

HOW I  
LEARNED  
JESUS  
WAS NOT  
POOR

ORAL  
ROBERTS

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Creation  House  
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## Introduction

I have firsthand experience of what it means to be raised poor. Sometimes my family would go for months in extreme poverty. It tore my preacher father apart emotionally and spiritually. My mother, a hard-working woman who always helped to make ends meet for the family, was just plain upset when there was little or no money. Both Papa and Mama were extremely dedicated to God. They would never say anything against God or the church about our financial condition. But from my childhood, until I got enough of it and left home to make my own way, I saw the anguish of their spirit.

Papa would both preach full time and hold down a full-time secular job. Yet when the twelve local churches he had started from nothing did not support him financially, he had an awful choice to make. He could give up the ministry and fail God in his calling, or he could use his talents to make money as his brothers did.

I grew up in the oil fields of Oklahoma, yet shared in none of the wealth. Papa's 160-acre farm was located in the heart of the oil lands in Pontotoc County. He sold it for eight hundred dollars and went into the ministry. Right across the road on the farm of his oldest brother Willis they struck oil gushers. Only two miles away his brother John struck oil. Papa's father also received a great deal of oil money.

But not a thin dime of it came our way. Worst of all, my cousins looked down on us, mocking us as "preacher's kids." My brother Vaden and I bloodied a few noses, but that didn't fill our stomachs.

In spite of the very little support he received for his ministry, Papa kept right on preaching and building new churches. Often our family would have to live on the other side of the tracks in the poorest section of town.

Vaden and I thirsted for an education. I especially wanted to become a lawyer, and dreamed of being governor of Oklahoma. So we could go to school, Papa would take off from his ministry the first six weeks of school and move us to the rich cotton fields of western Oklahoma. There we'd pick cotton until we earned enough money to buy our winter clothes. We would also get enough staple foods—flour, sugar, shortening, potatoes and the like—to get us through the winter.

Enrolling six weeks late and being behind in our studies brought us many

taunts. But Papa and Mama, two of the best readers I ever knew, inspired us to believe we could make up the lost time.

One of my memories of those days is very amusing. In my class was the daughter of a family that had become very wealthy from oil, and she was really smart. In those days the teacher would bring us to the homeroom at the end of the year and read off the grades of each child. Phyllis got straight A's every time, and she would march to the front to get her report card, wearing a big smile.

Since my last name began with R, my grades were read near the last. There was no sweeter moment than when the teacher would say, "Oral Roberts, straight A's." It sure took the smile off Phyllis' face.

I got the A's, and the fact sang in my heart. But to go back to poverty brought me no songs.

Papa was such a good man, a hard-working preacher, a helper of people. Why was it we were "supposed to be poor"? The doctors lived in good houses, so did the lawyers and merchants, and many others. We were the children of a father and mother who put God first in their lives. There was never a time I didn't love or admire them for it. But one of their "rewards" was stinking poverty. The sad part of that was I later learned God didn't have one thing to do with Papa's being poor. Jesus said, "**The labourer is worthy of his hire**" (Luke 10:7).

Papa was known as a powerful preacher, a church builder, a man of faith and good deeds. But not once do I remember my father's being encouraged by his denomination to use his faith for anything but the gospel. His family's needs had a low priority. People thought Jesus had been poor so Papa was supposed to be poor. Against my will, I was poor with him. In addition to my school work and enrolling six weeks late each fall because I had to pick cotton, I was a newsboy. I also sold things from our garden as far as I could walk and still get home by dark. I rose at 4 a.m. to run a milk route for the dairy company. Certainly that was not all bad. But connecting our poverty to Christianity was something I couldn't accept then, and I cannot now. I think that's a man-made doctrine.

As a teenager I had not accepted Christ as my personal Savior. It was not because of my parents, whom I knew loved God with all their hearts. But being a preacher's son didn't automatically make me a born-again Christian. I later learned I had to accept Christ for myself. As someone once said, "God has no grandchildren, only sons and daughters."

As a small child I actually thought Jesus lived at our house. My parents always awakened before daylight. In the little two-and three-room houses we lived in, the walls were thin, and we could hear them talking to Jesus. It seemed Jesus was right there in our house.



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What turned me off was I instinctively knew I could never carry out my dream of being a lawyer, and hopefully becoming governor, without money to finish high school and college, and then go on to law school. I literally could see no way through the poverty we lived in to attain my goals no matter how hard I worked—or how much good my preacher father did.

What persuaded me to leave home just before I was sixteen was the way church people hurt my father. It was more than suffering for the gospel's sake. He did a lot of that but he never complained. What tore at him was the unspoken attitude of church folks, "God, You keep Rev. E.M. Roberts humble, and we'll keep him poor." The upshot of that was a sadness in his spirit. Mama was much more outspoken and she'd let them have it. Papa just took it and refused to give up his calling to preach the Word of God.

On the other hand, there were times the offerings of the people for his ministry overflowed us, and we had plenty for a few weeks.

Papa's shoulders would straighten up, and he'd go at his ministry with renewed vigor.

As a boy I stuttered and didn't talk often. But I sure thought a lot. I thought: Why is Papa so sad when the money doesn't come, but so up when it does? Why did the people seem to think Papa was so humble when he had a little or nothing, but if he prospered why were they so critical? Wasn't the ministry as honorable as the work of the doctor, the lawyer, the merchant? It was honorable, and the respect of the people was very great. But right there was the great wrong. They actually believed Jesus was poor and those who preached the gospel should be poor.

In fact, if someone in the church prospered too much, he was worldly in their eyes. They thought he might not make it to Heaven.

Until I began this ministry of God's healing power I never heard a sermon on Bible prosperity for God's people, except the ones I preached myself after discovering 3 John 2. That life-changing verse says, "**Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.**" That verse and others I discovered throughout the Bible opened my eyes to the goodness of God. In the years that followed as my ministry with this teaching began to cut such a swath across America, *Time* magazine described me as a "tornado from Oklahoma."

In my mind while growing up Jesus was real to my parents, but as far as His life on Earth was concerned, I thought He was some kind of an ethereal being with no financial needs such as lodging, clothes, food or transportation. In my view He was sort of a vagabond.

Yet Papa preached Jesus was the Son of God! He also said He was human like us. I thought: If Jesus was human, didn't He have needs like we have?

I got all mixed up. I didn't understand it at all. Now after forty-one years in the healing ministry, and dealing with millions of people worldwide in their sufferings—spiritually, physically, financially—I am moved with the force of God Himself to take the question, “Was Jesus poor?” head on. I want to share with you what I have personally learned about Jesus.

There are many questions that have haunted God's people for centuries.

Is Christianity only spiritual? Are Christians supposed to ignore the human factor? Is Jesus' statement that “**the labourer is worthy of his hire**” true or false (Luke 10:7)? Are we letting the devil get away with stealing our money, our hopes and our dreams, our present and our future? Are God's people worthy to have their needs met financially as well as spiritually, or are they unworthy?

Did Jesus really mean it when He said, “**I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly**” (see John 10:10)? Did He intend the more abundant life to mean that it was for our souls only and not for our daily physical needs and human aspirations to be met? Why has Jesus' announced purpose in coming to Earth, “**I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly,**” made such a small impression on the body of Christ? Since one must live in his physical body twenty-four hours a day the rest of his life on Earth, why is there no common understanding among believers that God cares equally for their spiritual life and for their physical humanness?

The pressure of poverty in our dedicated Christian home filled me with questions, and I was not even a professed Christian. In being brought up on the Bible and its fascinating stories about Jesus, I wondered, did Jesus have only one robe? Was there really no place to lay His head? Were His archenemy the devil and those who served him the only ones to have money, especially since Papa in reading the Bible stories to us read where God owned all the silver and gold? If I became a Christian did I have to face a life of poverty and deprivation as my father did? Was there no place for me beyond that narrow little sphere in life in Pontotoc County, where there was a chance I might never get an education, much less have a chance at life?

I was certain of one thing, the world Jesus lived in was aware of Him. Would they be aware of me if I followed Him?

Later when I did become a born-again believer, was healed of tuberculosis and of a stammering tongue, and received the call from God to preach, I was thrown into that same situation I had grown up in. From then until today I've read the entire Bible through more than 100 times and the New Testament

## *Introduction*

through many more times than that. In fact, you might say I've spent tens of thousands of hours in studying the Bible, including earning a masters degree in theology. I have applied the Word of God in the severest stresses of life—to desperate needs of people throughout the Earth one-on-one, and in crowds of a few up to one-half million in a single service. I don't claim to know it all. In fact, I have so much more to learn! But I declare before God and man, somebody is selling the world a bill of goods about the greatest friend I've ever known, my personal Savior and Lord—my very Life—Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

I believe I have reasonable qualifications to deal with this question from the standpoint of the only book that tells all the truth, the Bible, as well as my own personal experience. Go with me now as we ask what the Bible says about Jesus' being poor. You may want to take a new look at Jesus. You just may see Jesus in an entirely new light. It could make all the difference in the world in your attitude toward God and your personal relationship with Jesus-in-the-now. And it could give you an excitement in your soul you may never have had.

Oral Roberts

P.S. If you have a Bible handy, you might want to check the scriptures I shall refer to, as well as compare the revelational knowledge I believe the Holy Spirit has given me concerning Jesus' being poor and whether Christians should be poor today.



## Seven Ways We Know Jesus Was Not Poor

**T**here is a very popular, but false idea, that Jesus was poor when He was on Earth. Very quickly let me give you seven reasons from the Bible that I believe show *Jesus was not poor*.

Then I will come back and explain each one from the Word of God.

1. Jesus had a house large enough for guests.
2. Jesus had money, enough so that He had to have a treasurer.
3. Jesus had a team, a large one that He had to support financially from city to city.
4. Jesus had a donor base, a faithful group of financial partners who “ministered” to Him of their money.
5. Jesus wore good clothes, clothes that many people today might call designer clothes, clothes that were costly and unique to His needs.
6. Jesus was put in a rich man’s trust to insure He had a proper burial place—actually, so that He might be buried with the rich.
7. It is Jesus’ riches by which God said He would supply all your needs (see Philippians 4:19).

First, how do we know Jesus had a house? Please carefully read these words from John 1:35-39, and listen to what I believe is a special revelation to us—that Jesus had a house, one large enough to house guests:

**Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He said unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.**

Here are the facts. Before Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, John had received revelational knowledge that He whom he baptized would be the Son of God, the long-promised Messiah, the Savior of the world. As John recognized this was indeed the Christ, he declared to the crowd

surrounding him, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:29).

Shortly after His baptism, Jesus left quietly. Two of John’s disciples were so taken by Jesus that they caught up with Him and asked where He lived. **“Come and see,”** Jesus answered. Perhaps these men thought, as so many still do today, that Jesus was some ethereal kind of being and had no home, sort of like a vagabond. They may have believed He had no material things such as all other people must have to live on the Earth. Jesus, wanting to drive home the truth, was saying, “Do you think because I’ve had this supernatural encounter with God, and that at the same time I’m God’s only begotten Son, I was not sent to Earth to be a man just as you are? That I require no house, no home? Come with Me and I’ll show you.” When they arrived, they saw where He dwelled. I believe that was His house. For the Bible says that He asked them to be His guests, and they spent a day with Him.

If you asked me, “Oral, where do you dwell?” and I said, “Come, I’ll show you,” and when I showed you and asked you to spend the rest of the day with me, I would be talking about my house.

You see, Jesus had grown up in His foster father Joseph’s carpenter shop and became a carpenter Himself. So when He was grown, it was natural for Him to leave Joseph and Mary, His mother, and build His own house. And it is evident He built it big enough for His needs and for guests.

Thus, I believe according to the Word of God, Jesus was not homeless. He was not a vagabond. He had His dwelling—as all people of God should—and He used it not only for Himself, but to give others lodging from time to time as is indicated here in John 1:35-39.

Yes, Jesus had a place to live. Do not believe the devil’s lie, or the misteaching of many in Christianity, or the slant of the news media or the doubt and cynicism in others they represent that Jesus had nothing and left you the example of being without a place of your own, be it a house, an apartment, or other suitable dwelling.

I’m one who knows what it is like to live in a family that did not own a house. Also, I owned no house myself the first few years of my ministry. I know what it is to live in other people’s houses as a young preacher with a family, sometimes welcomed, other times resented. I know what it is to have Evelyn, my darling wife, say to me after we had lived with another family for several weeks, until both families almost lost their minds, “Oral, I’m taking our children to my parents to stay until you get us a place to live.”

I know how I came up against the poverty thinking of those to whom I was

preaching as a young pastor. I know in one desperate situation I literally gave all the money I possessed—less than \$100—to help raise a down payment on what was called a parsonage, but not one where I was allowed to build up any financial equity of my own for my family. I remember later buying a house for which I had to seek friends to intercede so I could borrow every dollar it cost in order to move into it.

I remember my father and mother approaching their seventies after having preached the gospel over forty years, establishing twelve new local churches that are still functioning today, having no car and living in little two-room or three-room houses until my oldest brother Elmer sacrificed to build a small place for them behind his own house after the church had taken the best of Papa's life and left him without a pension, no place to live, and seemingly forgotten by the world.

As I began to obey God's calling on my life to "be like Jesus and heal the people as He did," I remember when the large numbers of people to whom I ministered began to meet my financial needs, Evelyn and I made a faith decision to build my parents a decent house and buy them a decent car. And as long as they lived—to age eighty-nine and eighty-seven—and we earned sufficient money, we gave them a monthly stipend. We also made a decision to help Evelyn's parents. There is no question in our minds that in honoring our parents, especially in helping lift them from their poverty, God increased His blessings on us, including our finances.

During the early years of my father's ministry he owned no automobile. Most often in his ministry he would walk from one small town to the other to save money to support his family. One of my vivid memories as a little boy is seeing my preacher father come staggering into the yard and up onto the porch nearly frozen to death. It was in the dead of winter and in order to save the few dollars he had received for preaching two weeks, fourteen miles away, he had walked every step of the way home. Twice he walked holes in his shoes and stopped to find cardboard to put inside as soles. His overcoat was thin, and when Mama and we children pulled him in the door, it was just in time.

"Oh, Ellis," Mama cried, "why didn't you ride the bus home?" "There was no bus."

"Why didn't you ask someone to drive you?"

"They knew I had no way except to walk but no one volunteered." My brother Vaden and I stood there with clenched fists and with tears in our eyes. We hated it. Our daddy had been a top farmer. He could have kept his land and gotten wealthy from the oil discovered on it the year after he sold it to go preach.

In our childish minds we sided with Mama when she said, “Oh, Ellis, how do Christian people live with themselves and treat a man of God like this?” There was fire in her eyes.

I still remember Papa was too cold to talk. He just nodded his head to indicate he had to share the gospel that someone else had brought to him. It took many years before I could agree.

One thing I couldn’t agree with then and now is that God’s servants ought to suffer like Papa did just because people misinterpret the scriptures on Jesus’ so-called poverty. So many use this as an excuse to withhold their money from those who minister the gospel to them, or get jealous if they enjoy any measure of Bible prosperity.

As I have studied Jesus’ life in minutest detail, I’m convinced He identified with homeless people, and with those who live in cramped and unhealthy housing. Poor housing tends to breed disease, and disease among the poor affords little opportunity for adequate medical care. Too often those who pray for the sick, as few church people do, make little or no identification with those who are homeless or poorly housed. Is this the kind of Christianity of the early church during the first century—when Paul the great apostle preached to the churches to help the poor and even received special offerings **“for the poor saints in Jerusalem”** (Romans 15:26)?

It is true more and more people in such situations must believe they can help themselves. All the money of the government cannot solve the problem in its present system of welfare. But not all people supported by welfare are people who are unwilling to work and believe for something better. Many are sick or handicapped. Others are part of a vicious circle, part of which stems from a concept of the Christian faith that its Founder lived in poverty.

There is something we can do about this. Jesus had a place to dwell, and He is our inspiration to work, to believe, and to determine we can do better. We also can see that God in His Heaven gets no glory out of any of us being homeless or deprived by the depths of poverty. After all, the Earth belongs to our God, and He has a “fullness” for our benefit (Psalms 24:1).

However you may understand statements in the Bible of Jesus’ becoming poor or being in poverty, it should not be the kind that dehumanizes God’s own Son and the rest of us who, too, are God’s creation.

Yes, Jesus had a house, a good one for the day in which He lived, and so can you. Stand on the Word of God that tells where Jesus dwelt and say, “I will work, I will sow my seed, I will believe, and I will expect a miracle and get my house.”

Second, we know Jesus was not poor because He needed to have a treasurer.



According to John 13:29, a disciple by the name of Judas Iscariot was Jesus' treasurer.

Now a treasurer is needed by a person who must deal with large sums of money that has to be accounted for, write checks, make purchases and pay bills, taxes and debts. You ask, "Did Jesus have that kind of money?" Yes, or He wouldn't have needed a treasurer. He had so much that later Judas stole from the treasury (see John 12:6). In fact, here's what the Bible says happened at the Last Supper:

**And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. (John 13:27-29).**

What I'm saying is not to refer so much to unfaithful Judas, but rather to show that the Bible is clear that Jesus earned money through His ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. For that day, it was a large amount of money, sufficient to meet the full needs of Himself and His team, including funds to give to the poor. Remember the poor can't give to the poor; it takes someone who has something to give—and Jesus did.

When I got the revelation from 3 John 2 that God wanted my financial blessings to equal the blessing of my soul, as well as my body, I felt a breakthrough in my spirit and I told Evelyn, "Honey, God is a good God." How many have been blessed all over the world through this divine revelation from God's Holy Word? I give God the glory for this revelation that has been a vital part of much of the change among God's people concerning getting their needs met.

I tell you plainly, whatever amount of money is consistent with the Word of God and with living a righteous Christian life is *supposed to come into your hands*. God said to Abraham, the father of all who have faith, "**Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply you**" (see Genesis 22:17; Hebrews 7:14).

Be very careful about thinking when you suffer financially you are suffering for God. As I've already indicated, being unable to purchase the necessities of life is seldom, if ever, a sign you are glorifying God. David said, "**I was young, and now I'm old; yet I've never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread**" (see Psalm 37:25). And it was from David that Jesus descended.

Jesus had a house.

Jesus had a treasury.

Third, Jesus had a team, a big one. **“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him”** (Luke 8:1). This states that in every city and village Jesus went into preaching, teaching and healing, **“the twelve were with Him.”** This means Jesus and His twelve apostles, *plus their helpers*.

I know what it is to have an evangelistic team large enough to assist me in my following Jesus in His mission to preach, teach and heal. Just as my team traveled to cities to prepare the way, Jesus’ team had to go before and schedule the places in which He would minister, make provision for lodging and food, and meet all the city ordinances to handle the crowds. Jesus had to raise enough money to meet these large financial requirements both for Himself and His team, as well as to help the poor (see John 13:29; Acts 20:35).

The financial support system required for you and your family—and career—is much on God’s mind today. You have the greatest role model of all: Jesus Himself. Therefore, I urge you to believe the Word of God with Jesus being your example and dare to turn your faith loose. Just as He worked and believed for the finances He needed—and used properly—so can you work and believe for yours and use them properly!

But for it to happen, and to continue to happen, you must adopt a biblical mindset, a spirit of Bible prosperity, refusing to listen to the critics and using your faith firmly rather than listening to your doubts. Remember Haggai 2:8: **“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.”**

If the silver and gold, on which our money system is based, is God’s, and you’re His, why would He not want you to have your due share? Why would not the Lord of all real wealth want your earnings to be sufficient? God says of His Son, **“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and, for ever”** (Hebrews 13:8). If you believe Jesus Christ is the same today as He was yesterday, as I do, then do you not believe Haggai 2:8 applied to Him when He was on Earth? Since all the silver and gold in the entire Earth belongs to God and you are His child, will you not accept His financial provision for you and determine to have it honestly and fairly?

Most Christians I know do not understand that there is a vast difference in what God is over and what Satan controls. For example, the Bible clearly states **“Satan is the god of this world”** (see 2 Corinthians 4:4), meaning this present world system where man without God seems to run things. The Bible equally declares, **“The Earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof”** (Psalm 24:1).

*Seven Ways We Know Jesus Was Not Poor*

The indisputable fact is that Satan in being the “god of this world” system does not own one particle of soil, one drop of water or one ounce of gold or silver or any real wealth of God’s Earth. He owns nothing. Zero. The *real* wealth, and the only real wealth is the Earth, is God’s!

I think everyone should read the story of the father and the prodigal son at least once a year as it is recorded in Luke 15:11-32. I believe it is the greatest story our Master ever told because it more nearly reflects the true nature of our Heavenly Father in a way we can best understand and apply it to ourselves.

First, there’s the restless son eager to leave his good father, taking the resources he claims are his, who goes far, far away to waste it on “riotous” living...until he’s wasted everything, including his own life. In the story Jesus carefully points out there was a moment in time when the young man “comes to himself.”

It is a picture of our using our will to turn away from a good God, demanding to go our own way with our inborn gifts and unbridled use of God’s earthly resources. In a very real sense, it shows sin is a form of insanity. Like the prodigal, some of us finally “come to ourselves” and like him repent and return to the Father in hope of restoration.

Second, there is the father whose love for his son was so great he honored his son’s decision to take his share and leave, knowing what the sad result would be. But more striking than that was the father’s glad welcome of the son’s return. He joyously welcomed him home and gave him total restoration, including a magnificent feast for him with his friends.

Third, there is the “elder brother” who is the real reflection of this unholy doctrine that teaches God is not a good God and poverty belongs to His children, all on the assumption that since he hadn’t asked for anything and hadn’t received anything special, and therefore didn’t have anything, we are to have nothing.

The elder brother loudly proclaimed he hadn’t left home, he hadn’t even asked his father for anything, and here was his brother welcomed home after disgracing himself and his father by his wasteful fling. Right here Jesus has the father saying, **“It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found”** (v.32). What a picture Jesus paints of the love He personally knew His (our) Father has.

Then Jesus drove home the biggest point of all as He has the father saying to the envious elder brother, **“Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine”** (v.31).

Jesus emphatically meant to tell us that God is saying to everyone of us, *“All I have is yours!”*

I've been that prodigal. I've also met that Father. That same crowd the elder brother represents have treated me the way he did his repentant younger brother. As for me, I'll take Jesus' story of the prodigal son and how the father received him back. I love that Man of Galilee. I believe, as I hope you do, our Heavenly Father's statement, "All I have is yours." We must ask for it, believe for it, and receive it!

Jesus had a house.

Jesus had a treasury.

Jesus had a team.

Fourth, Jesus had people who ministered to Him from their finances, and they became His donor base. Let's carefully and prayerfully read Luke 8:2,3:

**And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.**

Notice that those whom Jesus delivered from the powers of Satan—in spirit, mind and body—became partners with Him financially in the gospel. They were followers, not only with grateful hearts, but with a clear understanding they were to minister to Jesus with their substance—or rather their money. In addition to making spiritual change in their lives, they made a change in their financial priorities. This is one major reason that Jesus was not poor in the sense the world looks on poverty. Those He delivered who began ministering to Him of their money freed Him up to give His full time to preaching, teaching and healing which was His three-fold ministry on Earth (Matthew 4:23).

It is clear that these individuals were not ministering unto Jesus with their money before they were saved and delivered from demons, from sin, from sickness, and other negative things. Under Satan's influence they were using their money on themselves. But afterward when Jesus became their personal Savior and Deliverer, He taught them what to do with their substance. They began ministering to Jesus Himself with their finances. They developed a *ministry of money*.

Before they became members of Jesus' partner family—His donors—their was not a ministry of money. It had not occurred to them before to think of it as a ministry of money both for Jesus and their own lives at the same time.

Some like Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast out seven demons, were Jewish and knew something of the tithe, that the tenth belonged to God—that it is holy unto Him (see Leviticus 27:30).

On the other hand, the wife of Chuza, the steward of King Herod, who was appointed by Rome to rule over the Jews, was probably a Gentile and knew nothing of tithes or of making a ministry of her money, until she met the One who had healed her.

And this scripture says **“many others ministered to Jesus of their substance.”** Some were Jewish, who knew of the tithes being the Lord’s but were not participating in it, and others were Gentiles, who didn’t know and couldn’t care less, until Jesus saved, and healed and taught them the ministry of money.

Jesus changed their attitude toward Him, and He also changed their attitude toward their money. Up till then, the evil spirits dominating their thinking had misdirected their use of their money. Under Satan’s influence they believed that their money was theirs, that they could do with it as they pleased, and that they were the boss of their money—and let God and the work of the gospel be ignored.

But carefully make a note of this: One of the greatest discoveries they ever made was that when they ministered to Jesus with their money, their giving released God’s power into their lives.

There is a double blessing. First, Jesus could pay all His bills, without being victim of bad financial circumstances, and without leaving financial scandal behind to reproach the work of the gospel. Second, these believers discovered that in ministering to Jesus with their money, God’s power was released into their lives. And it will do the same for you and me today when we, too, minister unto Jesus with our money. We’ll be astounded—and thrilled—at the way God meets our needs by releasing His power of supply to us, especially if we expect to receive from a good God.

The question is raised, should we in the service of the gospel receive gifts of money from persons such as Mary Magdalene? She is known not only as one who had been demon-possessed, but also as a prostitute. Was some of her impure earnings the same money she “ministered unto Jesus”?

Are we in the church to research the pedigree of all those who give tithes and offerings? Are we to check it out to see that all money given is only from holy people? Or is it proper for such money to change hands—getting it into the hands of those who would use it for the gospel?

In March, 1987, when a dog track owner brought a large financial gift to help me with the Oral Roberts University School of Medicine in its medical missions outreach, the criticism from certain church leaders, including some in my partner family, and daily in the news media, was loud and vicious. But that man, when

asked if God told him to give, replied, “I know one thing, the devil didn’t tell me to do it.” We had the honor to lead him in the sinner’s prayer and to see the light of the Lord come on his countenance. I later learned giving this gift profoundly affected his life toward God.

Please note that these whom Jesus delivered and who ministered to Jesus of their money did not consider that they were merely giving money. They made it a ministry—and they were not preachers or necessarily full-time Christian service workers. They were just Christians, what we would call lay people in the body of Christ. *They made their giving a ministry to Jesus Himself.* Now to me that’s a touching thing. It brings a lump in my throat, tears to my eyes, and a deep desire in my heart to check myself to see if my giving of money is just giving or is it a ministry of money to Jesus, my personal Savior and the One who healed my body of tuberculosis and a stuttering tongue.

Suppose Jesus stood directly in front of you today? Suppose you saw Him with financial needs to preach, teach and heal. And suppose He needed you to minister to Him with your money? I believe you would say, “Jesus, this is the greatest honor of my life to minister to you of my finances, my tithes and offerings.” Well, Jesus *is* standing before you through those whom He has called into the work of the gospel. He and His work have financial needs today. Are you looking at your finances as a ministry of money to Him and His work through those who are carrying on His works with Him, **“confirming the word with signs following”** (Mark 16:20)?

The Bible assures you that God has a sure way of taking care of you when you minister to Him with your giving (see Luke 8:3; 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:10; Galatians 6:7; Malachi 3:10,11). As you make your giving a ministry of money, you will develop an intimate relationship with Jesus, just as did Mary Magdalene, Chuza’s wife Joanna, Susanna and all those who ministered of their money to Jesus. They knew their giving was a ministry of money to Him to give the world the gospel. And He knew that through their giving He and His followers would be able to preach, teach and heal.

I’m convinced that had I not been faithful in giving all my tithes and offerings and giving them as a seed of my faith all these years, I could not have accomplished the good things God has done through me as I have preached, taught and healed in His name. And I know I must be just as faithful in the future by giving all my tithes and offerings—sown as a seed of my faith; as a ministry of my earnings; also as a covenant of my giving to Jesus, just as those in His days on Earth had a covenant of ministering to Him of their substance. This is a decision each one of us must make for unless we *“will to do it”* it won’t happen.

My friend Norvel Hayes, a successful entrepreneur and man of God, told me,

“Oral, the day I willed to give my life to God, I willed to give of my money to Him. Since that day God has owned my life and my money; in turn I have received His best.” He added, “But without choosing to do it with my will it never would have happened.” Have you willed to give your life and your substance to God? If you will it to happen...it will happen and make your life meaningful as you’ve never known before.

*Jesus had a house.*

*Jesus had a treasury.*

*Jesus had a team.*

*Jesus had a donor base: a partner family of believers, who ministered to Him with their money.*

Fifth, Jesus wore good clothes. Today we talk about “designer clothes,” that is, uniquely made and different from the ordinary. But Jesus’ clothes were even better than that. Scripture says,

**Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. (John 19:23,24).**

Evidence for the quality of Jesus’ robe came after His crucifixion. Usually the Roman crucifiers were paid by the clothes of their victim which they evenly divided among themselves. But seeing the kind of robe Jesus had worn as it lay before them and noticing it had no seams, they decided not to divide it but to gamble to see which one got it, which equaled the pay that all of them would have received (John 19:24).

It certainly was not the usual thing for people in Jesus’ day to wear an outer robe woven without seam. All my clothes have seams. Probably yours do, too.

I’ve worn about every type of clothes, from hand-me-downs as a child, or the best I could afford as a boy selling papers on the streets of my hometown, then to a little better clothes by the time I married Evelyn, to the time we did our television specials when the producer insisted I wear well-designed clothes. I’m not too good to wear either type now. All I desire is to dress as well as I can, and decently.

Let’s take a closer look at the seamless robe Jesus wore when He preached, taught and healed. It was most difficult to weave such a garment, and therefore

most costly, and was easily observed to be unique.

Nowhere does the Bible indicate that Jesus was intimidated by critics concerning this costly garment. Nor did He wear it in a self-conscious manner. That robe played an important role in Jesus' life and ministry.

Ask the woman with the issue of blood, who when she touched His robe with her hand, she touched Him with her own faith, and felt in her body she was healed of her plague (Mark 5:29). Ask multitudes of other sick ones who had the same experience (Matthew 14:35,36).

I've always looked on Jesus' seamless robe as being more than just good clothes He wore. I've seen it in having *no seams* as a symbol of His desire to make us whole in spirit, mind, body, finances—actually in every area of our lives, enabling us to live a life of wholeness—*one without seams (without brokenness)*.

The news media and other critics are always after us who minister the gospel on television, sometimes criticizing the clothes we wear. I refuse to be intimidated by them. I don't count the wearing of nice clothes a test of the level of Christian faith. However, there is clear evidence in Jesus' clothes that He was not poor in the way the church and the world have thought.

I do not believe Jesus' robe was gaudy. I believe it was in good taste, and for a purpose. Jesus made the wearing of suitable clothes all right. The attitude of His heart was more important than the uniqueness of His seamless robe. But as the Son of man on Earth, Jesus did wear a unique robe.

Anyway, if poverty is so desirable, why doesn't it have saving power for the starving people of the world? If insufficient clothes are so great, why don't they keep millions from freezing to death? Really, if poverty is the answer for bringing people closer to God, would not the millions of people who are poor and without Christ be in the kingdom of God? It's faith in the shed blood of Jesus and His resurrection that saves and brings people to the Lord (Romans 10:9,10).

Jesus was not poor, but He loved poor people as He did all other people. He came to preach the good news of the gospel to poor people (Luke 4:18). The poor heard Jesus gladly, seamless robe and all (Mark 12:37). He never turned anyone away because that person was poor. There was something about the way Jesus conducted Himself that caused poor people to be comfortable in being around Him. They did not think of Jesus being poor as has been taught by so many. Had He been poverty-stricken, His own poverty would have tended to turn poor people away. But Jesus Himself was not poor.

*He had a house.*



*He had a treasury.*

*He had a team.*

*He had a partner family.*

*He wore good clothes.*

And His appeal was enormous to both the poor *and* the rich.

Sixth, Jesus was put in the trust fund of a rich man for His burial. In Isaiah 53:9, the prophet foretold that, **“He made His grave with the rich.”** Eight hundred years after the prophet Isaiah gave that prophecy, Joseph, a wealthy disciple of Jesus, made the special provision that Jesus would not be buried in the same degrading way as He had been brutalized by men.

**When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. (Matthew 27:57-60).**

Oh, yes, how they would have liked to take Jesus from the most shameful death ever devised by the evil minds of men and cast Him into some abandoned trench or mine shaft, discarding Him there to be forgotten by the world. But God decreed, “Enough is enough.” He put it in the heart of a new believer, one of the most respected and wealthy men in Israel, to honor Jesus by burying His body in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of rock, an expensive process that was a most precious and thoughtful gift to Jesus at His death. This was because God had put it into the spirit of a rich man to put Jesus in his will.

Perhaps God will lead someone to put you in their will or if you have the personal means, you should put God’s work in your will—and soon. If you don’t make a will and your overall worth is at a certain level, the government will say where it will go, rather than your wishes being carried out to extend the gospel after your death.

