

OPEN WINDOWS

by John Beaumont

Foreword

Paul writes, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Not only has our God given a variety of gifts to His church, but He has provided many ways for His gifts to be manifested. John Beaumont's prophetic gift, an expression of God's heart in him, is the fruit of His grace in John's life, of the way He made him and the road John has walked with his Lord. His teachings and his prophesies capture God's love for us and ours for Him with a yearning like that found in the Song of Solomon. They have consistently inspired in us a hunger for a deeper relationship with the Lord each time he has visited with us.

John again has been able to bring his gift to us in writing with this devotional, personalizing the most profound gift of all, love. The element that makes the devotional uniquely John's expression of Him is the glimpse he gives of the loving interchange between the lowly creature and his awesome and merciful Creator. In reading "Open Windows" the Holy Spirit stirred in us the experience of being drawn near to the throne of grace with renewed hope in our hearts that we can know more and more of the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.

John and Betty Whritenor

The God of Daniel

Daniel...was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.... He went home to his upstairs rooms where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

At the first light of dawn, the king...called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight...." No wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Then King Darius wrote..."! Issue a *decree* that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he *is* the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

From the Book of Daniel, chapter six

CHAPTER ONE

Devotion to his God was vastly more important to Daniel than popularity and honor, or even the success and authority he had gained by his exceptional qualities of reliability and diligence. Much more than that, his appreciation of God's goodness and his wholesome reverence for the Lord were such that even when his life was imperiled he had no hesitation in continuing to focus on Him.

Unless a person has learned to habitually magnify the Lord within the normal concerns of daily living, it is very likely that adversity or danger will bring an emphasis on the need and problem rather than on the Lord. Isn't it somewhat amazing that Daniel saw no need to radically change his lifestyle when under threat, but was content to pray and give thanks to the Lord "just as he had done before"?

It is ever so much better to express loving appreciation to the Lord who is our faithful Supplier than it is to plead for money. Likewise, we clearly honor Him more by confidently blessing our dear Lord Jesus for His close companionship than by requesting that He provide an answer to our loneliness; and we must bring more pleasure to Him by thankfully recognizing that He has absolute way ahead for us than by seeking an antidote for uncertainty or confusion.

To magnify the Lord in our thoughts, attitudes and desires is a special and precious privilege, as well as being ultimately right and reasonable, considering the wonder of His total perfection.

WONDERFUL, GLORIOUS LORD, today I recognize that You deserve to be central in my thoughts and desires. As I contemplate Your overflowing love to me I set my heart toward You. Simply because of who You are I gladly choose to become absorbed by You, engrossed in You and preoccupied with You.

I am deeply fond of You, gladly enraptured with You, and hold You in the highest regard as well as in profound reverence. What a God You are! From within me there arises a cry for an unchanging, passionate love relationship with You that cannot be affected by difficulty or danger. By Your grace I will walk in enthusiastic harmony with You and Your desires, purposes and emphases.

Father, this day I see with added clarity that in Your intrinsic nature there is an immeasurable abundance of anything I could ever lack at any stage of life's journey. Please help me to remember that from now on, rather than dwelling in thought on my weakness, I will bless You for Your unfailing strength; rather than pleading for help with recurring doubts, I will praise You for Your continuing faithfulness and absolute trustworthiness; and rather than being anxious and concerned about my lack of ability to cope with pressure and uncertainty, I will thankfully rely on Your amazing grace by which You extend Your unlimited capacity to give both inner rest and ongoing triumph to those who trustfully magnify You in everything.

CHILD OF MINE, be very certain that I appreciate the way you reach out to Me, seeking grace that you may keep close to Me in heart and mind no matter what your circumstances are. Let us walk this day in the enjoyment of each other's company. Please count on the fact, and have full confidence in Me, when I assure you that I am actually with you every moment.

As you maintain an attitude of yieldedness toward Me, I give Myself to be for you all you need in order that you may know deep inner satisfaction and may walk in continual victory. Never, never doubt My wisdom or My love, for I do love you with an everlasting love. I will respond to your trust in Me by sharing what I am with you so that any lack you have will be submerged in My fullness.

CHAPTER TWO

In the record we have of Daniel we find a picture that can be both valuable and challenging for us today. It is that we can have *open windows* of devotion and trust toward our Father. Through the fullness of salvation we are able to invite Him to read our hearts, knowing that, though we may be imperfect in many ways, yet we are deeply attached to Him and our hearts are truly filled with loving devotion for Him.

It seems almost too good to be true, and yet it most certainly is, that as we have *open windows* toward the Lord, so He has open *windows* toward us. He has committed Himself never to withhold anything truly good from us if we walk uprightly. How very foolish it is for us to keep some area of our lives closed to Him by not gladly allowing Him to examine, test and give instruction about any and every aspect of our lives.

