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TRULY BELIEVING GOD'S WORD

Dear Friends,

August 2013

Back in 1977 the ground-breaking movie *Star Wars* was released. Many people I knew went to see it and told me it was incredible, having the most stunning special effects they had ever seen. In spite of their glowing reviews, I thought the movie sounded stupid and refused to waste my money. But finally, after more friends shared their excitement, I decided to go see for myself if it was really that good. I went alone, because the one thing I didn't want to do was take a date to see a goofy, boring movie.

The theater was huge, seating almost 2,000 people with a massive screen and unequaled sound system. I sat in my seat, expecting to be greatly disappointed. But from the opening scenes I was hooked. I simply could not believe what I was seeing. Never before had any movie been released with such stunning, advanced, technological creativity. Other movies since released have had equally impressive - and greater - special effects. But for that time, it was the most spectacular movie ever shown in any theater anywhere. I was so captivated that I went back to see it again and again and again.

Had I believed the repeated, enthusiastic acclaim showered on the movie by my friends, I would have gone to see the movie much sooner. But simply put, I just didn't believe it could be as good as they said. I now understand that a similar problem exists in the Body of Christ concerning spiritual growth.

In Matthew 4:4, Jesus declared that we are to live by every word of God. That means we can never exalt any form of religious doctrine over what is written in scripture if we ever hope to mature spiritually. On the surface, that sounds great and I have no doubt that most Christians would agree. But the down side is that once we begin to look closely in scripture, it is quite possible we will discover how something we believe is countered by what God has said. I'll give you some examples.

In 1 John 4:17 we read that *"as He [Jesus] is, so are we in this world.* 2 Corinthians 3:18 declares, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* Further more, Jesus said in John 14:12, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also..."* Thus, God is telling us in His word that:

- Christians are a non-deified, "replication" of Jesus
- Christians have the potential to live on Earth with the same level of glory as did Jesus
- Christians have the potential to do the exact, same works on Earth as did Jesus

Now, since these truths were originally spoken by God and recorded in the Bible, why is it so hard for us to believe them? Yet what we actually find are churches which teach just the opposite; that no one can be like Jesus, that no one can have His glory, and no one can do His works. But aren't such doctrines the exact *opposite* of what God has said?

Let's also consider the following. In 1 Corinthians 14:14 we are told that when we pray in tongues, our spirit is praying. This same chapter also tells us that when we speak (pray) in tongues we are speaking directly and specifically to God, and that we are edifying ourselves (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4). Then Jude 1:20 explains that when we pray in the Spirit (tongues), we are building ourselves up on our most holy faith. Thus, God is telling us in His word that:

- Christians are having direct, spiritual interaction with Him when they pray in tongues
- Christians are having a private, personal conversation with Him when they pray in tongues
- Christians are developing their faith when they pray in tongues, (subsequently facilitating His instruction that we walk by faith, not by sight)

Now, since these truths were originally spoken by God and recorded in the Bible, why is it so hard for us to believe them? Why would *any* minister teach that tongues are of the devil, that tongues have passed away or that tongues are not for all Christians? Aren't such doctrines the exact *opposite* of what God has said?

I could continue, sharing scriptures about worship, fasting, confession of God's word and other topics that are very often refuted in sermons. But if God has established principles in His word which are applicable to the Body of Christ, then we should be living every day by His words which are not going to pass away. So the question arises: Why don't we live by every word He has given us?

The answer is really quite simple: We aren't yet convinced it will work.

The words of my friends about the movie *Star Wars* were true; I just didn't believe any movie could be that spectacular and exciting. But once I did what was necessary to experience the movie for myself, I realized it truly was that good and couldn't wait to see it again. If I could finally be convinced by my friends' words to see a movie, how much more should I be convinced by God Himself when He has told me who I am in Christ, what I can do in Christ, and what praying in tongues, fasting, worship and meditating, reading and confessing His word will do for me?

What I have learned over the years is that Christians generally base what they believe on what is said by a preacher they esteem to be further along in God than they. Preachers paint an image of God and scripture that, if appealing to the logic and mental reasoning of an individual, will be accepted without question.

Many years ago I was in a service where the preacher asked the congregation to write down the name and birth date of any rebellious children so he and his staff could pray and "break the power of the stars connected to the birth date" that was controlling those children. I was shocked at how many people - including some in our church - believed such a thing. I actually preached an entire sermon in our church to prove from scripture why such a doctrine is completely and utterly false.

But even if a preacher someone trusts explains in detail from scripture all the benefits of praying in tongues, clearly revealing how it will cause a Believer to mature more quickly in the Lord, unless that person truly believes what is said he will not apply himself to

praying in tongues. You see, it is one thing for me to agree that something is true: it is quite another for me to be so convinced that I actually apply that truth to my life. Life-changing truth, until it is acted upon, is just information. It is only by the application of the information that we experience transformation.

Many Christians also base what they accept as truth from God's word on what they see in the lives of other Christians. Although they don't consciously mean it this way, what they are actually doing is judging the reliability and integrity of God's word by the lives of fallible humans. This is not wise. God's word is true no matter what we see happening to other Christians.

As individual Believers we must come to the place where we believe and act on God's word regardless of what we have heard from or seen in others. If God says praying in tongues produces spiritual edification, then I need to make such prayer a part of my life no matter what others believe. If God says I am righteous (Ephesians 4:24), then I am righteous and must begin to see myself as righteous, even if preachers have told me otherwise. If God says healing is for today, then I need to begin applying His word for my healing to manifest; why on Earth would I choose to accept a sickness in light of His truth about healing?