Multiplied millions every year do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel because many Christians refuse or neglect to make a Christian will. Evelyn and I have given most of the money we’ve earned to build Oral Roberts University and this ministry, as well as to support the local church, yet we have made a will. We made a vow to God, never to touch the gold nor the glory. Our personal financial worth is not large. Still by making a Christian will our wishes will not be carried out by the government, but by our wishes made in our will in advance of our homegoing.

I personally believe it is un-Christlike—and probably a sin—not to make a Christian will and leave at least something of your worth to the work of the Lord. After you're in Heaven your money can be helping people to receive Jesus as their personal Savior. *Success without a successor is failure!* We should care about our success as God's people while we're alive and with what we leave behind after we've gone from this Earth to be with the Lord.

Don't you think you should act on this very soon to make a Christian will?

Think of what happened at Joseph's tomb, which he gave for Jesus' burial:

- ◆ the appearance of angels;
- ◆ the rolled-away stone;
- ◆ the empty tomb;
- ◆ the disciples seeing that Jesus was not there, but forever alive as our risen Savior.

Joseph must have looked back after putting Jesus' burial in a trust fund and counted the result as one of the holiest things he ever did. Long after Jesus had risen and had ascended to Heaven, Joseph could hold to his precious memories that he had used his money to “minister unto Jesus” both in His life and in His death.

*Jesus was not poor.*

*He had a house.*

*He had a treasury.*

*He had a team.*

*He had a partner family.*

*He had nice clothes, and He was put in a rich man's trust fund. Joseph was a rich man who made the use of his money a ministry of money.*

I have given you the first six ways we know Jesus was not poor while He was on Earth, the seventh is a *now* way.

Seven, it is not by Jesus' poverty that God said all our needs would be met, but according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). The founder of no other religion can say that. Others such as Confucius, Buddha and Mohammed left a philosophy and religious tenets. Our Savior left us salvation, a ministry of healing for our whole person, a supply for all our needs on Earth, a home in Heaven, and a way of life on Earth while we're on our way to Heaven. He is our way, our truth and our life, unlike all others. He stacks up uncountable riches against our earthly needs, whether big or small, and declares He will do for us “**above all that we ask or think**” (Ephesians 3:20). What a Savior!

The Bible says that people perish for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). There's no excuse for not knowing that the Word of God shows us that Jesus was not poor. There are needs you have that are crying to be met; dreams in your life calling out to be fulfilled; ideas hovering so close you can touch them with your fingertips. Jesus wants to provide for you out of His immeasurable riches! Know in your *knower* that Jesus was not poor on Earth, except relatively in comparison with the immeasurable riches He had in Heaven before coming to Earth. Today His highest wish is that you “prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.” Get this truth deep in your spirit.

*Put your faith in action now!*

## Summed Up Personal Reminders

- 1 How to know the ways that show Jesus was not poor:

He had a house, a treasury, a team, a donor base, good clothes, provision for burial and a *now* way to meet all our needs according to His riches in Heaven.

- 2 Jesus was able to minister with His team in every town, and city, because of those “who ministered to Him of their substance,” showing you that as a follower of Jesus you are to make your money a ministry of money.
- 3 Remind yourself there is a vast difference in what God owns and what Satan claims as his own. Second Corinthians 4:4 tells us Satan is god of this present world system while God owns the Earth and the fullness thereof (Psalms 24:1).

All real wealth is in God's hands. As a believer you need to stand by faith for all your needs to be met.

- 4 You should read often the most powerful story Jesus ever told: The father and the prodigal son. You need to especially dwell on the Father's words to the jealous elder brother, “**Son, all I have is yours,**” because it's Jesus' way of telling you that *all the Heavenly Father has is yours!* That certainly does not indicate Jesus was poor or intends for you to be poor as a penalty for being His follower.

Tell yourself over and over, “God is a good God. He has me in mind. In spite of my mistakes and failures, if I come to myself and repent—and return to Him—He will never turn me away. All He has is mine.”

- 5 Remind yourself that Jesus' ministry was three-fold: preaching, teaching and healing. In whatever calling of God you have, find ways to incorporate Jesus' three-fold ministry into yours.

Have this as a clear understanding in everything you do.

- 6 Keep before you one of the greatest discoveries Mary Magdalene and the others who gave to Jesus made for you: *When you minister to Jesus with your money, your giving releases Jesus 'power into your life!*

Remember it as a double blessing. One, you support the gospel. Two, Jesus supports you in ways no one else can.

- 7 Do not be afraid of the critics who continually spread gloom and doom about Jesus' so-called poverty. If poverty is so desirable, why didn't it become the tool Jesus used to save, heal and bless people instead of by His miraculous power through their faith?

Remind yourself that in Jesus' inaugural message in His home synagogue He declared God had anointed Him and sent Him with the good news to the poor. That good news was the "more abundant life," instead of Satan's stealing from them.

Make yourself look back on Jesus' life on Earth and see that Jesus' life and ministry were never trapped by poverty, and that nothing of a negative nature coming at Him either stopped Him or caused Him to give up! Don't you give up either, the best is yet to come!

## But What About the Scriptures That Say Jesus Was Poor?

I too, used to ask this same question. It seemed to me there were several hard to understand scriptures about Jesus' so-called mandate to live in poverty, and which seemed to indicate God wanted Christians to live in poverty. I decided I would face these completely misunderstood and misinterpreted scriptures—the so-called “hard scriptures”—head-on.

In this chapter I want you to look closely with me at four of these scriptures that are often wrongly understood and used to persuade Christians that Jesus was poor and wants them to be too.

### ***1. If Jesus Was Not Poor, Why Didn't He Have a Place to Lay His Head?***

This is a fair question. It comes from Luke 9:51-58:

**And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.**

I admit this scripture for years cast doubt in my mind about Jesus not being poor. People, including theologians, have used this scripture to try to prove, or at least to imply, that during all of Jesus' ministry He was so poor He literally was homeless—a vagabond. Read this scripture again and you'll see the truth is that when this scene happened He was on a very special mission with His face set toward Jerusalem to face the rulers who were out to get Him. He had the

“Jerusalem look.”

He wanted to conduct a crusade in a city of Samaria which was on His way. He knew the people of Samaria hated Jerusalem and had set up their own substitute for the Jewish faith, but He cared about them, and sent an advance team to prepare a place to preach, teach and heal. They were also to arrange accommodations for Him and His entire team.

When He arrived, He was preoccupied. He had Jerusalem on His mind. The Samaritans caught His spirit and cancelled the meeting, becoming openly hostile. “He’s not interested in us,” they said. “He’s just passing through.”

Long years before, when Solomon’s son Rehoboam increased the taxes on the twelve tribes of Israel, the ten northern tribes had joined Jeroboam in rebellion against King Rehoboam and had established a counter-religious culture and system in Samaria. They had turned to idols instead of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (see 1 Kings 12).

These Samaritans who rejected Jesus on this occasion were the descendants of those who followed Jeroboam. The moment they saw that Jesus’ primary intent was getting to Jerusalem where the true God was worshipped, they turned up their noses and cancelled His meeting and lodging. They said, “Get out of town.” It had nothing to do with Jesus’ being poor.

When Jesus’ team saw their hostility and realized that all lodgings for Jesus and themselves had been cancelled, they were very upset. Actually they got violently angry. “Lord,” they said in their fury, “shall we call fire down from Heaven and bring this city down?”

Jesus, upon seeing things getting dangerous and wanting to use the occasion to give one of the greatest healing truths of all time, said, **“Ye know what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them”** (Luke 9:55,56).

I remember when I began my healing ministry these words of Jesus burned in my consciousness like fire, opening my eyes to the fact that Jesus did not come with a life-shortening threat but with a lifesaving power. It further convinced me *God is a good God*. As I preached it across America and the world, it helped me tear down many of the strongholds of the devil in which the enemy of men’s souls had blinded them to the will of God to heal and prosper, as well as to save their souls..

Among others, God used me, my sermons and my prayers for the sick to draw huge crowds. Thousands upon thousands were inspired by the Holy Spirit to believe the Word of God to heal and deliver them. Then beginning in 1954 we brought the crusades, taped live, on nationwide television, and millions more saw

—for the first time right in their living rooms—God heal the sick. They came into the knowledge that this same Jesus is *in the now!* Like the hostility Jesus felt in Samaria, I felt the severest opposition I’d ever encountered. But Jesus, having said he had not come to destroy men’s lives (spirit, mind and body) but to save and heal them, set me on fire even more to preach that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever—and He’s IN THE NOW! Things began to turn around for millions who had not heard of the *real* Christ of the Bible.

So Jesus had no place to lodge in that city that night, and He lamented their inhospitality. As He went on toward Jerusalem, He was joined by a man who said, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” In other words, “Lord, I won’t treat You like those rude people did.”

Again, Jesus took the occasion to teach us another great truth to help us get through this world and on to Heaven. He said, “**The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head**” (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58). People have built a whole doctrine of poverty on Jesus’ words here, a doctrine which I believe is satanic, which they have applied to Jesus and His followers today.

No, the Samaritans wouldn’t take Jesus’ money or let Him preach in their city. Yes, they were prejudiced against Him. And, yes, His disciples in their burning anger wanted to call fire down from Heaven and wipe them and their city off the face of the Earth. But the fact is that Jesus had a house. He could have gone back to it. He had money in His treasury to pay. He had partners who were ministering to Him of their money so He could do His mighty works of deliverance. He had on that seamless robe. He was in the financial trust of a rich man for His burial. He was in position to meet His financial obligations.

They simply wouldn’t take Jesus’ money. They refused to accept Him or His ministry, but there was more to it than not taking His money. Their reaction was more than financial. *It was also a social and religious rejection.* Jesus said, “**The Son of man has no place....**” He was speaking of having no place in their social circles or their religious structure. He had no place with the gospel in their perverted view of God. In their view of life the foxes had a right to their holes, and the birds to their nests, but Jesus had no place in their scheme of things. Jesus wanted this young man to see that following Him wouldn’t bring popularity with everybody or make everything easy.

I want to say again I am not going to accept that satanic doctrine and posture that declares Jesus was poor. Had He been poor He might not have been able to get out of town and on to Jerusalem. It takes money to travel and to get things done.

## **Unwelcome In Australia**

I got kicked out of a nation once—the nation of Australia. It was the year before they had a law to protect religious gatherings. They passed that law the following year, and it protected my friend Billy Graham and his great crusade that followed mine.

I was there with the big tent that we had shipped over. In Sydney, we had been overwhelmingly received, the tent was packed every night and the results were unsurpassed anywhere we had been in the world. However, when the big tent was moved for the second crusade to Melbourne, a huge city, it was during a nationwide dock strike, which we were told was Communist-controlled. The tent was packed on opening night with 10,000 people. Hundreds came down the aisles to accept Christ. There were many healings right before the people's eyes. The news spread throughout the city.

The next night it seemed all hell broke loose. Gangs from the docks rushed down the aisles and climbed up on the platform. They spit on me and hit me, trying to stop my preaching. Hundreds coming forward to receive Christ were stopped, and many were pulled out of the healing line and thrown to the ground. They broke up the service, preventing us from continuing that night.

The newspapers appeared to go berserk. Yellow journalists tried to discredit me. They poured beer in a glass of water I was to drink from before I went on stage. They carried such sensational news accounts of the mob attempts to break up the crusade that almost the whole city of Melbourne was thrown into an uproar. They asked for names of those who had been healed. Upon interviewing them and finding they had been healed, they refused to carry it in their news accounts. A mob set about to kill me. Thinking I was leaving the service in a car Evelyn was in, they tried to turn it over, only to stop when they realized the sponsoring pastors had put me in another car. The police were under strict orders to keep their hands folded across their chests and let the mob have its way, because there was no law permitting them to stop this assault.

By the third night people were so frightened to come, only a few braved their way past the howling mobs, who struck at them as they did me. The American Embassy sent me a message, saying: "We can't guarantee your safety." The next morning the headlines screamed, **MOBS TO BURN ROBERTS' TENT DOWN.**

But during that night as I slept, my team took down the huge tent and loaded in on the ship for America. They were at my door at daybreak saying, "Oral, here are the tickets for you and Evelyn to board the plane for Tulsa." They hurried us to the airport before the mob knew we were gone.



Being kicked out had nothing to do with our being able to pay the bills or the generosity of the beautiful Australian people. Many Australians were shocked to discover that there were no laws to protect religious gatherings, not even in their church buildings if the mobs wanted to come in.

It had to do with religious prejudice; with gangs being allowed to run loose; with yellow journalism; and with the fact that the healing power of God in a crusade of the magnitude of ours had no place in the social and religious realm of the power system of Australia at that time in its history; and with the fact that there were no laws to protect religious gatherings. (Since then, Richard, my son, has gone to Australia by invitation of scores of pastors. His crusades were heralded positively, even by the news media, and thousands of people were saved and healed. I understand Australia is now enjoying its greatest spiritual awakening, and the charismatic power of God is birthing hundreds of new churches!)

The year following our rejection, Billy Graham's great reception in the 100,000-seat stadium in Sydney caused him to wire me his gratitude. He said I had helped pave the way for the freedom of his great crusade in Australia. (Billy is that kind of man.) He had met many who had been saved and healed through my crusade in Sydney, where I was fairly well protected, and later in Melbourne, where the riots in the tent occurred. I know a little of how Jesus felt being kicked out of Samaria. But it didn't stop His ministry. And what happened in Australia didn't stop mine.

## **My Welcome in a Small Town**

Speaking a little more intimately, right after my healing from tuberculosis and being called to preach, I was asked to preach in the small town where I had been ill for so long. The little church was packed, as many had known of my healing and wanted to see and hear me.

There were no hotels or motels there, and I was invited to spend the night with a family whose oldest daughter had once had tuberculosis. She had been in a sanitarium, and the disease had been arrested. The husband and father was not a Christian and was not at home. He didn't come home until we had all gone to bed and were asleep.

After midnight the wife awakened me in tears, "Oh, Oral, I'm so sorry," she said, "but my husband has arrived and learned you are here. He knows how contagious tuberculosis is and he doesn't believe you were healed. He's ordered me to have you leave."

It was freezing cold, in the dead of winter, and when I left I had no place to

go. Then, remembering a family who had befriended us when I was sick, I finally made it to their house and knocked on the door. They said, “Oral, what are you doing here this time of night?” I said, “If you don’t take me in I’ll freeze to death.” They kindly invited me in and put me to bed. I’m sure I’m not the only man of God who has had such an experience. It had *nothing* to do with money—only the fear of a father.

What I want to say is that Jesus’ troubles for the gospel didn’t stop Him, and mine hasn’t stopped me. Also, I want to say that it’s not that we’re not willing to endure such things. When we have to, we are willing to suffer anything if it’s part of God’s plan. But to connect Jesus’ experience or mine with poverty as God’s plan for human beings—the Word of God rejects it all the way.

You must not blame God when bad things happen to you. Remember John 10:10 when Jesus Himself said, **“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”** Draw your line between a bad devil and a good God, and know that God wants to give you abundant life, despite anything Satan tries to do to steal your money or to destroy your efforts or kill you. Pay attention to Jesus’ saying His very reason for coming into your life is that you may have “life more abundantly.” Jesus and more abundant life is what keeps me going.

## **2. Peter Said, “Silver and Gold Have I None.” Doesn’t That Mean Christians Are to Be Poor?**

I believe nothing could be further from the truth of God’s supplying the needs of His people. Let’s read the scripture in Acts 3:1-9:

**Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.**

QUESTION: Did these two chief apostles of Jesus, Peter and John, have no money?

ANSWER: I believe the fact is that they had money. However, since they said they had none, how do we know they did? Let me share four reasons that show Peter and John were not without money that day. First, they were on the way to the temple to pray. Those who entered God's temple in Jerusalem came with offerings to give to the Lord.

Even the poorest of widows knew when they went into the temple they were to have a money offering for the Lord. In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus took time out of His busy schedule to observe people giving their money offerings into the treasury of the temple:

**And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.**

Notice, Jesus praised this poor widow for her giving, and especially because her need was so great *she gave out of her need*. It is evident Jesus would see to it that *this seed of her faith* would be multiplied back to her. But the main point here is that even the poorest people expected to contribute money when they entered the temple. So, we can be sure Peter and John who were on their way to the temple had money to give for the temple worship that day when Peter said, **“Silver and gold have I none.”**

Second, bear in mind that Peter and John were now in the “employ” of Jesus. They had given up their personal fishing business several years ago on the Sea of Galilee after Jesus called them to catch men, as they once had caught fish.

Jesus had not called Peter or John or any of the others from their former business to a life of poverty. He called them to be fishers of men, which took all their time. And fishing for men, that is, reaching them with the gospel on a full-time basis, required their all and their proper financial support. Jesus had clearly said, **“The labourer is worthy of his hire”** (Luke 10:7). And Peter and John here before the lame man were in the employ of Jesus Himself and they were paid out of His treasury from the money **“ministered unto Him”** by those He had saved and healed (Luke 8:2,3). Their business was the gospel of delivering people into the kingdom of God. They **“went everywhere preaching the gospel, Jesus working with them, and confirming His word with signs following”** (see Mark 16:20). Those signs included healing the sick as Jesus did. I will not accept Jesus saying, “The laborer is worthy of his hire,” and then going back on it with Peter and John, or any of His laborers then or now.

Third, it is false to imply that Peter meant he had no money to eat, to lodge, to be clothed, to travel or to be the leader of the twelve apostles; or that the newly-formed church in Jerusalem with all its heavy expense and duties had no financial resources. The Bible says the early church had money.

Right here is something you should know and remember: Several hundred years after the Bible was written it had no chapters and verses. It was one long, uninterrupted writing. To make it easier to understand it was later, much later, divided into chapters and verses. Therefore, when you read Acts 3:1-9, you should go back and start reading at chapter 2:42 and read all the way non-stop through Acts 3:1-9.

Let's re-read the whole thing now starting in Acts 2:42,

**And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.**

Notice verses 44 and 45 read, **“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”**

Under Peter's leadership the thousands he and the other apostles had led to Christ, and formed community with them, *pooled their money*. They all had an equal share which was **“imparted to them all, as every man had need”** (v. 45). It's obvious that Peter and John had their share. They had money—“silver and

gold”—as they confronted the lame man at the gate of the temple in Jerusalem.

Fourth, the scene at the Beautiful Gate of the temple occurred *after* Jesus’ ascension to His Father (Acts 1:9,10) and after He had “**sat down on the right hand of the Father**” (Ephesians 1:20). Paul spoke eloquently of the riches of Jesus, “**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus**” (Philippians 4:19).

Peter not only knew Jesus was not poor while He was on this Earth, but when He was once again at the right hand of the Father He was surrounded by all the riches of Heaven. He would not have Peter, one of His laborers *who was worthy of his hire*, go into the temple financially destitute.

QUESTION: Then why didn’t they give money to the crippled beggar?

ANSWER: They didn’t give money because money was not what he needed. They had something better for him. Look at verse 16: “**And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.**” We are clearly told faith, not money, in this instance was the answer to this man’s condition.

As part of Jesus’ original team to whom Jesus had given power to heal all manner of disease (see Matthew 10:1), Peter and John were saying: “All these years you sat daily here beside the Beautiful gate of God’s temple asking people for money. Money is not sufficient to make your crippled body walk or be made whole. Money is not what we’re here to offer you, because it won’t get the job done.

But we have what it takes: ‘In the name of Jesus’ (and Peter takes him by the hand and starts lifting), ‘Rise up and walk.’” The man was able to take his first step since he was born. Then he began jumping and running, and he immediately went into the temple with Peter and John. Even the enemies of the gospel said it was a notable miracle (Acts 4:16).

Let me ask a question here. Do you think being poor is a condition or criterion for a servant of God healing the diseased or for bringing forth miracles?

If poverty is the criterion for producing healing and miracles, then why aren’t all the preachers and other workers of the gospel refusing their salaries so they can be instruments of miraculous healings?

It simply doesn’t make sense, because it is not the teaching of the Word of God about Jesus and His followers in the early church or in the church today.

In verse 16 Peter flatly stated it was faith in Jesus’ name that brought the miracle that made him whole.

Again, listen carefully to what David said hundreds of years before: **“I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”** (Psalm 37:25). We do know that the crippled man, who was delivered by the faith of Peter and John, *stopped begging*.

In Jesus’ inaugural message in the synagogue at Nazareth, He applied Isaiah 61:1,2 to Himself: **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor”** (Luke 4:18). The gospel means “good news.” What good news is there in coming to poor people, and even to beggars, and saying, “I am here to tell you that God wants you to be poor, and that poverty is His blessing on your life. Just stay poor and starve to death and you will please God.”

Listen, if Peter and John were paupers, was Jesus saying to them, “I am rewarding your faith in Me and your efforts to heal the sick in My name with poverty”? Dare we believe that Jesus at the right hand of the Father, with all the riches of Heaven restored to Him, was not mindful of His great apostles, Peter and John? Or that they were to go into God’s house that day with nothing—zero—to give as an offering to the Lord their God? Are we to believe they did not have their share of the “pooled” resources of the early church as stated in Acts 2:44,45? Certainly not!

Even if we had billions of dollars, it couldn’t make some things happen, because money in itself is not the answer to everything, not by a long shot. *But, believe me, after long experience with and without money—and with and without faith—I know that money is no substitute for faith, but neither is faith a substitute for money.* It was not an action of Peter and John’s money but an action of their faith in Jesus that could and did make this man walk. He was free to work and earn a living from that day on, also to be a dynamic witness to the miracle-working power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth by faith in His name.

As for money, why did God pave the streets of Heaven with gold, where He has His throne? If Jesus has no riches and is a pauper, how could He supply all our needs according to His riches by Christ Jesus in glory? Also, why did God say: **“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine”** (Haggai 2:8)? Since all real property is God’s, why should we give in to the poverty-teaching of those who either misinterpret the Bible, or don’t care whether your needs are met or not?

As for faith, if faith doesn’t work, why did God give each one of us a measure of it? The apostle said, **“God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”** (Romans 12:3). If we can please God without faith, why did God say, **“Without faith it is impossible to please him”** (Hebrews 11:6)? God knows it’s only through faith that you and I can please Him. That’s why He gave us faith to use toward Him. And faith still works miracles, including miracles such as

healing the sick and diseased, and also for our finances today.

Money has its purpose. Faith has its purpose. We *must* have both. God has provided *both* money and faith. If we will meet His conditions to get them and use them for His glory, we shall have them. Besides, if money could have healed the lame beggar who daily for years had received financial gifts at the temple gate, why had he not been already healed? Why? Or if poverty heals, why was he, on those days when no one gave to him, not healed? Why? I believe Peter and John had their own financial needs met, and also had enough faith in the name of Jesus with which to heal that man. In this instance, I believe their faith did what no amount of silver and gold could do. Faith can do exactly the same thing today.

I'm not afraid of this so-called hard scripture, or any others which could be badly misinterpreted without careful examination of the context in which they were written. There is an answer, and it's on the side of what Jesus came to give us: life more abundantly (John 10:10).

I ask you to believe the truth about Jesus' own abundant life, and to *come into agreement* with me for your needs to be met (Matthew 18:19) according to Jesus' riches, and I ask that you *do not come out of the agreement*. I challenge you to lay aside wrong teachings and to turn your faith loose and get your miracle. I encourage you to stand on the Word of God, not on the unscriptural teachings of some unbelieving religious leaders or their doctrines. I encourage you, also, to respect the news media as I do, but do not—do not—give it any more credibility than that it is a news-gathering, money-making institution, no better than the opinion and bias of those who write or report for it. The news media is not God and we should not allow it to assume that status.

A great preacher once said, "I would rather stand on the Word of God because God said, 'Heaven and Earth shall pass away but My Word shall never pass away.'" I agree with him 100 percent.

The Word of God wants you to understand that the silver and gold—the basis of all money God put in His Earth—is *beautiful*. It's so beautiful and useful that Satan would like to steal it away, leaving you with the ugly reality of having little or none, being reduced in your finances until, like an incurable disease, it takes your dignity and your life away. Remember, the devil is a thief who will try to steal anything you have, including your money, or even your ability to earn it.

I urge you to stand up for all the money that is yours by your work, your faith, your determination and your use of it to honor God as a *ministry of money*. Refuse to take the devil's *no* when God is giving you a great big *yes* for you to have sufficient money for your needs. Sow your tithes and offerings—as a ministry of money—ministering to Jesus and His servants to spread the gospel by

preaching, teaching and healing—throughout the world! Say yes, yes, yes. Say, “I’ll do it and I’ll expect a miracle!”

### **3. How Are We to Understand the Scripture That Says Jesus Became Poor, So That We Could Become Rich?**

Some people say that 2 Corinthians 8:9 proves Jesus lived in poverty. **“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”**

This is one of the scriptures that was difficult for me to understand. But what helped me was I stayed with it until I found the context in which Paul wrote it. I was making the same error of those who pick out one verse of the Bible and try to build a whole doctrine on it.

Paul says, **“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** That means they had had a personal experience with Jesus in believing on Him as their personal Savior and Lord, and in the miraculous things He had done for them.

Do you know the grace of God in your own life? Grace is the gift of God’s unmerited favor. It boggles the mind that God is such a good God that He would save and bless us when we don’t merit it at all.

As Paul said, he had told them of God’s grace so often that they *knew* the grace of Jesus to them. Then he added, **“Though he [Jesus] was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.”**

The text says Jesus became poor. Also, it says He became poor for your sake, and the sake of all people. What does that mean in this context, also in the context of the entire Word of God?

I think we have to understand Jesus’ poverty in the context of Philippians 2. Jesus became poor in the sense that He who was equal with God **“made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:7,8). In order to show us what God is like, and to sit where we sit in order to feel everything we feel, that He might be our Savior, Jesus Himself became a human being without the glory He had had with the Father in Heaven.

Look at the term, **“He made himself of no reputation....”**

In the original Greek the word as used here means “emptied.” In other words, He who was equal with God voluntarily “emptied” Himself, not by abandoning His deity but by relinquishing *the reins* of His divine nature, so that in taking on



## *But What About the Scriptures That Say Jesus Was Poor?*

the physical form as man *He would use only the same kind of faith we use.* In this sense, it was a humbling or emptying of Himself, compared to whom He really was in Heaven, that He became poor indeed. Not poor in the sense of having no money, not poor in the sense of having no means of livelihood, or of not having the resources for organizing Himself and His team to preach, teach and heal. *But poor as a human being by comparison to His divinity as God the Son.*

Notice carefully where it says through Jesus' grace, though He was rich, yet, for our sakes, He became poor, that we through His poverty, might be rich. If you say He became poor *financially* that we might be rich, then you'll have to say He did it that we may have our financial needs met.

In other words, if you believe that Jesus' becoming poor refers to money, then you'll have to admit money is part of this scripture when it says He did it that we might be rich. Or, in other words, our finances are at the heart of Jesus' laying aside His riches in Heaven so that we would not be forced to be poor. If it means money in His becoming poor, then it means money in our becoming rich as a consequence.

Stated another way: Jesus became *less* than He was in Heaven so we might be *more* than we have been on the Earth.

*But I do not believe this scripture means that every one of us will automatically become wealthy on receiving Him as our Savior.* I don't believe that at all. However, it does mean we can have our financial needs abundantly met. And frankly, I've known much poverty, and gone through many periods of having no money. A practical result of being a Christian means Jesus will meet all my needs, including my financial needs. I can have sufficient money *consistent* with the Bible, with living a Christ-centered life, and in being financially able to do all the things He has called me to do on this Earth.

I believe the same is true for you. To get through this life, it takes love, it takes faith, it takes hope, it takes obedience, it takes hard work, it takes "I won't give up"—*and it takes money.*

## **The Grace of Giving**

Just in case you think I've made this overly simple, go with me in a little deeper study of the context of 2 Corinthians 8:9.

First, chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians are the only full chapters I know of in the Bible dealing with our giving to God. There are hundreds of other portions of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation dealing with giving, also with receiving. But in these two chapters God, through Paul, speaks directly to the grace of Jesus in *His* giving, and to the grace of *our* giving.

Second, Paul begins chapter 8 by saying,

**Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. (vv. 1-5).**

He clearly points out it is God, the Source, who gives to each of us *the grace of giving*. Also He gives to the church as a whole the grace of giving. As human beings we're so selfish it takes the grace of God to get us into giving. Otherwise, we'd squander everything we earned on ourselves.

Third, Paul states that these particular believers in Macedonia by the grace of God in their heart *gave out of their deepest financial need*. They also gave with *joy*. This means they certainly expected to receive back from God out of the same grace He put in their hearts to give.

Fourth, they prayed that Paul would receive their gifts of money and minister God's work with it (v.4).

Fifth, first they gave their own selves to the Lord, then they gave their gifts to Paul and his team to help the saints in Jerusalem, *so the Christians there would not be forced to live in poverty*. They had been cut off from their employment for believing in Jesus. *If God had wanted Christians to be poor—and that was to be their lot in life—He wouldn't have had Paul receive this offering churchwide outside of Jerusalem so the Christians there would NOT have to be poor*.

Sixth, Paul was so impressed with their grace of giving he sent one of his most trusted team members, Titus, a pastor, to preach and further deepen their grace of giving, so it would continue in them *the rest of their lives*. Paul didn't want them in the heat of excitement to give a time or two, then quit. He wanted them to give consistently because they had entered into the grace of giving. And that's what God wants of you and me today: the grace of giving in our hearts, the rest of our lives. In other words, *a ministry of money*.

Then Paul wanted them to remember he had preached this to them. **“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”** (v. 9).

Yes, Paul not only had the understanding that giving springs from the grace of God in our hearts, that is, grace as a free gift of God, but *he had the courage*

*to preach it.* And he preached it until they knew it in their hearts. How can you as a believer know that giving grace is in your heart by what God has done for you, unless we in the ministry preach it to you? Paul preached it over and over, until they got hold of it in their spirit and then practiced it. For some reason not many preachers have the courage to preach the grace of giving regularly to their people. Preachers have got to change for the gospel's sake, and for the sake of each believer's understanding the grace of giving and the *expectancy to receive from God.*

That's why I'm teaching you this truth of God, that Jesus was not poor in the sense people speak of poverty. He not only was not poor in that sense, He had the grace of giving and by the grace of God in our hearts we too have the grace of giving. But we must not let it lie dormant in our hearts. We must rise up in this grace and minister unto Jesus with the giving of our tithes and offerings—as *seeds of our faith.* In return God will open the windows of Heaven to us, and He will rebuke the devourers for our sake (Malachi 3:10,11).

Are you hearing what the Spirit is saying to you concerning this great truth of the grace of giving becoming reality in your life this very hour? I believe God is speaking inside you. But it is not enough for God to speak inside you—you must listen! As Dr. Larry Lea in his great book, *The Hearing Ear*, says, “Have a hearing ear!” You can do it if you *will* to do it.

#### **4. Jesus Said to Sell All We Have. Doesn't That Mean He Intended His Followers to Be Poor?**

Here is one more badly misinterpreted scripture which many use to prove that Jesus was poor, and that He also wants you to be poor.

I remember how it once hindered me.

Look at Matthew 19:21: **“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come and follow me.”**

Even Jesus' own disciples who had followed Him so closely, when they heard His words to this rich young man, had trouble with this. They knew Jesus was not poor. As His team members, their financial needs were supplied by Him. And knowing that He not only ministered to the poor but had them to help the poor also, they were shocked that Jesus would tell anyone to sell all he had. You can understand how it was a shock, can't you?

Peter, the most vocal of the team, said: **“Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?”** (v. 27).

Jesus took careful time to help Peter and the entire group to understand that

His statement to the rich young man to “sell all” did *not* apply to every believer. This young man was trying to give himself to God without giving any substantial amount of his money to the Lord. Jesus would not allow him to separate himself and his money—they are one and the same in the eyes of God. That is, all we are and all we have belong to God. God is our Source. Money is not our source, people are not, nothing is except God alone.

Also, Jesus was saying that nothing can take the place of our giving—not even any amount of religion. Giving is a *grace*, giving is a *ministry*, giving is a *seed*, giving is a *covenant*. When you desire to walk with Jesus, the man, as your personal Savior and Lord *and* your Source, you will count it an honor to bring God your tithes and offerings. Remember, your tithe is the Lord’s already, you can only *bring* it to Him. If you don’t do it, no matter how much you appear to be right in the sight of God, you are just like the rich young ruler, who went away sorrowfully because he wanted to keep what belonged to God for himself. It says, **“He went away sorrowful”** (v. 22). Many believers wonder about a certain type of sorrowfulness in their spirit. *They are those who want to give Jesus their lives but keep their money to themselves.*

Jesus’ reply here also indicates if you do not minister unto Jesus with your money as an act of your faith, you cannot live in a flow of ongoing miracles. Indeed, you don’t have any Bible basis to expect a miracle any more than the rich young ruler did. He refused to enter into the grace of giving, to actually make a ministry with his money, which is what Jesus meant. And although he had money, he never knew the unspeakable joy of expecting a miracle as a result of giving some of it and doing it in faith.

