



# DYNAMIC

Exploring Partnership with God

*I no longer presume to tell the Lord where I want to live, or how I want to serve Him.*

## Give it up!

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LIFESTYLE

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Several years ago my family and I were driving from our home in northern California to a family reunion in southwestern Missouri. As we drove through northern Nevada, I looked at the miles and miles of rocky, sandy, sage-covered prairie, surrounded by rough, barren mountains. I couldn't help but think, *Man, I'm glad I don't live here . . .* Within 12 months I was pastoring a two-church district on the high desert of northern Nevada and wondering what I had done to earn this *wilderness* experience.

A few years later I had been invited to interview for an opening at the *Adventist Review*. As I drove into metropolitan Washington, D C, fresh from the open spaces of Nevada, surrounded by slow-moving traffic on a cold, gray, December afternoon, the thought, *I'm glad I don't live here*, stamped through my mind like vegetarians on their way to a salad bar. . . . Six months later, . . . you guessed it.

I've learned. I no longer presume to tell the Lord where I want to live, or how I want to serve Him. Rather, I dedicate my life—my interests, my talents, my influence, my means—to Him, and pray that, through me, His name will be glorified. I don't succeed nearly as often as I'd like, but I'm honored to know that on a few occasions over the years—and entirely by His grace—I have been able to make a difference for His kingdom.

In our service to Christ, God claims all that we have, all that we are. But in a weird twist of autonomy, God created us with the ability to withhold our allegiance and pursue our own selfish goals. The irony is that when we cling to our own ego-centered impulses, we realize even fewer spiritual and material blessings than if we surrender them completely to Him.

It's tempting to believe that God is satisfied with the bare minimum of our time, energy, and finances; but what God really wants is for us to get lost in the ocean of His loving, generous, and merciful character, and reflect it to everyone within our sphere of influence. The rest will take care of itself. *Delight yourself in the Lord*, promised David, *and he will give you the desires of your heart (Ps 37:4)*.

To *delight yourself in the Lord* is to bask in His love, revel in His generosity, and be enthralled by His mercy. A spirit of stingy selfishness cannot coexist in a climate where knowing God and doing His will is one's highest priority. That's why it's important—no matter our talents, no matter how much we have, no matter where we happen to be working—to make Christ first, last, and best in everything we do, everyday. It may not get you out of the desert, but there's shelter and rest in the shadow of the Almighty (see Ps 91:1).

*Stephen Chavez, Assistant Editor, Adventist Review*

# Application



*We must alter our lives in order to alter our hearts, for it is impossible to live one way and pray another.*

— William Law

## Introduction

- 1) Ask for volunteers to share personal experiences of when they found it difficult to put their trust in God or when they tried to solve their problems by themselves. Have a few illustrations handy in case your group is not comfortable sharing personal stories.
- 2) Choose an easy-to-read version of the Bible (Living, New Century, etc). Divide the group in two and read responsively II Chronicles 14 through 16.
- 3) Isolate and discuss the following two events in King Asa's life. Some questions to generate a good discussion:

Event #1: King Asa is attacked by Zerah, a Cushite King. Zerah's army is comprised of *thousands upon thousands* (See NIV version's footnote for the term *vast army* as used in II Chron 14:9). King Asa's army is insignificant in number when compared to Zerah's army. But Asa does not panic. Instead he calls on the name of the Lord His God: *Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you (2 Chron 14:11).*

Upon hearing Asa's prayer, *The Lord struck down the Cushites (v 12).*

Event #2: Many years have gone by since Event #1. Now *Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet*. This time Asa does not ask God for help. *Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians (2 Chron 16:12).* At the end Asa dies.

## Lessons from Asa

### Life application

Have each group member do the following exercise individually. Be sure they know that they will not be sharing this information with the rest

of the group.

Concluding Exercise: Take an inventory of your lifestyle and the methods you use to handle your problems. How much do you try to take on by yourself? How much of your life does God control?

- 1) Make a list of the problems and/or challenges you face (financial, marital, work related, sickness etc.)
- 2) How did you deal with problems? Your answer may be a combination of more than one method.
  - a) I took the matter to God in prayer and, by faith, left it with Him to help me.
  - b) I began solving the problem myself without taking it to God in prayer.
  - c) I consulted with the experts in that field (doctors, counsellors, etc)
  - d) I took it to the Lord, but then I look for alternate ways to solve the problem (an effort to help the Lord).
  - e) Any unlisted method of how you solved the problem.

Compare your list of problems and challenges with your responses. How do your problem-solving methods reflect your lifestyle? Where does God fit into your life events? Does your worship of God permeate your everyday activities?

## Conclusion

The lesson of total dependency on God is very clear in the story of King Asa. For God to be the focus of our lifestyle, we need to heed the advice of Peter: *Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you (1 Peter 5:7, Living Bible).*

Need a good way to review stewardship education in your church? The General Conference Children's Ministries Department has a new program that does just that. Spanned over 12 lessons, *My Place in Space* uses active learning to teach the importance of being good stewards. In this program, the participants will learn that stewards take care of everything for which they are given responsibility.

*My Place in Space* covers a broad concept of being a steward in the biblical sense. Too often stewardship is limited to money. But, stewardship is more than money—At home, in the community and country, and especially in God's cosmic plan, every one of us has a specific and assigned role to play.

These programs are designed for multi-age interaction, and are most effective when used this way. It creates a learning environment for children of all ages, and incorporates adults as teachers and participants. This innovative method makes this program ideal for the entire church congregation. By participating in the activities together, adults and children alike will enjoy building their faith and fortifying their minds to face life with confidence.

You cannot find a more affordable program! You will only need one copy per congregation—the programs are loose-leaf and come with the rights to photocopy for use in your congregation.

To introduce this new program to the world church, *My Place in Space* can be purchased for \$US 10.00. This introductory low price is available only for a limited time, and includes shipping and handling.

## My place in space



**For more information:**  
**General Conference Children's Ministries Dept**  
**12501 Old Columbia Pike**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20904**  
**Tel: 301-680-6144**  
**Fax: 301-680-6155**  
**Email: 74617,2747@compuserve.com**



## Quotes on lifestyle and worship . . .

There are delights that the heart may enjoy in the awesome presence of God that cannot find expression in language; they belong to the unutterable element in Christian experience. Not many enjoy them because not many know that they can. The whole concept of ineffable worship has been lost.—*A W Tozer*

Worship is a way of living, a way of seeing the world in the light of God . . . to rise to a higher level of existence, to see the world from the point of view of God.—*Abraham J Heschel*

Fellowship with a holy God will produce holy living.—*Croft M Pentz*

The one essential condition of human existence is that man should always be able to bow down before something infinitely great. The Infinite and the Eternal are as essential for man as the little planet on which he dwells.—*Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevski*

He who lives a life of love and charity is constantly at worship.—*Croft M Pentz*

If worship does not change us, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. Worship begins in holy expectancy; it ends in holy obedience.—*Richard J Foster*

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.—*Archbishop William Temple*

Worship is not a part of the Christian life; it is the Christian life.—*Gerald Vann*

Worship is pictured at its best in Isaiah when the young prophet became aware of the Father, aware of his own limitations, aware of the Father's directives, and aware of the task at hand.—*David Julius*

# Concept



## Worship as sacrifice

*Only when you experience God's love can you worship God. Sacrificial worship means reconciling with God—restoring the relationship with God that has been broken by sin.*

Sacrifice! The very word triggers varied memories and emotions. Sacrifice means giving up something we want or need. It usually means pain and loss. Parents sacrifice for their children. Athletes sacrifice to excel. Business people sacrifice to succeed. Charities challenge us to sacrifice to help others. And Christ's sacrifice on our behalf calls us to sacrifice for Him.

