

FRUITFUL LIVING IN SPRING



THE SEASON OF
ANTICIPATION

CHRIS AND
CAROL GREEN

**Fruitful
Living
in
Spring**

By
Chris and Carol Green

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

Fruitful Living in Spring

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to our brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews:

Lillian Stewart

Raphael and Brenda Green and family

Jonathan and Cynthia Green and family

Pamela Green-Keys and family

Desiree Green and family

Mark and Irwin Green (in the presence of the Lord)

Christopher Dennis

Michael Dennis

Preface

This book was written in the spring. In this part of the United States spring usually means lots of rain. It means melting snow and the slow process of cold and ice gradually giving way to longer days and gentler breezes. New life is on the way, but you have no idea what the new season is going to bring. Spring can be like the last months of pregnancy. You are anxiously, impatiently, and uncomfortably waiting for this new life to come; however, you know there's a painful transition required to bring the new life into the world.

We entered the spring season with many lingering fears and doubts from the past. With the painful memories from our first failed attempt to start a church still fresh in our thoughts, God was nudging us to pursue His heart in a whole new way. Our pursuit of God's heart helped us to release the past and embrace the new thing that He was doing.

When a couple came to us for pre-marital advice, we realized that God was presenting the new life for us to embrace. We found ourselves talking about marriage, family, relationships, and covenant. We found that people were hungry for insight and understanding. Suddenly, we had found our niche.

I knew from hearing missionary stories that when a community comes to you and asks for your help in meeting a practical need, then you have found the open door to the hearts of people.

All kinds of setbacks and difficulties continued to oppose us, but we were no longer so easily distracted because we had found the field with the treasure buried in it. We were postured to sell everything in order to buy that field.

As you navigate through your own 'spring' time, it is our prayer that something written within the pages of this book will encourage you along the way. There is no set method to reading this book. It may be a devotional for some or inspirational for others. You might need to read it every day in sequential order or the Lord may direct you to read sections randomly. It doesn't matter how you approach this book - just know that God has a

Word for you and a plan to accomplish the Word that He gives you. Just remain open to Him.

This all began when we received the following email from one of our spiritual sisters, DeVata Davis:

I think you should take excerpts from all of these Midweek Connections and publish them in a daily devotional - maybe call it "Fruitful Living" or something of that nature. There is such rich encouragement and a unique demonstration of the word in them that they should be shared in print as well as on this website. This will reach that other generation that either doesn't have a computer, doesn't trust the internet, or who would rather flip the pages than scroll down. What I'm saying is that these Midweek Connections really bless me and I know they would bless others too. And because I love books, I'd like to see you publish another one. :o)

Be blessed!
DeVata

So, we took our sister's suggestion and began compiling the weekly emails. You hold in your hands the actual weekly journal of a church and its pastors.

This started out as just our little simple way of staying connected with everyone since we did not have a midweek church service.

We had no idea our weekly email was evolving into a journal, a log, a devotional and a set of powerful sermons/messages/words to a young church going through the seasons of transition that are necessary to help it grow and become all that God had spoken concerning its purpose.

Spring

Midweek Connection

**Emails to our Church,
Family and Friends**

Turning a Page

Last Sunday, Carol and I shared with you from 1 Corinthians 1:26-28:

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.”

According to religious standards, we do not qualify to serve in this way because we are not proficient in scripture learning and Bible scholarship. According to the world's standards, we do not have the educational credentials nor the connections and association with people of prestige that are necessary for bringing a message of change to a generation.

Yet, God has chosen us - this foolish little family of believers - to confound the wisdom of this world. We've shared this with you before, but as we stand on the eve of a great time of impartation and celebration, we are reminded of what God says that qualifies us to be here. God was looking for some people that would be faithful. He wanted some people that would be faithful over a little so that HE could trust them with a little more.

More is coming. More people and more responsibility are coming. The key word is responsibility. That word means *response* ability. We must have the ability to respond the right way with each person, each situation, and in any circumstance. If we can keep in mind that we did not earn our way into the promotion that has come, we can continue to make the right response in the sight of the Lord. That basically means be humble and thankful.

God is not promoting us so that we can escape from the current situations that we are in right now. Ministry is not an escape

from our jobs, our families, and our financial obligations. In fact, the work of the Lord was the toughest and most difficult thing we ever did. We were in full-time ministry for 14 years. Sometimes it was 24/7/365! In many seasons there were no weekends off. There's no such thing as working 8 to 5 and the rest of night is mine. Sometimes it was relentless and life consuming. It's easy to go off on people and then justify having a bad attitude because you're tired.

What I'm saying to you now is that all of your life's experience and situations have prepared you for this next level of your life. We're not saying that all of you will be in full-time ministry someday. We're just giving you a glimpse of what it means to be promoted into a new level of ministry. New levels really mean more responsibility.