This rich young man actually chose to let Satan deceive him into believing that Jesus, whom he evidently had believed to be poor, wanted him to give away all his financial possessions and be poor also. Give him credit, however, he knew that in and of itself that would be a bad deal. But he permitted Satan to blind his eyes to what Jesus was offering him in return.

Very quickly Jesus explained to His shocked disciples,

**And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. (vv. 29,30).**

Jesus said that what we receive back from our giving would be for *this life*. And in addition we will inherit everlasting life. In this same scene as described in Mark 10:21-30, Jesus says:

**One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give**

to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Notice He says “**But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time**” (v. 30). He also said, “*with persecutions*” (v. 30).

I can personally assure you out of my own personal experience and the experiences of countless others I know of who have been seed-faith givers and receivers (sowers and reapers) of whom people are jealous and envious, that this is true. Also, Satan himself who doesn't own one particle of this Earth, one drop of water, one ounce of silver or gold—or anything of God's Earth and its fullness—is livid with rage when a believer gets his spiritual understanding opened that *Jesus was not poor and doesn't want His followers to be poor.*

Jesus has the devil's number. He says, “**The thief cometh not but for to steal and kill and to destroy...**” (see John 10:10).

The next time someone throws Jesus' words to the rich young ruler at you in attempting to convince you that Jesus was poor and wants you to be poor, remember the context in which He said them. And unless you have this rich young man's spirit, Jesus' words to him do not apply to you at all.

There are *other* scriptures that are commonly misunderstood to mean that Jesus was poor.

However, I used these four because they're the ones I hear repeated the most. Also I chose them because misinterpretations of these very passages had a bad effect on me at one time.

Just recently I heard a well-known spiritual leader speaking on national

television against millions of dollars being used by the church and special ministries. He said, "After all Jesus had only one robe; He had no place to lay His head. He lived in poverty." He ended by asking for his viewers to send him money for the important work of God he was doing around the world.

I noticed that the eloquent flow of words of his message became halting sentences when he took up the offering. He knew he had to have donations to pay the TV stations carrying the program and to meet his payroll and other bills. I noticed also he wore an apology on his countenance for even asking for money. He made me feel bad again as I had as a boy, the son of a preacher who had given his life for the gospel, yet never felt able to ask for his own needs to be supplied.

If that leader would grasp the truth about Jesus' not being poor and give his hearers a correct interpretation of these misunderstood scriptures, he would be helping his viewers. They would get an honest appreciation of having the grace of giving as part of making their money a ministry of money and its importance to God's kingdom on Earth and to mankind, as well as to themselves. If he had a right understanding of these scriptures, his attitude would be different and his viewers would be positively influenced. People always pick up more on attitudes than words. The one scripture he should have stood on is Jesus' statement, "**The labourer is worthy of his hire**" (Luke 10:7). He should feel honored to be a minister of the gospel and feel privileged to give those he helps the opportunity to support his ministry.

If you think so little of yourself in doing the greatest work on Earth; if you carry a "hang-dog" look, and apologize for asking—or expecting to receive—for what is duly yours, then you will find you not only cause God's work to be hurt, but your loss of self-worth will diminish your own effectiveness for God. The saddest thing of all is it will make you "double-minded" about what God says is rightfully yours as it did my preacher father. On the one hand, in place of what Jesus called "wages worthy of your hire," you will carry an inner sadness that cripples your enthusiasm. On the other hand, when plenty comes, your joy over it will tend to make you feel you have no right to so much. And people will sense it in you as a negative factor. This is the meaning in which I felt my father allowed himself to become "double-minded."

*I've never seen in the Word of God where Jesus was ashamed of His house. He never apologized for His treasury. He wore His unique robe without being intimidated. He gladly received the ministry of money from those He had saved and delivered. He knew He would be buried in a rich man's tomb and did not refuse it.*

I sincerely believe, except for those times we have evidence that being

without money is for the glory of God and our own holiness, that each of us should have all the money we need which is in harmony with the Word of God and a consistent Christian life. Of course, we must be willing to work and to do a good job. In my attitude, in my work, in my faith, and in my determination to reap from my seeds sown, I am totally committed to having my needs met **“according to His riches by Christ Jesus in glory”** (see Philippians 4:19). And I am dedicated to helping everybody I can to get their needs met in the same way. God is a good God and I aim to serve Him in this manner.

What is your decision? I’m expecting it to be positive as you take the necessary faith steps to correct any misunderstanding you have had on Jesus being poor. You deserve better.

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. *On Jesus having no place to lay His head.*

Remind yourself you, too, may have cancellations of important plans and trips but that is not the end. It didn’t stop Jesus, it didn’t stop me, it won’t stop you.

Don’t blame God for bad things happening to you. Put that on the devil where it belongs and hold on to Jesus’ promise He has come to give you more abundant life.

2. *On Peter and John saying they had no silver or gold.*

Make yourself see the truth they had to have an offering to enter the temple, they had their share of the “pooled resources” of the community of believers of which they were leaders, they were not yielding to the lame beggar’s request for alms because they knew money alone would not make this man walk, and they refused to offer him a substitute for what they had to heal him, **“Faith in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,”** which they freely gave him and which produced his miracle!

Remember the use of faith and money are both a ministry. Choose to use the one to meet the need at hand. Believe Jesus doesn’t want you to be without either faith or money.

3. *On Jesus becoming poor for our sakes that we might become rich.*

Remind yourself that if those who misunderstand this scripture insist that Jesus’ becoming poor includes “financially,” then it has to mean also that He will provide for us “financially.” Repeat that. Believe instead that God will provide sufficient finances consistent with His Word and our living a consistent godly life.

*How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor*

Also, remember He became poor only in comparison with the riches He gave up in Heaven. Since He had to live as a human person with normal financial obligations personally, and for His team, it did not mean He lived in poverty, nor does it mean for you or those you're responsible for to live in poverty.

Tell yourself it took money for Jesus, it takes money for you. So when things are challenging, DON'T GIVE UP!

4. *On Jesus telling the rich young man to give away his possessions.*

Remind yourself Jesus will allow no follower of His to give himself to God but not his possessions. Your money is an extension of you. Your money is what you did to earn it, so what you do with it is what you do with yourself.



## Jesus' Attitude Kept Him From Being Poor

**A**ttitude! Everything is in attitude. Your whole attitude about Jesus' being poor must change, once and for all. There is no middle ground. Jesus was not poor, and only did without on a few occasions, such as that brief time in Samaria. It is clear His attitude was that God had provided the opportunity for Him to have His needs met, and the needs of His team to do His works.

On one occasion He and His disciples—His team—did not have the temple tax money at hand. When there was no earthly way to get the money, He gave the command of faith to Peter to go **“cast a hook into the sea”** (Matthew 17:27). Although Peter's mind didn't understand it, he turned his faith loose and did as Jesus said. The first fish he caught had money in its mouth. “Take it,” Jesus said, “and pay our taxes.”

Clearly it was a miracle.

Jesus was so determined not to be poor or not to fail to have sufficient money to pay the bills, He brought His faith into play with a fish. And with one of His team members to believe it could be done, it happened.

If you can adopt this same attitude that faith can make way where there is no way, humanly speaking, and put your faith to work, the miracle-working power of Jesus who wasn't poor will also put the needed money into your hand.

But if you reject the wealth God has in His ownership of the Earth you live on and of the Heaven you're going to, then Satan will steal your provision. He will take from you the very thought that you can have finances consistent with the Word of God and with the living of a godly life.

Jesus said, **“Satan hath nothing in me”** (see John 14:30). That is, Satan had no hook in Jesus to hang his ideas on. Have you allowed Satan to have something in you? What about your attitude toward money? Who do you think owns the wealth of the Earth? God or Satan? Have you thought about it? Do you know what the Bible says?

Are you uncertain that God is a good God? Are you afraid He does not care about you? Even when you prosper do you give the glory to God? Do you minister unto Jesus with your money? Are you a tither? Or do you believe giving

your tithes and offerings to God will diminish the amount of money you have and fill you with fear for the future? You see, that's an attitude. And it is you who determines what your attitude will be toward money.

Since this book is about Jesus not being poor, and therefore holding Him up as your example in all things including finances, I want to point out that there is a fuller, richer life—spiritually, physically, financially—for you and for your family. But you'll have to battle Satan for it. It's a battle every step of the way, starting in your soul, and going on into your physical and financial being.

## **Six Ways to Check Your Attitudes**

*First, Jesus labored, and you have to labor.* There are no free rides with God. There are no substitutes for honest toil, for working smart, for earning the respect of those you work for or of those who work for you.

*Second, Jesus believed money comes from God and that God's people have a right to all God has.* He had no guilt feelings about His house, His treasury, His seamless robe, or about the many people who ministered to Him of their substance. He felt great having enough money that He could give to the poor (had He been poor, He couldn't have given to the poor).

At the same time Jesus never let money possess Him. He never loved money for money's sake. He knew that **“the love of money is the root of all evil”** (1 Timothy 6:10). Money is not the root of all evil, but the love of or the lust for it above everything else. He made money His servant to work His will for good. He was good so His money was good.

*Third, Jesus included the getting of money by faith, including when it took a miracle.* He made the Father His Source, not any man or any earthly thing. When one earthly source of supply dried up, such as running out of money to pay His taxes, He put His faith, and that of Peter, into action to get the necessary money by a miracle. Jesus never divided the natural from the supernatural. To Him all things belonged to God, and God was the Source of all supply.

*Fourth, Jesus practiced seed-faith, saying, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you”* (Matthew 17:20).

There are three ways to seed-faith Jesus refers to here. First, faith in God, meaning God is your Source and you reach God by your faith. So Jesus says you are to make your faith as a seed you sow, no matter how small it is. He mentions the mustard seed since it was the smallest of all seeds, suggesting that even a little faith can grow and produce both naturally and supernaturally. Second, you

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sow your seed first. That is, you mix your seed with faith so it will connect you with God who owns it all. Third, after *you sow* your seed, *you speak* to your mountain to be removed from your life, meaning, you expect a miracle!

- ◆ God is your Source.
- ◆ Sow your seed and speak the word.
- ◆ Expect a miracle.

Jesus says when you do these three things, “nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

Again, I say to you, *attitude is everything*. Whatever is in your spirit, faith or doubt, comes out. Attitude, positive or negative, can't be held down. There are no accidents in attitude. Attitude runs true to form, every time.

Stop looking to God as your Source, and you'll lose out with God, and the things that count in this life and in eternity will lose their meaning. Keep looking to God as your Source of total supply, and if one method fails, He will open up another. God literally controls all sources of supply, the expected and the unexpected, because in trusting Him as your Source there is a straight line of supply back to you. And it will never fail because God can never fail!

*Fifth, Jesus had the spirit of a finisher.* He never gave up, although He had many opportunities to quit on His mission. In Nazareth they tried to kill Him when He announced the good news. In Capernaum after His greatest miracles they totally rejected Him. In Samaria they drove Him out of their social and religious circles. At Gethsemane He could have called twelve legions of angels to deliver Him from being taken to the cross, but He refused to do it. In Jerusalem they cried, “**Crucify Him! Crucify Him!**”

On the cross, God turned His back on Him, and He cried, “**My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?**” At that critical moment His disciples forsook Him and fled.

But Jesus held on. He wouldn't quit. As the last drop of blood was leaving His lacerated body, seeing that He had obeyed God with His total life, He raised His voice and shouted, “It is finished!” Then hanging His head on a pulseless chest, He said, “**Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.**”

Jesus was a finisher!

Having the spirit of a finisher is what Paul talks about when he speaks of sowing your seeds of faith. In Galatians 6:9 he said, “**And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**” IF YOU DON'T GIVE UP!

*Sixth, Jesus listened to the Father, not men.* Peter rebuked Him for saying He must go to Jerusalem and die. Jesus said, **“Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men”** (Matthew 16:23).

He was listening to God and refused to get on the wave length Peter was listening to.

In the days of the Morse code, when our communication system operated on the dots and dashes of the telegraph system, a call went out for operators. Immediately the employment office was filled with applicants. They sat there all morning—waiting.

A young man walked in and started to sit down when suddenly he straightened up, turned and walked through a door. Soon he came back out. “You all can go home now, I got the job,” he said.

“What do you mean, you got the job? You’ve just arrived and we’ve been waiting here all morning,” the others angrily replied.

“Didn’t you hear the dots and dashes?”

“We heard a noise.”

“Well, that noise you heard was the dots and dashes of the telegraph saying, ‘Do you read me? Do you read me? If you read me, come in, you have the job.’ Well, I’ve been busy learning the Morse code and I could read it.”

Sometimes God seems to speak without any expectation on our part, but that’s not His rule. Jesus said, **“I came to do my Father’s work”** (see John 5:36), meaning He prepared. He was listening, He was anticipating, He was expecting. When God spoke to Him *He heard*. As for men, He was attuned to their needs, to listen to their cries and to their faith. But for direction He listened to His Father... and only to Him.

A noted physician in Tulsa invited me to play golf with him. After we teed off the first hole, he said, “Oral, will you tell me how to hear God’s voice?” And that’s all we talked about. It was the real reason he wanted to play golf with me.

Why? His medical practice was highly successful but the rest of his life was messed up. He went to church, he was good and kind, but listening to men in his investments and other parts of his life had him near shipwreck. He wanted to know how to listen to God.

The best way I know is to do just that—listen. When you hear a sermon, listen for that one word, that one thought you know is different from men’s words and thoughts.

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When you read a book, look for that idea that your spirit responds to which you know is not men's idea. You have within you created by God a "hearing ear." But you have to separate the voices of men from God's. His is different.

I've discovered when I hear God I hear words put together, in an impression or audibly, that no human can do. God's words always harmonize with the Bible, they're always practical, they always get to the heart of the issue. And they always cause you to do *good*, not evil.

Other than listening, expect to hear God speak to you. The entire Bible is God speaking to you. As you read and study it, and hear it, expect a word or a statement to leap up and become personal to you. It's there for you. Don't let it pass you by.

Listening. Expecting. Don't forget to rely on the Holy Spirit. He is the unlimited invisible spirit of the reason for Christ's being inside you, if you have let Him fill you. He is a Person. A person speaks. The Holy Spirit speaks. Everything Jesus was on Earth He is now in His unlimited, invisible presence inside you! Speak your thoughts by the Spirit as if Jesus were standing beside you. Get a two-way conversation going. God is not dead, you are not dead—*TALK TO ONE ANOTHER!*

To me, the bottom line on why I believe Jesus was not poor, in the sense so many think, is that poverty is all-pervading, and nothing of a negative nature could get charge of Jesus' attitude.

Was He without money at times? On a few occasions it appears He was. But it never reached the level of pervading His spirit or of being a constant in His life, or in His team.

Was He denied lodging at times either physically or in the social and religious attitudes of people, such as at Samaria? Yes. But it never stopped Him from doing the works of His Father.

Was He in danger? Many times. They couldn't get to Him until He said, "**Father, it is finished!**" They didn't take His spirit out of His body. He said, "**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.**" His attitude was He was a finisher!

To me it is Satan's ploy to cause us to believe that Christianity is a weak faith, that Jesus couldn't take care of His own financial needs or leave an example that we can use our faith for our needs to be met.

Being poor, having to deal with poverty, is always something we have to arouse our attitude to face, to deal with, to overcome. I love what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "**Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to**

**triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.”**

“Always to triumph” means in every way, in all times, in all levels of success.

What stands before you like a snarling dog this instant? Desperate money needs? Desperate physical needs? Desperate spiritual needs? Desperate family needs? Other desperate needs? I ask myself the same questions. I know Jesus faced the most desperate needs imaginable, perhaps beyond our comprehension.

Because Jesus’ attitude was under His control, it kept Him from being poor no matter how many opportunities were before Him to be poor and poverty-stricken in every area of His life. I’ve got to believe that our attitude is also important in our situation. Do you agree?

Then with Jesus’ life before us, in the role model He left for us, in the Bible He gave us, in the Holy Spirit He sent us, in the “spirit of being a finisher” He left us, let’s take charge of our attitude. Let’s start now!

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Remember with you, as with Jesus, attitude is everything. There is no middle ground about Jesus living a poverty-stricken life. You must make your decision concerning your attitude whether He was in charge, or not, of things financial concerning His life, His team, His gospel, His followers.

Study Jesus’ statement, “Satan hath nothing in me,” and how it applies to you.

Remember, you have to battle Satan over your attitude concerning your soul, and about having the financial means to carry on your life and witness successfully.

2. Keep in mind Jesus said, “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” As a follower of Jesus your higher employment is by Him. He says if you labor well you are worthy to receive His best. Choose to believe that. By your will determine you will labor for Him and expect the best of wages, the kind that God makes possible.
3. Keep reminding yourself that Jesus as “the seed of David” practiced seed-faith, and tells you to have faith based on (1) God being your Source, (2) mixing faith with your giving, (3) based on your seed sown, expect a miracle.

Put deep into your consciousness *attitude is everything*. Attitude runs

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true to form every time, whether it's positive or negative. Take charge of your attitude!

4. Have the spirit of a finisher. Jesus did. Paul did. DON'T GIVE UP!
5. Listen to God, not men. Remember the story of the young man who got the job as a telegrapher because he didn't just hear the noise of the dots and dashes, he LISTENED to their meaning.

Tell yourself the way to hear God is to *listen*. Listen for that word, that idea, that might come at any time.

6. Rely on the Holy Spirit. Remind yourself the Holy Spirit is a Person. A person talks. As the unlimited, invisible presence of Jesus inside you, He is speaking to you. *TALK TO ONE ANOTHER*.

Bear in mind at all times, I can be in charge of my attitude by the help of the Holy Spirit...AND I AM IN CHARGE OF MY ATTITUDE!





## Learning the Truth About Money

**T**he Achilles' heel in the finances of the church of Jesus Christ, including all its denominations and independent branches—and individual believers—is the subconscious belief that somehow the world should control the money. By default we permit Satan to steal most of the wealth and put it in the hands of people who do not put God first in their lives. This relegates most believers to second-class status in the world's eyes.

The *second major weakness* in the body of Christ in the financial area occurs when believers become wealthy and influential, and either feel they outgrow the little thinking of the church, or they choose to allow money to dominate them. If they wish to remain a church member, they usually change to a church that requires little of them, or they drop out of sight spiritually, secretly saying, “Well, I don't need to make a fanatical commitment of my life; I have money, and besides God will get me into Heaven some way.”

Often when such individuals are earning small salaries or their business is small, they are zealous tithers and witnesses for the Lord. Once they grow financially and in influence in their area, too often they leave the old landmarks, and go the way of the world.

I've met many such persons. When they were willing to talk, or asked me my opinion, I discovered that lurking somewhere in their subconscious was the belief that Jesus was poor. When they ceased being poor, but still felt deep spiritual feelings, they faced a real dilemma. For one thing giving the tenth out of a larger amount became harder for them than out of a former small amount. Or if they continued tithing and continued growing, a guilt feeling came over them that perhaps they were doing something wrong. Their peers praised them, but more deeply committed Christians felt uncomfortable with their prosperity, or even suspected them of getting their money dishonestly.

Another problem occurs when really bright people give their lives to God and come under the teaching of giving tithes and offerings without having been taught the corresponding principle of God's opening the windows of Heaven. They do not understand that He will multiply the seed sown, that He will link giving with receiving, sowing with reaping, and that we should be living in a constant state of expectation along with our giving. When the return appears,

there is an unnatural reluctance to accept or a feeling of selfishness that to receive anything back is not in order.

## **Even Preachers Must Overcome This**

To me, all this bad stuff comes from a wrong understanding that Jesus supposedly was poor and that poverty is part and parcel of Christianity.

One of the best illustrations of this was with the pastors who were co-chairmen of my first crusade under the big tent in 1948. Their churches were struggling financially, and they and their families were on such a small income they were really suffering. They were very much like my family, when my preacher father was bound by the misinterpreted scriptures that Jesus was poor.

Once the crusade began to grow, and thousands were thronging the tent and the offerings were large enough to pay the bills, these two co-chairmen finally received a love offering for me and my family. It was quite generous. After Evelyn and I set aside our tithe, the Lord laid these two pastors on my heart. I went to them, opened my wallet and extracted two twenty-dollar bills and handed one to each pastor.

“Oh, no, Oral,” they said, “we can’t take that from you.”

Now both these men of God were tithers, hard workers, men of faith, and had gone all out to bring my crusade to their city. They had financial needs, but when offered some money they fell back in their minds to a subconscious guilt feeling they were not to receive anything back. When I pressed them and they still refused, I started to put the two twenty-dollar bills back in my pocket. Quick as a flash, they grabbed the bills out of my hands.

I said, “Brethren, what’s the matter? You just refused to take these bills.”

They looked sort of sheepish, but had no explanation.

Here God had impressed me to give them an offering out of my own blessing, and at first old negative teaching had given them a false humility. Before I could return the bills to my wallet the more positive part of their inner selves asserted itself and they snatched the twenty-dollar bills from my hands. God had sent a financial miracle toward them, and they had almost let it pass them by.

By the end of that three-week crusade, as God anointed me to open the Bible, teaching on whole person deliverance and the blessing of the more abundant life Jesus came to give, both pastors had fought their way out of bad teaching and misinterpreted scripture about Jesus’ presumed poverty. Not only were they and their families suffering unnecessarily, but the people of their churches, in spite of

their tithes and offerings, were unknowingly letting the miracles coming toward them pass them by. To me it was a weakness through which Satan stole money God was sending them, and at the same time causing those in the world system to pay no attention to their stand for Christ.

I hated it then. I hate even more today to see Satan, the god of this world, controlling the vast amounts of God's silver and gold, while God's Spirit-filled and "signs and wonders"-believing people have so little.

It's not God's fault or will! It's not the teaching of the Bible! It's not the role model of Jesus! It is the choice of too many of God's sincere people who haven't taken the time or the interest to find out the truth of God about their own abundant life that their own Savior promised all of us! You say you believe the Bible? You declare Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord? Well, then wake up and take the whole Bible in proper context, including what it says about money, without which you can't live or pay your bills or give God anything. What about, **"It is God who giveth the power to get wealth"** (see Deuteronomy 8:18)? If it is God who has put the ability and faith inside you to get the money you need, and some left over, why don't you accept it as a personal part of your relationship with God? Why don't you make it an integral part of your attitude, instead of ignoring what your Heavenly Father said? Why not go for it starting now?

How about Proverbs 13:22, **"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just"**? If God has laid up the wealth of the wicked for His people, why are you so content, if you are, for them to have it while you have so little? Can you not use your faith and honest labor to earn your part of the wealth Satan has used the wicked to steal from you and all God's people?

If you really believed the Word of God about the amount of money God has provided you to fulfill His will in your life, if every time you *seeded* all your tithes and offerings from every dollar you earned, you instantly released your faith to expect to receive—being watchful to see what God would send "from out of the blue"—you would find yourself tasting of the more abundant life which includes money along with all the spiritual, physical, family and other blessings of God.

There's never been such an opportunity to hear God's Word on salvation, healing, witnessing, tithes and offerings, seed-faith, giving and receiving, as today. Preachers are waking up to their own responsibility to Jesus' statement that **"The labourer is worthy of his hire"** (Luke 10:7). And to Paul's, **"Muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn"** (1 Corinthians 9:9). Or don't stop the ox as he treads out the corn from eating enough to keep up his strength.

And preachers are testing God, as He said in Malachi 3:10 concerning bringing all the tithe into the storehouse of God's work—including their own tithe—and proving to themselves God opens the windows of Heaven to them. In this way they have the proof God does what He says, and with it the courage to look the people of their church in the eye and tell them the great honor it is to give God His tithe and His offerings. The pastors can give their churches absolute guarantee He will open the windows of Heaven to *them—and*. teach them to expect to receive it with a thankful heart, and to vow to tithe, then to receive back from God, *the rest of their lives!*

*The next thing ordinary Christian people are waking up to is that they are somebody in God.* After bringing God all their tithes and offerings, *they are learning to receive back.* They see it puts them on an equal footing with anybody in the whole world! God deliver us from an inferiority complex, a non-receiving attitude, a closed-door spirit to receiving the miracles that are coming toward us. And He will, if we choose it, if we will it, if we actually do it!

There's one other weakness through which Satan steals your money, and the finances God wants you to have. That's cheating—treating others without honesty and integrity. The Bible says in Proverbs 16:11, **“A just weight and balance are the Lord's: all the weights of the bag are his work.”**

God loves an honest weight and He penalizes an unjust one. You can be sure it will be revealed.

## **A Farmer and a Baker**

A farmer and baker got together and agreed to exchange a pound of butter for a large loaf of bread. As time went on the farmer noticed his large loaf of bread seemingly getting smaller. Sure enough he discovered it was decreasing in size.

One day he accosted the baker who replied, “Come back here a minute.” He put the farmer's last pound of butter on the scales. “See for yourself,” he said, “what it really weighs.” In all honesty he replied, “We've both been cheating, haven't we?” Right then and there they made a decision to get honest with God and each other, and the unjust weights never happened again.

I heard of one brother who was complaining to God. “God, I need a shovelful of your supply, but it seems you're giving it to me in a teaspoon.” In his spirit he heard God say back, “Then stop using a teaspoon to give to My work, and I'll take care of the shovelful coming back to you.”

But what about Judas, someone asks, who was a cheat and a thief. Why did Jesus choose him to be one of the twelve apostles, appointing him to be His treasurer?

Well, the Bible doesn't say Judas was a bad person when Jesus chose him to be one of the twelve.

Judas was a follower of Jesus, an able man of God who fitted in well with the twelve, who with them healed the sick and cast out devils, and who ably handled all the money people were ministering unto Jesus. When Judas chose to let the devil enter him, he turned bad both spiritually and in his financial integrity.

There was a Judas who was good and trustworthy. There was a Judas who allowed Satan to enter into him and that Judas chose to follow the devil's plans rather than obey Jesus. Later this Judas gave up. After seeing what he had done in betraying Jesus, he realized that the money he got for his foul deed didn't satisfy, and he committed suicide.

I contend that money didn't ruin Judas, he ruined himself. He allowed himself to love money above loving Jesus. It became the root in his heart that finally made him an evil man—even after he had been a follower of Jesus, an apostle, and Jesus' treasurer.

Money is neutral, it takes after the one who has it. It's a force for the greatest good or the worst evil. It's the choice of every person which it will be.

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Remind yourself not to let yourself believe you are not to have money. You are not a second-class citizen but God's child.
2. Remember also when you do prosper: Don't let your money dominate you. Don't say you can make it without God.
3. Don't be reluctant to expect to receive back from God when you give to Him. God is not a stingy God, but a good God! Poverty is not God's gift, a supply of your needs is.

It is Satan who is trying to steal your money or make you feel unworthy to be blessed financially by God.

4. God is sending miracles toward you, or past you all the time. Be alert to recognize your miracle—don't let it pass you by, then blame God for not helping you!

Remember the two co-chairmen of my first big tent crusade who at first refused to accept what God wanted them to have.

5. Remind yourself that every time you sow your seed to release your faith and go into a spirit of expectancy.

There's never been as great an opportunity to learn God's principles of

giving and receiving as today.

6. Wake up to the fact God doesn't want you to be arrogant and self-centered, but He does want you, as His child, to know you are something!

An inferiority complex, a non-expecting, non-receiving attitude—a closed-door spirit to receiving God's best—is not God's will for you.

Don't cheat yourself!

7. Remember the story of the farmer's butter and the baker's bread and how they cheated each other, each to their own loss.

Remind yourself God hates an unjust deal.

Get honest with your brother, your fellow man! **“For with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again”** (Luke 6:38).

8. Remember Judas. He wasn't always a bad person or a betrayer. Jesus chose him, trusted him, put him in charge of his treasury. Judas was among the twelve who were very, very close to Jesus.

Remind yourself you can backslide in the midst of Christian people, even in church, if you don't minister unto Jesus.

Money didn't ruin Judas, he ruined himself. Your money is neutral, it takes after the one who has it—you!

You can use it for good or bad, the choice is yours.

Jesus is believing you'll use it right!

## You Can Break the Spirit of Poverty

If you are living in poverty—if you believe you are poor because God wants you to be—you have fallen under the influence of the spirit of poverty. For you to progress from poverty into the blessing and provision God has for you, you need to break that spirit of poverty off your life. The good news is that you can begin to do it right now, right where you are.

Let me give you six ways to get rid of the spirit of poverty.

1. Study the Word of God about how other people broke the spirit of poverty.
2. Admit that the spirit of poverty is afflicting you.
3. Begin to give generously out of your need.
4. Believe that God wants you to prosper financially.
5. Decide to expect God to meet your every need.
6. Find a church whose pastor preaches good news to the poor, as Jesus did.

Now let's look at these ways in detail.

*First, study the Word of God about how other people did it.*

Start with Luke 4:18 where Jesus said, **“He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”** Gospel means “good news.” And that’s what Jesus preached, good news.

A mother with several little children in a big city wrote me there was one thing about me on TV she liked, and one she didn’t. She said, “Oral Roberts, every Sunday morning when I turn on my TV to your program, you stand there with a big smile on your face like you’re on top of the world and you say, ‘Something good is going to happen to you!’”

She said, “The first time I heard you say, ‘Something good is going to happen to you,’ I said, ‘Yeah, sure.’”

She went on in her letter saying she was black, she was a widow, she had nine children. They all lived in one big room in one of the poorest sections in her city. I’ve preached crusades in her city and I remembered once you drive out of the big financial districts and areas of fine homes, abruptly you’re in some real

ghettos. I pictured her living in such an area. I realized she was the poorest of the poor. The chances that she and her nine children had of getting out of such an area and amounting to something were slim. At least she had a TV set and could hear a man, who at one time was part of a family whom even the poor called poor, say, "Something good is going to happen to you!" I wondered what the one thing was she didn't like about me. As I read the rest of her letter she let me have it.

"Oral Roberts," she said, "I want that something good you're talking about, my nine children, from the baby to the oldest, want it, but after you make us feel so good you tell me to give out of my need and expect a miracle."

"Now what kind of preaching is that? I have a Bible and I take my children to church every Sunday but I've never heard any sermons on giving out of your need and expecting a miracle. I've been giving my little bit. When I can, I put a penny or a nickel in the hands of my nine little ones to give. But no miracles have happened to us. You make me so glad, then so mad. One part of me says you know something about God I don't know; the other side says you just want me to send you money which I haven't got, and that's what I don't like about you."

Then she added, "I bet you won't read this letter, you're too busy saying, 'Something good is going to happen to you!' If you do, write me back and tell me *how* something good is going to happen to me and my nine children."

By the time I finished reading her letter, visualizing her condition, tears were flowing down my cheeks. The husband who had sired her nine children was gone. She was not only at what the government calls the poverty level, she was so far below it she had to reach up to touch bottom. She had also said in her letter she'd seen Oral Roberts University on TV and all the happy students. She said she dreamed of sending her children there if they could ever get out of high school someday.

I thought to myself, she hasn't got the slightest idea the poverty I've known, or how I know Jesus cares about poor people. She does not know that the reason I say, "Something good is going to happen to you," is to believe the good news of the gospel. Jesus said in Luke 4:18 He came to preach the gospel to the poor.

It was evident she was a Christian and a church-going woman, seeing to it all nine children went with her. In my mind's eye I could see them sitting in church. But I believed I saw something else. By the time she got those children up and dressed on Sunday, and by the time they got to church, all she could think of was poverty and more poverty. I asked myself, "Do you suppose her preacher, other than being nice to her and seeing that some help reached her, was preaching 'good news to the poor,' including her and her family?" When I wrote her back I



knew it was no time to be sympathetic. It was time to be compassionate. The difference is that sympathy is human and says, “Oh, I’m so sorry, I wish I could help you.” But compassion is divine and it means you feel an almost irresistible urge from God to rid the person of their problem or trouble. Compassion, unlike sympathy, doesn’t just bring tears. It makes you *angry*. It makes you act. Well, I wrote her a letter that made her angry enough to do something.

This leads me to point two. *To get the spirit of poverty off your back, you need to admit that this spirit is afflicting you.*

I told the black woman that I wasn’t black, but I wasn’t white either, but part Indian. I said that I had been so poor I had to leave home at fifteen to make my own way. At seventeen I came down with tuberculosis, a disease that Indians have more than any other. When I was taken ill, Papa and Mama lived in two small rented rooms. They didn’t have enough money to pay the doctor to come see me. If the doctor hadn’t known Papa was a preacher he wouldn’t have come. The same is true of the two others that came when I got worse. I told her I’d gone from 165 pounds to 120 pounds on a 6’1” frame. I was skin and bones, and burned up with fever. Even when my folks had had the proper food for me, I had no appetite. At the end of five months of being bedfast, I lived on milk with raw eggs beaten into it.

I said, “Maybe I wasn’t as bad off as you are but I was a close second. At least you talk like you’re a Christian and I wasn’t, you go to church and I couldn’t.”

