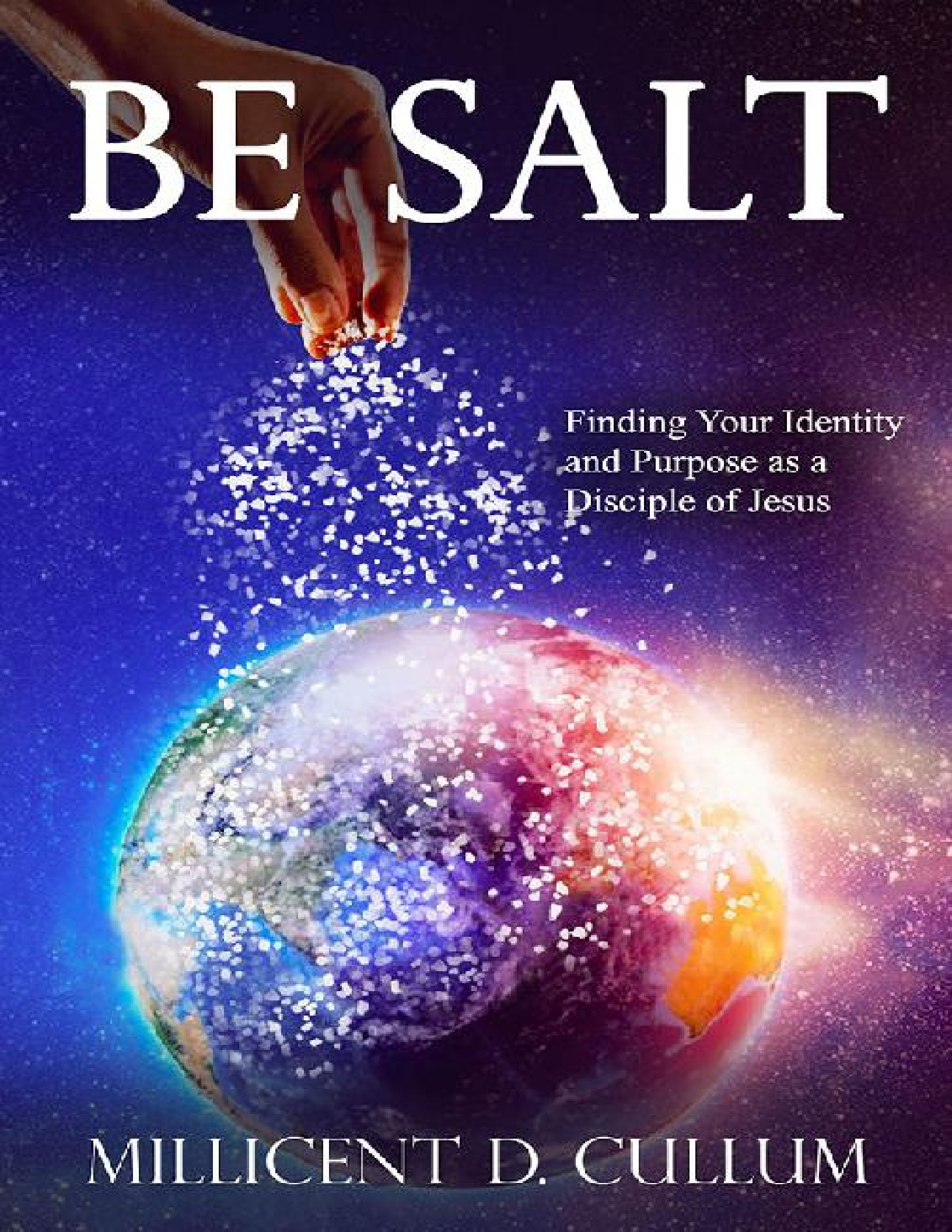
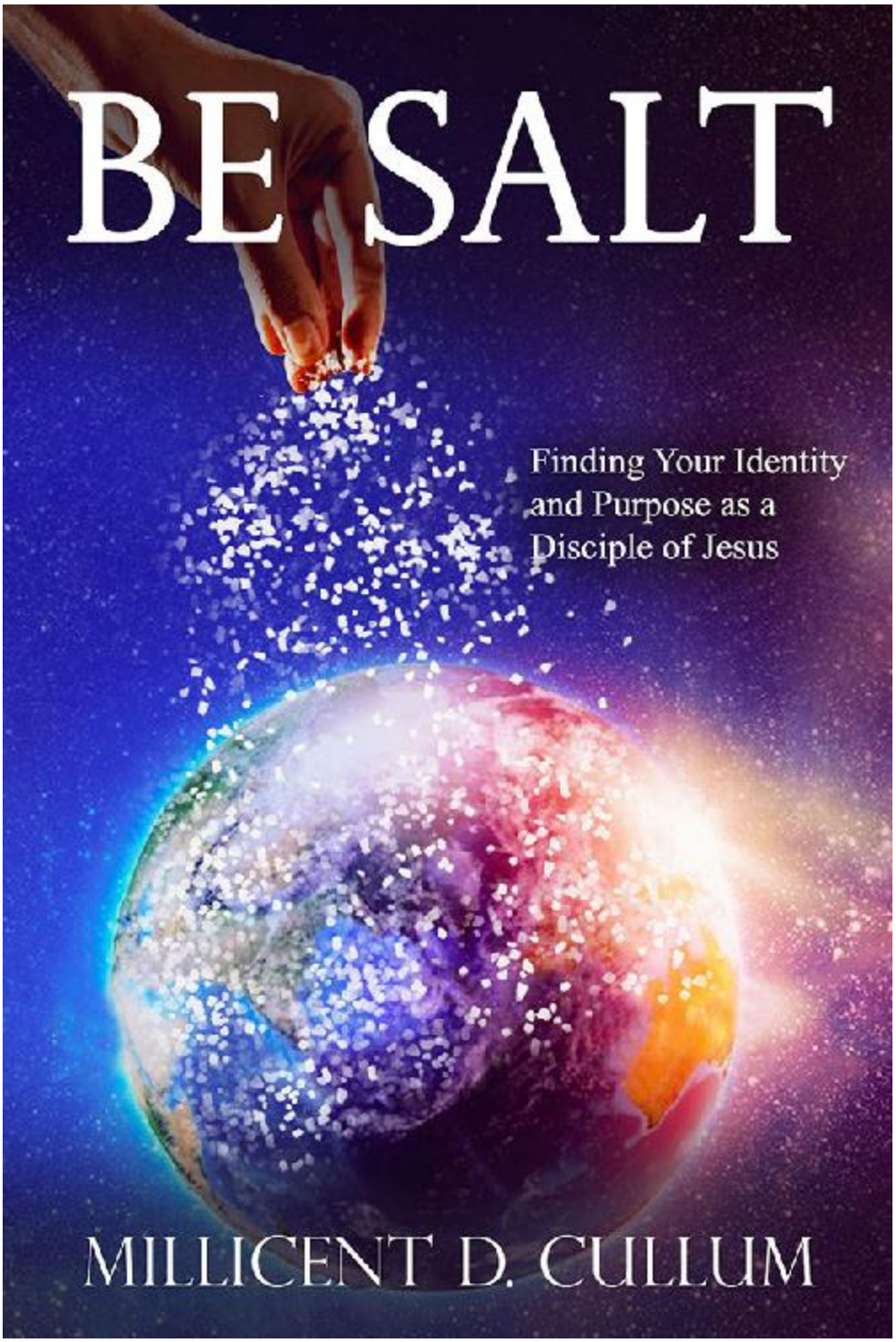
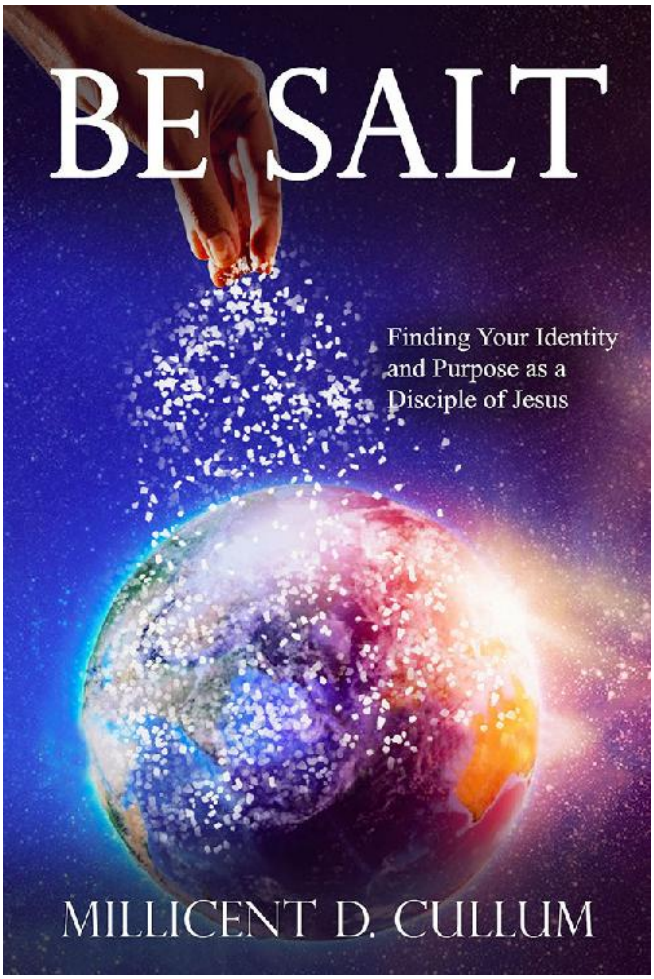
BE SALT



Finding Your Identity and Purpose as a Disciple of Jesus

MILLICENT D. CULLUM


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Forward

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I met Millicent “Millie” some years back at a prophetic conference and we bonded quickly thereafter. We’ve shared funny stories about our children and just life in general. We have that kind of friendship where you can start a statement with “ok now so…” and you know that means you are going to hear that God-centered truth even when you are still ready to sit in your feelings. To know Millie is to know her love for cooking. She starts planning her Thanksgiving menu at least a month in advance. We share recipes on occasion, the ones that are not family secrets, of course, but she is often known for sharing tips and facts about food and spices. The second thing to know about Millie is that she loves reading and owns a thousand books easily. I am grateful that she is following God’s leading to add the one thousand and one book to her collection authored by none other than herself.

Over the years, Millie has shared her journey from growing up in church to battling back after what felt like a long period of distance from God. She vividly recalls a strong urging from God to “Be Salt” and that was something she clung to. In this book, you will learn why salt is so necessary in the earth and why God commands us as believers to “Be Salt.” Of all the things on the earth, we as believers could be referred to, God chose salt. He did not suggest it, He commanded that we be the salt of the earth. One might wonder what is so special and significant about salt?

Salt permeates, purifies, preserves, cures and at its most potent state, it enhances. Salt is in just about every flavor profile you can think of when cooking. Ever thought about how difficult it is to obliterate salt from your diet only to find out it is in everything, even desserts and drinks? Ever tried making a dessert without salt? In theory, it’s possible but not nearly as good and in some cases, the product or dessert in this instance doesn’t come to its

true form or purpose. The cake won't rise to its intended height and it lacks flavor potential so it is inevitably mediocre at best.

Salt is powerful and when used effectively, shifts everything it encounters. In a recipe, salt can reduce bitterness, enhance sweetness, increase sour and umami. If we break this down this means that as believers we are called to "reduce bitterness" by presenting an opportunity for healing, "enhance sweetness" by displaying the love of Christ, "increase sour" by sending warnings and setting a standard and be "savory" in flavor, like meat, we are called to grow into a depth of maturity to disciple others. Much like a believer without salt is rendered ineffective when we do not live as God has commanded us to, a baker who has not studied flavor profiles isn't equipped to deliver their best work.

To be who God commands us to be, we must "Study to shew thyself approved unto God…"(2 Timothy 2:15). Millie would say it's time to take our places and get into purpose. God's command is clear and He is waiting for us to respond. I pray this book calls you into purpose and that you permeate the world with God's truth in love. Be Salt!

Apostle Lisa Cooper

Cutting Edge Ministries

Long Island, N. Y.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

Proverbs 4:7

I love this Scripture, because it reminds me of my sister/friend Millicent Cullum. She is known to some as "Millie," but I fondly refer to her as "Pastor Millie." I met Millie when I was at one of the lowest points in my life. I had been able to hide my brokenness from other people, but not her. She saw right through my heart and knew that I needed healing. I knew from the moment we met there was something special about her. God has blessed her with the gift to see the needs of "the broken" and minister to them. The Holy Spirit uses her to bring deliverance to God's people.

I would describe Millie as a wise woman. Anyone that knows her knows that she exhibits wisdom in words and deeds. She believes in acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge and applying knowledge. Since the first time Millie told me about "Be Salt," I have been excited to read it. Because, I knew it would be full of wisdom and it has not let me down. I will never look at or think of salt the same again. Nor will I ever think of my place on the earth the same. "Be Salt" speaks to the purpose and plan of discipleship of the born-again believer. It speaks to states of brokenness in some of our lives. It speaks to being empowered as a child of God. I encourage you to read this book and make it a part of your permanent personal library.

Janet Allen

I met “Ms. Millie” when I was experiencing several hardships. I was grieving the loss of my cousin. I was also undergoing great pressure from my job and home life. I had become so discouraged and I was questioning some areas of my faith. One of the things that I appreciated the most about her when we first met was how she took time with me. She not only prayed for me, she listened, empathized, sympathized and understood my pain as well. Her comfort and encouraging words helped so much through my season of despair. I remember she devoted two weeks, sending me messages of encouragement, letting me know she loves me, and was praying for me. She opened her heart and her home to me. I felt God’s love and wisdom through her.

I know Ms. Millie to be an encourager, exalter, and a courageous woman of God. She is an anointed prayer warrior, intercessor, and teacher of God’s Word. I will always remember a lesson she taught on the “fruit of the Spirit” and its need to mature in me. It changed my life. I will never view Galatians Chapter five the same again. I am so excited about this book that she has written, because I know that it will bless all who read it and apply its lessons to their lives. “Be Salt” will help you discover your identity and purpose as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Her commitment to serve God through His people is honorable and admirable. She uses her gifts to uplift and change the people around her. I am so blessed beyond measures to know this invaluable woman of God. I am so honored to call her my spiritual mother, friend, and sister in Christ. May God bless you always!

I love you Ms. Millie so much, your dearest spiritual daughter.

Meriyel David

Acknowledgements

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God, my heavenly Father and Creator, You are the God of my salvation. Thank You for always having me on Your mind. You love and choose me when others may not have. Thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You for Your Grace and Mercy.

My mother, the late Mary Louise Bell, instilled in me the value of studying, knowing, understanding and applying God's Word. She was my first Bible teacher. She nurtured my thirst for knowledge. She never made me feel less, when I wanted to know "why?" She believed that asking a question could be the start of making you a better person. My mother was one of the hardest working people I have ever known. She became an educator later in her life, and she was an example of never giving up on one's dream. She mentored me with the life she lived. Thank you, mom, for encouraging my talents and hobbies.

