

# PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

## Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.10.2

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF contains chapters 3-5 of the book *Sarah's Children*.

I was led of the Spirit of Christ to write this book in the year 2002. I received many grateful letters from women who were aspiring to be all that God had created them to be. Yet some of the letters I received from women expressed criticism.

Some women did not like the message of this book. I am persuaded that the chief reason that some object is that the message leads to a personal cross. Women find that they will have to deny themselves to attain to Yahweh's plan for their life.

A few suggested that this book was typical of writings by men who want to tell women how they should live, but they will not apply the same standard to men.

It is ever a temptation of people to attack the messenger when they find a message displeasing to them. However, this particular criticism has always been easily refuted by me.

The year before I wrote *Sarah's Children* I wrote the book *Sabbath*. The book *Sabbath* was written to instruct men in the will of God for their lives. The message of *Sabbath* is that man has been given Christ as head, even as *Sarah's Children* relates that

woman has been given man as head.

Men are to do nothing of their own initiative. As Christ showed in His life, men are to always live to do the will and pleasure of the Father. Man is not an independent creature. He was created by God for God's pleasure. The apostle Paul testified to men, "You are not your own. You have been bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:20).

God's government brings all creation to embrace a personal cross. Men must die to their own desire and will as much as women. God makes no distinction. All must take up their cross daily to follow Christ.

### Food for Thought

*"This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or use it for good. What I do today is important, because I'm exchanging a day of my life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something that I have traded for it. I want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil; success, not failure; in order that I shall not regret the price I paid for it."*

Anonymous

### Scripture Memory

Ephesians 5:15-16

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

#### Parables Newsletter

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# Sarah's Children

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The watchmen who make the rounds in the city  
found me,

They struck me and wounded me;

The guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl  
from me.

Song of Songs 5:7

## The Bitter Cup

**O**ne benefit of releasing this book in serialized form is that it gives me an opportunity to gauge the response of those who are receiving it. After announcing the book and sending out the Introduction I received much effusive praise and encouragement from many women.

The Introduction spoke of the high calling of women, and of women being viewed as holy. It made mention of the reactions godly women are getting on the sidewalks and in public places as men see something pure in them as they are adorned with modesty and humility. It spoke of godly women being viewed as beacons of light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. What I was sharing excited many women, and rightly so.

Yet as I have gotten into the next two chapters the response has changed. Instead of a gusher of praise and excitement I have found an eerie silence and a few questioning e-mails and I am hearing rumors of great discontent.

I am not surprised by this response. In the introduction of the book I spoke of the fruit of the life of a godly woman, and the fruit is exceedingly good. Yet the next two chapters spoke of the process of bringing forth this fruit. The process is not so glori-

ous as the fruit. We have the words of our Savior that clearly reveal the path to fruitfulness and glory.

John 12:24-25

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

The last chapter was entitled "Dying to Live". There is one fact that often we would like to forget. To reach a place of fruitfulness in our lives we must first go through crushing and a process of death. The hard outer shell of our life must be broken open to allow the life of Christ to come forth.

The message of the previous chapters is that a woman must come to a place of having no life of her own. She must give up her own life. She must die to self. She must embrace crucifixion of her flesh and all of its desires. I can hear the objections in the silence.

"Is there no other way?"

"Cannot this cup pass from me?"

"Must I truly take man as my head and become submissive to him, even calling my husband lord?"

"Must I truly remain silent, chaste and respectful even when he is walking in disobedience to the word of God, as Peter has said?"

"Must I refrain from usurping authority over man in anyway?"

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And with every question the flesh of woman cries out for deliverance. "Must I endure the scourging, the crown of thorns and the nails? Must I really die in order for life and fruit to come forth?" Yet once again we hear the words of Christ:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Death comes before glory. The seed must die to bring forth fruit.

Know this, the objections that arise have nothing to do with whether these things be true, for they are, and they are exceedingly plain in scripture. The objections arise because the flesh seeks to avoid suffering and death. "The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5), and this warfare can be brutal. The greatest struggle in our lives is always at the crisis of decision.

Consider the suffering of our Savior. His greatest agony wasn't on the cross, it was in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is where He sweat drops of blood. This is where His soul was deeply grieved to the point of death (Matthew 26:38, Mark 14:34). Gethsemane means "olive press". It is here that the olives were crushed to separate the pure oil from them. It is the oil from the crushed flesh of the olive that was used as a continual light in the Temple.

For our lives to become as light in a darkened world we must undergo the crushing of our flesh. But if we crucify the flesh, if we surrender our lives and refuse to hold onto our will, then we will not abide alone, but we will bear fruit.

The greatest trial is always in the act of deciding. When we think we might escape the will of God by any other means our flesh yet has hope. When we

hear the Father say, "This is the only way", it is like a sentence of death. We agonize and cry out, "Father, if there is any other way... please Father let this cup pass from me!"

I know there is much in the first two chapters of this book that seems dreadful and so very unreasonable. Why should woman be subject to man, after all? Yet, in this, please note that the Father is not so interested in woman being subjected to man as He is in bringing woman to the place of dying that life might come forth. What better way to bring forth death than to ask women to do something that seems totally unfair?