Then I said, “But there’s one thing about the spirit possessing me at that time and the one you’ve got. They’re exactly alike. It’s a spirit of poverty. I didn’t know then that it could be broken, and you don’t now, because neither I then nor you now have heard that Jesus was not poor and He doesn’t want us to be poor.”

Back came another hot letter. “Oh, yeah, but Jesus healed you. I haven’t got anything except my children and they’re hungry most of the time. How I’ve kept them out of crime, I don’t know. Why don’t you just tell me if Jesus doesn’t want me to be poor, what’s He going to do about it.”

*Three, breaking the spirit of poverty DOES involve your giving out of your need.*

I wrote my black friend, “Jesus is going to tell you exactly what He told Paul to tell the poorest of the poor Christians in Macedonia. He told them to be generous with the little bit they had and to help the saints in Jerusalem, who had lost everything, even their homes.

“Sister,” I said, “Turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians 8 and read the whole thing, especially the first five verses. Paul called their financial condition ‘deep poverty,’ and that was at a time when people were really poor. So their deep

poverty was at least as bad as yours.”

I gathered up all my courage because I knew I had to tell her God’s truth or her condition would worsen. There was no telling what those nine children’s bitterness over their condition would cause them to do. I told her that in verse one, Paul said Christians are given the grace of God to give, that giving is a grace, or giving out of a gratitude that Jesus has saved your soul. And since it seemed to me from her letter that she was saved, that meant she had an extra grace—bestowed on her by God Himself—to *give out of her deep need*. I told her that verse two laid down God’s plan that no matter how she was “afflicted with the great trial” of “deep poverty,” she should remember the joy of her salvation right in the midst of it. She needed to start giving her little in a different way: since she was needy when she gave, to enter giving out of her need in a conscious way—and with a purpose, and that would be a step of her faith. In order to give of the little she and her nine children had, she’d certainly have to believe that God said if she’d do it, it would, “abound unto her riches.” In other words, “abound” meant MORE.

I thought to myself, Oral Roberts, she’ll never understand this. She’ll never believe it. Then I thought, but one day in my desperate condition of illness and the spirit of poverty eating me up, I understood it. I believed it.

Out loud, I said, “If I did, she can.”

*Four, Christians have to believe what the Word of God says about m-o-n-e-y, without which you can’t live.*

You need to believe that Jesus wants you to prosper so much that He said, **“He has sent me to preach the good news to the poor.”**

You can do something about your spirit. You’ve got to believe Jesus was not poor, in the sense that He wanted you to be poor. The only way Jesus was poor was in the sense of comparison with all the riches He laid aside in Heaven to become a man. He became “poor” to *identify* with you and me in our humanity and needs.

Poverty was not in the spirit of Jesus, poverty was not the subject of His preaching and teaching. He did not go around showing people it was God’s will to be poor. Poverty was not a part of the kingdom of God. Jesus held up the kingdom of God as the invisible world from which—if we seek God and this His kingdom first—**“all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:33). And Jesus meant what He said and said what He meant!

Negative preachers can do you in, as much as a negative world can do you in because it hates God’s people.

I wrote that black mother advising her to check her pastor’s sermons about

tithes and offerings to the church. I instructed her to listen to see if he talked about how God would open the windows of Heaven to her and rebuke the devourer for her sake (Malachi 3:10,11). I told her to notice if he taught her to expect back from God more than she gave. And if he talked about God being her Source, rather than government or anything else.

I flatly told her that if her pastor didn't preach this, to talk to him, and if he refused to preach the Bible on this, that she should start looking for a pastor who did.

Finally, she tested me. She mailed a few very worn dollar bills that she obviously had hidden away for the day she had to have them. I wanted to send them back. She must have sensed that. "Oral Roberts, you preach seed-faith, well, let's see if it works," she said.

Soon came back the answer: not a thing had happened. I wrote her back, "It will never work just by giving money, although God tells us to give a full tenth plus offerings of all the money coming into our hands. It won't work because you can't separate your money from your Source, and your Source is God."

I asked her to read 2 Corinthians 9:10: "**Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.**" God gives seed to the sower, in this case, the money for giving, however large or small. That makes God your Source of all good coming to you. Also, God multiplies your seed sown, and increase your righteousness. That makes God your Source of multiplying back all you give.

Next, I asked her to read Philippians 4:19: "**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**"

In 2 Corinthians 9:10, God is the Source of giving seed to sow or something to give, also the Source for multiplying it back. In Philippians 4:19, God is also the Source of total supply. Therefore, what you give, no matter what part of God's work you give through, have it clearly in your spirit—and your mind—that you're giving it to God your Source. I say it again, when you give, be sure you have in mind you're giving to God your Source.

Then when you give to God your Source, *expect to receive multiplied back from God your Source*. Source is the key. That Source is not a human being or a thing: it is God Himself and there is no other! If you can get this one fact of the Word of God inside you you're already nearly home to victory!

I could see her at home looking up those key scriptures in her Bible at least I prayed she would. I suggested as she watched me on TV to listen for my use of the word *Source*—as I always say you receive from God to give to Him your

Source, you give to God your Source you receive back from God your Source IF YOU EXPECT TO RECEIVE BACK.

One thing I have to watch is assuming that I'm saying it often enough: God is your Source. But over and over I see I'm not saying it often enough, or illustrating it well enough. I should know better.

For one thing, I find looking to God as my Source personally the toughest thing for me to do on a consistent basis. I forget He my Source, and too often find myself looking to people rather than to God. I know, however, when I practice it like I preach it, it works. I'm doing it better all the time.

It took this black woman and me writing to each other about two or three times a month for at least a year to get us communicating. No matter how much I know, or you know, about God, unless we can communicate it so the other person can and will hear it, it won't get the job done. This means we should be persistent and not give up.

But bless her, she had a keen mind and she picked up my spirit very well. So well, that she put me to the test to see if I really cared about her and really believed in giving out of our need. And that's a good test for anyone, especially a preacher since he or she is dealing in the Word of God as a divine calling.

The thrill that finally emerged was that she had grasped God was her Source, and she began to sow her seed then mix it with her faith, and then expect God to multiply it back for her to receive. How did I know?

Her letter glowed, at last. She had gained a six-room house in a nice neighborhood, better employment had opened up, she found a church that was more in tune with the Holy Spirit and seed-faith. In fact, I felt a part of her and her family. In addition to tithing to her local church from an increasing income as a result of grasping seed-faith, she is still my partner. And I learned recently that at least two of her children are planning to attend ORU. Believe me, most of the students attending ORU practice seed-faith because they see with their own eyes it works! And it works because it's God's plan.

The bottom line with this dear woman is she broke the spirit of poverty. My TV program and letters helped, but it was she herself upon grasping the truth of the Word of God and using her faith in her deep need who really met God. Through Him she changed things in her life and destiny.

And you know the more I teach these truths the better I can carry them out in my life and ministry. I hate it when I miss the mark, when I forget who my Source is, or when I fail to expect a miracle from the seeds of faith I plant.

*Five, to break the hold of the spirit of poverty, you must decide to expect God to meet your every need.*

I was acting out of a decision I'd made forty-one years ago, when I began this healing ministry, that I wouldn't preach up among the stars, but down where suffering humanity sat. I determined in spite of a good education which I was improving all the time, and still am, I would seek to use little, simple words. And I decided I would stop using adjectives and use verbs, action words, because my God is a God of action, a God of miracles, a God of the more abundant life!

This decision has gotten me in a lot of trouble with those who believe that Christianity is all spiritual and that miracles stopped when the twelve apostles died. Many of these people think it's only the government's responsibility to help the poor. They believe that while Christians should do good works, they shouldn't think about applying Jesus' healing ways to the poor, the sick, the disfranchised, with a real gospel *for the now!*

I dress nice. I drive a nice car. I live in a nice house—and I praise God for it. But it's no gift of man to me. I worked for it; I planted seed for it; I believed in miracles for it; and I use it to help me carry on this ministry. I want it to inspire faith in others.

When Evelyn and I had the first two of our four children, and I was going to college and evangelizing on the weekends, we lived in three tiny rented rooms. I had no car and no salary. On Friday afternoon after class I'd ride the city bus out to the edge of town with my little bag and put out my thumb to hitchhike as far away as one hundred miles to preach at some little church. I would take whatever they'd give me as a love offering, have the pastor drive me out to the highway after the Sunday night service, and I'd hitchhike back to Evelyn and the children. Sometimes I'd get a ride to my very door, but at other times it would take all night with three or four different cars picking me up, and I'd arrive just in time to make my morning eight o'clock class.

And, friend, I'm not too good to do it again. But I remember a day during that year when it came to me that I ought to be using my faith rather than accept my condition. I realized I had to reach my hand up to God with believing faith, rather than to hold out my thumb to hitchhike, hoping the churches I preached in would give me enough to feed my family, pay the rent and my way through college. I made that decision and that decision is still made today.

*Sixth, to get free and stay free from a spirit of poverty, find a church whose pastor preaches good news to the poor, as Jesus did.*

If you're poor, you had better care about yourself. Few others will. You better find a preacher at a church that teaches you first how to *give*, then to *receive*. You better understand that poverty is a spirit, before it becomes a steady diet of little or no money or anything else that helps you hold your head up.

My friend and colleague, Tommy Barnett, pastor of First Assembly, the largest church in Phoenix, goes with his people right out on the streets and literally picks up the poor, the homeless, the down-and-outers, and busses them to his Sunday morning services.

I remember the first time I preached to that great church packed with over 7,000 people. When Tommy presented me and I stepped on the stage, I saw seated between me and that huge congregation all those people brought in from the streets. Tommy was beaming, the congregation was excited and gave me a big welcome. But I was looking at those desperate and forgotten people—some seventy-five of them—only a few feet in front of me in the best seats in the house.

The Spirit of God went through me. I quickly turned in my Bible to Luke 4:18, and repeated what Jesus said 2,000 years ago, **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor....”** And I read the rest about Jesus also being sent to heal the brokenhearted; to deliver the captives; to give sight to the blind; to set free those who were mistreated; and to announce that this is the acceptable day of the Lord for deliverance.

In my crusades in the big tent and auditoriums, stadiums and open fields, thousands of the poor with their sickness, fears and torments have thronged me—and I have poured my ministry into them. But this was a church, a multi-million dollar church.

For the first time I was in a church with all kinds of people, like those that have thronged my healing crusades, and like the widow and her nine children.

This was Jesus’ territory. He would have felt right at home. So did I.

I preached in that church that day feeling I was standing in Jesus’ shoes. In my spirit I was sitting where these people off the streets sat. After preaching the Word of God that Jesus gave me, I went and hugged or laid hands on every one of them, with Tommy right by my side doing the same. Both of us cried, but not out of sympathy, but out of compassion—feeling that irresistible urge to rid them of their spirit of poverty and the spirit of believing God didn’t care about them!

I am a seed-sower. I do that better than anything. But Jesus teaches us not to be sloppy seed-sowers. There’s more to it. There’s looking to God as our Source. There’s following our seed-sowing—our regular tithes and offerings—with expectation that God will supply. And there’s the continuation of it, never stopping, never giving up, but keeping on, keeping on!

Is it easy? No! But it’s a lot easier than doing without God’s best—His supplying of our needs and being made a blessing to others by our Heavenly

Father.

Now will you please turn the pages back to the first page of this chapter and re-read the six ways to get rid of the spirit of poverty? Will you get serious about this and do it? As I cared deeply about this woman and her nine children—and still do—I care about you. But my caring is not enough. You’ve got to do your part. Remember, things have to be made to happen. Remember, also God will help you make them happen, if you become partners with Him in His holy Word, His gospel, and His God-called ones as they minister through His church.

Don’t live one more day with the spirit of poverty!

## Summed Up Personal Reminders

1. Remember before poverty can be actual and real in your life, it becomes a *spirit of poverty* in you.

Remind yourself the spirit of poverty comes into both poor and rich people—it’s when inside yourself you believe you can *never* have enough. Watch it when no matter how much you have, you’re never satisfied or you’re afraid you won’t make it.

2. Remind yourself you have to look inside your spirit to see if the spirit of poverty is there, regardless of how much money you’ve made or are making, and *admit* this spirit is afflicting you.

Study God’s Word about people and how they dealt with money.

3. Remind yourself that to break the spirit of poverty involves giving to God even if you have little to give.

Remember how I dealt over a year with the widow, a mother with nine children, living in one large room. Not only were they in poverty but the *spirit of poverty* was in her. That had to be broken first.

Although she had a hard time seeing the way the Bible teaches on breaking the spirit of poverty by first giving out of your NEED, she finally saw it, and her deliverance began.

4. Remember Tommy Barnett in Phoenix, Arizona, going out on the streets and bringing in the homeless, the down-and-outers into his great church—and sitting on the front row?

Why did he do it? Because the first part of Jesus’ inaugural message was, **“He hath sent me to preach [the good news] to the poor”** (Luke 4:18).

Tommy helps people break the spirit of poverty and get into the spirit of giving and receiving—because he knows God is a good God.

5. Remember to break the spirit of poverty God wants you to get into a spirit of *expectancy*—to expect His concern, His eagerness to meet your needs, to keep you in a UP attitude.

Remind yourself Jesus came to give you *MORE ABUNDANT LIFE* (John 10:10). Those are not words only. Jesus backs them with His death and resurrection!

6. Face up to the fact if you attend a church where the pastor is negative, where the “good news” of the more abundant life of Jesus is not preached, you may want to go where a preacher is lifting up Jesus the way He really is: the Christ of the More Abundant Life.

**“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”** (Romans 10:17). Not negative words, or words *about* God’s Word, but God’s Word itself which is full of power to turn your thinking and believing in the most positive way (Hebrews 4:12).

7. Remember the bottom line with this widow and mother of nine is that she found she herself could break the spirit of poverty off her life and children. She made changes in the midst of her dire poverty. She believed me, a man of God, and let the Word of God show her the way.

Remind yourself, good things don’t just happen, they have to be made to happen. Remember also, God helps you make them happen, if you become a partner with Him in His Word, His gospel, and learn to give out of your need and expect God to help you! Say, “I can break the spirit of poverty—and I will!”



## How to Follow Jesus as Your Role Model With Money—And With Your Giving and Receiving

Until Jesus entered His public ministry at age thirty, He was best known as a carpenter’s son. Obviously that’s the way He earned His living. He had a livelihood and He had a home. He was not known as a poor person.

However, the method of His livelihood changed abruptly after He began His public ministry. Beginning at age thirty He poured His whole life into *doing the works of His Father, and therefore had to change His method of financial support*. He chose a team early and gave them a call to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out devils and serve by His side (Matthew 10:1-8). A treasury had to be established. Those who entered the kingdom of God were invited to contribute into it, to minister unto Jesus and His team with their substance (Luke 8:1-3).

The tithing plan had been in effect since Abraham “**gave tithes of all**” (Genesis 14:20). Moses had said, “**The tithe is the Lord’s. It is holy unto Him**” (see Leviticus 27:30). Even the scribes and Pharisees, in their cold religious forms, practiced tithing, but in a manner that violated faith in God and love of man. Jesus rebuked them, telling them they ought to tithe, but not to separate money from a godly life (see Matthew 23:23).

Jesus gave public instruction about those who were in the ministry. He said, “**The laborer is worthy of his hire**” (see Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7).

Before His public ministry, Jesus knew the value of having His financial needs met by His own physical and mental skills as a carpenter. And when He and His team began preaching, teaching and healing, He knew poverty would not pay the bills. Poverty would not be a faith-inspiring example to those who were poor and who were discriminated against by those who adopted Satan’s purpose of stealing from them (see John 10:10).

Jesus hit the streets, market places and synagogues of Israel like a fresh new breeze of hope for the poor. The poor along with their sicknesses were at the top of His list. He knew poverty opened the door to sickness like nothing else. He knew, too, that a life of poverty was not only a life of blasted hopes and daily drudgery, but it also made people doubt the goodness of God and His care for

them. Or if they accepted poverty as God's will, it caused them to "pine away" for Heaven rather than to attack their lack here in this life—where they had to live all the years on the way to eternity. In some, He knew it caused them to become bitter and angry with the world. People can say all they want to about Jesus loving poverty, but I don't believe it. If you'll just study the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—the only sources of original information about Him—you cannot escape how He came against poverty with all its attending evils.

Jesus Himself was one with God, healthy and whole from sickness, disease, fear and poverty. He said of His Father, "**He hath sent me to preach the good news to the poor**" (see Luke 4:18).

Wearing His seamless robe, enrolled in a rich disciple's trust fund for His burial, and having a treasurer to handle His funds, He went up and down the land the living example, proclaiming, "**I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly**" (see John 10:10).

A thrill went through the people. Poor people, sick people, burdened people began to look up. Jesus of Nazareth was passing their way! And on the main streets of that little land that straddled continents and the center of the Earth, God's only begotten Son—a human being like us—began to perform miracles. Expectancy kindled, hopes sparkled as dulled eyes began to see "a new light" in the darkness, and ears which had never heard "good news" began to listen to a man of whom it was said, no man ever spoke like this before (see John 7:46).

The carpenter who had made yokes to fit the necks of animals now began to make a new kind of yoke for men's lives: yokes that were easy, that is, that fit them as if they had been made in God's image. No rubbing the neck raw, no bad fits to make an already heavy load heavier. He cried, "**My yoke is easy [it fits!], and my burden is light**" (see Matthew 11:30) in comparison with Satan's stealing, killing and destroying.

Now Jesus, as He delivered the people, was not destined to be poor, and neither are you.

Here are the four ways He showed us to give generously, so that we would prosper according to His Word and a consistent godly life.

## **The Four Ways Of Generous Giving**

*First, the Bible makes it clear you are to minister unto Jesus with your substance—your money.*

Let's look once again at the scripture that goes to the heart of how to make

our giving a ministry of money:

**And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. (Luke 8:1-3).**

Two things very important to you are stated here:

One, Jesus preached the kingdom of God and did His mighty works in every city and village. The twelve apostles were with Him, along with their helpers, in His ministry. It's exactly as Jesus intends to go into every city and village today with His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and their helpers to preach, teach and heal. He wants to do it through us as part of His team.

Two, there was a large number of people Jesus had delivered from demon possession, from sickness and disease and from a sinful life. As a result they became His followers. They responded to what He had done for them by changing their financial priorities. These new followers of Jesus stopped using their earnings solely on themselves, and entered into a ministry of money. They supplied the financial resources that Jesus and His team needed to conduct the work of healing people and setting them free from Satan's power.

With a touch of His hand, or a word of His power, His preaching of the kingdom of God on Earth brought newness of life, really the more abundant life, and people were shouting, "Messiah! Messiah! He has come! He's made me a new creature. His power is flowing through my being, making me whole from sin, sickness and disease, demons and fear, poverty and hopelessness, darkness and despair. He's ministered life to me and I'm going to minister to Him of my substance!"

It was a large group who, upon experiencing Jesus' life-changing power, understood Jesus could only carry on the work of the kingdom of God on Earth if He had contributors—those who gave their tithes and offerings as seeds of their faith and as a ministry of money unto Him. Their covenant with Him was to give. Their way to give was by a ministry of their money to Him, or as Paul called it, "**the grace of giving**" (2 Corinthians 8:1).

It sounds so simple. It really is. The Master had come to do the mighty works of the Father, but He couldn't do it without those He delivered ministering unto Him of their substance.

Suppose Jesus—the same Jesus they met and who delivered them and to

whom they in turn ministered of their finances—has touched your life. Do you know Jesus of Nazareth in a personal way? Has he saved your immortal soul, as He has mine? Perhaps He has healed you as He did me, when not even medical science could cure my TB-ridden lungs. Most probably as you read this book to learn that Jesus was not poor—is not poor and doesn't intend for you to be poor—you're already recalling the things Jesus has done for you that no other person or power could do. Even if none of these are true in your life, then consider that Jesus alone is your answer, your only Savior, your Source of total supply, your only way, truth and life (John 14:6).

But if you already love Jesus or you care about Jesus or your life has been changed by Jesus or you see your future is only secure because of following Jesus, then ministering unto Him with your substance is the greatest privilege and honor of your life. And it is the most rewarding.

## **Giving God's Way**

I don't mean giving to Jesus once in awhile, or giving when you feel like it, or because you think Christians, including us in the ministry with Jesus, are perfect. I mean giving as a ministry unto Jesus through His church, through His servants, through His Great Commission **“to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”** And I mean doing it precisely according to *the divine measurement* of the percentage of your earnings God Himself said to give: **“All your tithes and offerings”** (Malachi 3:10).

I tell you on the basis of God's Word, neither you nor I nor anyone else will ever change God or His measurements. God says, **“I change not”** (Malachi 3:6). God says **“The tithe is mine”** (Leviticus 27:30). He has measured our giving as a tenth, plus offerings. And the way He says to give it is as a seed of your faith, because it is when you “seed” your money that *expectancy* rises in your heart and you are more keenly aware of Him as your Source of supply.

Before the Lord saved me, when someone mentioned that I should be a tither all I could think of was that if I did, it would leave me with ten percent less than what I had. I didn't know the number ten in the Bible means *increase*. Had I known I'm sure it would have made a difference in my thinking.

God had your prosperity—according to His provision—and your godly life in mind when He said to give Him your tithe. For the *tithe means tenth*, and ten in the Bible is the number for *increase*.

Let me tell you a story that illustrates this point.

A pastor told me of a young man who, upon receiving Christ into his life, began to understand the tithing principle. He began tithing on his earnings, which

was only seventy dollars a week. His seven dollar tithe excited him, and he faithfully gave it after receiving each paycheck.

Well, the young man saw it worked. In a few weeks he got a raise and continued to tithe from the increase. At the end of the year he had gone from seventy to three hundred dollars a week. He kept up his giving. Then came the time he was earning seven hundred dollars a week. *He went from minus zero, to being even, to a prosperity he had only dreamed of.*

But there are always the doubters, the ones with the big mouths. One of them said to this young man, “Do you know you’re giving the Lord seventy dollars a week? You’ve got to be crazy.” “Well,” he replied, “I’m earning seven hundred dollars a week and seventy dollars is the tithe out of that, and it’s the Lord’s. The Word of God says it’s holy unto Him. And, besides, look where I started from.”

“Yeah, but you’re earning \$36,400 a year and you’re giving \$3,640 in tithes, which is as much as you used to make in an entire year.” The young man didn’t know how to handle this kind of criticism. He went back to his pastor, and said, “I’m in trouble. I’m giving God as much in tithes now as the total amount I used to make.” The pastor said, “Well, why don’t we pray about it?”

“Let’s do.”

“Kneel down.

“Lord,” the pastor said, “reduce this young brother’s salary back down to seventy dollars a week so he only has to give seven dollars in tithe.” As he prayed, the pastor felt his trouser leg being pulled. “Well, what’s the matter, son?”

“Pastor, stop praying. I get the point. I get the point.”

Tithing works because it is a divine measurement for God’s increase in your life, including finances. Jesus wasn’t poor, and I can’t think of one biblical reason He wants you to be poor. However, you have to choose, to will, to determine, that you will tithe of every dollar coming into your hands for the rest of your life. Only you can make that determination, and only you can keep it. And only you can consciously give it as a seed you sow which carries with it the greatest secret of all: *expecting a miracle.*

## **Make a Covenant to Minister With Your Money**

Here is the second way Jesus showed us to give generously. *Make a covenant directly with Jesus your Lord and Savior to minister to Him personally with your money according to the divine measurement: one-tenth of every dollar, plus your*

*offerings.*

Making this covenant to minister to Jesus with my tithes and offerings—as a seed of my faith—literally changed my life. And it can change yours as you grasp the revelation of it from God’s Word in your spirit.

I vividly remember the time God revealed to me that after He had saved and healed me I was part of His kingdom on Earth. He showed me I was to be a covenant man. The most astonishing thing was I learned that I was His property and all I was and all I had belonged to Him. As I write, I’m very aware that the spirit of a covenant man is in me. Nothing excites me more.

A second revelation came several years later. It was that my covenant with Jesus included doing what these partners of Jesus in Luke 8:1-3 did. When I gave my tithes and offerings, I was ministering to Jesus Himself with my substance to extend His gospel on this Earth.

To realize I could be a partner with Jesus in the ministry of money almost took my breath away. I remember I began holding the tenth of my earnings, plus offerings beyond my tithes, in my hands and lifting them up to Jesus, feeling as though I was putting them into His hands.

I was putting my tithes into my local church, and my offerings into other God-ordained ministries of His work. I was giving to Jesus through men and women called of God as leaders in the ministry of the Word of God both in America and on the mission fields of the world. They are Jesus’ instruments, His called ones, and as I gave my tithes and offerings to them or mailed them, I was inwardly ministering personally to Jesus with my tithes and offerings.

A whole new realization of my relationship to the person of Jesus came to me. I realized that I and my giving were one. Jesus and my tithes and offerings to Him were one. It dawned on me after studying God’s Word on His ordained way of giving that my money *is* an extension of me. What I earn comes through my talent, my toil, my sweat, my honest day’s labor, my doing my very best to do a good job. And what I do with my money is one way I extend myself or express myself. This is one of the exciting things about my giving because I know I’m giving myself to the Lord.

A man heard me describe this and said, “I’m willing to give God my life but my money is mine.”

I said, “God will allow you to do that, but it’s not His way or His will for your life.”

He said, “But I earn my money myself.”

I said, “No, you don’t. God put the money on the Earth. He put you on Earth.

*How to Follow Jesus as Your Role Model With Money—And With Your Giving and Receiving*

He provided you work and the strength and ability to do it. Both you and your money belong to God whether you admit it or not.”

He said, “Where is that in the Bible?”

I took out my little pocket New Testament that I carry and handed it to him. “Turn to Luke 8:2,3,” I said.

As he started reading it, I asked him to read it out loud.

**“And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.”** After he finished, he said, “Well, what has this got to do with me?” I said, “Has God done something for you?”

“Well, He saved my soul,” he answered. “And He’s done lots of things for me.”

“Then read that last line,” I asked.

He read, **“And many others who ministered to Jesus with their substance”** (v.3).

He looked up at me and there were tears in his eyes. “Dear God,” he said, “I’ve missed it, haven’t I?”

Another man once said to me, “I’ll give God my tithes but not myself. I’m not ready to become a Christian.”

Now I’d seen that before in other people. One was a merchant. When I’d go into his store, particularly if it was early and I was the first customer, he’d have his sales book in his hand and be writing at the top of the first page, “God, if you will bless me today, I will give you the tenth.”

I asked him if he was a Christian. He said, “No, but I’ve found it pays to tithe.”

I’ll say this for him—he really believed that and he did prosper financially. But I said, “If you see it’s such a financial benefit to give God your tithe, won’t it be a far greater benefit to give yourself to God so His full blessings will come upon you, spiritually, physically, financially, family, and your witness for God?”

We became good friends, but I soon moved away and never learned if my witness had helped him to decide to give God his life as he did his tithes. I hope it did, for giving the tenth without giving yourself may increase your earnings, but it won’t replace all God has prepared to do in every area of your life.

## **Give With Praise**

*Third, accompany the giving of your tithes with an offering of praise to God.*

Hebrews 13:15 says, **“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”**

I’ve discovered when I praise God with the fruit of my lips, I minister to Him and He blesses me. In the same manner when I minister my money to Jesus He opens the windows of Heaven and pours fresh new ideas, concepts, dreams and visions into my spirit and mind to such an extent I can’t contain them. He also rebukes the devourers off my life, as He says in Malachi 3:11, **“for my sake.”** It excites me to praise God with my lips. And it also excites me to minister to Him with my financial gifts. In my covenant with God this is a ministry with me. And I’m not talking just as a preacher of His Holy Word. I’m talking as any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why don’t you make a new commitment to develop your giving into a ministry of money unto Jesus, and do it with praise to Him!

Say this out loud—

Jesus, You saved me.

Jesus, You have touched me with Your healing power.

Jesus, You have made possible every dollar coming into my hands.

Jesus, I have a great desire to minister unto You with my whole life, including ministering to You with my money.

Jesus, from this hour I make a personal vow to God to take Your divine measurement of the amount I am to give—my tithes and offerings—and each time I give I will inwardly know I have made my giving a ministry of money.

Jesus, in return, I receive Your promise to me that I can expect You to open the windows of Heaven and pour out fresh new ideas and concepts, dreams and visions, with which I can excel, I can succeed, I can do great and mighty things for the Lord.

Jesus, each time I give I receive Your promise You will rebuke Satan for seeking to devour my life, I will stand on Your Word to tell Satan, ‘Stop it, that’s enough.’ I praise you, Jesus, for Your faithfulness!

In no way am I telling you tough times won’t come. There’s a devil, and Jesus said he **“comes only to steal, kill and destroy.”** But Satan is no real threat to you, if you obey God. God says, **“The Earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof”** (Psalm 24:1). On the other hand we’re told **“Satan is god of this**



**world”** (2 Corinthians 4:4). But the Earth and its fullness and this world system are two different things. Our God is God over all that is real on this planet, that is, the real estate. I repeat: Not a particle of Earth or drop of water or ounce of gold is Satan’s. The prophet said, **“All the silver and gold are mine, saith the Lord”** (Haggai 2:8).

This world system is run by men, most of whom are ruled by Satan. Real wealth is in God, not Satan. This is the basis on which Jesus said, **“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”** (Luke 6:38). Yes, when you give, God causes men to open up the right employment, or the right business or career to open as a door of opportunity, or for gifts to come “out of the blue.” As long as you obey scripturally and consistently Jesus’ command to give, no power in Satan’s world system can prevent God’s causing men to give to you, “good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.”

## **Keep Exact Records**

You say, “How can I be sure of this?” Let’s move to the fourth of the four ways Jesus gives you to prosper according to His Word and a consistent godly life.

*Fourth, keep records on your tithes and offerings, so you’ll know for certain you have met God’s divine measurement for your giving.*

As Evelyn and I were nearing the end of last year, I had an overwhelming urge to check to see if all our tithes and offerings had been given to God. Evelyn keeps an account of our personal finances, and I mentioned my concern to her.

“Oral,” she said, “give me a couple of hours to go through our check stubs, and I’ll tell you.”

Being impatient I said, “Darling, just tell me how much we’ve given, and I’ll add it up in my head and see if it’s the correct amount according to our income this year.”

My wife is my darling, but she can’t handle figures in her head. She has to get pen and paper, and labor to add the figures. She said, “Now Oral, just get out of my way and leave me alone. I’ll let you know, okay?”

So I left.

When I returned two or three hours later, she had gone through every contribution we’d made for the entire year and compiled what we’d earned

personally. She didn't look happy.

"Oh, Oral," she said. "We're behind in our tithes."

Quickly I said, "How much do we have in the bank?"

She said, "Honey, we've just got barely enough in the bank to bring our tithes up to date."

"Do it today," I said. A great big smile came over Evelyn's face. "Oh, Oral, this just thrills me that we're doing what God said, and that He is really going to bless us."

I said, "Yes, I agree."

Evelyn said, "I'm so glad we're keeping records of everything we make and everything we give. Otherwise, we would have no way of knowing how much we gave."

I said, "Evelyn, if we were giving haphazardly and not according to God's measurement of the full tenth plus offerings, we would be missing out on the blessing."

Evelyn said, "We would be giving with no regard to the way God says to give—no plan, no purpose, just guessing."

"Yes, we would," I said, "and guessing is not accurate. God does not guess about what He does for us, and we must not guess about what we do for Him."

We took the check Evelyn wrote and held it in our hands and worshipped God. "Put it in the mail today," I said, "and let's minister to the Lord with it."

You may ask, "But how do I minister to the Lord as an act of giving?" The best advice I can give you is to remember every time you give, think of your money as an integral part of your life. Say,

This is really a part of me and I'm giving me to the Lord.

As you do this, I think you'll experience what Evelyn and I do, and many others I know. Your spirit will worship God; your spirit will go with your gift; your spirit will come into agreement with the Holy Spirit that you are actually ministering unto God.

Start keeping records of your tithes and offerings today as you make it a seed of your faith to God. Don't guess. You are dealing with God Himself. You are dealing also with the most precious thing you can do, and that is to give God your best.

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

*How to Follow Jesus as Your Role Model With Money—And With Your Giving and Receiving*

1. Remind yourself God's tithing plan has been in effect since Abraham, the man God calls **"the father of all who have faith"** (Romans 4:11), and **"know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham"** (Galatians 3:7).

Also remind yourself, Moses said the tithe is the Lord's...it is holy unto Him (see Leviticus 27:28). So your tithe is not yours to give, you simply *choose* to give what is already His...and holy unto Him.

However, tithes in themselves must be mixed with *faith* (Matthew 23:23), or Jesus cancels out the blessing.

2. Remember the four ways Jesus gave you to give:

*First, make your giving a ministry.*

Re-read and study Luke 8:2,3. Jesus shows you your giving is a *ministry of giving*. Also the *grace of giving* (2 Corinthians 8:1).