God has tested us. He's prepared us. Now He is promoting us. Promotion does not mean making us famous or making us a new superstar ministry. Promotion means God is going to entrust us with more people and with tougher situations than we have ever been through. He's going to entrust us to care for people while we are still working through our own issues. He's entrusting us to serve them and love them even when it is totally inconvenient. They will need our help after we've put in a long day of work. They'll need our time when we want to relax on the weekend. They'll need our help when we are in need of help for ourselves. That's the challenge that is set before us.

Yet, we believe that God has declared that you are ready for the challenge. He chose you.

Please take a moment to unite with us in this prayer:

Our Father God,

We come before Your throne in the name of Jesus Christ, Your son, and we are before You today to simply give You all the honor and glory that is due Your name.

As we close this chapter of the story of our church, we are thankful that we can turn this page with a renewed hope. Our desire and our expectations are based upon Your promises that You have spoken concerning us as individuals and families within this corporate body.

*Just three months after opening the doors of this church, you caused your servants at Christ Community Church to embrace us. They were the first to **publicly confirm the call upon us.***

Three months later, when everything began to crumble, You guided us through great storms of heartbreak and disappointment. We felt like the disciples must have felt when their boat was being hit by wave after wave and they began sinking. All the while, You were in the boat, but You were asleep. We did not take Your sleep as a signal to be at peace. We thought it meant You didn't care.

Yet, You stood up in our boat and You commanded the winds and the waves. You had already told us to set sail because we had an appointment on the other side, but we thought we would not make it because of the storm.

The disciples must have lost many valuables in that storm. We know that we did so. There has been the loss of relationships and the loss of property, yet You somehow sustained us so that there was no loss of life. So many times we wanted to quit when we we're in the midst of the violent storms because we could not go forward and we could not go backwards, either.

When all hope was fading away, You provided employment for us (through Your servant La-Verna Fountain) and kept us afloat. You touched the heart of another church family (Zion Assembly) and they gave us shelter and a place to meet while we regrouped. You took us through the filtering process to purge our hearts and purify our motives. You removed the stony heart and gave us a heart of flesh. You created a clean heart within us, and renewed within us a right spirit. You drove out the fear of man with Your precious love and gave us a new boldness to preach the gospel of the Kingdom.

You moved upon us to transition from that place of shelter and into our home for a season. You gave us wonderful and special visitations as we met every Friday night. You gave us a mighty breakthrough in our Healing Encounter weekend. You formed a new family unit and You put together a special force team with a very specific assignment for this generation.

We have desperately cried out to You and we have tried to be diligent and faithful to the assignment that You gave us in this generation. It's been like trying to break through a huge wall with a single sledge hammer, but You kept telling us to swing and hit the wall over and over again.

*Now as we turn the page to begin a new chapter, we know that we are entering a new chapter of our story and it is titled **Recovery and Restoration**.*

So we take this time to thank You for the recovery of that which was lost. We thank You for the break in the wall. We can see people coming. You have shown us clear indicators the past couple of weeks and we are growing in excitement because You are doing what You said You would do. We thank You for being faithful to us, even when we lost heart. We thank You for holding on to us even when we lost the strength to keeping holding on to You.

And now we declare this Word over this church family and to all of our intercessors, partners, and friends who have stood beside us in prayer, financial support, phone calls, and e-mails to keep us encouraged and moving forward:

Ephesians 3: 20-21: *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Jude 1: 24-25: *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is*

wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Always remember, **“We Win, We Win, We Win!”**

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Recovery and Restoration

Where do we begin? How can we possibly describe what God did during our anniversary celebration? All we can say is that it was truly a God ordained weekend. HE directed our decisions and set up a wonderful and intimate time of fellowship and spiritual impartation.

We can't tell you all that was done because each person that was present would have to tell you what God did for them during our time together. We will tell you from our perspective what the weekend was like:

We were off to a great start as our little sister DeVata Davis arrived on Friday evening. It was so good to see her because she's had a special place in our lives long before we even knew that we would become senior pastors. She was here when we opened our doors and has made a couple of visits during other critical moments in our foundation-laying years. It seemed like it's been a long time since we've seen her. We talked for a while and shared a meal.

Saturday morning we were up bright and early to drive south to Baltimore to pick up Quincy and Sherri from the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. We faced predictions of 1-2 inches of snow and there was some accumulation in the grassy areas. The wind was blowing as snow began to fall, but we held our ground in the spirit. Carol kept speaking forth all week that it was not going to snow and we are going to have a good weekend.

As we set out for Baltimore, the weather began to slowly clear. At first I thought it was just because we were headed south, but when we returned from picking up our spiritual son and daughter, the snow was gone and the skies were clear. As the day went on the sun came out and it was bright and sunny throughout the entire weekend.

It was great to see Quincy and Sherri. They called us on our cell phone just as we were walking into the airport terminal. We

talked along the way as we drove back north. As we crossed the bridge over the Susquehanna River into downtown Harrisburg we gave them a few highlights about where we were and a little bit about the community.