Worship is another word which triggers a variety of reactions. We can all remember a boring church service, and we are moved by a stimulating worship. Congregations are divided over styles of worship, and members complain about changes in the order of worship.

### A powerful call

What happens when we combine the two concepts of worship and sacrifice? Normally we think of tithes and offerings. But Paul presents a powerful call, as well as practical guidelines for daily life—*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship (Rom 12:1)*. Paul clearly calls for sacrifice, but not in giving up. Instead he challenges us to offer ourselves to God in worship. Could it be that we have focused too much on what we give up in place of what we offer to God?

The concept of sacrifice first appears in Genesis. These sacrifices indicate an offering to God and a foretelling of Christ's sacrifice. From that point on, worship is always integrated with biblical sacrifice. So let's explore a little more of what worship really means.

### Accept the sacrifice

Sacrificial worship begins with accepting Jesus' sacrifice for us. Only when you experience God's love can you worship God. Sacrificial worship means reconciling with God—restoring the relationship with God that has been broken by sin. Because of Adam's sin, we are born into a broken relationship between man and God. Our own sinful acts perpetuate that brokenness. God initiated reconciliation through Jesus' life and death. However, reconciliation between two estranged parties can never be forced. Each must desire restoration.

What God accomplished on Calvary becomes real to us only when we accept it. To respond to His divine initiative, we need to face and confess our sin; accept His forgiveness; and rejoice in the reality of a restored relationship between Creator and creature. Thus the offering of ourselves to God in worship begins with bringing our sinful self to God in confession and repentance.

Our forgiveness is assured in Christ. Once we confess, we can move on to thanksgiving and adoration, for our relationship is restored, and by faith we acknowledge it with worship. This worship may be the coming together with others in a corporate act. It may be a quiet moment of prayer. Or it may be a joyous celebration of God's goodness as we share our testimony of what God has done. But the greatest act of worship is to live out a living sacrifice—presenting each moment and each act of the day as an offering to God. *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)*.

### A life filled with grace

Worship is also recognizing who God is and who we are in relationship to Him. He is Creator, Redeemer, and Owner. We are redeemed sinners, saved by grace. Our identity and status comes from Him. We recognize that we belong to Him. Everything we have is first His. We face life with a different perspective. Since everything belongs to Him, we only have things and talents in sacred trust. How we use and manage possessions—how we live each day, becomes an exciting adventure. There is an awesome sense of expectancy as we wait for God to break into our lives in new and powerful ways.

Worship is also a life lived in grace—experiencing God's grace and extending it to those around us. The experience of salvation changes the way we see and treat each other. *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Cor 5:14-17)*.

Thus worship helps us integrate our walk with God into our relationship with others. How we treat others becomes a reflection of our own experience of grace. Home and workplace become worship sites as we bring God from the intimacy of our devotional lives into the activity and business of daily life.

Still further, our bodies become living temples for the presence of God (*1 Cor. 6:19*).

Paul even challenges us to *honor God with your body (v 20)*. There is no part of life that can be excluded from this lifestyle of worship. Each part is offered to God as a living sacrifice.

### **Set apart for divine use**

What happens then when we offer ourselves in worship to God? First of all, Paul tells us that it is *pleasing to God (Rom 12:1)*. What is dedicated or offered to God is also holy—set apart for divine use. He has the prerogative to choose to use what is His as He wills. Enoch walked right into heaven; Noah spent 120 years building an ark and preaching the gospel; Abraham becomes the father of God’s people; Jonah went from the belly of a fish to preach to a pagan nation; Jesus walked on earth as a man and offered His life on a cross—These, and many more, are lives of worship that inspire us today.

We offer what we have to Him in worship, and suddenly we discover that He places even more in our lives that our joy might grow in our relationship with Him. That *more* may be material blessings held in trust. It may be new challenges and opportunities. It may be a greater intimacy with Him. Or it may be the strange joy of sharing in His sufferings (*Rom 5:3; 1 Peter 4:13*). Worship is each moment of life lived in a vibrant awareness of God’s presence and partnership.

Now we have choices to make. Will we worship God? *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name (Heb 13:15)*. Will we live with Him, or will we fragment our lives into pieces—some offered to God, and some lived on our own? Will we worship only with our lips, or will we offer Him everything we do, everything we have, and everything we are?

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*Benjamin C Maxson, Director, General Conference Stewardship Department*

*The glory of  
God is a living  
man; and the  
life of man  
consists in  
beholding  
God.—Saint  
Irenaeus*

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## **Stewardship Window**



The year had been exhausting and I was definitely in need of spiritual renewal. So we skipped the usual Disneyland vacation that year and opted for a camp-meeting vacation instead. But throughout the camp-meeting events, issues and problems related to my work distracted me, and I left wondering where the blessing was.

The next year we decided to try the camp meeting vacation again. But as I loaded our motor home, I found my anxiety level rising. Still discouraged by job and family problems, I didn’t want to go. Something was standing in my way. What was wrong with me?

### **It was choking God out of my life**

Driving to the camp-meeting I seriously reflected on the journey my life had taken me: As an anesthesiologist, I am usually busy throughout my on-call nights. But some nights, when there is time between cases, I relax in the hospital lounge watching cable television. It all began when cable TV was installed in the hospital. I found myself watching everything on the movie channels regardless of content or rating. Soon I was hooked. It was no longer just a way to while away my time. It became a direct conflict and struggle with my Christian experience. My commitment to prayer and Bible study became less desirable. I seemed to have a negative, unhappy attitude about almost everything around me, including my family and job. The sex and violence I was addicted to viewing was choking my desire for a relationship with God.

### **God was waiting for me**

But God, in His unfailing love, knew my problem, and was waiting for me. He tried reaching out to me the first year I was at camp-meeting. But so engrossed was I in my discontent that I didn’t see Him waiting for me. I didn’t hear Him calling my name.