Suppose when you give you visualize Jesus receiving your tithes and offerings, wouldn't that make all the difference in the way you give? Well, it is to Jesus you're ministering of your substance, not man. Those of us who minister His Word are instruments only, laborers in His service. However, He did say **"for the workman is worthy of his hire"** (see Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7).

As ministers represent Jesus in the ministry, they are laborers with Jesus and are worthy of your support—and it's counted to you as ministering unto Jesus, and you can depend on their ministering to you as Jesus would.

Remember the young man who went from tithing \$7 a week to \$70 a week, and how the critics hit him; but how his pastor's prayer helped him.

*Second, make a covenant to give according to God's measurement: your tithe, plus offerings.*

Remember you can never change God's measurement of the tithe or the percentage of your giving, plus free will offerings. Covenant with God in His measurement and don't break it!

Don't forget the man who said, "I'll give God my life but not my money." Give God both so He can bless all your life!

*Third, with each gift of your money, give God a "praise offering" of your thanks for all that He has done, is doing, and is going to do in your life.*

*Fourth, keep exact records of your giving.*

*How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor*

Remember how Evelyn and I checked ourselves at the end of the year and discovered we were short in our tithing.

Remember too we got with it and the thrill that went through us.

Remind yourself if you give haphazardly and not according to God's measurement—and fail to keep records so you won't know—then you're just guessing. You don't want God guessing on how He blesses you!

Think of your money as an integral part of your life—and your giving and receiving as the only way God *can fully* bless you. Without God's full blessing, your life will always fall short. Be excited about God's giving and receiving plan. Good things are going to happen to you!

## How I Learned That Jesus Pours Out Ideas From Heaven to You and Me

I want to tell you a story that's worth the price of this book many times over. As a young preacher I pastored a small church for a few months in Toccoa, Georgia. The leading man in that church, Mr. Bill Lee, was a manager in the LeTourneau plant which manufactured huge, Earth-moving equipment. Bill told me Mr. LeTourneau was a deeply committed Christian man and had prospered so much that instead of giving God ten percent of his income and keeping ninety percent, he had reversed that and was now giving God ninety percent and living off the ten percent.

I was astonished. I gave my tithe and loved giving it, but had not discovered yet how the spirit of tithing could open the windows of Heaven to me in the form of fresh new ideas and concepts through which I could come out of mediocrity into creativity in my field of ministry. I was getting many of my sermon ideas mostly from books other men wrote or from listening to other preachers. Few of my own thoughts on the Bible had any originality to them. If anything can put a church crowd to sleep, it's a preacher echoing others. He simply doesn't have the spark, or seldom the anointing, powerful enough to break his people out of their religious ruts.

I learned the only difference in a rut and a grave is the rut has both ends knocked out of it.

Bill Lee insisted on taking me through the LeTourneau plant. He showed me the great Earth-moving machines, the first in the world, called Tournapulls and carryalls, which could dig out tons of dirt and instantly start carrying it yards or miles away to where great dams were being made or where beds for highways were under construction. These machines were the biggest vehicles I'd ever seen. When in minutes they scooped out five, ten, twenty tons of dirt and just went lumbering off with it to the waiting site, I couldn't believe my eyes.

"You've got to meet R.G. LeTourneau," Bill told me. "He got this whole idea through tithing."

"What?" I asked.

"He got the idea from tithing."

“How in the world could he do that?”

Bill said, “Oral, you know the sermon you recently preached in our church on tithing, when you said if we brought all our tithes to God, He would open the windows of Heaven and pour us out a blessing where there is not room enough to receive it?”

Before I answered him I remembered that every time I said, “God will open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing where there is not room enough to contain it,” I didn’t say what was in my mind, which was I’ve never had God pour out a blessing on me I couldn’t contain. I was thinking primarily that since the tithe is ten percent of our money earnings God was going to open the windows of Heaven to us to pour out this uncontainable blessing in the form of money. It hadn’t happened to me.

I said to Bill, “Yes, I know I preached that message on tithing as you’ve described.”

He said, “R.G. LeToumeau is the first man I’ve ever known who understands when God pours out a blessing where there’s not room enough to contain it, that doesn’t mean God pours money out of Heaven. God put the silver and gold in the Earth and from it comes our money. R.G. LeToumeau began tithing very early after he became a Christian, but the uncontainable blessing was not being poured out upon him. Yet right after he began tithing, suddenly new ideas and concepts began pouring into his mind about building big Earth-moving machines. The more faithful he was in tithing the more the ideas came until one day they came so fast he stopped everything he was doing and said, “Lord, these ideas are coming from You, not men.”

I asked him how Mr. LeToumeau knew these ideas were being poured into him through his tithing. “Oh, he could tell that easily. If he stopped tithing the ideas got blurred or stopped altogether. He’d start to put the idea into practice and it would fade away. As he began tithing again here would come the ideas again. Each one was very clear.”

“What did he do?”

“He called industrial architects and had them draw the plans for his idea of massive Earth-moving equipment. Being something of an engineer himself, he sat down with the architects and engineers and supplied what they didn’t know in how to design these machines.”

“Was it just one idea?”

“No, it wasn’t. In fact, he began to talk to God about his tithes, telling Him he knew the tithe was His, it was holy, and that Jesus said it had to be given in

faith. But faith for what, he asked God. That's when God spoke in his spirit that tithing opens a person up inside to receive the greatest ideas God can give. By believing that these ideas come from God, then God will make them plain to him, plain in a way others can't see them unless the information is shared with them."

"And that's what Mr. LeToumeau did with his engineers and architects?"

"Without his ideas in areas that completely baffled all his smart people, these machines would never have been possible. In fact, he's been so successful he's giving God ninety percent rather than ten percent. And since then he employs thousands of people and still can't meet the demand. You ought to read his book, *God Runs My Business*."

I was thinking that I had missed something in my own tithing. I'd never connected God's pouring out "uncontainable blessings from Heaven" with ideas and concepts. Quickly I understood how ideas coming directly out of Heaven—miraculously—could more than fill one's mind. Some of that was happening to me but I hadn't known what to do with them. Little did I know that what I was picking up on would some day help me build the world's first charismatic university, and establish a major health-care center to merge God's healing streams of prayer and medicine. My tithing took on new meaning to me right there as Bill Lee talked to me.

"Oral, would you like to meet R.G. LeToumeau? I've just learned he'll be here this week."

"Would I?" I said. "I sure would."

When I met him he looked me over. "How old are you, young man?" "Twenty-three."

"And you are already a preacher?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm flying in my plane tonight to speak in another city to give my testimony to a thousand people. How would you and Bill like to go with me?"

I jumped at the chance. He asked me to sit by him both there and back that night. Not only did I hear his hour-long story before those men, but he told me many details as I sat by him on the trip.

When R.G. LeToumeau gave his heart to Christ he was a poor man. He had a great dream and a great desire. He had read Malachi 3:10,11, and decided to take God's word literally. He decided to give Him the tenth of his income and make God his partner. He said, "I'd learned ten in the Bible means 'increase,' and I realized without increase I would wither on the vine. I decided to test God on my dream of building these great road-building machines, which had never been

done. I had the dream but not the slightest idea how to turn it into a business reality. So I tested God on what He said about opening the windows of Heaven and pouring out of them a blessing, one so big I couldn't contain it."

"Was it money?" I asked.

"No. I never thought about money. I never have. I was thinking of ideas. I knew the world moves on ideas. So I told God I was serving Him and tithing like He said. I was enjoying it, but I wanted Him to keep His word and do His part."

"His part?"

"Yes, which for me was to help me turn my dream into the practical ideas on how to build these big machines."

"What happened?"

"Well, here they came, the ideas literally overflowing my mind. I had come from a background of moving dirt with a little scoop pulled by a team of mules. It took days, or even weeks to do what should have been done in a few hours. And there were all those big highways that had to be built as this nation grew, and dams to be constructed as the population needed water piped into the coming cities. Oh, I saw it all. But where were the inventive ideas to take us from scoops and mules to the big machines?"

"Where were they, Mr. LeToumeau?"

"Son, they were in God and I was testing Him with my tithes and offerings to pour them out upon me!"

"And He did it?"

"Yes, He did it. As clearly as I see my hand I saw how to create these machines and to help move this nation into a new era." "And you believe those ideas were poured out of Heaven into your mind?"

"Absolutely. And I've only used a few of them. I've got machines to build so much bigger than the ones we're now using, that there's no comparison. Son, with God as my partner, we're going to go from moving five, ten, twenty tons of Earth to loads so big it'll stagger the imagination."

Then he told me how he almost missed it completely. "You want to hear it?" he asked. "You're young, you're going to make mistakes and when you do the devil will tempt you to give up. Well, listen carefully."

He said, "One day I made a bad mistake. We'd had a great year. My accountants came and laid out our profits—a million dollars! My tithe was \$100,000."

He paused, as if reliving that first heady moment. He said, "I thought to



myself, 'My God, I never made \$100,000 in my life. Now my tithe is \$100,000 in one year.' Then I heard a little voice which I thought was mine saying, 'That's too much to give to God. Take that \$100,000 and invest it yourself and make more, then give it to God next year.'"

"Pardon me," I said. "You said you heard a little voice and you thought it was yours telling you to do this?"

"To tell you the truth, I may even have thought it was God talking, but I later learned it was the voice of the tempting devil. Well, it rained so much the next year my big machines mired down in the mud, and we couldn't fulfill our contracts. By the end of the year we had lost \$100,000 and were in deep trouble."

Again he paused, a look of pain on his face. "It was like God was telling me that since I thought my tithe of \$100,000 was too much for Him to handle, 'Then you handle it yourself. Maybe you're smarter than Me.' Well, when I saw the mess we were in, I called the officers of the company together. I told them, 'I want you to sell off \$100,000 of the company. I'm going to make up the tithes I failed to give God a year ago.' They said, 'Mr. LeToumeau, that may bankrupt the company.' I said, 'Furthermore, because you said that, I want you to sell off \$200,000 worth of assets. I'm going to double that \$100,000 I'm making up to God.'"

My mind could hardly take all that in but I was listening. He said, "After I gave that order I went home and fell asleep. I woke up the next morning refreshed saying, 'God is my partner.' I made a dumb mistake. I thought I was smarter than God. It's always going to rain. I've got to have an idea to make a change in my Carryall machines, so that if it's raining cats and dogs, they will still move Earth.

"The next night while I was asleep God poured ideas into my mind. I awoke in the morning and called my engineers together, saying, 'Here's the change I want made.'

"They said, 'It won't work.'

"I said, 'I'm paying you to do what I say. Do it.'"

They made the change and soon big machines rolled out with a new capacity.

I moved back to Oklahoma in my ministry, never forgetting what R.G. LeToumeau had told me. One day I read in the newspapers he'd sold out for multi-millions of dollars to one of the greatest companies in America, which is still making those big Earth-moving machines.

Mr. LeToumeau, before he died, established LeToumeau College in Longview, Texas, to help underprivileged boys. It's partly vocational and is in a

class by itself. The president of the college once asked me to come and tell the students the story I'm telling you now.

The last conversation I had with this Christian layman who had made God his partner was just before I moved back to Oklahoma. He told me some of the things Bill Lee had related before I took the trip in his plane with him.

"I stopped being a tither," he said.

"But I thought you said that through your tithing you tested God and discovered how He poured so many ideas into your mind you couldn't contain them, and you got all the ideas how to build those Earth-moving machines to benefit humanity," I said.

"Well, I quit giving God ten percent and increased it to twenty. I prospered so much I increased it to thirty, and began living off the seventy left. I went to fifty and lived off of fifty. Then I discovered I couldn't outgive God. Today I give God ninety percent of my earnings and live off of the ten percent left."

Many people have asked me why through the years of my healing ministry—of preaching the gospel and praying for the sick—I've always preached so strong on tithing, on giving and receiving, which is the biblical concept of seed-faith.

I cannot help but think God sent me across the path of a man who understood that the uncontainable blessing God poured out on the tither was not in the form of money coming down from the windows of Heaven, but ideas and concepts. I saw it and believed it. And I began to expect to receive ideas for the dream I had to take God's healing power to my generation. I knew it would take millions of dollars to do all the things necessary to get God's healing message across America and into the world. I had no money to speak of, just a dream and a call from God, but not the slightest idea of how to do it on a global scale. I had no idea how to impact preachers and churches or people outside the kingdom of God. No one had ever done it before on the scale of the dream my spirit was pregnant with.

In my tithing Evelyn and I came into agreement, and agreed not to come out of the agreement, that we would tithe as consistently as we breathed—and as thankfully—and we'd expect God to open the windows of Heaven and pour us out ideas like he had R.G. LeTourneau. The difference would be that our ideas would enable us to operate in the realm of healing, until the dream became a reality in our lifetime and would continue to grow after we were gone.

"No success without a successor" became a great idea to us. So Oral Roberts University, with its more than 10,000 graduates already (and thousands more who attended a year or more), is one of the great ideas God poured into me, then into Evelyn as my helpmeet. Then the City of Faith Medical and Research Center

(the largest medical complex on one foundation with over 2,200,000 square feet), then the School of Medical Missions, taking the idea God gave me to put the concept of Paul the apostle/evangelist and Luke the physician back together. God gave the idea of using Oral Roberts University along with the School of Medicine to carry on medical missions among the nations of the world, opening doors closed to the gospel and giving new force to the Great Commission of Jesus: **“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”** (Mark 16:15).

Preaching, teaching, healing—the three-fold ministry of Jesus (see Matthew 4:23)—is another idea God poured into me. I’ve made this whole ministry follow that pattern. Preaching the gospel with signs following, teaching through Oral Roberts University and the medical school, healing through the laying on of hands, the word of knowledge and combining the best of prayer with the best of medicine—and all this projected beyond what we can do personally by using television and satellite communications to carry it all to this generation.

As a twenty-three-year-old young preacher listening to the vast sums Mr. LeToumeau talked about earning and tithing on, out of which came ideas that stirred my imagination, I little knew that over one billion dollars would pass through this ministry as the fruit of our ideas and labors and commitment—money which would build, evangelize, and extend the preaching, teaching, and healing ministry of Jesus around the world. And all of it, I believe, happened through our agreement to tithe and listen for His ideas and concepts, and carry them out by our faith and our labor!

I’m still alive and strong and tithing as I did when I was converted and healed and called with this dream of taking God’s healing power to my generation.

At times I’ve almost stopped tithing. I’ve almost let the people who told me—and keep telling me—“you can’t do it” stop me from giving. *Almost.*

But I’ve found a secret, yet not really a secret because it’s in the Bible for all to see, to grasp, to practice. It’s that Jesus was not poor in the sense so many have believed. We can go into partnership with Him and get into agreement with His eternal principles. Our faithful tithes and offerings given in faith and joy cause God to pour out ideas and concepts into our minds. Then with faith, courage and determination we can choose to carry them out, in spite of mistakes, setbacks, and failures.

The “secret” is standing with Jesus, ministering to Him with our substance, making our giving a ministry of money, getting into the grace of giving, entering a covenant of giving, and constantly *listening*. Listening to God. Having a

hearing ear for ideas and concepts from Heaven. Planting everything we do, including planting our tithes and offerings as seeds of our faith, and then becoming pregnant in our spirit with dreams and visions and following through with *EXPECTATION TO RECEIVE MIRACLES FROM GOD!*

You know, a secret is no longer a secret when it is revealed. The secret of the ages is so simple. God put it in the Bible, and people—all kinds of people—began to discover it and apply it. No one today need say he doesn't know how to receive ideas and concepts from God which will change his life!

There's an old saying,

Without God I cannot,  
Without me He will not.

Put your faith to work on that and you'll see what God can do in you...and through you!

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Remember when as a tither God opens the windows of Heaven to you, pouring out blessings where there's not room enough to contain them, He's speaking of ideas and concepts, of dreams and visions.

God doesn't pour *money* out of Heaven. Haggai 2:8 tells you God put the silver and gold in the Earth. R.G. LeToumeau found the uncontainable blessings God poured out upon him as a tither came in the form of ideas and concepts to build the first big Earth-moving machines that in turn have changed the way our roads and dams are built.

Remind yourself: As a tither I'll be expecting God's ideas to pour into my mind to tell me how to do things with His supernatural help. Don't be wholly dependent on the ideas of men.

2. Remind yourself of Mr. LeToumeau's mistake of believing he was smarter than God in taking the tithes and trying to invest them to make them large, and instead lost them all.

Remember that he faced up to this his biggest mistake, sold off enough assets to give God the amount of the tithe he had lost, plus he sold off an additional amount in order to condition himself never again to think he was smarter than God.

3. Recall that out of this experience Mr. LeToumeau awoke saying, "God is my partner."
4. Remember this man, a Christian layman, was not afraid to do what God

said when he gave Him all his tithes and offerings: “Test Me! Prove Me!” He believed it either works or it doesn’t. But he knew God would *not* break His Word and he didn’t have to be afraid God would let him down. Mr. LeToumeau was not a tither “now and then” but consistently!

5. Finally, remember how God prospered him from giving ten percent so that he soon saw he could give twenty percent, then thirty, and eventually ninety percent and live off the ten percent. Why? Because with God as his partner, he had Someone on the other end of his business deals and his daily life greater and smarter than He was.

God may not lead you to go from giving ten percent—your tithe—to ninety percent as He did R.G. LeToumeau. God is asking you to remind yourself to watch how He prospers you—and to recognize that with God as your partner **IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH GOD CAN PROSPER YOU IF YOU’RE FAITHFUL IN DOING YOUR PART, AND LET HIM DO HIS PART!**



## How Your Spirit Can Become Pregnant So You Can Expect Your Miracle

**T**he key word that I've discovered is the most important in what business people would use in "closing the deal," but which I call completing your miracle, is *expecting*.

The first time I became aware of this word in a meaningful way was when Evelyn was pregnant with our first child, Rebecca. I'd hear our friends say, "Evelyn is expecting." Of course, I was thrilled that we were going to have a baby, and in a sense we both were expecting. But the truth was that it was Evelyn's body that was ticking off the time for the baby to be born. The closer she came to the birth time the more the word expecting regulated our lives. We had to be mindful of where we went, how long we stayed, if the doctor was going to be in town, if this, and if that.

The state of expectancy was different than any other type of waiting or of looking forward to any other event. The miracle of birth was involved; a child's life was at stake; the due season for its appearance took precedence over everything else. However, I really didn't grasp the true significance of Evelyn's expectancy until the night when the first big pains hit her body. This was our first and I got the shock of my life.

Several months before, the doctor had predicted pretty close to the exact time the baby would come if all went well. As a young preacher, I had a dozen things on my mind when the first warning came. I said, "Evelyn, what are we going to do?"

She said, "The first thing is locate the doctor." We didn't have a phone and I jumped in the car and raced to his office only to find it closed. I couldn't find a pay phone (we didn't have one in our little town), so I knocked on the first door I could find and breathlessly said, "May I use your phone, it's an emergency."

The doctor on the other end calmly asked me Evelyn's condition and calculated the approximate time he'd come to deliver the baby. I rushed back to the house and told Evelyn. We didn't know it then, but as the doctor said later, "Evelyn, you're made to have babies and have 'em quick." About two hours later, Evelyn said, "Oral, go call him to come now." I drove back to that same

house, asked to use the phone and told the doctor what she had said. He wasn't so calm this time. "Wait right there," he said.

He called right back. "The nurse lives in the country, she has no phone, you'll have to go get her and have her here in one hour or less."

I was so scared I could hardly take his directions to where the nurse lived, ten miles out in the country. When I had them written down, I jumped in my little blue Chevrolet coupe I had courted Evelyn in and made a mad dash toward a house in an area where I'd never driven. It was after midnight. I had no idea how fast I drove on those country roads, but after I finally found the nurse and got her in the car and raced back, she knew how fast I was going. "You were driving eighty miles an hour," she screamed. When the car slid into the driveway I had to help her out. She was as white as a sheet and couldn't talk. "Follow me," I said. In seconds I propelled her into the bedroom where Evelyn's expectancy was ready to turn into one of the fastest miracles the world has ever seen.

The doctor told the nurse to do her job, he told me to stand at the end of the bed and he and Evelyn and God—and the baby—would do the rest.

I'm certain I worked harder than any of them. *Expecting* had taken on real meaning for me. Nine months had come down to one hour as I turned corners on two wheels, to minutes while the doctor and nurse and Evelyn were telling that baby its due season was here, and I was standing there overseeing a miracle being born.

They laid that little black-haired, part-Indian papoose in her daddy's arms, and all I could think of was, "God, don't let me drop it!"

They saw I was in a critical condition. They retrieved the baby and sent me to get a drink of water. Until we had three more children and I became an old hand at it, I'll always remember how in that first one I came to understand that the word **expecting** is one of the most important words in the human language.

What I've learned about miracles is that they work on the same God-given principle. To get a miracle we have to be in the same state of expectancy that we were when we had our babies.

Miracles begin with *seed*. Even Jesus, God's Son who is the greatest miracle ever given to man, is called "**the seed of David**" (Romans 1:3). There was planning on God's part for that miracle to happen. Just as God planned the event of Jesus' birth (as well as His death, resurrection and second coming) for the miracle of our redemption, so He plans for all the miracles that are to come to us. That's His part. Our part is to get into position to receive each of those miracles. And after we have planted our seeds of faith, and we've looked to God as our Source and believed from our hearts without doubt, then there is one more all-



important thing to do: *expect*.

Right here we can't kid ourselves. We can't expect to receive something for nothing. There are no free lunches in real life. Evelyn's pregnancy which put her into a state of expectancy is no more real than our getting spiritually pregnant to be in position to expect something specific from God.

Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the largest church in the world, the 600,000-member Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, tells in his book, *The Fourth Dimension*, how when he was birthing this church thirty years ago with a handful of people, he got "pregnant" with an idea. The idea was something he seeded for, through giving his tithes to God, he prayed for, he believed for, he expected for right up to the moment of its due season. His great church continues its miracle growth and influence because the people have grasped the pregnancy idea and expectancy has permeated the whole congregation.

Recently I preached in one of his seven Sunday services, each consisting of over 50,000 people, in the great sanctuary in Seoul. Before I preached these thousands of expectant people began praying—in unison. It was so powerful I literally felt the spirit of expectancy rushing up in my face. They say when NASA launches one of our space shuttles, the sound of it leaving its pad in the sheath of flame flows like rushing waters over the ground in every direction. One of the NBC correspondents covering it told me, "We were not permitted closer than a half-mile, but still the sound of the launching almost knocked us down. It engulfed us and it took all our force to get beyond the sound to where our eyes would focus on the upthrust of the shuttle."

That's pretty much how I felt that Sunday morning when the expectancy those Korean Christians had carried in their hearts all week was released to God as they all prayed as one person. The sound of their voices in prayer engulfed me and crowded everything out of my hearing.

Dr. Cho was getting ready to introduce me and interpret my message, when I leaned over and yelled in his ear, "Dr. Cho, what is this force I feel in their prayers that is filling this sanctuary and engulfing my very being?"

"Ah, Dr. Roberts," he said, "they are pregnant with visions and dreams of God taking the nation of Korea for Christ, then the whole world. What you feel is their expectancy of the new babies to be born into God's kingdom."

I understood.

Every miracle I've ever been "pregnant" with has filled me with that same state of expectancy. The best way I can explain it is that when I know my seed of faith is really sown, and in good soil; when I know that I'm looking to God and to Him only as my Source of supply; when I know that I know that I know I've

done everything I can do with my faith and my efforts, then *the Holy Spirit supernaturally empties me of doubt*. He brings me into a state of knowing... of expecting...until in a very real sense I CANNOT DOUBT! Expectancy is that powerful.

Dr. Larry Lea, the founder and pastor of the Church on the Rock in Rockwall, Texas told me, “Oral, God spoke in my heart nine years ago to move my wife and children to Rockwall, a city of only 7,000 people, the county seat of the smallest county in Texas, and build Him a great church. There was no way I could do it except to know in my *knower* I was to do it. By the Holy Spirit and following Dr. Cho’s example, I became pregnant in my faith and vision to go there. With no building, no members and scarcely enough money to support my family, I began with less than twenty people.”

When Larry invited me in 1987 to help dedicate the new huge 11,000-seat, \$16 million church building, we had to fight our way through the traffic that literally blocked the streets of that small city. Looking into the eager faces of the thousands filling the huge new sanctuary, I asked Larry, “What was the one thing you finally did to get this great Holy Ghost church to this stage of development?” With his face lighted by the glory of God, he said, “When I and those who believed with me had done everything we could—like sowing our best seed, working day and night, facing every kind of obstacle, and being pregnant inside with this great idea of a church that’s truly built on the Rock, we did the one thing I’ve heard you express so often: *We expected!*”

“What about the days when it looked like Larry’s folly?”

He smiled and said, “Oral, we just kept on working, believing and expecting.”

Friends of mine from all over who fly to Dallas and go out to Rockwall to attend one of the Sunday services of Church on the Rock tell me the impact on their souls faith-wise is so powerful it changes their lives. Several told me, “If Larry Lea can expect that kind of miracle, then I can expect mine!”

When you give tithes and offerings as a seed of your faith, I believe that miracles are coming toward you, or past you every day. If you’re not expecting, your miracle will pass you by and you’ll wonder why God doesn’t help you. If you expect, you’ll recognize your miracle when it comes, and reach out and receive it. Then you’ll know God is in business with your expectancy.

Remember, you can’t expect from a false pregnancy.

I was called by one of our doctors at our City of Faith Medical Center to help him with a woman who insisted she was pregnant, but the tests proved she was not. But she wouldn’t leave unless I confirmed what the doctors said.

“I’m not a doctor,” I said.

“I know, and she knows, but she has a fixation we can’t handle.” I felt compassion, but a little aggravated, too. Especially when I got there and saw how she was wasting her time and money and ours. As I entered her room alongside our attending doctor, she said, “Oh, Brother Roberts, I’m so glad you’re here. Please tell them I’m pregnant.”

“Will you do as I ask?”

“Yes.”

“According to every medical test, you’re not pregnant, your expectancy is false. Get up, dress and go home!”

“Why, Brother Roberts?”

“You said you’d do what I asked.”

“That’s right. Please forgive me. I’ll leave as quickly as I can dress, get my things and receive my dismissal from the hospital.”

We warmly shook hands, had a good prayer, and it was over. Something good came out of that experience. It reminded me again that expectancy is indispensable, but it is false without the seed.

As I said, God works with seed. All of life is in the seed. Not wishes, not false assumptions, not hope only—but seed. In Hebrews 11:1 God says, “**Faith is...the evidence of things not seen.**” In other words, faith works on expectation—expectation based on evidence, not presumption.

Every court in the land demands the kind of evidence on which a proper verdict can be expected to be rendered. Evidence. Presumption of innocence or guilt is not allowed. In a fair court when proper evidence is presented, one can expect a proper verdict. To expect on presumption alone is hazardous in a court of law or a court of a merciful God.

My grandfather, Amos Pleasant Roberts, was a judge in Indian territory before my home state Oklahoma became the forty-sixth state in the union in 1907. I grew up at his feet as he sat in court. I learned one thing above all else about the law: evidence is the thing to come with.

Evelyn’s evidence of expectancy was a pregnancy that was real; the seed was in her womb; a *due season* was set by eternal laws. By working with that kind of expectancy we got our little Rebecca, also our Ronnie, Richard, Roberta, and through them, our twelve beautiful grandchildren.

Dr. Cho, pregnant in his spirit, inspired that first small number of Korean believers thirty years ago to get pregnant with him in their spirit by planting their

seeds for the same dreams and visions God had ordained to birth the world's largest church—perhaps the strongest praying church in the world. They had evidence for their faith because they knew their seed was in. Therefore, they went into an *expectancy* for a miracle that is an inspiration to this generation. They had come out of the Japanese occupation where they were so near starvation they often had to eat the bark off trees. With their own ill-equipped army and with the help of the American forces and others, they overcame communist North Korea. In the midst of all this, one man stood shivering in the cold one icy winter day and realized Acts 2:17 that states, **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”** As a young man in his twenties, he saw the dream, he seeded for it, he believed it, he expected it, he led others to unite with him. Out of a night so dark it's difficult for the western mind to comprehend, Paul Yonggi Cho's expectancy was real because his pregnancy with God's dream for Korea was real—and the miracle didn't pass him by...nor our generation.

In Nigeria, the largest nation in Africa, with one of four black people in the whole world, some fifty years ago a little boy baby was thrown into the trash can. His father didn't want him and his mother was too frightened to defy her husband.

However, the mother would slip out at night and nurse the baby. In three weeks the father relented and received the baby back in the family.

You can imagine what Benson Idahosa's life was like growing up under those conditions. But at nineteen a missionary told him of Jesus, and he saw in Jesus the fulfillment of the dreams in his heart. Benson says, “I began studying the Gospels and the Book of Acts to discover the kind of man Jesus is. I had no enlightenment from the missionaries on expecting miracles.”

Later he made his way to America to Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas. There, Dr. Freda Lindsay and the staff poured the love of God into his life. A glimmer of the future possibilities in his life for the gospel began to show forth.

Back in Africa he was praying. In a vision he had seen the world and heard God calling him not only to Nigeria and all Africa, but to the nations of the Earth.

“But Lord, who am I to go to the world,” he asked. “The color of my skin is wrong and...”

The Lord interrupted him. “I hadn't noticed,” He said.

“Well, if you haven't noticed my skin is black, then neither will I see I am a

man, loved by You, beloved by You, sent by You. Lord, I will go.”

The same kind of pregnancy of spirit that had come upon Paul Yonggi Cho in Asia, and upon Larry Lea in America, entered Benson Idahosa. The seed-faith message had also reached him and he caught the term, *expect a miracle*, and saw expecting would have to be the password of his future concerning the seeds he would plant.

One day the word expecting “filled me up,” he said. “I thought I would burst, I expected miracles so much.”

Drawing inspiration from men such as Dr. Cho, and also from my own calling to the healing ministry and to build ORU, he literally gave himself to God without reservation and began to expect miracles to happen through his preaching.

Without money, without influence, without most of the things at hand that make men great, Benson Idahosa, nineteen years ago, looked at his home city, Benin City with its 1,000,000 people, and saw that fewer than three per cent were Christians. None of those Christians had an automobile or very many of the essentials to move life forward.

A few had bicycles. He went to the king and gave him his testimony. He also went to the chiefs of the region and told the same story. He was *pregnant* with the vision of God.

From Nigeria he went into Ghana, Zaire, Uganda, Kenya and back to Benin City. Inside him he knew the *due season* was near. His expectation flooded his spirit. He found himself reaching out to receive some of the miracles that he had been seeding for.

To make a long story short, this black man *has birthed 5,000 Christian churches with over 5,000,000 members throughout Africa*. Today he is the single most powerful voice for God in his nation and continent, with influence over presidents, prime ministers and other leaders. I know. Last July in a three-day span that I was in Nigeria and Ghana with my team of medical and preaching missionaries, Benson opened the doors of those nations. After having been all over Africa since 1954 in crusades, I reached more governments in three days, and more people in a shorter span of time than I ever had before, including 500,000 in one single service, as well as government leaders who are the key to taking Africa for Christ.

I asked Benson, now a member of the Board of Regents of Oral Roberts University, also of the Board of Trustees of Charismatic Bible Ministries, to tell me what it was that propelled him in such far-reaching power after having been plucked out of a garbage can as a baby. He said,

*How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor*

When I heard the name Jesus by the missionary, I turned my life over to Him. Then I came to America to study at Christ for the Nations in Dallas. I ran across your life story and your book on *The Miracle of Seed-Faith*, and began to let God birth His full vision in my heart. I woke up to the fact it is not by color, not by money, not by human backing, but by the Holy Spirit making me His battle axe, that I could use Nigeria and Ghana as my base to preach to the world. I saw I could expect Him with signs and wonders to touch the whole world. Being pregnant with that vision, I am moving as a man on fire for God and I know this is only the beginning.

What about you? No matter who you are or where you are, do you have a dream? Have you recognized the vision God has placed in your heart by His Spirit? If so, are you holding to the worn-out theory that Jesus was poor? Have you accepted your lot in life—however bad—as something you can’t do anything about? Have you ever, ever had a miracle...a supernatural occurrence from on high in your life?

Are you lying down on the inside? Is your inner man waiting, waiting, waiting, but not rising up and striking a blow for deliverance?

Are you about to quit? Or are you ready to put Jesus’ “becoming poor for your sake that you might be rich” in context with the whole Word of God? Are you hearing Jesus’ first sermon as recorded in Luke 4:18?

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised?**

Do you not understand if you’re poor—in any form—that Jesus is preaching “good news” to you and that you can prosper according to 3 John 2, **“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth”**?

Do you feel the igniting of the spark of your faith that any breaking of your heart can be healed? That you can be released into your true destiny of greatness? That any blindness to the truth of Jesus’ identification with you in your need can be removed? This is your hour to become pregnant with God’s call on your life and start seeding, believing, working, and expecting your miracle breakthrough!

As the baseball great Yogi Berra once said, “It’s not over till it’s over.”