We had breakfast and took them on a short tour to see our first home near the mountain base and then to our current townhouse before taking them to their hotel. Later, Quincy's comments to us were that, from all the places that we showed them, they could see that God has given us favor here. He said things could have been so much worse, but God had shown us favor. Sherri said that when they get back to St. Louis, they're going to tell everyone that we're doing fine.

Well, let me move on to the meetings. Saturday evening we got started with a meal in our home. Quincy and Sherri were able to meet the church family for the first time. Thanks to our videos on the website, they already recognized everyone. It was a reunion, of sorts, for DeVata with them. After eating and talking, I opened the evening with a video that I had secretly put together to reflect back on the past three years.

The video set the tone for the night. I asked DeVata to share some of the insights God had given her regarding our church. She disclosed how God showed her that He was training us to be like a Delta Force unit like on the TV show, *The Unit*. She talked about how close the team on *The Unit* was and how much they depended upon each other. She told us to not be discouraged by our small size right now because we are most effective when the unit is small. She added that in order to accomplish their mission, teams like *The Unit* have to go through some very difficult training that not everyone can endure. The training is difficult because the assignments are life and death situations. Her words echoed a prophetic utterance Carol and I received back in 2003 in Trinidad.

Her words also explained why so many people have come and gone when trying to join this church. God has been allowing intense training to come to them. The training is so hard in order to prepare for the high level of warfare. This church hasn't even

gotten into the warfare yet. All of this has been the training for the spiritual warfare that is yet to come.

So, our understanding was shifted from questioning why we are still small after three years, to understanding that we are not just another church. We are a special force unit. God plans to use us in a very specific manner. Other churches and ministries won't even understand who we are and what we are because that's the nature of the calling.

Then she shared one other point: Not everyone can become a member of The Unit. They are an elite force, full of potential and who have been tried and tested. That revelation brought a whole new understanding for us. Even though we are casting out a net for people to come and experience this ministry, God is going to single out those who show potential, to become a part of the ministry team. Everyone that comes to this church cannot join the Delta Force team. They may join the church, but the ministry team is another matter altogether. As you know, Carol and I have been praying and asking the Lord to send help. This exhortation was part of the answer to that prayer.

DeVata also sang a song that the Lord gave her to share with us. It was called He Restoreth My Soul. As she sang, I could hear and see that it was indeed for those who are in our church family, and it was a prophetic song for this generation. Here is a portion of the lyrics:

*Sitting there in church my heart was far from Thee
Though I looked and played the part
My iniquity consumed me
You told the saints to restore me
In a spirit of meekness
But they couldn't see beyond my weakness*

*My sin is ever before me
My soul cries out – Oh Lord, Lord Restore me
Create in me a clean heart
Renew a steadfast spirit within me*

*Lord restore my soul
Please Lord forgive me
Restore my soul
Set my spirit free
Restore my soul
As I worship at Your feet
Oh Lord, my God
Please restore my soul*

Then Quincy and Sherri introduced themselves and began sharing stories. God used them to remind us of the things that were done in the context of the small group in our weekly home meeting that we hosted while we served in St. Louis. They kept recalling one thing after another that God did through a small group of people that met in our house. God was speaking that HE was doing a similar thing here.

Sunday morning was just wonderful. We began with our own special arrangement of Helena Barrington's song, 'That's The Kingdom of God'. Quincy and Sherri had everyone rolling in laughter as they danced through the steps. (Yes, we still include movement and dance with our praise songs.) The Spirit of God moved on us as Pastor Carol led us in a special song called, "But for Your Grace."

From that point on the Lord just took over the meeting. He told me to begin the confirmation of our two newest members while HE was present. I tried to begin the ceremony portion, but HE meant the prayer and prophetic impartation portion. Usually we pray for people after the ceremony, but God was moving in a different way. DeVata began to travail in prayer and I backed up so she could go forth and pray for our new family members.

From there, the words of exhortation and prophecy just came pouring forth. Carol and I were blown away as Quincy, Sherri, and DeVata just flowed together with us. It was as if they had been here all along. It was marvelous to behold.

Later in the meeting we played the newest video production from the young people. Our youngest son, David, produced an

outstanding video. With co-writing and help from Jessica, Christopher, and Jonathan, the best video production to date was shown to the church family.

After the Sunday morning session, we went to our home for a Sunday afternoon dinner. Another one of the highlights, for me, was when Quincy and Sherri showed a video from their wedding. It not only took us back in time, but it showed Carol and me the boldness and tenacity in which we once ministered. That was some of what was lost when we moved here.

