When God is Silent

Bob Yandian



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by
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Table of Contents

Chapter 1
Satan's Greatest Trap.....5

Chapter 2
Trust What You Know.....17

Chapter 3
What About James?.....33

Chapter 4
Seed Never Fails.....43

Meet Bob Yandian.....61

Chapter 1

Satan's Greatest Trap

The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

Mark 4:2-9: (NKJV)

Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred. And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Often, the focus of this familiar parable about the sower and the seed is the different ways Satan steals from the immature Christians. Four different types of ground are mentioned. Each type of ground represents the heart of a believer. The hard ground is the believer who hears the Word being taught but rejects it. Satan *comes immediately* and *steals* the Word from his heart. The second type of ground is the stony ground. This is one who hears the Word and receives it quickly, but gives up when trials and persecution come. This one does not have enough soil or depth of heart for the Word to produce a good root. He then becomes offended. The third type of ground is thorny. This ground receives the Word and

holds on for a while but when prosperity manifests, things become more important than the Word and the Word is choked out. The last type of ground is good ground. It holds on to the Word and endures all persecution and begins to increasingly produce for the kingdom of God, thirty, sixty and finally one hundred fold. This fourth type of ground deals with the mature Christian.

Just as Satan has tactics he uses against the immature believer, he also has tactics he uses against mature believers. Satan never gives up. I have met people who have been faithfully walking in the things of God for many years, have been faithful to their church home, and have grown in the Word of God. But suddenly, something has happened that seemingly contradicts the Word of God. Something has happened that they cannot explain or understand.

Mark 4:21-22: (NKJV)

> *Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.*

This parable is referring to believers who suddenly put their lamp under a bushel or under a bed. The lamp represents our witness, our good works, our conversation about God and how we live our lives before others. The person who hides their light represents someone who suddenly becomes self-conscious about their stand for God. They become filled with confusion and doubt. Soon they don't want people to know they're a Christian, that they attend church and believe the Word of God. They are embarrassed to let others know they believe in divine healing, that God fills His children with the Holy Spirit, and that they believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They back off from the teachings found in the Bible, especially

those that are challenged by the world because something happened that they could not understand or explain.

It is true there are some things as believers we cannot explain, but with God there is no such thing as a question that has no answer. This parable says there is nothing hidden to our understanding that God will not reveal, nothing kept in secret that He will not bring to light.

God Always Brings the Answers

Loretta and I were raised in church. When I went to work for *Kenneth Hagin Ministries,* we knew some things about the Word of God but began to have a greater understanding of the simple principles of trusting God for finances. We made the decision we were going to pay off all our debts with the exception of our house. In addition to working for the ministry, I also had a side business duplicating teachings for *Full Gospel Businessmen* and other ministries in town. During that time I was asked to do a major conference for *Full Gospel Businessmen* both duplicating and selling the messages. Loretta and I agreed together that I would clear $10,000 at this conference because that is what we needed to get out of debt. We found scriptures, stood on the Word of God, held hands and agreed in prayer. We thanked God and praised Him for it from that day on. It seemed we had done everything right but when the meeting was over, I only cleared between three and four thousand dollars.

Loretta and I became very quiet. We began to question, "*Maybe this faith stuff doesn't work."* We began to doubt and have confusion, but we didn't quit God and we didn't quit church. We didn't stop believing the message and we didn't quit ministering. We continued to trust God. Along the way we learned that the *steps* (plural) of a good man are ordered of the Lord but we were trying to get there in one giant step!

Today, I still do not have all the answers to things I don't understand, but there have been situations where God eventually brought the answers. In the church I pastor, people have died I didn't think should die, yet they did. And it seems questions always arise, "*God, didn't we do everything right? We prayed. We stood on Your promises. We praised and thanked You. We don't understand."* However, oftentimes we don't know what is in another person's heart.

Once there was a woman in the church we prayed for who died. I did the funeral and it was one of the most difficult funerals I ever did because she was so young. It wasn't until many months later while talking to another woman from the church that I understood. She said, "You know, I stayed with her while she was battling against the disease. When you would come to visit, she would say she wanted to live and was trusting God, but she only said those things so she wouldn't hurt you because you were her pastor. Others would come as well, but as soon as everyone left, she would say she couldn't wait to see Jesus. She just wanted to go to heaven." Well, my question about this woman's premature death was answered, but it didn't come over night.

A City Set on a Hill

Matthew 5:14: (NKJV)

> *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.*

Notice, Jesus is the light of the world, but since He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, we are the light of the world in the earth.

Jesus stated that a city set on a hill cannot be hidden; it is set on a hill for all to see. In the ancient world, people knew the value of building a city on a hill. It was easier to defend and more difficult for the enemy to ride uphill to conquer. The inhabitants of a city on a hill could also more easily see when an enemy was approaching.

The same is true of a lamp in a house. A lamp is placed in a high place to shed down light on all who are in the room. Even today, lights are placed in the ceiling of our churches so we can read our Bibles and see one another. We don't put lights under the chairs or the platform of the church because the room wouldn't be illuminated as well. What am I saying? Let me put this as simply as possible: *Just because you may doubt God, doesn't mean you're no longer a Christian; your lamp is still lit; it's just hidden.* If you don't let the world know about the light on the inside of you, it will not stop you from being a Christian; you are just hiding your testimony. The "light" is your testimony.

Perhaps you once told others about Jesus, talked to them about the goodness of God, testified about how Jesus healed your body and provided finances and then suddenly, something happened you didn't understand and you have become timid, embarrassed, or even ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is putting your lamp under a bushel. Jesus said, "Don't do that!"

That Which Is Hidden Will Be Revealed

It comes back to what was stated in Mark 4:22, There is nothing hidden that shall not be made manifest, nothing kept secret that God will not bring it to light (paraphrased). In other words, God is saying, "Hang in there. I will explain it."

Another response to not understanding the outcome of certain situations is blaming the sovereignty of God. We begin to think, "*Well, maybe scriptures don't always work.*

Maybe God is sovereign, and sometimes He just lets these things happen." We take on the attitude, "*Whatever is going to be will be. God is going to do whatever He wants to do. I have no control"* and suddenly the life of faith is out the window. However, the light of our good works is supposed to shine before men.

Don't misunderstand. I believe in the sovereignty of God, but God is not sovereign when it comes to answers. He has promised He will give us an answer, but He is sovereign concerning the timing of His answer.

Times and Seasons

Acts 1:7: (NKJV)

> *And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."*

Before Jesus left this earth, the disciples were quibbling about what they would be doing in the kingdom. They wanted to know when His kingdom was coming. He simply responded, "*It's not up to you to know the times or the seasons, which are in God's hands"* (paraphrased). Again, God promised He will answer you. He didn't say it would be today. Wait on Him. Eventually, He will give you an answer.

Loretta and I have friends whose son died prematurely and it caused them to re-examine their Christian life. Many have found themselves confronted with similar situations and it is in the face of these types of disappointments that we must ask ourselves how determined we are to believe the Word of God and profess our faith in Him.

John 14:13-14: (NKJV)

> *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

Jesus said *whatever* and *anything.* He promised He will answer, but didn't promise the *whatever* and *anything* will be granted in our timing. God wants to answer at the right time. He knows the time better than we do. Oftentimes I have doubted. Oftentimes I have felt threatened. Oftentimes I have been confused. *But I refuse to give in!* I am determined to continue following God because He promised in due time He will let me know the answers to my questions.