Driving into the campground this time, I had identified my problem. I then I felt a mighty peace that I couldn’t explain. I joined a prayer group that met every day. I spent time alone studying God’s Word. And the presence of the Lord was evident even to me. I left our camp-meeting vacation that year, determined to have a vital relationship with God.

Once back home I asked Chris Nelson, an acquaintance from church, to be my prayer partner. We called each other every weekday morning at five o’clock to pray together. We prayed for our churches, pastors, friends, jobs, families, and those who were sick, both physically and spiritually. Soon I began witnessing amazing answers to prayer. God healed the sick, secured and sold homes, protected jobs and manifested His presence to those for whom I prayed.

I have learned that God is interested in my whole being. He has changed my goals and orientation. He is in total control of my lifestyle. I’m amazed at how intimate God desires to be with me. I praise God for His amazing grace and mercy.

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*Joseph Fluence (Edited and reprinted with the permission of Pacific Union Recorder)*

# Sermons

*And when they had come to a place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (Luke 23:33, NKJV)*

## The wounds of Christ

### The greatest mount

Great is Mount Sinai—where God’s voice rumbled; where across the blazing dark skies God wrote the 10 commandments with his finger. Great is Mount Horeb—where the bush burned but did not consume; where Moses stood in the presence of his God without his sandals. Great is Mount Pisgah—where Moses viewed the promised land; where Israel received promises from God. Great is Mount Carmel—where Elijah challenged the Prophets of Baal; where the name of God was vindicated.

But above all mountains is Calvary. Mount Calvary—the pinnacle of Divine love; an altar of God’s sacrifice. It was on Calvary that the center of the great controversy began to rage. It was on Calvary that Good triumphed over Evil, Mercy over Maliciousness, and Love over Hate. It was on Calvary that the Savior suffered for a sinner. How can mortal tongue and faltering, feeble lips speak the magnitude of Calvary? How can human mind, corrupted by sin, ever fathom the glory that shone from the wounds of our Lord?

### The greatest story

Over the pain and pretense, wounds and wants, Jesus cries, *It is finished*, and His tender lips are silent. The lips of Jesus speak only truth. His lips are not the babbling lips of the carnally-minded. The eyes of our Lord Jesus on Calvary on that day are closed. The eyes of Jesus sees good in all people. His eyes, compassionate and tender, sparkle with divine love.

On Mount Calvary, Jesus allows death to come to Him. He invites death to come to Him. He says *Come to me, Death. So that the dying might understand my love, come to me Death. So that the sick might understand my compassion, come to me Death!* Jesus allows death to come to Him—slow, torturing, cruel, unmerciful death.

In reading the story of Calvary, in unraveling the theology of the act, in coming to grips with redemption and reconciliation, we miss the point. We unwrap Him theologically—we see the nakedness of the theology of it, but we don’t really see the body, we don’t understand the wounds.

Christ was wounded in the head, the hands, the feet, and the heart. His wounds represent the whole truth of love.

### They wounded His head

A crown of thorns was crushed upon His brow until blood dripped down His forehead, down His face, and into His eyes. With thorns, the people crowned Him King of the Jews. The first attack on Jesus was on His mind. Theologians were embarrassed by a twelve-year-old in their own temple. Rulers were overruled by a servant. Lawyers were tricked by their own laws. No one could understand how that mind could be so profound, and so they always attacked the mind. The wisdom of man cannot cope or compete with the mind of God.

When they attacked Him with thorns, blood flowed from His head. The head—the mind where sin begins. At the mind, God can save the hand from murder. At the mind, God can save the heart from lust. At the mind, God can save the heart from crime. At the mind, God can save the soul from sin. To destroy sin, God must cleanse the mind. So Jesus bled first at the mind. The only way God can vanish darkness, the only way God can vanish from our hearts the degradation of sinning, the only way He can heal the hurt of sins is to cleanse the mind of sin.

When Paul saw a vision where blood dripped down the face of Jesus, he was moved to tell us to cleanse our minds. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5, KJV)*. Pure mind leads to pure life. Our minds must be cleansed by the sacred blood of Jesus. The bleeding head of God is crowned by man’s foolishness, the bleeding head of God on Calvary is crowned by man’s lawlessness, the bleeding head of God is crowned by man’s carnal mind. Man’s mind must be cleansed, and so God’s head was wounded.

### They wounded His hands

The hands of man are tools for good or evil. The hands of man can build or destroy God’s world. The hands of man can add or take away from God’s church. They can be beautiful hands, touching needs. Or they can be wicked hands, polluting everything they touch.

At His birth, Jesus with baby hands, reached out in love. His little hands reached up to a mother chosen by God. *Mary, teach his hands touch and not to hurt, to love and not to soil, to give and not to take*. In His death, Jesus reached out to cleanse and save. The crib and the cross came together by a babe’s reaching hands.

In His youth, Jesus had working hands. He was a carpenter. The Greek word for carpenter connotes more than someone who can hammer a shelf together—it means craftsman. Jesus was a craftsman, someone who could build a bridge or a delicate piece of furniture with the same sense of detail. He could take a block of wood and carve out an angel's face.

When a man, Jesus touched with healing hands. His hands touched lame legs and they walked in praise of God. His hands touched the eyes of the blind and they saw what they believed. His hands held out hope for the hopeless. Jesus' working, healing hands, were bleeding hands on Calvary. On Calvary His hands were saving hands, hands crucified.

## They wounded His feet

The feet of Christ went about His father's business. His feet lead Him to Jordan, to Galilee, to Samaria. He was a missionary of mercy and He went about showing love—He taught the people to love a prostitute. He taught them that living for God is more than going to the temple. He said *Walk two miles for your enemy*. (There was a law in Jesus' times that permitted a Roman soldier to force a Jew traveling in the opposite direction to turn around and carry his burden for a mile. So the Jews put mile markers along the road to keep from carrying a Roman's burdens for more than a mile. Another law stated that a Roman soldier could take the outer robe of a Jew for himself. So the Jews often wore their moth-eaten old robes over their good robe.)

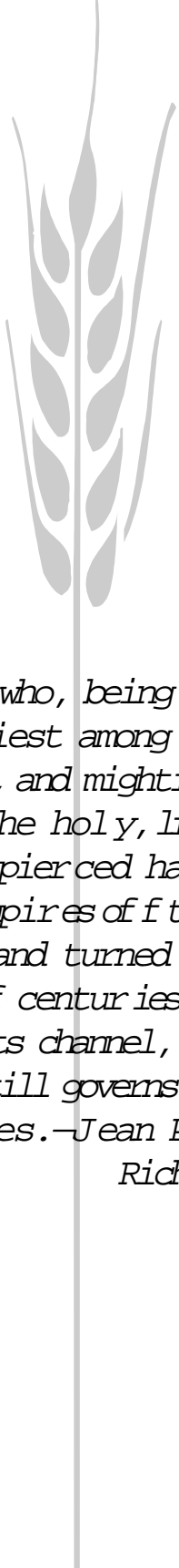
They hated His missions of mercy. They hated the feet of Jesus—feet that went places they would rather forget. Their feet would go to the temple, but not to the tenement. So they nailed His feet to the cross. Jesus' feet bled from the hard stones of man sinning. They bled from the hard stones of selfishness. They bled from walking the road of sin to redeem the ungodly. He walked from the height of deity to the depths of humanity.