It’s amazing how I feel my spirit reaching out to your spirit, my faith seeking to be joined with your faith, and my expecting being joined to your expectancy for your life to be changed. Pick up your Bible, turn to Luke 6:38 (probably the greatest single verse in the Bible for true expectancy), go stand before your

mirror and read it out loud to yourself. Do it again and again until you get “a hold” of it and it gets “a hold” of you. Do it and something good is going to happen—to you!

**Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38)**

## Summed Up Personal Reminders

1. *Remind yourself often of how I discovered expecting.*

The birth of our first child, Rebecca, is as I look back the beginning of my learning the key to miracles is *expecting*.

Tell yourself over and over, “I must learn the importance of cultivating the *spirit of expecting*.” Just as parents have to live in a state of expectancy, you must live in a state of expecting good things from the seed you sow to God.

2. *Remember Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho and how he got “pregnant” in his spirit when he began birthing the largest church in the world.*

The key was *expecting*!

Recall Dr. Larry Lea’s birthing the great Church on the Rock, in Rockwall, Texas. He had to come to a place where he knew in his *knower* to get into *expecting*. Remember Benson Idahosa when he thought he had no choice. Remember if God can do it with Benson, He can do it with you.

3. *Remember there can be no false pregnancies or false expectations.*

Even courts demand evidence to render their judgments. Faith has to have evidence to act on—and then evidence must go into expecting: the due season!

4. *Refuse to quit or to give up. Have the spirit of a finisher.*

Expect your miracle breakthrough! Remember Yogi Berra’s famous words, “It’s not over till it’s over.”

5. *Take Jesus’ words, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom” (Luke 6:38). Memorize every word.*

Stand before your mirror and say them out loud to yourself.

Remember the first word is *give*. The last phrase is “**...men shall give unto your bosom.**”

Jesus emphatically says He will cause even men to give to you. But if you're not expecting God to cause men (only He knows the ones He will impress to do the giving) to give to you, you won't be expecting and you won't receive!

Remember God gives through men in many ways: His Word, friendship, money, even things money cannot buy.

Important: Don't expect the person to whom you give to be your Source. Only God can be your Source! God often causes men you have no relationship with, or even know, to give to you.

Remember the whole idea is to wrap yourself and your giving around your faith in God, and live in keen expectancy to receive His best, however He chooses to give it to you! Expect your miracle!



## How It Finally Dawned on Me That God Never Gave Anything Without Expecting Something Back

**M**y sister Jewel, one of the best givers I've ever known, had a hard time with expecting back from God, until one day she came to me in deep trouble.

Jewel is the sister who came to my bedside where I had lain five months with the dreaded disease of tuberculosis in that day when there was no medical cure for it. She said seven words that gave me the first hope that I would get well: "Oral, God is going to heal you." How can I tell you how much I love my sister and those miracle-working words? How can I estimate how great a seed she planted in me that day of my desperation?

For years, she and her husband Leo have lived in Tulsa not far from me. One day she came to see me. Without a word she put a few worn dollar bills into my hand.

"What's this for?" I asked.

"Oral," she said with tears in her eyes, "Leo and I are down to these last few dollars." Leo is a carpenter and because the construction business had almost shutdown, he had not worked a day in four months. "We've spent all of our savings, we've eaten everything we've canned from our garden, and we refuse to go on welfare," Jewel told me.

She paused and I could see the hurt in her eyes. "Oral, you've been preaching seed-faith, and I'm all upset. You've really got me confused." I knew she and Leo were faithful tithers and I couldn't grasp what she was getting at.

"Well, I've come over here to give you our last few dollars to be what you call 'seed.' I don't understand it, but you say God showed it to you in the Bible. You're my preacher brother and I believe in you." She smiled and said, "You know I was there when God healed you."

"You sure were, Jewel," I said. "I appreciate all you did to help me get my healing, but I can't accept this money."

"You've got to," she said in desperation.

"Okay, I'll do it under one condition."

“What’s that?”

“That you will expect to receive back from God.”

“Oh,” she said plaintively, “I can’t do that.”

“Why not, Jewel?”

“Well, I’ve been taught when I give to God’s work I am never to expect anything back.”

She actually said that to me. I said, “Then I can’t take your last bit of money. I can’t put it in God’s work against what the Bible says.” “But you’ve got to. I’m desperate for God to help us.”

“Then promise me you’ll expect to receive, as God said.”

I remember the tense moments as she stood there, trembling in her desperate need and fighting a spiritual battle over bad teaching. “All right,” she said. “You’re my brother, but you’re a man of God and, because you say it, I’ll do it.”

Evelyn and I prayed with her before she left. She returned in about two weeks so excited she could hardly contain herself.

“Oral, Oral!” she called.

“Yes, Jewel.”

“We just got a phone call from the contractor that Leo builds houses for, the one that laid him off. He said although the housing market is still down, he’s got a big new building contract that could last up to a year. Leo can work full time that whole period.”

“That’s wonderful,” I said.

“And that’s not all,” she said. “After I left you the other day I decided to look for a job, and I got the best job I’ve ever had in my life.” Then with a great sigh of relief she said, “Oral, if I live to be a hundred I can never pay you back for convincing me when I give my tithes to give in expectation, because I have never expected anything back from God. I went home and took my Bible and convinced Leo to expect. When that call came, we had been expecting God to do something about our situation that we couldn’t do. We were looking to God as our Source, and not just sitting there about to give up.”

“Jewel, whether or not you were expecting a call back to work, God would have sent it anyway. God says when you give you are to receive, because He sends the miracle every time. But when you’re not looking for the miracle, it passes you by. Then you wonder why God didn’t send it. But thank God you were looking for your miracle and you recognized and received it.”

*How It Finally Dawned on Me That God Never Gave Anything Without Expecting  
Something Back*

Recently, Leo and Jewel retired after having worked for all the years since that time. Jewel makes me homemade wild plum preserves, the kind that Mama kept on the table at every meal as I grew up, and she and Leo also give us fresh vegetables out of their garden. Evelyn was over at their house the other day to pick up my plum preserves. “Tell Oral,” Jewel said to Evelyn with a smile, “not only do I expect to receive through my tithes and offerings as my seed to God, but also from the plum preserves I go out of my way to make for him every year.”

Evelyn smiled. “I’ll tell him.” When Evelyn handed me the several pint jars of my favorite dessert, a lump came in my throat. I thought: If Jewel can now believe me when I say, “Plant your seed and God is going to send you a harvest; therefore, get into expecting to receive,” then certainly others who have been taught incorrectly can now believe it will work for them. *It’s the Word of God...and God’s Word never fails.*

It was God who gave us the principle of *expecting*.

You say, “Where is it in the Bible where God expected to receive back?” Believe it or not it’s in the best known scripture in the Bible, John 3:16: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”**

God is not a good loser. After God created man, Satan slipped in to tempt him and when he bought Satan’s lie and rejected God and His ways totally—making himself god instead of God Himself—he was cast out of the Garden of Eden. A curse came on Adam and Eve, and even on the ground. God lost. But He didn’t sit by His loss.

It’s easier to lose than to win. Someone said, “Any old dead fish can float downstream; only a live one can swim upstream.” God went to work to get man, whom He had created in His own image and likeness, back.

God has always dealt in seeds. All life is in a seed. In pronouncing judgment on the serpent, the guise in which Satan had entered the Garden and tempted Adam and Eve, He said,

**Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:14,15).**

The seed of the woman would destroy Satan. The seed of the woman would be the Messiah, the Christ, the “Anointed One” of God, whom God would send

to restore God's lost creatures and creation.

In Adam and Eve's offspring God looked for persons of *faith*. It was a battle between God and Satan. The first two sons born of the deposed Adam and Eve, from whom all humans organically come, Cain and Abel both retained the spirit in which man was created: the spirit of worship.

Cain sacrificed, but without it being an act of his faith; Abel came to God with faith. In a jealous rage of Abel's acceptance by God and his own rejection, Cain rose up and killed his brother (see Genesis 4:8).

Next came Seth, a man of faith (see Genesis 5:3-6).

Ten generations later only Noah had faith and God spared the world by his faith from being totally destroyed by the flood (see Genesis 6).

Noah's son Shem emerged with faith and through his line came Abraham, the first one after the Fall, whose faith God could build a family on, then a nation (the Israelites), out of whom the Messiah, the promised seed of the woman, would come.

The Israelites had no sense of personal sin, so God raised up Moses to give them the Law. It became like a school teacher. Its strict commandments did three things:

One, it separated them from other nations that rejected God.

Two, when the Israelites fell short of living up to the Law of Moses with its strict commandments they felt a sense of sin from which they could not save themselves.

And third, they felt the need of a Redeemer. That was the Messiah God had promised through the seed of the woman.

Finally, Jesus, conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, was born in Bethlehem, Judea, as the Redeemer/Savior.

At the height of His earthly ministry Jesus stated the words that have been immortalized in John 3:16: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

This is where God's expecting went into full force, and still continues today among all men. Notice carefully:

First, God *so* loved. When we say, "I love you," that means a lot. But when we say, "I *so* love you," that means total love. Who did God *so love*?

Second, God *so* loved *the world*. He loved all He had lost. He loved with a fierceness to get man back. How do we know how strong, how fierce His love

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was?

Third, God so loved the world that He *gave*.

I'll never forget the famous stage actress, Mary Martin, telling on a television interview, how one evening before she was to go on stage in "South Pacific," on Broadway, that the author of the music, Oscar Hammerstein, sent her a note. It read:

Dear Mary,  
A bell is not a bell till you ring it.  
A song is not a song till you sing it.  
Love in your heart is not put there to stay.  
Love is not love till you give it away.

That night Maiy gave such a moving performance, people crowded backstage to thank her. A close friend said, "Oh, Mary, what was it you did tonight that moved us so?"

Quietly reading her friend the note she had received before going on stage, she said as tears streamed down her cheeks, "Tonight, I gave my love away!"

What did God give that moved Him so deeply?

Fourth, God so loved the world that He gave *His only begotten Son*. Let me tell you a story of a dream I had.

When my four children were smaller, one evening I was sitting in the house studying and sort of dozing and I had a dream, like it was real. And I dreamed that the older of my two sons, Ronnie, was in the yard playing and some men came and grabbed him, threw him in their car and drove away with him. And before I could get out there, they were gone. And I screamed for Evelyn. And I didn't know what to do but start my car and go down the road where I saw the car had disappeared. And in the dream I drove all over Tulsa County. And finally I found them. I saw the car on the side of the road and over on a hillside was a cross jabbed in the ground, my little boy Ronnie nailed to it. And I rushed over there, grabbed him and he died in my arms, saying, "Daddy, daddy, daddy."

I was crushed.

God spoke inside me and said, "If this had really happened and Ronnie your son was nailed to a cross, you'd still have one son left, Richard. But I had only one Son and I gave Him." And involuntarily I heard myself saying, "God, there isn't anybody in the world who ever has been or who ever will be born who is worth Your Son." And right out of my spirit He spoke and said, "You have no

right to say that any human being is any less valuable than My Son because that's the price I paid." And it just flew all over me.

Never had I realized my own worth, my own value, that God's Son, the only one, died for Oral Roberts.

My mind went back when I was running away from my parents, throwing my life away in sin and finally struck down with tuberculosis and worth nothing to anybody. And He was up there saying, "You're worth My Son."

I really believe if I, or you, or any other one human being is so valuable that had there been *only* one of us, God so loved us that He would have given His only begotten Son to die for us. He so loved the *world*. That's you, that's me, that's human beings no matter what our self-worth may be, high or low.

That was what was really in God's mind when He gave His only begotten Son for the world.

Fifth, **"...that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

What is God saying? He's dealing with winning...of expecting... of receiving back what He had lost...of planting His best seed from all those in the line of faith from Seth to Noah, Noah to Abraham, and from that long unbroken line from Abraham to David, God calling Jesus "the seed of Abraham" and "the seed of David" (Romans 1:3).

Then from David's faith line to Mary, the virgin highly favored of God (Luke 1:28).

In that seed was all God's love, all His faith, all His hope or expectation.

On the cross that seed "died" as a seed sown, according to the scriptures. From the tomb the seed sprang forth into newness of life. In the ascension that miracle of Resurrected Life sat down at the Father's right hand to give gifts among men (Hebrews 8:1-3).

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came as the unlimited, invisible presence of Jesus, and baptized the 120 believers. He filled them with the Holy Spirit, opening up the stream of salvation to flow, and keep flowing until all who would believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess His name with their mouths would be saved (Romans 10:9,10).

Some never heard before that God gave to receive something back. The fact is, God gave for a "desired result"—our salvation. I've read the Bible from cover to cover scores of times and I've never found one act of God's giving in which He didn't expect to receive back, or what I call "seed for a desired result." Some scoff at the idea, some reject it. I believe it. I am a product of God's *expecting*.

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I was lost and undone,  
without God or His Son,  
When He reached down  
His hand for me.

I would not have come back to God voluntarily. It was the farthest thing from my mind. But God expected Oral Roberts to be among all those “whosoever’s” He mentioned in John 3:16. I was one He loved, so loved that He gave His only begotten Son to die for me—for me—that if I believed in His Son, I would not perish but have—yes, have—everlasting life! I was part of God’s giving His best seed, His only begotten Son, for a “desired result.”

All because God gave His love away—to me. All because He expected me to hear Him calling for me and He kept on expecting. All because His expecting caught up with my runaway life, my life with its blasted hopes and the cold breath of death on me.

All because He believed I was worth the price He paid: His only begotten Son dying on Calvary and rising from the dead.

If God had not expected from the seed of seeds He planted, I wouldn’t be writing this book. With the sin of my life in my soul, and the disease pushing me over the rim of death, I would have been in hell—lost forever!

But God expected. As a careful seed planter He didn’t sow for nothing. He didn’t throw His best seed to the winds and aimlessly hope, “Well, maybe, that seed will spring up in Oral Roberts.”

He had me in mind. For me He “so loved.” He gave His best seed to save me, to heal me, to call me to preach, teach and heal.

And God did it for every human being born and for all who are still to be born. He did it for you.

God won’t quit.

God refuses to lose even one of us.

He’s holding on for the “desired result” from His seed sown.

He expects to reap from the seed He sows.

I tried to tell my sister Jewel that. Bad teaching coming out of the poverty of my preacher father’s life and from a church that believed Jesus was poor, hindered Jewel at the point of her and her husband Leo’s need. But I remembered her seven words, “Oral, God is going to heal you,” and learned many years after my healing that Jewel had sown seeds of her faith into my miserable, little life

there on that bed dying with the dreaded disease, tuberculosis.

Since that hour God had been sending miracles toward Jewel, or past her, and she never knew it. Not until she held out those few worn dollar bills, her last, and said, "I don't understand seed-faith, but you do, Oral, so please take this. I'm desperate for a miracle."

"I won't do it, Jewel," I told her, "unless you expect to receive back!"

Am I comparing God with Jewel? No, but I'm comparing Jewel with God, at least up to a point.

Both had sown their best seeds. Jewel's seven words, as far as my chances of getting healed were concerned, were her best. There the comparison stopped. God had sown His best seed, and started expecting! Jewel had not expected because misinterpreted and misapplied teachings of Jesus' being poor had bred in her spirit that she was not to expect from her seed sown to God for her baby brother's healing.

I remember it so well, when understanding dawned on Jewel that she was to expect. It came in her eyes first: Gone were the dullness, the hopelessness. Her face began to glow and she straightened up in her body. When she realized she had to expect, and as she started expecting, all the forces of Satan could not keep the blinders on her spiritual eyes. God was sending her miracle, and she opened her eyes spiritually to recognize it and receive it!

God is good, totally good. But I've come to believe that the propelling force of all that goodness is *His expectancy!*

Must love die in vain? Must seed sown produce no harvests? Must there be no reaping?

NO, THANK GOD!

What a great hour to be alive. How blessed we are to know Jesus was *not* poor. He had a house, a treasury, a team, generous partners, a unique robe, a rich man's tomb to be buried in, riches in Heaven to supply our needs with, the power to give us seed to sow, then to multiply our seed sown and increase our righteousness. And Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!

If you could count every seed you sow as an act of your love and faith...every one of which has in it a miracle God has been releasing and sending your way...you would not be sitting there looking like an accident going off to happen, or like you've been drinking vinegar, or like your faith doesn't work. With every fiber of your being, every molecule of your strength, every particle of your power to expect, every ability you have to receive, you would be declaring out of the depths of your soul,



*God, forgive me for not knowing any better. Accept my repentance that I am turning myself around from my failure to expect and to receive from every seed I've sown. God! I...do...expect! God! I...look...to...my...due season! God! I...believe...I'm... overdue! Now God, I open my entire being to receive! God, I...do... receive!*

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Ask yourself if Jewel's attitude has ever been yours.

Is it yours now?

As she changed, do you believe you can change also? Can you see that the idea of expecting to receive for all the good seed you've sown—even years ago—still holds good? Get serious about expecting.

2. Remember God is not a loser. Remember the difference between the dead fish and the live one.
3. Remind yourself God has always dealt in seeds. Your life came from a seed. You are planting seeds all the time. The question to ask yourself is, "Am I planting seeds of faith as God does?"

From Adam to Jesus the seed-principle ruled. Jesus is the seed of seeds. Jesus to you today is the greatest example of seed-sowing and reaping of all time. See it. Grasp it.

4. Remember the dream I had of my two little sons, Ronnie and Richard, and how I learned of God's great love in a deeper way. Also, how God so loved you He gave His only begotten Son.

You are worth Jesus. How do you know? That's the price God paid to save your soul!

5. Remind yourself I wouldn't take the few dollars from my sister for God's work until she agreed to get into faith and expect to receive back from God.

It was Jewel's seven words that gave me my first thought of believing God would heal me. For that seed sown in me she had never expected anything back from the God of the harvest. Are you guilty of not letting God be God to you, of revealing His goodness so that you can reap from your seed sown? Let this idea change your life.

6. I remind you: This is the greatest hour for you to be alive. More good

*How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor*

teaching on the truth that Jesus was not poor, but came to prosper His people, is being given now than in all history.

Remember: Like begets like. Get in the best spiritual atmosphere you can find. Hear the most anointed and positive preachers. Get God's Word into your heart and see how Jesus came that you might have the more abundant life.

This is your hour. Seize the moment. Jesus gave an example of your Heavenly Father saying, "**All that I have is yours**" (see Luke 15:31).

## Eight Things I Try to Remember That Cause God to Prosper Me

**A**ll through my long years of ministering as an evangelist, God has taught me many lessons that have shaped my life. I have been teachable, and the Lord has blessed me with many words and experiences I learned from. I have always tried to remember these lessons, because I discovered that by sticking to them, I was blessed by God for my obedience. I think you could benefit from them, and so I share some of the more important things I know that bring God's prosperity to our lives.

### 1 Identify your enemies.

If you find you have a *love* for money, recognize it as your enemy. For it is not money itself that is your enemy, since you must have sufficient money to live on, but **“the love of money that is the root of all evil”** (see 1 Timothy 6:10). Loving money for money's sake is raising yourself above God, and that in turn opens you to the very heart of evil itself and all of its offspring.

I remember a very successful man, who I thought was my friend say, “Oral, many people believe you take the money you raise for your ministry and keep it, so why not do it?”

I said, “You can't be serious.”

He said, “No one would ever know the difference.”

“I would know it,” I replied.

I remember the scripture that came to me. It's in Matthew 13:28: **“An enemy hath done this.”** Suddenly, I knew this man was my enemy because he was trying to get me to break the vow I had made to God when I began this ministry, “I will never touch the gold or the glory.” And I knew I had kept that vow.

Time after time when people have suggested doing wrong, I never fail to hear God's Word in my spirit say, **“An enemy hath done this.”** It's saved me and my ministry in many different ways.

I believe there is built into us a *knower* that picks up the sound of evil, that lets us know something is wrong. Also, there is the Word of God that shines on our path as we study it and hide it in our hearts. There is also the Holy Spirit who

unmasks and reveals evil to us.

My credo is: When in doubt, don't do it.

**2 When discouraged and ready to quit, remember the miracles you've already received.**

I know of no Christian who is not tempted by Satan to become discouraged to the point of wanting to quit. And Satan the discourager keeps knocking at our door.

Something good always happens to me when I'm so discouraged I'm about ready to throw up my hands and say, "Oh, what's the use?" Every time I hear one word deep inside myself: *Remember!* Instantly, my spirit is transported back to the time I was seventeen years old. I was not a Christian, and I had contracted tuberculous thirteen years before the discovery of antibiotic drugs.

The district judge and the county health officer signed papers to put me in the sanitarium in the little town of Talihena in the mountains of eastern Oklahoma. I came face to face with the truth: few ever came out of that mountain alive!

My conversion became the most important event in my life. Now when I feel like quitting all I have to do is to *remember* I would have been dead and in hell without giving my heart to God. For it was during my conversion experience, within a matter of hours, that the Lord healed me.

Remember an event or moment in your life which was decisive in turning your life around, and you'll find you can command Satan,

"Take your hands off God's property—me!" He'll do it, too.

God makes available many ways to help you through discouragement and a desire to quit, not the least of which is to remember His goodness to you.

**3 Send it through Heaven first.**

It seems inevitable that when someone comes against us often enough or hard enough, we find ourselves thinking some pretty rough things and find ourselves ready to lambaste him. I know I've had such experiences.

Once I said to a close spiritually minded friend of mine what I was about to do to such an individual. "That's okay, Oral," he told me. "But send it through Heaven first."

I'd never heard that before. "How do I do that?" I asked. "Oral, just go off alone and tell God exactly what you plan to say back to the person who has injured you."

"You mean exactly?"

“Exactly.”

I felt sort of sheepish saying to God the exact words, because I was getting ready to angrily tell this person off. I blurted out these words to God and just stood there feeling like a fool. To my amazement it seemed to me I heard in my spirit a corrected version of my words. Immediately, I sought this person out and said those nice things to him.

He looked at me. “You know, Oral Roberts, you’re a real nice guy. I’m going to help you do your work for God.”

I thought to myself: Dear God, sending it through Heaven first really works. As I thought further about the particular person who’d been a thorn in my side, it was surely a miracle to see him change like that.

The fact was the miracle had first happened in me. Ever since, I’ve been sending a lot of things through Heaven first.

**4 When you can’t think of anything to say in a tight situation, do what Paul did: Give your personal testimony.**

The apostle Paul never forgot how Jesus met him on the Damascus road. While he was so angry at God and man, he was dangerous to himself and everyone he could find who served Jesus. Out of this personal experience of repenting and believing in Jesus, he was changed through and through, and became so effective in his witness for Jesus he was frequently thrown into prison.

Each time when he stood in court facing his accusers, or being hounded by the judge, or the situation got so tight there seemed to be nothing he could do to bring good into the moment, Paul would start telling them how he met Jesus, how Jesus turned his life around and made life worthwhile.

It never failed to touch many of the people present, including the judge and the prosecutors.

There’s something powerful about your personal encounter with Jesus, your new birth experience, your experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, or a miracle of healing or some other answer to prayer that you can tell out of your heart.

An oil rich uncle of mine was once asked which one of papa’s children would someday preach the gospel. Quickly he named my brother Vaden, who was very handsome, articulate and friendly to everyone.

My father said, “Vaden will make his mark, but the one who’ll preach is Oral!”

Uncle Willis said, “Him? Why he stutters so bad, he can’t even talk.”

Years later when I was called of God to preach and heal the sick, this uncle came to one of my crusades. I saw him standing on the edge of the crowd which was so large we couldn't seat them. Seeing him I remembered his doubt and cutting words about me. That's when I knew I should change my sermon and simply tell my personal testimony.

At the invitation to those who had never accepted Jesus as their personal Savior, here he came. As we fell into each other's arms he was crying. "Oral," he said, "and to think I'm the one who believed you'd never amount to anything, let alone preach."

Uncle Willis, then nearly eighty, received Christ for the first time.

Have you a personal testimony to tell?

### **5 Never give God that which costs you nothing.**

In 2 Samuel, David was wanting to purchase land on which to build the temple for the worship of the God of Israel. The man who owned the land was so overwhelmed that the temple might stand on his land, he offered it free.

David gave us one of the greatest seed-faith demonstrations one can ever learn. In refusing the man's offer David said, "**I will not give God that which costs me nothing,**" and he paid full price for the land.

There's something about a stingy person, one who would cheat even God, or who connives to get something of value for little or nothing, that is repulsive to God and man. It's a serious flaw in character, and a spirit that always comes back in kind a hundredfold.

On the other hand, when I watch my spirit to see if it causes me to want something for nothing, I know my soul is in danger before God. There is no more rewarding experience than when I, or you, or anybody knows in our hearts a good deal is one that is good for both sides.

Give God your best, then expect His best.

### **6 It's not *who's* right, but *what's* right.**

There's no greater temptation than to agree on something because a person you like is for it.

We all face the situation in our lives.

I recall my father who was once under severe pressure at a church conference. Papa kept saying, "But just because John is my friend doesn't make what he's saying here right." Friends called papa aside. I heard them say, "Ellis, you could make the man your enemy for life."

If I live to be a hundred, I'll never forget papa's reply. "It's not *who's* right,

but *what's* right.” And he voted his convictions.

As I've indicated my father suffered much poverty during his ministry, but at his death the most important people we knew honored him at his funeral. They knew Ellis Melvin Roberts had integrity. We children knew it, too. We still miss him.

**7 If you find yourself hollering out of fear, sit quiet and listen, God is saying, “I’m just a hand’s reach away.”**

In a mountain climbing expedition the men who were climbing tied themselves together with ropes. At a treacherous place, the rope of one young climber broke and he tumbled down the mountainside. His fall was broken on an icy ledge, and he rolled up against the side of the mountain, knocked unconscious.

When he came to and realized the danger he was in, he was so scared he began hollering at the top of his voice, “Help! Somebody help me!”

For an hour he yelled like this, until he was so exhausted he could yell no more. Suddenly he heard a quiet, firm voice just above him say, “Tie your rope to mine and I’ll pull you up. It’s just a hand’s reach away.”

After being pulled up he cried, “Why didn’t you hear me and pull me up sooner?”

The man who pulled him up said, “Every three minutes I lowered my rope and said those same words to you. But you were hollering so loud you couldn’t hear me. But when you exhausted yourself, you listened and heard me.”

When the man told me this story he said, “One thing stands out to me. After my friend told me in that quiet, firm voice to reach up and tie my rope to his, that it was only a hand’s reach away, something has happened to my life in a spiritual sense.”

“What is it?”

“When he said his rope was just a hand’s reach away, something opened up inside me. I realized that I had fallen away from God with my life. I’d let a lot of fear come in and at times I did a lot of yelling and cursing. But then I remembered God was telling me in that still small voice to reach up with the rope of my faith and tie it to His and He would pull me back up.”

“Did you do it?”

“Yes, I did. And I’ve learned that hollering and yelling and letting fear dominate me is so useless. When I listen quietly I hear God telling me what to do.”

While I've never been a mountain climber, I've done a lot of hollering when bad things happened to threaten my life or my career or my family. This man's story has had a profound effect upon me. I do a lot more listening now.

### **8 Don't tell anyone to go to hell, tell them to go to Heaven.**

For twenty-five years our general counsel was a Jewish lawyer, a very dedicated and able man, who was extremely loyal to our work. He would never allow anyone, Jewish, Gentile or anyone else to speak a bad word against me or this ministry.

One day he said, "Dr. Roberts, someone said something real mean about the ministry yesterday."

I knew he had not let him get by with it. I said, "What did you say to him?"

"I told him to go to hell!"

"You what?"

"I told him to go to hell!"

"Why didn't you tell him to go to Heaven?"

He stood there dumbfounded. "But I didn't want his kind to go to Heaven. I wanted him to go to hell."

"Not really," I replied. "Knowing you I cannot believe you'd want anyone to go to hell, to be punished so seriously and severely." He didn't say anything.

I waited.

"Well," he said. "Come to think of it, I really wouldn't want any person to go to hell. Say again to me what you said before."

"Tell them to go to Heaven."

He laughed and laughed. "Not only are you right," he said. "But just think of the look on his face had I told him to go to Heaven."

Weeks passed. One day the lawyer said. "You know I've been thinking about what you said about telling the man to go to Heaven. I've done that twice already and the effect has been electrifying." Then he said, "But not only on the ones I said it to but on me, also. I'll never forget that it's a lot better to tell someone to go to Heaven rather than to hell."

To me it's not just the words. It's the intent of the heart, the attitude that pervades our spirit, our outlook on life that makes us like God.

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**



*Eight Things I Try to Remember That Cause God to Prosper Me*

1. Remember to identify any person as an enemy who tries to get you to break your vow with God.
2. Whenever you get discouraged, remember...recall the event God used to change your life.
3. No matter what you feel like saying or doing against another person, always send it through Heaven first. You can make enemies into friends.
4. Remember that when Paul was in a tight situation, he gave his personal testimony. There's something powerful about your testimony of what Jesus did for you.
5. Remember David. He said, "I will not give God that which costs me nothing."

Give God your best, then expect His best.

6. Recall the lesson my father taught me, "It's not *who's* right, but *what's* right."

Integrity is the key.

7. If you fall off the mountain, get quiet and listen. God is saying, "I'm only a hand's reach away."

Hollering and yelling help very little. Getting quiet and listening calmly, bring God close enough for you to hear Him.

8. Remember my Jewish lawyer who learned to stop telling people to go to hell, but instead learned it was better to tell them to go to Heaven.

Compare your words with the intent of your heart. You don't really want bad things to happen to people, but good things.



## It's Time to Take Another Look at Jesus! What If He Had to Face What We Do Today? Eight Questions for the Media and Everyone

**I**s there a major difference between what Jesus needed financially and a minister of the gospel needs today? What about the charges of the news media on the failures of a few and on the perceived wrongs it holds before the public concerning the finances of ministers in general? I want you to consider eight key questions.

*1. What about Jesus' personal financial obligations? Did He live in poverty?*

If so, how did He exist on Earth in a poverty-stricken condition, and at the same time proclaim such a triumphant message of hope and faith for mankind such as He did in Luke 4:18:

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.**

When I think of the obligations of our complex society and compare Jesus' financial needs as a single man with the needs of a minister today with a family, it seems to me people have a blind spot towards God's spiritual leaders and their financial obligations.

Jesus was a single man whose main purpose, in the ultimate sense, was to die for the sins of man that he might be forgiven and restored to God.

The ministers of the gospel He has chosen to carry on His work throughout the world have much different obligations financially than Jesus did; although He too did have to have finances to a certain extent as we have seen. There must be finances for all the areas ministers labor in, including their churches or other church-related positions, as well as to provide for their families, which in our day is expensive, to say the least.

Consider the minister's family with their needs of decent housing, food, clothing, education, medical care, means of transportation in what is now mostly an urban society, taxes and other necessities too numerous to mention, as well as

their relationship to the church. Any reasonable thinking person can easily see this is a different society than the unmarried Jesus faced.

The Bible makes it clear Jesus did not come to assume personal family obligations. His major concern for families and all people was, **“I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly”** (John 10:10). More abundant life implies a plentiful supply for human needs, and that includes the needs of His people, and certainly it includes the needs of His divinely called and appointed **“apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers”** (Ephesians 4:11). Without this five-fold ministry there would be no Christian church or carrying out the Great Commission (Mark 16:15), certainly not in the strong form it exists today.

A minister’s supply for him and his family does not come automatically. Although his work includes the business end of God’s work, his work is mostly spiritual. This means diligent labor for fifty to seventy hours a week just with the specific spiritual part of his ministry. In addition, he must earn enough money to provide for his wife and children, as well as serving the community in many ways outside his own ministerial calling.

## *2. How did Jesus exist on Earth?*

By labor, most of it hard manual labor as a carpenter. At age thirty when He entered His public ministry, He had to change the way He earned His living. That is why we read that **“many ministered to him of their substance”** (Luke 8:2,3). There was no way Jesus could have lived in poverty and carried out His divinely appointed ministry. Neither can any person He has called to a spiritual ministry today. Notice Luke states those who supported Jesus and His apostles (and their helpers) were “many.” And it takes “many” today, even more because of the worldwide scope of preaching the gospel.

Notice also, that while I’m specifying the ministry here what I’m saying includes all people, particularly people who serve God in any area of life.

Tradition has it that Joseph died early, and Jesus had to assume the obligation of providing for His mother, Mary, and children by her through Joseph her husband. If that is true, and most likely it was, then it entailed pretty large financial earnings.

At the very least, Jesus as a single man had to provide for his own housing, food, clothing, transportation, and so on. We know He was able to do this easily because all Jewish males were taught a trade, in Jesus’ case, carpentry. As conscientious as He was, He must have been a good worker.

Despite the financial obligations Jesus may have had after Joseph’s death, for Mary and her younger children, the finances required for Himself cannot be said

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to be insignificant. Supporting oneself then or now is not an easy task. And no one can do his best work when forced to live in financial poverty.