I once did a funeral for the father of a young girl. She had been trusting God that her father would not die. She had read books about healing, had healing scriptures laid out, and prayed over her father that he would live and not die. But her father died. As I ministered at the funeral, I felt impressed that God wanted me to focus on her because she was doubting whether or not God was real or His Word was true and considering not returning to church because she had done everything right but her father still died.

I looked at her and I said, “I want you to understand, what often looks complicated to us is simple when God gives us the answer. I'm going to trust God that He will answer your questions and reveal why your father died." I continued, “You may not receive the answer in this life; it may be when you get to Heaven, but God will have the answer. You're young enough to live another forty years on this earth and wouldn't it be sad to run from God for the next forty years and then stand before Him one day after He has explained why your father died and you respond, 'That's it?! I ran from God for forty years because of that?!'"

Don't Run From God

God's answers are not complicated; they're simple. I am exhorting you, DON'T RUN *FROM* GOD! Run *to* God during those times when things happen that you don't

understand. You may be confused, but God has promised that nothing hidden will remain hidden; it will become manifest. There's nothing kept secret that God will not reveal.

Our emotions can be wrong and lead us astray. I learned a long time ago to never make a decision when I'm confused—NEVER! If you are confused in an area of your life, don't do anything. Many times, in the midst of confusion our first temptation is to run.

You may be wondering, "*Have you ever been tempted to run, Pastor?"* The answer is yes. There have been times I've doubted God's Word for a brief moment, but made the decision to keep pressing through and I refused to turn my back on His Word. Why? Because, as I said before, confusion is never a time to make a decision. God is not the author of confusion. Confusion comes from the enemy and God is greater than the enemy; He will answer.

So the question is not *if God* will answer; the question is *when* will He answer? The *when* is where His sovereignty lies. God has told us the times and seasons are in His hands and we are not to question Him about this. We are to just keep following Him.

Wait on God

Psalm 27:14: (NKJV)

Wait for the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!

This verse gives us a key to the Christian life when we don't understand what is happening in our lives. Notice, waiting strengthens us. God desires, maturity before answers. Often, all we care about are answers. Waiting produces maturity. In other words, if the answer doesn't come today, by the end of the day I'll be a little more mature than I was yesterday. If it doesn't come tomorrow morning, I'll be more mature tomorrow night than I was

that morning. One of these days the answer will come and when it does, I'll be able to handle the answer. God is more interested in our maturity than in providing answers.

Psalm 37:34: (NKJV)

Wait on the Lord, and keep (guard) His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.

Notice, this verse says if you wait on the Lord and keep His way, *He* will exalt you. Waiting and staying with God's Word will bring prosperity. Why should we want to wait on the Lord? Because every day we wait, we become more mature in the things of God. And every day we become more mature, God is able to entrust us with more prosperity in every area of our lives including health, relationships, and finances. Waiting equals prosperity! Waiting on the Lord will also allow us to see the destruction of those who brought evil into our lives. Of course we pray for them to find Jesus, but if they don't, God promised we will outlast them and one day we will actually witness their destruction.

Proverbs 20:22: (ESV)

Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the Lord, and He will deliver you.

God promised that vengeance belongs to Him and He will repay. It is not up to you or me to get even; it is up to us to keep following God, to keep trusting Him. It is up to us to continue maturing. It is up to God to bless us and one day He will answer us. In the meantime, it is not up to us to do God's job.

Patience, An Indicator of Maturity

Patience is a great indicator of maturity.

Luke 8:15: (NKJV)

As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

All of us have experienced times of pressure and endurance. There are times things happen we cannot explain and do not understand. This verse is telling us to handle those times with patience. Patience is a virtue found in mature believers.

2 Peter 1:5-7: (NKJV)

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (moral excellence); and to virtue (moral excellence) knowledge; And to knowledge temperance (self-control); and to temperance (self-control) patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love).

People often ask for prayer for patience, but how does patience come? Romans 5 provides the answer.

Romans 5:3-4: (NKJV)

And not only that, but we also glory (rejoice) in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance (patience); and perseverance (patience), character; and character, hope.

What are we supposed to do in tribulation? Rejoice!

Don't Cast Away Your Confidence

Hebrews 10:35-36 says,

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

Patience will *work* experience and experience is a testimony, something you can tell others about. When you are in a trial, rather than crying, "*Lord, when is this*

going to be over? When am I going to be delivered from this situation?" Why don't you take the attitude that you are building a testimony? Think about how testifying about how God delivered you from your trial will put a damper on the devil's attempt to bring discouragement and defeat. I can guarantee you are not the only person being confronted by the problem you are facing. There are hundreds of thousands experiencing the same trial and God will see to it that one day you will cross the paths of some of those people to testify about what God did to bring you through!

Where does confidence come from and what is confidence based upon? Experience. Because God has come through so many times, I have confidence in Him. This passage says not to cast that confidence away for something momentary. Don't throw away what you do know for some sudden state of "*I don't know what to do." Don't throw away what you do know for what you don't know.* Cast not away your confidence because God has been so wonderful and faithful through the years. Unfortunately, many Christians do cast away their confidence. Don't throw away all of your testimonies for some momentary thing you cannot explain. Don't allow Satan to whisper in your ear that everything you have believed has been wrong, that God doesn't exist or that God can't help you and doesn't care when in reality He does care.

Hebrews 10:36: (NKJV)

> *For you have need of endurance (patience), so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.*

This passage doesn't mention how long after you have done the will of God you will receive the promise, but it says you *will* receive it! And it doesn't say if you're questioning God about something you don't understand that He is obligated to answer you immediately; it simply

states that He *will* answer.

The God we serve says *"there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed and nothing kept secret that will not be brought to the light"* (Mark 4:22).

I believe there are many today who have had something happen that seems contrary to the Word of God. There are individuals who believed God's Word and expected to see it come to pass, but it didn't and they have been confused. Yes, they may still be attending church, but there is a lingering question mark, "*Lord, what happened?"* It could be finances and they haven't manifested the way you thought. Or it could be in the area of healing. Perhaps it was the death of a loved one. Maybe, you lost a child, a father, a mother, someone who was young at the time, and you have not understood it. Maybe you have been praying for one of your children to come to Jesus, but it seems things have gotten worse. You have begun to doubt God and His Word and are ready to hide your light under a basket, ashamed to let people know you're a Christian. I exhort you to hang on! Don't give up! God has an answer.

Prayer:

Father, I thank you as we wait on You, we will grow in You and become strong in You. Thank you while we are waiting we are going to continue to prosper and be blessed and when the answer comes, all glory will be given to You. Father, we thank you right now for the answers that will come for their children, their loved ones, their healing, their finances, their jobs, whatever else it may be. Father, we simply hang onto your promise and claim it. Nothing is kept secret that You will not bring it to light in Jesus' Name.

Chapter 2

Trust What You Know

Keep on Hearing

Mark 4:20-23: (NKJV)

"But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Satan's goal for the born again Christian is to convince us to give up on the Word of God. For the mature believer, the "*good ground"* in this parable, Satan would like nothing more than to have us hide our light under a bushel so it does not shine. He would love to destroy our testimony before the world and before other believers. In the Greek, verse 23 actually says, "*If anyone has ears to hear, let him* ***keep on*** *hearing."* When it looks like God has failed us, when it looks like His Word has not worked, when we have questions that He has not yet answered, we need **to keep on hearing** His Word.

When You Pray

Mark 11:24: (NKJV)

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have

them.