Just seeing ourselves minister with no fear of people and under the authority of the Lord, instantly restored something back into me. God was, indeed, using everything in this weekend to make our anniversary theme come to pass: **Recovery and Restoration!**

We are so thankful to God for sending Quincy, Sherri, and DeVata to minister to us during our Resurrection Weekend/Anniversary Celebration. This weekend will always be remembered as a turning point in the life of our church family.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Pages of a Novel

We've had a pretty tough stretch of days, but we are still reporting victory. Sometimes when I read over my personal journals and these weekly connections letters it's like going through the pages of a novel. The difference is that this story is REAL. It actually happened the way we described it. One day our grandchildren will be able to look back and see the foundation that was laid for them to continue to advance the Kingdom of God.

This past Sunday we held our first gathering of worship and prayer. I must admit that it was a bit disappointing because we only had one visitor. We had a tough night before Sunday morning because we had to drive to Baltimore and pick up David and Jessica from the airport as they returned from a special weekend at Oral Roberts University.

(By the way, the legacy will continue. There will always be somebody from the Green family or from a church pastored by a Green attending O.R.U.) Their flight coming out of St. Louis was delayed so by the time we picked them up and returned home, we didn't get to bed until 2:00 in the morning.

We were all very tired and weary, so as we launched our first prayer gathering, immediately our faithfulness, commitment, and obedience was put to the test. As we began our audio check I could not sing because my voice was really worn out, but my wife stepped up to the moment. The anointing of the Lord was on her to sing and lead the worship, so I turned it over to her. She just began to pray and worship even though it was only the sound check. I knew that she was the one to take the lead in the worship.

Every time we gather and pray, I can see myself standing before a tower of religion. I know that the family of God is trapped in that tower. One of the strategies the Lord gave us was to release the Word of God into the atmosphere. So I found myself speaking to people beyond those that were present in the hotel room.

The Lord directed me to establish a focal point of our prayer from **Psalm 72**, “***Those from the city will flourish like the grass.***” Then the Lord directed me to challenge the attitude and trap of ***perfectionism*** in the church.

Next week, we will return to our ***House Church*** meeting as we step into Season Two of the Fruitful Lifestyle Development Series. We can hardly wait to begin our discussions and teaching. You will see that this is one of the most exciting aspects of this ministry. Carol and I love small groups because we love the intimacy and energy of small group Bible studies and discussions.

For the next few weeks, we anticipate vibrant and dynamic encounters with the Lord through His word.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Perfect

Well, for some reason, God has us digging into this issue of **perfection versus perfectionism**. We planned to dive into our Lifestyle foundation teaching this past Sunday, but we got into a discussion regarding our responses to people on our jobs and in the neighborhood. We discovered that everyone experienced difficult encounters this past week. So, as we usually do, instead of proceeding with the planned agenda, we went with the flow and the direction the Lord was taking us at this time.

Carol and I shared regarding numerous issues, but one of the key points was to bring clarity to what Jesus meant by what He said in Matthew 5:43-48: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**”*

For many years, most believers have been pounded with the words **“Be ye perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”** This passage has been drilled into us as the foundational teaching regarding holiness and living a clean, pure life before the Lord.

Now, let me be absolutely clear that we teach and live holiness in this ministry. It’s just that in this passage of scripture “holiness” is not what Jesus was referring to. If you put these words of Jesus into context, Jesus was talking about loving our enemies. Then the Lord tells us to be perfect, like our Father in heaven is perfect. **What was He saying regarding this perfect state of being?**

It is my understanding that He was telling us to be perfect in our expression of love to our enemies just like our heavenly Father is perfect in His expression of love to those same people. He was giving us practical ways to express that perfect love when He said, “**ble**ss those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray for** those who spitefully use you and persecute you”.

One of the basic meanings of the word perfect is to be unreserved and unconditional. It actually means to express or give (in words, deeds, gifts, or talents) without pre-qualifying the recipient. It means to give to them without holding anything back. Give them your best. Give them the most. Give them the truth. Give to them whether they deserve it or not. That’s what a perfect gift is. That’s what perfect love is. That’s how God is. Now you can see why Jesus would say *be perfect* (in your love, gifts and expressions) like your heavenly Father is perfect.

The reason we’re dealing with **perfectionism** is because it is not the same as being perfect. Perfectionism seeks after flawless performance and it judges and predetermines whether a person deserves our time, talents, treasure, or kindness.

This passage is not about being flawless and never making a mistake or never committing any sin so as to try to attain eternal life. This was about the mature expression of the Love of God in practical everyday situations so that we can truly be children of God - to be an expression of who we really are.

We find this NEW understanding of this scripture to be one of the most liberating truths that we desire to release in this generation. The stranglehold of religion has people trying to live a flawless life and at the same time, in pride, judging the flaws in others based upon standards that are mere misinterpretations of the Word of God.

Now you see why we spend so much time in teaching and prayer. It’s been a very slow and delicate process, but we believe it is because God is doing heart surgery on us. As God is moving us closer to public ministry beyond our monthly prayer

gatherings, He is preparing our hearts. If we are annoyed and irritated by people on our jobs and in the neighborhood, we will be annoyed and irritated by the people that come to our public gatherings.

