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THE PROMISES OF GOD THE LINK TO LIFE DEUTERONOMY 32:45-47

GOD'S PROMISE TO YOU:
“When you obey my word, you choose life.”

Often one thing serves as a bridge to get from where we are to where we want to be. Say a college student desires an invitation into an honor society, and all that stands between him and that goal is his final grade on a critical exam. Or perhaps a newly formed company is teetering on the brink of financial ruin. Securing a key contract will prevent their bankruptcy. These scenarios, some large and some small, occur in all of our lives daily. Most are very inconsequential—there is more than one way, in other words, to achieve the desired goal. Others are totally dependent on one, and only one, event coming to pass.

All human beings share one critical link, one defining reality that stands between success and failure both in time and for eternity. It is not one of the inconsequential “either/or” kinds of links. It is THE most important “if/then” link that will confront any person in life. It was first expressed by God through Moses to the Israelites. God told Israel, “IF you will obey the words that I have given you (the Law, or the Covenant), THEN you will live. IF you don't obey them, THEN you will not live.” Therefore, the defining variable in the Israelites' equation for life was obedience to God's word as expressed through the Law. In fact, life was so bound to the keeping of the Law that Moses told the Israelites, “. . . (the words of this law) are your life” (Deuteronomy 33:8).

Moses had just told the Israelites that the

Lord was their life (Deuteronomy 30:20), and because the Lord and his word are inseparable, his word is their life as well (Deuteronomy 32:47). Life was literally a choice for them: embrace God's words and live; ignore God's words and die.

While the Mosaic Law is no longer the form of God's word that is the believer's link to life, God's words are no less the key. Christ, the Living Word, came to bring life (John 10:10), and it is through his words that we gain it (John 15:7). Life is still a choice—now and for eternity.

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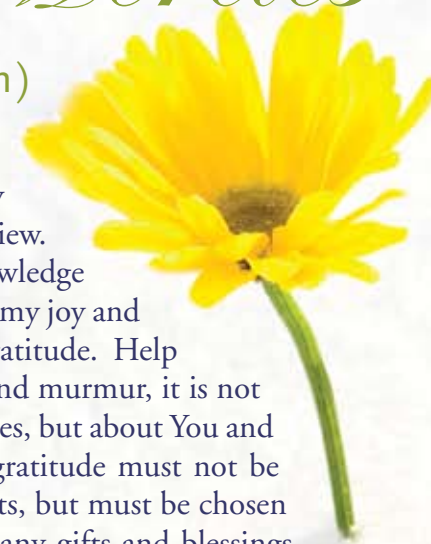
REFLECTIONS

Reflections on God's revealed truth
FEBRUARY 2010

Acknowledging God's Tender Mercies

(a prayer appreciation)

Father, I acknowledge that I often approach life with a deficiency rather than a sufficiency point of view. I realize that when I fail to acknowledge Your many tender mercies, I lose my joy and contentment and slip into ingratitude. Help me to see that when I grumble and murmur, it is not ultimately about my circumstances, but about You and Your provision. Teach me that gratitude must not be left only to spontaneous moments, but must be chosen every day. May I review Your many gifts and blessings in my life, including those I have too long taken for granted. Teach me that gratitude relates to trust and obedience, for I cannot trust You when I am murmuring and grumbling about my life and circumstances. I choose this day to thank You for Your innumerable kindnesses to me, because I have done nothing to deserve them.



A teaching letter to encourage believers to Develop a Clear Mind and a Warm Heart.



THE PURSUIT OF GOD—PART 12

This Reflections series is based on my 11-part CD teaching series on A. W. Tozer's spiritual classic, *The Pursuit of God*.

Removing the Veil

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Hebrews 10:19)

Rest for the Restless Heart

A. W. Tozer observes that "we have been guilty of that 'foul revolt' of which Milton speaks when describing the rebellion of Satan and his hosts" in *Paradise Lost*. We have broken free of God and have fled as far as our strength will carry us. While it is clear that we cannot possibly escape the omnipresence of the Lord, we may indeed flee from the manifest Presence of the Lord. Like Adam, we might attempt to hide among the trees of the garden, or like Peter we might say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." We either run away from God, or beg him to run away from us.

I vividly remember my first encounter with the manifest Presence of God when I was a college senior. After a variety of experiences, I was forced to come face-to-face with that Presence, and it terrified me. Yet, at the same time, I longed for it. It is what is often referred to as the "mysterium tremendum" – that which overwhelms one with fear and terror on the one hand, and love and wonder on the other. But at that time, I was keenly aware that what separated me from that Presence was stronger than what was drawing me. I recognized that it was my sin that prevented me from reaching the love and wonder that I longed for, and that I had no hope of succeeding on my own. It was only later that I discovered the message of the Gospel, and that what I was unable to do by myself, God Himself did for me.

