

# Embracing the Enemies

## Chapter One



# Purpose in Our Life

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

**Embrace Your Cross**  
**Chapter One**  
**Embracing the Enemies Purpose in Your Life**

In our quest to walk in the supernatural power of God our journey is to walk in the scripture, which Jesus spoke; listed at the top of every page. Did you understand what I just said? The importance of this book is found in this passage spoken by Jesus. Read the scripture above or below one more time. Place this scripture in the front of your thinking while you read following chapters.

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The preachers of today seldom teach on embracing the cross of Christ. However, Jesus told us we would need to think about this every single day that we are on the face of this planet. Before we begin let us join hearts and pray for this chapter is important to grasp. We need Jesus to expose the plans of the enemy. We need Jesus to shed His Light on this dark subject. *"Father of truth, show us the way. Reveal the enemies plan to steal, kill, and destroy. You are our Shepherd and*

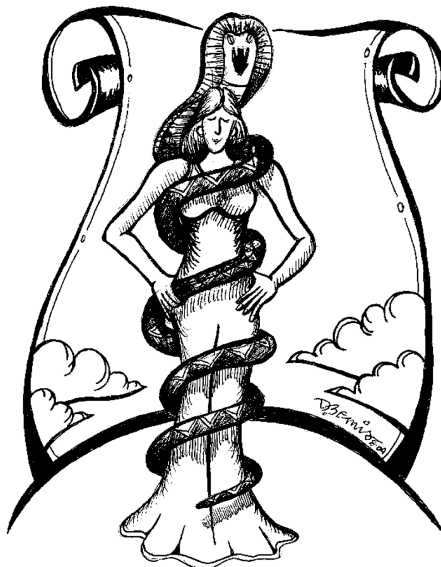
*we shall not lack. You are the One that leads us by quiet waters. Open our hearts, our ears, and our minds to understanding more about our evil opponent. Amen and amen."*

Let us spend some time on our key verse and let us meditate on it.

First of all as you look on the top of this page and you read the words, *"If anyone desires to come after Me..."* So the question is, do we want or do we desire to follow Jesus? Do you hunger to follow Him? Do you thirst to tag along after Jesus? Do you want His highest will accomplished in your personal life? If you desire to follow Him then one must become a doer of His word as you pick up your cross daily. Other wise you are just a person full of hot air. Talk is cheap and actions speak. What has your actions over the last week told others about Jesus?

If Jesus asked you to move to another country, would you? If He asked you to go into the prisons, would you? If He asked you to open, drug rehabilitation home would you. If you would then keep reading to make sure you are willing to pay the price.

What would happen if someone walked up to you and spit in your face? What



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would you do? I know this all sounds hard but this is the price to follow Jesus. This is the proven testing ground where common people become supernatural saints.

Next we read, *"Let him deny himself."* My dear reader, this is the narrow road to real life. *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13 and 14)*

As you learn to lay it all down again and again, you learn that your heart is satisfied in this holy place of self denying. Only here, where one denies himself, will one truly walk in the miraculous? Only here will one find true freedom, liberty, and joy for ones heart. This verse is telling us that it is not all about us but others. God is never the problem, the problem is denying our own self. The problem lies within our own hearts.

The next statement in our key verse is that we must pick up our cross and daily follow Him. Day in and day out Jesus is telling all of us that we need to choose. Daily we decided to follow the King of Glory, the King of Kings, and the Alpha and Omega. Daily we struggle to walk the narrow road of life.

Lastly, we must lose our life in Him and once we have then He promises us that we will find real life. Real life is in Jesus. Real life is found when we die to self. Jesus demonstrated this as He said, not My will but God's will.

Dear reader, is this the direction you really want to go? One must be honest and one must be willing to lay down their life for the King.

Jesus made it clear to us that the enemy is real and needs to be addressed. *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10) NKJV*

The enemy only has one job and we need to embrace his realness. Before the enemy embraces us, like in this drawing, the enemy wants to wrap us up and make us feel good in the midst of destructive sin. The enemy desires us to play with sin as a sport. He wants us to get real familiar with him and think we can control him. But he only wants to steal, kill, and destroy. The enemy wants to worm his way into our life until he can take us over and completely destroy us. He is out to stop us from reaching our highest goal in Jesus. He wants to stop the plans of God. The enemy wants to steal our money, our health, and even our kids. He does not care how he does this he just wants to stop you and I. The enemy is a real force to be reckoned with. Let us look deeper into the Word of God and find out what I am talking about.

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1) NKJV*

If Jesus was tempted then we know that we are going to be tempted. **Get over it!** Fight the good fight of faith and keep going forward as you embrace your cross daily. If the

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enemy wanted to hinder the work of God while Jesus walked the earth how much more will he try to stop us? We must recognize his tactics and pick up our daily suffering and keep going forward toward the prize.

The enemy wants us to lie, he wants us to steal, and ultimately he wants to make sure we do his will not God's. So how is the enemy doing? Did you notice it was the spirit of God that led Jesus into the wilderness? Did you see that if we are going to follow Jesus then this is part of the total package? The enemy will come and attack us or tempt us. But if we are dead in Christ then the risen Savior is in us and His supernatural powers will keep us out of the grip of the enemy. On top of all this, how many of us have been used by the enemy to stop others from reaching their highest in God? Now that is a scary thing to think about.

Once again let us return to the word of God and see what we can glean from this passage.

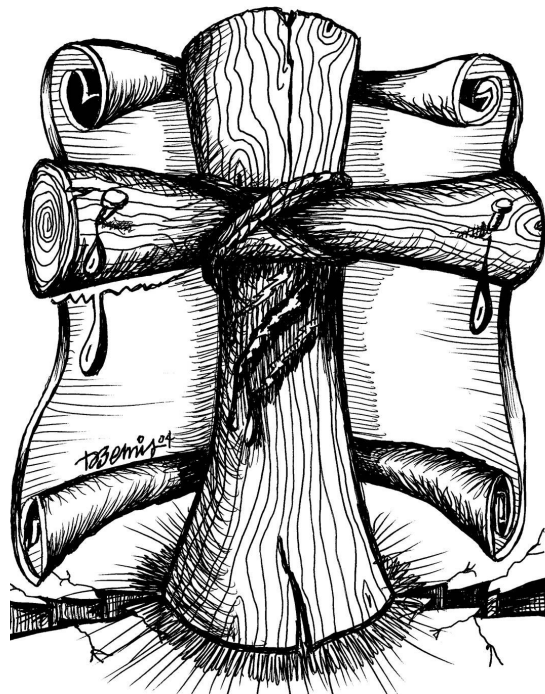
*And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, "Man*

*shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:2-4) NKJV*

Within these scriptures we will find how to deal with the enemy. Jesus knew the word of God and used it accurately. My friend, this is where many Christians fall short. Many fall away from God because they know so little of God's word. If you want to follow Jesus you must read His word and hid it in your heart. Jesus used a verse against Satan that had to do with food. Jesus was tempted with food and He used a food verse to defeat the enemy. We must learn to use the word of God accurately. Using His word correctly is of utmost importance if we want to defeat the enemy.

One time I was called out to an apartment and this young lady was tormented by the enemy. As we began to pray she started to scream at us in a male demonic voice. I was scared and

the only verse I could remember was John 3:16. Now, John 3:16 is a salvation verse and powerful if used as such. But John 3:16 is not a verse to rebuke the enemy. I felt as though I was up against the enemy with a tooth pick. After I said that verse many times my heart was calmer and we rebuked the evil presence with the



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name of Jesus. After the evil presence left I thought to myself that I will spend more time in God's word memorizing scripture. I wanted to look like Rambo the next time I encountered a evil spirit. I wanted many bullets, a military M-16 rifle, rocket propelled launcher and more. Since that time I make sure I read the bible from cover to cover at least once a year.

If we desire to follow Jesus we must embrace that there is a real enemy and he is out to steal, kill, and destroy us. We must get over it and keep running the race of faith to win the prize. Over and over Jesus fought off the advancement of the enemy with scripture. Jesus used scripture precisely and He is our prefect example. He would always address the enemy with, "It is written," and we must do like wise.

*"Jesus said to him, "It is written again, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God." (Matthew 4:7) NKJV*

One day as a teacher in California I was talking to a professing Satan worshipper. And he told me he had read the bible from cover to cove one time. I talked to my youth group and found that not one of them had read the bible from cover to cover. I then challenged them to get busy reading. I pointed out to the group that

the enemy used scripture in his attempt to tempt Jesus. Oh dear reader, we must know the word of God if we want to win. If we want to live victoriously then we must know the word of God and learn to use it accurately.

Some times the attack comes from Satan. We must get over it and not let him win. Let us look into the Old Testament to find out more.

*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (Job 1:6-8) NKJV*

I do not like the idea that Satan has access to the Lord but I know I must get over it and keep picking up my cross everyday. I do not like it that Satan is going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it. But I must get over it and keep striving forward no matter what happens. Did you hear that? We cannot let the enemy win. We cannot lay down our cross because the going gets rough. Do you remember the



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story of Job? He will lose everything in one day. But he refused to give in.

I hope you also noticed what God said about this man. I want to be known to God and talked about by God in the same manner. God said Job was unique, God's servant, and blameless. How would God describe you this last week?

In everything that happened to Job I want you to listen to him speak after news was brought to him about the death and destruction of his family, livestock, houses, and income.

*Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. (Job 1:20-22) NKJV*

In all this Job kept going forward. He was broken, humbled, and yet in all this he did not blame God. Many Christians are the first to walk away from the things of God and they blame Him instead of knowing that there is a real enemy. The enemy wants to stop you from reaching God's highest calling in your personal life. The enemy will use anyone he can find to help him, even if it is in your own home. Listen to the words of Job's wife.

*Then his wife*

*said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9) NKJV*

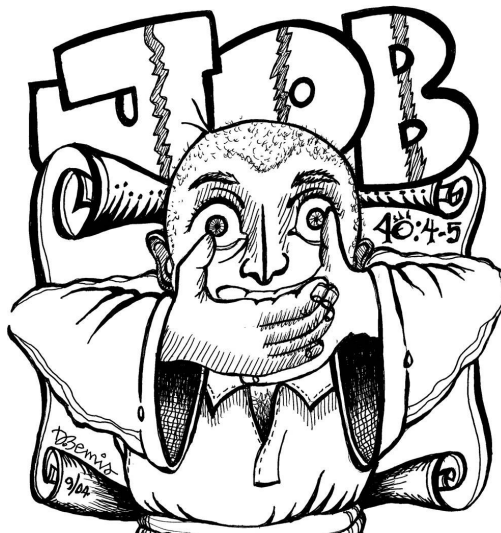
Once again this should warn us that we too can be used by the enemy to try to discourage one another. We must be on the guard that the enemy is very tricky and he might be flowing through our heart and words.

My daughter was preparing to go off to college and a Christian from our church told her not to get her hopes up too much. He continued to tell her that it might be God's will that she not go to college. She rebuked his words of discouragement and claimed once again the words she heard from God. She is now a registered nurse and a graduate of Oral Roberts University.

The enemy used Job's wife to try to get him to curse God. She did not understand that these were the very words of Satan flowing through her tongue. But this did not stop Job. He did not give into his wife's words. Listen to Job's answer.

*But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10) NKJV*

The difference I want you to see is that Job continued to go forward in his struggle with life. He would not accept even these negative words his wife



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spoke. We must do the same. Deny our self, pick up our cross and then follow Jesus. It is only on this road that one finds life. And that life is more abundant.

One inmate spoke the other night how God showed him in a dream what was going to happen and the man continued to go forward. He quoted scripture and how it was filling his heart with peace even after they have told him that he has, Lou Gehrig's disease. You could see the peace of God resting upon him because he used scripture to get his heart in the right place to be blessed by God in the midst of terrible news. He used:

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28) NKJV*

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21) NKJV*

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly*

*about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Corinthians 12:9) NKJV*

The enemy was defeated and the Christian was victorious even in the midst of great sorrow. We could see the peace of God resting over and in him. In his personal weakness we could see God's strength. He needed to use three scriptures to center his heart once again upon his God.