I'm always aware of the Lord testing our hearts before opening doors for us. I know that if we cannot pass this test we will not qualify for the increase. The principle of increase is this: **faithful over a little, ruler over much.** If we cannot love now, we will not be given more people to care for and shepherd.

Part of the reason churches remain small is because they cannot pass this test. If they can only embrace people that are easy to love, they cannot ever grow. We must love the unlovable and embrace the ungrateful and unruly.

Personally, I hate seeing believers compare themselves and their life's situations and experiences to other people in order to justify their intolerance. They have forgotten or they have never been aware of how much they have been forgiven.

We must desire to be perfect like our heavenly Father is perfect. He wakes us up each day and protects us along the way. His sunrise was for us, just like it was for the one who curses us. His cooling rainfall is for us, just like it is for the one who hates us. Therefore, we dare not look down on them, for we would be the same as them if it had not been for the grace of God. Now He chooses to use us to extend His grace to them.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

They Need to Hear the Stories

Well . . . on with our continuing adventure.

We have battles on every side and the attacks of the enemy have increased but we are still advancing in the will of God. We would have to call this past Sunday another one of those breakthrough moments.

Carol and I tried to get to our first lesson in our Fruitful Lifestyle Development Series for Season Two but instead the Lord took us into a completely different discussion once again. We found ourselves recounting the time when our twin sons were born. Sunday was their 18th birthday and the events surrounding their birth were severe as we faced life threatening circumstances all the way up until the moment of their birth. The best way for us to explain the story of their birth is to call it **Discovering God's Favor**.

Lately, the Lord has had us recounting our personal testimony which is filled with stories of deliverance. After our first few months in this community I became hesitant to do this because we didn't want it to appear that this ministry was ALL ABOUT CHRIS AND CAROL. But, as a couple of our church members have told us, "We need to hear the stories of what God has done in you because it encourages us."

We now realize that God is sending people who need and want to hear more than a few scriptures quoted to them. They need to hear that the things that we have taught them have been actually LIVED by us as well.

In our early days of this ministry, I was criticized for telling stories and not giving enough scriptures, so I stopped telling our personal stories for a long time. However, since that time, God has made it clear that the people that HE is sending NEED TO HEAR THE STORIES as much as they need the scriptures. Like the ancient people of God, we have several landmark stones and altars all around us and we need to tell the present generation

what those stones and altars mean and give them the real life stories.

I don't know if ALL of this generation needs this style of ministry, but we can tell you that the particular people God has sent to us want to hear what God has done in our lives. They need to know that we have done what we are teaching them to do. They have told us, in so many words, that they don't need another sermon from the lips but they need a sermon in a lifestyle.

So, before we can get into our Fruitful Lifestyle Development Series, God has led us to disclose the lifestyle from which this teaching series was given birth. One of our favorite stories, which we shared last Sunday, was how God gave us such favor that a medical bill of over \$32,000 was reduced to \$300. Now that's the kind of anointing that this church family comes under!

We are declaring that God's favor is on you so strong that nothing will hinder you from fulfilling God's purpose and plan for your life. We will continue to seek first the Kingdom of God so that all these things (the needs and necessities of life) will be added. God will make sure that you and I are free to be who we were created to be and free to do what we were created to do.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

The Checklist

We are anticipating our monthly ***Sunday Morning Live*** at the hotel. This Sunday, we'll be back for another public gathering. After a full month of radio broadcasts, extending invitations through various community calendars, and even leaving cards and flyers in various locations, we are hoping to see more people come and receive the ministry.

There has been such a big fight (in the spirit) over the past three weeks that we just know we must be making progress in the spiritual realm. Many of you have been battling against the thoughts of quitting and giving up. We had a very candid discussion this past Sunday as we stressed the realities of life with the young people and the requirement to fight and resist the internal pressure to quit.

This is how your pastors view our assignment in this area. God sent us here. He has provided for us here. He has sustained us here. He has tested and trained us here. One of the lessons He has taught us has been to accept the role He gives you. Many of His prophets did not see the results of their preaching in their lifetime. Does it mean they were not called? Does it mean they were not sent? They had to be faithful to the command of God no matter what they encountered. God told Ezekiel the kind of people he was being sent to minister to. He was also told how they would respond.

Ezekiel 3:8-11 says, *Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, **nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.*** Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. And go, **get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse.**

So, the response of the people does not change what God has told us to do. We will do it as unto the Lord. We will do it with a perfect love and with a perfect heart. Remember the definition of perfect. We will do it without holding back anything. It doesn't matter how people respond or don't respond. God put His word in our hearts and we must do this, even when it feels like a waste of time, energy, and money. We must obey the Word of the Lord. Until He sets another assignment before us, we are focused on this generation.