## They broke His heart

The last wound in our Lord was inflicted on His heart. It was the wound that brought death. On Calvary, Jesus died of a broken heart. When the Roman spear pierced His side, a mixture of blood and water poured out. Blood and water—that is how man is redeemed. Through the blood of Jesus comes cleansing from sins and the water of baptism. Wounded in the side, the baptism of blood and water, Jesus died of a broken heart. He could bear nails pounded into His hands; He could bear the crown of thorns crushed on His brow; He could bear the nails piercing His feet; but He could not bear to see what sin would do to us.

His heart was broken because His love was refused, spurned, and rejected. *My God why hast thou forsaken me. He was saying I stretch out my hands to them, Father, and they reject me. I pray for them, and they persecute me. I weep for them and they laugh at me. They all have forsaken me, but not you Father.* Love brought Him into a crib, wrapped in swaddling clothes laying in a manger. Love brought Him to a cross, wrapped in blood and love. And love will bring Him back in the clouds of glory, wrapped in power.

A popular monk in the middle ages, revered by all the townspeople, was known for his godliness and his love. One morning He said *This evening at vespers I'm going to preach on the love of God*. The townspeople were excited. As the sun began to set, the people gathered at the great cathedral. They came to hear the monk preach the love of God. The last rays of sunlight glistened through the stained glass windows. Darkness began to creep into every corner. Total darkness engulfed the cathedral and the people were still waiting for the monk. Then they saw a candlelight, a tiny little light came from the side room. It was the monk—He walked over to the great crucifix. The old monk held the candle and put it to the forehead where the artist had painted in red the symbol of the blood. The monk didn't say a word and the people waited. Then he brought the candle down to the torn hands that symbolized love. He still didn't say a word. They waited. The candle moved to the soiled feet. Finally, he brought the candle to Christ's side. The artist had captured torn flesh of the Savior's side. There wasn't a sound, except for crying. The old monk then said *This is my sermon on the love of God. In His head, in His hands, in His feet and in His side. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that who so ever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This is my sermon on the love of God.*



*Christ, who, being the holiest among the mighty, and mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hands empires of their hinges and turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.—Jean Paul Richter*



## Worship: Go beyond

### Big events, small results

Worship is more than just going to church. Worship must go beyond a day of the week. Worship must be a lifestyle. If we understand the biblical context or the radical meaning of worship, we can live a legacy for God. Most of us don't see ourselves as ones who radically impact the world. Instead of a lifestyle of worship, we limit ourselves to big events and revivals. And that is why, although we have many churches, we still have many problems. We have big events, but small results.

Tourists are often warned of the dangers of North Omaha. Landmarks are identified as places where someone was once shot, crack houses, gang hangouts, suicide spots, etc. Strangely though, in this very bad part of town, is a church on every street. More than 50% of all churches in Omaha are in this neighborhood. How could there be so many problems in a place with so many churches?

Media gives us a glimpse of many big events: *Promise Keepers*—men of different color, culture, and careers come together to refuel and recommit—great speakers and great music. But at the end, it's back to the same old stuff. *Women of Faith* is another big event where women of different races and backgrounds come together and fill up convention centers all over the country. Big event, but then it's back to the same old lifestyle. *Youth Workers National Convention* is yet another—more than 5,000 youth pastors and youth workers from all over the country. And then it is over. Big events, small results.

We put so much into big events that we've limited the ability to be used by God to change the world. We need to get beyond big events, many revivals, many conventions and many churches. We need to go beyond to a lifestyle of worship that equips us to change the world.

### Beyond the hurdles

It's so hard to develop a lifestyle of worship and in turn change the world because we have obstacles within the Christian community. We're trying to run to the finish line or even go beyond the track that we're on, but there are some hurdles.

Many of us run marathons. Many of us run sprints. And only a few can handle the hurdles on the track. What are the hurdles? Maybe if you knew what the hurdles were, you'd know how to get over them.

One of the hurdles is self-focus. Even when we get people of different races and denominations together, we really don't live together and hang out together. We're still focused on us. So I sit in church waiting to get *my* blessing and *my* healing, waiting to hear the song that makes *me* feel good, and for the preacher to preach the way *I* like it. I came to church for *me* because *I* had a bad week and *I* need something from God. That's how we market the church. *Come to church and get your healing. Come to the convention and you'll get healed, you'll be blessed, you'll be prosperous.* It's all about you. It's not about changing the world, it's not about us, it's not about the community, it's about you. To really go beyond and see what true worship is, we must overcome and go beyond the self-centered church!

Another hurdle that keeps us from really understanding worship and making an impact in the world is the celebrity-pastor syndrome. You see it on TV all the time. Most of the church shows on TV are not about the church or about the community. They're about the celebrity-pastor. The Reverend So-and-So ministry. The Reverend So-and-So crusade. Do you know that Reverend So-and-So is selling his audio tapes for \$5.00 each? Instead of living a legacy, we pay for a legacy by sending our money to the celebrity-pastor. We're trying to live a legacy through the pastor. Instead of being Christ-centered, we are pastor-centered.

A televangelist said, *If you want to be blessed, you need a man of God in your life. You need to find a man of God and do what the man of God says. Give the man of God your money and you better love the man of God and you better pray for the man of God.* We don't need to look to a celebrity pastor. We need to commit to the radical Jesus Christ and make an impact in the world! That's what we need to do! I am so glad for pastors who do not stand in pin-striped suits with a little gold tooth and tell us that if we give them money, they'll give us a healing handkerchief. I'm so glad for pastors who are about Jesus and not about themselves!

But even when the pastor is Christ-centered, there may be a problem. The problem may be with us. Some of us have gotten leadership-centered and not Christ-centered. *Oh, Pastor, if you would just talk to me. Oh, Pastor, if you would just make me feel good. Oh, Pastor, do you have fifteen minutes?* We want the Pastor instead of the real God who can change our life. We live in this fantasy legacy through leadership instead of getting to know the radical Jesus Christ. Don't try to make an impact on leadership! Make your own impact in the world. The job of the leaders is to

*When you know the radical Christ, you will cry just thinking about when you didn't know Him. You will tingle at thoughts of your special relationship with Him. You will have goose bumps for Him!*



equip the saints, to fuel the saints into a lifestyle of worship that would in turn trigger change in the world.