I hear the objections in the silence. What is required of woman is unfair. A woman has a perfectly good mind, why should she not be free to choose her own way? A woman is capable of making her own decisions, why should she have to submit to her husband's will? A woman can sense right from wrong very well, why should she remain silent when her husband is in gross disobedience? A woman has her own life, why should she not live to fulfill her own desires?

It is unreasonable and unfair, plain and simple. Yet it is the revealed will of God.

Remember, it was also the will of God that His perfect Son, who was well pleasing to Him in every way, should suffer for sins He did not commit. It was the Father's will for His only begotten Son to receive in His body the penalty for every sin of mankind when He Himself was a spotless and pure lamb. This was unfair. There is no reasonable law that demands that the innocent pay the consequences for the sins of the wicked. Yet this was the Father's will.

Isaiah 53:10

But Yahweh was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His off-

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spring...

It is the Father's good will to crush every one of us, and if we will allow it we will also see the fruit of our obedience.

There is no other way. The pathway to life is through the valley of death.

If you are debating right now whether the things written in the first two chapters of this book could possibly be right, if you have already concluded that the author must certainly be deceived in some way, I would have you to consider this:

***What has been written will require every woman to go through a crushing process. Denying what has been written will free every woman from this same process. The will of the Father is that we all be crushed that the oil of anointing might overflow from our lives bringing life to others. There is a Gethsemane that lies between each one of us and an overcoming life.***

Yahshua pleaded, "If there be any other way, let this cup pass from Me." Yet no other way was offered, and our Savior asks us to take up our cross and follow Him. He overcame, and in Him we also can overcome. Don't be surprised that the way seems exceedingly grievous and that our flesh cries out with everything it has to not go this way. When you come to this place of wrestling with the will of God, you can know with a surety that you are where the Father has led you. You are in the olive press.

I have heard the sincere questions of a number of women. "What if a husband asks his wife to do something she finds repulsive?" "What if a man

physically and mentally abuses his wife or daughter?" "What if a man is not fulfilling his role as the spiritual shepherd in the home?" "What if the man is pursuing a course that is undeniably ungodly?"

These are not just rhetorical questions. These things actually occur, and they happen all too frequently. In my own spirit I feel sickened when I hear of the cruel and wicked things done to wives and daughters by fallen men. I feel anger rise up within, and at times I cry out, "Father, how could You allow this to happen?"

I remember listening to a woman speaking to a group about the abuse she suffered from her father when she was a young girl. This girl loved her daddy, and when her parents divorced she chose to go and live with her father. She was only about thirteen years of age at the time, and her dad would have her share the same bed with him so they could be close.

Over time, however, this girl's father began treating her as a substitute for his wife. He began to touch her sexually, and then eventually to have intercourse with her. This young girl described how tortured she was in her mind and how she felt guilty about the relationship, thinking she must have done something wrong to bring it about. For a number of years this father abused his daughter and he devastated her life with his ungodly behavior.

I watched this attractive young woman share about these things as tears streamed down her face. I thought of an innocent young girl who loved her daddy, yet her daddy betrayed her love. Inside I cried out, "Why God?" "Why did you allow it to happen?"

This young woman told how she moved out from her father's house when she was of age, and how in the intervening years she dealt with great anger, guilt, and many other terrible emotions. She then spoke of how the Spirit led her to forgive her fa-

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ther, and to even go back to him and tell him that she forgave him. I saw a grace upon her that was uncommon, and it was evident that He who is Life was flowing through her being and bringing transformation.

Yet as I listened to her I was angry. I didn't want the story to go this way. I didn't want an innocent child to be abused and violated. It is one thing to hear about such a thing second hand, but it is another matter to see the victim standing before you telling you these things through tears and sobs. I left that meeting angry and dissatisfied. This woman had come to a place of peace in her life, but I was full of offense that these things should have happened to her. My offense was ultimately against God that He should have allowed a teenage girl to be so violated by her daddy that she adored.

There are no nice, pat, theological explanations that will bring us peace about such matters. There is no argument or justification that will bring us to say, "Now I see that it was really okay." These things are not okay. They are tragic, they are unfair, they are abominations, they should bring us to weep and cry when we hear about them. But in all things Yahweh is just and without fault. His ways are higher than our ways and we cannot impute wrongdoing to Him.

The scriptures say that Yahweh was pleased to crush His Son and to put Him to grief. This young lady I have spoken of seemed to me to be an exceptionally fine person whom any dad would be glad to claim as a daughter. Yet Yahweh had a Son who was far more praiseworthy than anyone born of Adam. His Son was perfect in obedience and love. This Son lived to do the will of His Father. This Son was the exact representation of His Father's nature. It was testified of Him that the Father was "well pleased" with Him.

Yet the Father was also pleased to have Him suffer at the hands of evil men. The Father was pleased to crush Him and to allow Him to undergo grief so great that He sweat drops of blood in His agony,

and in a final moment of perplexity He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

There are no theological arguments that can bring me to declare that the experience of Christ in following the path the Father had for Him was fair. It was horrendous. This Son who was perfect in obedience was put through things that make me tremble to think upon. He was abandoned by His closest friends. He was falsely accused by the very nation of people He came to save. He was beaten, spat upon, insulted, mocked, and ridiculed. He had His beard plucked out by the handfuls. He was scourged until His flesh was left in ragged tatters and He was unrecognizable as a man. He was subjected to the torments of Roman crucifixion. And worst of all, His Father hid his eyes away from Him as all the guilt for all the sins of mankind were placed upon this spotless Lamb.