It is interesting to note that the word *you* appears *five* times in this verse of scripture. Notice also, this passage doesn't say "*... whatever things you ask when you pray for him or her."* Did you catch that? Whatever *you* desire when *you* pray, believe *you* receive them and *you* shall have them. This is a prayer for *you.*

When I am praying for myself, I know when I am in faith and I know if the attitude of my heart is right. But when I pray for others, unless the Spirit of God reveals it to me, I do not know whether the person is actually in faith and I do not know the true condition of their heart.

Often, we become upset after we have prayed in faith for someone and either see no change at all or the circumstances seem to become worse.

We think to ourselves, "*We have prayed in faith, therefore this life should be changed because of our prayer."* But often the problem is that we cannot change another person's life; they must *want* their life to be changed. Listen. We cannot control others through prayer. Prayer is not witchcraft. The truth is not even God can change a person's will. If He could, the whole world would be saved without certain people wanting to be saved.

If you're really honest with yourself, according to Mark 11:24, the only person you can be assured of receiving the results of your prayers is you. Confusion in the Christian life comes when we pray for someone else, and nothing seems to happen, when the person we have prayed for doesn't seem to get healed, a child seems to turn further from God, and we suddenly get upset because we think, "*I prayed scripturally. I stood on the Word of God. I believed I received."* We go through the list of things we have done in behalf of another, but it still comes back to this: *You are not accountable for someone*

else; you are accountable for you.

Agreeing in Prayer

Matthew 18:19: (NKJV)

> *Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in Heaven.*

The word *agree* is the Greek word *sumphoneo.* The English word symphony is derived from this word. It describes a *harmonizing together.* However, even with the prayer of agreement, you are only certain of whether or not you prayed in faith; you cannot be assured of whether the person you are praying with is really in agreement even if they say they are. You know where you stand; they know where they stand, but only God truly knows if you have truly agreed in prayer. You are accountable for yourself alone. You cannot be accountable for someone else, even if it is a spouse a child or another family member. Your faith will work for you, but it may not work for someone else. If you have stood in faith, trusted God, praised Him, believed you received; you can do nothing else beyond that. If it appears your prayers have failed, there must have been something beyond your prayer. Quit blaming yourself.

Unfortunately, we often carry guilt in life for something that happened to another person thinking we have all the answers, but you may never know in this lifetime what prevented your prayer from manifesting the results you expected. We cannot see into another person's heart; only God has that ability. There are many today who need to forgive themselves for carrying guilt over someone else's life.

Most often these feelings emerge when a loved one has died prematurely. We begin to question ourselves, "*What more could I have done? What did l do wrong?"* But when

you have examined your life and you know you did everything you could in behalf of another person's life, leave it in God's hands. One day you will know the answer.

Think about it. You know if you have bitterness in your heart. You know if you have unforgiveness in your heart. You know if you are standing in faith or if you have doubt and unbelief in your heart. Again, if you have assurance that you have acted according to God's Word, you can relax and stop blaming yourself for the outcome of another person's life.

Paul and Silas

Acts 16:25-26: (KJV)

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

This is the story of Paul and Silas being divinely led by God to the city of Philippi. Prior to this, Paul had had a vision in the nighttime and as a result, sailed to Macedonia with other followers. The first place they arrived at was Philippi where they wound up in prison. There are times when we're in God's will, but still face pressures, trials, and troubles.

How often have you thought, "*I know I was in God's will, yet all hell broke loose"?* I have learned over the years that tribulation comes for two reasons: *either you are in God's will or you are out of God's will.* Psalm 34:19 doesn't say, "Many are the afflictions of the sinners" or "Many are the afflictions of the carnal Christian;" it says, "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous."* According to 2 Timothy 3:12, "*... all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer*

persecution." If you are in the midst of persecution today, it is important to understand *God will bring you through. "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him"* (Isaiah 59:19), and that standard is the Word of God, which is the power of God.

Here is Paul, in the will of God but in prison. He knows he is in the will of God. The reason God gave Paul a vision in the nighttime to go to Macedonia was probably because He knew the tremendous tribulations Paul would be facing in Philippi. Paul has obeyed God and now he and Silas are in chains and hanging on the wall. I can imagine them in the inner dungeon and Silas turning to Paul and saying, "*Run that vision by me again. Are you sure you had enough sleep that night? Are you sure you didn't just eat something bad the night before you had the vision? Are you sure we are in the will of God?"* But in reality, Paul and Silas knew they were in God's will. Yet, while in the will of God trouble came, persecution came.

Paul and Silas Prayed and Sang Praises

Verse 25 says, "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed..."* Notice, it says *they prayed.* What do you think they prayed? I'd like to know. I think they were trusting God, praying scriptures of deliverance, believing God they would be delivered from prison because they *knew* they were *in the will of God* being in Macedonia and *knowing* they had a call on their lives.

Verse 25 continues, "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God."* I believe the praises they sang were affirmations of their faith in God. I also believe singing and praise and worship are the greatest expressions of faith we can have. Putting the praisers out in front is vital. Prayer and supplication is to be made with thanksgiving and praise to God. "*I will enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise"*

(Psalm 100:4).

Again, Acts 16:25 says, *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."* If the prisoners heard Paul and Silas praying to God and singing praises to Him, they were not being quiet about it. They were not praying and singing under their breath. Verse 26 continues, *"And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."*

Suddenly, the prison doors flew open. The jailer and his family were saved that night. I would imagine many of the prisoners were also saved that night because of the manifestation of God.

John the Baptist

We love that story and how often have we quoted that story? But wait a minute. Let's look at another similar story.

Matthew 11:2-6: (KJV)

> *Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said unto him, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."*

What happens when your prayers are seemingly unanswered? What do you do? Throw in the towel? Take your testimony and put it under a bushel? Do you hide your testimony? The answer is no.

The John mentioned in this passage is John the

Baptist. Like Paul and Silas, he too is in prison and in the will of God. While in prison John has heard about the works of Christ. Notice, Jesus told His disciples, "*Go and show John again...*"

I believe John the Baptist was becoming offended at the works of Jesus thinking, "Why am I in prison? What am I doing here? There is a call on my life. I know this without a doubt. I have stood on the Word of God and done what He has sent me to do, yet here I am in prison. I am hearing rumors that my head is to be cut off, but I have followed God."

In the midst of his imprisonment, John the Baptist begins doubting the ministry of Jesus, doubting that He is truly the Messiah. He is having questions and sends his disciples to Jesus. John was probably thinking about others who had been released from prison yet finds himself doubting. Jesus sent John's disciples back to him with an answer: "*The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*"

I do not believe this is the answer John wanted to hear.

Elijah in the Cave

This reminds me of Elijah in a cave. He began to question God, "*God, where are you? Nobody cares. Only I care.*"

1 Kings 19:9-12: (NKJV)

And there he (Elijah) went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" so he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets

> *with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.*

God brought Elijah out of the cave and told him to stand on the mountain. While Elijah stood there, a mighty wind came, then an earthquake, then a fire and God was not in any of those. Finally, there was a still, small voice. The still, small voice was God saying, "*Let's go back to how I've always led you. You don't need some special sign for this occasion."*

If you're in the midst of troubles and trials, quit seeking a sign from heaven, "*If only four angels would come and tell me, if a bolt of lightning would come down from heaven, if a ball of fire would roll past me, I would certainly be convinced I'm in God's will."* But God says the same thing to you as He did to John the Baptist, "*The blind see. The deaf hear. Go back to what you know."* When God isn't speaking, go back to what you know. Do not throw away what you know for what you do not know or understand. If you will simply trust God, even when you don't understand, God will eventually reveal the answers to the things you don't know.