When our focus is on ourselves or on leadership, we become bench warmers and not participants. We sit in passive faith and don't go anywhere. We just cheer on the ministers and the evangelists and we don't do anything. We need a new vision for worship that changes the world. We need to get beyond spectator faith.

## **Beyond spectator faith**

We need to get beyond bench warmer faith. We need to get out of the crowd and into the action. *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'be holy, because I am holy' (1 Peter 1:13-16).* Prepare your minds for action because you're supposed to be active! We are all supposed to be participants. We all get to play. Nobody sits on the bench. Nobody stands on the sidelines. This is exciting! We all get to participate and bring the radical Jesus Christ to the lost, to the poor, to those that are hurting and to those who can't find their way. We all get to start, we all get to score, we all get to catch and throw and pass.

You need to be prepared to participate. If you're not prepared, you can't play. If you're not ready, you can't go in. You've got to be prepared for action. Set your hope fully on the grace given to you. You've got to give your all. Everything that's in you has got to be focused on your purpose, your identity in Christ and how you can change the world. Know that you're special, that you're valuable, that you are created to make a difference.

Don't let worship be a one day a week thing. Go beyond weekend worship, beyond prayer service, beyond the big event, beyond the service. Don't just put God in just one area of your life. Be holy in all things. Let God have a place in every area of your life. This will take you beyond spectator faith to being a participant in the radical activity of God.

The only way this can happen is for you to develop a lifestyle of worship. When you take a walk and look up at the blue sky, you will be reminded of how awesome the Creator is. Worship will be a moment to moment, exciting event because you know the real Jesus Christ and what He has done for you! Don't limit worship to the Sabbath. Don't gauge your spirituality on your church attendance. Now, I'm not saying that you should stay home and not go to church. I'm saying go beyond, go beyond, go beyond.

## **Beyond weekend Worship**

Good advice to basketball players is *If you don't start feeling like it's game day until game day, you'll never win.* Every basketball practice must be treated as if it were the real game—with the clock, the fans, the cheerleaders, the screaming. Practice under that pressure so when game day comes, it is no big deal. The game just becomes something we do all of the time.

You can't just wait for game day! You can't just wait to worship God until you get to church. It's not a stage—Lights! Camera! Action! Now we worship God! That's why some of us are kind of *fake*. So we put on a mask in church, act all Christian-like, worship God, and shout Hallelujah! But then we get in our cars and say *bleep, bleep, bleep* (things you wouldn't dare say in church). Worship has sadly become a two-hour thing instead of a lifestyle.

If worship were a lifestyle, you would talk the same everywhere you went. If worship were a lifestyle, you'd live the same anywhere you were. We must go beyond our limitations of what true worship is. A lifestyle of worship will give us the fuel to live a legacy. When you are moment to moment worshipping God, you can make a difference in the world, moment to moment.

*Before Mahalia Jackson could live a legacy, she had to live a life of worship. Although crippled as a child, she believed she would be healed. She grew up to go into the world and sing what was not popular—gospel music. She lived a lifestyle of worship. She knew that she could make a difference. Many said her records would never sell. But record sales soared and concerts sold out. Her music touched and changed racism, politics, and searching souls. Mahalia changed the world, but she was no more special than any of us. We too can live a legacy for God. We are all created to make a difference.*

# Sermons

*We need baptism of clear seeing. We desperately need seers who can see through the mist—Christian leaders with prophetic vision. Unless they come soon it will be too late for this generation. And if they do come we will no doubt crucify a few of them in the name of our worldly or thodoxy.*

—A W Tozer

## Introduction

Faster than a speeding bullet, he can leap tall buildings with a single bound, he stops a locomotive with one arm—It's Superman, comic world's greatest super hero. The newspaper reporter, Clark Kent, in a moment of national crisis, can disappear into a phone booth and emerge in a spandex suit complete with a colorful cape. With his cape on, Clark Kent has tremendous hang time. I wonder if it would work for me?

In this day of failed leaders and fallen heroes, there is a need for ordinary people to do ordinary things in extraordinary ways. A need to go into the phone booth of prayer and come out with a changed experience.

## An impressive resumé

As you look through the Bible, perhaps the greatest prophet of the Old Testament was Elijah. Talk about an impressive resumé! Elijah had done it all. He shows up in King Ahab's palace saying, *You know that canoe trip you were planning with the wife and kids this summer on the Jordan River? You might as well cancel it, because guess what? It's not going to rain for a long time, Bucko!* Elijah was a fireball. He wore a cape of camel hair that became symbolic of the prophetic office. Throughout Elijah's life, he fought ferocious battles for God.

In one of the most incredible stories of the Bible, at the end of the drought, Elijah orchestrated a showdown between Baal and Jehovah on Mt. Carmel. God rained down fire on Elijah's soggy altar, wiping out 450 false prophets. On the heels of this apparent victory came one of Elijah's greatest challenges. The challenge wasn't the fact that Jezebel wanted to kill him. Elijah's greatest challenge was depending on himself to do all the work. As he is hiding from Jezebel's hit men, he verbalizes an exhausted death wish. Then in conversation with God, he says, *I've been working tirelessly for you. And what good has it done? The Israelites still worship idols and kill the prophets. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me.*

## Superman's cape

## Pass on the mantle

Do you ever tire of working for God and wonder if anyone else will pick up the ball and run with it when you're gone? *Who's going to teach my Sabbath School if I don't. Who will lead this ministry when I lay it down? I've given all my life for this church and what good has it done?* I'm the only one who cares! Oh, poor lonesome little me!

That's how Elijah felt. He was discouraged because he truly believed he was the only one battling the enemy. When you get to that point, it's time to let go, and that's exactly what God instructed Elijah to do. God says, *You're not the only one Elijah! There are 7,000 loyalists who have never fallen before Baal. And by the way, you're not going to be around forever. There will come a time when that cape will be around someone else's shoulders. And just so you get used to the idea, I want you to anoint your successor.*

*So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him (1 Kg 19:19).* This was the sign of awareness. The mantle was being passed to a new generation.

That is what is happening today. A new generation is emerging with the energy and enthusiasm required to finish the gospel commission. Those of us who are now involved in leadership need to recognize our responsibility in this process. We need to lead by setting a faithful example of service. But it is incumbent upon us that we don't lead independently of those who will follow in our footsteps. The passing of the mantle requires a willingness on the part of the older generation to let the mantle go and an acceptance by the younger generation to step up and take it on.

## Care and nurture

Subtly, slowly but surely the mantle is being passed. Even before Elijah saw Elisha, the young man was preparing to take it on. While living at home, he was faithful to his father. He respected his parents and teachers. In the process, he was learning to cooperate with God. Students, this can be your experience. Recognize in your elders and parents the higher authority God has given to them at this point in time.