So my dear friend, what have you learned or what changes do you need to make to learn how to fight off the attacks of the enemy? Let us close with a word of prayer: "Father, You inspired the word of God and we want to hunger and thirst for more of it to be in our hearts. Help us; no help me to hide the



*word of God in my heart that I might not sin against thee. You are the answer to my problems Help me to turn to You first and then remind me of what the scriptures say. I want more and more of You and Your higher ways. Fill me with Your wisdom. Open my eyes to see the enemy's moves. Teach me Your ways and guide me to victory. Help me to stand in truth and help me to stand with You even when I do not see You. In the good times I vow to follow You. In the*

**So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Revelation 3:16) NKJV**

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*bad times I vow to follow You. I want to make a promise to You to follow You all the days of my life.*

*Search me and know me. Examine me and if there be any wicked thing inside my heart I give You permission to take it out. I want You to know I am your servant and in the good or bad times I will follow You as I learn to pick up my cross daily. I want to be upright according to You. I want to be found blameless by You. I desire to follow You so I desire to pick up my cross and endure.*

*Fill my heart with Your word and show me how to use it accurately. Help me to keep my mouth shut and to be silent*

*knowing You know what You are doing. Help me to be silent and know that Your Spiritual ways are the best. Even if I do not understand to the fullest I can trust in You. Keep me as the apple of Your eye and help me find the Rock that is higher than I. Lead me to the high tower or that secret place where I can rest under the shadows of Your wings.*

*Lord I do not want to look like vomit. I want my works to be hot. I do not want my heart to look like it is lukewarm. I do not want you to vomit me out of Your mouth as You had to do with Jonah. Amen and amen."*

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Write your personal prayer from your heart on the lines below. \_\_\_\_\_

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Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the enemy been talking to you? What has the enemy tried to do in your life, in other words, how has he tried to stop you from going forward in the things of God?

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Write John 10:10 below and then memorize it; \_\_\_\_\_

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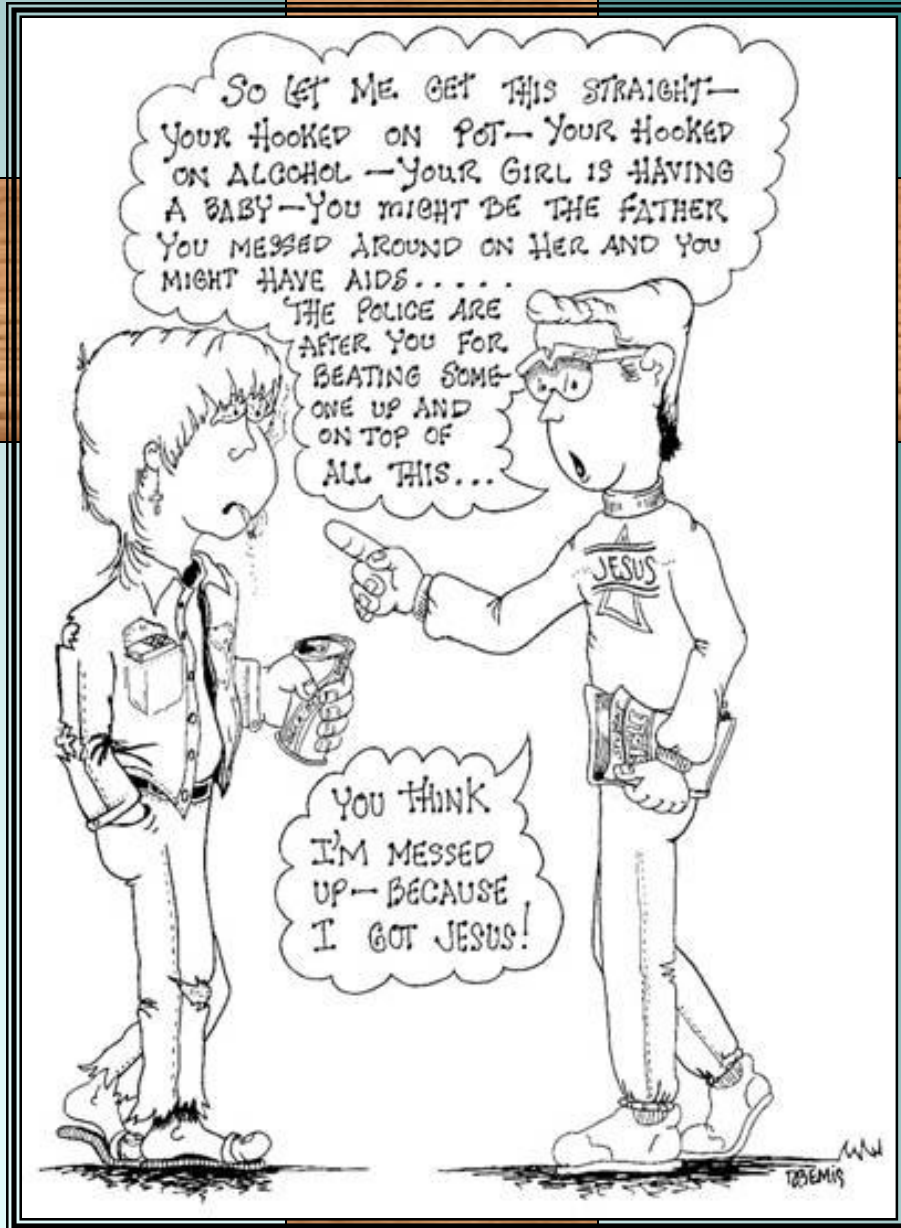
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## Chapter Two

# Embracing Ignorance



# of Others

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## **Embrace Your Cross** **Chapter Two** **Embracing Ignorance of Others**

In this chapter, you will learn how to deal with the ignorant. This chapter will have you meditate upon our every day encounter with those who are ignorant about the things of God.

We are to pattern our everyday lives by the example that Jesus set for us. The ill mannered, the rude, or the badly informed people will always hinder the work of God because they just do no now any better. They do not understand that the enemy or Satan uses them to hinder the work of God. But how are we, as Christians to handle these obnoxious people? Let me explain by using the word of God.

However, before we dig into the word of God let us, lift our eyes towards Heaven and talk with the Lord. (John 17) Let us boldly come before Him and pray.

*"Father of our blessed Jesus, open Your word and teach us, guide us, and instruct us. We want to learn how to handle the ignorant people who mock the things of God. Jesus, help us to learn as we sit quietly at Your feet with a willing Spirit. O Lord, give us understanding and make us to know Your higher ways. We desire to be more like You each day so help us to change. We hunger and thirst to walk in Your blessings and Your miracles. We do not*

*want to see others walk in Your miracles We want to walk in Your miracles. We want to know that we walk under the showers of Your blessings and favor. Amen and amen."*

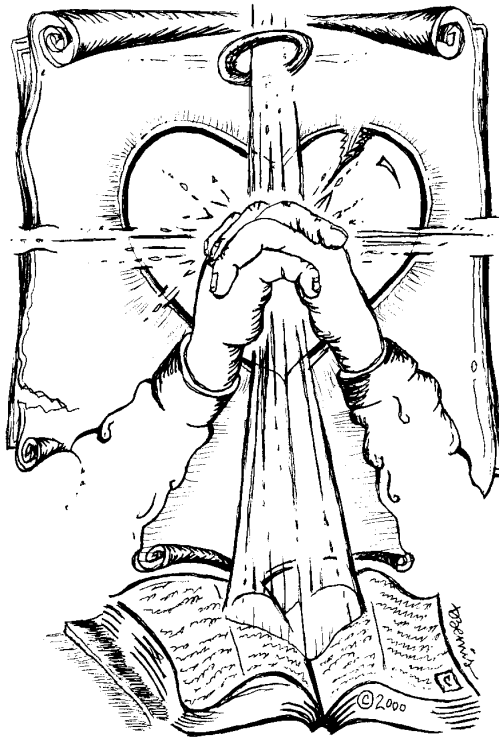
Open your Bible to the Gospel of John and read along with me.

*"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." (John 19:1-4) NKJ*

Pilate was ignorant of religious matters. He was the governing authority in that part of the country. Nevertheless, he

did not know any better. He listened to the crowd. He followed the groups' request and their wishes. Pilate had Jesus whipped and beaten to please the people. Pilate just did what the crowd wanted even though he himself could not find any fault in Jesus.

In all of this, we find that Jesus never attacked him physically or verbally. Jesus was nearly silent during His time in front of



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this earthly ruler.

Under the orders of Pilate Jesus found Himself in the hands of the rude, ignorant, and ill-mannered men. He was whipped, cut, and spit on as these ignorant people beat Him. The men mocked Him by placing a crown of thorns and a purple robe on Him. They knew He said He was a king so they made fun of Him. These same people administered pain, shame, and mockery. Yet in all this Jesus was silent. In all this, He kept His emotions controlled. Here my friend is where we need to learn from Jesus and embrace our cross daily. We all need to work on controlling our emotions. This is part of embracing our daily cross of suffering at the hands of the ignorant.

Many will mock us out of their ignorance. Many will joke about the things of God. Many ignorant people will cause us pain. Many will place shame upon our heart if we let them. Many will try to steal your joy. However, our daily choice should be to pick up and embrace our cross. Embracing your cross as you can see is no easy task. The fact of the matter is it is the hardest thing a Christian has to do.

At this moment, Jesus could have killed them all. Jesus not only had the authority to do it He also had the power yet in all this He held His temper, He held His anger, and He held His tongue. If we are to pick up the cross daily and follow Him then we must embrace His higher ways. We must deny ourselves daily. I do not know about you but for me this needs to become a priority. Christians need to become more involved spiritually so that they know what is going on around them. Because we do not do this, we act out of our emotions and we get in the way of God's highest will.

I was a public school teacher for over twenty years. One year I was

teaching at the middle school level in California. I had a young student who was in trouble everyday. The school assigned him to my classroom. The counselors placed him in my room for four classes a day. He felt safe and he felt peaceful when he was in my room. He did not want to eat outside with the other students because it was unsafe. He did not want to be hurt. He spent lunch with me and I fed him often. I brought muffins in for him from our family's dinner the night before. I just loved him right where he was and I told the truth when he asked questions. By the time, the first semester was nearing completion he was asking many questions. One day we were walking and the local seagulls lifted off the roof of the gym. The students and he scattered from the white rain of seagull dodo! I told him that if you are right with God you have nothing to worry about that God would watch over him. Right then white dodo fell from the sky and hit him. He looked at me with great wonderment. So, I looked back at him and asked if he wanted to get right with God. He was so amazed because the seagulls missed me and I was only one foot away from him. I later was able to tell him that the seagulls missed me for over five years. I was able to explain to him that I knew I was blessed and walked in the favor of God.

By living life to the fullest and hungering for more and more of Jesus people saw the peace, the joy, and the love that was within my heart. When school ended that year, he told me that he knew God really existed because he saw Jesus alive in me. Now, that is what I call a testimony of love. That is what I call walking in the blessings and miracles of God. Just love the ignorant; pick up your cross daily and walk in the miraculous. Live your life by embracing your cross daily as you follow Him!

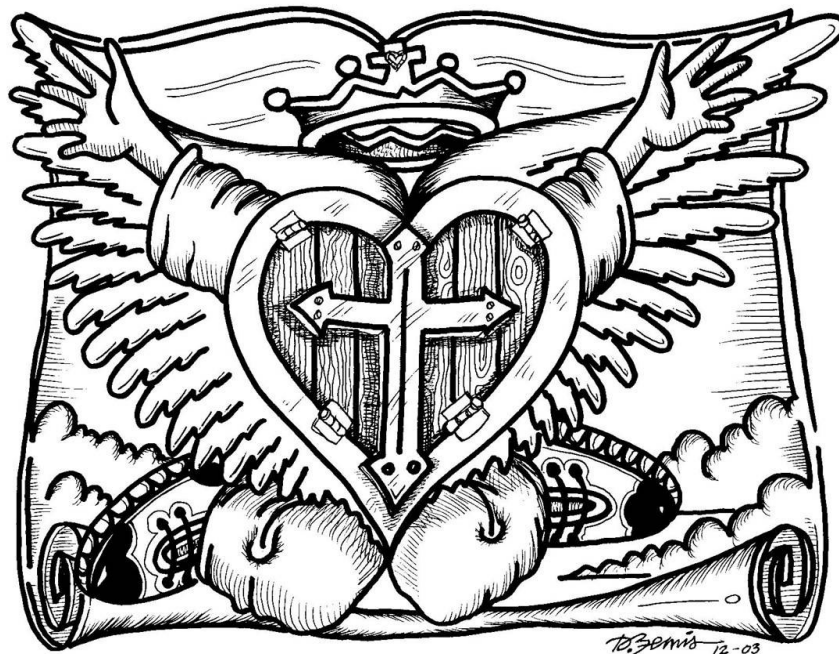
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We do not talk much about embracing the ignorant or those who mock us. Nonetheless, it is time that we embrace all of the cross and what it stands for. Come now and let us embrace our cross daily as we follow the King of Glory. He alone is worthy of our praise. He alone is worthy to be worshiped.