My firstborn, my late son Bryant R. Cullum, I am so grateful to God for the time he was in my life. He was one of the best listeners I ever knew. Usually, after he would listen to you attentively, he would think for a few minutes, then look you in the eye, perhaps give you an answer, smile, hugs you and say, "Don't worry about it, you're going to be okay, and God hears you." Even though he may have said it every time, you believed it like it was the first time you heard it. His laughter was contagious.

My beautiful daughters, Cecilia T. Cullum-Yampolsky, and Leah L. Cullum; you both are beautiful inside and outside. You are the best daughters this mother could ever want. You two are wise beyond your years. It is a joy to be your mother. Leah, you are one of the purest worshippers that I know, and your heart of worship helped me gain insight concerning some things the Holy Spirit spoke to me about when I was

praying about this book. Cecilia, I am glad to have had your insight. You were able to help me see things clearly and stay on track.

I am so thankful to God for the strong gift of discernment that is present in you both. You are not only my daughters, you are my friends. You are two of my best prayer partners and supporters. Thank you both for cultivating your callings, and gifts to become prophetic women of God Almighty filled with faith, and courage that pushed me to complete my first book. I really thank you for allowing me to voice numerous thoughts to you concerning writing and publishing this book. I could not have completed this project without you.

My godmother Prophetess Geraldine Ferebee – Thank you, Mama, for all your prayers, patience, love, and mentorship. You always encourage me to follow the dreams and visions God gives me. I am thankful for all the time you spent nurturing me to become the person I am. You always push me to do greater and, when I needed correction, you were not afraid to give it to me. You were the first person that introduced me to praying with power and spiritual warfare.

Honorable mention to:

My dad, the late Paul Rodgers, I am grateful for the time God gave me with you. I will always love and miss you. The year before he passed away, he told me, “Never forget you can do anything you want to do. You are never too old, so go ahead and write all the books you want to.” He always told me he was proud of me.

To my loving and supportive husband, the late Allan Cullum, I want to acknowledge him for his example of courage, dedication, and pursuit of excellence.

Special mention to

My son (son-in-law) Frederick L. Yampolsky, who from the moment I told you that I was writing a book you said, “Come on Mama, you can finish this book.” You constantly gave me words of encouragement and checked in on my progress. Besides my daughters, no one has pushed me more to complete this book than you. Thank you for all your help with publishing research.

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I am always grateful for your encouragement in ministry. Thank you for seeing what God says about me and not just how I appeared to you.

Thank You to

To all my family, friends and mentors for your presence and contributions in and to my life; You each have made an essential contribution to my life’s successes and I am profoundly grateful.

Introduction



"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

Matthew 5:13 (NKJV)

As a born-again believer, have you ever thought of yourself literally and figuratively as salt?

Are you willing to consider what implications it would have in the world if you truly saw yourself with the qualities and abilities of salt?"

There are times in every person's life when they may struggle to find themselves, look for purpose or even feel stuck. We all have been through and still do go through times when we are looking for our place in the world. Everyone wants to know where they fit in, what their purpose is and if they are fulfilling their purpose. Often, it is no different for the born-again believer because we are still humans with emotions, dreams, and aspirations. We all wrestle with our emotions and flesh daily. How we express and react to them depends on the state of our relationship with God.

In Matthew chapters 5 and 6, we read that after Jesus had called His disciples to follow Him, He healed people and then He began to teach them the Beatitudes. He began to address their purpose. He said, "You are the salt of the earth." This was before He sent them out two by two. Even before He called some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, or pastors, every one of His disciples were told they were salt. This is a small metaphorical (emblematic) statement, but it has powerful implications. Jesus did not say much about salt, but the implications are more powerful than the length of the statement! He spent the last years of His life, preparing His disciples to be salt on the earth. I cannot tell you how many times I have read this Scripture and never really saw what He was doing. Perhaps the imagery was lost on me because of my modern-day thinking. From the very start of His ministry on earth, He started addressing what was to be expected of His disciples. Jesus knew the hearts and minds of humankind. He knew that if He did not address it, Satan would use our own hearts and minds as an avenue to discourage us. Yet, most of us fail to see it. Jesus set a precedent for all disciples when He said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." (Matthew 5:13 NKJV). I was aware of this Scripture but not the depths of it. The thought of salt losing its influence and becoming useless is a powerful image. The church appears to be slowly losing its ability to be salt to the world because of many reasons. But we can be restored by the grace and mercy of God.

I studied chemistry in high school and college. But it was in college when I was studying nursing that I vividly remember my professors expounding on the topic of sodium. At the time, I did not grasp how important this information would be in helping me to understand a Bible verse. It is my desire that after you finish reading this book, you will be strengthened and encouraged to obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by being salt.

I have written interludes before each chapter and prayers after each chapter. They are written to provide points of focus. After reading them I believe you will benefit from meditating on them and using them as prayer points for your devotion. I hope that you will allow the Holy Spirit to lead you even deeper into the purpose that God has for your life. I pray that this book will help you think of Matthew 5:13 as you have never thought about it before. May we all “Be salt” for God in the earth, in Jesus name. Amen!

Lovingly Apostle Millicent Cullum

Prelude

Purpose

You are the salt of the earth!

God’s authority

Blessed

Equipped

Freely submitted

Faithfully committed

Chapter One



The Command

“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

Habakkuk 3:18-191

Many years ago, the Spirit of the Lord impressed these words into my spirit, “Be Salt.” It was during a stage in my life when I was looking for a purpose in my walk with the Lord. Perhaps, you understand what I am talking about; when I say I was looking for purpose. You know, when you’re thinking to yourself, “Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing? Am I pleasing in the sight of the Lord? Am I even effective?”

For almost one year, I struggled and battled with those thoughts. Eventually, I began to compare myself with my peers. But our loving Father God sent me a prophetic word at a conference in Buffalo, New York just when I needed it most. God knew my heart. He had one of His servants tell me to not compare myself to peers in this manner, because it is destructive. I was instructed to read Habakkuk 3:17-19. I needed to see myself as who God called me to be and not possibly who everyone else thought that I was. I needed to accept that with joy and be freed from the thought that had held me captive. I stopped consciously comparing myself to my peers. Yet, I still was facing an intense battle within myself; am I being effective? I needed it to click in my spirit as a revelation does. In the midst of all this rambling, I heard the unmistakable voice of the Lord tell me, “Be Salt.” I am willing to admit that I have not always been sure that God was speaking to me, but this time, I was sure. It came to me as a command, it felt like a quiet assurance meant to push me forward. My spirit needed to be truly awakened

to this command, its instructions, and its effects. I needed a revelation of Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” (NIV). And I needed to believe that I could obey it.

This command gave me direction. I wanted to “Be Salt” and “change the world.” I needed to know more about salt and understand its purpose. I knew by doing so, I would be able to clearly obey my Lord and be more effective in His kingdom. Often, when we are given a prophecy, we are not given all the information at one time. We also may have to study or even be mentored so that we are able to obey a command from our Commander. Either way, I knew I needed direction from the Holy Spirit, and I remembered praying and asking for help to obey. First, I realized that “Be Salt” was a command, secondly, I was being told what to be, thirdly, I was being told how to be and lastly, I was being told why. So, as a born-again believer, I knew I must be willing to obey any command given to me by God. I had to recognize His authority in my life. He has the right and privilege to command this soldier and it should be my pleasure, my joy to yield and obey.

Our refusal to obey is often not clear-cut to us. It may not be what we view as outright, obvious disobedience. Therefore, we must study the Word of God and hide it in our hearts (Psalms 119:11). We must learn the ways of God. We must look to know the will of God. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit and led by Him. In his book, Hebrew Honey23Al Novak writes about two Hebrew words for the word meditate. They are Suach and Hagar. He says that suach is a type of meditation that involves bowing down and musing. While Hagah is a type of meditation that involves talking to oneself in a low voice, to think out loud about something, while being alone. Abraham S Rajah writes in the Apostolic and Prophetic Dictionary; Language of The End-Time Church4 that meditation is the process by which a believer focuses on certain Scriptures, common teaching or concept from God in order to get revelation from it and allow it to become a part of their thinking and faith5.” Its writers describe meditation as a process of chewing and digesting the word of God “in order to obtain a richer and fuller meaning from it.” According to Abraham S. Rajah, we must study the

Word of God this way, so that it may be more to us than mere information, it must become a revelation that will ignite our faith and cause spiritual growth. Both Novak and Rajah write about meditation as a practice that must be done continuously. It requires discipline. Meditation helps us build and strengthen our relationship with God, it can change us and how we see things.

The Bible says that the ways of a person may seem right, but they eventually lead us to destruction (see Proverbs 14:12). We are in the kingdom army now and our Commander (God Almighty) has a right to tell us what to do. Not because He is a dictator or wants to lord over us, but because He loves and cares for us. He knows what is best for us. Aside from that, there are these crucial elements –

His Son, Jesus Christ gave His life to redeem us from the curse of the law.

We have been bought with a price (the blood of Jesus' blood(See Galatians 3:13-15 and I Corinthians 6:20).

Unfortunately, worldly thoughts have taken an illegal position within the body of Christ, causing us to forget, deny or even challenge the rights and privileges of God Almighty to command the body of Christ. We challenge this right everyday by the things that we say and do. One of my friends and I have a running joke between us, every now and then, we say to each other, "Ain't nobody gonna mann me to do nothing." ("Mann" is our lingo for command or make.) Only she and I know why we honestly say it. But, sadly to say some of us in the church truly feel that way, even about some commands from God Almighty. While we would never ever say such a thing aloud, our actions say, "Ain't nobody gonna mann me to do nothing," and just as the saying goes - "actions speak louder than words."

Please do not misunderstand what I am saying, becoming born again does not take away our individualism. We have the right to make choices and to express ourselves. God created us as individuals. He loves His creation. We

are so important to Him that He is aware of the individual hair on our heads (Matthew 10:30). In the human body, the health of each individual cell is important and their function matters to the entire body! Why? Because tissue in the human body is made of a group of specialized cells. These cells are grouped together according to their structure and their function. The human body is made up of four basic tissue types. They are the epithelial, muscle, nervous and connective tissues. These four tissue types are used to make up all the organs in the human body. Many of these organs work together to perform a function in the body and they are called systems. The human body is made up of eleven systems. These systems are the skeletal, muscular, reproductive, digestive, cardiovascular, respiratory, excretory, nervous, endocrine, immune and integumentary. None of these cells, tissues, organs, or systems could be possible without nucleotides on DNA strands. All these things and so much more are needed to form the human body and keep it functioning. It may not be easy to comprehend how a malformation inside a single cell on a strand of DNA can cause tissues, organs, systems, or the entire body not to function properly. Usually, when a type of cell or tissue is found in an area of the body it does not belong in, it will cause that area to be diseased or dysfunctional. Yet, it can and does happen. An example of a condition in which a type of cell displacement can cause such chaos in the body is endometriosis6. God wants us to function properly as individuals and as a body. Each person in the church (the body of Christ) matters to Him. As individuals, we are children of God and collectively, we are the body of Christ. What we do, how we are and how we do what we do matters to the rest of the body. Our individualism helps to make the entire body of Christ strong and productive.

Our Father cares about us as individuals and He wants us to be healthy in our spirit, soul and body.

He created us with free will, not as robots or “yes men.” Therefore, the choice to obey His command is purely up to us. We must remember that no army can win its objective if the subordinates are doing what they want to do and have total disregard for their commander. Obeying is our

responsibility. Yes, there is reward in choosing to obey our Father, but it is better to obey out of love than because of rewardseeking or fear. It is better to have a relationship built on love than of something else.

We must choose to submit. We must choose to commit. We must choose to obey.

A command is an authoritative order, with instructions on how to perform a task and it comes from someone in a position of authority. For an example, in Mark 16:15-18, "… he said to them go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (NIV7). Do you see the command, the instructions and the person of authority in these Scripture verses? It is an undeniable fact that Jesus is in a position of authority in the life of every born again believer and every believer should surrender (cease resisting/submit to authority) their life to His authority!

A Way of Life

In Matthew 8:5-13, a centurion (a military officer in the Roman army) approached Jesus asking for help. "Lord he said, my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." Jesus told the officer that He would go with him to his house. He told Jesus that He didn't need to come to his house, that he only had to command it to be and it would be. He explained that he understood authority, because he is submitted to authority and has men who are submitted to his authority. He understood authority and submission, therefore the centurion was able to boldly and confidently ask Jesus to

speak the word of healing for his servant and he would be healed. He believed that Jesus had the power, the authority, influence and the ability to do what he requested. Jesus said that he had great faith. “Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that moment” (Matthew 8:13 NIV). Submitting to authority and obeying commands was a way of life for the centurion, so when Jesus spoke, it was easy for him to obey.

The first command God ever gave to man and woman is found in Genesis 1:28; “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” After God had ashar (blessed); he then gave them a dabar (command). Ashar is one of the Hebrew words for blessed, which means to advance or prosper. In the beginning, God created man and placed him in an advanced or prosperous position in the garden of Eden. Mankind was created with the ability to make intelligent choices. They were meant to rule and care for God’s creation (the earth and everything on it). He commanded them to be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, subdue the earth, have dominion over what is in the sea, what is in the air and what is on the land.

Notice that in Genesis 1:28

There is a command that came with responsibility

Man was equipped to carry out the command

God had blessed (advanced or prospered) man to a position to do what He had commanded

Therefore, if we view Genesis 1:28 as part of the “law of first mention,” it is evident that God will never give us a command that He does not first

prepare us for or provide us with what we need to obey Him. The law of first mention is the biblical principle that teaches believers to go to that portion of the Scriptures where a doctrine is mentioned for the first time and to study the first occurrence of the same in order to get the fundamental inherent meaning of that doctrine. So, we can adequately conclude that Adam and Eve had the position and ability they needed to obey God, but they willingly chose not to. They lost the position that they were blessed with through disobedience (sin), but we have the chance to gain it back through the acceptance of Jesus, His sacrifices and acts for salvation on our behalf.

But in our time something new has been added. What Moses and the prophets witnessed to all those years has happened. The Godsetting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-settingthings-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's now—this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness. Romans 3:21-26 (MSG)8

Our God is truly merciful, patient, kind and full of grace. He does not make us do anything, but He does ask for our obedience. In His kingdom, there are instances recorded of the law of sowing and reaping (see Galatians 6:7-9) and the law of blessings and cursing (see Deuteronomy 11:26-28) that provide proof of the benefits of being obedient. From the beginning, we were supposed to rule and impact our environment/surroundings and not the

other way around. Most people's lives are dramatically ruled and dictated by their circumstances/surroundings (availability of resources, earthquakes, storms and forest fires just to name a few examples). As a child of God, we must obey the commands He gives us and impact the world in every way possible for His glory. Are you willing to "Be Salt?" Are you willing to exist as salt? No matter what command our LORD speaks, I pray that we may say, "Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places." Habakkuk 3:18-19.