None can deny that our world with its five billion plus people—and growing—with its vast communication system of radio, television, satellites, instant electronics transmission, atomic energy, star wars, is very different from that little world lying around the Mediterranean Sea with no more than 100 million people. Maybe so different there's little comparison.

The poverty level now determined by the U.S. government for a family is around \$11,000 a year. Today it takes dollars, not pennies, to buy bread and milk.

To impose poverty on the ministry under the guise that Jesus lived in poverty is enough to make Jesus Himself angry!

Suppose my belief that the Bible indicates Jesus had a house is wrong. Then where did He live, eat, get His clothes? If He had no money, then how did He feed His party of twelve apostles and their helpers? Without His ministry being like a business, how could they have conducted such huge preaching, teaching and healing missions in as many cities?

Did Jesus and his helpers sleep in the streets? Did they beg for food? Were they poorly clad, in Palestine where there was freezing weather in winter and up to 120-degree heat during the summer?

Had Jesus been a father, how could He have made it if opinion makers and religious leaders continued to insist He was poor with no place to lay His head?

Think for a moment if Jesus came to me and said, "Oral, I want to step into your shoes as a family man, take on all financial responsibilities you had in raising your children, your training for the ministry, your tax obligations personally and as a householder—city, state and federal. I want to purchase an automobile as you have to do, keep it up, make monthly payments, pay grocery bills, utility bills, housekeeping bills, take part in United Fund drives, PTA, Red Cross...."

Suppose He said He wanted to assume one of the ministry offices which He had the apostles set in the church, and do it as an evangelist according to His call on my life. In my case He would first have had to be a pastor. I had to learn the way the local church operates and the system of church government of the denomination which ordained me.

When it was time to fulfill the call as an evangelist of healing power for my generation, He would have had at that time to purchase a big tent with organ, piano, thousands of folding chairs, big trucks and semi-trailers. He would also have had to buy all the other equipment required to put up that huge portable

auditorium, meet all city standards, handle crowds of tens of thousands under stringent laws of today's society and with a full-time team of salaried people to do it.

For Jesus to be me, He would have had to operate with my limited ability, my understanding, and my experience in handling an organization as complex as ours and to handle over a million people a year in the tent crusades for twenty years. He would have had to organize sponsors, pastors and personal workers to help unsaved, unchurched people in large numbers, up to 1,000 to 2,000 converts a service. And He would have had to conduct all this with order and security for the people.

So, my deep and sincere belief is that we should take another look at Jesus. Let's consider what we face in today's complicated, costly society that was not required of Him.

*3. Why do both the church and the world resist Jesus' words, "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7)?*

The word *hire* in the sense Jesus connects it with His ministers is not the same as the word *pay* from secular organizations. It is a divine prerogative of the ministry that they are to obey God's calling first and last, and for that God understands their human needs of adequate finances.

When a church board says, "We pay our preacher so much," it's totally out of order scripturally. As good monitors in taking business affairs off a minister to the extent he has time to pray and give the ministry of the Word, a church board is perfectly in order. They should see to it that a proper part of the money the minister causes to come in goes to his support.

But God sees the minister's service not as one they can pay for. *If they can pay him, they can buy him.* If this happens he can easily become what the Bible calls a "hireling" (see John 10:12). This means the minister pays more attention to pleasing people than the God who called him.

When Jesus said we in the ministry are *worthy* of our hire, He meant we are in His hire, not men's.

I was reading a well-known secular news magazine recently and there was an entire page devoted to the title of an article, "And Then There Is Only Reverend Left," naming *only one* evangelist left who is honest and trustworthy. I know that man well and love him deeply. I said to my wife, "He will be insulted when he reads this about himself." Evelyn went further, a little outraged, "As much as I love and believe in him, he is not more honest or trustworthy than you and many more who are giving their all to God and His service!"

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I'm not overly disturbed about that opinion—and that's all it is—because as God said to the prophet Elijah who once thought he was the only man of God left, **“I have 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal”** (see 1 Kings 19:18).

Multiply 7,000 in those days when the number of God's ministers were few with the far greater number in our populous age, and God could easily say, “I have 700,000 or 7,000,000 ministers who have not failed Me!”

In my lifetime I've seen the ebb and flow of public opinion and church opinion, when they put many men of God down for the sins of the few. I've also seen mighty new waves of revival and church plantings come again and again. A little verse of a poem comes at the time of confusion and outright persecution occurring today against many of God's true ministers:

Truth crushed to Earth will rise again,  
The eternal years of God are hers;  
But error wounded, writhes in pain,  
And lies amid her worshippers.

*4. How would the media have reported on Jesus?*

I constantly run into the aftermath of age-old teachings and beliefs among religious people about the so-called poverty of Jesus. I face even the *subconscious* way people believe about it. The news media have made a fetish of reporting any form of Christian prosperity.

I respectfully ask what would these opinion makers and certain religious leaders do with Jesus if He went on television. He preached in a way that His own hometown tried to kill Him. Would they believe His miracles? If they got a report that at night He walks on water with the only eyewitnesses being His own disciples, would they report in their local and national news stories, “Isn't that great?” Or would they send their highest paid newsmen (some making over a million dollars a year!) to hound those who believed they saw Jesus walk on water, until they made them a laughingstock?

Imagine the news accounts reporting that Jesus turned water into wine. Or that Jesus stood in the storm-tossed boat, raised His hand and said, “Peace be still!” and the whole sea immediately became calm as the storm subsided. Or what would they do with reports that He raised the dead? Or that He sent seventy of His disciples to heal the sick and cast out devils and they told everyone how successful they had been in doing it? Would the news media give a fair report of that?

Or think of Jesus being out of money on an occasion and sending Peter to

catch a money fish. Wouldn't the newscasters bombard Peter for proof, which he couldn't give to their satisfaction?

Think of how the news media would have carried what was said by 120 disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost. How the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they spoke in tongues they never learned. And how those witnessing the phenomenon, who were native speakers of the languages, understood them.

Or how they got their church people to pool all their money and possessions, and all shared equally.

Go back to the cross. Think of those reports that that bloody scene was likened to the act of the Father's "so loving" everyone, that He was giving His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe this bloody crucifixion of the Man they killed would *not* go to hell but to Heaven!

Our deeds would be small in comparison.

Visualize the coverage of Jesus' resurrection and how the news media would have hounded the handful who said, "I was there." Or "I talked with Him afterward." Or "He came in His resurrected body when we were fishing and catching nothing and told us how to haul in one of the most successful catches of our lives."

Peter goes to jail; Paul to prison; Stephen is stoned to death. This is how Christianity was introduced to an already religious world. Wouldn't the media say, "We have too much religion in the world now"?

This is the kind of bias that Jesus' ministers of preaching, teaching and healing have to put up with today. It's this distorted bias of the media that also tries to perpetuate the false idea that Jesus was poor and His ministers should be poor, too.

*5. What about the media's perception of ministers on television?*

In the first place, the media has a serious misunderstanding of the way God set up the office of the ministry. Paul makes it clear as a five-fold office of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher (Ephesians 4:11).

I was a young pastor in my college days, the spiritual head and leader of a local congregation. I had my wife, Evelyn, and the first two of our four children, Rebecca and Ronnie. My services were carried on radio, but since the church designated me as a pastor and not an evangelist, I was not known as an evangelist by being on the radio—which was before television came on the scene.

My ministry as a pastor had to do with seeing that the local church I was over stayed in operation and had proper growth. My duties went far beyond preaching on Sundays. My personal prayer life and my sermon preparation—all of which



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took many hours each week. As a pastor I served in the capacity of a shepherd of the flock spiritually with my preaching the Word for them to feed on and grow on.

Although preaching and prayer were the central parts of pastoring, my responsibilities went far beyond that—to serving the needs of the poor, the widows and orphans, the sick and afflicted; as chairman of the board of deacons, to seeing that the financial and physical needs of the church and its buildings, equipment and supplies were met, in fulfilling the requirements of being an ordained minister in my denomination, which was no little thing; to paying the tuition for my college credits, attending class, and making passing grades; to being a responsible member of my community as a citizen as well as a pastor!

Many pastors are capable of running almost any size of business. I myself had gifts beyond those required of me as a minister of the gospel and serving as a pastor of a local church. On several occasions job and career offers were made me by secular interests. While I never trained or sought to be a businessman, when I left the pastorate in my call to be an evangelist, my work of the gospel finally grew until I was called on by God to build a major university, a large medical center, and to raise hundreds of millions of dollars to build, equip, staff and operate these entities, while at the same time carry on my preaching, teaching and healing.

It is important to know that the evangelist has his own separate ministry office in the church but often interlaces with that of a pastor as mine did and still does today. In my situation, I knew all along my office in the church was that of an evangelist rather than that of a pastor. However, I and many evangelists can also serve as pastors and do a good job. Our chief calling though is not so much shepherding a local church, but going to the unchurched or coming into a local church for a brief period to help stir spiritual revival.

The evangelist's calling—his goal—is to preach the good news (the gospel) to as many people as possible, to glean a harvest of souls. In Jesus' day, farmers harvested their grain by hand. Today, huge machines harvest several rows of grain simultaneously, covering acres of a field in an hour. In Jesus' day, the gospel was preached door-to-door and in public meetings. Today, our public forums are radio and television and our means of going door-to-door are by mail, radio receivers, and television sets.

There are those evangelists, as there are certain pastors, who are destined by God to a very large ministry and influence. They have far-reaching abilities to help the church make quantum leaps. This type of evangelist often opens up whole new areas of soul-winning with a special anointing to heal the sick, which

is **“God confirming His [preached] Word, with signs following”** (Mark 16:20). In many areas where there were few or no churches, the ministry of the evangelist often results in birthing scores of new local congregations, as well as introducing deeper revelations of the Word of God that are more easily understood by the masses. The evangelist usually preaches in simple terms, and backs up his ministry by the demonstration of the power of God by miracles. **“Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ”** (Romans 15:19). Here Paul indicates the gospel as only fully preached when it is accompanied by “mighty signs and wonders” [miracles]. The evangelist can definitely add to the pastor’s work by bringing this dimension of Jesus’ ministry to the local congregation, and thereby to the world.

This does not mean pastors are not to have their preaching “confirmed by God by signs,” for many do, and increasingly so, as is evidenced in charismatic congregations, in many classical Pentecostal congregations, and in many other church groups.

Our Lord Jesus had a definite evangelistic thrust in His ministry. The dominating factor of His ministry was a confirmation of His ministry by healings and miracles.

The seventy He sent forth to preach, heal and cast out demons could be looked upon as evangelists (Luke 10:1-20). The writers of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are considered to have been evangelists. Paul told young Timothy, **“Do the work of an evangelist”** (2 Timothy 4:5). In Acts 21:8 Philip was known as “the evangelist.”

Evangelism was the heart of church growth in the early church, and it is today. That is perhaps one of the reasons the work of the evangelist, especially the successful ones, creates so much more interest in the gospel and in the work of the local churches. When used properly there is no other ministry that can further the gospel as quickly and thoroughly. When abused, probably no other ministry can be a larger cause of abuse and scandal.

For example, if a local pastor suffers a serious moral falling or financial misappropriation or is thought to be money hungry, he can be dealt with privately. The situation can be more easily contained without large public embarrassment to the church. This is very important to understand in the light of recent events concerning those evangelists whose difficulties have been highly sensationalized by the news media.

The evangelist’s ministry is often more dynamic. The individual often displays more charisma, and does his work in a far more public way. If the

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evangelist has a television ministry, particularly a large one, and has or is perceived to have the same falling as a pastor—be it moral or financial—it is soon in the public eye. This is tailor-made for the news media or for anyone who opposes evangelism in any form, particularly evangelism accompanied by miracles.

In my opinion, this is not all bad. In some cases it is justified. Abuses in any field affecting the welfare of society must be exposed—never covered up—in government, in businesses such as inside trading in the stock market, in the professions such as medical malfeasance or legal irregularities—or in the ministry whether it is an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher.

Standards for integrity in every area should and must be guarded and maintained. The Bible requires it. However, the ministry in its high calling of dealing with the souls of men and their eternal destiny should adhere to the highest standards of all! Nothing should ever be covered up.

Jesus said, **“For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad”** (Luke 8:17).

Yet in virtually all other professions, these standards of integrity are self-regulated. Doctors judge doctors and set medical standards; lawyers do the same for their profession, and so forth.

If the church is not diligent in cleaning up its own house, which is the place many of us believe such spiritual and moral failures should be dealt with, then outside concerns such as the powerful news media will, usually with a view to sensationalizing it. Up to a point, it is my view this is part of the function of the news media wherever abuses occur—including the media themselves.

We would be less than candid, however, if we did not recognize that the curiosity of the public, in effect, *demand*s the news media to sensationalize to a degree everything it touches. Every media outlet, be it broadcast or print, is a business, and the way a media business makes money is not only to print legitimate news but to titillate the public's “senses” with headlines and features that focus on the bizarre and unusual aspects of human nature.

In the recent unfortunate and serious failings of a few evangelists, it seems that it gave opportunity—or an excuse—for a secular media to go beyond the norm. Expose it thoroughly, yes, Make it fully known, yes. Raise questions, yes. The church will not be destroyed under any conditions just because a few ministers are revealed to be either charlatans or morally weak. The vast majority of the more than 500,000 others are dedicated men and women of the highest

integrity—and will continue to be.

The media's proclivity to go too far is like a dog working on a bone seriously and playfully, and sometimes angrily. They make it harder on any minister or evangelist who is widely known and has a large influence. The news media and certain religious leaders with their own personal ax to grind have a field day with it. Many times they simply won't turn it loose until the public, including some church people, adopt their view.

Often—far too often in my personal experience—it's what the news media *says* that the evangelist said rather than what he actually said that sticks in the viewers' or readers' mind.

I believe it is fair to say I know this as well as anyone, and I have had *no* moral failure and have *not* been guilty of any financial indiscretions. Attacks on me have been more on what I am absolutely convinced God spoke in my spirit and told me to do, and which sometimes runs totally opposite to popular beliefs. I cannot as a committed man of God retreat from what God says. I'll suffer what I have to suffer rather than break my relationship with my Savior, Jesus Christ. History is full of accounts of men and women who would rather die than disobey God.

Now in no way would I, or any other man of integrity, uphold the sins of a brother if we know of them!

Nor are we above criticism. But these critics—who consider themselves to be public servants—should look at themselves before they throw *all* their stones. Let them give up their fine cars, homes, clothes and highly paid jobs if that is a requirement for moral good and public service. Otherwise, they are *hypocritical* if they're going to continue portraying in every way possible that *one particular group of public servants*—those who serve the public spiritually—should not have the funds they need to carry on Jesus' work.

The miracle is that they can't stop the power of God, or kill the deep instincts in all of us for miracles from the King Jesus. They cannot bleep out His own ringing words, **"...I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly"** (John 10:10).

The church still lives. And that includes the offices of the *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers* which God Himself "set in the church" (Ephesians 4:11). These ministry offices will be functioning long after the last critic falls on his own futility, the sun and moon have been blown from their sockets and Jesus has returned to the Earth to rule and reign forever!

*6. Is everybody preaching on television an evangelist?*

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No.

In 1951 when my long-time friend Billy Graham appeared on a monthly TV program, he became the first minister properly designated as an evangelist to be on national prime-time television. As far as I can determine I was the second evangelist to go on prime-time television. Mine was a weekly program starting in 1954, and it still continues.

Others were on television locally or regionally very early. My friend Rex Humbard is the most noted, but Rex was pastor of the Cathedral of Tomorrow, preaching regularly in Akron, Ohio. He was not, as I understand it, an evangelist as Billy and I are.

The news media is smart, highly informed and skeptical by their own admission, but as a rule they do not understand biblical concepts. It is the news media who took to calling all ministers who went on television evangelists. It simply is not true.

Over and over I've heard my friend, Pat Robertson, declare he is not an evangelist, but a minister/businessman. I've known Pat since about 1960, and played a small part in assisting him in launching what was then the first Christian network.

Neither was Jim Bakker an evangelist in the biblical sense. His vision was not to preach and conduct evangelistic crusades. His mission was to build a Christian television network, a theme park, and to pastor a local church. Yet the media still persists in calling him an evangelist.

Jimmy Swaggart, whom I've only met once briefly and talked to twice on the phone during his admitted moral tragedy, had been designated by his denomination as an evangelist.

Dr. D. James Kennedy, pastor of Coral Gables Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is also called an evangelist by the media solely because he is on national television. He is a pastor. In fact I've never known the Presbyterian church to have the designation of evangelist.

Neither is Dr. Robert Schuller an evangelist. I first met Bob when we were doing our prime-time TV specials at the NBC studio in Burbank, California. I met him in the tower of his church in Garden Grove, because my long time business associate, Mr. Lee Braxton, loved Dr. Schuller and urged me to meet him. He invited me to be a special guest in one of his Sunday morning televised services, the same program he now broadcasts from the Crystal Cathedral. Bob is not an evangelist, but a pastor.

Dr. James Robison of Fort Worth, Texas, is an evangelist on national

television. Dr. Kenneth Copeland, also of Forth Worth, is an evangelist. Neither man serves as a pastor.

But Dr. Ed Young of the Second Baptist Church in Houston, whose Sunday morning services are nationally televised, is a pastor. So is my dear friend John Osteen of the huge Lakewood Church, also in Houston. Both are wrongly called evangelists by the news media. They are pastors.

Now suppose one, two or even three nationally known pastors with enormous influence, went wrong morally and financially. Suppose the news media, like the dog and the bone, sensationalizes the pastors' own version of their fall, and kept at it until most of the world knew about it, making their names bywords.

Why do I bring this up? For two reasons. First, this very small number whose fall was so sensationalized would be portrayed as though all several hundred thousand pastors—both off and on TV—were also fallen leaders. This is simply not true. Second, you cannot count on the fingers of one hand the number of evangelists on TV who have fallen. Yet, in my lifetime I've never seen evangelists portrayed so badly, or so unfairly, or so continuously by the news media. The inference is that none of us is worthy to preach the gospel.

In 1947 when my evangelistic ministry started, and criticism began to come, my own mother would tell me to do three things: First, she would tell me to ask myself if it was true. Second, she would tell me to consider the source. Third, she would say no matter how untrue it was, don't strike back; leave it to God!

I've tried to live by those three principles. My family and friends, also my associates in the ministry, have often told me I've gone too far by not answering the criticism, particularly if it was vicious and untrue.

My reply has been, "If I devote my time to answering, and bitterness gets in my spirit, that means I'm striking back. If that happens, the devil will have succeeded in stopping the effectiveness of my ministry."

Take 100 percent of the negative things said about me and the probably no more than one percent of my replying, and it does seem one-sided. But consider the positive accomplishments of my stance:

First, I and this healing ministry are still here after forty-one continuous years, and going stronger than ever. Healing is now a thousand times or more accepted and practiced in the church throughout the world. Also, the healing ministry as a confirmation of the preaching of the Word of God has become perhaps the strongest soul-winning force since Jesus' and the apostles' day.

Second, the creation of phrases such as "God is a good God," "Turn your

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faith loose,” “the point of contact,” “the miracle of seed-faith,” and dozens more given me by God and which I’ve popularized are worth everything I’ve ever gone through.

Third, in the nineteenth century only one man built a university, a hospital and a medical school—John Hopkins of Baltimore, Maryland. It all still stands and is world-revered. In the twentieth century directed by God’s Word and with the help of my partners, Oral Roberts is the only person who has built a university, a hospital, a medical school, plus a seminary.

We have built a world-class university to educate the whole person; we have merged the healing streams of prayer and medicine; we have come a long way in restoring medical missionaries to their scriptural place in helping carry out the Great Commission; and in the seminary of ORU we have restored signs and wonders to the theological training of hundreds of young men and women studying for the ministry.

No responsible person, to our knowledge, has accused our educational and medical institutions of not being excellent in every way. In fact the 1988 college edition of the national news magazine, *U.S. News and World Report*, in its ranking colleges and universities in the United States, gave ORU one of the highest rankings of all.

In the category of 399 comprehensive universities, ORU was ranked in the top twenty! In resources it was ranked second. Not bad for its first twenty-five years!

But of course while I am called the founder, I know who the real founder is: God. I also know without the faith and support of friends and partners none of this could have happened or can continue.

*7. Does the media report the whole truth? Can the whole truth about a person ever be known?*

What about Evelyn and I having been happily married for fifty years this past Christmas without a moral indiscretion by either of us, and not the breath of scandal on our personal lives or the ministry?

What about our earnings? Can the media honestly say we’ve had no large personal earning power? What are the facts?

In 1962 when the ministry purchased the 400 acres on which Oral Roberts University and the City of Faith stand today (the land and institutions are a half-billion dollar investment), we were advised to buy real estate next to it. We refused to buy one single acre on the grounds that it would not be proper for us to profit from it personally.

Instead...we sold our farm with its land, house and barn for \$85,000, and gave it all as our personal gift of seed money to start ORU, and we went on a \$15,000 year salary.

Money has never been a personal passion for Evelyn and me. Our four children have never profited financially from our ministry. Of the fifty books I wrote, approximately forty-five of them have been made gifts to the ministry and were the instruments that brought in millions of dollars to help build ORU and the City of Faith. Several of these books have had printings of one million copies each, and two went to three million copies each.

Evelyn wrote only two books for the bookstores, and she gave the full advance and royalties of many thousands of dollars to the School of Medicine. The four or five of my books permitted to be sold in bookstores were handled in the same manner. For many years no royalties of any kind have come to us personally.

Yet most leading ministers have kept their book royalties.

Evelyn and I own our two cars. We live in a house owned by Oral Roberts University and designated as the home for the president of the school. We won't live there when I'm no longer president. We own no other houses or land. Yet that isn't the picture that is so often painted.

The news media, whether they are aware of it or not, seem to have a strongly selective way of choosing whom they like and dislike.

But praise God, I'm still here and going strong. ORU has graduated over 10,000 with undergraduate, masters and doctors degrees. The City of Faith is carrying itself and growing. The School of Nursing is our first school, undergraduate or graduate, to be endowed: the amount of \$14,000,000 was left in the will of one of our partners upon her homegoing.

We are presently believing God and working hard to raise \$200 million to secure fully Oral Roberts University and the School of Medicine until Jesus returns. Our current endowment of \$50 million is a good start. I believe God has some specific people in mind to help with this.

I'm pregnant in my spirit with *expectancy*! The *whole truth* is that our lives are clean before God and our future is bright!

8. *What about the media's charges that I used the threat of my death to raise the \$8,000,000 it took to run the School of Medicine for one year?*

You know we still have prophetic books. People have made predictions, some have come true, others did not. God said to me, "I told you to build a School of Medicine for medical missions. After eight years the graduating



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doctors are not going to the mission field. If you don't obey Me and turn it around in one year by raising the \$8,000,000 it will take so you can scholarship them for one year and require them to go to the mission field, your work on Earth will be finished and I will call you home."

At first, I felt some fear, for I had failed God, which is the worst fear I could possibly have.

Next, there was a great joy, because for a genuine Christian to be called home and be with God is the ultimate goal of Christianity. Death holds no fear to a child of God. Death is simply a transition from this physical plane to the eternal realm of our Savior.

Then came my sense of faith and obedience. This was the reason I was healed at seventeen years of age from tuberculosis in my body and sin in my soul. When God saved and healed me, He also called me into the healing ministry. It was then that He spoke to me giving me the bare outlines of building Him a university some day and merging His healing streams of prayer and medicine.

When I stood up on our television program and told my partners what God said about raising the \$8,000,000 to turn the medical school around in twelve months and making it a totally medical missions school, I never dreamed the news media would distort my plainly said words. Instead of accurately reporting my words, the media said: "Oral Roberts says God is going to kill him if he doesn't raise \$8,000,000."

In spite of the nationwide and worldwide controversy and hulla-ballou, my family and partners believed that God had spoken, and that I heard correctly and was obeying Him. They sent in the \$8,000,000 plus an extra \$700,000.

It happened. It's a historical fact. I'm still alive. The medical school *was* turned around.

My partners rallied. They believed and obeyed. But like the dog with the bone, the news media—and certain religious leaders—would not turn loose their worldly distorted version. And they did it at about the same time the PTL debacle happened. I began to get letters from my partners and other people who felt God spoke to them to help me with the \$8,000,000. But others wrote repeating the exact words of the media's view: "Oral, you said God was going to kill you, and you used that to raise money."

I didn't say that. That was what the media said I said, then added to it more of their ridicule and cynicism. The persecution hurt me, I will not deny that. People tried to talk me out of what I said God said, so that the media would have

to stop changing my words. I was saying God would call me home, they were saying I said that God was going to kill me. We who know the Word of God understand that there is all the difference in the world between being called home and being killed by God. It was different from and opposed to everything ever taught about God being a good God. But I couldn't stop them. I could have quit and run, but I chose to obey God and suffer whatever the consequences.

The income for the ministry, for ORU, for everything we're called to do for God took nearly a fifty percent drop after the fact! As I write eighteen months later it's still at about one-half.

Will we make it? Yes, a thousand times, yes!

How? I do not know humanly speaking. But I've never done anything in the ministry until I firmly heard God speak to me, then I went to the written Word of God to be sure it was in harmony with the Bible. I've obeyed, human frailties and all. God is my Source. Somewhere, somehow, God is holding the fifty percent of partners steady, and in spite of every opposing force, He is gradually increasing their number.

We've been able to launch Richard in a live one hour TV program five days a week, and his program is very close to being in the black—thank God. ORU is about eight percent from being in the black. The City of Faith is costing the ministry nothing, and is putting about \$1,000,000 a year into the School of Medicine.

After cutting expenses and all of us living strictly by faith, we're getting closer to breaking even again. And that while under the worst media scenario imaginable in the way the media eats on the bone continually—and won't let go.

We've had to borrow for the first time an amount equal to five percent of our assets. ORU and the ministry is probably the only major industry in Tulsa ninety-five percent liquid, in spite of everything that's happened to the ministry and to our national and local economy!

The beautiful fact is that there are *no* moral or financial failings in this ministry—after forty-one years!

Richard and Roberta, forty and thirty-eight years of age, are by my side and are growing in the Lord daily. They hold responsible positions and carry God's anointing and are blessed with a strong work ethic. Their faith and obedience Evelyn and I often say "are beyond anything we could have expected."

So much is good...positive...promising. We're on the way to victory again. Some clouds are dark. Critics say, "You'll never make it." Others say, "Time is running out."

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But God is saying in my spirit, "It's time to press on!"

Look at the ways God has prospered us so faithfully over the years.

- He gave us Oral Roberts University, a university that puts God first, where family and partners can send their children for a first-class college education.
- He gave us the City of Faith, where the sick can get the finest medical care and prayer all at the same time.
- He gave us Richard's daily LIVE TV program and my Sunday morning TV program, where people can be sure to have the opportunity to hear and receive the good news of God's healing power.
- He gave us a helping ministry where you can write your prayer requests and get a prompt answer.
- He gave us the Prayer Tower at the center of ORU's campus, through which millions of people have received powerful and effective prayer.
- He is giving us the "Journey through the Bible" (with Phase 1 completed) to "show" this generation and succeeding generations the Bible as it really is—the exiting, dramatic, powerful Word of God that will change their lives forever!
- He gave us the more than 10,000 graduates of ORU—including young ministers, doctors, nurses, teachers, business people—who are so on fire for Him. I don't think you can go anywhere in the United States, in the mission field, or in the world and not meet alumni of ORU.

Daily, hundreds of people come to Tulsa to see ORU and the City of Faith to get blessed, to see where their money goes. I wish you could see their faces when they leave, or hear them tell us, "I like what I see and feel here."

The Oral Roberts University, City of Faith, and Prayer Tower of this ministry are still the number one tourist attraction in Oklahoma!

What about mistakes?

I believe there is only one man that never made a mistake: Jesus. I will, you will, everybody will make mistakes. The important thing is what we do when we know we've made a mistake. Do we let it become a habit? Or do we repent, receive God's forgiveness, and vow in our will and with our faith to correct the mistake and not make it again? You must give the past to God and put yourself in the hands of the God of a second chance. Recognize you are human, and not in Heaven yet. Use your will power, faith power, love power, Jesus power! Press on!

What has all this to do with the so-called poverty of Jesus?

Everything! For if Jesus were indeed poor in the sense so many think openly—or subconsciously—then He would have been like a dried-up sort of man, wandering about hungry and in worn-out clothes and trying to find a place to sleep at night. He would be lost in the dreams inspired in Him by His mother Mary, telling of the angel’s visit and His birth without a human father, but “conceived by the Holy Spirit.”

I still remember after all these years that the “seeds” of my preacher father’s good works and highly intelligent mind never resulted in their *full* harvest. The daily reality of poverty no matter how well he preached, how many souls won, new churches birthed, and integrity he had at all times, took its toll on the human father I loved so much. They depressed the growing of his seeds like drought and pestilence. I recall the poverty he couldn’t escape. I remember how this marred my view of a good God, until it nearly cost me my life.

Just think if people, if the news media, if we in the ministry, if those in the churches, if all who have a desire to be responsible would take a real look at Jesus and understand once and for all that Jesus was not poverty-stricken and was not bound with a poverty syndrome. Then we could open our souls to the beauty of serving God. We could look at failure as human, but recognizing also that the vast majority of us in the ministry and service of God have not fallen and won’t.

And we could see with new eyes a truth that would set us free:

WITHOUT GOD I CANNOT,  
WITHOUT ME HE WILL NOT.

My friend, then we would know there’s so much to live for!

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. The difference in the financial needs of Jesus, who was a single man and who only lived until age thirty-three, are far different than those of the head of a family today.

Heads of Christian families, as well as those who are preachers of the gospel, must fill many family roles and also serve in the community.

2. However, remember when Jesus assumed the finances for Himself and His team, there were many whom He had delivered “**who ministered to him of their substance**” (Luke 8:2,3).

Jesus set the role model for the meeting of the needs of preachers’ families as they do God’s special work, just as for all families with their

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many needs and responsibilities. In other words, there must be a supplying of those needs in the way God has provided for us.

3. Remember Jesus valued money rewards for those who do His work. "The labourer is worthy of his hire," He said (Luke 10:7).

Jesus says we who labor are worthy to earn and the amount we earn is to be a worthy amount.

4. Remember God told Elijah He had thousands who had not lost their spiritual relationship with Him. Today when the news media have made so much of the few who have fallen, we need to remember God knows the number that has not fallen, and it is *large*.
5. Ask yourself, how would the media report on Jesus if He were physically on Earth today?

Would the media report the miracles? The never-before-witnessed happenings? Verify the raising of the dead, including His own resurrection?

How would the media treat Peter? Paul? All the others who, too, were different from the established religion? How would the media have reported the speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost and later? Would there have been deadly lies against Jesus Himself today as there were then? Misrepresentation against His followers today as then? Think about it!

6. Remember most people in the news media are not trained in the Word of God. How would they know how to deal fairly with the five-fold offices Jesus set in the church? Apostles? Prophets? Evangelists? Pastors? Teachers?

Will they ever know the difference? Do they desire to? Will they report from the standpoint of the Bible?

Since Jesus' ministry had a definite evangelistic thrust, how can we follow Him and have less today?

7. Remember the gates of hell can never prevail against Jesus' church. We must always be diligent for wholeness of life and purity of thought.

None of us are above criticism. Only the truth will set us free. Go wherever you will, raise any questions, and you'll find God's people growing stronger in the Lord and more effective for the church than ever.

8. Remember the references to the dog and the bone. Let's not gnaw at something until we destroy it and ourselves.

*How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor*

9. Remember faith and obedience will still outlast the world and totally defeat the devil.
10. Remember there are *no* moral and financial failures in the forty-one-year history of this ministry—and it's still going strong!
11. What about mistakes? The best way I've found to deal with mistakes is to face them, make right what can be made right, and give the rest to God...for He is the God of a second chance!
12. In taking this new look at Jesus, remember,

WITHOUT GOD I CANNOT, WITHOUT ME HE WILL NOT.

This is how we know there's so much to live for!

## Your Greatest Wealth Will Be Producing Sons and Daughters in the Lord

I am a wealthy man. But not in money. My wealth is in having sons and daughters and their children and children's children in the Lord.

I didn't always think that would be the case. At seventeen, I wasn't even sure I would ever have children.

The stories I had heard about Jesus—either as they were told to me or as I perceived them—made Jesus seem poor and homeless. In the stories I heard His apostles seemed to have nothing. And although everybody said they were part of the biggest force that had ever been launched in the history of mankind, the way it appeared on the surface to me was that these men were at the bottom of the heap. That's why I left home...to tackle the world for myself and to make something of myself...*and* to see if I couldn't snatch my own star out of the sky.

Those who taught me were wrong and I was wrong. I didn't get a star. I got a handful of nothing. My star didn't appear until I almost inadvertently began to learn the truth—that Jesus owns it all and He's the only one that puts the true values of life together, which no person can give or take away.