One year I worked for a boys' group home in California. The home was for young boys the ages seven to fifteen and all were wards of the state. In other words they all were taken care of by the state. None of these young boys were allowed to live at home. Every one of the boys had been molested and every one had violated someone younger than themselves. I did not know how deep darkness ran until I worked with these little ones. These young boys were very ignorant of the things of God. No, these boys were ignorant of love in general. Their minds were twisted and far from reality. Each and everyday I had to choose to pick up my cross or would I lay it down and hide it under my bed. One day one of the lads spit in my face. In all the years of working with teenagers, I never experienced this

level of ignorance. I will admit to you that the first thing I wanted to do was spit back but I had to pick up my cross that day out of obedience and held my peace. I cried out, "Jesus!" And I heard His voice, "They spit on Me too!" And just that fast I had my joy back. The cross that Jesus is asking us to pick up is the ugliness of life. He is asking us to walk His way not ours.

It becomes our personal choice to let someone steal your joy. All of this happened as I restrained the young man as we were going to the ground. Once we hit the ground he shouted, "And would you quite smiling at me!" Only because of the love of God could I help the young man to his feet as the other leaders came and whisked him to his room for isolation. Later that day the staff came to me and asked what he must do to come back to class. I told them he just had to confess what it was he did wrong and I would welcome him back. The young man did so and I welcomed him warmly again. God is big and He lives in me so I must be big. I could not receive him back without love. I picked up my cross and carried it. That day I walked in the miraculous strength of



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the Lord.

Are you ready to lay it all down in order to pick up your cross? Read our key verse at the top of this page and notice Jesus said to pick up **your** cross. Each of us has a cross to bear. The time has come to give up all the excuses and make a daily choice to pick up your cross. I do not know what is in your way but do not let it be the ignorant, which keeps you from the miraculous.

In the Old Testament we find the story about Abraham. Let us look into his life as another example.

*Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." (Genesis 22:1)*

God tested Abraham as He will also test you and me. Our personal test is determined upon our picking up our cross and embracing it daily. Many of us will say, "Yes Lord, here I am." But when things get difficult what happens? Many Christians run. They run from the call of God. They run from church. They run from their Christian friends. We must be determined to embrace our own cross everyday. Obedience to the call of God is the best place to be. Come now, pick up your cross today and follow Jesus.

*Then He said, "Take now your son, your only*

*son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:2)*

The going just became tougher. The daily choice to pick up our cross has just become harder. What is it that the Lord is asking us to give up? Will Abraham be obedient? Will you become obedient to His call? Because when we become obedient, we will start walking the road to the miraculous. I want you to see that there is a high price to follow Jesus and to be trusted with His miracles.

*So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."(Genesis 22:3-5)*



Abraham had to face his wife, his servants, and even his son with what the Lord asked him to do. However, he went forward in obedience and I know he must have struggled to give up his son to death. We find Abraham walking each day in obedience to the call. We too must pick up our own

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

personal cross everyday and follow God out of obedience. In the good days this is easy but will we continue even in the bad days?

*So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:6-7)*

When we pick up the cross and as we learn how to embrace the ignorant we find answering their questions alone becomes difficult. But in our embracing the cross we must just answer their questions. No more and no less, just answer their questions. They really do not know what is going on around them in the spiritual realm. Keep quite and keep moving forward. If you pass the test you will find the miracles. What I am talking about is living a Godly life. Let your light shine before all men. Just walk what you know is biblical.

*And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and*

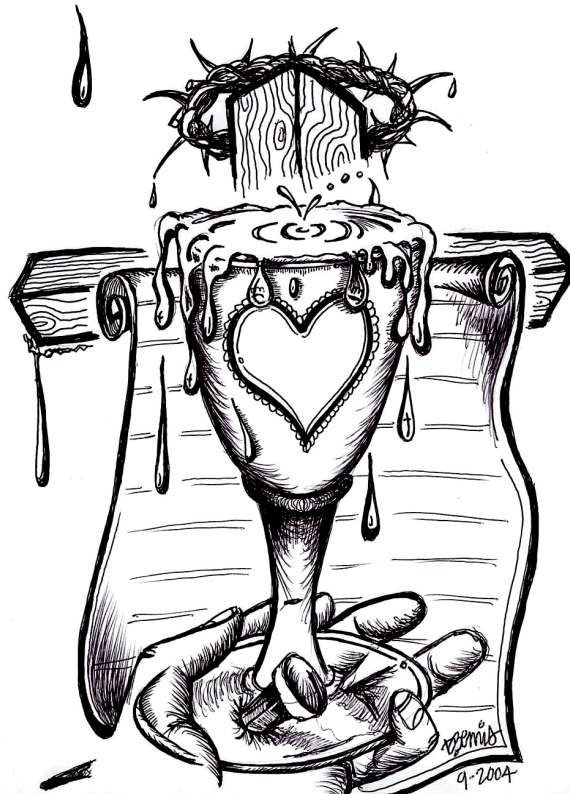
*he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. (Genesis 22:9-10)*

Can you imagine what was going through Isaac's mind? Dad, what are you doing? Then his father ties him up and places him on the wood pile to be the sacrifice. Abraham must have struggled deeply. I'm sure he had tears in his eyes and was overcome by emotions. His hands must have trembled. But out of obedience he went forward. His son must have been looking intently at his beloved father. Abraham picked up his cross that morning and refused to put it down. He withheld nothing from God not even his son.

*And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"*

*So he said, "Here I am."*

*And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In*



*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

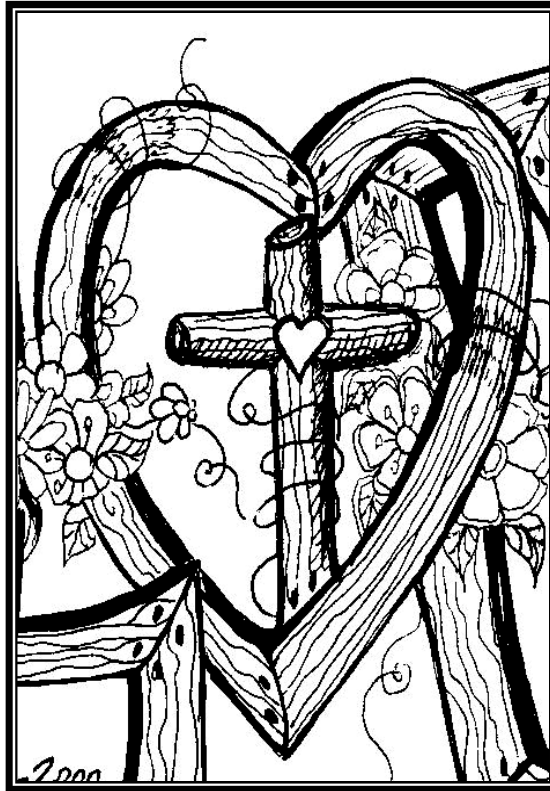
*the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided." Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."(Genesis 22:11-18)*

Abraham withheld nothing from God. We must not withhold anything from God either. This is the test, this is our cross, and this is the way to the miraculous. We must pick up our cross and rebuff ourselves daily. If we can, we will experience the mighty miracles of God.

So my dear friend, what are you hanging on to? Are you hanging onto a relationship to tightly? Are you hanging onto your money? Are you hanging onto your life to much? What about your knowledge are you hanging on to it to much? Or what about pain, rejection, and hate are you clinging to them? You can not cling to anything do not withhold

anything from God; this is the road to the miraculous.

If you are ready to lay it all down again then repeat after me:



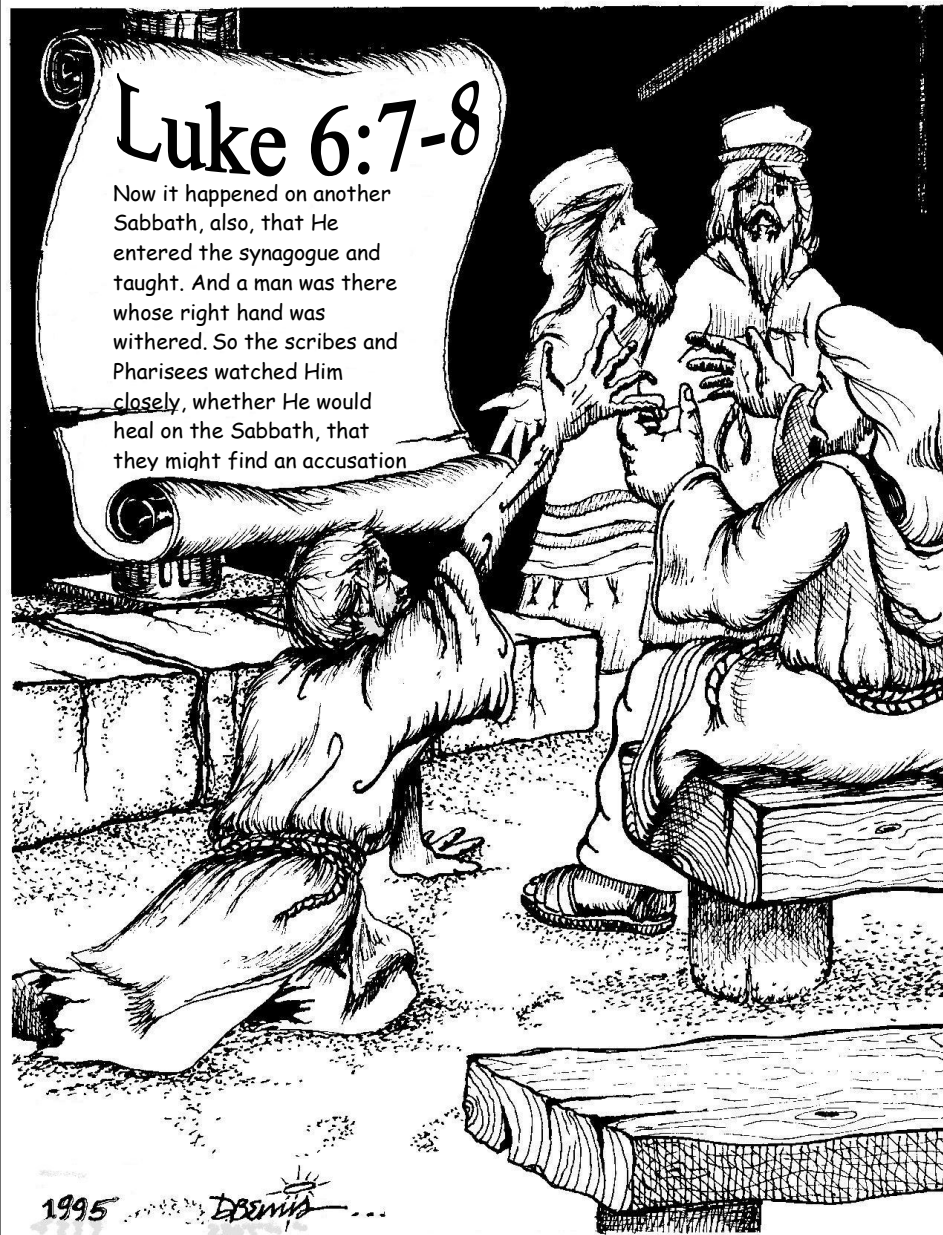
*"Father, help me to pick up my cross. I know Your Son struggled under the weight of His cross but He asked You to give Him strength. Well, now it is my turn and I ask that You my heavenly Father give me strength also. The time has come for me to give up all my excuses and follow You with all my heart, strength, and soul. I want to truly follow Your beloved Son. Forgive me Lord, yes, forgive me! I know that the road to destruction is wide and the road to life is narrow and difficult, forgive me for wanting to take the wide and easy road. Well, the time has come to pay the price by picking up my cross so that I can walk in Your supernatural miracles. I will walk the narrow path and not complain. I will be silent as You were, just help me. Yes, I need Your Holy Spirit to Help me. Not my will but Yours for I know it to be the best. I know Your ways are higher and always better than mine. I want to lose my life for the sake of Your highest calling. I have been bought with a great price and I do not take that lightly. You are my Fortress, my Rock, and my Help. Amen and amen."*





## Chapter Three

# Embracing Religious Pride



# in Others

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJV*

## **Embrace Your Cross**

### **Chapter Three**

### **Embracing the Religious Pride in Others**

Embracing our personal cross is not easy. Embracing your cross is to embrace a life style of Christianity. Everyday we must rise from our beds and choose to follow Jesus. We choose to live for Jesus and to have an honest relationship with our Father God. It seems that the Christian world has painted many wonderful depictions of Christ but there was nothing easy about the narrow road that He had to walk. To hug, hold, or embrace His cross Jesus knew that He would encounter religious prideful people. Let us look into His Anointed Word and study Jesus' action or reaction toward the religious prideful leaders of His day.

*Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" And*



*when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. (Luke 6:6-11)*

Did you notice that Jesus was in the local church and He was teaching? However, the religious prideful people entered with a negative spirit to find fault.

Now that sounds like many churches today. People come wanting to find fault with the local preachers or music directors or just about anyone. The majority of church goes quit coming to church because they are so disillusioned with Christians. Moreover, if your focus is on people then I am here to tell you that you will live a miserable life. Our focus must be on Jesus. If you are looking for the negative you will certainly find it.

I was a coach for many years. I found that you have two basic types of players and they are either negative or positive. The negative hinder every effort for the positive players to win. The negative soon found themselves sitting on my bench. It does not matter how talented they are, if they are negative they hinder winning. And it is the same in Christianity. The negative people who look for mistakes act as a spiritual cancer. These people hinder the very move of God.

Negative people might find that the preacher did not shine his shoes or

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they might find that he has bad breath. Well my counsel to you is to get over it and refocus upon Jesus. He is the reason we should go to church. He is the one we worship. Get your eyes off people and you will find great freedom to serve God through serving others.

The negative religious people did not stop our Lord. Jesus knew their thoughts and He still healed the withered hand. Jesus demonstrated the love of God by setting this man free and yet the people were filled with rage. Jesus was going to do what was right no matter what the other people thought or did. Jesus embraced that the religious spirited people existed and He continued to go forward and declare the truth. Jesus continued to choose whom He was going to live for.

Jesus simply asked which should we do; should we do evil or good? He continued to declare truth and said, "Save life or to destroy life?" Jesus pronounced truth and the people were angry and ready to destroy Jesus.

One year I worked as a youth pastor. My job was to bridge the gap between the Christian school and the supporting church. I explained the strategy that the Lord had given me and I went to work. Every other Friday we would hold youth revival services. This ushered in great fires of renewal. Young teens and their parents flocked to church. Our worship team consisted

of three seventh and eight grade girls. On the drums another eight-grade boy along with a seventh grade boy on the congas. On electric guitar was one of my fellow teachers and another girl ran the overheads. We practiced and the Lord was giving us new songs. Some of the songs I wrote others were written by these teens.

The parents came and brought all the children in their family and I felt like Jesus on the mount. People were coming forward with prizes for me to give away. I held many different bible trivia games for all the different ages. We gave away many t-shirts and CD's. We even had different groups or ages sing special songs for all that came. We played the Bible sword game. This game I yell out a scripture while all of them hold their bibles high in the air. Once I say go they all try to find

the scripture and stand to their feet with their finger on the right passage. Soon we were filling the church on a Friday night and many flocked to the altar to pray or receive salvation. Others came to receive prayer.

One Monday I went to work to find out that the leadership of the church wanted to meet with me. I went to the board meeting that night and found out that they wanted me to stop having these renewal services because there were too many different age groups in attendance. They continued to tell me that it was not right to have high school kids there along with preschool kids. I spoke to them that the Bible says, "Then they also brought infants to Him that



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*He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (Luke 18:15-17) NKJV*

I placed my bible on the table and asked them to show me what I was doing wrong. They explained that I could not use the Bible as such.

I submitted to their leadership and watched the Spirit of God grieve. My heart welled from within with tears and sadness. Moreover, as fast as it all began it was over and as soon as my contract was completed, we moved on, shaking the dust off our feet.

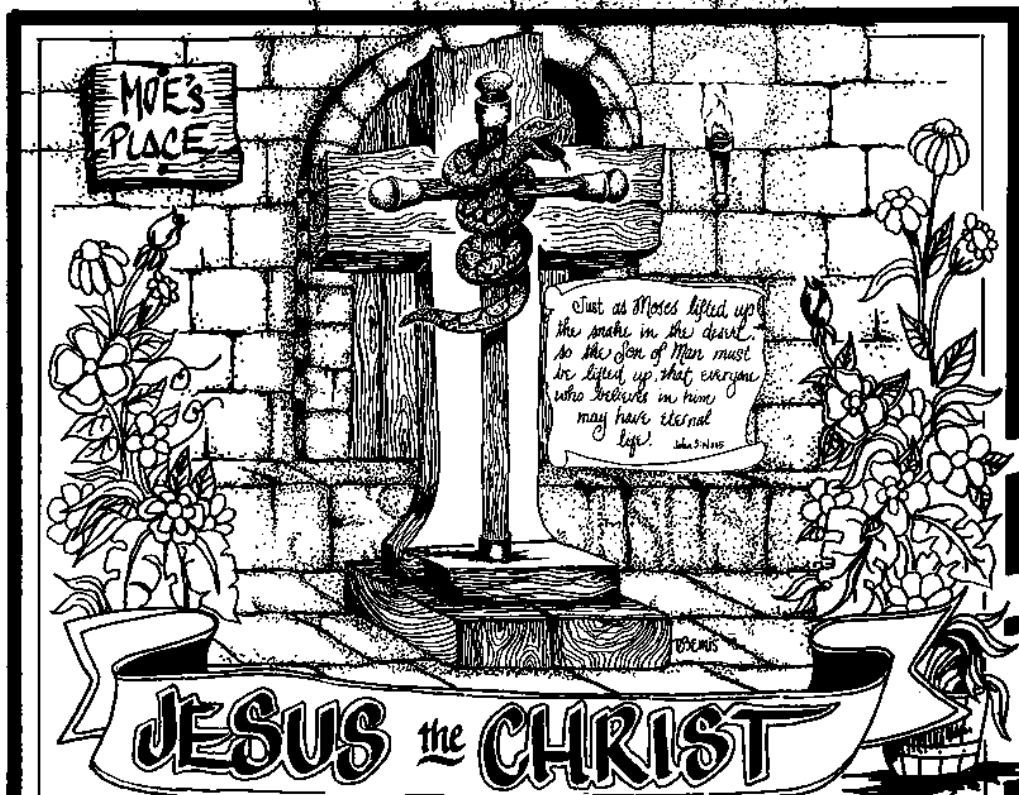
It seems to me that the religious pride within the church has been around a long time. They do not see that they are the ones being used by Satan to divide and

conquer the church. Jesus knew this and the religious people did not stop Him. This is our example; keep going forward and keep your focus on God.

We must embrace that religious prideful people will come against anyone who is truly living out our key scripture, Luke 9:23-24. We must embrace our cross and deny ourselves as we keep going on. But what we have found is that many Christians get tired of the religious spirited people and soon they lay down their cross upon their pillow and leave home without it. Soon they leave the church delusional about the things of God.

Dear reader, I know it is hard when these who know better come against you but get over it and reach down once more and pick up your cross. Embrace your cross daily and strive towards the goal of competing in the real race. The road is very narrow that leads to the miraculous.

The road to the miraculous is



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narrow and it is difficult. Listen to Jesus and remember we are called to make this decision everyday. *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14) NKJV*

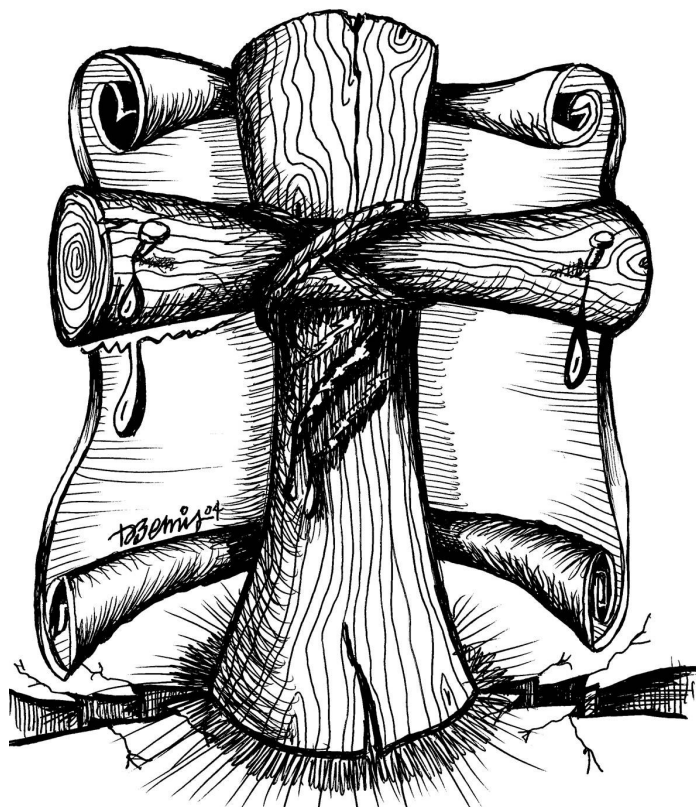
I hope you placed this scripture in your heart because it is truth. Embrace the difficult path of the cross. Get over it; if you want to follow Jesus then you must embrace your cross.

Embracing the cross is real life style Christianity. Jesus lived what He preached and this is what He is asking from us. Not our agenda but God's. Not our evil desires but His higher desires of hope, love, and peace. Come with me and let us find where you last laid down the cross of Christ. Come and learn how to embrace this narrow path of life as you carry your cross. Your life style or your everyday actions should speak to those around you. Once they see, feel, and know there is something different they will ask questions. *"But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (1 Peter 3:14-16) NKJV*

Did you see that the author is telling us we will suffer and that we should have no fear? Did you notice that he tells us to give an answer for the hope that is in us. He did not tell us to beat people over the head with the bible. He tells us to be gentle and with respect. And he even tells us to live with good conduct and that this will convict those you speak against us.

What should we do if this is in your own family? Once again let us turn to the word of God and listen. *"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. (Numbers 12:1) NKJV*

One of the signs of the religious spirit in a person or in our family is the negative outlook on life. Aaron and Miriam are looking for a reason to be mad at their brother Moses. They are looking



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at the woman Moses married and because of her race they can attack Moses. Moses has no idea what they are upset about because he is leading many people out of the land of darkness. Listen to Miriam and Aaron;

*So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) (Numbers 12:2-3) NKJV*

Moses' own brother and sister turned on him. They held within their hearts the religious spirit which was flowing through them to stop or at least hinder the move of God. I find many in the church today still uttering the same phrases as Miriam and Aaron. But I want you to see how Moses handled this situation. And I want you to hear how it made God angry. The Lord was mad, because the Lord heard what Aaron and Miriam were saying about the leader that He chose. Listen to more of our family story.

*Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, "If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" (Number 12:4-8) NKJV*

One thing I see from meditating upon this portion of scripture is the fact

that the Lord is angry. Another thing I see is I want God on my side. I do not want to be fighting against Him. And again I see that it is important what we say about the leaders that God has picked. In all of this I want God on my side and I want Him to speak about me as He did Moses. I long for God to say to others that He and I speak face to face. I hunger for God to call me His faithful servant. And I do not want Him to call me forward to discipline me. Could this be why many in the church are so sick?

But as for my house and me we will choose to seek the Lord with all my heart. We will daily pick up my cross and embrace that there are religious prideful spirited people trying to hinder the move of God. I will choose to serve the Lord with all of my strength. And I will deny myself daily.

*So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!" (Numbers 12:9-12)*

Did you notice that the presence of God lifted and Miriam and Aaron found themselves outside and facing the sickness of leprosy? When we find ourselves outside of the will of God, we open the door for the enemy.

However, most of us would face God and tell the Lord to go and get these bad people. We would ask the Lord to bring some of His lightning bolts to strike them the bad people. Many of us would pray for God to completely destroy those

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who have spoken evil about us. Nevertheless, this is not what Jesus did nor is it what Moses did. And this brings us to the point of this chapter. We must deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and then follow Jesus. *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* (Luke 23:34a) NKJV

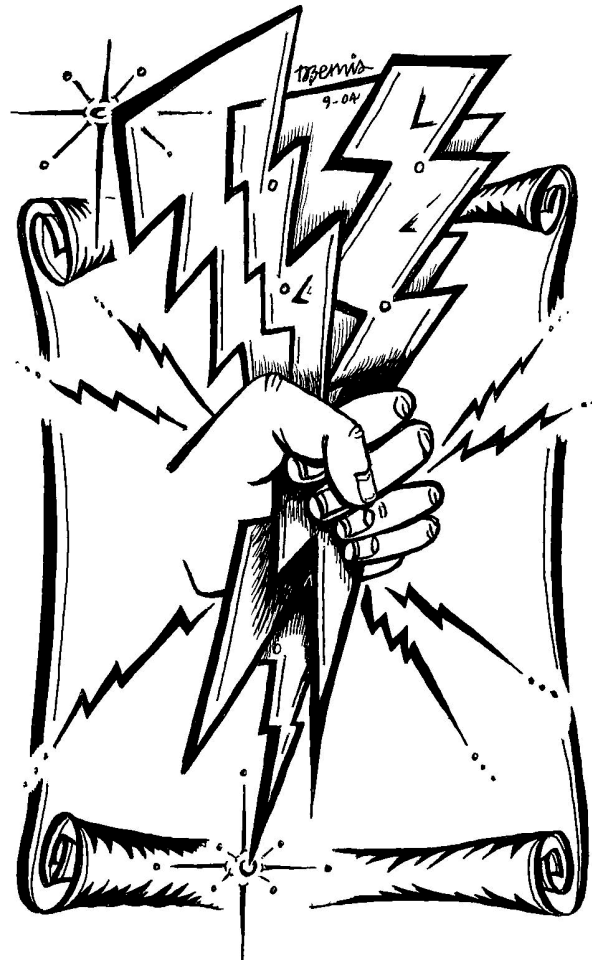
Dear Reader, this is what we must do. He is our example and He is the one we are to emulate. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and end who was and is and is to come.