Prayer

Father in the name of Jesus, I rejoice in You, for You are the God of my salvation. You are a Great and Mighty God. All glory belongs to You. You are my strength. Your Word teaches me that You would never ask anything of me that You have not equipped me for/or provided for. Therefore, I choose to submit myself to You. I choose to commit myself to You. I choose to obey You. I know You are holding my hand. I believe that You will establish my feet and if I continue in Your will, You will not let me fall. Father, I ask for clarity in areas that I am unsure about. Help me to hear Your voice, because I want to be a hearer and a doer of Your Word. Forgive me for disobeying You and for the times that I have been slow to obey You. I submit to Your authority. Thank You, for loving me. Thank You for all Your marvelous blessings. Thank You, Jesus for new life. Thank You for the Holy Spirit living in me. Thank You for being my Father and my God who lovingly watches me. Thank You for the privilege You have given me to approach You. Father, Your Word says that You watch over Your Word to make sure it comes to pass. I believe that You are faithful and keep Your word. Thank You for hearing me, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Interlude #1

Being Salt

“The salt of the earth” is an idiom to some people meaning a person who is very kind, reliable and honest. But this is not what Jesus teaches His disciples about being “the salt of the earth.” He was talking about impacting and changing the world to the glory of God, just as sure as when the chemical compound salt is introduced into an environment something is bound to change. “The salt of the earth” is a metaphor which refers to the distinctiveness that a believer should have. We benefit most from a metaphor when we have correct knowledge of its materials and its subject matter. The best salt is salt without impurities, because impurities will alter its taste and effectiveness!

Chapter Two



The Thing About Salt

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

Matthew 5:13

In Matthew 5:13, Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth…" In this verse, He did not say much about what salt is or the application of salt but mentioned its quality and its value instead. Salt has proven to be a necessary and valuable element for life, both in biblical and modern times. In biblical times, salt was not found in the refined and pure form that we see today on our tables. Jesus used their knowledge of salt to teach them a valued lesson through imagery. It is understood that the hearers already knew something about salt, its value and its application in their environment. Salt was a part of their daily lives even though they did not have the means to refine it to such a pure form as we do today. It is understood that the disciples of Jesus would have been aware that salt was the symbol of the everlasting covenant that God has with Israel. "Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your perpetual share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD for both you and your offspring." Numbers 18:19 (NIV).

Necessary and Valuable Element for Life

Throughout history, mankind has had a relationship with salt. Even when they did not totally understand our need for salt, they knew that our bodies craved it. Salt is a compound, and it contains the chemical element sodium. Salt is produced by a chemical reaction of an acid element with a base element. According to Mark Kurlansky9, "When sodium, an unstable metal that can suddenly burst into flame, reacts with a deadly poisonous gas known as chlorine, it becomes the stable food sodium chloride (NaCl), from the only family of rocks eaten by humans" (pg. 5-6).

Sodium is a reactive element, which means that you will not find it alone in nature. Its ability to function and do the job that it was created for always depends on something else! Just as we are dependent upon Jesus. We must be connected to Him. He is the vine. We are the branches (see John 15:5). Sodium is always in/or with something else. There are many different compounds of salts. Several of these compounds are edible, but many are also toxic to the human body. Not all of these compounds taste salty, several of them taste bitter or even sour. Salt is the only rock that can be tasty and provide humans with certain needed nutritional value for our dietary intake. Our body is able to digest the salt in various forms of sodium (see table on electrolytes for clarification).

There are a few forms of sodium that are essential to the human body. The various salts which are present in the human body exist in solutions as ions10 and they are called electrolytes11. The human body needs electrolytes to function properly. These electrolytes cannot be manufactured by the human body. They are essential for maintaining fluid and acid-base balance in the human body, as well as maintaining normal cell functioning. They are invaluable to the functioning of the human body.

A deficiency in these electrolytes or salt compounds can cause headaches, muscular weakness, light-headedness and nausea. A long-term continued deficiency can even lead to death. If infants or toddlers have excessive diarrhea, most doctors will prescribe electrolyte replacements to replace electrolytes and fluid loss until the diarrhea ceases. All infant formula contains magnesium chloride, sodium chloride and potassium chloride, because these are necessary for human life, growth and development. Breastfed infants must receive an adequate number of

electrolytes in mother’s milk. They are dependent on their mother’s dietary intake to fulfil this need, as long as this is their only source of nutrition. Humans cannot live without an adequate amount of salt, yet they can die with too much of it. In addition to our dietary intake, our salt levels are also being maintained in our bodies by our skin through the process of perspiration, by our lungs every time we inhale and exhale (respiration) and by our kidneys as they filter our blood to create urine to be excreted.

Table summary of several ions found in the body relating to organic and biological Chemistry12.

Major electrolytes in the human body and their functions

Electrolyte (ion)	Function
Na+	Sodium is mainly an extracellular ion that is positively charged. It supports osmotic pressure13 a
Mg2+	Magnesium is a necessary cofactor in numerous crucial enzymatic processes in the human body s
K+	Potassium ions are necessary for the function of all living cells. The transfer of potassium ions th
Ca2+	Calcium is the most abundant positive change ions in the body. It participates in almost all of the
HPO4 2	Phosphorus is primarily found inside the cells. It is present in bone with calcium and it is needed
HCO3	Hydrogen Carbonate is a buffer to help maintain the acid-base balance of the blood. The kidneys
SO4 2	Sulfate is found in the cells with proteins.

-

These salts must be a part of our dietary intake. Without these ions, there can be no transporting nutrients, oxygenation of our blood, transmitting of nerve impulses or even moving of our muscles (this includes the beating of our hearts). Think about it, we can't live without these salts. These salts are found in variant forms in every part of our bodies. There is salt in our tears, blood, sweat, urine, mucous, reproductive fluid, just to name a few.

Most people are familiar with table salt, which is a compound of NaCl - (Na [sodium] and Cl [chlorine]). Sodium chloride is formed when an acid and a base are neutralized in a chemical reaction. The chemical salt will try to bring balance to any solution that it is in. It will pull/draw or allow the passage out or in through cell membranes of multiple ions in an attempt to achieve balance within the cell. Cell membranes are semi-permeable, and they have ion channels that allow passage of ions through the cell membrane. A condition of Edema shows the struggle of the body to carry out this process. A large group of cells in an area may be pushing the sodium ion out to achieve balance within the surrounding tissue.

Salt in What?

There are two ways that sodium chloride is commonly obtained. It can be gathered when seawater evaporates, or it can be mined from the earth. Throughout the ages, humankind has found many uses for various salt compounds. In his book Salt: A World History, Mark Kurlansky writes that the Diamond Crystal Salt Company of St. Clair, Michigan published a booklet in the 1920s entitled, "One Hundred and One Uses for Diamond Crystal Salt." Some of those uses were for: making ice cream, removing rust, cleaning bamboo furniture, sealing cracks, making candles, killing poison ivy, treating dyspepsia (indigestion), sprains, earaches, and sore throats. According to Kurlansky, there are more than 101 well-known uses

for salt. He says that “the modern-day salt industry” claims that there are 14,000 uses for salt. These uses include “the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, the melting of ice from winter roads, fertilizing agricultural fields, making soap, softening water and dying textiles15.” It is believed that the Chinese were the first to utilize salt industrially for the purpose of war. They mixed potassium nitrate (saltpeter) with sulfur and carbon creating gunpowder. Some believe that they invented it by mistake, nevertheless they invented it and we know they learned to perfect it.

There are hundreds of hypersaline lakes on earth, which means they are landlocked bodies of water with high concentrations of sodium chloride and other mineral salts. The Dead Sea, Great Salt Lake and Yuncheng Lake are just three of them. The Dead Sea is actually a lake.

It is the deepest hypersaline lake on the earth, making it the lowest point on earth. It is located in the Middle East between Israel, Jordan, and Palestine. It is believed to be one of the most visited salt lakes on earth. The United States of America also has its own salt lake. It is located in the northern part of Utah. It is the biggest salt lake in the western hemisphere. The Great Salt Lake has several islands, several causeways, a railroad and three state parks. The Yuncheng Salt Lake is located in China. Chinese historians have found records of their ancestors fighting over the 16Yuncheng17Lake. This lake was particularly important to the ancient and present-day Chinese people who lived in this area because of its salt content. This lake appears as a lake of rainbow colors when viewed from the sky.

The ancient Roman soldiers were also paid part of their salary in salt, because of its necessity and scarcity. According to Mark Kurlansky, there is almost no place on earth that is without salt. We know this to be true because of modern geology18. In the past, mankind had problems obtaining salt; the problem was mostly related to accessibility, not availability. According to Alan Taylor in an article in The Atlantic, entitled: The Strange Beauty of Salt Mines, “…salt is abundant here on earth, it still requires extraction from stone deposits or salty water. The process of mining that salt can produce interesting landscapes, including deep, stable caverns, multicolored pools of water and geometric carving. Most of us don’t think about salt beyond its dietary uses, just as most born-again believers don’t

really consider the true impact we should be having on the earth. Today our healthcare practitioners are constantly reminding us not to use it in excess, because of its potential to cause high blood pressure. Of course, if we reside in a cold climate, we are aware of its use to melt snow and ice. Beyond these two uses, most people rarely think about the potential, multipurpose uses of salt. Needless to say, we may need to reconsider how we view being the salt of the earth. Could it be that there is a need to adjust our mindset and receive strategy from the Holy Spirit on how to present the gospel message to the world? Jesus gave us a mission19 and He commissioned20 us to do it! Strategies can and will change, but the message will never change. “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” (Matthew 5:13). Flavorless salt can never fulfill its purpose.

When salt loses its effectiveness

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” (Matthew 5:13). When Jesus spoke those words, salt was not refined like the salt we have today. Compared to today’s salt, their salt was of a poorer quality. Because of the tools they had, it would be crudely gathered from the Dead Sea; so naturally this led to the gathering of many impurities with the salt. If the salt that came from the Dead Sea got wet, it would dissolve and leave insoluble pieces of material behind that could be good for only one thing. They could not throw in their garden or in fields mixed among their crops, because any remaining residue of salt would damage or destroy the land. Therefore, it was only good to throw in the street to be walked on. As disciples of Christ, we are supposed to be “the salt of the earth,” but when we compromise the Word of God, we choose to lose our distinctiveness as salt, and we become ineffective. We are in the world, but not of/or like the world.

Genealogists say that salt will only lose its distinctive pungent saltiness, change its physical composition or appearance when it is diluted. They say that this is because salt is non-reactive when it is in its crystalline solid rock form. Perhaps you learned in chemistry how a sodium chloride ion could be forced to change its chemical composition by using electricity. This will occur when sodium chloride is mixed in distilled water and electricity is introduced to it. Adding Nacl to pure (distilled) water makes it an electrolyte solution that is theoretically able to conduct electricity. It is also important to maintain proper storage conditions for salt to remain salty. Salt should be stored in an uncontaminated and moisture-proof vessel to keep and maintain its effectiveness. As a child of God, our saltiness is maintained by our relationship with Him. A disciple will lose his/her saltiness when he/she decides to walk away from the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus and pursue their own self-righteousness. A disciple that loses his/her saltiness is powerless to exercise power against the kingdom of darkness in the name of Jesus. Every time a born again believer loses their influence or effectiveness as the salt of the earth, they lose a degree of their saltiness; this makes the gospel appear undesirable, ineffective and diluted to non-believers.

The gospel is pure and simplistic. It should not be watered down by tradition and cultural habits.

The Pharisees believed and taught that having a relationship with God was based on obeying certain rules and regulations. They rejected God's grace. They rejected the Lamb of God. They rejected Jesus, the Son of the Living God. The Pharisees and Sadducees had difficulty accepting the simplicity of the gospel. Surely there must be more to it than believing and confessing. The teachings of Jesus exposed all their pious living and rituals that were powerless to achieve a relationship with God, our Father. Jesus said that people must be born again to see the kingdom of God. He said that there is the first birth which is natural (by water out of our mother's womb), but then we must be born again by spiritual birth (second birth is faith). This

truth was explained to Nicodemus (a Pharisees) by Jesus in John chapter three.

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. (John 3:3-8 NIV).

John 3:16 explains why Jesus came. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Romans 10:9-10 explains the simplicity of receiving salvation, “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.” (NIV).

Believe the Truth, Accept the Truth and Obey the Truth

Paul the apostle said to the church at Galatia, “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?” (Galatians 5:7 NIV). Paul was really asking them to look at themselves and be truthful about their own life and choices. Was there anything in it that had caused them to be ineffective or tasteless salt? We always have to measure ourselves with the Word of God. What has slowed me down? What kept me from proceeding? The effects of salt changes according to what it is

introduced to and how much of it is used. As salt, we basically decide how effective we will be by the choices we make. Paul told the Galatians that, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25).

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in the mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do. (James 1:22-25 NIV)

What would happen if every born again believer accepted that they were salt called to be an influence right where they are? The church would mature, and the world would change for the glory of God. It is true that not all of us are called and ordained to the mission field. The reality is most of us are called to influence right where we are and that is a beautiful thing. We have been compared to something that gives flavor, influences, preserves, changes things and so much more. We are called to be salt in our home, on our jobs, in our communities and in our houses of worship. When we are salt, things change around us because of the qualifications and the qualities we bring to the environment. Things change because of whom we bring with us. We bring the Spirit of God Almighty with us. He is living on the inside of us and He wants to use us.

Prayer

Father God, You are great and mighty. I am in awe of You. You created me. I am thankful for all that You have done and provided for me. Thank You for the blood of Jesus that cleanses me from all unrighteousness. Thank You Jesus for every stripe You took on Your body so that I could be healed. Thank You for the beating You took so that I can be healed in my body. Thank You for all the abuse that You took for me so that I can have peace. Thank You for allowing me to call on the name of Jesus. Thank You for salvation. Thank You for saving me. I need Your strength, Father. Help me to "…keep in step with the Spirit." I want to be in Your will Heavenly Father. So that the fruit of the Spirit may be seen in my life and I will bring glory to Your name. Father, I want to maintain the saltiness that only You give Your children. I cannot live my life apart from Your wisdom and knowledge and produce the best results. I need You. I need Your strength. I do not want to be just a hearer of Your Word. I want to be a hearer and be a doer. I want to willingly obey. I want to be a child that obeys Your Word. Help me so that I may run this race with patience and not get weary. Help me Father so I may impact the world around me for Your glory. Use me. Let Your will be done in me. I want to be who You ordained that I should be even before I was born. I want to use every talent that You have given me for Your glory, and as I use them, You will add more to them. Help me so that I will be who You have chosen me to be. Lord, use me to help equip the body of Christ, "for works of service so that the body of Christ" will be built up and unified in the faith and knowledge of Jesus. Holy Spirit, I need You to teach me so I may be a mature child of God and not wavering back and forth. Lord, I want to exercise the gifts You have given me in spiritual maturity and unity with others in the body of Christ. Father, let every gift that You have given me be manifested by the Holy Spirit for the common good of the body of Christ to bring unity and true godly diversity in the body of Christ. I do not want to be selfish and command attention to myself. I want to be salty for You. Thank You for hearing me. In Jesus' name.

Amen!

Interlude #2

Being What is Needed

The use of salt in nature is very versatile.

Our Father God expects us to be as versatile as salt on the earth; by affecting our natural and spiritual environment!

Jesus wants us to truly grasp this metaphor and become change agents in the earth.