When the mantle was placed on Elisha, he demonstrated respect for his parents. *Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. 'Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye,' he said, 'and then I will come with you' (1 Kg 19:20).* Radio preacher Daniel Poling tells of the death of an outstanding author, conference teacher and social leader—a lady lauded and applauded. Her son was a well respected citizen in the town. Everyone was at the funeral to hear her son say, as he stood by the coffin, *I don't remember you for your books or your well-earned reputation. I remember you as the one with a*

warm and loving embrace, whose lips pressed on mine in days of doubt and uncertainty when I needed acceptance. I remember you as my mother. There are few outstanding authors, but there are millions of ordinary mothers and fathers and friends who shape the world generation after generation. Ordinary people doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways.

## Be a mentor

Elisha became Elijah's attendant. He followed faithfully learning to depend on God while doing menial tasks for the prophet. This is part of the process that may be unpleasant, but is very important. Elijah didn't place the mantle on Elisha and let him keep it. Elisha had to prove himself worthy of the calling. He had to demonstrate loyalty, integrity and honesty.

For the mantle to be passed there must be a process of training where trust is developed and knowledge is handed down. In the Old Testament, Elijah had restored the system of education. As Elijah approached the end of his ministry, he visited the schools one last time. At each site Elijah told Elisha to stay at the schools and teach. This was a test of Elisha's loyalty. For the mantle to be passed down he had to prove once again that he was ready to follow the leading of the Lord. Three times Elijah said, *Stay here*. And each time Elisha responded, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee*. What Elijah didn't know was that the Lord had appeared to Elisha revealing to him the plan for Elijah to be translated. *The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, 'Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?' 'Yes, I know,' he replied, 'but do not speak of it' (2 Kg 2:5).*

*When the Lord in His providence sees fit to remove from His work those to whom He has given wisdom, He helps and strengthens their successors, if they will look to Him for aid and will walk in His ways. They may be even wiser than their predecessors; for they may profit by their experience and learn wisdom from their mistakes (Prophets and Kings, pg 228).* In an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust God can do great things as the mantle is passed.

## Life of service

When Elijah and Elisha left Jericho, they had to cross the Jordan River. Elijah took of his mantle and struck the water and the waters parted. *When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?' 'Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,' Elisha replied (2 Kg 2:9).* This was Elisha, tugging on Superman's cape. *I am ready to take the mantle.* Elijah acknowledged that the power was not his to give. Only God could give it.

Elisha was sad. His friend and mentor was gone. But as he was standing there, something came floating down from the sky. What could it be? It was the cape of camel hair. . . the mantle was passed. *He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. 'Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' he asked (v 13,14).* And the waters of the rivers parted.

We are not all asked to serve as Elisha served, nor are we told to sell everything we have; but God asks us to give His service first place in our lives, to allow no day to pass without doing something to advance His work in the earth. Adults, you have seen the desire on the part of the emerging generation to accept the challenge. Now it's up to us to let the mantle fall.



## I Wonder

You know, Lord, how I serve You  
 With great emotional fervor  
 In the limelight.  
 You know how eagerly I speak for You  
 At the women's club.  
 You know how I effervesce when I promote  
 A fellowship group.  
 You know my genuine enthusiasm  
 At a Bible study.

But how would I react, I wonder,  
 If you pointed to a basin of water  
 And asked me to wash the calloused feet  
 Of a bent and wrinkled old woman  
 Day after day  
 Month after month  
 In a room where nobody saw  
 And nobody knew.

—Ruth Harms Calkin



## Introduction

There once was a man who didn't show up at work one day. And here's his reason why: *The hurricane had knocked off some bricks at the top of the building, so I rigged up a beam with a pulley on the roof, and hoisted a couple of barrels full of bricks. I fixed the damage, but I had to get the leftover bricks back down. So while on the ground, I began releasing the line. But the barrel of bricks was much heavier than me. Before I knew what was happening, the barrel started coming down, jerking me up. I decided to hang on, since I was too far off the ground by then to jump. Half way up I met the barrel of bricks coming down. I received a hard blow on my shoulder. I continued to the top, banging my head against the beam, and getting my fingers pinched in the pulley. When the barrel hit the ground hard, all the bricks fell out. Now I was heavier than the barrel. So I started coming down at high speed. Half way down, I met the barrel again, and received a second set of hard knocks. I finally landed on the pile of bricks. At this point, I must have lost my presence of mind, because I let go of my grip on the line, letting the barrel down on me. I respectfully request sick leave.*

We all have bad days and hectic weeks. We all go through struggles and frustrations. There are times when questions perplex us and answers are difficult to find. Some of us feel that if we are sincere enough or faithful enough or diligent enough, then somehow hardships and difficulties won't come. Popular television ministers sometimes give the impression that Christians wear some impregnable or invulnerable armor—and that if troubles come and linger, then you haven't prayed the right prayer or claimed the appropriate promise. The truth is that Christians receive the blunt of a sinful world like everybody else.

As Christians, we have confidence in God not only because of what happens, but also despite of what happens. We are loyal to God not only when things go right, but also when things go wrong. We live by faith not because we have no doubt, but also because we believe and obey God in spite of any doubt.

## Live by faith when God seems silent

Job had lost everything. Job asked *Why? Why did I not die at birth? Why do I labor in vain? Why have you set me as a target? Why do You hide Your face, And regard me as Your enemy?* But he got no answer. The one thing that bothered him the most, one thing that tore him up inside, one thing that got to him more than anything else—God seemed to have hidden His face—Job's prayers bounced off the ceiling and came back to hit him in the face.

There was silence, a time of testing. A merciful God gave Job time. It was a time when Job had to search for answers alone. And in the time of silence, Job's concluding response is *Though He slay me yet will I trust Him.* There are times when all seems to be going well, when you're following God's guiding truth and He seems to be blessing you greatly, and all the pieces of life's jigsaw are fitting together. Then the picture changes—circumstances take you down unexpected paths or hostile territory. Like the quip so commonly seen on posters around schools, *Just when I thought I knew all the answers, they changed all the questions!* All of a sudden you find yourself asking *Why?*

James Dobson tells the story of a man driving a truck on a mountain road. He is up near the top, and he is going too fast. The truck goes out of control and is thrown over the side of the mountain. Bouncing all the way down, the truck lands at the bottom, then bursts into flames. The man, however, is thrown out of the truck at the top of the mountain, and manages to grab hold of a limb just as the truck is going over. He's hanging on to this limb, and can't get up or down, and the truck is way down below. His back is hurting, and his arms are sore, and he can't make a move in either direction.