Let us pray as Moses and Jesus did. *"So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!" (Numbers 12:13) NKJV*

Father we pray as did Jesus, *"Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do."* (Luke 23:34) NKJV

*Lord help us embrace our own personal cross. We pray for those who have come against You and we ask that You forgive them. Help us to deny ourselves and move forward as we follow You everyday. Guide us to do good to those around us. Keep us from evil and help us to give life to the hurting. Make us edify all people especially those who believe in You. Remind me everyday to pick up my cross and to keep moving forward. Help me to go forward and never laying down my personal cross. Help me to see the religious prideful people and let them not discourage me. Keep me from evil by praying that You kill them. Let my*

*heart be found to be like Moses and Jesus. I want to awake more and more in Your likeness. I want to run the race of faith. I want to follow You by picking up my cross and following You with all my heart no matter what the cost. Remind me to declare truth and continue on doing good! Amen."*



Write your personal prayer from your heart on the lines below.

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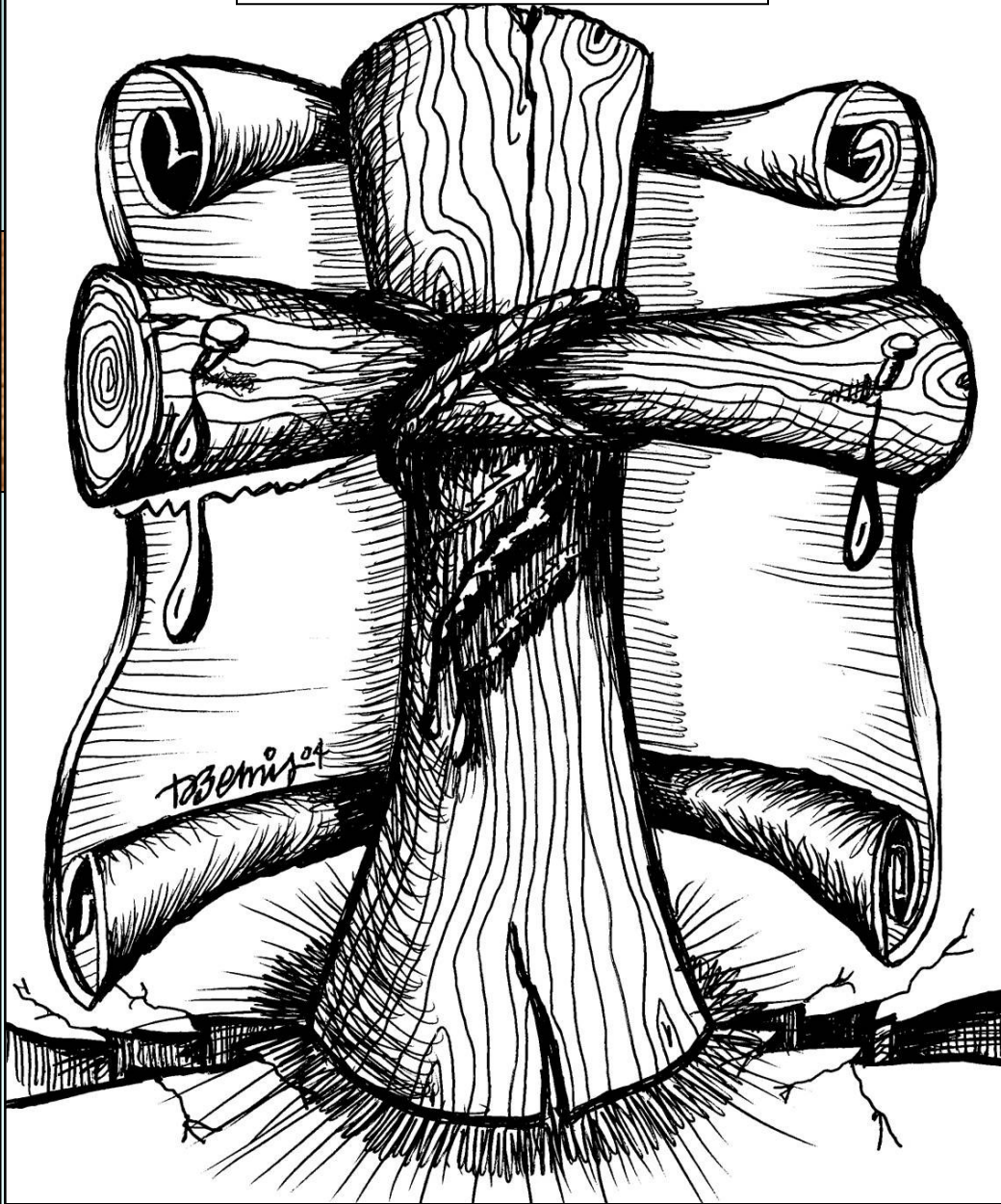




*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake*

# Embracing Abandonment

## Chapter Four



# and Rejection

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJV

## Embrace Your Cross Chapter Four Embracing Rejection and Abandonment

When I became sold-out for Christ, I found this narrow road of life laced with times of great abandonment and rejection. I did not know I had signed up for this kind of treatment. However, according to our key verse we are to deny our self and pick up our cross daily. Abandonment and rejection come with our choice and desire to follow Jesus. If our blessed savior had to deal with abandonment and rejection then so will we.

I have always wanted more of God. I do not want to sit by and watch others receive their personal miracles, I wanted my own. In this quest for more of God and His supernatural blessings, I found the ugly cross that I needed to

carry. Abandonment and rejection is yet another side of the Old Ugly Cross of life.

I have experienced abandonment and rejection or the fear of these in the work place. Once they find out, I was a Christian they stop talking to me. Many feared I would talk to them about God.

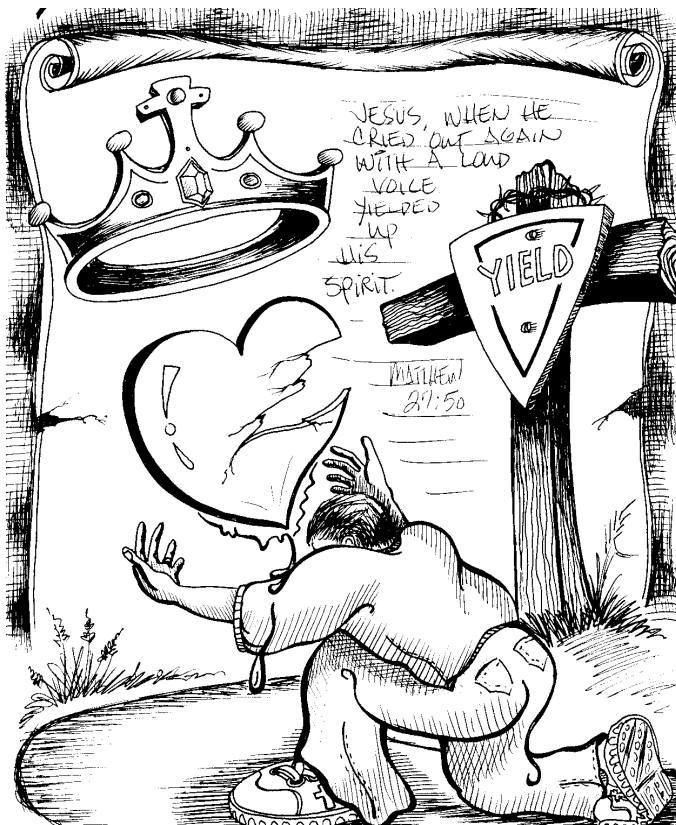
When in a crowd, they will make fun of me and my God but when alone they ask all kinds of spiritual questions.

One teacher came to me and asked me for counsel. She was dating a non-Christian and he was using marijuana. Her excuse was that if she left him there would be no one to talk to him about Jesus. I told her what scripture says:

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14) NKJV*

I added that God is the only one that saves and that God is bigger than she is allowing Him to be. I continued to tell her that she is hindering him from finding God by compromising what she knows is right. She left and completely rejected me and would not even say hello to me. For over six months, she would not look me in the eye.

One evening she called me at home and asked if she could take me to breakfast. At



Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ

breakfast the next morning, she asked me to forgive her. She continued to tell me that the counsel I gave her was correct and from God. She just did not want to hear it or obey His word. Nevertheless, after six months of torment she finally let go of him and stopped seeing him. Once she moved on with her life he was alone and he went to a church and accepted Jesus as his personal savior.

We must embrace our personal cross every day and keep going forward. Her rejection was real. My being rejected was real. However, I had to move forward if I wanted the blessings and the miracles to flow. Abandonment and rejection are just part of following Jesus. Our Christian life style will reflect our Jesus. Jesus went forward even though all rejected and abandoned Him. "Oh Lord anoint us to keep going forward and to release to You our personal rejection."

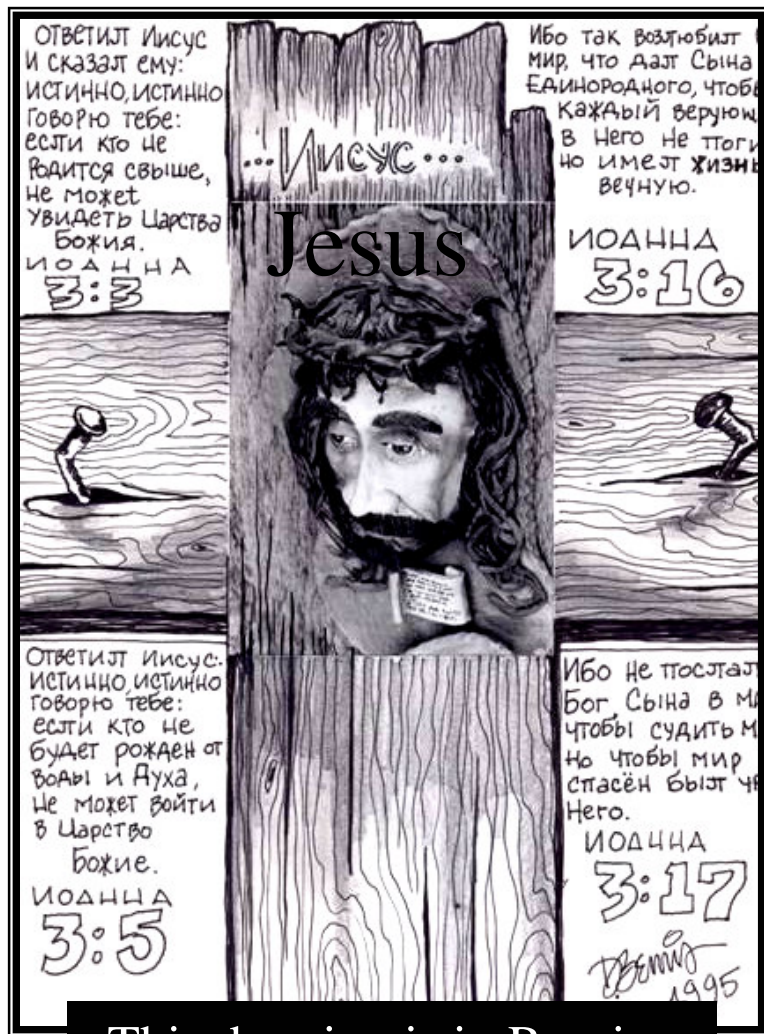
Let us look into the scriptures and find out how Jesus dealt with abandonment and rejection.

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three

times that you know Me."(Luke 31-34) NKJV

As I told you, we must pick up our cross of rejection and abandonment and follow Jesus. He knew Peter was going to reject Him but He did not let that stop Him.

Jesus prophetically told Peter what was going to happen and He is now telling us the same. He is saying to our hearts it is going to happen and we must not stop going forward. Jesus is telling us that if they rejected Him they are going to reject us. He is tell our hearts to not give up. He is showing us the way and demonstrating that it is possible to keep going forward in the face of



This drawing is in Russian

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rejection.