Chapter Three



Salt Use Mentioned in Bible

In biblical times, salt was used commonly as a seasoning, preservative, fuel enhancement and as an occasional instrument of war. Salt was used with spices and herbs to enhance the flavor of food. Salt was used to preserve meat and fish. The process of salting prevented the bacteria from quickly degrading the meat and causing spoilage. Salting the meat and fish removes the watery environment that bacteria need to survive and grow in. This process was necessary for survival, because they live in a culture without refrigeration. It was even used to enhance a fuel source. Salt is a catalyst when it is mixed with dried animal dung, thereby producing a chemical reaction of energy. This can produce a quick, high-level reaction when the two are mixed. It needs to be refreshed often to keep the fire burning, because of its propensity to burn quickly. They waged war with and for salt. There are several instances recorded in Scripture where salt was used as part of a strategic warfare strategy to keep an enemy from returning to an area again to live and re-establish themselves in the territory (see Judges 9:157 as an example).

Salt was readily available to those who lived near or around the Dead Sea for use in their day-to-day living. Salt from the Dead Sea could be obtained easily by walking along the seashore. There were chunks of salt readily available to them, because of the evaporation of seawater. The salt was gathered, then transported throughout the regent for domestic and industrial use. These chunks were a mixture of sodium chloride and other chemical agents or impurities. These impurities altered the taste of the salt causing it to lack taste or even have a bitter taste. In addition, there were also occasionally visible caves of salt deposits, as well as valleys of salt. In general, the availability of salt was less frequent and more difficult to obtain, the further people lived from the Dead Sea.

The following are some Scripture verses in the Bible about salt.

“So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.” Genesis 19:17, 26 (NKJV). Lot’s wife did not obey God’s command. She looked back and it cost her life.

“And the LORD said to Moses: “Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.” Exodus 30:34-35. These ingredients were used to make holy incense to be used by the priests, but not for the priests. They were for the Lord God. The Lord may anoint us to do His will, but the anointing on our life is not for us. Its purpose is to be used to bring glory to God. These ingredients in the incense are sacred and its specified formula was never meant to be used for any non-sacred purposes. Anything that is precious, sacred, or sanctified to God should not be taken lightly or treated with disregard.

“And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.” Leviticus 2:13 (NKJV). Salt is an important part of the offering. It is meant to represent purity, its long-lasting covenant and the sacrifice that the owner had to make to give it. Salt was costly. Every time we give an offering to God, we must remember that He is Yahweh- the LORD who is eternally self-existent; actively present to assist, bless and deliver His people. He is El Olam, the Everlasting God (God eternal).

“All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as

an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you." Numbers 18:19 (NKJV). According to The Baker's Illustrated Bible Dictionary a "Covenant is one of the most significant concepts in the Bible that affects our understanding of God's relationship with His people (past, present, and future), the structure of that relationship and message of His word is all based on a covenant." A covenant is an agreement that refers to the establishment of a legal situation by a testimony (witness) of an oath that binds something together as with a fetter. When something is said to be bound with a fetter, it is meant to last. Salt has a preservative quality. It will survive the sacrificial fire; therefore, it symbolizes the eternity of the covenant relationship. We have to remind ourselves daily that God does not change. He is the same God who created mankind.

"And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech.So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them.Then Abimelech and the company that was with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the other two companies rushed upon all who were in the fields and killed them.So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who were in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt." Judges 9:42-45 (NKJV). Abimelech was the son of Gideon. He murdered seventy of his brothers with the aid of the men of Shechem, but his youngest brother escaped and hid himself. (To read more about Abimelech, see Judges 9:1-57 and II Samuel 11:21). When Abimelech scattered salt over the land of Shechem, it was meant as a symbol of perpetual desolation and a sign that it should never be rebuilt. But his declaration did not come from the heart of God or by the authority of God. He did not have the power or authority to speak of permanent desolation over the land. Therefore, Shechem was later rebuilt (see 1 Kings 12:25). When we are salt in the earth, in the natural and spiritual environment, we should do so only under the command, power, and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ (NOT MY WILL LORD, BUT YOURS BE DONE).

“And David made himself a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians in the Valley of Salt.” 2 Samuel 8:13 (NKJV). One of David’s great military victories was in this valley.

“Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren.”And he said, “Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it.” So they brought it to him.Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.”So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.” 2 Kings 2:19-22 (NKJV). These waters were healed with the application of salt and by a prophetic utterance of a true prophet of God. Notice that the words Elisha spoke in verse 22 were approved by God. He was in good standing (relationship) with God and so his declaration remained.

“Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt?” 2 Chronicles 13:5 (NKJV). The scepter for rulership over Israel shall not be taken away from the lineage of David. Salt covenants are meant to last.

“Can that which has no taste to it be eaten without salt? Or is there any flavor in the white of an egg? Job 6:6 (AMP). Salt provides flavor to that which is tasteless, and it can make that which is undesirable, desirable.

“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality), how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men.” Matthew 5:13 (AMPC). Salt should taste salty. There is little to no value in tasteless salt.

Believers are compared to salt here as a metaphoric language. During this time, people had chunks of salt (these chunks held impurities as well as pure salt) which they struck to break free small pieces of pure salt to season their food with. Once they had visibly broken all the pure salt off, it was not good for anything else, but to be thrown away.

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other." Mark 9:50 (NIV). Have the qualities of salt as a preserver. Be a preserver of peace. As born again believers our words and our actions should be those that ultimately bring peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Matthew 5:9 (NIV).

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6 (NIV). The words that we speak should be helpful, encouraging and strengthen others.

Prayer

Father, I love You. Thank You for all You do for me. Jesus said that we are to be the “salt of the earth.” Father, help me to be effective for You everywhere I go. Father, help me by the power of Your Holy Spirit to be the “salt of the earth.” I want to be versatile for You. Father,

I ask for more knowledge and understanding of Your word, Your will and Your way. I need wisdom from You. Lord, may those around me see and experience the fruit of the spirit through me. I ask You to let the gifts of the Spirit be manifested in me for the common good of the body of Christ. Help me to use the talents that You have given me for Your glory, so that You may be pleased and add more as You please to do so. Thank You for revelation knowledge. Father, when I lose saltiness, help me to see myself, return to You and repent. Because only You can restore me. Thank You for Your grace and for having mercy on me. Father, I thank You for hearing me. You are more than able to keep Your word. In Jesus’ name. Amen

Interlude #3

God’s love is pure, intentional and unconditional!

God’s love has the power to heal and restore!

God wants a relationship with mankind and He actively pursues us! Love is the foundation of the relationship that God has with His children!

Genuine love is more than sentimental words, it is accompanied by sincere actions!

There are four types of love that are mentioned in the New Testament.

These types of love are better understood if we know the four Greek words for love that are characterized:

Agape -God’s kind of love

Storge -love for one’s family

Philia -brotherly love

Eros -romantic love

Love that overpowers and disarms hypocrisy!

For some of us, one of the greatest expressions of love to the people of God will be admitting that we have been wrong about some of the doctrinal beliefs and teachings that we have imparted in them.

Chapter Four



Salt That Enhances

Agape Love is primary

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

John 3:16 (NIV)

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:34-35

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."

I John 4:7

One day, I was praying about this chapter, because I wasn't exactly sure how to approach it. What should I write? So sweet was the response of my Lord. He said, "love is primary." Love is primary because it was the motivation that caused God to provide a plan of salvation as a remedy for the sins of mankind. It is the primary reason that Jesus chose to give His life in the place of mankind on the cross. God's grace toward us is an endorsement of love that we don't deserve. He provided us with a plan of salvation because He loves us. He chose not to punish us because of His mercy. In God's willingness to forgive us, we experience His mercy. In an article on Christianity.com21 Phillip Wijaya writes, "Mercy is the act of withholding deserved punishment while grace is the act of endowing unmerited favor. In His mercy, God does not give us the punishment we deserve…" When we choose to accept His salvation plan that He provided through grace and mercy, we become disciples of Jesus. Jesus commanded His disciples to love. If we love with the God-kind of love, we can change the world as we were commanded to do.

God created man and placed him in a beautiful garden and "…commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17 (NASB).22 He provided them with everything they needed. He even gave the man (Adam) a woman (Eve) that was "suitable for him." God Almighty would visit them in the garden. Wow, personal visits from God Almighty! How awesome is that?

We don't know how long (in our concept of time) that they enjoyed this relationship with God. But we do know according to Genesis 3:1-5, that one day the serpent came with enticing words to deceive Eve. Both Adam and Eve fell for his trickery and made a deliberate decision to go beyond an established law of God concerning the tree of knowledge. Adam and Eve believed the serpent's lies, disobeyed God and ate fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They immediately experienced spiritual death and natural death surely came later. After they sinned, they could no longer have direct communication with God, because their sin had separated them

from Him. Because they trespassed and went beyond the commandment of God.

Genesis chapter three records the fall of man and the mercy of God towards them. In verse fifteen, God says, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Even though He drove them out of the garden, He still provided a way for them to reach out to Him through the blood sacrifice (see Genesis 4:4). They had to respectively offer these offerings, because these animals could not cleanse or wash away their sins. All through the Old Testament, there are Scriptures promising the arrival of a Savoir, one who would be the Lamb of God and He would eliminate the need for animal sacrifices. The birth of Jesus was foretold many times in Scripture:

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Isaiah 53:3-7

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Matthew 1:23

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7

God no longer requires animal sacrifices. Jesus ended them because He was the utmost and perfect lamb for sacrifice. The prophet John the Baptist in John 1:29, saw Jesus coming to be baptized and said, “…Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (NIV).

Love That Heals, Frees and Delivers

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,”

Isaiah 61:1 (NIV)

I remember in 1985 when my three children and I were “homeless.” I felt that God was punishing me because I had drifted away from Him. I had

become homeless and I was definitely overwhelmed by some of the circumstances in my life. I was educated and I had a career. I had difficulty coping. I also felt judged when I reached out for help, eventually, I stopped trying. My husband was arrested soon after the birth of our youngest child and I was left alone with three children. It became exceedingly difficult for me to keep working, pay bills and take care of three children on my own. I started missing a lot of days from work, because of undependable childcare. At first, I sought help from various people in my life, but I felt my problems were too big for them. Some of them stopped communicating with me and I stopped trying to communicate with them. Finally, we slowly drifted apart. Then I slowly began to sink into a place in my heart and mind where I had never been before. I felt hopeless and depressed. One of my biggest fears was that people would judge me for being a failure. I was so busy worrying about what other people thought of me, that I did not realize that I had already judged myself unworthy of God's love. So, I stopped praying, I stopped studying the Bible and I stopped fellowshipping with other believers. I believed that God was punishing me for neglecting my relationship with Him and for some consciously bad decisions I had made. I had chosen to "run" from Him, yet in His grace and mercy He still pursued me.

I became born-again when I was eight years old. My understanding of God's grace and mercy was that of a sincere child. Romans 10:9-10 says, "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved." I truly believed that Jesus died for my sins. But, as I was taught the doctrines of man, I began to exchange the righteousness of Jesus for my own righteousness. As the years passed, I also began to believe that I had to be a perfect "goodie two-shoes," person. This took my eyes off of the grace of God. Once I did that every time, I sinned. I "hid" from my Father and it became increasingly difficult for me to trust Him. Because I was always trying to be perfect. I was afraid to approach Him and by the time I found myself in the shelter system of New York City, I had become very depressed and I was isolating myself from anyone that might help me. I had cut off all ties with family and friends; they had no idea where I was.

I didn't see my heavenly Father as a loving Father. I had come to view God as a strict disciplinarian who was watching and waiting to punish me every time I stepped out of line. I was trying to do right, but I was rendered powerless because of a lack of knowledge and a flawed belief system. Unfortunately, I was battling with legalism just as many believers do today. I was taught a lot of legalistic beliefs and these beliefs were separating me from my loving Father. I had lost my child-like faith, trust and belief I had in my heavenly Father. It was not until I was lost in New York City's maze of a "homeless shelter" system (with my small, three children) that I really started to understand how deeply my heavenly Father truly loved me.

I remember the day I had to leave my home with my children, and we walked into the EAU (Emergency Assistance Unit) Center. I was immediately overwhelmed with fear and uncertainty. As soon as I arrived, they asked me for my ID card for the assistance program. I said I did not have one. I told the lady that I had a job. She told me that if I wanted assistance to get an apartment, I better get rid of that job and get on welfare, I was in disbelief. I thought that it would be quicker for them to help me because I have a job. But that was not how the system was set up at that time. Having to give up my job (they no longer do this) or they would not help me get out of that horrible cycle baffled me beyond belief. I viewed my job and profession as a nurse as an important part of who I was and having to give them up made me feel stripped and lost. I could not understand the senselessness of this practice. It was like being sentenced to bureaucracy bondage within the NYC homeless shelter system for families. There were so many ridiculous, meaningless rules. How could I recover if I could not work? How could I work without a place for my children and I to lay our heads? I had no choice but to do what they said. My children and I were placed in the Prince George Hotel, which was known for being one of the worst homeless hotels in NYC.

During the time I was in this system, I felt trapped, but I never lost my desire to get out. I felt powerless, because I didn't know where to start to get out. I didn't know "my rights" and because I didn't, I often missed out on things that could benefit my family. The workers were overworked, and we were overlooked. Many times, opportunities would "creep up on me," I would be caught off guard and be forced to make decisions without

preparation. Sometimes I felt like the system ran over me and was trying to take away my last ounce of fight. I was more depressed, more hopeless, and more alone than ever within a few short months of this. Being homeless has a stigma attached to it and it is something that most people do not ever want to talk about or think about.

I didn't really tell anyone I was living there, because I was too ashamed, and the stigma was powerful and painful. But I thank God that I can look back on my experiences there as the place where I was able to begin to accept my Father's pure, nonjudgmental love. I experienced His great favor, great protection and great deliverance there as well. I was able to receive God's pure, intentional and unconditional love without trying to see if I was worthy. I just accepted it as true. It was where I first believed and acknowledged that I didn't have to earn God's love. I learned to embrace God's love for me there. I realized that if I could not accept His unconditional love for me, I certainly could not tell others that He loved them that way. In the past, when I told others about salvation through Jesus, I always looked at them with colored glasses. It was easy for me to judge because I believed that God was always judging me with clouded mercy.

In the hotel, I had made "friends" with a lady (I will just call her "Betty,") who lived in the room to the left of me. When Betty and I first met, I told her to call me "Millie" but, for some reason, she never remembered my name. She kept calling me "Margie" and I got tired of correcting her. So, I just let her call me Margie. I had given up on so many things that year. I was barely hanging on and I didn't want to fight about much of anything anymore, except for my children. Both Betty and I were sheep who had wandered off and we were not listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd. I was trying to read my Bible and pray, but I still felt so empty every time I tried; I just gave up. I was adrift on rough seas with no paddles. I was not attending church, so I had no fellowship with others in the body of Christ where I could be strengthened or ministered to. In addition to being depressed, I was cynical, broken, disillusioned, bitter and a few other things, as well. I had sunk down into a level of depression and self-pity that I had never known before. My hair was falling out in patches. So, I wore a wool hat or scarf tied on my head all the time. I needed to be restored back to my heavenly Father.