By wanting what we desire rather than what He chooses we deprive ourselves not only of the sweet delights of intimate fellowship with our dear Lord Jesus, but also of His incomparably better selection of ingredients for our lives. No, no, no! We cannot be so foolish as to think that He finds pleasure in depriving us of what is best. He only seeks to save us from what will restrict our spiritual development and cause us loss in the end. My friend, let me strongly urge you to enjoy the great adventure of maintaining open *windows* toward the Lord.

DEAR, WONDERFUL LORD, I wholeheartedly respond to Your gracious invitation to open toward You every window of my being.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me...Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me...and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 51:10, 12; Ps. 139:23-24).

These things I trust You to do for me this very day. I count on Your activity within me, precious and mighty Holy Spirit. And beyond that, I beseech You to be continually active within me in transforming my desires, motives and attitudes—yes, my very character—into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will be happy however You choose to make use of people and circumstances to accomplish Your will in me. I have no doubt at all that "in all things God works for the-good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Rom. 8:28, 29).

MY DEAR CHILD, you are precious to Me. I love you very much and have a deep desire to wonderfully transform your life. You may have total confidence in the fact that there is no reluctance in Me to bless you. You should know, of course, that I have already blessed you in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

I want to make that very real to you. Please give Me your total trust and full obedience so that I can bless you. Please keep your inner ear open and attentive to Me. Be alert to the promptings of My Spirit and respond quickly when I speak to you. Do everything I ask of you. If you will walk hand in hand with Me you will experience the best of what I desire for My people today.

CHAPTER THREE

There was more to open windows for Daniel than his awareness and appreciation of his Lord. As he prayed, it would seem obvious that he was alert to the likelihood of being overheard by those who sought to harm him and who had no experiential knowledge of his God.

Can you see that we need to have open windows toward our fellow man as well? In fact, unless we do provide opportunity for others to become conscious of the wonderful difference Jesus makes in our lives, they will have much less opportunity of discovering this blessed secret of life for themselves. The Lord Jesus Himself instructs us to let our light shine before men. We are to be like a lamp on its stand that gives light to everyone in the house so that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. (See Matthew 5:14-16.)

In Psalm 67 David shares that when all the people praise God, the land yields its harvest, God blesses us, and the ends of the earth will fear Him.

What does it mean to praise God? David praised God for specified blessing. To praise God is to give Him the credit that He deserves for the good things He does for us. Paul told the believers at Colossae that the gospel was bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it had been doing among them since the day they heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

Since God's grace is His active, beneficial involvement in our lives, we need to give Him the credit for that activity so people who don't yet know Him may recognize the wonderful difference He makes to us. Can you see that?

When someone compliments you because of a promotion, or because of your success in an examination, who gets the credit?

When someone expresses appreciation for your thoughtfulness, or kind helpfulness, who gets the credit?

When people comment on the way you have maintained a restful spirit when coping with adversity or loss, who gets the credit?

When people admire your new car or house, who gets the credit?

If we remain silent at men's words we take the credit to ourselves and rob God of it. How tragic if, because of that, even one person is deprived of the privilege of gaining insight into Father's love! But how very wonderful if, because of our giving credit to God, some work associate or neighbor reaches out for God's grace in his personal salvation.

O LORD, I really do know that You deserve great credit day after day because of the way You

encourage me, strengthen me, change me and provide for my needs in a multitude of ways. I am ashamed that I have robbed You of credit so many times. Please have mercy and forgive me! Today I set myself to let people know where the credit lies for anything praiseworthy in my life and for anything good that happens to me.

Holy Spirit, please remind me about this again and again so that I maintain a thoughtful awareness of God's great love toward me. I long to see other people come to know Him in His fullness, and I reach out to You with trustful expectation for divine enablement to worthily praise my Lord by giving Him the credit He so richly deserves.

This day I purpose to have *open windows* toward my fellow man so others may become much more aware of how exceptionally good You are, and of the wonderful way in which You make a tremendous difference in my life. Thank You for sharing Your heart with me in this matter.

CHILD, the more you stay alert to My continuing presence with you, and the more you turn to Me with petition or appreciation throughout each day, the more you will be aware of My practical blessing in the everyday affairs of your life. You will please Me immensely if you habitually both whisper your thankful love to Me and share with others your gratitude for My touch upon your life. In this I will be glorified, and in this you will bear much fruit. May I count on you?

CHAPTER FOUR

When King Darius wrote about "the God of Daniel," he did not imply that somehow Daniel possessed, owned or controlled his God. Quite the reverse! Daniel belonged to, revered and served the God of glory, who honored him for his diligent faith.