As Tozer says, "The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that foul revolt, and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship

with Himself. This requires that our sins be disposed of satisfactorily." It is at this point that he preveniently moves within us to persuade our heart to come home, home to God himself. Like the prodigal son, our soul awakens from its insane stupor and says, "I will arise and go to my Father." That is the first step.

The Tabernacle Then and Now

"The interior journey of the soul from the wilds of sin into the enjoyed presence of God is beautifully illustrated through the Old Testament tabernacle," writes Tozer. Each sinner seeking to worship God gained entry by way of a single opening into a large outer courtyard surrounded by a wall. The first thing you encountered was a brass altar



upon which burnt sacrifices were offered. It was a picture of redemption – the price of sin was a payment in blood. The next thing you encountered in the courtyard was the laver, used for washing. It was a picture of cleansing. Having been redeemed by a blood sacrifice, it was now necessary to wash away the sin and proceed as one who is now cleansed through the purifying water of confession.

To proceed into the holy place, one had to pass through a veil. Once inside the holy place, to the left would be the golden lamp stand, to the right would be the altar of shewbread, and toward the back stood the altar of incense. No natural light was permitted in the holy place. The only light

came from the burning candles in the golden lamp stand. The flames from the golden lamp stand spoke of Christ, the Light of the World, as well as pointed to the Holy Spirit, who would some day manifest himself in tongues of fire. The shewbread illustrated Christ as the Bread of Life and pictured our communion meal with God. The altar of incense represented the fragrant prayers of the saints going up to God.

But the worshiper who had come this far and had enjoyed so much still had not entered the presence of God. A second veil separated the holy place from another space, the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, where there was but one piece of furniture – the Ark of the Covenant. It contained the Tablets of Law given by God to Moses, which speaks of the righteous requirements of God, as well as other items. Covering the top the Ark was a heavy slab of thick gold that could be removed. That slab of gold was called the mercy seat, upon which the figures of two Cherubim perched, guarding the holiness of God. It was the

The interior journey of the soul from the wilds of sin into the enjoyed presence of God is beautifully illustrated through the Old Testament tabernacle

place of propitiation, or the place of "satisfaction." Hovering above the mercy seat dwelt the very presence of God himself in awful and glorious manifestation. No matter where the tabernacle traveled, upon being set up, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and that but once a year on the Day of Atonement, with the blood of an animal which he sprinkled on the mercy seat. In effect, the blood would put off the righteous requirements of the law for another year.

The veil that covered the Holy of Holies was about six inches thick and was made of various animal skins and cloth. Once a year, the high priest could enter, but only after filling the space with incense first. Failure to

do so would ensure that the brilliant light of God's presence would blind him. Then he would go in and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat to offer atonement for the sins of the nation. It was this last veil that was torn when the Lord died at Calvary, and the eyewitnesses report that the veil was ripped top to bottom. Mark well the direction of the tear. Immediately upon being satisfied (propitiated) by the perfect sacrifice of his own Son, the barrier between God and man, symbolized by the veil over the Holy of Holies, is ripped by God from top to bottom. After the sacrifice, God opens wide the way into his presence and invites us to draw near with boldness.

After the atoning death of Christ, the temple of God was no longer the designated place where man was to meet with God. No longer was it limited to a physical structure, and restricted to only one chosen man, and only open to that man once a year. But now the presence of God himself could dwell within anyone who received Christ's free gift of atonement for his or her sins. Their body became a living tabernacle for the Holy Spirit, a Holy of Holies where the presence of God could take up residence. What had formerly separated sinful people from God's holiness had now been removed forever.

In fact, it is helpful to think of yourself as a temple modeled after the Tabernacle. Your physical body corresponds to the outer courtyard. Your soul corresponds to the holy place. And at the center your spirit, where God now dwells, corresponds to the Holy of Holies. For the believer, there is free and open access from the outer body into the inner being, and on into the most holy place where God abides. Now, the actual life of Christ can be lived through you, from the inside out, affecting the heart, the mind, the body, all relationships, and the soul. You are now invited to push on into the presence of God, where you can actually live each day of your life. It is a staggering truth to contemplate: that the God of the universe waits for you, not in heaven, not in a religious structure, but within your very heart.



GOD HAS OUR BEST INTEREST AT HEART

Lord God, as I read the stories of the Bible, I see again and again that You call Your people to do things that, at the time, don't seem to make sense. I also realize that the reason Your will didn't make sense to Your people is that their vision was limited—they couldn't see the ends You had in mind. Show me in my mind and heart that I cannot know what my best interest really looks like, because I would need to know the future, and only You know that. Because my own perspective is limited, may I learn to trust You and do what You tell me, because it will always work out to my greater good. Then trust will overcome fear, and I will risk everything on Your character and live into the purposes You have ordained for me. As I embrace a biblical perspective, may it change my priorities and my practice.

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