Carol and I recounted stories of walking in faith. Way back in 1977 a young woman made her first airplane flight - a one way ticket, to Tulsa, Oklahoma. She was pursuing what she understood to be the will of God for her life. She had twenty-five dollars and was about to attend Oral Roberts University. She had nothing for tuition, housing or books. She didn't have the money to return home if nothing worked out. It was the greatest step of faith of her life. Miraculously, they allowed her to enroll and assigned her housing.

As she recalls this true life story, Carol Green said that she left home because she just knew that there had to be more to life than what she had experienced. She wanted more and this was her one chance to go for it. Two days after arriving on the campus her new friend, Wilma Calvert, introduced her to a young man named Chris Green. She didn't know he would one day be her husband. A couple of days after that, another new friend, Mark Lawrence, introduced her to Chris Green again. She connected with Chris and many other young people who were like her in that they wanted the will of God for their lives. They were in the same pursuit.

Well, she didn't complete that year at Oral Roberts, but the connection that God desired for her life had been made. In Acts 8:26 we read: *Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."*

Philip was instructed to take the road that led to Gaza. At first glance, it would appear that God wanted him to go to Gaza.

However, the goal wasn't Gaza. The goal was the connection that would be made while taking that route. Philip saw an Ethiopian guy reading a book that he didn't understand. He ran over to him and struck up a conversation that led to this man committing his heart and life to Jesus Christ. The road to Gaza was all about a divine appointment. Once that assignment was completed, God instantly and supernaturally moved him to the next assignment.

Acts 8:38-40 says: So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Carol Green was also led to take a road that led to Gaza, and the intentions of God were for her to make a connection. She connected with the family that God had determined before time that she would be joined to by marriage into the ministry.

We shared this and a couple of other stories with the church family because this is the kind of leadership that we have been sent to provide. Your pastor's wife was crazy enough to get on a plane with a one way ticket. Years later, we were crazy enough to pack up and move to St. Louis, Missouri after only six months of marriage, to pursue God's will to assist in the building of a local church. We were still crazy enough, twenty three years later, to pack up and move with no guarantees of income, jobs, or anything.

Why are we saying this to you? Well, it's because as a church family, we will have to continue to pursue the will of God in this same manner. We have to be willing to pursue God and His will - no matter what. He has to matter more than comfort or security. He has to matter more than money or fame. He has to matter more than having a big church. He has to matter more than our desire to return to fulltime ministry someday. He has to matter more than the paychecks from our state government jobs.

He has to matter more than our marriage. He has to matter more than our children. God has to matter more than anything.

There's a song we used to sing back in our home church called More Than Anything. Part of the lyrics say: More than worldly wealth; more than life itself, I love You Jesus, more than anything.

When we find ourselves angry, bitter, hurt, or cold towards God, it's because a lot of our love and understanding is still based upon what He will do for us. When He doesn't do it, or if He takes too long, we tend to get frustrated or depressed. Believe me - we know. We have to fight these responses, too. We've been there a whole lot of times. Every time I've been there, God has been faithful to take me back through the choices I made to bring me into certain situations.

It's like God gives me a check list:

1. Did I tell you to do this or did you do this on your own?
2. Did I tell you to do it now or did you move ahead of my timing? Did you wait too long?
3. Did I tell you to do it this way or did you do it your way?
4. Did I warn you about certain things to check closely or certain people to be careful with? Did you ignore my warnings?
5. Did I leave you or forsake you?

You see if we stop and think about why we got into some situations, we will discover exactly how we got there. Instead of digging in our heels and standing in a negative posture against God and His word, we will find ourselves bowing our heads and saying, Lord forgive me. I ask you for mercy and grace to get through this.

If you can go through the check list and if you can honestly say that you have done what God told you to do and you're doing it the way He said to do it, and you're doing it in the timing He set, then you can truly rejoice because you are suffering out of

obedience and not because of bad choices or because of getting involved in matters that you weren't supposed to be in anyway.

1 Peter 4:15-16 says: *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a **busybody in other men's matters**. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

If my battle is the result of obedience, I have hope and faith. If it's from bad choices, then I must humble myself and ask for forgiveness, mercy and grace.

1 Peter 4:12-13 says: *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that **when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.***

So, we encourage you and urge you to go through the check list. Use it and apply it to every area of your life. When we discover that we have missed God's mark in certain places, it does not mean that we are not saved, and it doesn't mean God will discard us. However, it does mean that we need to make a conscious effort to get back on track and get back in sync with the will of God for our lives.

This is the kind of message that doesn't fill up churches because many people would rather be told that everything will be okay if they just believe harder; just keep praying harder; just keeping giving more money; just keep fasting more. Well, we're saying that the purpose of the believing, praying, giving, and fasting is to bring us to this place in our hearts where we are ready to keep it real between us and God. This is where we develop a real relationship.