Finally, out of desperation, he calls out above and says, *Is anybody there?*

The voice of the Lord replies, *Yes, I'm here. What do you want me to do for you?*

The man pleads, *Will you save me?*

*Yes, I will save you. What I want you to do is just let go of the branch. Let go and trust Me to catch you.*

The man looks over his shoulder at the truck at the bottom of the mountain, and looks back over the precipice, and yells out, *Is anybody else there?*

Have there been any times when God seems to require too much—times when you have difficulty making sense out of a situation? Have you always understood why things happen? Are there any perplexing questions for which you have not yet found answers? What do you do? Hebrews 11 lists the great people of faith: Abel offers sacrifice, and God accepts it. Enoch lives a holy life, and God translates him. Noah builds an ark, and God saves his family. Abraham leaves Ur of the Chaldeas, and God leads him to the Promised land. Sarah believes and God works a miracle and she conceives. Moses chooses to suffer with Israel rather than sit on the throne of Egypt, and God equips him to oversee the Exodus. Israel steps into the Red Sea, and God parts the water. They march around Jericho, and God shatters the city walls. Rahab

# When all is not well

shelters the spies, and God saves her life.

On the other hand you read of those who were tortured and found no deliverance. What of them? They let go of the branch, but God didn't catch them. Was it because they didn't have enough faith? Was it because they hadn't claimed the right promise? NO! You can almost hear them say, *And He shall give His angels charge over thee* as flames licked the flesh off their bodies. The issue is not whether or not God could or would catch them, but whether or not they would believe. The Lord wants people who realize that the branches of our talents and abilities, the branches of wealth and possessions, the branches of intellect and presuppositions, can only hold us so long. The Lord wants us to realize that He is the only One who can help us. He wants people who are willing to let go of everything, knowing full well that some promises supersede other promises. They know that heaven is their eternal home. The Lord wants people who can resolutely say with the three Hebrews as they felt the heat of the fiery furnace, *The God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O King. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O King, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up (Dan 3:17,18).*

### Live by faith when God seems unfeeling

Moses had dreamed of entering the Promised land for more than 80 years. What agony and disappointment he must have felt when told that he couldn't cross over the Jordan and enter Caanan. Can you imagine the questions of fairness and justice, of grace and forgiveness that Moses could have asked? However, Moses had by now learned to let go. And the Lord took Moses to the Great Promised Land of Heaven as the first fruit of the resurrection.

### Live by faith when God seems to contradict Himself

Think of Abraham. One evening He's gazing up at the nighttime sky when God says, *Abraham, do you see all those stars? Someday your descendants will be as numerous, like the sands of the sea. I'm going to give you many generations, and kings will be born among them.* Another evening, many decades later, God says, *Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering (Gen 22: 2).* Can you imagine the questions that come to Abraham's mind?

God was teaching Abraham that the future didn't depend on Isaac—it depended on God. Even when it doesn't make any sense, God is with you! If it seems ever that God is silent, you, like Job, can still say in faith: *Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him.* If it ever seems to you that God is unfeeling, you can, like Moses, go to your grave in confidence of the Great Promised Land. If ever it seems to you that God almost contradicts Himself, or asks you to make a sacrifice, you can believe, like Abraham, that *The Lord will provide.*

### Conclusion

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Heb 11:1).* It sees the invisible, touches the untouchable, hears the sound of silence. Faith perseveres to the end (*Heb 12:1*). *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb 12:1, 2).* Where are you in your belief today?

**Lord give me faith!**  
**—to live from day to day,**  
**With tranquil heart**  
**to do my simple part,**  
**And, with my hand in Thine,**  
**just go Thy way.**

**Lord, give me faith!**  
**—to trust, if not to know;**  
**With quiet mind**  
**in all things Thee to find,**  
**And, child-like,**  
**to go where Thou wouldst have**  
**me go.**

**Lord, give me faith!**  
**—to leave it all to Thee,**  
**The future is Thy gift,**  
**I would not live**  
**The veil Thy love**  
**has hung 'twixt it and me.**

**—John Oxenham**

# Book Reviews



## ***The Forgotten Blessing***

by Henry Holloman

Word Publishing

Nashville, Tennessee, 1999

US\$ 24.99

*Sanctification is the greatest work God is doing in the Christian life, the process through which He is making us more Christlike for our good and His glory.* With these words, Holloman begins his treatment of sanctification as a dynamic reality in Christ. This book is a practical exploration of what is often a theoretical subject.

The author presents three different forms of sanctification. *Positional Sanctification* deals with being set apart in Christ, making Christians holy or saints; *Progressive Sanctification* describes the growth in Christlikeness and victory over sin through a partnership with God. *Perfective Sanctification* is glorification, where Christ transforms Christians into His likeness at His coming.

This work includes a discussion of God's role in sanctification, including exploring how the Father planned sanctification, the Son provided sanctification, and the Holy Spirit performs sanctification. Holloman's discussion of the spiritual union with Christ is especially helpful. He separates sanctification from the concept of maintaining our salvation. However, the reader will need to disregard the author's view of eternal security.

The treatment of conquering sin through dealing with internal and external opposition to sanctification is also helpful. Repeatedly, the emphasis is on victory through Christ's victory and the faith acceptance and integration of that victory into daily living. Throughout the book, the author presents practical applications, points, and illustrations which help clarify his understanding of sanctification.

Holloman also explores the role of spiritual disciplines in the process of sanctification. They are tools which help one grow in sanctification and are "God-appointed" practices "to help one become more Christlike." Though not an exhaustive treatment of the subject, his discussion of this area is helpful. The author closes with the invitation to develop a lifetime plan for sanctification, and the challenge to actively pursue sanctification.

I found this book significant and helpful. It is well worth adding to one's personal library and growth.

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*Benjamin C Maxson, Director, General Conference Stewardship Department*



## ***John Stott Bible Studies***

by John Stott

(with Dale and Sandy Larsen)

InterVarsity Press

Downers Grove, Illinois, 1998

US\$ 39.92 /set of 8

US\$ 4.99/single copy

Mid-week prayer meetings, be they on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, are known for the faithful few who come to study with the pastor, despite weather conditions and schedule pressures. More and more often these days prayer meetings tend to focus on intensive Bible studies. Regular attendees thrive on this special time when they can, with pastoral guidance, learn from God's Word.

Preparing for these Bible Studies need not be time-consuming when you have the *John Stott Bible Studies*. John Stott is one of the world's leading and most loved Bible teachers and preachers. In this guide you can explore Scripture side by side with Stott, enhancing your own in-depth study with insights gained from his years of immersion in God's Word

This particular series is based on entire New Testament books or portions, and is specifically designed for individual or small group study. For example *Ephesians* is divided into 12 studies, and deals with the subject of unity. The *Ephesians John Stott Studies* helps us learn how to break down whatever it is that separates us from God, one ethnic group from another, husband from wife, parent from child, and employer from employee. The studies in *Ephesians* provide a vision of the new society God has planned in His church.