When the Bible Is Silent

The Bible doesn't explain why John the Baptist wasn't delivered, but that doesn't mean we dismiss this account from the Bible and decide we're just going to give up on God because we don't understand why John died even though he fulfilled the will of God.

Sometimes the Bible is silent on why certain things

did or did not happen, but that should not be an excuse for us to dismiss the ninety-nine percent of the Bible that we do understand for the momentary thing we do not understand. We must always go back to what we know.

A number of years ago we went through a lawsuit at the church I pastor. My wife, Loretta and I prayed every day believing *today was the last day; today the lawsuit would end,* but it went on for three years. Every morning Loretta had scripture for me to stand on. I sang those scriptures. I confessed them. My trust was in God, and every day we believed it was the last day of the trial. Daily we believed something would happen to end this thing, but it ultimately ended with a jury decision. Even though things ended greatly in our favor, we still had to endure it all the way to the end. To this day I don't have all the answers as to why we had to go through it. There were people in the congregation who quit the church over it; staff members who quit because things didn't happen like they thought it would. But the bottom line is we are not God.

I refuse to back off from the Word of God, from the things of God simply because I don't understand. God has *never* lied to me and He has never failed me. Again, Mark 4:22 says, "*For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light."*

God will reveal the answers at the right time. There are other things besides the lawsuit that I still don't understand, but what do I do until the answers come? Return to what I already know. I cannot twist God's arm and force Him to give me an answer thinking I'm something special and deserve an immediate response. We cannot control God. In the meantime, I will not hide my lamp under a bushel; I won't put it where others can't see it. Don't back off my testimony.

Why wasn't John the Baptist set free from prison? I

don't know. The answer is not given in the Bible. John the Baptist wanted to know the same thing we want to know. Why am I here? *Are you really the Messiah? Does Your Word really work? Do the promises of God really work?*

Instead of John receiving some great, special revelation from heaven, instead of angels appearing and singing, "Glory to God in the highest," Jesus told him, "Go back to what you know." It was the same answer He gave Elijah, "Go back to the still, small voice. Go back to the Word of God. Go back to the signs and wonders still being performed."

John the Baptist was offended. He was probably thinking, "I am called by God. I was born supernaturally to two parents who were too old to bear children. I was anointed by the Holy Spirit in my mother's womb. I am the forerunner of the Messiah. Jesus wouldn't even have a ministry if it wasn't for me! I introduced Him. I was prophesied of by Isaiah. I'm the one who Isaiah said would be the voice crying in the wilderness. What am I doing here in prison? Besides all this, I am the cousin of Jesus. Does that count for anything? My parents are close to Jesus' parents. Don't I deserve special treatment?" John allowed the circumstances to offend him. Others had gone to prison and were delivered. Why not him?

Don't Compare Yourself to Others

Isn't it funny how we're always comparing ourselves to each other. Don't do that. If John the Baptist had been able to see into the future the deliverance of Paul and Silas from prison, He would probably be thinking, *Why them and not me?*

Jesus did not visit John in prison. John's parents probably wondered, "*Why didn't Jesus visit John? After all, they are cousins. Why didn't He assure John of His*

love and concern?" But Jesus just kept on doing what He was doing—healing the sick, raising the dead, opening blind eyes, opening deaf ears. John's parents probably thought the same thing as the disciples when they were storm tossed at sea while Jesus soundly slept, "*Doesn't Jesus care?"* In fact, they woke Jesus up and questioned Him, "*Jesus, don't you care?"* Be honest, how often has that same thought come to you?

Maybe you've never allowed it to come out of your mouth, but in the midst of the storm, in the midst of the trial or tribulation you've wondered, "*Jesus, don't you care?"* Don't you dare speak that thought! Stop before you utter those words because it is impossible for Him not to care. He cares so much He will bring you the answer at the right time.

Jesus' answer to John the Baptist was,

> *Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

In other words, remind John of what he already knows.

When you don't understand, go back to what you know and don't compare yourself to others. Paul warned the people of his day in 2 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV),

> *We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

Over the years I've heard people say, "*Well, I prayed for so and so, and he died. But she prayed for someone else and they lived. Why?"* I don't know. I don't know all the thoughts and intents of their heart. I don't know what

was going on in their mind. But I do know God is fair; He is no respecter of persons. What I don't know will get answered either in this life or in Heaven, but God has promised me He will give me an answer. The same is true in your life.

As stated previously, one of the last things Jesus said before He left this earth was, "*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority"* (ESV). Earlier Jesus had commanded His followers to go to the upper room and wait to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When they questioned Jesus about when he would establish His kingdom, Jesus basically answered, "*That is not the issue. Go and wait in the upper room for the promised Holy Spirit."*

Times and seasons are in God's hands alone. Answers are in God's hands and when His answers come, they're so simple you'll be thankful you didn't cast away your confidence, throw it away; you'll be thankful you stayed with what you know. What you know has brought you this far and what you know will take you to Heaven!

What About Job?

What about Job and all of the things that happened to him? When Job lost everything, including his children, when things seemed unexplainable, he didn't turn from God. Did he question God? Of course! Is it wrong to question God? No. But if you don't get an answer, don't throw the Christian life away. Be determined to keep following God.

Even when Job's friends told him to give up on God, Job refused.

Job 2:9-20: (ESV)

Then his (Job's) wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would

speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Did Job understand everything that had happened to him? No. It is possible you might find yourself in a situation so unexplainable that your friends advise you to just give up on God. If that happens, don't listen to their advise; fall back on what you've always known. God will see you through. Job didn't give up on God when his wife told him to *curse God and die.*

In Job's life, God was on one side and Satan was on the other side. God blessed Job's life and Satan cursed it. The first two chapters of Job tell us before the story even begins who was the answer and who was the problem. We often get that confused. Job's wife got it confused. Job's friends got it confused. They thought God was suddenly the problem. No, Satan had always been and still was the problem. And although Job got confused, he never gave up on God. He kept examining his heart, until he finally found the answer and his life was blessed doubly at the end.

Job 13:15: (NKJV)

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

Job 42:10, 12-13, 15-17: (NKJV)

And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters.

In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grand

children for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.

Don't give up on God! There are double blessings coming your way! God cannot lie. His Word is true. He cannot bring cursing into your life; He can only bring good and blessing. God cannot bring sickness into your life; He brings deliverance and healing. Satan comes to kill, to steal, to destroy; he brings sickness and disease into your life. Don't give up on God! If you can't explain something, go back to what you know. He still leads by the still, small voice. He is still opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. He is still raising the dead.

Job 13:15 says again, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him."* The word defend simply means, "I am going to stick with the Word and if God comes, I'll defend myself because I have stayed with His Word. And even God slays me, I will trust Him." God cannot and will not slay you, but even if God did something that appeared contrary to His Word Job said, "I'll trust what I know. When I stand before God, I will repeat His Word back to Him."

This is the type of stand we need to take in life. It may appear as though God has not stood by His Word, but He has said, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* (Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

I don't know where you are today. I don't know what has happened in your life. You may be at a place where you say in your heart, "*I don't understand what has happened, but I don't want to completely quit coming to church. I'll come once in awhile, but when I'm not in church and living my life outside the church, I won't let people know I'm one of those Bible believing people. I won't let them know I believe when I pray I receive because things have happened I don't understand."* I say join the club. Join John the Baptist. Join his parents. Join Elijah.

There are times in life we don't know for sure, but God has promised He would answer. He simply tells us, return to what you know. God is alive. People are being saved. People are being healed and getting delivered. God is not confused; I am, but my confusion is only temporary.