We must get over your abandonment and rejection issues and go forward. Let nothing stop you from going forward. Read on in our story and see what happened.

*And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 47 and 48) NKJV*

The people who should have accepted Jesus rejected Him. Judas rejected Him with a kiss and for money but this did not stop Jesus. Rejection will happen to each of us, even from those who know better. Judas saw Jesus walk on water. Judas witnessed many great and supernatural miracles done through Jesus, yet he betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Rejection will happen even from those who are close to you. Rejection will happen by those that have watched the miracles and witnessed that God's approval rest on your life. Get over it, pick up your cross, embrace these issues, and move forward.

*Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke*

*22:52 and 53) NKJV*

In this section of scripture, the religious people are rejecting Him. However, once again this does not stop Jesus. He declares truth and keeps going forward to accomplish the High calling of God's will in His life. Jesus also explains the forces of darkness behind the rejection.

Let us look at Peter who denies Jesus three times just as Jesus said.

*But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." (Luke 22:55-61) NKJV*

Peter just rejected Jesus and what did Jesus do? He just looked at Peter and He kept going forward. Jesus was silent and did not remind Peter of this mistake. Jesus knew rejection and abandonment are a part of His cross to bear. Of all the disciples Peter knew better, yet he walked away from his Lord. Peter knew of the



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miracles and he knew that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed of God. Peter knew better but he still rejected and abandoned the Lord. And all Jesus did was look at him. Oh dear reader, let us look more and keep quiet more as we pick up our cross.

The cross is ugly and it represents the ugly side of life. As my wife says, "The cross is not dipped in chocolate, but in the blood and pain of suffering."

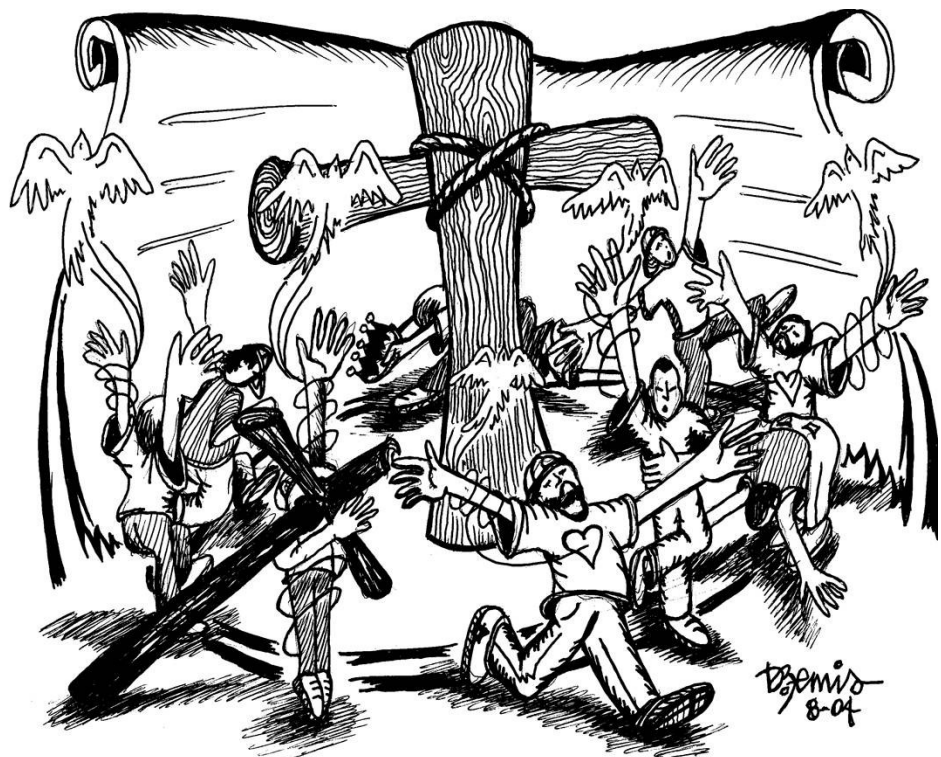
The Christian community has displayed an easy Gospel hence leading many to walk away from the Lord when bad times are upon them. Dear reader, the cross is ugly and full of pain. This is why Jesus is telling us to pick it up daily. To follow Jesus is a daily decision to do what is right. We must do this on the good days and on the bad days. Our quest to walk in the miraculous is not an emotional one. Our quest for more of God is a daily choice to be obedient to His voice. The blessings of God flow from being obedient not disobedient.

Oh dear reader, do you see what the Spirit of God is trying to tell you? **We must not give up so easily.** Deny your self, pick up our cross daily, and then follow Jesus. Christians give up too easily and too quickly. Christians become discouraged with God, with others. Eventually they walk away from the

Lord Himself. Blessings and the miracles are with Jesus. Don't let go of your personal blessings and let no-one stop you for your blessings are just around the next corner.

While ministering on the streets of Lompoc, California, a young man came towards my truck. The young teen was on his bicycle. His question was about the board game known as the Ouija board. I told him it was straight from Hell. I also explained that the enemy really wants to steal, kill, and destroy him, but Jesus wanted to give him life and life more abundantly. The young man loved the game and did not want to let go of it. I continued explaining the game to him and that the Ouija board was evil and will lead him to take his own life. I persisted to tell him I would stand in the gap and before he tries suicide, he would come back out to the streets and see me.

I risk the fact that he might reject, make fun of, and abandon my



*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

counsel and take his own life. Nevertheless, we must declare the truth and live in the truth because this is where God lives. If God is truth and stands in truth so must we.

Do you see that God wants to take all our excuses away from us? He wants us to know that we must pay a certain price to follow Jesus and walk in His supernatural blessings. I do not know about you but I wanted and still want more of God. I know He is never the problem so I will change in order to walk in His miracles and His blessings. Let us read on and search His scriptures some more.

*Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.*

King David was on a spiritual high. He was dancing before the Lord and the king's heart was full of praise. He was leading a great move of God. He was pointing all of his country to God. It was a time of great spiritual victory and he was walking in God's blessings. His heart was full of power, love, and a sound mind. He was ushering God's presence back into the heart of God's people.

*Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed*

*the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.*

King David was having a great time in the Lord. He was blessing others as he had been blessed. He was walking in God's supernatural provisions. King David was walking in God's blessings and miracles. Think about it for a moment, was David blessed or what? He was able to bless every man and women in Israel with a loaf of bread, meat, and raisin cakes. Talk about a miracle.

*Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"*

*So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD. And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."*

King David had trouble brewing in his own home as he served God with all his heart. All the time he was blessing everyone his wife was rejecting him as leader of her home. David did not stop. He knew God holds the blessings and the miracles and he was not going to let go of God. All David did was walk into his own home and asked God to bless it. But his wife came around the corner and was being used by the enemy to

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discourage him. But David declared truth and stayed in the supernatural flow of God's blessings. He faced rejection and abandonment and he was determined to go forward with his God. We must do the same.

What are we going to do? This goes right along with our key verse. If we want the miracles and the blessings we must deny ourselves and pick up our cross daily. Let nothing stop you from praising and worshiping God. Our miracles rest in following Him. Do not let abandonment or rejection keep you from walking in your own personal blessings and miracles.

Are you happy to watch others receive their blessings or do you want your own. Then we must keep our focus upon Jesus and pick up our cross daily. King David's wife chose to walk in the curses. Listen once again to God's word.

*Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death. (2 Samuel 6:14-22) NKJV*

I tried the curses for twenty-eight years and I'm ready for His blessings. I will allow nothing to stop me. I will not allow the enemy. I will not allow the ignorant or the religious spirited people. Nothing can keep me from my God. That is what David was saying. It was more important to be right with God than anyone else. Even if it means they will reject or abandon him.

**Prayer Time:** *"Father, help me pick up and embrace my cross each and every day. I want to walk in Your blessings and know that I am a child of the Most High God. I want to walk daily in Your*

*favor. I am tired of seeing others experience their miracles while I just sit and watch. I'm taking a risk and asking that I have my own blessings and my own miracles. I need Your miracles in my finances, my family, and my work place. Come Lord Jesus come. I want to release all my hurt from past rejection and past abandonment pain. Fill my heart with Your peace, love, and joy. Remind me to continue going forward letting nothing stop me. Help me to deny myself and embrace my cross as I follow*



*You to the blessings and the miracles. I desire to have life and have it more abundantly. Amen and amen."*





# Embracing Pain

CHAPTER FIVE



# And Suffering

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

## **Embrace Your Cross**

### **Chapter Five**

### **Embracing Personal Pain and Suffering**

I was in high school in 1968 when I first broke my neck. I was at wrestling practice. I should have been listening to my coach but I was watching the cheerleaders. Hence, the coach called on me and I acted as though I knew what was happening. I stepped out onto the mat and failed miserably. I landed on the top of my head and fractured one of my vertebrae.

They took me to the doctor and he thought I was suffering from a bad neck strain. Three weeks later and I was still in pain the doctor decided to take x-rays. He came out into the waiting room and told me I have fractured the fifth vertebrae in my neck. I was sixteen when I began my journey with my friend "Pain."

In 1973 I survived a 45 miles per-hour. In February of that year I had a head-on-automobile accident hitting the steering wheel and breaking my nose, neck, and many ribs. Once again I did more damage to my vertebrae in my neck. I spent time in traction and rehabilitation.

Since that time I have lived with personal friend, "Pain" and suffering has become my daily routine. I can echo with the Psalmist when he wrote:

*I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught. Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off. They came around me all day long like water; They engulfed me*

*altogether. Loved one and friend You have put far from me, and my acquaintances into darkness. (Psalm 88:15-18)*

At times it has felt as though even God does not care how much I hurt. This thorn in my flesh has taken many productive days right out from under my feet. I never knew this would be a part of embracing my cross. On top of all of this I never knew this was on the road to His miraculous, His blessings, and His favor. But I have found just that, I found His favor, His blessings, and His miracles. Even though I still live with "Pain" after three neck and two hip surgeries. The two hip surgeries where to borrow bone graphs to place in my neck.

At this moment I have a metal



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titanium plate installed in my neck and it is held in place with 6 titanium screws. So I can tell everyone that my head is screwed on straight. I can tell everyone that it was not good to have his or her pastor with one screw loose. You see at one time one of my screws worked its way loose and was about to fall out. I wonder if that screw would have fallen out where it would have ended up. Would it fall all the way down to my toes or would it have lodged itself in my knee? But with all joking aside, I have to live with "Pain" as my closest friend. And with "Pain" as my friend he has become my fellow bed partner. It seems that the nights are when he talks to me very loud. But it is also the time I choose to look up instead of down and to be with Christ instead of listening to the enemy. I desire to be with Christ more and Mr. Pain less. Everyday I have to deal with pain and I must choose to go forward as God's grace is enough. I must allow His grace to be enough comfort in my times of daily struggling and suffering.

*And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

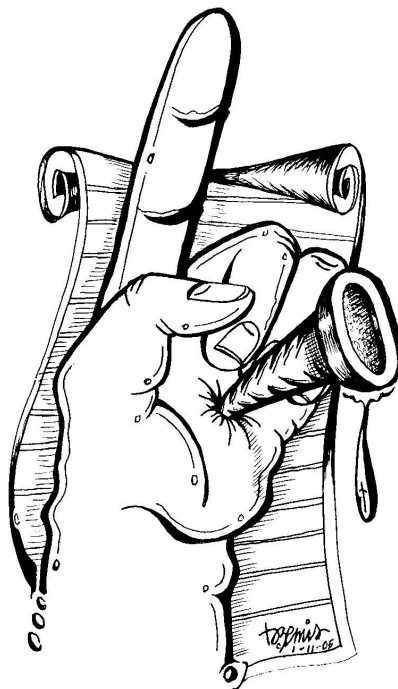
In my weakness and in the midst of unbearable pain I have found His grace enough. In my weakness I have found His strength to be more than adequate. Now I want you to know that there are days when I pray and I wish that chronic pain would leave me alone. There are days when I'm just tired physically and emotionally but it is then that I continue to look up and continue to go forward not giving in to the negative talk from Mr. Pain.

Let us stop and pray, "Father help us trust in Your higher plans and in Your higher ways. Help us to let go and let You accomplish Your greater will. Help us to understand our own personal suffering. Help us to embrace our suffering as You embraced the cross."

Back to our story. What happens to us in the midst of pain? The one thing I have learned from reading Job's story is that he stayed honest with God. The Lord knew Job's physical body and the condition of Job's heart. We cannot fool the Lord

with flowery words. Be honest with Him! Job said it this way:

*And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of Lord." (Job 1:21)*



*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

I came into this world naked and I will leave the same. The only thing that matters is to be right with God. Oh to hunger to be right in His sight should be what matters the most inside our heart.