Usually, after Betty and I fed our children, we would stand outside our rooms in the doorway as if we had been assigned a post. We would discuss the day's events and talk about people. Yet, somehow, we almost always ended our conversations talking about how the church had changed and how disappointed we were with the people in the church. We somehow never admitted that we were part of the dysfunction that we so eagerly complained about. I had no idea that God was reaching out to me with purpose, while I was aimlessly fleeing from Him. On the same day around 7pm every week, this group of people from "Living Word Church" would come by to invite people to a church service downstairs on the 2nd floor. Betty and I knew this so we made sure to hide in our rooms until they passed by, because we had already decided that these people could not be "saved." After all, look at their appearance. The women wore pants and make-up. Some of the men had long hair and long shabby beards. Worst of all, these people just looked "too happy," so we discussed it and decided not to trust them. Plus, we were not going to some church in a hotel room! We were so hypocritical, cynical, and suspicious that we were not able to see them as children of our God, whom He had sent to bring healing and deliverance to us through acts of His great love. Neither of us had any idea of what true identity and purpose in Christ Jesus was. To Betty and me, they were not like us and that was enough. (Might I add that, this church actually paid the hotel for an empty room to have service and minister the needs of the residents there.)

One evening they had come earlier than usual and caught us in the hallway. From then on Betty and I vowed to never let that happen to us again. We would always check through the peephole and listen for sounds of "unnecessary happiness" before we came out of our rooms (yes, we did refer to them that way). Every now and then, Betty would not be available at our regular time. Therefore, when she was ready, she would just knock, say nothing and I would open the door. One day there was a knock at the door, I flung the door open without looking and said, "give me a minute I'm coming." I heard a couple of happy voices at one time saying something about how they were so happy that I had decided to come to church. Then this man said, "Yes my sister, our Father has been waiting for you to return to fellowship with Him." Then he started saying how God still loves me and that I had been chosen before I was born to minister to the people of God. I

was caught off guard so all I could do was try to fake a smile, while stumbling through some lie about why I could not go with them so that they would go away. I was sure the man knew I was lying, because before I could finish lying, he politely said “It’s alright sister, we will be back next week.” Then they ask my name? I was going to lie about my name too, but before I could, my five-year-old son yelled out, “Millie. Everybody calls my mommy Millie.” Needless to say, I was not too happy with him about that. At that moment, Betty opened her door, but she quickly closed it when she saw my situation. Later she came and knocked on my door. She could not stop laughing at me. She kept saying that I was going to be one of those “crazy happy people.” I assured her that I would not!

When the next week came, I already had a plan of action in place. I was determined not to go with them anywhere, so around the time I thought they would show up, I turned off the TV and the lights. I told my son to lay down and be quiet. My daughters were young, so I gave the baby a bottle and the toddler a snack to keep them quiet. They knocked on the door while saying, “Sister Millie we are here to take you to church,” before I could stop him, my son jumped off his bump bed, unlocked the door and yelled, “Mommy, mommy it’s the people from the church.” He may have only been five years old, but he remembered church and he wanted to go back. I had not been to church in over a year and now my Father was pursuing me with His agape love flowing from these people. When I said I was not ready to go, a beautiful redheaded lady said that she and a lady with one of the prettiest, warmest smiles I had ever seen “would wait until I got ready.” I rushed to gather some things and put them in the diaper bag. Then as we walked toward the elevator, I saw Betty standing in front of her room out of the corner of my eye, shaking her head and wagging her finger at me in an accusing manner. But I could no longer run from my Father God because the Holy Spirit was pulling me with His pure and unconditional love. He was pulling me, and He was using these people to show me His love.

When I got downstairs, I saw several other families there that I knew. They were singing and clapping their hands. The moment I entered that room, I felt like a weight had lifted from me and that desire to aimlessly wander around through life left me. It felt like home. They were singing songs of praise and worship to God. I didn’t know some of them by the beat, but I

knew the words. Some of the songs they were singing were taken straight out of Bible verses word for word. The more I sang songs with them, the better I felt. Eventually, tears were flowing down my face and I found myself asking God to forgive me for allowing my circumstances to affect my relationship with Him. I asked Him to forgive me for judging His people and to renew my relationship with Him. I ask Him to heal my broken heart, take out all bitterness and restore me. I asked Him to deliver me. By the time the minister was ready to speak, I was ready to hear. The minister was the man who had told me, “Yes my sister, our Father has been waiting for you to return to fellowship with Him,” the week before. The lady with the beautiful smile was his wife. He was the assistant pastor of “Living Word Church.” He was a prophet, and she was a teacher of God’s Word. I learned a lot from them. One of the biggest things that I learned from these new brothers and sisters in my life was how to be loved unconditionally. I never felt like they judged me, only loved me.

The minister spoke about love. He spoke of God as a loving and caring Father who cares about all aspects of our lives. The sense of hopelessness that I had for over a year left me as I listened to the Word of God. After he finished speaking, they prayed for me and my children. That night when I read my Bible, it felt different. It was alive to me, not just words on a page. I opened it and started reading the page that it fell open to.

Matthew 7:7-11;

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

I’ve read these verses before, but this time they spoke to me. After

I read those words, I prayed. I remember saying; “God, You are my Father who loves me, and You want the best for me. Will You provide my children and I a new apartment so we can get out of this place?” Then I went to bed and had the most peaceful night sleep I had since I was placed there. I was determined to go downstairs the next morning to see my caseworker and get a referral to get out of there. Just about a month prior, my caseworker had told me to stop coming to her asking for referrals because I did not qualify at this time. She informed me that I needed to be there for at least a total of 18 months then she would give me one. Somehow, I was overlooked when I first arrived. At that time, I did qualify in a different category, a baby six months or younger. She said, “Your youngest is one year old now, so you have to wait as you missed that deadline,” then she waved me off and told me that she was terribly busy.

Despite what my caseworker told me, the next morning, I woke up believing Matthew 7:7-11 applied to me. I believed God, my Father loved me. I had faith to believe that He loved me, and He wanted to provide for me out of that love. When I arrived downstairs, I was told that my caseworker was not there. But her supervisor said, “I will be glad to help you, what do you want?” I said, “I want a referral for HPD (Housing Preservation Development) to get an apartment.” She did not ask me if I qualified. She simply gave it to me and told me to have a nice day. I went to HPD that very same day, they gave me a list of apartments to go see, I picked one and they told me that I could move in, in approximately 6 weeks.

Betty did not talk to me much after I started going to church. She made it a habit to stand in her doorway, look at me with her arms crossed; lips twisted as I went church with my children. I told her that I had an apartment and would be leaving soon. She did not even seem happy for me. She did not celebrate with me. I invited her to come to church with me. She said, “Not on your life buddy.” I really wanted her to get out of there just like my family was going to. I did not want to leave her and her family there. She eventually stopped talking to me. I continued to fellowship on the 2nd floor with them until I left the hotel. Once in my new apartment, my children and I continued going to Living Word Church at the primary location. When I reflect on this time in my life I think about, Galatians 5:1-14:

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves! You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” Galatians 5:1-14 (NIV).

Over time, I have learned to maintain my relationship with God, family, friends and other members of the body of Christ. I have learned to be quick to repent, quick to admit when I am wrong, quick to forgive and seek forgiveness. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV). These Scripture verses continue to provide me with reflections and instructions. They help keep me grounded and from going back to that dark place again.

Those people were truly salt in my life. My life was enhanced, because they lifted the name of Jesus and allowed the love of God to flow through them by their actions. I not only was restored to my Father, but I received a new apartment, and I was able to get a new job. Even many of my previous

relationships were restored. Years later, I returned to the same place that I met those children of God to preach and teach the gospel on a weekly basis. By the time this happened, I was attending Living Word's sister church, Harlem Tabernacle. I was doing the same work in Christ that had reached me. As believers, agape love is primary, because this kind of love should be "the driving force" that causes us to be good disciples and want to build the kingdom of God.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister." 1 John 4:7-21.

We cannot say wholly and truthfully that we love God, if we don't love people. The Word of God says if we claim to love God and "…hate a brother or sister we are a liar." (1 John 4:20). Sometimes people want to

love in fragments (meaning, we want to show love according to how we feel at that moment or what we can receive from others). This is definitely not the God kind of love. God's love for us is not based on our ability to respond to Him or to reciprocate. In His great mercy, He chose to pursue us through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. Jesus willingly gave His life on the cross and shed His blood for the remission of mankind's sin. He showed us the greatest love and sacrificed His life so that we could receive a restored relationship with our Father. God wants all of His children to be healed and free. He wants them to receive freedom and healing through the love that He provides. As His children, we could be set free from we struggle with, if we accepted God's love as a source of victory for His children. When we become born again, we come as we are, but we are not meant to stay that way.

Salvation is God's love gift to mankind

Sincere prayer to our Father, mixed with the power of the Word of God can change us. That change causes us to love those in our lives we may have deemed unlovable. The love in us should enhance the world. It should enhance the gospel and make it desirable. When the gospel is presented with love, it is more effective. The Word of God teaches us that the same love in us should want the best for our fellow believers. We are to give love freely to others without judgement. We will know God's love, experience God's love and share God's love best when we're in a flourishing relationship with Him. The love of God enhances our lives and we should enhance the lives of others with the love of God. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." Salt is a reactive compound. True love always involves action. In the thirteenth chapter of John, we can read about the last supper with Jesus and His disciples. He taught them about love while He performs an act of love and humility by washing their feet. Jesus not only taught about love, He showed love to His disciples.

The American Heritage College Dictionary defines the word enhance: 1. To make greater, as in value, beauty, or effectiveness; augment. 2. To provide

improved, advanced, or sophisticated features. Food scientists say that the five basic taste receptor cells on the tongue are salty, sweet, bitter, sour and umami23. Up until the mid-1980's, it was considered to only be four types of taste receptors. But in 1985, umami (savory) became the fifth taste receptor. Previously these scientists thought that each sense of taste was separate from the other and that they were found on different areas on the tongue. But now, through study and research, they have learned that individual taste cells are capable of responding to several taste at the same time at various degrees of sensitivity. They have also found that the latter is why people experience taste differently.

I am not a chef, but according to everyone that has tasted my cooking, I am an excellent cook. I can say with certainty that salt is one of the cook's best seasoning tools. Many professional chefs might say that salt is an excellent enhancer when added to food in appropriate amounts. They might even tell you that salt is the single, most important ingredient in cooking and when it is applied appropriately, its use is maximized. Salt will enhance or suppress other flavors according to the various concentrations within the food we eat. A small amount of salt in a food item will lower a bitter taste, while the same amount of salt will enhance sour, sweet and umami taste. Food scientists say that salt has the ability to make things taste more like themselves. For instance, I like to add a little salt separately to my sliced cucumbers before I add them to my salad. I enjoyed them much better that way. It softens the skin and draws out the flavor of the cucumber. It makes the salad taste so refreshing. Do you know anyone who enjoys a little salt sprinkled on their watermelon? I have been told that it is one of the best ways to enjoy eating watermelon and enhance its sweetness.

It may be difficult to think of putting salt on watermelon. Perhaps it is difficult for you to envision them together. In Luke chapter four, the people in Nazareth had difficulty accepting Jesus as the promised Messiah. In Luke 4:18, Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." He told the people who were gathered in the synagogue in Nazareth that He is the one that had come to accomplish and fulfill this Scripture. They could not accept His words as truth. How can this carpenter's son be

their Messiah? Even though they knew prophecies about the birth of the Messiah, they refused to believe that Jesus could be Him. He didn't fit their mold of a Savior and Deliverer. They wanted a king who would confront, overthrow the Roman government and establish Israel as an earthly kingdom. Jesus had come as the Lamb of God and a sacrifice for mankind's sin. Jesus enhanced the world by doing what He was born to do. He gave His life for that purpose. He arose from the dead with victory for that purpose. He sits next to the Father for that purpose. He intercedes for that purpose. He wants us to enhance the world by being what we were born again and called to do. He wants our lifestyle to reflect Him, bring glory to God and promote the gospel.

Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:34-35. Leviticus 19:18 says, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." (NIV). Since Jesus said, "A new commandment I give you," there must have been an old way they were doing it that needed to change. Apostle Paul told the Philippians to love like Jesus-

"Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:1-8 (NIV).

In I Corinthians chapter 13, Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth of how indispensable love is. He told them that no matter how gifted they were, it meant nothing without love. He said, they could speak in tongues, prophesy, be knowledgeable about God and understand the mysteries of God, but if they did not love others, their gifts are sound. It is so powerful that he told them this after he explained spiritual gifts and their use in chapter 12 of I Corinthians. Many believers desire the gifts of the Spirit, but Paul said we need to use those gifts in love. In chapter 14 he said, “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit…” Love will enhance any gift God gives us. If we seek God about how He wants us to use and offer the gift to others in love, the gifts will be received better. Love will enhance whatever God gives us.

Prayer

Father, You are my Creator. Thank You for Your mercy that reached out to me. Thank You for intervening for me through mighty, redemptive acts of love. You sent Jesus as a sacrifice and He gave His life. Father, thank You for loving me. Thank You for pursuing me even when I didn't know that I needed You. Jesus, help me to love others as You love me, so that they will know that I am Your disciple. Lord you said, we are the salt of the earth. Help me to be salt that enhances the earth. I want to be used by You.

Father in the name of Jesus, I acknowledge that there is always room to grow in my life in the area of love. Because just when I think I have mastered loving purely and freely; I am tested and challenged by people and circumstances to love better. Father, I pray that You will help me to be honest with myself when I fall short of your glory. Help me to forgive others as You forgive me. Help me not to judge people, because You said, we should not judge, criticize, condemn others unfairly with an attitude of self-righteous superiority and that we should not assume the place of a self-righteous judge.

Father, I ask You to forgive me for the times that I have taken that position over people's lives. I ask You to forgive me for any hypocritical behavior that I have lived. Father, for anyone that I have shown this behavior and I wasn't salt in their lives, please be merciful to them and show them Your true love. Help me to love. Father, please replenish my saltiness and let Your light shine through me. Wash me, cleanse me and make me whole. Help me to put on the righteousness of Jesus. Forgive me for the times I wore my own righteousness. Help me to live a holy life. Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Lord I need You, because there is nothing better than You. I am grateful that Your love will find me anywhere. Thank You for loving me Jesus. So, I ask these things of You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Interlude #4

Exist as Salt

The word exist is a synonym for the word be. It is a verb, which means to have been, to have existence, to occur or take place. It means to live/ have reality as something.

Often, we are so used to using a word that after a while that we do not even think about its meaning. Take the word “be” for example, it is a verb, and it means “to exist” as something in a continuous tense, to occur or to take place. The word “be” is used multiple times in our everyday conversation, even if we do not use it often, we certainly carry out its connotation.

We exist!

Chapter Five



Being Salt That Exalts Jesus

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17

Being salt that exalts Jesus means that we must do the things that salt does. We must change and enhance the environment where we exist. We are meant to bring change to our families, neighborhoods, schools, jobs, church fellowships: in fact, everywhere we are, we should bring change by exalting Jesus. Jesus said that it is the Holy Spirit who moves upon the hearts of men. He convicts24! In John chapter three, Jesus said that as we share the gospel, the Holy Spirit convicts the hearts of men. His love for His creation is greater than any other love. He is always aware of us and He is always faithful.