Prayer:

Father, forgive me for wanting to hide my testimony and witness for Jesus Christ under a bushel. You promised one day You will explain the things I don't understand. You promised there is nothing secret that You will not bring to light. Father, I choose to rest in You and trust in You. You've always been faithful. You've never let me down. You've healed me, delivered me, brought finances into my life, settled my family, given me hope and eternal life. I'm not going to throw it all away for something I don't understand. I'm pulling my lamp back out, setting it on a hill. You'll one day answer what I don't understand and I thank You for it.

Chapter 3

What About James?

Don't Be Offended

All of us have probably experienced moments in our Christian walk when we hold things that happen in life against God. We may carry animosity, offense, or bitterness inside. In fact, there may be some reading this book today who are offended at God because it looked like He didn't come through. You may even have said in your heart, "*God, You've been faithful in the past but in this case You let me down.*" Perhaps you have even turned from Him because you know He is not supposed to let you down, but it seems like He has. Or it may be you're not upset with God but you're upset with someone. "*My husband died and left me. Why didn't he stay? We stood together on God's Word in faith, but he just died!*" You feel like you have been let down by a spouse or a friend because he or she should have stayed, but instead they left you here to fend for yourself.

I believe this is what happened with John the Baptist. He was offended at Jesus because things didn't work out like John thought they should. It is possible that John even compared himself to other people. When Jesus heard what John wanted to know, He responded, "*Go back and tell John—again... the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised. Go back and tell him.*" Jesus continued, "*And blessed is the one who is not offended by me*" (Matthew 11:6 ESV). What a powerful verse!

When you don't understand, when things don't seem to work out the way you thought they would, when you

are confused and don't know what to do, don't allow yourself to become offended at God or His Word. Go back to what you've always known. Don't throw away what you know for what you don't know. Hang in there. God will explain it even though it may seem confusing or contrary to His Word.

People have often said, "*I just wish I could have lived during Bible times; everyone was healed and everyone was delivered!"* However, that is not true. The Bible is like our lives today; it is filled with stories of how people succeeded but also how they failed. For example, there are chapters in the Bible of Solomon when he is "wonderful" and also chapters of Solomon when he is "stupid." There are stories of Peter when he is "wonderful" and also stories of Peter when he is "stupid." People living during Bible times were just like us.

Jesus chose everyday normal people. Think about it, how many times did Jesus say to His disciples, "*Oh, ye of little faith"?* How often did He upbraid them? *Upbraid* means He railed at them. In one passage Jesus commends Peter "*Blessed are you for flesh and blood hasn't revealed this to you but my Father"* and two verses later He says to Peter "*Get thee behind me, Satan."*

Peter Delivered From Prison

Acts 12:4-10: (ESV)

And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and

woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.

Isn't this a great story? What always amazes me about this story is how Peter was able to sleep. Herod had just violently killed James, the brother of John, with a sword and had arrested Peter because the Jews were pleased with the killing of James; his intent was to also kill Peter (Acts 12:1-3). Yet, Peter slept bound by chains between two soldiers and with two soldiers outside his prison door guarding him knowing he would probably be martyred the next day. I can tell you what I'd probably be doing in that situation. I'd probably have my eyes wide open feverishly confessing, *"I believe I receive! I am the blessed of the Lord! I will live and not die!"* and I most probably would not be sleeping!

Peter was at rest. He was resting in God's promises on the inside of him. The angel actually had to wake him up! Notice, what Peter could not do, the angel did for him.

The chains fell off, the prison doors opened, and the gates opened. However, what Peter could do the angel required him to do. The angel instructed Peter, "*Put on your shoes and your cloak."*

What is interesting is the fact that the cloak is mentioned because before Jesus went to heaven, He told Peter, *"You will be so old that one day you will need help getting dressed; you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not*

want to go." (John 21:18). The phrase, *"... carry you where you do not want to go"* is a reference to the manner of death Peter would suffer.

In telling Peter to put on his coat, he was saying "*It's not your time to die, Peter."* Peter thought he was dreaming. It wasn't until he walked outside and the angel suddenly disappeared that Peter realized what had just happened. He had been supernaturally delivered from prison!

While all of this was happening, Jesus' followers were having a prayer meeting for Peter's deliverance. Their prayers were answered so quickly that when Peter knocked on the gate, they didn't think it was real. In fact, Rhoda answered Peter's knocking, ran inside to tell everyone their prayers had already been answered, and they argued with her, "*No, that's not possible. We have barely begun to pray!"*

Over the years there has been a belief that greater numbers of Christians praying increases the effectiveness of our prayers. I don't believe this because the Word of God also declares, "*I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me in the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none"* (Ezekiel 22:30 KJV). The number of people praying is not the issue; it is the amount of faith we have when we are praying.

I'm sure believers were praying for James just as they had been praying for Peter. What happened? Why wasn't James delivered? I am going to give you a very spiritual three-word answer. *I don't know.* This life is filled with "*I don't knows."* James was part of *Peter, James and John,* the trio that was so close to Jesus. I want to point out that even though the saints had probably been praying for James to be delivered, he was killed, but they didn't give up on God. In spite of what had happened to James, they still gathered to pray for Peter.

Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

Our lives are filled with both the blessings of God and things that might cause us to question God's faithfulness, those things we don't understand and cannot explain. But regardless, we should rise up each day and declare, "This is the day the Lord has made. I'll rejoice and be glad in it! There may be situations in my life I don't understand but this I do understand, His Word is still true; it lives and abides forever! Heaven and Earth will pass away, but His Word will remain forever!"

What are some possible reasons our prayers don't work? The Bible is filled with them. Here are a few possibilities. First, are you truly operating in faith? Only you and God know the answer to that question. Do you have unbelief in your heart? If so, get rid of it! Next, is there sin in your life? Psalm 66:18 says, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"* (KJV). Are you approaching God in fear? I have met people who needed surgery and told others they would believe God for healing, when they were actually in fear about the surgery. You cannot trust God out of fear of going to a doctor. Faith is not built on the foundation of fear! Of course, if you have prayed and are in faith and choose to believe God rather than having surgery, that is completely different. Here is another question: Do you really want to be healed? Do you really want to live or do want to go on to be with the Lord?

Getting back to James, was James in faith about his deliverance, or did he want to go on to heaven? I don't know and neither do you. The Bible doesn't give us the answer. This was something between James and God.

When a brother or sister dies who we have known as a man or woman of faith, we must return to the Word. What a sad thing it would be to one day get to Heaven, learn the answer to your question about something that happened that you didn't understand, and discover you

needlessly deserted God and spent many miserable years unnecessarily. During those times we don't understand, we must not forget all of His benefits (Psalm 103:2). God has loaded us with benefits, blessed us with benefits and the greatest of those benefits are not our possessions or our prosperity, but all the times God has never, ever failed us or let us down.

Hebrews 10:35-36: (NKJV)

> *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

Your confidence is different than your faith. Confidence is built on experience. God has proven Himself in your life over and over again. Each time He comes through we have greater confidence He will come through the next time. When the Bible says, "*Forget not all His benefits,"* it means we need to remember those times God has been faithful to us in the past.

Verse 36 says, "*For ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."* There are times when we are tempted to throw away our confidence, especially when we don't understand. God says, "*Don't throw away your confidence because there is great reward. Keep following Me. Keep trusting and you'll eventually understand. You need to develop patience."*

Stephen Stoned

In Acts chapter 6, the followers of Jesus were multiplying and a dispute arose between the Greeks and the Hebrews. The disciples instructed the multitude of followers to select seven men from among them to deal with the day to day problems that occurred so they could give themselves to prayer and study of the Word of God.