*"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your **sight**, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*

Do not worry about what others think or say. What matters is what God thinks and says. What matters is to be right in God's all knowing sight. Let God do His better plan. Trust the Lord God Almighty with even the results of your life even in the midst of pain and suffering. Even in the middle of personal suffering and pain, trust in the Lord. Though I did not understand the circumstances in my own life, I knew in whom to trust. I know whose voice to follow, do you?



Even in the midst of great personal loss, in the midst of great personal pain, we must believe in the Lord Almighty. We must stand on the unshakable ROCK, Jesus.

*The LORD is my **rock** and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:2)*

*For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a **rock**, except our God? (Psalm 18:31)*

In the midst of all our hurt and even anger against God, because we do not understand, we must believe that God is for us. We must believe that all things work together for the good of those who trust in the Lord. (Romans 8:28)

I want you to be honest and tell God about the hurt and about the anger. I, your fellow sufferer know thoughts, I still had thoughts like this;

- "I am not sure You know what You are doing God, but I will praise You just the same. But I need another shot of Your grace."
- "I know that I do not understand why You will not heal me, but I am not walking away from You."
- "I hurt deeply Lord and at times I just can not bear any more pain, yet I will bring a sacrifice of praise within my heart."

This is real faith; this is where it takes courage to trust and follow God. This is where we continue to go

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forward not looking at the circumstances but at the God who has our answers. Many people let the circumstances in their life control their thought life. Once those circumstances control our thought life we will soon follow with bad choices. The enemy is still trying to destroy us any way he can. The enemy is still trying to rob you of your joy. But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Do not turn to your left or your right but going forward praising Him with all heart, soul and strength.

*Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:7-9)*

I must be strong and courageous and so must you. The word of God must become our focus and our daily meditation. When we will do this we will become successful.

Jesus said it this way:

*And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat*

*became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation." (Luke 22:41-46)*

The Lord Jesus in the midst of His darkest hour still surrendered to God's highest calling. Even though He knew this included suffering beyond human recognition. He gave up His agenda for the will of His Heavenly Father. We must do the same as we embrace the cross daily to follow Jesus. Get over it-picking up the cross is no easy thing.

*Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. (Luke 22:63-65)*

Jesus had to deal with personal pain and let us look into this scripture to see how to follow His example. One example we find in scriptures is that the local people personally had Him beaten. People in the church might beat you with their words, so what, get over it and keep going. Do what the Lord did and be silent. People mocked Him, so what, get over it and keep going for we have not suffered unto blood shed as of yet. The church has not changed much people are still mocking and making fun of those who truly love and follow Jesus. Especially those who pick up the cross every day to follow Jesus. Do not let this stop you and if they have stopped

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you then just repent and get going again.

The people even struck Jesus in the face and Jesus did not retaliate, He kept His focus on His Heavenly Father. Oh that we will learn and be like Jesus and look up into Heaven to see the Father's face. But many look down and only see the face of those who mock. They only see the face of the enemy and not the face of divine truth. We must do the same as Jesus and look up gaining God's acceptance. Next let us see Jesus as our greatest example in the following scriptures.

*There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Luke 23:32-38)*

Here was our King in the midst of death and criminals and He said nothing. He just continued to yield to God in the middle of His agony. He allowed God to be God. But most in the church would complain and even walk away from their calling because they did not get their own way.

Embrace your personal pain as you embrace your personal cross every day. This is the path to the miraculos. Obedience to God's voice always brings about His miracles, His favor, and His blessings.

Once again you see that this following Jesus can be difficult at times. Get over it! God knows what He is doing and He has a greater plan in the works. Just because we do not see or understand all that God is doing does not mean we can quite.

*Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit." Having said this, He breathed His last. (Luke 23:44-46)*

Even in the midst of darkness Jesus yielded His spirit, His will, and even His life to God's greatest and highest plans. Now it is our turn to follow Jesus. Even if it is dark all around you and you have many questions continue to yield your spirit over to God's highest will. Then you will walk in His supernatural power. Then you will walk in His supernatural miracles.

God is sovereign, and He knows how people are going to act as well as what they are going to do. Our God is huge. He is too big to put into a man-made box.

Praise God al you fellow sufferers! If I could understand everything God was doing, He would be a very small deity. I would rather serve a big and awesome God. So

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

what are you going to do when it is your turn to carry your own personal cross of pain and suffering?

- When you lose our health— what are you going to do?
- When you lose a loved one-- what are you going to do?
- When you lose a close friend-- what are you going to do?
- When you lose a body part-- what are you going to do?
- When you lose our employment-- what are you going to do?
- When you lose your dog-- what are you going to do?

And then there is another list of questions to ask yourself?

- In your physical pain-- what are you going to do?
- In your suffering-- what are you going to do?
- In your despair-- what are you going to do?
- In your future-- what are you going to do?

We must embrace and accept what God is doing and continue to go forward. Let nothing stop you from reaching God's highest calling upon your personal life. When we think that God has failed, and we lose all hope and it drives us to despair. When we cannot figure God out, and we lose all sense of direction it is then we need to trust in God all the more. It is then

that we must rest in the foundation we have built. It is then that we pick up our cross daily and follow Jesus.

I find many people who pray; when that earnest prayer goes unanswered and things get worse, they abandon their faith. Job has a clue for us: hang in there; God is in control. It is not Satan's world, it belongs to the Creator! The fact of the matter is, God is more than likely around the next bend ready to bless His obedient children.

We are stuck on this side of eternity and we just do not see the whole scenario. We are anchored, for the moment, in the reality of the now. Our finite minds suffer because of our lack of trusting in the all knowing and all seeing Lord God Almighty. Jesus said He was the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. We should wrestle this through and trust Him. From the beginning to the end we need to trust Him and not give up.

In closing, I would like us to give it all up: give up the control, the unanswered prayers, and the unknown. Let the Lord direct your every step. He takes great delight in doing so, because He is faithful. God is still in control even when we think He is wrong. If I think God is wrong, guess what? That does not stop God.

The real question is, in the midst of the unknown can we trust and praise our Maker?

The real question is, in the midst of darkness can we seek the Light?

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

The real question is, in the midst of shaky faith can we hang on until the dawn lights our world again?

The real question is, in the midst of sorrow and grief, can we trade it for the joy of the Lord?

Job was completely broken. He had lost it all, yet he chose to give it all up and bless the name of the Lord. Now it is our turn to surrender to God's highest calling. We do this by picking up our cross of suffering every day and we keep going forward knowing that the blessings and the miracles are soon to follow.

*So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" (Job 2:4 & 5)*

I do not like the above scripture because we see how active the enemy is. The enemy wants to steal from us, he wants to kill us, and he wants to destroy us but I am going to seek the Lord and seek after the abundant life that Jesus promises.

The enemy causes many of our health issues as he tries to steal wellness from us. However, as Job did we must do also. We must keep going forward and keep our lips from sinning. Many of our pain issues are from the world we live in. Even then, we must keep on going in God. Some health issues are from our own poor choices. In this case we need only to repent and keep going.

*And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:6-10)*

Job was hurting and full of personal pain. We know he did not understand what was happening to his life but we find Job still going forward in his pain.



*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

I have had so much pain associated with my neck. Even now I suffer everyday with pain. I do not sleep well but God has given my His grace to keep going. Even after three surgeries I wrestle every day with my personal friend of pain. I have learned how to take short naps to recover the lack of sleep. I have asked the Lord to heal me and He just tells me His grace is sufficient. My friends generally do not even know when I am in pain for I just do not focus on it. My focus is held on Jesus and not on my personal friend "Pain." In pain I am forced to look up. This has also kept me very humbled.

We can not lay down our cross if we want to walk in the miracles of God. The only way to the miraculoos is through the cross. And we know the cross is not pretty but it is laced with personal death and shed blood. I want nothing more than to be poured out like a drink offering on the altar of God's highest ways.

The main point of this chapter is to encourage you to yeild to God's highest plans for you.

- Yeild in the midst of pain.
- Yeild in the midst of many questions.
- Yeild in the midst of suffering.
- Yield in the midst of hurt.

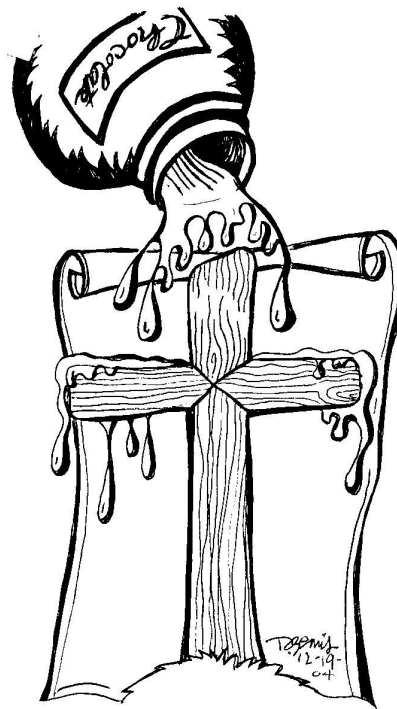
Just keep on yeilding as you continue to keep going forward in His might, His love, and His purpose. This is the only way to the miraculos.

I have prayed for many people to be healed and many have but as for

me His grace has to be suffiencent. I have no other choice.

Right now I want to pray for you and ask the Lord to heal any infirmety found in your body. Let us pray:

*"Father, I ask you to heal the reader from the top of his or hers head to the bottom of their feet. We need your healing touch. The enemy has stolen much from us and I rebuke the enemies plans right now. I bind the evil one and his demons from destroying the reader. And in the name of Jesus we ask for Your abundant life. I usher the reader into Your presence for in Your presence we are made whole. Make the reader whole and heal our land. And know this dear Lord, the reader will give You all the glory for we know You will not share Your glory with any man. Demonstrate Your loveing power and desire to heal Your children. Lord I receive*



**The cross is not dipped or covered in chocolate!**

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

*this prayer in my own life and I receive this prayer into the inner man of the reader.*

*Be glorified as You lead us to heal and healing. For we do not forget all the benefits of our great salvation for in the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. Amen and amen."*

Do the following pages of assignments and know that Your God is with you as you learn His word. God's Holy Bible is time tested to be true and accurate. Come with me as I follow Jesus through embracing my personal cross every day.



# I'm Going Higher







# Embracing the

## *Chapter Six*



# Holiness of God

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

## **Embrace Your Cross**

### **Chapter Six**

### **Embracing the Holiness of God**

As you have been reading this book, I hope you are seeing what the Lord wants you to understand. The price to follow Jesus is high. The price that Jesus paid was even higher. He gave us His best and now it is our turn to do the same for His greater will. In this chapter, we are going to look into the importance of embracing and accepting God's holiness. It is our turn to understand what it means to embrace the cross of Christ or the cross of suffering. One slice or piece of this cross is that Jesus understood the role that holiness or sanctification plays in God's sight. As we learn to carry our own personal cross, we need to learn how to embrace God's move of real holiness. We need to learn how to embrace, accept, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling through God's visionary word.

Let us begin again with a word of prayer: *"Father, designer and holder of truth come and guide us to Your proven truth. Come and make us understand the importance of Your standard of holiness. Help us become all that You want us to be. Give us Your thoughts on this revelation knowledge of Your purity found in the form of holiness. I hunger to be holy as You are holy. Amen and amen."*

Let us look into God's word for our inspiration and for understanding. The key to understanding this chapter is in understanding the word holiness. The holiness that the Lord is talking about

is to be free of all sin. The Lord's desire is that we would be holy as He is holy. His standard of holiness is very high, which means we must repent all the time.

One Friday night in our home the youth wanted to praise and worship the Lord in our backyard around our little bar-b-que. Angelina, a student of mine at the time, just received salvation that week. In she walked into our home bible study. She was carrying a brown paper bag. I was hoping she was bringing some extra food to feed everyone. This night, as she came outside she asked me if she could share with the group. Mind you she just received Jesus into



*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

her heart, while the others around the fire have been Christians for a long time. I gave Angelina permission to share with us. The first thing she pulled out of her bag was male pornographic artwork and magazines and threw them on the fire. The teens were silent. She continued to pull out of her bag old sin issues. She explained that the Lord had convicted her to get rid of these things from her bedroom. She pulled out VCR tapes and threw them onto the fire. One of those tapes or movies was the "Exorcist." The other teens were held spellbound by her actions. She continued to throw things onto the fire. Soon the others arose and asked if they could go home and clean house also. The others left and about twenty minutes passed before they returned with their bags full of items that the Spirit of God wanted out of their rooms. CD, Cassette tapes, VCR tapes, and magazines filled their bags. My little fire became a big fire very quickly. Angelina had given us a beautiful example of what we know as, "Holiness or Sanctification."