When Joshua was near Jericho he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

This was like asking whether God were on his side or his enemy's side. The answer was, "Neither." God is on nobody's side! The call and challenge to us is whether we are on the Lord's side or not; thinking, speaking, reacting and moving with the same inner motivation, manner and desire for Father's glory that Jesus would have if He were in our shoes at the present moment—and every moment.

The man with the drawn sword continued, "As commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." At this revelation Joshua fell on his face on the ground in reverence and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for His servant?" In the manifest presence of the Almighty God all one can do is worship with submission, adoration and reverential awe.

LORD, YOU ARE VERY GREAT! At this moment I delight to wholeheartedly recognize that You are ruler in my life. What a privilege—I belong to the King! You have made me, redeemed me and kept me. You have drawn me to You and transformed my life. You have filled me with joy in believing, and have become my constant Companion.

How favored I am; I am Yours! You have assigned me my portion and my cup; the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. You are my God and I bless You. You have afforded me the high privilege of being Your servant, Your love slave, and I find far greater joy and fulfillment in this than if I sought to retain the right to control my own life.

Father, I do treasure, and always will, the way , You have showered me with grace and flooded j my life with Your loving kindness. You have given the Holy Spirit to fill, empower, lead and | accompany me every moment of each day. There is no one like You! I cannot sing Your praises enough. You are my God and I do praise You...and I will.

Every day I will bless You! One generation will commend Your works to another; they will tell of Your mighty acts. I will too! They will speak of the glorious splendor of Your majesty. So will I! I will meditate on Your wonderful works, and celebrate Your abundant goodness. You are my God!

SERVANT, slave, friend; yes, I am glad that you are these to Me. But I have brought You into My family, and you are My child—the child of My love. In My love for them I ask My children to

see themselves as My favored sons and daughters. I like them to nestle close to Me. I enjoy sharing My heart with them.

At the same time, please see that it is essential that you do not lose your servant heart. There is no place in My Kingdom for pride! I dwell with those who are meek and lowly in spirit. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. Thus will you find rest for your soul, and thus will I be satisfied with your yielded, trusting attitude toward Me.

CHAPTER FIVE

After King Darius described the Lord as "the God of Daniel," he proceeded to give his understanding of Daniel's God. He sought to describe God according to what he had seen of the Lord's involvement in Daniel's life.

Some of this was a fresh revelation to him because he had seen Daniel miraculously saved from the power of the lions. Daniel had been very quick to give God credit for that! But some of the king's understanding of the nature of God had come as he had observed the manner of life of this man over a period of time.

Some years ago I visited friends who had been through a very difficult time in the church fellowship they had attended. They had experienced the pain of false accusation, malicious rumors and rejection by those they had considered good friends. Little wonder, then, that the wife commented to me, "John, I am sick of the Church and fed up with God."

My reply was, "My dear, which God are you fed up with? Is it the god of wicked church elders, or the One who says, 'My yoke is mild and pleasant, and my load is light in weight'? He also says, 'I love you with an everlasting love.' Are you fed up with Him?" Tears flowed as she answered, "Oh no, I'm not fed up with Him!"

There are many people in the world around us who have a very distorted understanding of what God is like. We know the truth of that, don't we? I have no interest in seeking to place blame for this, though I do believe that, in the minds of believer and unbeliever alike, God and today's churches are far too closely linked together.

The One we love and serve is not the God of this church or that, nor the God of *our* activity or our leadership. He is the God of heaven and earth, the God of glory. He doesn't live in buildings or organizational structures erected by men, but in the hearts of the pure and lowly.

This brings us to a very soul-searching question: What picture do people have of the "God of John Beaumont"? What picture do people have of the "God of you"? Let me share what I desire and look to the Lord for in this regard.

My God is One who satisfies fully, and who causes me to find deep enjoyment in giving and living for Him. In fact, He fills with a joy that cannot be affected by changing circumstances because it is based on the wonderful reality that He is perfect and never changes. There is so much fun in a life where Jesus reigns.

God delights to express His life through frail vessels, through those who seek to walk in the kind of "hiddenness" which focuses attention on Him so that He is wonderfully glorified. He is the God of all grace who shares the abundance of His love with those who walk uprightly. He loves sinners, needy people and simple folk who can easily be overlooked by those who feel important or are motivated by personal ambition. Our dear Lord Jesus has plenty of time to listen to the

outpouring of hungry hearts and delights to give of Himself to satisfy their needs and aspirations.