Stephen was one of the seven chosen. Verse 5 says, "*... and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."*

The number of disciples in Jerusalem continued to increase and Stephen was being used by God to perform wonders and miracles among the people.

Acts 6:7-15: (NKJV)

Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Then there arose some from what is called the synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say,

"We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said,

"This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Acts chapter six reveals that in a short time, Stephen had become a great teacher of God's Word. In fact, when the high priest questioned him, Stephen began by teaching about Abraham and went on to teach about Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, and finally Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Chapter seven ends in the martyrdom of Stephen.

Acts 7:54-60: (NKJV)

When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep (died).

As Stephen preached that sermon to them, the power of God became so strong those disputing him could not contend against him. They shut their ears to try to block out what Stephen was saying because he preached an outline from Old Testament times until the day in which they were living showing that Abraham, David and the prophets all knew of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Stephen then accused them of persecuting and killing those who had foretold the coming of Jesus and ultimately murdering Him on the cross. They became so angry with Stephen, some stopped their ears, but others grabbed rocks and began to stone him until He died.

Stoning of Paul

Later, we have the same thing happening to Paul while on his first missionary journey. He came to Lystra and was preaching the Word of God, and a group stoned him to death.

Acts 14:19-20: (NKJV)

Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and

> *having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

This passage says the Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul and they left him for dead. Many scholars have argued, "*Paul really wasn't dead. They just assumed he was dead; he was really alive."* However, I believe he was dead and when the disciples stood around him they prayed for him to rise from the dead and he did! After being stoned to death, Paul was able to rise and walk back into the city to preach the Word of God again!

Can you imagine what those who had stoned Paul were thinking when they saw him back in town? He was probably cut, bruised, and bleeding but he began to preach the Word of God again!

So, Paul lived but Stephen died. I ask a question. Was Stephen in faith? I personally believe he was. Did Stephen have any unforgiveness in his heart? I don't believe he did because the presence of God was so much on him that his face shined "*as the face of an angel"* (verse 15). He was such a humble man, chosen by the congregation to be a deacon in the church. I don't believe he had any known sin in his life. Understand, this is me making assumptions about Stephen's life; the Bible doesn't say anything specifically about the condition of his heart.

Did Stephen really want to be delivered? He had a glimpse of heaven and said, "*I see Jesus standing at the Father's right hand."*

Some are holding grudges against a husband who left or a wife or another loved one who left this earth prematurely to go to Heaven. However, they may have had a glimpse of Heaven, they may have seen Jesus and decided to leave this Earth. I believe very often we do not

really know what has happened in a person's heart between them and Jesus, and we carry guilt as if we didn't pray enough, or anger because they went on. You might have thought, "*How could they leave me? Didn't they realize how difficult it would be for me?" We* hide our testimony about Jesus, bury our lamp, cast away our confidence in Him, and turn away from following Him instead of continuing to live for Him. But again, Jesus says, "*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded"* (Hebrews 10:35 NIV).

If you have cast away your confidence in God, you need to make the decision today to quit living your life based on the fact that something happened that seemed contrary to the Word, something you don't yet understand. Perhaps you have said in your heart, "*My life with God stopped when he died... my life as a Christian stopped when she died... I haven't witnessed for the Lord or talked much about Him because my friend didn't get healed and I'm embarrassed to say I'm a Christian."* Why don't you choose today to instead say, "*I admit that as smart as I am, I don't know everything; God does. One day I will know everything, but until that day, I'm just going to keep following God. I'm going to come back to what I know, and trust in His faithfulness. No longer will I hide my testimony under a bushel, but will share about the goodness of God and all those times in the past He has proven Himself faithful."*

Chapter 4

Seed Never Fails

We have been discussing what we should do when something happens in life that seems to contradict the Word of God, specifically when we have prayed in behalf of someone and it seems our prayers were not answered. We have examined a number of examples from the Bible of those who were imprisoned because of their faith and lived to continue preaching the Word. We have also examined the lives of those who were imprisoned, but did not live. We discussed those who were stoned for their faith but died, and those who were stoned and lived. We have come to the conclusion that even when we don't understand why things happen, we must not cast away our confidence in the Lord (Hebrews 10:35).

A Key to Understanding

It is important to understand that the Bible was not written from the mind of man, but by the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is not called the Holy “Mind" or the Holy “Brain"; He is called the Holy “Spirit,” so why do we try to understand spiritual things with our man-sized brain?

Faith not only involves trusting God; sometimes it also involves turning off all of those thoughts that come racing through our mind when we don't understand. When our mind says, *I don't understand this. This doesn't make sense.* That is when we need to say to our thoughts, “*Just be quiet for awhile. You will understand one day. God is bigger than you!”* Thank God He has given us a brain, but I have met some Christians who seem to have turned off

their brains! The Bible says we are to *renew* our mind, not *remove* it! God has not told us to cross the street by faith without looking both directions! We can't text and drive and claim God will cover it! God said He would give us the desires of our heart, but only those desires that line up with His Word. When things happen we don't understand, and we begin to wrestle on the inside, we need to stick with what we know.

Casting Down Imaginations

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: (KJV)

> *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Paul warned against us wrestling inside trying to figure things out in our natural mind. He said we are to *cast down imaginations.* Another word for *imaginations* is *reasonings. Reasoning* is when we try to reason things that happen that we do not understand in life. Of course, the first thing we need to do when things happen in life we don't understand is look at the Word, but if it seemingly contradicts the Word of God, like a premature death, then we need to *cast down our reasonings;* we need to set them aside and simply walk in faith that God knows better than we do and one day we will understand.

If you are perfectly honest, you would probably admit you have a difficult time understanding the book of Revelation. Have you ever read through the book or even sections of it and thought to yourself, "*What in the world is this guy talking about!"?* And if you had an actual glimpse of Heaven and came back to try to describe it to others, don't you think it would be difficult to explain?

Think about the book of Ezekiel describing wheels within wheels (Ezekiel 10:10). Ezekiel had a glimpse of Heaven and tried his best with his natural mind to describe it, but Heaven is beyond description! What I'm simply trying to say is there are times in life when God has an answer to your question that is far beyond what you can reason. Faith is not based on human reasoning; it is based on the truth of God's Word. Part of that truth is waiting on the Lord knowing that things hidden will be revealed and things kept secret will be brought to light.

Have you laid awake at night wrestling and wrestling with thoughts like, *Why didn't it seem like my prayer was answered? Why did I ask for something specific, but it didn't come to pass? I thought if I ask ANYTHING in Your name, (and I did Lord), it would be done* until you finally surrendered and even released the burden of trying to figure things out and said, "*You know what, God? I can't handle this. I cast down these imaginations and cast the whole of my care on You because You CAN handle this!"* God wants us to stop wrestling and rest in Him. Walk in faith, do what God has asked you to do, and fall back on what you know. Again, I say it to you; don't throw away what you know.

2 Timothy 4:20: (NKJV)

Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

Paul made this statement without any explanation about why he left Trophimus sick in Miletus, just as there was no explanation given about why James went to prison and died and just as there was no explanation about why John the Baptist went to prison and also died. Paul gave no reason for why he left Trophimus or why he was sick. Did somebody pray for him? We have to assume they did. Did Paul himself pray for Trophimus? He probably did. Did Luke, who was also with him, try to medically treat him? Probably. Some people read that

verse and say, "*See, healing doesn't always work.*"

The truth is healing *always* works. Salvation *always* works. The Bible does not have to explain everything. There are some unknown things about what was going on in Trophimus' life. God does not want us to focus on the unknown, rather to focus on the fact that healing is true.