As believers, we have a mandate, and we must fulfill that mandate. We must be salt continuously. Jesus compares us to the abilities and characteristics of salt in Matthew 5:13 and gave us a mandate found in Mark 16:16-18. He gave us a specific command. Many people have difficulty separating and understanding the difference between purpose and mandate. While they both can be used as nouns and verbs, a mandate is an official, authoritative command. It is a commission. As a verb, it means to authorize or give official commission. Mandates are given by someone in charge. Jesus gave His disciples a mandate in Mark 16:16-18. He said, "Go…" Purpose as a noun is about a desired intention for someone or an object. When purpose is used as a verb, it is referring to resolve or determination to accomplish something. I believe that both mandate and purpose can be multi-layered. For example, the mandate in Mark chapter

16, “Go”, “Preach” and “Lay hands.” The purpose of the mandate in this Scripture is that all who believe shall be saved.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:16-18

Salvation comes through the finished works of Jesus; there is no other way to receive salvation, but through Him. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12 (NIV). The mandate and purpose for believers to be salt still continue even today, while the accomplishments of Jesus still reach out to mankind as evident that He fulfilled His mandate and purpose. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NIV). His purpose can be seen in John 3:17, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (NIV). The apostle Paul told Timothy that petitions, prayer, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people because “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people…” I Timothy 2:3-6 (NIV).

Jesus gave His life so that He could draw all men to Himself, give them eternal life and make them partakers of God’s salvation plan. He allowed Himself to be lifted on the cross for that purpose. He said in John 10:18, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.”

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” John 12:32-33. “Therefore, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” John 10:17-18.

In Matthew 11:25-30, Jesus says that His Father has chosen to show us a new way to enter into a relationship with Him. That new way is through Jesus only. Jesus was given the task of providing an opportunity for men to have this relationship with God. Jesus offered the good news to all that would hear it and receive it. Most of the religious leaders rejected it, because their self-righteous religious mind would not accept the simplicity of the gospel. Jesus says if you are tired of trying and failing on your own, come to Him and accept that He is the sacrifice for your sin. He wants to carry your load. He will walk alongside you. He will never leave you. Come, yoke yourself to Him (accept and believe that He is the Lamb of God), and He will take away all your burdens of sin and give you rest. Jesus wants us to know that sin and self-righteousness are burdens, which He came to take and carry away to the cross and the grave.

We should have no confidence in our own ability to be righteous. We need Jesus’ righteousness!

In Galatians chapter five, the Apostle Paul writes about being set free from the bondage of sin and the bondage of self-righteous, religious practices. He says in verse one, “…do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” He questioned their desire to go backwards. Paul told them if they continue to try to justify themselves by the law, they will separate themselves from the grace of God. Paul said that the only way to receive righteousness is through faith. He encouraged them to believe that they were loved so much that Jesus gave His life so they could freely experience

the grace of God. Paul said to the Galatians, once you have experienced freedom, why go back? Many of us do the same thing today by mixing religious doctrines, our education, ancestral customs, traditions, ethnic backgrounds, family status, personal beliefs, societal norms and political beliefs with the gospel. Some of us dare to make them equal to the Word of God. Often, we don't believe such things about ourselves, but we can recite an old wise tale or traditional story quicker and easier than the Word of God. It may not be an intentional thing, but some of us have even placed more trust in these sayings and wise tales than the Word of God.

In I Timothy 4:1-8, we are told to avoid silly and unreliable heresy which does not bring honor to God. If you are saying to yourself, "I would never put my cultural beliefs ahead of God." I say slow down, read Acts 10 –11, how God told Peter to go share the gospel with Cornelius (a Gentile). At first, Peter resisted; but in Acts 10:34, he said, "…now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism," and Peter did as God told him. Yet, later, despite what God had said and shown him, he fell back into his old ways. We know this because of what Paul said in Galatians 2:11-21; Peter fell back into this same behavior, causing confusion and separation in the church and Paul rebuked him for it. There may be some things which we have learned during our lifetime that we will have to let go of for the sake of the gospel. These things may have "brought us far," but when they come to the kingdom of God, they can take us no further. Although our culture and heritage help make us the individuals we are, we must never get so proud that we choose to challenge God or His written Word with them. Nothing must come before Him and His Word. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 3:8-9. (NIV).

He said, "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ- the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

The Fruit of the Spirit

I believe Paul was very stern and direct in questioning them. He even mentioned it was not the first time he had told them. In Galatians 5:7 (NIV) he asked, “You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?” In that same chapter, Paul said, “Don’t use your freedom to sin.” Just because you know that God is forgiving and full of grace toward you, don’t use grace as an excuse to sin; you must learn not to sin. You must tell your flesh, no! He said, you should not be surprised that your flesh wants to do whatever “…is contrary to the Spirit…” He made it clear, so that there would have no misunderstanding about the acts of the flesh and their need for the fruit of the Spirit. He said,

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:19-24 (NIV).

What if we viewed these acts of the flesh as impurities mixed in salt rendering it to no other purpose than to be walked on as Jesus said in Matthew 5:13. Then perhaps we will be able to accept why we must make the decision to stop committing these sins. Jesus desires that we produce fruit and do what we were born again to do. We are meant to be salt enhancing our environment and trees of righteousness producing authentic, mature fruit that glorify the Father. Imagine how you would feel if you planted a fruit tree and it appeared capable of producing fruit and every time you went to get fruit from it, it had none, or the fruit was never ripe.

More than likely, you would probably stop looking for fruit on that tree, maybe even stop watering it or even chop it down. Yet, God has not cut us down in His mercy. He has offered us grace and has given us power to say no to sin. We have free will, but we must choose to crucify our flesh and its passions so that we can live our best lives. Then we can truly inherit the kingdom of God. When we do this, we will exist as salt, producing the fruit of the Spirit that will enhance our environment and glorify our Father in heaven. The apostle Paul made an appeal to the Ephesians about this very thing when he wrote:

So I, the prisoner for the Lord, appeal to you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called [that is, to live a life that exhibits godly character, moral courage, personal integrity, and mature behavior—a life that expresses gratitude to God for your salvation], with all humility [forsaking self-righteousness], and gentleness [maintaining self-control], with patience, bearing with one another in [unselfish] love. Ephesians 4:1-3 (AMP).

In John, 16th chapter, Jesus informs His disciples that He will be leaving them to return to His Father in heaven. He wanted them to know that He was not leaving them without help, guidance and comfort. Jesus informed them that He would be sending them a helper who would teach them, give them power and courage. The Holy Spirit would direct them to any truth they needed to know, and He would move upon the heart of mankind to convict them of their sins. Jesus said,

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” John 16:7-11

We Need the Holy Spirit

Some believers have chosen to dismiss the importance of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Some say that the Holy Spirit is not needed today. But we need the Holy Spirit. He empowers us to do the will of God on the earth. We cannot obey the command Jesus gave in Matthew 28:1620 without Him. Some want the Holy Spirit, but without speaking in tongues. There are also some who have reduced His presence to some emotional frenzy where people scream, run around and fall to the floor. Being baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit is more than an emotional experience, yet there may be times when we are overwhelmed with emotions. We need the Holy Spirit to pray, to obey the will of God, to obey the Word of God and to accept the ways of God as truth. We need the Holy Spirit to "Be Salt that Exalts Jesus." We need the Holy Spirit and His acts. There are no miracles, signs and wonders without Him. There must be acts of the Holy Spirit in the church today just like in the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit has not ceased to function on the earth. We don't have enough strength, wisdom or knowledge to fulfill the commission and carry out the commands found in Matthew 5:13 and Mark 16:16-18 without Him. The disciples were commanded to not leave Jerusalem, but to wait until they received the Holy Spirit. It was not a suggestion. It was a command that still extends to us today!

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in

Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:4-8

We can never be as effective as we are meant to be without the Holy Spirit, because He knows the mind of God and mankind.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:9-14.

In the same way the Spirit [comes to us and] helps us in our weakness. We do not know what prayer to offer or how to offer it as we should, but the Spirit Himself [knows our need and at the right time] intercedes on our behalf with sighs and groanings too deep for words. And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes [before God] on behalf of God's people in accordance with God's will. Romans 8:26-27 (AMP)

The Holy Spirit teaches us and comforts us. He helps us when we are lost for words to pray for what is needed at that time. The Holy Spirit helps us to be truthful in prayer. He can intercede for us so, our prayers are

according to the will of God and appropriate for the time or season we are in. He will direct us and show us our sins; as well as empower us to overcome them. He shows us sins that we are not aware of. He will reveal things to us before they happen. He helps us to exalt the name of Jesus.

When we walk by the Spirit and do not yield to the acts of the flesh, there will be fewer incidents of people abusing the gifts of the Spirit.

The Gifts of the Spirit

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. I Corinthians 12:4-11.

The Holy Spirit can choose to empower any member of the body of Christ with the gifts of the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples did not just speak in tongues, they were also waiting for the Holy Spirit to give them power to do what Jesus had told them to do. They were powerless to do it on their own. They needed power from the Gift giver. We cannot truly be empowered by someone unless they themselves are competent and in authority. How can anyone fix their mouth to say that Jesus is not competent or in a place of authority to tell the church which is His body what to do?

Show me, Teach me, Mentor me; I want to know.

The Holy Spirit should be in a position of authority in the lives of every born again believer. Then we will truly see mature gifts of the Spirit accordingly in the lives of believers; as well as seeing the acts of the Holy Spirit occurring daily. The gifts of the Spirit are meant to bless the people of God. Yes, sometimes abuse of the gifts happen, but remember the idiom, "Don't throw the baby out with bathwater." We cannot forsake the use of the gifts of the Spirit in the church, because of fear of misuse. They are meant to help us and make us better.

Consider the following

Everyone does not operate in their gifting in the same way. There can be several reasons for that:

Also, it may be that the person is a five-fold ministry gift that Jesus gave to the church—apostle, prophet, teacher, evangelist and pastor; (see Ephesians 4:11-14). To function effectively, these people need certain gifts that are comparable to these offices. They are given by the Holy Spirit and the gifts will be stronger in them than a lay person with the very same gift. Being a member of the five-fold ministry can greatly affect the use of the gift, because the level of anointing is different. It is definitely true that the expression of these gifts will be different according to the foundational gift in the person.

Take the office of the prophet for example, perhaps you have noticed that a lot of prophets usually have the gifts of the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. They may operate in these gifts in different manners. Some

prophets may mostly hear and speak a word to give a person a word of knowledge and the word of wisdom. Others may mostly see (seers) and give a person a word of knowledge and the word of wisdom through a story, dream or vision. But it is still the gift of the word of knowledge and the gift of the word of wisdom in operation. Some prophets speak in various unknown tongues and are able to interpret them. It is vitally important to remember that not everyone that prophesy, speaks in tongues and/or interprets tongues is a prophet. I have seen prophets operate in the gift of the working of miracles. I know a prophet that literally told a storm to turn and go back to the ocean in the name of Jesus. The storm immediately obeyed her. People were in awe of the power of God. I believe that the gift of faith was definitely at work also. Prophets will have various responsibilities because of the gifts the Holy Spirit chooses to give to them. The same is true for the other four offices as well.

Something is happening

In the early 1980's, I noticed that I would know things about people which they never told me. I knew some things about the gifts of the Spirit, but I didn't recognize what was happening to me, so God sent a prophet to me to reveal it to me. The church that I was attending at that time was pastored by an apostle who operated greatly in the gifts of the Spirit. He would say, "You have the call of God on your life." He also encouraged me to spend a lot of time with the older women in the church who were prayer warriors. It was at this church that I started to notice that I was aware of certain things before other people were. I would know what was happening and why it was happening. When people stood up and spoke in unknown tongues, I knew the interpretation. Sometimes I even knew what they were going to say before they said it. There were times when people prophesied, I knew what they were going to prophesy about before they opened their mouth. I remember knowing what the person was saying when they were speaking in tongues. I remember the Apostle waiting for someone to interpret the unknown tongue, but I never stood up because I was overcome with fear. Eventually, he would just give the interpretation and it would be just what

was ringing inside of me. One day I expressed this to him, and he said the next time just stand up and say what you hear. I had never been encouraged to do anything like that before. He also encouraged me to spend more time with one of the female leaders in the church who is gifted prophetically. He even started taking me with him when he went out to minister. Of course, he also took a few of the male and female ministers. He knew that I needed to learn, so he assigned a minister to mentor me. Despite this, I still managed to fall into that dark place in the late 80's, because mentoring without a willing student, purpose and direction will not succeed. I was not forced or ready to be mentored.

In the 1990's, I was attending a church in which my pastor was also a musician and a psalmist. I led praise and worship at this church. This was not the first church that I had led praise and worship. But it was different at this one. It was more powerful, and dynamic than ever before. (Proverbs 27:17 17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another). While leading worship at this church, I learnt that I was more than a singer, I was a psalmist. Previously, I didn't have a clue. Therefore, I truly believe that we should be exposed to people with like callings and similar giftings to encourage growth and development. One Sunday, during praise and worship, I saw a big cloud over the people of God. It was so thick I could not see them anymore. This time was different than ever. I was sure others saw it too. But no one did. When I told my friend after church exactly what I had seen she replied, "No I didn't see anything like that over the congregation. But I saw your face shining and a glow was all around you." She excitedly said, "Girl, you saw the glory of God."

One day the same friend and I were sitting in Central Park talking and a large adult raccoon came out of the bushes at us. We had leftover food in takeout bags. After eating lunch, the two of us had decided to sit down on a bench near the entrance of the park and talk. I saw the raccoon out of the corner of my eye when he first came out of the bushes. He was coming straight at us. The moment my friend saw him, she made a hasty retreat out of the park. Before I knew it, I loudly said, "Raccoon, God has given me authority and power over you, and I am not running. Go back into your place in the bushes and don't return here." He immediately stopped, turned and went back into the bushes. People were yelling, "Throw the food at him

and run." I did neither. I can't tell you why I did not do that. I never even felt fear. When the raccoon left, people told me that they had been telling the city to get rid of that raccoon for weeks, because it would come out of nowhere and go after people. One man told me that the raccoon "would not allow anyone to sit where we were sitting." Most definitely from a human standpoint, I should have run like my friend and I can't explain why I didn't, because I know raccoons are dangerous animals. Their claws are huge, and they are wild animals. There are multiple yearly sightings of raccoons in the five boroughs of New York City. They can carry various transmittable diseases. The City Department of Health always advises the public to stay away from them and report any sightings. To this day I still marvel and laugh about this occurrence. I realize how awesome God is that He protected me. He chooses to reveal Himself through me, to me and to others that day. Things were continuing to change for me at church as well.

Not long after this, I began to assist my pastor at the altar while he was praying for people. One day before he started praying for a lady, he said, "Cullum pray for her." At first, I was thinking, what are you talking about pastor, we never discuss my doing this. My mind was racing. I told myself you can't pray for this lady in front of everybody. You don't know what you are doing! I felt panic setting in, and fear was trying to take over me. But I decided to do as I was told. The moment I opened my mouth and began to pray, I also started prophesying God's word over her life, the words came out in power and authority. I had never seen this woman before. While I was praying and prophesying to her, the Holy Spirit also gave me a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge for her. I began to speak words of healing, freedom and joy over her life. Her whole countenance changed. Afterwards, she praised God and said she had received what she needed. She was amazed how the Holy Spirit had used me and so was I. I had never done anything like that before. She said she "was walking down the street and just felt like she had to come inside the church building." Of course, I knew that it was the Holy Spirit that she felt drawing her inside.