The God who loves the ungodly and would share His life with all who look to Him is the God "who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?" (2 Cor. 14b-16)

The only answer I know to Paul's question is the Lord's word: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Let me share my understanding of the Scripture that refers to our being the aroma of Christ. Both to those being saved and to those who are perishing we are indeed the aroma of Christ. To the believer we are the peculiar fragrance of a life which has been crucified with Christ—the smell of death in a self crucified life. To the nonbeliever we bear the alluring fragrance of a quality and fullness of life that can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD, I stand in awe of You! I am stilled, as if in shock, by the things You show me and the life to which You call me. In my heart one statement rises: 'God, You are able. God, You are able! I will cling to that'!

Holy Spirit! Holy Spirit, Please keep me immersed in You, enveloped in and saturated by You, I implore. I need You! Every hour I need You. This very day I need You!

Father, to You be glory in the Church, including through my yielded life, and in Christ Jesus, In the ages of ages.

DEAR CHILD, please be assured that My "I will" of building My Church is as certain as My "I will" of your personal salvation. More than that, My "I will" of being your sufficiency has My personal, guarantee upon it equal to My guarantee to make all things new. I am the Lord! I am as eager to cause your life to shine for Me, radiating with My love, as I am to bless and use anyone anywhere in the whole wide world. Rest in Me. Trust in Me. Look to Me and you will experience My grace and see My glory! I want you to understand that the Holy Spirit who is at work in you is also at work in people around you, seeking to draw them to Me.

WINDOWS OF GODLY LOVE

Listen! My lover!
Look! Here he comes,
leaping across the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.
My lover spoke and said to me,
"Arise, my darling, my beautiful one,
and come with me."

From the Song of Songs

CHAPTER SIX

How attractive the Lover is to the beloved! She says of Him, "Your love is better than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out...How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming! Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my Lover...! Delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love."

There is nothing more amazing in the entire universe than God's love for us. He loved us first! We respond to His love. God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Isn't that staggering? When we were marred by the stain and ugliness of sin, God loved us!

Furthermore, our glorious Lord loves us with an unending and unchanging love. The love of God—divine love—has nothing to compare with it in all creation. What security and what blessing there is in this: You and I are deeply, wonderfully, perpetually and extraordinarily loved! Can you grasp it, dear friend? There has never been anyone more loved than you are!

To some the language of love seems a little embarrassing and out of place when applied to God's attitude toward us and our response to Him. Not so! Love is the language of the heart, and Father still says, "My son, My daughter, give Me your heart."

Listen as He speaks to you. "It is your freely expressed and unreserved love that I long for more than anything else. Don't think that I place emphasis on wanting your talent, your money, your time, your ceaseless activity. It is you yourself I yearn after. Let Me have your deepest affection, your fondest gaze, your sincerest devotion and fullest yieldedness. I want your love!"

FAIREST LORD JESUS, I know very well that One so precious and glorious as You deserves much, much more than just the expression of my voice in word or song. Wordiness does not impress You! Love such as Yours requires and deserves nothing less than that in every moment of my time and every activity of my life, there should be a flowing of love toward You. You are my all in all, and I love You with my whole heart.

Please strengthen my resolve never to allow words of love to replace the reality of it, Lord. To be honest, I fear lest my love for You become stale or grow cold. I don't know how that could ever possibly be, yet because You know the heart of man, understanding human nature completely, You surely sympathize with my concern.

Much more than that, I am confident that You will love me in such practical ways and tenderly draw forth love from me that I will find it very natural to turn my thoughts and my desires toward You repeatedly. Thank You for sending the Spirit of love to fill my life and to bring love to mature fruition within me.

Father, although in Your love You look for more than the words of my mouth, even when they flow from a sincere heart, I am convinced that when word and lifestyle harmonize You find

pleasure in what I say to You. It may seem ever so simple, as when a child turns with an adoring look toward his parent and lisps, "I love you"; but as your adoring child I tell you now, "Daddy, I love You!"

SON, DAUGHTER, thank you for your honesty, and thank you for your love. People truly appreciative of My love and filled with love for Me grow to be like Me because that kind of love provides a way for the Holy Spirit to mold their very nature into My likeness. In turn, our relationship, built on love's commitment, will perfect love in you.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:4-8a). Deeply heartfelt love for Me will overflow from you into this kind of love for those around you. In this I will be glorified.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Does the possibility of the Lord examining every detail of your innermost thoughts, desires and attitudes bring a measure of consternation to you? Are there things in your life that you would be ashamed of others knowing, and in the back of your mind is there concern because Father knows? And know He certainly does!

"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord" (Ps. 139:1-4).

David added to his psalm, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" (vs. 7-10).