Besides the studies in *Ephesians*, there are the following studies:

*Acts: Seeing the Spirit at Work*—18 studies

*The Beatitudes: Developing Spiritual Character*—8 studies

*Romans: Encountering the Gospel's Power*—20 studies

*1 & 2 Thessalonians: Living in the End Times*—10 studies

*1 Timothy and Titus: Fighting the Good Fight*—12 studies

*2 Timothy: Standing Firm in Truth*—8 studies

*Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*—12 studies

# Book Reviews

Is your self-confidence fragile or inconsistent? Do you feel strong enough to take on the world one day but on the next day, small things make you nervous and fretful? Then you need to take on Donna Partow's challenge! Her book *Walking in Total God-Confidence* guarantees major changes in your life—a change in lifestyle, a change in purpose, a change in attitude—in just ten weeks.

Donna Partow is a bestselling author and Christian communicator with a compelling testimony of God's transforming power. Her uncommon transparency and passion for Christ have made her a popular guest on more than 100 radio and TV shows.

This book helps you learn to rely completely on God for your confidence and sense of worth: Written in the same format as Partow's bestselling book, *Becoming a Vessel God Can Use*, this book focuses on: 1) Learning the importance of being in His word daily; 2) Gaining energy through your faith by realizing nothing takes God by surprise; and 3) Seeking an open heart and mind that are ready for His plan.

Relying on your own self-confidence works in times of happiness, but what happens during difficult periods? There is another kind of confidence and it's something completely different: God-confidence—the absolute assurance that God can do anything and everything He wants to do through you—regardless of your upbringing, circumstances, past successes or failures.

The ten-week study is both interactive and inspirational. There are thoughts to reflect on, points to learn, and assignments to complete. This book can be used as a personal spiritual growth plan or as a small group study. It would be a perfect study program for a series of mid-week prayer meetings.



## ***God-Confidence***

by Donna Partow

Bethany House Publishers

Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1999

US\$ 10.99



Each of us has a gift. But many of us never discover it. Instead, we wind up in jobs that don't suit us, that don't make full use of our talents, and, ultimately, that we hate. But it doesn't have to be that way. God designed each of us with unique talents that allow us to enjoy our careers—and serve Him in the meantime.

In *Why You Can't Be Anything You Want to Be*, Arthur F Miller Jr and William Hendricks discuss the Myth of Becoming, the mistaken notion that we can become anything we want. Society reveres money, power, and prestige, and the pressure to climb as high as you can is great. Companies push employees to become leaders and self-starters, and, as a result, many employees wind up in a job mismatch, where they can burn out and develop psychological and health problems.

After two life-changing experiences, Miller spent four decades studying what drives people to pursue specific challenges. He found that each person has a unique motivational pattern and innate giftedness that determines a person's abilities and behaviors. This giftedness is something that can't be learned. We're born with it.

Institutions are responsible for perpetuating the myth that you can be anything you want to be. Work, education, and religion all send messages that contribute to a person's desire to pursue the wrong path. Miller and Hendricks call on these institutions to change, and suggest ways they can improve.

But how does someone find his or her giftedness? Miller and Hendricks say standard psychological and interest tests do not provide an accurate picture of a person's motivated abilities. So instead of relying on such tests, the authors use a unique assessment tool called SIMA (System for Identifying Motivated Abilities) to guide readers through the process of discovering their God-given gifts and opening the door to a fun and exciting career. The secret lies in your past experiences.

*Why You Can't Be Anything You Want to Be* is for anyone who wants to discover their God-given purpose and serve others through their inherent gifts. Church leaders may especially find this book useful in helping to make fundamental changes in the way they guide others.



## ***Why You Can't Be Anything You Want to Be***

by Arthur F Miller, Jr.

(with William Hendricks)

Zondervan Publishing House

Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999

US\$ 19.99

# Resources

Stewardship training seminars presented by *Benjamin C Maxson* are available on video and audio tapes. Each seminar is six to eight hours in length, divided into 30-minute segments, and designed to be used by itself or with an instructor. Also available are the participant's workbook and instructor's manual. To order, contact either AdventSource (5040 Prescott, Lincoln, NE 68506; Tel: 800-328-0525; Fax: 402-486-2572 email 74617.1241@compuserve.com) or the General Conference Stewardship Department (12501 Old Columbia Pk, Silver Spring, MD 20904; Tel 301-680-6157; Fax 301-680-6155 email gcstewardship@compuserve.com). The cost of each set, excluding shipping is \$79.95 for video and \$29.95 for audio (available at a subsidized rate to churches in the mission fields).

## For pastors and church leaders:

*Volume I: Biblical Stewardship Foundations* This seminar explores stewardship and its biblical foundations. The very word *steward* implies the reality of Christ as Lord. The relationship with Christ as Lord must begin with experiencing the gospel.

*Volume II: Strategic Church Stewardship* This seminar explores the strategic elements that make stewardship ministry successful. To be effective, stewardship must focus on the overall lifestyle in Christ. Even financial stewardship must begin with helping people grow spiritually, and discipling them to become partners and friends with Christ.

## For church members

*Normal Christianity* This seminar explores a biblical approach to daily life. Biblical principles provide the foundation for living life in a dynamic, vibrant partnership with God. He created us to enjoy Him—to share life with Him.

# Editorial

All who are pursuing the onward Christian course, should have, and will have, an experience that is living, that is new and interesting. A living experience is made up of daily trials, conflicts, and temptations, strong efforts and victories, and great peace and joy gained through Jesus. A simple relation of such experiences gives light, strength, and knowledge, that will aid others in their advancement in the divine life. The worship of God should be both interesting and instructive to those who have any love for divine and heavenly things (*Review and Herald*, April 28, 1885).

Those who consecrate their all to God will not be left unmolested by the enemy of souls. Satan will come to them with his specious temptations, designing to allure them from their loyalty to God. He will present to them his bribe, as he did to Christ in the wilderness of temptation, saying, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* But what should be the answer of the Christian to all the temptations of the evil one? He should say, *I will not lend my influence in any way to the advancement of anything save the cause of Christ. I am not my own; I have been bought with a price. I am not to live to please myself; for I have been purchased, ransomed by the blood of Christ. It is not possible for me to give to Christ more than that which belongs to him; for every moment of my life belongs to him. I am his possession, a servant employed to do the will of my Master.* This is the only position that is safe for us occupy; and if the individual members of the church felt this way, what a power would the church exert to draw and win souls to Christ. . . . Were the members of the church consecrated to God, were they in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, were they organized for the purpose (*The Home Missionary*, October 1, 1892).

*Excerpts from the writings of Ellen G White*



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**Editor»** Fylvia Fowler Kline

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» V S Neikurs » Mario Niño » Paul Ratsara »  
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Ruguri » Bobby J Sepang

**12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
(301) 680-6157 Phone  
(301) 680-6155 Fax**

**gcstewardship@compuserve.com  
FFKline@compuserve.com**