In this church, I experienced a flourishing of the anointing on my life. My gifts grew and my talents were added to in such a way I had never experienced before. I was challenged by God to grow. It was not always easy for me there and I faced opposition on numerous occasions in all areas

of my life. But it was there I learnt that the anointing grows and develops in hard places or hard times. An environment of growth is not always easy or pleasant. Things we experience are an opportunity for us to be salt for our Father. The previous snippets that I shared are from my daily journals.

The fruit of the Spirit continued to ripen in me. The gifts of the Spirit are still maturing and developing in me. I pray these two statements remain true for my entire life.

Prepare your Heart!

Remember:

Jesus called His disciples salt and gave them a purpose. The Holy Spirit helps us to fulfill that purpose. The world will never see evidence of the old passed away and the new developing unless we apply ourselves to God’s Word, prayer and discipleship.

Prayer

Father God of Heaven, You created me, and You know all about me. There is nothing that is hidden from You. You knew my end before I knew my beginning. There is nowhere that I could go that You are not. You are all-Seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful. You are life. You are the faithful God. You keep Your Word. Your Word is alive and full of power.

Thank You for Jesus who gave His life for me. Thank You, Jesus for choosing to sacrifice your life for me. Thank You for raising Jesus, from the dead with all power. Thank You, Jesus, for redeeming me. Father, Your Word says, that Your eyes are on the righteous. I thank You for the righteousness of Jesus, because the righteousness of man cannot satisfy You. Praise You Jesus for what You did for me. Thank You, Father for grace and mercy.

Jesus, thank You for shedding Your blood. Thank You for my salvation. It provides me with everything I need. Not only did You save me, You delivered me, You preserved me, and You have established me. You gave the Holy Spirit to the church, to comfort, to teach and guide us. Thank You for the Holy Spirit who gives me power to do the will of God on the earth. I am grateful to be able to say that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ and I am not ashamed of that.

I want the fruit of the Spirit to be seen in my life, not the works of the flesh. Help me to know You Lord. I want to know You, Your Word, Your will and Your ways. Enlighten my understanding and give me wisdom and knowledge. Father, I want to use every gift and talent You have given me to reflect Your character. I want to be used by You Holy Spirit. I want whatever gifts You have for me. Lord, help me not to neglect them when they are given to me.

Father, thank You for the talents You have given me; help me not to neglect them. Forgive me for any times I have misused Your gifts. Forgive me for

not applying myself to the talents You gave me. I want to use them, so that You may freely add to them as You choose. I want to do better. I submit myself to You. I will apply myself so I can be a vessel of honor. Lord, make me an anointed vessel for Your glory. Help me not to compare myself to others. Help me to remember that I am made by You and I am unique. You are the great I am. I want to be a change agent for You God. I want to be used to bring change wherever You take me. I want to be salt in the earth. Thank You for hearing me when I pray. In Jesus name. Amen!

Interlude #5

Defensive and Offensive

Change agents have a purpose.

After Jesus had called His disciples in Matthew chapter four, in Matthew 5:3-12, He gave them commands that came with responsibility, equipped them to carry out the commands and blessed (advanced or prospered) to a position to do what He had commanded; just as God the Father had done in Genesis chapter one.

In verse thirteen, He mentioned our purpose, “You are the salt of the earth…” God never expects anything of us that He has not blessed and equipped us for!

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.” C. S. Lewis

“I think that if God forgives us, we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise, it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him.” C. S. Lewis

“We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it.”

C. S. Lewis

Can there be transformation without implementation?

Alteration

Whose behalf are you acting on?

Fulfilling an active role

Taking procession

Chapter Six



Salt as a Change Agent

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality), how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men.

Matthew 5:13 (AMPC)25

Salt is a change agent. Salt by itself does nothing. It must be introduced into something else for anything to happen, otherwise, it is just there. Salt will cause a chemical reaction when it is introduced into any environment. Salt preserves and changes the texture or appearance of things. The introduction of salt into a moist environment serves as a drying agent and thus delays or stops the growth of new bacteria. Bacteria require a moist environment to grow in. The greater the spoilage of the protein, the more rapidly the bacteria will grow. Can you imagine in your mind an image of darkness increasing as sin goes unchecked by the presence of salt (the church) in the earth? Salt can also have a destructive quality and therefore, must be used in moderation. Salt without temperance and restraint is dangerous. We need to spend time with our Father and get to know Him so that we may live a balanced life. We cannot live in a place of unforgiveness and grudges. We must acknowledge that we do not know how to effectively be salt without the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Salt is often used to preserve meat and fish, by keeping or slowing bacteria from growth. Salt inhibits the growth by removing the moisture from the meat or fish. Salt will change the structure of raw meat or fish protein, by drawing out the moisture and causing it to dry out. Salt preserves and prevents spoilage! Salt cannot heal on its own, but it can stop the spread of harmful bacteria; thereby making it a part of the healing or recovery

process. We are not the ones that save, heal or deliver, but we are told by Jesus to go bring this to the world. So, consider what can happen when the Spirit of God Almighty moves us as salt to show His works on the earth. Salt infuses into a new environment by osmosis.26 The osmosis can be slow, or it can be aggressive. It can be sprinkled, or it can be applied in large amounts as a coating or covering. As salt, we need the Holy Spirit to show us which application is needed, because each situation requires a different strategy. The osmosis effect of salt is not always visible or noticeable right away. It may be difficult sometimes to be salt, but we are not alone, God is with us. He is Emmanuel (God with us). This makes us able to "…endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Timothy 2:3. He gives us His joy and strength to endure.

We want God's kingdom to be seen in the earth, in the lives of people. Kingdom people are intent on knowing and obeying the will of God. They want to see His good pleasure done on the earth. A Change Agent for the kingdom of God is all about the business for the Father. I don't know about you, but I want it to be said of me that I was one of those "… who have turned the world upside down…" I want to obey my Savior and LORD when He commanded, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV). One of our challenges is to remember that salt infuses into a new environment by osmosis.27

It does not change our general marching orders that countless believers before us have undertaken. I like the way the Amplified Bible records Matthew 28:19-20, "Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be)." (AMPC). We have not been given a commission without preparation. We have been given the Word of God, the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the armor of God so that we can carry out the great commission as a church.

When the disciples (salt) were introduced to the Holy Spirit, changes started taking place all over Jerusalem and spread throughout the world. Jesus never meant for us to be ineffective, therefore, He gave us the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. If we as salt fail to do what we have been assigned and called to do, sin will reign and rule in our environments. It will rule in our homes, jobs, neighborhoods, governments, countries and even in the church. If we have lost our ability to be salty, only the Holy Spirit can give it back to us. The choices we make determine how effective we will be as we share the gospel and build the kingdom of God.

There is nothing wrong with good sound counseling and therapy, if you need it, get it. There is no shame in it.

I have noticed that a lot of people struggle with forgiving and moving on. Some people are constantly looking for their version of closure. Everyone's idea of closure is not the same. But there are times when we must admit to ourselves that we may never receive mankind's version of closure. In that case, what should we do? Should we remain in the chains or bondage that this wrong has created for us? Or should we find a way to forgive and move on? The ability to forgive and move on does not mean that we forget the valuable lessons that we have learned from the experience. It means that we should not hold grudges, but we are to retain the acquired knowledge and wisdom from every experience we have in life. There are great differences in how we can choose to retain and use this acquired information. A born again believer should handle things differently than the unbeliever. As painful as it is to acknowledge that, we must forgive many things the world calls unforgivable. That does not mean that people do not pay for their crime or experience consequences for the wrong. God is the one that established law and order. Faith and trust in God do not mean we pretend feelings are not real. It means we have confidence that He will and can change us and things. It means we believe that He can heal us in our spirit, soul, and body. We will not always know the answer to why or the "how could they"? At times we may get neither from God nor man, but the difference is God always has a purpose and plan. He reveals to redeem. He

is sovereign. Accepting the will of God is different from accepting pain inflicted on us by the sins of another person. Yet, they both can be difficult to accept. One involves accepting that God is all-knowing and in charge (even when it seems like He is nowhere to be found), and the other is about forgiving.

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matthew 6:14-15

Forgive and be forgiven

Prayer is one of the ways we connect with our Father. It is in prayer that we ask for forgiveness. It is required that we forgive others, just as we desire our Father in heaven to forgive us. The inability to forgive blocks our ability to be truly effective change agents. It is a sin to be unforgiving and it stifles our prayer life. When Jesus taught the disciples about prayer, He taught them about forgiveness, as well. So, we must assume that the two go hand in hand, if we expect to receive answered prayers.

Jesus replied, Have faith in God [constantly]. I assure you and most solemnly say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea!’ and does not doubt in his heart [in God’s unlimited power], but believes that what he says is going to take place, it will be done for him [in accordance with God’s will]. For this reason I am telling you, whatever things you ask for in prayer [in accordance with God’s will], believe [with confident trust] that you have received them, and they will be given to you. Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him [drop the issue, let it go], so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions and wrongdoings [against

Him and others]. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions." Mark 11:22-26 (AMP)28

It is easy for us to read the above scriptural verses, get lost in the moving mountains and having whatever we say, but Jesus said before we can move one mountain, we must forgive. When we don't forgive, we put ourselves in a prison. Even some unsaved people realize that forgiveness brings them some sort of freedom. Why is this so difficult for the church to receive? There is a great spirit of deception concerning this. Remember when we become born again, we come with all our weights and baggage, but as we spend time in the presence of God, they are supposed to fall away. We are to lay them down, strip them off and learn to run this race with patience. It should become our heart's desire to be free of all those weights and baggage. It should be our desire to lay them down and let them go.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who by faith have testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness], stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us, let us run with endurance and active persistence the race that is set before us, [looking away from all that will distract us and] focusing our eyes on Jesus, who is the Author and Perfecter of faith [the first incentive for our belief and the One who brings our faith to maturity], who for the joy [of accomplishing the goal] set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [revealing His deity, His authority, and the completion of His work]. Hebrews 12:1-2 (AMP)

Satan will use our own decisions not to forgive against us!

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell

you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca29,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:2124

Forgiveness will break the power of resentment, bitterness, reprisal and revenge over our lives. If we do not practice forgiveness, we are bound to live a life that is repeatedly governed by unforgiveness, bitterness, grudges, resentment, anger and planning/carrying out vengeful activities. I know from personal experience that it is a life filled with intense periods of stress, unfulfillment and unhappiness. I remember my mother saying two things to my husband when he asked for my hand in marriage, aside from ‘yes you can marry my daughter.’. She said, “She can be as sweet as pie or as mean as a skunk can stink. Don’t make her angry.” I was a hurt person, and it is so true that “hurt people, hurt people.” At the time I did not even think anything was wrong with what she said about me. I felt that my husband should see that as a warning not to make me upset or he would get it. Remember, my thinking was stinky and I was content to be that way. Even though I was born again as a child, I had not been healed from some of the pain that bound me, so I bounced around between depression, anger, unforgiveness and grudge-holding at various times in my life. These various emotional states are like having frequent whirlwinds rule your life. So, obviously, we cannot be our best at anything when we are constantly in an emotional tailspin.

Change must start in the change agent first. Any excessive amount of impurities will prevent us from being effective and lifting up the name of Jesus.

The Word of God teaches us that when we forgive others, our Father hears and responds to prayers prayed in faith, in Jesus' name. How awesome to know that we can enter the presence of the Father through the works of Jesus Christ, God's Anointed One. Becoming born-again is as simple as believing in our hearts and confessing with our mouths, but He has obtained so much for us and He wants us to receive it. If we don't want it, then that is another topic. It is no secret that some people don't think they need help. They believe they are just fine. Because they have held on to it so long, that it has festered and become a part of who they are. Unfortunately, sometimes this is how the world sees us and often, people will say, "That's how they are." This is often how people try to excuse such ungodly behavior, make excuses and willfully disobey the Word of God. It should never be our desire to remain this way. Sometimes people want to change but still can't seem to ever get a handle on it. In that case, they may need some deliverance administration30 to help them be free. Deliverance administration is not mystical or a bunch of "hocus pocus." It is the Word of God.

Have we truly accepted His works on the cross? Do we really accept the totality of His victorious life, death, burial and resurrection?

God cares for us

It is vital in the life of every believer to accept the totality of Jesus' victories otherwise, they will miss the truth of how much He loves them and how much the Father wants to answer their prayers. It is difficult for some people to believe that God is concerned about them on any personal level or that He does not want our lives to be in such disarray. Many people will tell you that they believe God is real, but they don't think He cares about them personally. They see Him as a hands-off God. But He is Jehovah-Rapha, the God who heals and restores. God revealed Himself to the children of Israel in this manner after they had been delivered and left Egypt in the great

exodus. (He revealed Himself to us through Jesus). They were in the wilderness wandering in the desert and they were thirsty. When they arrived at Marah, they found water, but they could not drink it because it was contaminated. The people began to mummer against Moses for bringing them to this place. But Jehovah-Rapha purified/healed the waters so they could drink. God made the bitter water sweet for His people. God Almighty promised to heal them and take care of them, if they obeyed Him (see Exodus 15:22-26).

Prayer

If you don’t believe that God cares about you, you are less likely to pray or believe that you can receive an answer to your prayers. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” It is not just faith that gets answers to prayer, it is also believing that He is God and believing that He rewards those that constantly, earnestly, and persistently seek Him. Many things can be said about prayer and it involves several concepts. To most people, prayer is the act of bringing a petition or request before God and this is true. But prayer is so much more. Prayer is more than firing-off a list of needs and desires to God.

After this manner or in this way pray.

It is recorded in Luke the 11th chapter that a disciple asked Jesus to teach them to pray right after Jesus had just finished praying. They must have realized that their prayers were not achieving the desired results, so they wanted to know what they were missing. They had seen Him heal people, cast out demons, calm the sea, raise the dead, forgive sins and more, so He must know something. At the disciple's request, Jesus provided a pattern of prayer that most of us were taught as a child and many of us still pray this prayer every day. He said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matthew 6:9-13).

I believe that it is important to enter prayer with intention and purpose, but always be aware that we are not in charge of its direction. We should always pray to the Father in the name of Jesus and be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to direct us. This is very important, because there are some prayers that are more Holy Spirit led than others. Our prayers are always more effective when we know the Word of God and use it appropriately in prayer. Of course, God knows who He is, but it sets a tone, precedence in prayer when we use His word in prayer and follow a set of biblical principles. Praying this way also helps us.

The Power of the Word of God

God's word is full of power and it is creative. (Read Genesis chapter one). God's Word is so powerful it consumes as a fire does and breaks anything like a smashing hammer. (See Jeremiah 23:29). It is the final authority about everything. Jesus is the living Word of God! The Word of God will never fail or pass away! He has proven Himself faithful.

Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled. Joshua 21:45 (NIV).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3

For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 (AMPC)

Jesus' name has authority and power

Jesus' name has authority because of who He is and what He has done! As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove

and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV).

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. Matthew 7:24-29 (NIV).

And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit and at once the curtain of the sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep in death were raised [to life]; And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus observed the earthquake and all that was happening, they were terribly frightened and filled with awe, and said, Truly this was God’s Son!” Matthew 27:50-54 (AMPC).