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3:1-4: (NLT)

King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. So all these officials came and stood before the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Then the herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the kings' command! When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

After the decree was made, some astrologers went to the king to inform him that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who the king had put in charge of the province of Babylon, had not bowed to the statue. They reminded King Nebuchadnezzar that anyone refusing to obey his decree must be thrown into a blazing furnace. This infuriated the king and he had them brought in for questioning.

Daniel 3:14-18: (NLT)

Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my

gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace.

And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power. But even if He doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

Some of us have set certain limits or thresholds in our lives. That is what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in essence doing. They said, "*We don't believe we will be cast into the furnace. We believe God will deliver us from your decree and the furnace." They* had a threshold in their thinking, but continued to basically say, "*but even if this goes beyond what we have set as our limit or threshold, we will not bow down!"* You may be close to going beyond a threshold in the circumstances of your life, but I want to assure you that God will be with you in the fire!

Daniel 3:19-26: (NLT)

Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.

Then he ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. And because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men in.

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely bound, fell into the roaring flames. But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and exclaimed to his advisers, "didn't we tie up three men and throw them into the furnace?" "Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound, walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like (the Son of God-NKJV).

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

God will be with you in the fire! Even if it's seven times hotter than normal, He will be with you in the fire!

As I mentioned earlier, when confronted with a legal trial, every day Loretta and I believed God would deliver us. Every day we believed we would not have to go through the trial, but we ended up in a three year ordeal. But guess Who was with us in the trial? The Fourth Man! In the things we didn't think we would have to face, the Fourth Man was there!

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego discovered something in the fire they never would have discovered without being in the fire. God did not throw them into the fire; evil, wicked people did. But God was there to help them, be with them, and bring them out. Those men who had thrown them into the fire were consumed by that very fire; what was meant to harm, God turned back on those who tried to bring harm and destruction.

Some of us need to remove all barriers and declare,

"God, no matter what happens to me, I've never seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging bread! You will not fail me! You will not forsake me! You are in the fire with me and will deliver me!"

God's intention was not merely to take what the enemy intended for the destruction of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and turn it around for them; His real intention was to deliver an entire nation, and He did!

It simply comes back to this: God is with you no matter what you are experiencing in your life.

The disciples thought, *Jesus is with us, so even if it looks like a storm is headed our way, surely we will not be in a storm. Surely, we will not get into a storm.* But halfway across the lake they were in a storm and they woke Jesus because they thought they were going to die. But Jesus was in the boat with them! And Jesus is in the boat with you! He is the Fourth Man in the fire and will deliver you out of every circumstance!

Proverbs 26:27: (NKJV)

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

Daniel and the Lion's Den

It doesn't matter what traps the devil has set for you, God has a way of causing Satan to fall into his own traps. Hell was not prepared for and never intended for people; it was prepared for the devil and one day he is going to fall into it and will eventually be thrown into the Lake of Fire! Keep walking with God and watch Him deliver you out of the fire and like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you won't even be scorched or smell of fire!

King Darius chose Daniel and two others to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests and because of Daniel's great ability, the king was making plans to place him over the entire empire. The other

officers did not like this plan and tried to find fault with Daniel.

Daniel 6:4-11: (NLT)

Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion." So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius! We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced.

Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

So King Darius signed the law. But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem.

He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help.

Once they found Daniel praying, the officials went directly to King Darius to remind him of the law he had made and to accuse Daniel.

Daniel 6:13-27: (NLT)

Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament. In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed." So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you." A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night. Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lion's den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty." The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor to the den. Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: "Peace and prosperity to you! I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and He will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and His rule will never end. He rescues and saves His people; He performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of

Cyrus the Persian.

I can imagine as Daniel was praying after the law was enacted by the king and probably thought, *I'll never be cast into the lion's den. God will preserve me.* Yet, he found himself thrown into the lion's den and not only that, the cave was sealed with a large stone so there was no chance of Daniel escaping or being rescued by anyone. The lions in the cave were hungry and should have devoured Daniel, but God sent an angel to close the mouths of the lions. The next morning, the king hurried to the lion's den and called out to Daniel. When Daniel answered, the king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. He then cast Daniel's accusers in the den and before they ever hit the ground, the lions pounced on them and tore them apart.

What Daniel's enemies intended for his destruction was turned around back on them. That is the God we serve! He will turn the evil your enemies intend for you back on them! Be patient. You may have to go through some fire, but you will not be burned! You may be thrown into the lion's den, but you will not be harmed!

The Seed Remains the Same

I want to go back where we started in Mark talking about the four types of ground.

Mark 4:2-9: (NKJV)

Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching: Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell

on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred. And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

This particular chapter talks about the four types of ground. Although each type of ground described was different, what was common about all is the seed that was sown. The first type of ground is hard ground. When the seed is sown it does not take root and is immediately stolen. The second type of ground is stony ground, which has very little soil for roots grow. The seed begins to produce, but because it has no root, when the heat or the pressures of life come, it withers and dies. This type of ground represents the Christian who is not firmly grounded so that when persecution and affliction come he is offended and turns from God. The third type of ground is thorny ground. This type of ground receives the seed and has time to grow to the point where great blessings come into their life, but the deceitfulness of wealth enters in and they eventually turn from God.

The fourth type of ground produces thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. The good ground represents the mature believer. How does it keep on producing? The key verse is this: "*He that has ears to hear, let him hear"* (Mark 4:9 NKJV). The Greek says, "*He that has ears to hear, let him keep on hearing."* Why did one type of ground prosper above the ground before it? It heard longer. The good ground just keeps on hearing and increases from thirty to sixty to one hundredfold. You would think by the time you get to be a hundredfold Christian, the devil couldn't pull anything over on you. But this is where we come to his tactic of making things appear as if the Word doesn't work so we will turn from God. Don't fall for it!

If the only types of ground mentioned in this parable were the first three, we might think, Well, I guess the seed doesn't always work. On the first type of ground, it didn't even produce at all. On the second type of ground

the seed produced for a very short time. On the third type of ground the seed produced a little bit longer, but didn't last. So something must be wrong with the seed. But the fourth type of ground is proof that the seed produces. The good ground produced well and went on to produce thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

I want you to understand: *The seed ALWAYS works!* The ground is what makes a difference in what is produced. You may argue, "*Yes, but my husband loved God. And my friend was so kind. They were such dedicated Christians."* Unfortunately, the heart is the part of man you cannot see. The Bible says "*man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7). As close as you may be to another person in your life, you cannot see into their heart; that is reserved for God.

When we have prayed for someone to be healed but they die, we must not doubt the healing power of God or that the Word says, "*... with His stripes we are healed."* Instead, we should doubt people. By that I mean we cannot know what was in their heart or the conversations in their heart between them and God. We cannot doubt salvation; the seed works for everybody. The seed represents everything it will produce. The seed will save you. The seed will heal you. The seed will prosper you. The seed will bless you. The seed will extend your life. The seed will bring great blessings into your life, and will keep the devil at bay.

What I'm saying is the seed never changes. In this parable, it is the ground that changed in every situation; the fourth type of ground convinces us of this. The seed has massive potential contained within it. If we'll deal with the sin in our life, the unforgiveness, and will truly trust God and pray in line with His Word, we will see the thirty, sixty, and hundredfold manifested in our lives. When things go wrong in life, don't doubt the seed!