"And it was the Father's good will to crush Him." His path led through Gethsemane, where the olives are crushed and the oil flows.

It was the Father's will that He should know this experience that the word 'grief' seems too small to express.

It is also the Father's will that we should share in the sufferings of His Son. Notice in the following scripture how one thought flows into another. Peter did not write his epistle with chapter demarcations. It was all one message with the same flow of thought throughout.

I Peter 2:21-3:2

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered

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no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

Peter speaks of the horrendous sufferings of Christ, sufferings that were part of the cup that the Father determined He should drink from. Peter states that Christ has left us an example to follow. We are to endure suffering while uttering no threats. We are to endure being reviled, but we are not to revile in return.

Peter then says, "In the same way, you wives...."

What a weight of revelation and instruction are in these few words. In the same way that Yahshua suffered, wives are to suffer. In the same way that He was reviled, you can expect to be reviled. Even as He did not revile in return, wives are not to respond with reviling. In the same way that He entrusted Himself to the Father who judges righteously, wives are to entrust their very lives to their Heavenly Father. In the same way that Christ drank the bitter cup prepared for Him, wives are to drink of the cup of bitterness prepared for them.

Yahshua sought no escape from the will of the Father. He could have sought escape had He desired it. He told His disciples, "Do you not know that I could request of My Father more than twelve legions of angels and He would put them at My disposal?"

Women today also have many avenues of escape. They can divorce a spouse for any perceived violation, or with no violation at all. They can take a spouse to court over the abuse they are suffering. They can seek refuge in the legal systems, or governmental institutions. They can call on the church to intervene. They can simply flee.

Or they can entrust themselves to the One who judges righteously. They can suffer while uttering no threats. They can be reviled and not revile in return.

In my heart I would like to show women that there is another way. I would like to spare young girls and women from all suffering. I would like to keep them from being abused and violated. I would like to deliver them from the whole rotten cesspool of this fallen world. Yet I know this is not the Father's way.

It was the Father's good pleasure to crush Him...

The Father takes the evil actions of men and He uses them for our good. There was a young man many years ago who suffered such calamity as he drank of the cup presented to him. In the end he understood the ways of Yahweh.

Genesis 50:19-20

But Joseph said to [his brothers], "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

The Father uses the evil of others to bring forth pure gold, refined gold, in our lives.

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I would like to tell women, young and old, that there is a way of escape from all of the suffering of life. I will still weep when I hear them share with me the agony of the things they have had to walk through. I will still ache inside when I hear of innocent hearts that are betrayed and lives subjected to ruinous circumstances. I will still marvel at the unfairness of it all. But I cannot tell them that they need not drink this bitter cup.

There was no other path for Yahshua. There was no other path for Joseph. There is no other path for you and I.

In the Introduction to this book I spoke about some of the honor and glory that attends women who choose the narrow path before them. There is an even more glorious heavenly reward that awaits those who overcome all as they pursue the One who has laid hold of them. After suffering Yahshua was glorified and exalted. So too was Joseph. We have these words written for us:

I Peter 5:10

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

This book on Sarah's Children must of necessity begin with these things. Certainly many will be offended and fall away as they read, but the Overcomers will go forward. Nothing will turn them from the course before them. They will drink the bitter cup, they will take up their cross, they will love not their lives, and they will enter into realms of glory.

Such is the good will and pleasure of the Father.

But Peter and the apostles answered,  
"We must obey God rather than men."

Acts 5:29

### Obeying Authorities

**T**he previous chapter leads into a great and often troubling question. What should a woman do when she is commanded by a husband or father to commit sin? We know that the abiding principle in all relationships involving authorities that Yahweh has established is to obey. But what do we do when the authority of man contradicts the authority of God?

The opening verse of this chapter should give one answer enough, but more should be said about this matter. There is always a tendency to go to extremes in one direction or another. Some have mistakenly declared that if a husband or father is walking in disobedience that he is no longer to be considered an authority at all, and some have used such thinking to justify rebellion and the casting away of all earthly authority. Others have gone the other direction and have declared that a woman must obey her husband or father even when instructed to commit sin. We will see clearly from scripture that both of these views are in error.

Let us begin by looking at the latter error. It has been taught by some that a woman must ALWAYS obey her husband or father, even when commanded to sin. Some have used the example of Sarah as an illustration to support this conclusion. Since Sarah is given as an example for godly women to emulate in I Peter chapter 3, some have supposed that they are to imitate everything in Sarah's life. However, Peter is quite precise about what aspect of Sarah's conduct should be imitated.

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He states:

I Peter 3:5-6

For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

It is evident that Sarah's reverent and respectful attitude toward her husband is the characteristic Peter is praising. He is not saying that women should do everything that Sarah did in her life. We are told on one occasion that when Sarah heard Yahweh declare that she would bare a child in her advanced age that she laughed. When Yahweh asked her why she laughed she replied that she had not laughed, lying because she was afraid (Genesis 18:12-15). We know that lying is wrong, so we cannot say that women are to emulate every action of Sarah. Wives are not justified in lying when they are afraid.