That's the lovely part of God's being all-knowing: He uses that knowledge to guide His people and to hold them fast. So David could further say, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!" (v. 17)

How sad that any of us should see God as the great Policeman in the sky, or the severe School Master waiting to pounce on us if we slip up in any way. He is not like that! Simply, yet gloriously, put: God is *hue!* His every attitude toward us is one of compassionate care. He is far more wonderful than we have yet grasped or understood.

Can you see the high expectation and brimming delight in the beloved when she exclaims, "Listen! My lover! Look! Here he comes...Look! There he stands behind our wall, *gazing through the windows*, peering through the lattice..."

There is no disquiet in her heart lest he see something she would prefer hidden, something *which* she is somewhat ashamed. Love finds deep_ pleasure in the gaze of the beloved! For love knows that what will be seen is love reflected back again.

God is not tyrannical, demanding perfect performance from us. God is even more aware than we are of our being imperfect creatures, even at our best. What He desires is that our heart be perfect before Him so that we love Him with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind. He gazes into the windows of your life today, and of mine, looking to see that our love is as full as it has ever been. I am glad that He knows my heart. Aren't you?

LORD JESUS, I am glad that nothing is hidden from the all-seeing eye of God. I long to be more like You, Jesus, in every part of my being. Even now I ask Your forgiveness for the hidden thoughts of which I am ashamed. Please cleanse me and keep me clean.

Again today I gladly cooperate with You, asking that You search me and test me. Be kind enough, my Lord, to reveal to me now anything You want altered, so I may respond to You without delay. There is a deep yearning within me that You would bring me to a place in which You find both pleasure and satisfaction because my heart is wholly and always Yours and Yours alone.

In fact, Lord, I boldly trust and count on the fact that You have accepted the total giving of my life to You, so that even at this moment Your loving gaze into my life's window brings rapturous satisfaction to You. Can it really be so? I believe it is, and thank You for making it possible. I love you very, very much.

THANKS, FRIEND, for your confidence in Me. I like that! How right you are: I am not searching for dirt and waste in the hidden corners of the rooms of your life. No, no! I look for widely *opened windows* where the inhabitants are eager for as much sunlight to shine in as possible.

I look for people who have appropriated the provision of cleansing I have made available to them through the Cross, and who cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His activity in their lives, eagerly responding to Him. I look for those whose heart is perfect before Me; not made perfect by their effort, but by their acceptance of My effort on their behalf. Thank you for wanting Me to gaze through the love windows of your life!

CHAPTER EIGHT

There are a number of factors that cause our love relationship with the Lord Jesus to be much better than that of the Lover and beloved in the Song of Songs. Incomparably so!

The beloved being described as "a walled garden" (Song. 4:12) and the lover standing "behind our wall" (2:9) give indication of the exclusiveness of their love relationship. She was especially and solely his. She kept herself for him alone. They only "had eyes" for each other. So must it be between us and the Lord. We are totally, especially and exclusively His. It must ever be so! No other affection dare ever be permitted to lessen our wholehearted love for Him.

The maiden in the Song of Songs was filled with excitement and joy because she saw her lover coming, leaping across the mountains and bounding over the hills. We have a higher privilege: Our Lover, Jesus, is always with us. Every moment of this day He is actually here right where we are, through the Involvement of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The maiden was thrilled as he gazed through the windows. She doubtless gazed back at him. It was a prolonged beholding of each other in love.

David once wrote that there was one thing he desired of the Lord, and that was he seeking. It involved living in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, especially so that he could gaze upon the beauty of the Lord (Ps. 27:4). How much better for us! We are a home for the Lord. He actually lives in us, and will do so all the days of our lives as we continue to trust in and follow Him. The mutual gazing need never cease.

One other very important thing: Because he was her lover, the young man called her to "Arise...and come away with me." The call of their hearts was, "Come away, my lover, and be like a gazelle or like a young stag on the spice-laden mountains."

Because of the explosive, consuming love between us and the Lord Jesus, He calls us to come away. He calls us to a higher place, a place where we spring from one high point to another, a place where we experience an ever fresh and deepening, close love relationship with Him.

God has higher purposes for His people than they have yet experienced on earth. One day He will look upon His lover-people, His bride, and say, "I am satisfied with her." What a day that will be! Peter tells us that we can speed the day of God by living holy and godly lives. Only an overflowing, ongoing, all-consuming love relationship with Jesus can provide adequate motivation for us to live without faltering or being inconsistent, and with such a quality of positive holiness that the coming of the glorious day of the Lord is expedited.

OH YES, LORD JESUS! I am wholly Yours. All that I desire is found in You. Lead me where You will, require of me whatever You desire, for I am Yours both now and forever!

Lord, I am overwhelmed by the fact that You love me as You do. You have won my heart! My deepest desire is to bring pleasure to You, to proclaim to all creation what a precious and glorious God You are, and to satisfy the purposes of Your heart.