If the seed represents the Word, then the seed is Jesus because Jesus is the Word.

The Word Remains the Same

John 1:1-5: (NKJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Jesus remains the same. He never changes. His Word lives and abides forever!

Matthew 13:58: (KJV)

Now He (Jesus) did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Where is the "*there*" mentioned in this verse? It is Nazareth, the city where Jesus was raised. Notice, Jesus *did not do many mighty works* in Nazareth *because of their unbelief.*

In city after city after city, Jesus had done great things —healings, miracles, signs and wonders. However, in certain cities, like Nazareth, he could do very little. It wasn't Jesus who changed from town to town; it was the ground, the hearts of the people that changed as Jesus went from one place to another. When He arrived at His own hometown, He was hindered by their unbelief.

Jesus also mentioned Chorazin and Bethsaida, two other cities He rebuked because of their legalism, because of their religion.

The Message Remains the Same

Matthew 11:21: (NKJV)

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Jesus said, "*If I had done the same things in Tyre and Sidon that I have done here, they would have repented."* The people of Chorazin and Bethsaida hated Tyre and Sidon. Why? Because they were such sinful cities. Yet, Jesus rebuked these two religious cities saying if He had taken the same message to these sinful cities, they would have received it.

Jesus preached the Word in Nazareth. He also preached the Word in Chorazin and Bethsaida. Jesus went from city to city, but *He did not change.* He preached from city to city, but *the message did not change.* He healed the sick from city to city, but *healing didn't change.* He set people free from city to city, but *freedom didn't change.* It was the people of each city Jesus entered that changed. No two cities were exactly the same, but *the Word never changes.*

James and John the Baptist were not delivered, but Peter and Paul and Silas were delivered. And we come to those moments when we say, "*I don't understand. Why wasn't my friend delivered? Why wasn't my husband delivered? Why wasn't my wife delivered?"* The hearts of people are no different than the different types of ground or the different heart attitudes Jesus found from city to city. These can change but Jesus remains the same. We may think we know exactly what is in another person's heart, even those closest to us, but we don't.

The Woman at the Well

John 4:4: (KJV)

And He (Jesus) must needs go through Samaria.

Why did Jesus must needs go to Samaria? He went for one woman, a woman at a well.

John 4:7-14: (NLT)

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."

He was alone at the time because His disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

Jesus replied, "anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

Jesus gave the Samaritan woman the answer to eternal life. A little later, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, He tells her about her life and she is suddenly changed in her heart.

John 4:28-30: (NLT)

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!

Could he possibly be the Messiah?" So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

After her encounter with Jesus, the entire village was

changed! Jesus was the same as He had been when He had been in Chorazin and Bethsaida, but these towns were not changed. Jesus remained the same.

It all comes down to this: *Is your heart right before God?* If the answer is yes, determine to keep it that way because you are in line for great miracles, signs and wonders. But keep in mind, you are not accountable for other people's lives. Of course, we need to pray for them, but if their healing doesn't manifest, their salvation doesn't manifest, the restoration of their marriage doesn't manifest, you cannot allow the results to affect your faith. The seed never changes! The Word never changes! Jesus Christ never changes!

Habakkuk and the Fig Trees

Habakkuk 3:17-19: (NLT)

> *Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!*

What kind of situation are you in now? You say, "Well, you know the economy is really bad and it has affected my business. Maybe prosperity works sometime and sometimes it doesn't." Wrong! Prosperity always works! "I guess faith works sometimes and sometimes it doesn't." Wrong! Faith always works! "My friend died. Maybe healing works sometime and sometimes it doesn't." Wrong! Healing always works!

Notice, Habakkuk didn't throw away everything he knew because there was a famine in the land. Why did he have to suffer through a famine? Wasn't he one of God's chosen? Even though he didn't understand, Habakkuk continued to serve God.

You may say, "*I'm in a fiery furnace."* Well, the Fourth Man is in there with you. His name is Jesus and He will bring you out! "*Well, nothing seems to be working."* Anyone who has ever served God has been right where you are. Don't give up on God because He has promised He will come through for you! He is faithful. He is dependable. And if you don't have the answers you are seeking, remember He promised us that those things that are hidden *will* be revealed; those things that are darkness to you *will* be brought to the light. One day you will understand and be glad you continued to follow the One Who is faithful, the One Who can be trusted, the One Who has the answers, and the One Who has given us everything we will ever need in this lifetime!

Meet Bob Yandian



Since 1980, Bob Yandian has been pastor of Grace Church, with a vibrant and growing congregation in his hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is also host of a weekly teaching radio broadcast called *Precepts with Bob Yandian*.

Bob is widely acknowledged as one of the most knowledgeable Bible teachers of this generation. His practical insight and wisdom into the Word of God has helped countless people around the world to live successfully in every arena of the daily Christian life.

In addition to the sale of over 200,000 books, CDs, and tapes world-wide, more than 22,000 books, tapes, and CDs have been donated to Bible schools, missionaries, prisoners, and people in need throughout the United States and around the world through Bob Yandian Ministries.

Bob attended Southwestern College and is also a graduate of Trinity Bible College. He has served as both instructor and Dean of Instructors at Rhema Bible Training Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Bob has traveled extensively throughout the United States and internationally, taking his powerful and easy to apply teachings that bring stability and hope to hungry hearts everywhere. He has authored over thirty books and has been called “a pastor to pastors.”

Bob and his wife, Loretta, have been married for over thirty years, are the parents of two grown married children, and have five grandchildren. Bob and Loretta Yandian reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Books by Bob Yandian

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Prayer of Salvation

God loves you—no matter who you are, no matter what your past. God loves you so much that He gave His one and only begotten Son for you. The Bible tells us that "… whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV). Jesus laid down His life and rose again so that we could spend eternity with Him in heaven and experience His absolute best on earth. If you would like to receive Jesus into your life, say the following prayer out loud and mean it from your heart.

Heavenly Father, I come to You admitting that I am a sinner. Right now, I choose to turn away from sin, and I ask You to cleanse me of all unrighteousness. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died on the cross to take away my sins. I also believe that He rose again from the dead so that I might be forgiven of my sins and made righteous through faith in Him. I call upon the name of Jesus Christ to be the Savior and Lord of my life. Jesus, I choose to follow You and ask that You fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit. I declare that right now I am a child of God. I am free from sin and full of the righteousness of God. I am saved in Jesus' Name. Amen.

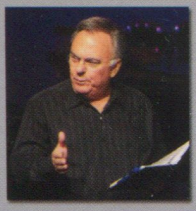
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When God is Silent

What do you do when you have prayed, but something unexpected happens, seemingly contrary to the Word of God? Maybe someone you have prayed for to be saved is still not saved and you begin to question whether salvation is for everyone. Or maybe you have given of your finances into the kingdom of God, but you have not seen a return on your giving and you begin to wonder if prosperity is for some people but just not for you. Perhaps you have prayed for healing for a family member or friend, but they died.

One of Satan's greatest tactics against the mature believer is to convince him or her that God's Word does not work. The devil's ultimate goal is for disciples of Jesus to become so disillusioned they turn from God completely or hide their light under a bushel becoming self-conscious about their faith enough to hide it from others.

When God Is Silent explores what our response is to be during those times when we don't understand, our prayers are unanswered, and God seems silent.



Bob Yandian pastors Grace Church in his hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The widely acknowledged success of the church he pastors is living proof that the practical insight and wisdom he imparts are both powerful and effective. His dynamic teaching ministry, boldly proclaiming the Word of God without compromise, is known throughout the world for its excellence and integrity.

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