There were two occasions when Abraham journeyed into a foreign land when he asked Sarah to join him in deception. Sarah was very beautiful and Abraham was afraid that the rulers of the country would kill him in order that they might take his wife. He therefore requested that Sarah declare that she was his sister, since indeed she was his half sister. We find these accounts recorded in Genesis chapters 12 and 20. In both instances the deception of Abraham resulted in shame being brought upon him.

Genesis 12:13-20

"Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you." It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyp-

tians saw that the woman was very beautiful. Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

Can you picture this prophet and friend of God being escorted out of Egypt in shame due to his deception? Abraham had a greater fear of man than he had confidence in God's ability to take care of him on these occasions, and his lack of faith rightly ended in humiliation. Did Sarah also act in fear, agreeing to participate in deception to save her husband, or did she act in obedience to her husband's authority while manifesting faith in God to protect her?

It is often difficult to understand the motives of a person when the Scriptures remain silent on a topic. However, my own thoughts concerning Sarah's actions in this matter are that she acted honorably while looking to God to protect her when her husband was experiencing a lack of faith in God. I cannot declare this to be the case definitely, but this understanding is attended by a peace in my spirit.

Consider again Peter's words concerning wives, and his usage of Sarah as an example of a godly role model for women. Peter declared that Chris-



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tian wives should manifest a chaste and respectful attitude toward their husbands even when the husband was walking in disobedience to the word and will of God. He instructs wives to let their husband be won, or persuaded back to a course of righteousness, “without a word,” without nagging, or verbal reproof, as they observe a continued attitude of honor and respect coming from the wife.

Peter declares these things in the midst of a passage on suffering. He says that a woman should be willing to suffer for the sake of obedience and righteousness even as Christ did when He went to the cross. Peter had also spoken about servants obeying masters who were unreasonable, and exhorted them that it would find favor with God if they bore up patiently when suffering unjustly.

This is the context of Peter’s words to women. It is also in this context that he mentions that Sarah is an example of one who did what “was right without being frightened by any fear.” I can think of a number of occasions in Sarah’s life spoken of in Scripture that would support such an understanding of her life in the mind of Peter. She followed Abraham obediently when he left Ur of the Chaldees to travel through foreign lands as an alien and a stranger. She also continued to honor her husband when his faith was wavering and he asked her to declare to others that she was his sister, rather than his wife.

What could Sarah’s motives in this matter have been? There is no doubt in my mind that Sarah loved her husband, otherwise the Scriptures would not elevate her as an example of a godly wife. I suspect that in observing the fear in her husband, and understanding his motives for asking her to declare that she was his sister, that her love for him played a part in directing her to obey his directions. I also suspect that her understanding of God’s will for women to honor their husbands also contributed to her decision.

In submitting to the will of her husband in this matter Sarah would have to look to God to protect her. She could confidently cast herself into the care

of God if her own conscience was clear in the matter, and I believe it was. There are certainly some gray areas here that are difficult to discern. Was it transgression for Sarah to participate in her husband’s deception in this instance, or was the responsibility completely upon Abraham’s shoulders? After all, Sarah was not lying when she said she was Abraham’s sister. Did God look at the motives of each person’s heart and find error in Abraham while finding reason for praise in Sarah? Is it possible for two people to be involved in the same action for different reasons and be judged vastly different in the eyes of God? I think it is.

Lest we go too far in assuming that a wife should always go along with the counsel of her husband, we need to look carefully at another testimony provided for our instruction. The book of Acts speaks in detail concerning another husband and wife who entered into a deceptive practice and both were judged as transgressors by God. It is therefore not always the will of God that wives obey their husbands. The story of Ananias and Sapphira reveals the consequences of joining with another in sin, even if the person is your husband.

### Acts 5:1-10

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. The young men got up and covered him

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up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

There is much to be gleaned from this account. We are told that it was Ananias, the husband, who decided to hold a portion of the money back. It was the husband who initiated the sinful behavior, but his wife Sapphira was fully aware of his actions. Ananias' sin was not in holding back a portion of the money. The money was his to do with as he desired. He was under no constraint to give any of it. His sin was in being deceptive. He wanted to appear generous in the eyes of the church, so he gave the false appearance that he was giving the full amount for which the property had sold.

I am sure that before going to present the money to the apostles that Ananias asked his wife to agree with him in this deception, even as Abraham asked Sarah to agree with him. Abraham's deception resulted in shame and humiliation for him. With Ananias and Sapphira the consequences were even more severe.

Because Ananias lied to the apostles and attempted to deceive the church about his gift, the Spirit of God judged him and he was struck dead on the spot. Later his wife Sapphira came in, not knowing what had happened to her husband and she told the same lie. When asked if they sold the piece of

property for such and such an amount, she declared affirmatively that it was so, when it was not true.

Peter's next question to Sapphira gives us great insight:

Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."