MY LOVED ONE, you have heard My call, and you have begun to understand the depths of love which caused Me to gladly lay down My life for you. Because of this love I have given My word that I will hold nothing back from those whose hearts are perfect before Me.

Thank you for the expressions of your love. I deeply appreciate them. At the same time, you will understand that the value of your statements can only be measured by the fulfilling of what you promise. You will need My help for that! Don't you dare ever question My love for you!

Likewise, never become complacent, thinking that you can be continually faithful without divine aid. I am the Lord! Freely seek My help, for I assure you that I will be the strength of your life as you trust Me so to be.

ARROWS OF VICTORY

Elisha said [to Jehoash king of Israel], "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

"Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram (Syria)!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans [Syrians] at Aphek."

Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram [Syria] and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."

From Second Kings chapter 13

CHAPTER NINE

This is a fascinating account of an evil king seeking advice and help from a man of God who had repeatedly experienced the reality of God's involvement in his life over the years. While it is delightful and important to see enthusiastic novices in Father's family, isn't there something rather special in spending time with someone who has walked in the Spirit for many years? This is even true if we may be tempted to feel that they are a bit "behind the times" because they haven't run after the latest teaching or practice that has become popular in the church world.

The first thing King Jehoash did was to turn back the years in Elisha's memory by crying out, "My lather! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" (2 Kings 13:14)

This statement referred to the amazing day when Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind. Just as that was about to happen, a chariot of fire and horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated Elijah and Elisha. No one else saw Elijah *go up* to heaven that day. A little later when young men mocked Elisha's account of it, and mocked the supernatural power of God by repeatedly shouting, "Go on up, you baldhead!" God sent sudden judgment on them. (See Second Kings 2:23-24.)

On another occasion, the Syrians came and encircled the city of Dothan so they could capture Elisha. Elisha's servant was terrified when he saw the Syrian army. Elisha prayed that the Lord would open his eyes. Immediately the young man looked and saw what was already there—"The hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17). God had provided an amazing deliverance for Elisha that day.

Now King Jehoash is indicating to Elisha, not only his knowledge of what he had experienced in the past, but also his confidence that the hand of God's grace is still upon him. Jehoash is saying, in effect, "I know you are a man of God. My people and I are trapped in a desperate situation and our only hope is in the mercy of God."

One day a man approached Jesus and besought him, "Lord, have mercy on my son!" In fact, people repeatedly came to Jesus asking for mercy. Hallelujah! He is a merciful God! He doesn't give us according to what we merit or deserve, but acts in grace toward needy people who reach out to Him.

Surely we know, as Jehoash knew, that a gracious God has wonderfully intervened in the lives of individuals, groups and nations many times in the past. He is the same today!

GRACIOUS HEAVENLY FATHER, You are a wonderful God who abounds with great grace. Not only have You manifested Your mercy a multitude of times beyond number throughout the course of history, but even in my own life You have always been ready to minister to me with Your active, overflowing love. You are a great God and worthy "to *receive* power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise" not only throughout eternity, but also right here and now. At Your feet, precious Master, I worship You

and bless Your holy name. You are great, and greatly to be praised.

Today, Lord, I seek Your mercy on my life, and also upon those of my family for whom I carry special concern. Please be merciful to them! I am looking to You with the eager expectation that You will quickly show Yourself the God of the chariots and horsemen of fire, the army of the Lord that encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.

Father, beyond concern for my own life and for those dear to me, I bring to Your attention today the desperate need of Your Church in my neighborhood and in this land, as well as the spiritual plight of this entire nation. Will You not have mercy, and revive us again? Our hope is in You alone, and this I know right well. "Mercy, Lord," is the cry of my heart today!

TRUSTING CHILD, I do not change! I am just the same today as I have been since before time ever was. You can rely on Me. You can be sure that as you delight yourself in Me I will indeed give you the desires of your heart. Can I trust you? Will I alone get credit and glory as I intervene on your behalf? If *so* you shall in truth see the glory of the Lord in the land of the living. Be in peaceful trust step by step throughout this day, for I am with you.

CHAPTER TEN

It looked as though the king had had a change of heart. Step by step he did exactly what the prophet instructed him to do. But something went wrong, for the man of God became angry with him, declaring that there would be a limitation to the measure of victory he experienced over the Syrians. Sadly, this limitation was not because God was unwilling to give absolute victory, but because of a lack of full response on the king's part.

It seems obvious that Elisha had intended and expected that the king would shoot every arrow he had been asked to take up. On the other hand, the king clearly felt that he had struck the ground with as many as seemed reasonable or necessary.