The concept of accepting and living exclusively by God's word over man's is much easier said than done. The roots of well-taught but incorrect doctrine can run very deep in a person's belief system. Old habits in both daily routine and the way we talk can be extremely difficult to break. The only way this will change is if we make a conscious effort to make the necessary adjustments.

This lesson has been something I have struggled with over the years. I first had to uproot volumes of wrong doctrine which had taken up residence in my heart. Then I had to convince myself to be a doer of the word, not just a hearer only. If I pray in tongues, I am guaranteed to get results. If I worship, I am guaranteed to experience its benefits. If I meditate in and confess God's word, I will become more of what the word says I am. These results are *guaranteed* because God cannot lie.

But the opposite is just as true. If I do not pray in the Spirit, worship, or meditate and confess the word of God, I will **NOT** get the promised results. In spite of this simple concept, I have actually had it said to me that Christians can do other things and get the exact, same results. That is **IMPOSSIBLE**, and there is **NOTHING** in the Bible which confirms such a belief; that being so, why would any Christian want to believe such a doctrine?

The challenge for me, as a pastor, is to try and convince Christians that change is inevitable if they will just discipline themselves to apply God's word and live by what He has said. I, too, have fought battles in this arena of self-discipline. But I have learned that, while the change will indeed come, it is going to take time. Applying and living by God's word must become a lifestyle, not just an occasional event.

The more we live by God's word the more we will understand that, yes, we can be like Jesus here on Earth; yes, we can do His works. No, we will **NEVER** edify ourselves spiritually to the point of being deity; but we can definitely get to the place of representing Jesus on Earth in the way that He represented the Father while He was on Earth.

I encourage you to not just acknowledge that God's word is irrefutable truth, but to begin living it's truth every day of your life. At times, it may take a real step of faith to accept that doing certain things outlined in scripture will bring permanent change. But if you will be diligent and disciplined in applying His word, the change **WILL** take place.

In His Grace,

Jim

NEW TEACHING SERIES RELEASED!

Over the last three years or so I have observed some very interesting "discussions" among Christians concerning several topics. Here is a sampling:

- When Christians sin, they do not have to repent; they are already forgiven for all past, present and future sins, and there are no verses in the Bible instructing Christians to repent. Yet, other people declare that the Bible teaches it is required of Christians to repent when they sin.
- Extended times of prayer, studying scripture, worship, fasting, etc are unnecessary works; God's grace will produce change in a Believer. On the other hand, many teach that Christians do need to incorporate extended times of prayer, studying scripture, worship and fasting in their lives.
- It is impossible for a Christian to fall out of fellowship with God. At the same time, others believe it is very possible for Christians to fall out of fellowship with God.
- The lost who come to Christ do not have to lay down sin and change their ways; God's grace will change them automatically. However, many teach that the lost are responsible for getting the sin out of their lives.

Much scripture is used to support both sides of these and other doctrines which seem diametrically opposed to each other. Therefore, what is true? What exactly does scripture have to say and what does God actually expect of Christians? For example, if I don't need to repent for sins I commit, why spend my time repenting?

I have recently completed a new teaching series that breaks down scripture in precise, line-upon-line fashion to find answers. You **NEED** to hear this series titled, "Who Hath Bewitched You?" It is not just one sermon, but 20 sermons on one MP3 CD that will take you on a wonderful, exciting adventure through scripture to discover what God has truly established as standards for His Kingdom. (You can order this MP3 CD on the next page.)

KENYA PRAYER & POWER CONFERENCE

In just a few days, Kathy and I will be leaving for Kenya to minister in a Prayer and Power Conference to be held in Migori. The dates are Sunday, August 11 through Sunday August 18. Services will be held at the Kakrao School. For more information, please send an email to the host pastor, Ken Oluock, at childrenshope2007@yahoo.com.

When the Prayer and Power Conference has concluded, we will be traveling north to Kisumu, Kenya for services to be held Monday, August 19 through Wednesday, August 21 at the Disciples of Mercy Family Church (located just past Mamboleo, next to the

Kisumu Concrete Quarry). For service times and more information, please contact Pastor Jennie Ochieng at dom@africaonline.co.ke.

Please join us in praying over this tremendous opportunity to be used of God in accomplishing His Kingdom purposes. If the Lord speaks to you about sending an offering to assist in this trip, that would be such a blessing. In no way do we want to be a financial burden to anyone over there. We know that God is able to make all grace abound toward us; that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8).

MINISTRY UPDATES ON FACEBOOK

If you would like to receive our ministry updates via Facebook, please send me a friend request. Type in "Jim Martin" in the Facebook search box. My ministry page has a picture of Kathy and me sitting on a large rock in front of a lake.

2014 SPRING PRAYER AND POWER CONFERENCE DATES

The dates for our Spring Prayer and Power Conference are now set for Sunday, April 27 through Friday, May 2. Our host hotel will again be the Country Inn and Suites 3971 Colonel Glenn Highway, Beavercreek, Ohio 45324). I have blocked off 30 rooms; two have already been reserved! To make your own reservation, call 937-429-2222.

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_____ Please send me the MP3 CD of the series, "Who Hath Bewitched You?"

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My love gift for this month is: \$_____
Make checks or money orders payable to "Jim Martin Ministries."

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