If it was the teaching of the church that a wife should **always** obey her husband, even if he asked her to commit sin, then why would Peter find fault with Sapphira for agreeing with her husband? Why would the Spirit judge her as a transgressor equal to her husband? The answer should be obvious. There is no command of God that a wife or daughter should commit sin when requested to do so by man. We should always obey God when we are brought to a decision of whether we should obey God or man. In the opening scripture of this chapter we read Peter's words:

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Some have innocently argued that God would protect a wife if their husband asked them to sin and they were to follow submissively in a desire to obey their husband. They refer to Sarah and they point out that Yahweh protected her when she was taken into another man's house to be his wife. Yahweh did not allow either Pharaoh or the King of Gerar to have relations with Sarah. However, it would be wrong to imagine that she was completely protected from the consequences of sin. Sarah, along with Abraham, suffered great embarrassment in the presence of rulers and kings, and in the pres-

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ence of royal courts as their deception was exposed. They were even forcibly escorted out of Egypt in deep humiliation.

We should keep in mind that the passage from Peter's first epistle is written to inform the saints that there are times when they must suffer for the sake of righteousness. Sarah suffered, and I believe she did so for righteousness and has a reward from God. Yet Sapphira suffered for unrighteousness, and does not share the same reward. Peter goes on to contrast the suffering of righteousness and unrighteousness.

I Peter 4:15-16

By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

It is difficult to build a set of rules by which we might judge every action of a man or woman. It is possible for two people to outwardly perform the same action while inwardly their hearts are vastly different. God looks on the heart, and judges the thoughts and intentions. Man often judges by sight and hearing and comes to a conclusion altogether different from that of God. It is necessary for the people of God to always be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and to be directed by the Spirit in all that they do.

It is quite possible for two women to ask the counsel of a minister concerning some decision they are facing, and although the outward circumstances may appear very similar, the inner life of the women may be vastly different. God will not always provide the same counsel to every woman. We should always wait patiently before the Father until we are confident we have heard His voice and understood His will in a matter.

Some have also argued that if a wife is walking in obedience and submission under the governmental

order of God that her husband will never ask her to do anything sinful, that Yahweh will restrain the husband from making such a request. This is merely wishful thinking. Ananias asked his wife to join with him in sin. God has not promised a woman that she will never be asked by a husband or father to sin if she is walking in submission to them. It can, and very well may, happen.

Sapphira could not argue that she was merely being obedient to her husband's request. This did not absolve her of the consequences of her participation in the sin of deception and lying. The Spirit judged her just as surely as her husband was judged. She could have, and should have, refused to violate the command of God. She may have suffered consequences in her home, but she would have been justified before the Father.

This leads us to our next point: when we are brought to a place of obeying God rather than the command of men to sin, we must yet submit ourselves to the authority of man and receive the consequences of our obedience. Often we must suffer for the sake of obedience. When Peter and John told the Jewish leaders that they must obey God rather than man, they then had to suffer for their obedience.

Acts 5:40-42

And after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Yahshua, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Yahshua as the Messiah.

The apostles kept on doing that which Yahshua commanded them, but they also submitted to the

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punishment of wicked rulers. Not only did they submit themselves, but they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Yahshua.

It will happen on occasions that a woman or daughter will have to suffer for their obedience. A wife may be beaten even as the apostles were beaten. Many stories have been told of a daughter or wife who committed their life to Yahshua in some Muslim or Hindu nation and they were killed because they would not renounce their Savior. The Heavenly Father may not always spare us the consequences of obedience, but there is great reward to those who suffer in this way.

Matthew 5:10-12

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

I suppose that we can really not imagine the reward that awaits those who suffer for obedience in the name of Christ. There have been some awesome rewards given by men to other men due to some act of bravery or great service. But all the rewards of this earth pale in comparison to the reward that flows from the hand of the Creator of the Universe. When He bestows honor and reward it is something of such far surpassing value as to render the recipient speechless and to have them sink to their knees declaring that they are not worthy. Such is the reward of the Overcomer.

There has been a tendency to look at the above scripture and to think that it only applies to missionaries or evangelists or some Christian worker who is persecuted for their testimony of Christ. The

scripture states, "blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness." This is speaking of much more than evangelism. It is speaking of any occasion when we choose obedience to God over conformity to this world and the will of sinful man.

When a woman is put in a position of deciding whether to obey God or man, and she chooses obedience to God, she is a candidate to receive the blessing and reward spoken of here. Whenever suffering results due to a choice to remain faithful to Yahweh, there will be reward.

In the preceding chapter I spoke of the tragedy of a young girl whose father sexually molested her. A young girl should not willingly go along with such ungodliness. She should not be a willing participant. However, she may be forced by a man who is much stronger than she. When we take a stand for righteousness, we cannot always know the effect of our decisions. In some instances a wife or daughter declaring that something is evil and that they cannot participate in it may be enough to dissuade the authority they are under to not pursue this course. On other occasions it may simply infuriate the authority and lead to violent and abusive behavior. In all things we must entrust ourselves to the care of the one who judges righteously.

I mentioned previously the example of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who are more commonly referred to by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When they were instructed by the ruler of Babylon to bow down and worship an idol, they refused with the following words.

Daniel 3:16-18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us

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out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Such must be our own attitude when faced with a similar crisis. We must entrust ourselves to a loving Father who is well able to deliver us, but even if He does not deliver we must remain true.

We mentioned that there is another extreme when considering the issue of obedience to a sinful request. On the one side is a tendency to do anything that is requested, even if commanded to sin, and we hope that it is now evident that this is not the will of the Father. On the other hand there is an even more popular tendency to simply rebel against authority and to cast off all government. This is the mindset that is pushed by society at large and it has become very popular within the Christian church.