Isn't it possible that we Christians are habitually limiting our response to God by what seems reasonable to us and by what we believe to be safe, orthodox, acceptable, painless and popular? Can it be that at times we allow "King Reason" to reign, rather than King Jesus? I fear so! Make no mistake about it: Wherever King Reason reigns, his accomplice Unbelief lurks, waiting to bind us in weakness and fear. The Book of Hebrews teaches that unbelief shuts us out of the rest God purposes and provides for His people (see Hebrews 4:1-13).

One of the saddest things in the Old Testament record of God's dealings with His people is His repeated comment that He would have done more for them if they had not turned away in selfishness and unbelief. He even asked, "What more could I have done for [her]...that I have not done?" Hear His plaintive utterance; "If my people would listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! Those who hate the Lord would cringe before Him, and their punishment would last forever. But you would be fed with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Think about that "But you..." But you, King Jehoshaphat, would have known complete victory. But you, Israelites, would have entered His rest. There are so many "But you's." We could mention not only Bible figures like the rich young ruler and King Agrippa, but so many of today's believers! I am totally persuaded that the generation in which we live has not known the fulness of what Father purposed for us.

And what about you, my dear friend? It is not our circumstances or other people that cause us to be too earthy, relatively powerless, fairly ineffectual, and less than serenely satisfied with Jesus and His overflowing love.

The answer lies in God's grace, and in whether we love Him with all our hearts, have a sensitive inner ear to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and are absolutely and unequivocally committed to full obedience to His desires and instructions.

FATHER GOD, I stand exposed before You. Too frequently I excuse the substandard quality of my life by what others do or don't do. Knowing that I am a weak person should cause me to look to You for wisdom and strength, but at times I am paralyzed by focusing on myself rather than

turning to You.

I know, Lord, that You deserve to be glorified by a clearer evidence of Christ-likeness than is manifested in me. But I do want You to be highly glorified. Thank You for understanding me, accepting me and loving me. This day I see that Your grace is enough for me! Amen! So I accept Your sweet favor and give myself to love You supremely, listen to You carefully and respond to You fully. Let Your Kingdom come!

HEIR OF MINE, freely draw on the riches of My grace! I, the Lord of heaven and earth, love you, forgive you and offer you My perpetual assistance so you can live as both you and I desire. I have done everything for you that I know to do so you can be a continual overcomer. Enjoy My company! Share My victory! Walk in the strength that I provide. This way glory!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Consider the prophet's anger and the restriction of divine blessing which he declared, and which actually occurred. It would seem obvious, wouldn't it, that the king had violated a clearly given instruction? At times we may try to excuse ourselves by feeling that we don't understand clearly enough what Father wants when self-will could be at the root of our problem. Why do we battle over allowing the Lord to have complete control of every aspect of our lives?

Perhaps more frequently, however, there are other causes of our difficulty. One of these is that many, if not most, of us have a built-in conviction that others can hear God better than we can. We need to see very clearly that "Nobody can hear God more clearly for me than me."

It is dangerous to rely on hearing God through others, feeling that our leaders or men with special ministries can hear God for us. Others may hear God with us, but not for us! Ultimately, God only speaks to us in one way, and that is by an inner persuasion of the Spirit. If we could see how extremely vital it is for us to discern that inner impression, witness and conviction, I have no doubt that we would come to a place of consistently clear hearing.

Another area we need to mature in is that of understanding what we hear. My conviction is that we need supplementary revelation to know what to do with the primary revelation. If Father shows us, for example, that someone we know is spiritually unwell, we will need to come to an understanding of what to do with that information. Natural reason is not sufficient!

We cannot take for granted that we should confront them with what has been revealed, either publicly or privately. Perhaps we have been given insight so that we can reach out to Father, trusting Him to handle the matter sovereignly. Perhaps God's purpose is that someone else share with the person, and our role is simply to befriend the one in difficulty. Can you see from this example that we need to clearly hear the Holy Spirit for each step of life's road?

One other thing, and this is probably where King Jehoshaphat failed: We dare not take what Father shares with us and pass it through filters of reasonableness, expediency, past experience, doctrinal understanding, the viewpoint of others, or our own assessment either of our ability or of the situation.

One of the men in a leadership group to whom I was speaking commented to me, "John, you are sharing radical things. We will need to weigh them carefully to see what is applicable for us and what we can implement at this stage of our church life."