This is not about doing stuff to appease an angry God or to ease our guilty conscious. This is about getting real answers to the real questions that we have about why things don't work out the way we think they should. We'll explore this again in the months and years to come. For now, please receive this word of wisdom

and insight. We believe God's best is yet to come for you and your family. We just encourage you to prayerfully and humbly go through the checklist and allow the Spirit of God to bring comfort to your soul.

What I'm saying is, put on your armor. Check your armor. Then, after you have done this, the command is to stand up and FIGHT!

Ephesians 6:12-13 says: *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, **to stand!***

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

What If?

On Sunday, April 27, 2008, I shared a very different kind of message with the church family. We were meeting in a hotel on Harrisburg's west shore with the same small group of people, however, that particular Sunday, we had about five or six visitors and we were very excited.

The Lord had given me a very special word for that week and I didn't know if hardly anyone would come, or it would be the same faithful few. I resolved in my heart to keep giving my best, no matter how many or how few attended.

The word was so special that we felt it should be included in this book as an integral part of our springtime journey. The message was titled,
What If?

What If?

More than fifteen years ago, we recorded and released a song called **WHAT IF?** The lyrics are:

TIME IS TICKIN' AND YOU'VE BEEN TRIPPIN'
PLACED YOUR BET, THROWN YOUR LIFE
DOWN ON THE GROUND

LIFE IS LIKE THAT DRIVE-BY SHOOTING
BUT SATAN'S GOT THE GUN AND
HE FIRES INTO THE CROWD

**WHAT IF THIS GOD IS REAL?
WHAT IF THERE IS A FIGHT?
WHAT IF YOU DIED RIGHT NOW
AND YOU FOUND OUT I WAS RIGHT?**

**WHAT IF GOD HEARS YOUR CRY?
WHAT IF THIS SONG IS TRUE?
WHAT IF THIS LIFE'S A GAMBLE?
CAN YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE AND LOSE?**

JUST CONSIDER FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT
HOW GOD TOOK HIS ONLY SON, LAID HIS LIFE DOWN
HE TOOK THAT DRIVE-BY FOR YOU
SO YOU'RE NOT JUST A NUMBER LOST IN THE CROWD

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HEART OF THE NATION MUSIC, 1993

Back in those days, drive-by shootings was commonplace in my home city. They were a part of gang initiations. Young perspective gang members would drive around the neighborhood and randomly shoot innocent bystanders to demonstrate their loyalty to their new family.

I used that scenario to help young people see how life was like that sometimes. You can be in the wrong place at the wrong time. When you fail to take God seriously and when you fail to prepare for your future, you're like one of those people standing in the crowd while bullets are fired randomly in your direction. You might survive it. You might not. But why take the chance? When I was in high school, our pastor's daughter came to talk to me and my younger sister about attending a house party after school one Friday night. She was freshman, a ninth grader, attending her first high school party. Well, my sister and I warned her, almost begging her not to go. We told her that the parties always end the same way. They end with violence. There will be a fight and there will be shooting.

We came to church the following Sunday morning and were shocked to hear that she had been shot at the house party and left paralyzed. All we could say, as we cried in regret, was that we told her not to go. We told her not to go.

So, many years later when we became pastors of teenagers and when we became parents of teenagers of our own, these were the kind of stories that were behind the passion in our voice. We were not giving warnings about things that might happen. We were talking about things that DID happen. We were talking about things that WILL happen.

And, just as impacting as the warnings, we also had the triumphs of those things that happened when the word and wisdom of God is received. We have personally watched God turn former dope dealers into hope dealers. We have watched God turn the fatherless into faithful spouses and wise parents. People with horrible backgrounds were given a new future. There are sons and daughters who have graduated from college or moved into new careers, all because they believed that God had something better for them.

That brings me to this moment right here, right now. The question before you is, "What If?"

This will be bit unorthodox, because even though I'm a minister, I'm not going to quote the Bible to you right now. I'm going to quote the lyrics to a song that God inspired me to write. The lyrics are based on Bible teachings, but I won't give it to you in those terms. I'm not concerned about you joining a church. I'm not trying to get into your pocket and get your money. I just want you to consider these two words for the rest of your life

- *What If?*

**WHAT IF THIS GOD IS REAL?
WHAT IF THERE IS A FIGHT?
WHAT IF YOU DIED RIGHT NOW
AND YOU FOUND OUT I WAS RIGHT?**

**WHAT IF GOD HEARS YOUR CRY?
WHAT IF THIS SONG IS TRUE?
WHAT IF THIS LIFE'S A GAMBLE?
CAN YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE AND LOSE?**

The first line asks "**What if this God is real?**" I'm not here to debate various religious beliefs and doctrines. I'm not here to debate philosophies and various points of view. There are many voices in the world and none of them is without significance. You must identify that voice that is speaking to your spirit.