We need to be reminded that obedience to authority is the norm, and only in cases where sin is being commanded should we ever disobey authority. An authority can be walking in sin, but they are still an authority. In demonstration of this truth Peter gave wives the following command.

I Peter 3:1-2

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

If a husband or father is walking in sin then the wife and daughter must give room for Christ to correct them. Christ is the head of man and correction must come from the head, not from those under authority. There is too much of a temptation to en-

ter into rebellion and insubordination when those under authority try to correct. We will look more at this issue of government in the following chapters.

A word fitly spoken

is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

Proverbs 25:11

### The Speech of the Godly Woman

# T

his is the chapter that excites me the most to write about thus far. Those women who grasp the message here and walk in it will be set to transform their worlds. What awesome power is in the tongue, and how incredibly positive this force can be when employed by a godly woman.

In an earlier chapter I spoke of a woman's high calling as a helper to man. Let me elaborate a little bit upon this. I am convinced that one of the things a woman is called to in her role as a helper to man is to help him recover the understanding of who he was created to be. When a woman treats her husband with reverence and respect she is affirming him and magnifying his own understanding of his high calling. When women fail to respect men they act as a drag and a weight upon the man. By failing to respect man, man is encouraged even more to not respect himself and he sinks lower and lower.

A part of the high calling of women in this day and hour is to help men to regain the understanding that they were created in the image and likeness and glory of God. This will ultimately prove to be to the woman's benefit. When a man sees himself as created in the image of God, he will begin to act more godly. He will treat his wife with love, compassion, mercy, and understanding. His behavior in all ways will become more elevated. When man begins to see that he is the image of God and not a

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mere beast, he will also begin to see that his wife is much more than a physical body to be lusted after or despised.

Man needs a helper. It was Yahweh who declared that it was not good for man to be alone. There has been no day when man's need has been greater. May many daughters of Sarah come forth to elevate their husbands, to lift them up in the midst of a world that seeks to diminish them. May they by their very behavior, by their conversation and respectful demeanor, remind their men that they were created in the image of God and that the calling of man is an exceedingly high calling.

A woman's tongue holds within it a tremendous power. It can build up, or tear down. It can produce life, or bring forth death. So much has been written about it. Have you ever wondered why so much of the writing in scriptures concerning women involves their tongues? Let me give you a small sampling of these scriptures.

### Judges 16:16

It came about when [Delilah] pressed [Samson] daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

### Proverbs 6:23-24

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life to keep you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

### Proverbs 31:10, 26

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels... She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

### Proverbs 19:13

A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

### Proverbs 27:15-16

A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike; he who would restrain her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand.

### Proverbs 21:9

It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

### I Corinthians 14:34

The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

### I Timothy 2:11-12

A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

### I Peter 3:1

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives...

Over and over throughout the scriptures the woman and the tongue are linked together. There

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is good reason for this. There is power in the tongue of a woman and man is greatly impacted by it. The first sin of man occurred when Adam's wife spoke to him and described the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as being highly desirable. Men have been enticed through the flattering tongue of an adulteress and have been brought to ruin. Kings have been persuaded to commit great evil through the seductive words of their wives as is seen in the relation between Ahab and Jezebel. Men have turned their back on Yahweh and followed the urging of their wives times without number.

Yet men have also been persuaded to a course of godliness by the tongue of a woman. Cities have been delivered at the counsel of a wise woman. The weary souls of men have been refreshed as choice words have been spoken from the lips of women in a moment of great need. The anger of man that would have led to rash and regrettable acts has been cooled by the choice fruit of a godly woman's tongue. Men who have been lacking in courage have been emboldened by the words of faith and confidence that have arisen from the tongue of a wife, daughter, mother, or some other woman.

If a woman will die to the fleshly impulses that want to control her tongue, and she will surrender her tongue to the purposes of God, she will find herself wielding a tool of great life-giving power.

An event happened early in my marriage that showed me the incredible power of the tongue of a woman when it is used wisely. It often happens that when a woman sees her husband doing something wrong that she will take it upon herself to correct him. This is never to be her role. A woman should not nag her husband or seek to correct him with a word of reproof or rebuke. It is unseemly and inappropriate for those under authority to do such a thing. Yet a wife or a daughter can, with wisdom and restraint, speak in such a manner that the authority will desire to change from a course of disobedience or ungodliness.

My wife demonstrated this principle to me in a very graphic and moving way. Not long after we married, my wife and I purchased our first home. I was working as a painting contractor at the time and one day I decided to paint the bathroom in our home. When it came to painting around the bathtub I placed a small ladder in the tub to reach up near the ceiling. Because a bathroom is a room where moisture is ever present I chose to use an oil base paint due to its greater immunity to water damage.

As I was standing on this ladder in the tub the ladder rocked and the can of oil base paint fell and landed in the tub spilling its contents everywhere. Oil base paint cannot be cleaned up with water, it has to be cleaned up with paint thinner or mineral spirits. This was a major mess and as soon as the spill occurred I was immediately infuriated. I was greatly upset at the prospects of having to clean up the mess all over the bath tub. In a fit of anger I picked up the closest thing to me, some sort of container one would find in a bath tub, and I hurled it with all of my strength out the door and down the hall where it ended up in some far room.