That sounds like a reasonable observation, doesn't it? However, the reply the Spirit gave me for him was, "Don't you think that your question should be, 'Is it God, or is it not?' If it is God, then He has already assessed your situation and knows what you need to be walking in. If it is not God, you don't need to consider it at all!" In other words, *"// it is God, do it. If it is not God, ignore it!"*

FATHER, I am realizing how utterly dependent on You I am. I feel like a child who cannot find his way across a city on his own or who has no hope of erecting an adequate home for the family to live in. I feel like a child who cannot understand a book written in a foreign language. I need You! I cannot cope with life without You! How extremely satisfying it is for me to happily depend on such a magnificent Father as You.

Holy Spirit, please be my Teacher today. From now on I will be relying on You each step of the way to instruct, guide and equip me. I have no confidence in myself, so I gladly look to You for the wisdom and strength I need to live a life that wholly pleases my precious Lord Jesus, in whom I have complete confidence.

MY PRECIOUS CHILD! You need feel no uneasiness, carry no doubts, nor have the least fear. Haven't I promised to be with you all the days? Don't I love you with an everlasting love? Haven't I proved to you over and over again that I am totally trustworthy, infinitely wise, and powerful without limitation? You are Mine and I am yours.

All I ask today is that you listen eagerly and carefully to My gentle inner voice in your spirit. I will lead you step by step. Because I know what is best for you I ask that you express your trust in Me by responding to My Spirit promptly and fully. I will keep My eye of love upon you, and listen expectantly for your voice. Let us walk in conversational friendship this day, you and I.

CHAPTER TWELVE

For King Jehoash to comply with Elisha's request that he open the east window meant that he was accepting an offered opportunity for the bright light and fresh air of a new and higher experience of God's goodness and power to touch his life.

When, after forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the ark, sending out first the raven and then the dove, he was indicating his eager expectation for a new day of God's favor in release from restriction and in the bursting forth of new life.

When Rehab the innkeeper (the harlot) let the spies Joshua had sent out escape by a rope through the window, she was opening a window of escape for herself and her family. She agreed with the conditions outlined for her by the spies and tied a scarlet cord in the window. God undertook responsibility for her welfare and in due season provided for her safety by supernatural intervention in a day when everything around her was crumbling and falling.

Ecclesiastes chapter twelve shows in striking imagery how one's vision can grow weak in old age: "When...those looking through the windows grow dim." Can there be a lesson in that picture, warning us to make full use of open windows while we can?

There are a number of places in Scripture where windows are used in a wrong way: To give vent to misplaced derision, for outward ostentatious show and hypocritical display, and to observe folly and sin. Windows are also described as places of vulnerability and entrances through which creeping desolation takes over that which no longer has life.

All of this presents a challenge to us to make the most of the God-given opportunities that come our way. Without doubt we should see each event of this day as a window of opportunity. Surely we should joyfully anticipate Father sending fresh breezes and fresh sunlight into our lives through our open windows of eager desire, so that we may be kept vibrantly alive, spiritually alert, and ever eager to move into new dimensions of His exciting purposes for us!

Let us not look at difficulties as something to shun, but rather as opportunities to see God at work on our behalf. Let us not fear when things turn out very differently from what we anticipated, but rather rejoice that we can walk hand in hand with the King of the universe, gaining fresh perception of His way of turning adversity into triumph. Let us not feel anxiety about tomorrow, but rather let us look forward with joyful anticipation to the "much more" of God's ways. When we open the windows of our hearts toward the Lord with keen desire we can be confident that He will make full use of His window of opportunity to glorify Himself in us. Bless Him forever!

FATHER, I wonder what You have in store for me today. I wonder in what fresh ways You desire to touch my life and draw love from my heart toward Yourself. What new understanding do You want to give me so that the reality of living in the heavenly realms and experiencing every spiritual blessing in Christ will bring a new bursting forth of praise, trust and adventuresome living? I wonder exactly how You want to reveal Yourself and Your ways to me today so that

earthly things stay remarkably dim to me and spiritual, eternal, divine things are as real to me as they are to You.

Precious Lord Jesus, You are overwhelmingly lovely to me. You have totally captivated my heart. By Your grace I will live this day on tiptoes of joy and expectation! Live in me; reign in me; overflow me for Your sake, and for Your Kingdom's sake. To You be the glory forever and ever. It is so, and it will be so. Amen and amen!

YOU ARE ENVELOPED by My love today. I have put eternity in your heart so that I alone, the God of eternity, can satisfy your deepest longings.

You were created for Me! You were formed for triumphant living! You were made to share My life with Me and to overflow with My blessing! You were brought into being so that you may bring others to know Me!

Today I challenge you, says the Lord your God: Dare to harmonize your lifestyle with My plans for you. Come into complete conformity with My will for your life. As you do so I guarantee that heaven will burst in upon you, My glory shall overshadow you, and you will begin an adventure into the fullness of My life that will never end. So shall My Kingdom come and My will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thank you, My beloved one.