Once I came to know Jesus personally and discovered His saving and healing power for my soul and body, and really started *listening*, to my astonishment I saw the full sweep of His purpose. His purpose was to multiply and replenish the Earth, which He had said in the beginning when He created man (Genesis 1:28).

It seems like just yesterday when Jesus became my personal Savior and Lord and He began speaking inside me and I learned I could hear and understand that Jesus was speaking to *me*. What astonished me most was that He began speaking to me about my future. I was to have a future! Even at that young age, I understood He was talking to me about a future that included sons and daughters—not only those I would someday have with my wife but those I would have through building Him a university.

I knew God was speaking inside me. There wasn't a doubt that I would live beyond myself. Because I knew I was hearing *God*, in my mind's eye I could see through the years that not only would my "blood" children and grandchildren play at my feet and carry on my bloodline, but that there was to be an

“immortality” that I had never thought of in the thousands of sons and daughters who would be visited by God through His calls and gifts in my life.

Of the four natural children that Evelyn and I have had, two of them are in Heaven (Rebecca and Ronnie) and two are standing with me in this healing ministry today (Richard and Roberta). I can’t tell you what a joy it is to have my natural children also experience the gifts and callings of God and be given the same dreams that I have.

I never would have thought that of Richard.

Both these children were born after I began the healing ministry, Richard in 1948 and Roberta in 1950. It became unmistakable early in Roberta’s life that she was inclined toward the Lord and felt called to be an integral part of my ministry. Even as a young teenager, she had wanted to become a lawyer, which had been my dream at the same age, but she didn’t plan to use her law degree as I had planned to use mine in the political realm (following in the footsteps of my Grandfather Roberts). Roberta wanted to be a *Christian who was a lawyer* rather than be a lawyer who was a Christian. She wanted to use her talent in this ministry and in the university she knew I was going to build. (And she’s doing that today, having earned her juris doctorate!)

Richard was a young colt with different ambitions.

Richard is our second son. He grew up as a happy-go-lucky child and teenager. It never occurred to Evelyn and me that beneath that exterior was a heart beating with a burning desire to heal the sick. As a little boy sitting with his sister Roberta and mother in the front row, right in front of the healing line of our crusades, was about the only time he was caught up in something as serious as a miracle.

Evelyn and I had thought it was our older son, Ronnie, who would be the one to preach and pray for the sick. Ronnie had it all. He was compassionate, keen on the ministry as God worked it through me, and was about as good a student as any in America. As a high school student, he was chosen as a foreign exchange student. Ronnie graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, and had his choice of attending about a dozen top universities as a doctoral candidate in linguistics.

After two years as an undergraduate, he interrupted his college career to enter the Security Division of the Army during the Vietnam War.

Ronnie and I were very close in every way, including spiritually. But somewhere along the line, something went wrong. We never suspected, as dumb as parents can be, that he had come out of the service on drugs. He spoke eight languages as an expert in the Army’s Security Division. In that area we were a



million miles apart. I have no ear for foreign languages. His mother does, but not anywhere near Ronnie's capacity.

To Ronnie, Polish, Russian, Chinese, French (in which he won the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship), Spanish, German, some Scandinavian languages as well as two or three dialects in Swahili, were about as easy as speaking English. As a scholar I thought he might follow me in heading up Oral Roberts University, or at least be a significant part of it someday.

On the other hand, Richard didn't appear studious at all. He did make the honor roll in his senior year in high school, but mainly because he wanted to enroll at the University of Kansas with its strong music department. Richard could sing. In many ways he and I had been closer than any of our four children, principally because he loved the healing ministry which is my life, and we both loved the outdoors—fishing, hunting, horseback riding, golfing, and other activities.

But Richard balked after his music career blossomed at Kansas. He was chosen to sing in Kansas City's Starlight Theater with Shirley Jones and a host of other well known names, as well as getting the lead in "Annie, Get Your Gun" in Interlachen, Michigan. He was good enough to be seriously approached by Las Vegas, and suddenly all his dreams went in that direction.

Meanwhile he fell head over heels in love with a beautiful young woman, also a terrific singer, who honestly told him she didn't love him. He said to me when I questioned the advisability of marrying under such circumstance, "Dad, I'll make her love me." (I thought, "Others have said that, too.")

She was a student at ORU, and went to our chaplain and poured out her heart to him that Richard was not for her, and that she didn't love him.

Well, they married and it was a defeat from the word go. Twelve years and two daughters later, she had had enough and sued for divorce. Richard was in a state of shock. When he told me and our top leaders in ORU and this ministry, he was as white as a sheet. By this time he was singing on our prime-time TV specials (in fact, both of them were) and was employed by our TV department. In tears he said, "What will happen to my job? Will I be cast out?" Everybody here knew the story, and had rooted for the marriage to work out. Only dogged determination had kept it together for twelve long years. Still it was a shock to the roots of our being, to the ministry itself, he being the son of the founder, having a prominent role and being known now by millions.

I said, "Richard, if you vow before God and these men of God you won't touch another woman immorally, and will take your time, if you remarry, and will be sure God has directed it, I'll stand behind you. But I warn you, this

ministry and this university are so precious that not even a son of mine can be permitted to endanger them.” We never prayed more in our lives, Richard included. The day an ORU law student, Lindsay Salem, entered his life, no one took it lightly, certainly not Lindsay and her family—or ours.

Prayer shone like a beacon on the situation. The Holy Spirit told us that despite the necessary tough standards of the church, the entire Bible presents God as the *God of a Second Chance!* I knew that then, but not like now.

Two major decisions were made which proved crucial. Richard, in his new marriage, would be under the closest scrutiny that a large spiritual constituency could give, including the entire university and ministry family—which was really close up. Second, Richard would have to make His peace with God in the sense of what God had called him to do with his life—or he would fade away, only God knew where.

In Lindsay he got a girl whose parents in Michigan had been longtime partners. Her father was a Lincoln/Mercury automobile dealer and a respected church and community leader. Her mother loves the ministry, like it was her very own. The father had died after I and others had prayed, and the doctors had done their best. And now his wife, Patricia, was left with three children, a boy and two girls, including Lindsay, the middle child.

Lindsay was committed to the Lord, period. She was twenty-three years old and would marry only if God brought her together with the man of both God’s choice and hers. She didn’t want to sing. She wanted to be a wife and helpmeet, and let Richard take the lead. That would be a new thing for him.

Well, Evelyn and I, and everyone close to us, thought this might work. But there were many hazards.

The chief thing had to do with Richard’s vocation, since being called of God was something the Roberts family took seriously. Was it to sing? Was it his dream as a little boy that he was to preach and pray for the sick?

Rather unconsciously, or so it seemed to me, he had caught the ministry in both his spirit and mind. What I felt was that the great God-given principles, such as God is a good God, the point of contact, the miracle of seed-faith, and so on, had caught fire in him. At times all these would flow up out of him to the extent they often were stronger than his singing gift.

Under a direct anointing, a close friend and I were led one day to have it out with him. “Richard, are you called to this ministry?”

“Yes, with my whole being.”

“What is the calling on you?”

“Well...”

“No well about it, life is moving on; you can sing, is that it?” “I’ll always sing.”

“That’s no answer.”

“Dad, I’ll let you know. Only God can bring me to the point when I absolutely know what I haven’t been able to get away from—and maybe partly why I’ve allowed myself to make a major mistake, and why I’ve missed God’s ideal in my marriage.”

One thing I haven’t mentioned is very important. I had said, “Richard, you know your father has been hit probably as hard as any man of God in this generation. Yet God told me never to strike back. I haven’t. In this divorce, because of who you are, the hue and cry will fill the air. The news media, the church, the preachers, friend and foe, will have their say. Most of it will be so rough you won’t know what hit you. You have Jesus who never struck back. He was perfect and they killed him. You’re not perfect, and you’ll think you’ll die before this is over.”

A sob from deep inside broke in Richard. “Dad, I know I’ve blown it. I know my former wife has a best-seller book out against me, against my family. It’s hard not to tell my side.”

“Richard, I’ve always had a side to tell, also. But God said in Romans 12:19, **‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’** And that’s because He alone is strong enough to survive the awful force of vengeance. No human being can survive the effects of taking vengeance. It’s hard not to strike back. You know that, I know that. You and my family know it. But what we suffer is a fraction of what would happen if we struck back and took vengeance on those who strike at us.” Everybody knew—and knows now—I’ve taken everything Satan and men could throw at me—and kept my mouth shut and gone about doing my work for God. So I said, “You haven’t struck back so far, but wait until the full brunt of this is thrown at you. You must be strong in the Lord.”

Finally I said what few knew: Over one-half of the people in my crusades were either from broken marriages or families, and at ORU about half of our students were from broken homes. I said, “Richard, it nearly kills us to see divorce invade our family. You were stubborn, you were proud, you really thought you could make a woman love you *after* you married her. The Bible teaches you can’t recall the mistakes of yesterday. You can only give them to God and start over. As bad as divorce can be, it’s not the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, although some may think it is. There’s one silver lining, if you’ll seize it by faith.”

Eagerly Richard said, “Dad, I need your help. I’ll do anything to put right what I can. And what I can’t, I want the strength to leave with God. Please tell me what the silver lining is, if there is one.” I said, “First, you’ve heard us talk about getting *pregnant* with an idea from God and getting into *expectancy* for it to happen. You know that’s what happened to put me in this ministry.”

“Yes,” he said.

“Second, fifty percent of marriages and homes are broken in this country and few seem to care or even believe they can be saved or healed. God loves people when they make good choices. His nature is also to love people when they fail. God is a good God, and God will always be a good God. He cares about broken marriages just like He cares about broken bodies. Somebody has got to care for these people. I haven’t always spoken out loud my case for them but somehow they seem to know. You know how they write me and come to the crusades, hoping God will help them through me.” We both were crying.

“Dad, you thought it was Ronnie and I understand that. I love him. He’s my brother. But since I was a little boy and you put me on your knee and told me Bible stories, and I went to the crusades with mother and saw the miracles, well, I don’t know about being *pregnant* like you said, because I’m a man but I do know something is down inside me. I didn’t put it there, so God did.”

“Richard, only you and God can solve this. You’re about out of time.”

In the early part of my ministry, Evelyn and I had a lot of poverty. The largest salary we had received in the ministry was fifty-five dollars a week when we had our two older children, Rebecca and Ronnie. Richard and Roberta were born *after* I was in the healing ministry. As we met the needs of the people, the people took care of our needs, just as those who had been healed by Jesus ministered unto him of their substance. It had made a big difference. “Richard,” I said, “you’ve never known real poverty and...” He interrupted me. “Dad, you know in the divorce I lost everything. I have only the clothes on my back.”

“Richard, that hurts,” I said. “But it’s not all bad. While I hate poverty and have had enough of it to last me forever, I do know what it feels like when I’m with hurting people. Now you know at least something of how millions feel who have lost everything.”

“If they feel like I feel, and knowing much of it is my own fault, and having no money and nowhere to turn, humanly speaking, then I believe I know what you mean. I’m glad you brought this to my attention. I won’t forget it.”

To me I felt that was a very important understanding.

After their marriage, Richard and Lindsay accepted whatever invitations that

came. I couldn't help them. I couldn't—and wouldn't even try—to force him on my friends in the ministry. One night in Albuquerque, he was preaching when to his utter amazement, something wonderful happened. After pouring his soul out, and letting the people know his mistakes and failures and how he had discovered the God of a second chance, before he hardly knew what he was doing, he heard himself say, "If there's anybody here with arthritis stand up. I want to pray for God to heal you."

To his amazement many stood. The healing words of his faith came rushing up out of his heart and mouth. "In Jesus' name, I come against this arthritis. I rebuke you and command you to come out!"

As he looked, dozens were moving their shoulders that had been stiff earlier. A woman in a walker was coming with her husband toward the stage. All of a sudden she leaped up and left her husband with the walker!

"Ma'am, what are you doing?" Richard asked her.

"I'm walking," she called back.

"Why are you out of your walker, why are you walking?"

"Can't you see? God has healed me."

"But I didn't lay hands on you or touch you."

"You didn't have to," she replied. "God did!"

The crowd burst into praise to God.

Richard called out those suffering with blindness, glaucoma, and other ailments to please stand. Several did. He prayed, in Jesus' name, for their healing, as he stood on the platform.

A woman some fifty feet away cried, "I can see! I can see!" They checked her publicly. It was revealed she'd been totally blind in one eye for four years. The sight had returned. With her hand over her other eye, she could see Richard clearly. She said, "I can even see the twinkle in your eye!"

As Richard called out other diseases, the healing power came like a rushing mighty wind and filled the building. So many healings happened it was almost pandemonium in the auditorium.

Later those with him told me the story. When Richard came to talk I was listening very intently to how he would describe it.

"Dad, you were called of God to lay hands on the sick and you've always felt His presence going up and down your right arm and into your hand."

"That's right and it's still there."

“Well, I felt that same kind of power rising up out of my chest and coming out over my voice as I spoke the word of faith.” “You mean you were speaking the word of faith by the word of knowledge?”

“Yes, how did you know? You weren’t there.”

“Richard, that’s happened through me, too, but not often like God’s presence works through my right hand. But I’ve known in my spirit the word of knowledge was coming. When I began in 1947, healing was unknown in the churches and nation. People felt few Christians wanted to get near them in their illness. God had to show them by my touch that He cared. Now through His healing power through me, also through others He raised up, multiplied millions have come to know God cares for them enough to heal them. We broke through by our faith. Now the word of knowledge can do even more in someone like you for the healing of the sick. I see many more healings coming in the future through the word of knowledge.” Richard just looked at me, surprised. I suppose that it was not the method but the principle I was more concerned about. “I’m not there yet, Dad,” he said. “That was only one service.”

Again I said, “Only you and God can work out what He has for you. I nor any other person can do that for you.”

Unknown to me he and Lindsay were secretly using Mark 11:24, “**Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**” They knew they were both *pregnant* with the healing ministry, but the full birth hadn’t come yet. They believed it was on the way and the Arizona scene was the first big birth pain. They really got down to business on Mark 11:24, saying over and over, “Thank you, Lord, for the healing ministry you’re birthing inside us. We know it’s on the way. We’re expecting it to leap forth at any moment!” Seed-faith was as real to Richard and Lindsay as their breath. Both came from families who seeded for everything and expected miracles. Although Lindsay’s father had died, it had not shaken her faith or her mother’s from continuing to sow their seeds of faith. And out of the little Richard had he was planting far more than I thought was necessary.

I said to him, “Richard, God doesn’t expect you to give Him everything you’ve got.”

“Dad, you’ve always said the Bible teaches to plant *out of your need*, isn’t that right?”

“Yes,” I said, “in Mark 12:42,43, the widow gave her last few pennies and Jesus praised her for it.”

“That’s what I’m doing,” Richard said. “Without a miracle I’m not going to make it anyway. Right?”

*Your Greatest Wealth Will Be Producing Sons and Daughters in the Lord*

With fire in his eyes, Richard said, “Dad, God is God or He’s not. Seed-faith is real or it’s not. I’m to have a healing ministry or I’m not. There’s no middle ground. Lindsay and I know two strikes are against us. But Jesus said if we had faith as a mustard seed....”

I said, hardly able to hold back the tears, “Yes! Jesus was talking about having faith no larger than the tiniest seed you can plant. If you sow it, then you can speak to your mountain and command it to be gone, and it will obey you!”

“Well, I made up my mind to obey the Bible and not blame others. I’m ready to take the heat myself. I haven’t told you that Lindsay and I have been living with our Bibles and almost living on our knees in prayer. We’ve been standing on His Word that He is the God of a second chance. And Mark 11:24 has been one of our foundation stones. You’ve talked about being spiritually pregnant with God’s call. That’s finally happened in us. And our expecting is about to come due in us.”

“Okay, I hear you. Let me ask you, however, are you going to let that pregnancy result in God’s using you exactly as He chooses?” “We’ve crossed over the bridge, Dad.”

“All the way?”

“All the way.”

“What do you see on the other side?”

“Suffering!”

“What else?”

“The healing of the people.”

“Anything else?”

“Souls saved by the tens of thousands!”

“Anything else?”

“What are you getting at?”

“Is there anything more?”

“ORU is.”

“What about ORU?”

“Dad, whether you or the Board of Regents ever feel I’m to have a part is okay with Lindsay and me. But we’re also pregnant in our spirit with ORU and all the thousands of young people across America and around the world that we can identify with and who can relate to us—who will be coming.”

“How do you know they can relate to you?”

“Well, I know many church leaders haven’t realized yet just how many come from broken marriages. We don’t know just how much many of them care. But we care, and we have the desire to let them see God is the God of a second chance.”

“What about those across the land like your mother and me, and like your sister Roberta and her husband Ron, whose marriages have held?”

“Oh, that’s God’s ideal. We’re for that with every fiber of our being, with all we know about God making the family His number one unit. Lindsay’s never been married. I have. Now I’m married to Lindsay. I’ve been on both sides—I’m not bragging about it—but I know how both sides feel. Since I can’t roll back the clock but can only go forward, I’m giving God everything in me to bring God to everybody I can in the whole world!”

I thought: I’m seeing a miracle that may be as great as any I’ve ever seen. I’m seeing suffering people channeled into God instead of giving up because of it. Also, I’m seeing hope for people outside the structure of the church as well as in the church. God, after all these years, it still thrills me to see You pick up a young man who seemed totally destroyed, and who has not only put it back together again, but is going to use the suffering in it as a beacon of hope for millions more of this suffering generation.

I said, “Richard, let’s talk again about ORU.”

“All right.”

“You were here when it opened in 1965. And you transferred back from Kansas to ORU and it was here you received Jesus as your personal Savior. Isn’t that right?”

“Yes, it is. Had it not been for the ORU faculty and students, besides you and the family, loving me so much, I might have missed it all.”

“I think you’re not the only one who can say that. But my point is you stayed here, and worked out of here in your preaching and healing ministry, and everybody knows it. Are you sure it wouldn’t be easier somewhere else?”

“Dad, I’m called here. I’m not running from my problems. Everybody here knows that. Our partners and friends everywhere know it. I’m not only your son and love ORU as your son, but also because it changed my life. I love it because just as I was pregnant with the healing ministry, I have that same force growing inside me for the only university in the world founded on the Holy Spirit and God’s authority; the only one that God said to raise up its students to go...to the uttermost parts of the Earth and do His mighty works. ORU is inside me,



growing in me, and whatever God is preparing me to do in it, small or large, I'm committed and so is Lindsay."

"That's saying a lot."

"I feel a lot."

Again I said, "Only you and God can work that part of it out, and when you do, we'll know it. Roberta, your sister, is also a graduate of ORU, as is Ron her husband and a terrific young man. Roberta has ORU inside her, too. But however much your mother and I want you both to work in ORU, only God can bring that about." "Dad, it can't be any other way except by God. But I can tell you and everybody else, God is going to work it out. Furthermore, as long as Roberta and I have anything to do with it, ORU will be a university within the healing ministry God led you to found. Its lifestyle will not change, and the Bible will be its number one book. And one more thing, the emphasis God led you and the Board of Regents to put on ORU's education to be for the whole person will stand strong. The excellence of its academic program will be one with its higher calling to take God's light where it is seen dim, where His voice is heard small, and His power is not known, and its students will exceed what you've done for God plus all who helped you bring it this far."

"Richard, you know Roberta feels it as strongly as you do." "Well, do you know another family more blessed?"

I had to laugh out of pure joy. He knew I knew what he was talking about.

I wish I had time to tell more of the story but there is one more thing I must say.

I have reached threescore years and ten. I feel I have at least ten more good years left for this ministry. I'm unusually blessed that God is letting me and the Board of Regents plan an orderly transition.

Today Richard, as most people know, has a live TV program daily Monday through Friday, and you can see and feel the healing, delivering power of God on him and the team. ORU and the City of Faith Healthcare Center are seen and projected daily on his shows. And the number of souls accepting Jesus is phenomenal.

The Board of Regents elected Richard executive vice president under me and Roberta as dean of admissions. Together with a top administration and faculty under me the president, ORU has come into new honors and recognition across the land, and the world.

Only the Lord knows who the ORU Board of Regents will elect to succeed me as the founding president at the proper time. Richard as the executive vice

president is proving to be a top administrator and educator, and he is loved and respected by the faculty and student body. He's freeing me up more and more to travel in my healing ministry and in helping raise a strong endowment for the university. Once we have a strong enough endowment, money can never be a force to sell out the university from its founding purpose.

I've said little about my oldest daughter Rebecca, and quite a lot about my oldest son Ronnie. Both are gone. Rebecca and her husband, Marshall Nash, having died in a tragic plane crash; and Ronnie, his brain chemically eaten away by drugs which started while he was a soldier during the Vietnam War, took his own life. 1977 and 1982 were the years they left us. Only those who have been through such an ordeal can really know what it feels like. But we are a family whose Source is God and from Him we receive our strength.

In addition to these natural children and their children, that which the Lord brought before me in a vision after my conversion and healing experience is coming to pass. I have countless children.

Abraham, the father of all of us who have faith, once thought that he and his wife Sarah would never have a child, an heir. But the faith he got hold of thousands of years ago worked then just as it does today.

One night with his barren wife standing near, God told him to look at the stars and count them. In each star, Abraham seemed to see a face. And God said, **"Your descendants will be as numerous as these stars."**

God also said to Abraham, **"Multiplying I will multiply you and blessing I will bless you...and make you a blessing"** (see Genesis 22:17; Hebrews 6:14).

The force of having that same kind of faith is what I got connected with when I got connected with God! And it's no wonder to me that the God who multiplied and blessed Abraham has been the same God to me, only in a different age and a different dimension.

When you get connected to God and experience that same flow of faith, you'll see beyond your own physical resurrection one day. You'll see your immortality in your children—whether natural or spiritual or both. You'll see that you will live on! Both here and in eternity.

And that is what I'm really talking about in Jesus not being poor. It's why I'm not poor as a Christian!

The force of faith connects you right now with God and His multiplying process. It connects you with the silver and gold of His Earth and all its wealth. Jesus wasn't a poor, homeless wanderer, and you don't have to be either. Jesus was creative and productive. He had His needs met. He reproduced His LIFE in

us. You can have your needs met and be creative, productive, and reproductive in every area of your life. That's wealth! And it's what God wants for every human being, *especially* for those who walk by faith.

When I first reached for a star, I missed it because I didn't have faith. I won't miss it now because faith *daily* erupts from my heart and is alive in me just as it was that first moment when the saving and healing power of Jesus touched my life, turned it around, and put me on the high road.

We're still pregnant in our spirits with our destiny, expecting miracles as never before. The race is still being run and we're not even tired yet. As glad tithers and seed-fathers, we see the windows of Heaven wide open to us and to all who **“minister unto Jesus with their substance,”** making their money a ministry of money in the **“grace of giving”** (2 Corinthians 8:1). It seems no day passes without our expecting at least one more miracle to come our way.

One thing for sure—we are determined it won't pass us by.

## **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Remember none of us can obliterate any part of our family, even when there is tragedy.  
Being a follower is not being exempt from reality...nor from the future.
2. The God of a second chance can be discovered even in your own family.  
Everybody deserves another chance.
3. Jesus, our Savior, died for all the broken families of our world also.  
In their brokenness, they can—if they will to do it, have faith to do it—find a totally new life through Him.
4. Missing God's ideal is *not* the end if you go to the Word of God and follow its path back.  
Remember how Richard and Lindsay got down to business with Mark 11:24, using it as a foundational stone to stand on to confess their faith, also as a base to give thanks for what they would receive from God.  
Never doubt the power of the Word of God you put into your spirit and mind.
5. Remember Richard's words about *crossing over the bridge*.  
There is a point in failure when you let Satan talk you into going back, or you cross over the bridge.
6. You can't successfully run from your problems. They'll catch you every

time. But with God on the case, God can turn it around.

7. Remember seed-faith is not just a word or a saying. God is in the seed business. He was when Adam and Eve fell and gave us the *seed* as the way out (Genesis 3:15).

It was holding on to God through His seed principle, the principle of seed-time and harvest running all through the Bible, that gave Richard the steadfastness of spirit to hold on for his miracle life and ministry.

Are you paying enough attention in your problems and failures to your seeds of faith? Have you worked at God's seed principle until it's inside you?

8. Our future is still pregnant with destiny., .and Jesus is right in the middle of it.

## The Little One-Armed Boy Who Wouldn't Turn Loose of What He Knew Was His

**T**he best way I can complete this book is to tell you about the calf scrambles out where I was born and raised—in these southwestern states of our nation.

As a youngster on my daddy's farm and on our neighbor's ranches, I took part in a few of these calf scrambles, but I saw a lot more than I've been in. Out here where there are thousands of ranches, huge, middle-size and small where millions of cattle graze and bear their young, and eventually end up on the tables of this country and abroad, many a little boy has won himself a calf.

At certain times of the year at rodeos, county fairs and cattle shows, they often have calf scrambles. Boys ten to twelve years old are chosen, and the ranchers give a calf to each one who can catch it and not let it get away. That sounds easy. But putting a bunch of little boys in a cattle arena full of 100-pound calves is a sight to see.

The boy has to catch the calf he's picked out, put his arms around it, throw it down and keep it there for ten seconds. If he can, it's his to keep and feed for a year and bring back the next year to sell...and the money is his. It's an exciting time.

This story is about a little boy who only had one arm, and they discouraged him on his chances of getting his calf. But he had that look in his eyes and they said, "Okay, son, at least you can try."

When the twenty-five or thirty frisky calves were turned loose, and the bell sounded for the boys to "go get 'em," this little boy with one arm let out a yell and went running toward a calf he'd picked out. He got his one arm around the calf's neck, but the calf was so strong it pulled the little fellow all over the arena.

By that time most of the other little boys had their calf and they'd been counted and taken away.

Suddenly the crowd became aware that the only one left out there was this little one-armed boy with a calf that he wouldn't let go of. As he held on wherever the calf pulled him, the crowd began to clap their hands and cheer him on. But then it got serious. As they saw he wouldn't turn loose and it looked like

the calf might injure him, everybody got quiet.

A big rancher ran over to the head official yelling, “Run out there and tell that boy to turn that calf loose. I’ll give him a calf.” The official rushed into the arena and yelled, “Son, turn loose. There’s a rancher who said he’d give you a calf.”

The little boy gritted his teeth. “No! The other boys with two arms got their calf. I’m gonna get mine.” And he locked his one arm tighter around that calf’s neck as the calf continued dragging him all over the arena.

Several people began to cry. Men stomped their feet and hollered, “Give it up, son.” As they watched, fearing for his life, the little boy kept saying to the calf, “You’re mine, and no one is going to take you away from me.”

Gradually the calf slowed, as that one arm gripped his neck, then fell to the ground, while the officials ran out and counted, “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten!”

“He’s yours, son, turn him loose and get up.” The little boy still held on. They had to pull his arm off the calf’s neck. That was the God-part in that little one-armed boy. God had given him **“a measure of faith”** (Romans 12:3).

*He had put a faith-lock on his miracle and wouldn't turn it loose.* Anytime a quitter’s spirit starts to enter you, know’ that’s not sent by God but the devil. The devil is a quitter, God is a finisher. That winning, finishing spirit is in you. You may not have everything going for you many others have. But you have a spirit birthed by God, and it’s the real you. We can see your physical body, but not your inner man. That’s where the strength is after your body runs out. And that’s where God meets you: *in your spirit!*

When our Heavenly Father put His little Son on the Earth to grow up and be our Savior, they hit him with poverty, money was scarce, friends were few, clothes were hard to come by, and nobody thought He had a chance.

It wasn’t a calf scramble, but a human battle. Jesus didn’t choose *one* that was His, *He chose every one of us*. “Don’t go in that arena,” they shouted, “You’ll never come out alive.”

But magnify the spirit in that little one-armed boy a million, a billion, a trillion, and more times, and you’ll have some idea of the force of the spirit there was in Jesus.

“I’ll get a house...I’ll get a treasury...I’ll get a team...I’ll heal and deliver so many...many of them will minister to me of their substance...I’ll get the robe I should wear and the one without seams to signify that I make men whole...I won’t be buried a vagabond...I won’t quit, I won’t turn loose what is mine, the

ones I died for.” But His one life did die. They pulled him down from the cross, His body whipped, cut and bleeding. They buried him in the tomb of a rich man as prophesied 800 years before by Isaiah. They put guards at the tomb. **“Go see that none of His disciples steal His body away,”** His enemies said.

None of them reckoned with the angels. Whatever Lucifer—Satan—said to the archangel Gabriel, it didn't do any good. A hand from Heaven touched the massive stone over the mouth of the tomb, sealed with Pilate's own signet which to break meant certain death. The stone was catapulted from its socket, the guards fell like dead men, while the Son of Man came out of the winding grave clothes of the dead, and walked forth. Standing there, the resurrected Son of the living God looked over the world He had taken hold of and wouldn't turn loose even in death, and shouted, His words reverberating over the whole Earth and through all centuries past and present. **“Now, because I live, you shall live also!”**

The little boy had only one arm. And the calf outweighed him. The odds were terribly unequal. But it was not his arm that held the calf until he fell and lay to the count of ten. It was the spirit back of that arm that had birthed the dream he wouldn't ever turn loose of because he knew it was his.

Satan says, “Mankind is mine! I stole them from Adam and Eve. Besides most of them have chosen me as their god.”

Jesus looked him straight in the eye. “Satan, you are a liar and the father of lies. You come only to steal, kill and destroy. But I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. You take your hands off My property because I died and rose for every one of them. They are mine. And I won't let go of one of them!”

Beyond your eyesight a battle is raging. It's a battle of ideas, concepts, dreams and visions. It's a struggle not between men but between Jesus and Satan. Satan is a quitter but Jesus won't ever give up or turn loose. The eternal brand of His love is stamped on your immortal soul. Hell was made for the devil and his angels, but Heaven was made for you. When God made up His jewels, He said, “You are mine” (see Malachi 3:17). “You are the apple of his eye” (see Deuteronomy 32:10). “You are his crown and his glory” (see Isaiah 62:3).

And the voice that spoke worlds into existence, that called Lazarus from the dead, that whispered softly and gently to Elijah; that noise that rides the crest of every wave and is carried on every wind; that sings over the wires strung across the Earth and in the spirit of every human being—that voice is reaching into the depths of your being talking your language today. If you will listen you will hear His voice drawing you to His heart and you will know in your *knower* that you

and He belong together...now...forever.

He won't turn you loose because He knows you are His. He said "No one can pluck you out of my hand" (see John 10:28,29).

I say to you, take another look at Jesus. Take another look at Jesus and see He wasn't poor. See He wants to prosper you spiritually... physically...financially...in your family and in every area of your life.

Look up and let the sun shine in your face, the sparkle of Heaven show in your eyes, and feel the glory in your breast. Square your shoulders, look the world in the eye, and say as the disciples did after their risen Master appeared in their midst, "**We have seen the Lord**" (John 20:25).

### **Summed Up Personal Reminders**

1. Remember Jesus is in the arena of life, real life. And remember the little one-armed boy.
2. Remember that the little one-armed boy refused to take the other calf the big rancher offered. "This one's mine," he cried, "and no one is going to take it away from me." And he refused to quit.
3. Remember when the calf finally went down to the count of ten, they had to pry the little one-armed boy's arm off its neck. *He had an armlock on his calf that settled it was his.*
4. Keep in mind the title of this book, *How I Learned Jesus Was Not Poor.*

I've stated all through the book Jesus faced poverty everywhere. But of not just being deprived financially. I've talked of those attitudes and times they cast Him out of their towns and He had no place to lay His head, nor those of His followers...but of its deeper meaning of having no place in the society of their world system, the political order of the times, the cynicism and doubt and rejection of His work and miracles. Of pinning their hopes on *this life only*.

5. But remember how I learned for myself, and for all who will accept it, that my Savior was not poor. Not in the sense men think of poverty. Not in the way so many are subconsciously influenced by thinking Jesus was a homeless wanderer, a vagabond, and without a divine plan that wherever He was it was center-stage in our world.
6. Understand that the little one-armed boy is pointing us to the understanding of the greatest struggle *and* the greatest achievement of all: that you and I can look away to the Cross.



It wasn't only one hand they nailed to the tree but both; not only one foot but both. Not only His side ripped open but His back cut open with "many stripes." Not only His one body laid in the tomb (thank God the one that Joseph had held in trust for Him), but it was "sealed" officially shut so the tomb would contain His bones also.

It wasn't only over that small area of the Holy Land our Master wrestled with the devil, forgave sinners, healed the sick, raised the dead, and refused to fail to finish until He had "**opened up a new and living way,**" but by His Spirit He is doing it all over the Earth...in every life and home, yours and mine.

They're telling Him they have someone else for Him, He need not hold His grip so hard, there is an easier way out.

But He won't turn you loose because He knows you are His. He says, "No one can pluck you out of my hand" (see John 10:28,29).

7. If Jesus won't give up on you, why should you give up on yourself?

JUST PUT A FAITH-LOCK ON YOUR MIRACLE AND DON'T TURN LOOSE!