As the projectile exited the doorway I looked and my wife had just come to see what the commotion was. Fortunately I missed hitting her, but I saw her stare with mouth agape as this object flew past her and she saw the obvious anger that I was demonstrating. Tony never said anything about my outburst, wisely remaining silent. She did not even give me so much as a disapproving glance. I think she was simply in shock.

As I mentioned, we had not been married very long at this time. I think there must always be some concern in the mind of a woman about what kind of a man they are marrying. Many men seem to be Prince Charming when they are dating, but they turn into an ugly toad after the vows are said. Many are the women that find out that their husbands have a violent streak after the marriage ceremony, and many endure beatings and worse.

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I am not sure what worries my violent outburst caused my wife, but her response was a study in the awesome power of the tongue when it is used with discretion and wisdom. Tony said nothing to me about the matter concerning my outburst. The next day, however, when we were together and we were embracing she looked me in the eyes and she said, "I am so glad that God gave me such a gentle and loving husband."

Tony said this with great sincerity, and the moment the words came from her lips I was reminded of my action the day before that seemed anything but gentle. I felt instant conviction as I looked at my bride and I wanted to be that good thing that she confessed about me. I wanted to be gentle and loving. I wanted to be worthy of my wife's confession and praise.

Tony never had to scold me or offer a word of reproof about my uncontrolled outburst. She did something far more powerful and effective. She became my cheerleader and I saw that she was rooting for me. I wanted to prevail in godliness because I saw her as being my advocate and not my adversary.

Over the next days and months I thought greatly about the dynamics of what my wife had done, and how she had elicited from me a desire to become more godly. I thought about how most women would have handled it and how they would have scolded or reprimanded their husband and how it would not have borne the same fruit.

One dynamic that I discovered was this: a man by his very nature hates to disappoint someone whom he knows thinks highly of him. If a man knows that someone is standing behind him as a cheerleader and they are rooting for him, pulling for him, and wishing that he will be victorious and successful in the things of life that really matter, that man will exert supreme effort to not disappoint such a one. If a man knows that a woman reveres him and holds him in high esteem, the man will seek to be worthy of her opinion.

I also saw another dynamic. If a woman chooses the lower course and she begins to correct her husband and to speak to him of all that he is doing wrong, then the man will see her not as a cheerleader, but as a critic. A man has no such drive to appease a critic. A man might be hounded into changing his behavior in some matter, but his relationship with the woman who criticizes is invariably altered. Rather than seeing her as a supporter, he will view her as an adversary and contention will result. He will have no inner drive to rise up to her high and lofty opinion of him because he does not perceive that she has such a mindset. Rather he sees that she finds fault with him and has deemed him to be deficient and lacking.

Had my wife scolded me when she observed my action, I might have apologized, but more likely in the state of anger I was in I would have said something unkind to her. However, by choosing the course of restraint and encouragement, she produced within me a desire to attain to a place of gentleness that was not yet mine. There is a world of difference between the man that is goaded into a course of righteousness and the man who eagerly pursues the course. My wife produced in me a desire to be more gentle and to control my anger, and she did it by revealing that she admired me and thought highly of me.

It is little wonder that so many marriages today find the husband and wife pitted against one another, arguing, fighting, threatening. In all of these marriages the wife has taken the role of a critic and she has determined that it is her responsibility to tell her husband when he errs, and to correct and condemn him when she disapproves.

In a ball game the cheerleader is on the same side as her team and she is rooting and pulling for her team. The players want to prevail that they might be worthy of those who are rooting for them. This should be the relationship between the wife and her husband. But when she chooses to criticize she crosses the field and becomes an adversary. The house becomes divided and a battle ensues. No longer does the man find an inner desire to excel



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that he might not disappoint the one who adores him, for there seems to be little adoration.

I have spoken of these things in common terms, but there are great spiritual principles involved. There are numerous scriptural examples of women who have pursued the same course demonstrated by my wife and they have changed the hearts of men. One of the clearest examples is found in the encounter between David and Abigail. I have been amazed as I considered the wisdom of this woman and how she changed the heart of David and kept him from a path he would surely have regretted.

During the time that David had to flee Israel to escape the wrath of King Saul, he had about six hundred men join themselves to him and they became a traveling band of warriors who would fight against the enemies of Israel. At times, however, they would attempt to settle down in one location, and during one such time they found themselves in a region where a wealthy man by the name of Nabal pastured his flocks. Shepherds at the time were always in danger from marauding bands who would seek to come in and steal flocks and kill or chase off the shepherds. David's men, however, not only restrained themselves from stealing Nabal's flocks, but they protected his shepherds and flocks from others.

At the end of the year when it came time to shear the sheep, Nabal gave a huge party and celebrated for many days. David sent a couple of his young men as ambassadors to Nabal anticipating that in his prosperity and great celebration he would desire to reward David and his men for their service in protecting his flocks and servants. However, Nabal acted foolishly and he insulted David and his men and he sent David's men back empty handed.

David was enraged when he heard of Nabal's insults (Nabal even accused David of being a rebellious servant that had broken away from King Saul). David, whose actions were typically very humble, responded in pride and swore that he would not leave a single male living in Nabal's household to see the light of day. He and his men

proceeded to go to Nabal's home with the intent of slaughtering everyone.