Recently this word has become impressed into my spirit. I awoke recently with the word "Sanctification" once again running through the chambers of my heart. The word, "Sanctify," echoed through my heart, my bones, and my mind repeatedly. I set out to research this religious word and to find the Lord's heartbeat. What you are about to read is the Lord's heart about this word. In many Christian conversations, we use this word and yet we truly know so little. Come with me and let us

uncover the meaning of this word and what it means today in our Christian walk.

I hunger for more and more of Him and less and less of me. I know He is never the problem. So, what is it that holds us back from experiencing more in the Lord? What is it that hinders us from taking possession of the promise land? I find many Christians in the wilderness and they are not seeking to make it to the promise land. Many seem content to dwell in the wilderness where their needs are met. I however desire to push forward toward the prize and I want to run the race to win. I know there is more and I want to go and live in the land flowing with milk and honey.

The Lord sent Moses back to Egypt to bring the people out of darkness, slavery, and bondage. The Lord sent Jesus to do the same for us. But the Lord also sent Moses to lead the people into the Promise Land a land flowing with milk and honey. The people stopped the flow of God's wonder working miracles hence they died in the wilderness. In their disobedience to the voice of God they missed the Promise Land and fell dead in the wilderness. I do not want to die in the wilderness I want to go to the Promise Land. In this sermon, we are going to look into the book of Joshua and see how he made it all the way to the land flowing with milk and honey.

Did you know that the word Egypt in Hebrew is translated the land of darkness? Come with me and let us press forward to win the prize.

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

For we all know there is more to experience in the things of God.

Let us begin our new quest in looking into the book of Acts and I ask that you open your heart to receive from the Spirit of God. Let us begin with this scripture:

*"To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18)*

The Lord began a good work in us the day we asked Him into our hearts or that day we surrendered to His higher ways. On the day of our salvation, He brought us out of darkness and into His light. He brought us from the power of Satan's grip and placed our hearts into the hand of God. He did this by His shed blood for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Heb. 9:22) With our acceptance of His shed blood we gained the forgiveness of our wrongs. We use this word salvation as a religious word but it simply means, delivered, saved, helped, and free. Moreover, our inheritance among the believers comes through sanctification by faith. So the quest is to find out what this word means in biblical terms or in God's terms.

Sanctification should be the ultimate quest for every believer. But

what is sanctification all about. Let us look deeper into God's holy word to find out. Turn in your bible to the Old Testament book of Joshua.

*And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." (Joshua 3:5) NKJ*

From this scripture we see that sanctification comes first before the miracles of God. Could this be why we see so few miracles among the believers, because they are not sanctified? I think this just might be why we see very little supernatural events among the Christians. I find most Christians powerless and running around talking about the Lord. But few who walk in the Lord's super nature power. We need to know about sanctification.

I dug into the original meaning of the word from the Hebrew language. I found that sanctuary, saint, and sanctified all originate from the same root Hebrew word. The word "sanctify," means; pronounced clean, pure, and holy. In the Old Testament the people literally had to wash-up they had to take a bath. They had to put on clean clothes. They had to get ready for God who is pure, clean, and holy. But to better illustrate this let us think about this from the story of Joshua.

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

*For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, **because they did not obey the voice of the LORD--to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey."** (Joshua 5:6)*

Moses had died and Joshua was the new leader. He was a man who refused to walk according to the others. If you remember he and Caleb brought back a good report and knew God was on their side and God would defeat the enemy. But the others decided to listen to their hearts which were full of fear. They refused to walk in true biblical faith trusting in God. All those who believed the bad report or those who could not look to the

God who could deliver them perished in the wilderness. They all perished because they refused to obey the voice of God.

I want us to stop for a minute and think about this. **What is the surest way to keep oneself from the promise land?** Do not obey the Lord's voice. And His word, the Holy Bible, is His voice.

But if you want to make it to the promise land we must obey the voice of God. We must believe in what we do not see but God has promised. We must believe in the God behind the promises. Even if we do not see any fruit we still need to praise and worship His Holy name.

The people who died in the wilderness would not let go of the things of Egypt. Did you hear that? We must let go of the world and that is what Angelina showed us around the fire that night. She was willing to let go of the things of the world, hence cleansing herself of the land of darkness. We must let go of the things of darkness in order to make it to the promise land.

God finds us all dirty at salvation, but He does not focus on the dirt. The Lord focuses on the heart under all the dirt. We must allow God to clean us until He pronounces us clean, pure, and holy. What we must strive for is purity of heart by God's standard. He is the refiner's fire. Gold is found in its raw form in the dirt. They place gold in the fire to burn all the dirt and impurities from it. This is what the Lord wants to do with us. The real you is under all that dirt. Let God hose you off. Let Him keep you



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in the fire until you come forth as pure gold. The person that God created will shine forth when all the dirt is burned and washed away. So dear reader, stay in the fire! No matter how hot it gets I want you to stay in the fire until He pronounces you clean.

I want us to spend some time now searching His word in Joshua to find this truth.

*But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel. Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about*

*two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few." So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water. (Joshua 7:1-5) NKJ*

Achan brought trouble upon all the people. You will see in a moment that he brought trouble upon his own household. He sin affected many people and the same holds true today. When we sin it affects many. Achan's name means, trouble, and he lived up to what his parents called him. How many people live up to the name their parents called them? The time has come to go and sin no more. (John 8:11) Sin caused these 36 men to be killed. Pride caused the men to try to



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win in their own effort. Pride is a killer. But let us see what the leader Joshua does now.

*Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all--to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?" (Joshua 7:6-9)NKJ*

Here is a prayer from a humble heart but also a heart that has no clue what is going on in the Spiritual world. We must seek the Lord everyday to find his highest will and plans for success. Joshua found out that God was not the problem the problem was there was sin in the camp. Joshua downloaded his heart before the Lord and in the Lord's answer you will see God never answers all of Joshua's emotional questions. Listen with your spiritual ears to the Lord's answer.

*So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have*

*even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.*

The Lord told Joshua to **get up** and get busy in what is really going on. The Lord told Joshua that He was not the problem but that sin was the real setback. The Lord gave him details about what was wrong. Someone stole some of the accursed things and that person hid them with their own things. Deceit was among them. I can just see Achan sneaking back into his tent and his wife and kids are glad to see him. They ask him, "What is that in your hands?" Then I can hear Achan the leader of his home saying, "Be quiet I want to dig a shallow hole right in the middle



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of the tent and hid these items." You can almost hear the conversations. He must have told them to be quiet and that it was a secret between them. He must have followed with, "What we do in this house stays within the walls of this tent. Do not let anyone know that I have hidden these things." One of the little ones must have answered, "But Daddy, you were not to bring any thing home according to God, isn't that right?" But Achan hid those accursed things among their own stuff. Continue to listen to the Lord's answer for you will see why this is such a critical thing.

*Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. (Joshua 7:12,13)*

Did you hear what the Lord said to His people? When we play with the accursed things God is saying we are doomed to destruction. **The reason is that He is not with them any longer.** We can not play with the things of God. We can not play church. We can not play with God's principles and think He does not know. God is holy and we must hunger to be holy. He is pure and we must hunger to be pure. He is righteous and we must hunger for the same. We must sanctify ourselves if we want to win. You read God's word and you know this to be true! We must purify our hearts and find everything that He says is accursed. We must be willing to place the accursed thing in the fire no matter

what the value is. Angelina did just that the day she placed those things into the fire. Some where pencil drawings she had spent hours upon hours of her own labor on. But like Achan many Christians will not let go of those accursed things and they will hide them.

Recently we find Christians hanging onto relationships that they know are not from God. Recently we find Christians playing on the internet and going into chat rooms to talk to others even though they are married. Recently we find teens playing with church and sneaking around trying drugs. Others are playing around with sex while they are dating. God says, "You can not win but you are sowing seeds of destruction into your lap and you will get burned. You will not win because I Am not with you."

Anything we are not willing to let go of becomes an idol. Anything we are not able to let go of becomes an adulteress affair against our relationship with God. God is a jealous God not wanting to give His glory to anyone or anything.

Achan placed silver and gold into the hole. How many of us hold onto our silver and gold and we will not tithe to God. And on top of all this Achan thinks he can fool God. Achan did fool the people but he never fooled God. Are you hanging on to your silver and your gold? Listen to God's Holy Word of truth.

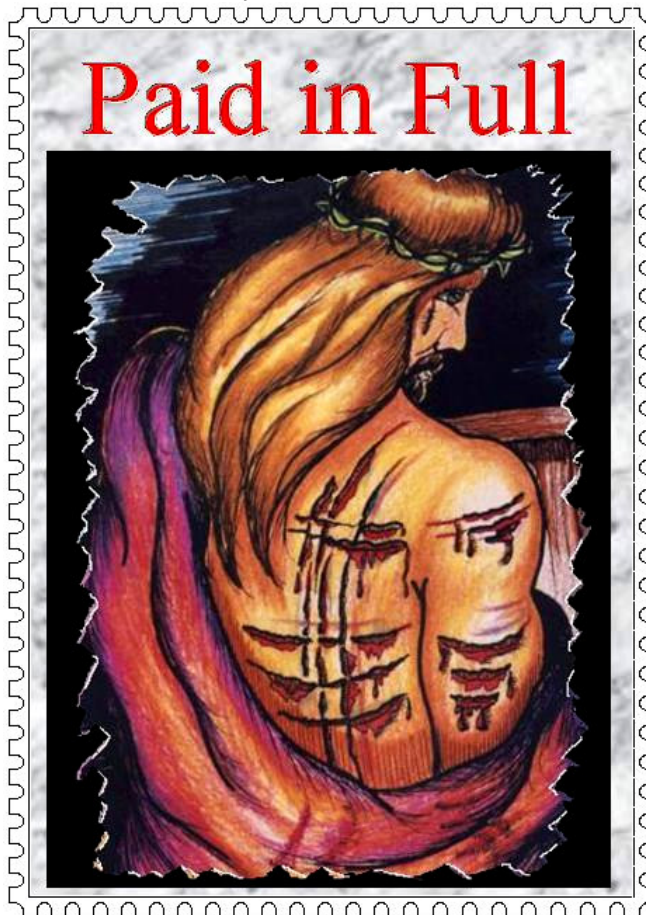
*Get up, sanctify the people, and say, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before*

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23 and 24) NKJ*

*your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. (Joshua 7:13-14)*

Once more God makes mention of the word, "sanctify." Because it is God who will declare the true condition of ones heart. God will pronounce a person clean or unclean and God is about to expose sin that is hidden in the camp. So, dear reader, what will God find in your camp? Let Him search you in the night hours and see if He finds any wicked or accursed thing in your midst. Let Him search your heart. Let Him search your house or your room. What will He find or will you wait until God exposes it to everyone. We better get our personal business straight with God in private before He makes a fool out of us by exposing it publicly. One inmate hid t-shirts that he had stolen and he knew he was to get rid of them but he hid them among his stuff. The next day God exposed it and he was sent to the hole or special housing. He was exposed publicly and his accursed things cost him much shame.

*Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant*



*of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel." (Joshua 7:15)*

One man brought trouble upon his entire family. Let us come and get rid of the accursed things that are in our hearts, homes, and minds. How long will we chose to carry our molestation within the walls of our hearts, His temple? How long will we carry hatred, anger, and pride and hid them within our own stuff? How long dear reader, how long? What is it that you are hanging on to from the times of darkness? Magazines? Books? Photos? Letters? Drugs? Guns? Silver or Gold?

- One inmate brought to the altar to be destroyed a letter from his adulteress women. The letter

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- was sitting underneath his wife's letter.
- Still another inmate talked to me about a gun he needs to rid his home of when he gets home.
  - Another man one time brought out old sexual items from his dark past. The time has come to destroy those accursed things no matter what the worth. No matter what the price.

Look what it cost Joshua.

*So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent,*

*brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.*

*Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day. (Joshua 7:16-26) NKJ*

"Father of truth and sanctification, take us through Your fire and help us to destroy the accursed things that are trapping us in destruction and doom. We hunger to have You with us not against us.

I hunger that You be with me. I thirst to be pure as You are pure. I long for the time when You pronounce me as clean. As for me, I will serve the Lord with all my heart, my entire mind, and all my strength. You alone are worthy, You alone are King. Move in my heart that others might see a true reflection of You. Mold the words on my tongue that those words would reflect Your love, tenderness, and Your caring attitude. I want less and less of me and more and more of You." Amen and Amen.

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Dear Reader, write your own prayer below: \_\_\_\_\_

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