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting

out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Colossians 2:9-15 (KJV).

Empowered to Succeed (Knowing who we are)

As born again believers we have been empowered to succeed at anything we are called to do, but we are not expected to do it alone. True empowerment involves processes of input, support and continued guidance until goals are reached and objectives are achieved. This is the approach that Jesus used with His disciples from the day His ministry began on earth and until He ascended into heaven. In fact, Jesus continues to empower us through the Holy Spirit as He sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus said, “Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the (very) close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be).” (AMPC).

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet

and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. Acts 3:2-8 (NIV).

When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:68 (NIV).

Put on your armor

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV).

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV).

It does not do a soldier any good to know that they have instruments/equipment to protect themselves and defeat the enemy with, if they never use them. There have been times in my life when I wished God would do everything for me, but I have had to accept that it is not like that. Maybe you have felt that way at times? It is during these times we must rely on the Holy Spirit the most. So, I willingly choose to accept that if I want to know victory in my life, I have got to pick up my armor, put it on and fight the good fight of faith daily.

My mother was a Sunday school teacher and I remember her teaching me the Word of God at home. It made a deep impression on me. She laid a foundation for my thirst for the Word of God. My godmother always sang a song about being a soldier in God's army. I have heard many people sing that song before and since, but no one sang it with her compassion and drive. You knew she meant it. She was in a war and you knew which side she was on. I grew up watching her live a life of prayer and fasting, just as she does today. We become the best soldiers when we spend time learning God's Word, fasting and praying. No one ever actually said the latter to me in those words, but I learned that from watching and listening to both of them. We impact others by the things we say and do. Our Savior and Lord made it clear that we are to "Be Salt," live our lives with integrity and show all around us evidence of the fruit of the Spirit (God's character). Salt can enhance everything it comes in contact with and we, like salt, need to affect everything we come in contact with positively for the kingdom of God. That includes our families, jobs, neighbors, and government. Nothing around us should be untouched by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus spent His earthly ministry teaching the disciples how to "Be Salt" in the earth and that has not changed. We are commanded to cover the earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to do that will require us to put on the armor of God and work together as the body of Christ. We are the salt of the earth; let's cover and sprinkle the earth for the kingdom of God. "Be Salt," everywhere you are. Simply because that's what a disciple does, they make it their business to learn and follow the ways of their teacher. There should not be a struggle about our identity and our ability to be effective on the earth. That has been settled for us.

We are the Church

The 20th century psychotherapist and psychiatrist Carl Jung, who created the field of analytical psychology made a valid point, when he said, “The world will ask you who you are, and if you don’t know, the world will tell you.” Unfortunately, we can see a reflection of this statement in the church as a whole today. The government and world are daily attempting to tell the church who we are since its creation. They want to tell the church what we can say, even where and when we can obey our Lord. Many of us have absorbed this form of impurities, and it has diminished our effectiveness on the earth. Jesus meant for us to change the world, not for the world to change us. This is not the time to forget the commands of our Savior. We (the church) have got to make it our business to drive out every illegal position the world has taken in the body of Christ, which has made us impure and caused us to become ineffective in the environment in which we live.

Church, we must never forget that Jesus already addressed our identity and purpose. If you find yourself looking for that you must remember that our identity and purpose is found in Him and His finished work that He accomplished through His life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, ascension into heaven and the position in which He sits. You may not know to which office you have been called to, if any. You may not know your gifting yet, but, from the beginning, Jesus declared that we are the salt of the earth. On the day that the Holy Spirit spoke those words to my heart I believe He was essentially telling me the same words. Till this day, I still remember the words the prophetess spoke to me at that conference. One of the things she said was, “If we compare ourselves, we defeat ourselves.” I had not even realized how long I had been causing my own self to be so ineffective.

Satan, our enemy, is very subtle and cunning. Deception is one of his goals.

He wants to spread confusion and discord among us so that we don't carry out our order and purpose. He wants us to feel conflicted about our orders. Therefore, we must be on the alert for his seeds of disruption and deception among us. We must be a unified body, an obedient army willing to obey our Lord and Savior; who are willing to be salt as He commands.

Before the time God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26). He was at work offering and providing them an identity and purpose. They both were lost to us with the fall of Man to sin, but Jesus came and gave it back to us. What an awesome relationship God has extended towards us. We have access to the most valuable relationship any human being could ever have. We have been empowered to do great things in the earth for our Father. The metaphorical statement in Matthew 5:13 makes plain the powerful position we were given in the earth. We were never meant to be helpless and powerless in our environment.

Our God-given purpose and identity

Purpose and identity was given to man in the beginning, man lost it. Jesus gave it back to the church. So, now why would we want the world to assign us a new identity or purpose. It could not possibly be better than the life altering one Jesus has already given us. We were told to take ground and hold territories. "…go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15 CSB). When we are salt, this is automatic.

In the beginning of this book, I said I had been looking for purpose and wanting something to do in the kingdom of God. I did not realize that I'd

already been given identity and purpose the moment I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I will acknowledge that life is not always easy and as human beings, we do and can get distracted and weary. But if you remember the words spoken in Habakkuk 3:18-19, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon my high places.”

Born Again Believer Remember

Prayer

Father, I give thanks to You, because You are good. I give thanks to You, because You are merciful and full of loving-kindness. I thank You because You hear the cry of Your people. I will praise You with all my heart. I praise You Lord, because blessed is the man that fears You and takes joy in obeying You. I worship You, because You are worthy and holy. You are my creator and I love You. I submit myself to Your leadership and Lordship. Father, I ask You to forgive me for the times that I went ahead of You. I thank You that I can stand before You and ask for forgiveness because of the blood of Jesus.

Thank You, Jesus, for sacrificing Your life for me and shedding in Your blood. Thank You, Jesus, for the blood of Jesus that cleanses me from all unrighteousness. Thank You for the stripes that You took on Your body and the beating that You took so that I may be healed in my body and in my soul. Thank You for the redemption through Jesus Christ. Thank You for forgiving me of my sins. Help me to live a life of forgiveness. Father in the name of Jesus, help me to forgive those that offend me. I don’t want to hold grudges. I don’t want to be full of resentment. I don’t want to be full of anger. Therefore, if I have any of these things in me, I ask You to help me to let them go. Holy Spirit cleanse me of all unrighteousness through the blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, if I have offended anyone, help me to be quick to admit it and seek forgiveness. I don’t want my flesh and my will to hinder me from being salt in the earth and obeying Your command. I am truly grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit who lives on the inside of me. Thank You for being a Comforter, Instructor and a Guide. Thank You for never leaving me alone.

Father, I want to be salt in the earth so teach me to do my part. Your words said that one plants, one waters and the Holy Spirit brings the increase. Holy Spirit, send laborers into the vineyard. I ask that You empower them to do the will of the father on the earth. Bless those that are on the mission

field for You Lord. Grant them safety, meet their needs, strengthen them, encourage them and protect them in Jesus name. Jesus, help us to turn the world upside down for You. Help us to promote You and not ourselves. Help us to be salt. Help us to bring glory to You everywhere we go by the things we do and say. Let the earth be covered with Your glory as we are salt for You. Teach our hands how to war for You. Let Your Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Evangelist and Pastor come forth for Your Glory. Equip Your people to do the will of the Father in the earth in Jesus name. Let the saints of God arise out of their slumber. Let the saints of God be joyful in the glory of God. You are great God and we need You to be the best salt that we can be for You. We are powerless to carry out Your commands without You.

We need You Holy Spirit in our homes, jobs and houses of worship. Lord, we don't want to meet any more in dead houses of worship. Forgive us for the times we have gone ahead of you. Now, we will follow You as the glory cloud, who lights the way for us. You are a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. Reveal Yourself to us and speak to our heart. We need Your wisdom, Your knowledge and Your understanding. We don't want to be a powerless church. Father, our leaders need You. Lord, let us have ears to hear You and a heart to receive You. Pour out Your Holy Spirit among us. Fill us up. I pray that You will strengthen Your people. Help us that our hearts please You. Father, help us so we will not put any man's opinion ahead of Your Word. Lord, You are the refiner and the purifier. No one can change us like You can. You have the right and permission to mold and shape us. You are our potter. Your Word is like a consuming fire and a hammer and nothing can stand against it. You are faithful. Thank You for loving me. Thank You for hearing me. You keep Your Word. I bless Your Holy Name. Father, You are the greater desire of my heart. I believe that You God are with and for me. Thank You for teaching me daily how to be salt and enabling me to be salt in Jesus name, I pray. Amen!

The Author

Millicent D. Cullum is an Apostle chosen by God. She holds a Bachelor of Art degree in theology with a concentration in Prophetic Deliverance. Millicent has been in ministry for over 30 years. She is the visionary and founder of Naba Ministries. It is her passion, and joy is to serve, strengthen, and encourage God's people as she helps them to understand, mature and follow their purpose in God. She encourages every born-again believer she meets to pursue inner healing from our Father God, because He loves them and always wants what is best for them. Apostle Cullum believes that God's people have been mandated to bring change to the lives of people through the power of the Holy Spirit.

She is a widow (late husband Allan T. Cullum) and the mother of three (one son and two daughters). She has one grandchild, Ava. She is a spiritual mother to many sons and daughters. Some of whom are serving in God's kingdom in various capacities in the five-fold ministry.

Apostle Cullum believes that, no matter who you are, your ministry must start at home, and then reach out to the world around you. She has two statements that she likes to share with any Christian parent. The first is, "Don't give your children to the enemy of our souls with the words of your mouth." The second is, "You must show your children what you value."

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[←2]

Novak, Al, Hebrew Honey: A Simple and Deep Word Study of the Old Testament, J. Countryman Publishers, 1965 P.O. Box 90776 Houston, Texas 77290

[←3]

Hebrew Honey: A Simple and Deep Word Study of the Old Testament, Al Novak, pg. 170

[←4]

Rajah, Abraham Apostolic & Prophetic Dictionary: Language of The End-Time Church West Bow Press

A Division of Thomas Nelson, 2013 1663 Liberty Drive Blooming, IN 47403 e-book

[←5]

Apostolic & Prophetic Dictionary; Language of The End-Time Church, Abraham S Rajah; e-book

[←6]

Endometriosis is a female reproductive disorder. It can cause pelvic pain, inflammation and vaginal bleeding. It is a condition in which cells similar to those in the endometrium, the layer of tissue that normally covers the inside of the uterus, grow outside of it. Usually this is on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and tissue around the uterus and ovaries; however, in rare cases this may also occur in other parts of the body. There have been cases where these cells have even been found in the ear canal and when they were triggered by hormones can caused great pain in the ear canal during menstruation and ovulation.

(Information from https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/endometriosis/symptoms-causes on 12/2/2019)

[←7]

Holy Bible NIV, 2016 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

[←8]

https://www.biblegateway.com/ Message Bible Retrieved 5/31/2020

[←9]

Kurlansky, Mark Salt: A World History, Walker Publishing Company, Inc. 2002 Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014

[←10]

Ions- An atom or a group of atoms that has acquired a net electric charge by gaining or losing one or more electrons. (The American Heritage College Dictionary pg. 731)

[←11]

Electrolyte- A conductor in which electric current is carried by the movement of ions that are not metallic. A substance that when dissolved in a suitable solvent or when melted becomes an ionic conductor.

[←12]

Ucko, David Living Chemistry: An Introduction to General, Organic, and Biological Chemistry, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1986 Orlando, Florida 32887

[←13]

Osmotic pressure - the minimum pressure that needs to be in a solution to prevent the inward flow of water across a semipermeable membrane. It is also the measure of the tendency of a solution to take in water by osmosis. Osmosis is a diffusion (passage) of fluid through a semi-permeable membrane from a solution with a low solute concentration to a solution with a higher solute concentration until there is an equal solute concentration on both sides of the membrane. This is a gradual process of assimilation or absorption.

[←14]

A buffer solution resists changes in its pH levels when small quantities of an acid or an alkali are added to it. A buffer solution is able to neutralize small amounts of acid or base, thus keeping the pH of the solution relatively stable. An acid buffer solution is one that has a pH of less than seven. It is a weak acid. A buffer solution always contains two parts so that it can neutralize either an acid or a base that would be introduced into its environment. Acid buffer solutions are usually made up of a weak acid and one of its salt is usually sodium.

[←15]

Kurlansky, Mark Salt: A World History, page 5

[←16]

https://www.discoverchinatours.com/travel-guide/yuncheng/yuncheng-salt-lake/ Retrieved 1/27/2020

[←17]

Yuncheng Salt Lake is in the southwest of Yuncheng city and the largest lake in Shanxi Province. The Salt Lake is a typical inland saltwater lake. It covers an area of 120 square kilometers. It is the world's third largest sodium sulfate inland lake. This information was obtained 12/22/2019 from https://www.discoverchinatours.com/travel-guide/yuncheng/yuncheng-salt-lake/

[←18]

Geology is the science comprising the study of solid Earth, the rocks of which it is composed, and the processes by which they change. It is the science that deals with the earth's physical structure and substance, its history, and the processes that act on it. Geology can also refer generally to the study of the solid features of any celestial body. (information obtained 12/22/2019 from https://www.britannica.com/science/geology)

[←19]

Mission – 1a.) A body of persons sent to conduct negotiations or establish relations with a foreign country. b). The business with which such a body of persons is charged. (The American Heritage College Dictionary – pg. 890). A mission is a specific task with which a person or a group is charged of performing or accomplishing something.

[← 20]

Commission – 1a.) The act of granting certain powers or the authority to carry out a particular task or duty. b.) The authority so granted. c.) The matter or task so authorized. d.) A document conferring such authorization. 2a.) A group of people officially authorized to perform certain duties or functions. (The American Heritage College Dictionary – pg. 288). A commission is given by a person in charge. It is instruction, command, or duty given to a person or group of people.

[← 21]

https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-is-the-difference-between-grace-andmercy.html (retrieved 01/02/2020)

[← 22]

New American Standard Bible, 1995 Edition, Foundation La Habra, California, 90631

[←23]

Umami – A taste characteristic of monosodium glutamate and associated with meats and other high-protein food. (The American Heritage College Dictionary).

[←24]

The Holy Spirit convicts the believer of sin. The verb “convict” is used in the sense of making one aware of a sinful thought or behavior. Feelings of remorse and regret will often accompany sin awareness.

[←25]

Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC) , 1995 The Zondervan Corporation Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530, U.S.A.

[←26]

Osmosis is a process by which molecules of a solvent tend to pass through a semipermeable membrane from a less concentrated solution into a more concentrated one, thus equalizing the concentrations on each side of the membrane. It is movement of a solvent (such as water) through a semipermeable membrane (as of a living cell) into a solution of higher solute concentration that tends to equalize the concentrations of solute on the two sides of the membrane.

[←27]

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[←28]

Amplified Bible, 1987, The Lockman Foundation (lockman.org) Retrieved 5/9/2020

[←29]

Raca- An old Aramaic term of contempt.

[←30]

Deliverance Administration- is a form of ministry in which people are set free from demonic control, be it oppression, procession or suppression. Deliverance is done through the evicting, casting out and binding their work and activity. See Mark 16:17-18; Luke 10:19.