This would have been great sin had David done what was in his heart. Yahweh has said, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay" (Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:19). We are advised to give place unto wrath and to not take vengeance into our own hands. Fortunately, the Father sent a woman to dissuade David from his course, and her words are a study in wisdom and humility.

### I Samuel 25:23-35

When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as your soul lives, since Yahweh has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for Yahweh will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil will not be found in you all your days. Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord

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shall be bound in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when Yahweh does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When Yahweh deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant." Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. Nevertheless, as Yahweh God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light as much as one male." So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

Undoubtedly, the people of the area knew the things that had been spoken of David. It was no secret that David had been anointed by Samuel to be king and that Saul was seeking his life due to jealousy. Nabal preferred to put his own twisted interpretation on this, and it was this that infuriated David so much. David was suffering tremendous things. He was the most faithful of servants to Saul, yet he was treated as an enemy. He had to leave family and home, and even go and live as an alien in a foreign land. Many times he remained just one step ahead of Saul and certain death. His life was a life of peril.

I am sure that David often wondered if God would truly fulfill what He had promised to him. Living in caves and foreign lands as an outcast must have caused his heart to doubt and question what God had promised. Nabal's words accusing David of simply being a rebellious servant to Saul must have struck deep to his doubts and insecurities.

Many men have doubts and insecurities about their call and election. Many who have been called to minister in

some capacity endure great torments when they find themselves walking as outcasts and rejected by the mainstream. Often these doubts can be such a weight of reproach that they lead the person to sin, even as David would surely have sinned had Abigail not interceded.

Look at Abigail's words. She knows the distress in David's heart. She is a wise woman and she perceives the issues that are warring within David. She understands what is necessary to raise him back to a place of faith so that he will not act out of his desperation and frustration. She begins by speaking of the surety of his calling and she declares with great confidence that David will certainly see all that Yahweh has spoken to him fulfilled.

This was really the heart of David's anguish. The promise of Yahweh had tarried. It had been many years since the oil was poured over his head by Samuel and the years had driven him far from a place where he expected to see the promises of God fulfilled. These thoughts tormented his heart and were like a goad in his spirit. Abigail proved herself to be a cheerleader of David, rooting for the fulfillment of God's purposes in his life with these words:

Yahweh will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil will not be found in you all your days. Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. And when Yahweh does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When Yahweh deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.

David needed someone to understand what had been promised to him. He needed someone to encourage his heart when all the circumstances around him were discouraging. He needed to hear from the lips of another

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person that his situation was not hopeless, but that Yahweh would perform all He had spoken. Abigail's words were like a healing balm to David's aching heart. She encouraged him with words of faith and hope, and as she did so David's desperation and pain was washed away to be replaced with calm and peace and with the patience to wait upon Yahweh.

What perception was in the heart of this woman! She did not go out and scold David for wanting to destroy her family. She did not tell him that the course he was on was wicked. No, she affirmed him and encouraged him and lifted him up. She brought back hope in a time when he desperately needed hope. And in the end she turned the heart of the man who would be the greatest king to ever rule Israel and she kept him from grief.

David, did give place to wrath. He accepted Abigail's gift and he and his men returned, and Yahweh did exact vengeance for Nabal's wickedness. We are told that about ten days later God struck Nabal and he died. David then took Abigail to be his wife.

Is it any wonder that David took this woman to be his wife? Man needs a helper and Abigail had already proven herself as one who was a great help to David. When he was desperate she brought him hope. When he was in pain she eased his hurt. When he was doubting that he would see the word of Yahweh fulfilled, she spoke words of great confidence as one who saw the promises already accomplished.

This is the awesome power of a godly woman in the life of a man. Yahweh has placed such influence within this creation He has called woman. She can help man to reach the goal before him and to achieve the prize. She can encourage man when he faints, and lift him up when he falters. She can produce in him a desire to be better than he has ever been before. Blessed are the Abigail's, the women of wisdom who use their tongues to build up and not to tear down, to bring forth life, and not to spread death. Blessed are the Abigail's, the women of wisdom who use their tongues to build up and not to tear down, to bring forth life, and not to spread death.

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### PARABLES PRECEPT— What's In A Word?



Faith is a very important word to understand. Most people have a wrong concept of true Biblical faith. Faith is not hoping for something you desire, or even claiming that something you want will come about.

In the Bible, faith always has to arise out of something. Faith is not just a thought entering into our mind that we take possession of. Faith ALWAYS arises out of a word that God speaks to us.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

When God tells you He is going to do something, then you are able to stand in faith. God cannot lie, so if He says He will do something it is as good as accomplished. Our faith arises out of our having received a word from God.

People need faith in many situa-

tions. They may be facing a financial crisis, or a health crisis, or some great difficulty in their circumstances. The first thing you need in every crisis is to receive a word from God. Whatever He says He will do, He will do.

Some people try to find promises in the Bible to apply to their circumstances. Some promises are universal, such as that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. At the same time, God does not give us blanket promises of universal health, prosperity, or peace in our circumstances. Sickness, poverty and difficulties are tools He uses to shape all His sons and daughters. We need to know what His specific will is in every situation.