Many voices and beliefs appeal to our intellect. They appeal to our feelings and emotions. Some appeal to our ego and others

appeal to our sense of right and wrong. Some voices appeal to our pride and others appeal to our shame. Some appeal to our guilt and others appeal to our good name. But I'm talking about that voice that is speaking to our spirit.

There is only one voice that can speak directly into that part of us that is called our spirit. This is the real me. This is the part that no one can see. This is part that doesn't sleep. This is part that makes me weep. This is part that feels comfort or pain that comes through my emotions with expressions I cannot contain. There is only one voice that can get through the maze in our minds, that can get past our fears and the experiences we left behind. Yes, I'm asking, what if this voice, this God is real?

The next line asks **“What if there is a fight?”** What if there is a fight - an epic Lord of the Rings, Matrix trilogy, X-Men trilogy, Spiderman trilogy, Star Wars six-pack battle over your soul and your future? God says in His word, the Bible, that He has good plans for you, to give you a hope and a future. That's why there's always something going on in our lives. There's a massive giant screen, epic, on-going battle that we're in all the time, and part of the purpose of that battle is to keep you blind to the reality of it. We're made to think that the goal is to just be successful in life by getting a great career, hooking up with the right person to love us, work and live together until we grow old, retire and die. But there's far more at stake than that.

This takes me to the next line, **“What if you died right now and found out I was right?”** You don't have to wait until you're dead to find out if I'm right. In fact, that's too late to make the discovery. I don't like finding out if I'm right about something after it's too late. Don't tell me at 30,000 feet that my suspicion that this airplane has faulty landing gear was right when you could have and should have told me before we took off.

Now comes one of the most important lines in the song: **“What if God hears your cry?”**

Before you and I ever learned to speak, we all came into the world and we knew how to cry. The cry was our one way of

communicating our feelings. It's funny how our parent or caretaker learned what our cries meant. They could tell the difference between the cry for a diaper change and the cry from hunger. They came to know our fearful cry as well as our angry cry. They knew when our cry was for comfort and when our cry was for no reason at all.

This is why you don't necessarily need to know how to say the right words in a prayer. God can hear your cry. He knows what you're trying to say when you have no words to explain how you feel. The same God who made you is the same God who knows your cry. He knows your cry because He knows you.

Now ask yourself, "**What if God hears my cry?**" There's a lot going on in our lives right now. Think about everything - and I do mean everything - that is going on in your life right now. Try to think about all that has happened.

Do you know God heard your cry? Even now He hears your cry. He knows you need a job. He knows you need a better home. He knows you want to go to college. He knows you need a car. He knows you want companionship. He knows you want to get married. He knows you need food to eat and clothes to wear. But He is not some mean monster up in Heaven enjoying your suffering. **What if God hears your cry?**

Now I ask, "**What if this song is true?**" It is not so much about the song, but it's the message. What if these words are true? What if it's true that TIME IS TICKIN' AND YOU'VE BEEN TRIPPIN' and you PLACED YOUR BET, and THROWN YOUR LIFE DOWN ON THE GROUND. What if LIFE IS LIKE THAT DRIVE-BY SHOOTING BUT SATAN'S GOT THE GUN AND HE FIRES INTO THE CROWD?

Because if this song is true, I ask you to:

JUST CONSIDER FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT
HOW GOD TOOK HIS ONLY SON, LAID HIS LIFE DOWN
HE TOOK THAT DRIVE-BY FOR YOU
SO YOU'RE NOT JUST A NUMBER LOST IN THE CROWD

God stepped in front of the bullets and took the one that would have killed you. But you say. "I've still been shot, though. My wife left me. My husband left me. I lost my family. I lost my home. I lost my career. I've been rejected. I've been betrayed. I've been abandoned. I've been wounded."

Yes, you have, but the bullets that were meant to kill you, He took. He stepped in front of them. And the same God that took the drive-by shooting for you simply says to you today, "You'll never be a number lost in the crowd. I know you. You're so precious to me; I even know every single hair on your head." He says that if He's aware of even little birds that fall and die, how much more is He aware of you.

What if this is what God wants people to know about Him?

What if God can get some people in this generation to change their minds about who He is?

What if we could get past religion and develop a real relationship with Him and with each other?

What if God has a purpose and plan for our lives beyond what we could have ever imagined?

What if this isn't just a fairy tale or religious rhetoric?

What if this could really happen?

What if God never came to give us religion, but He came to give us life?

Time is ticking by and life is moving on.

Will you live it by hustling, trying to make something happen?

Will you live it by waiting for something to happen?

Will you accept what has already happened and give your life and future to God?

I close with these final words from the song:

IF I WERE YOU I WOULDN'T MAKE THAT GAMBLE
IF I WERE YOU I WOULDN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE
IF I WERE YOU I'D LEAN ON THE SURE THING
I'D GIVE JESUS THE FINAL DANCE

Pastor Chris Green

The Dragnet

There's so much on my heart to share with you that I don't know where to begin. We're feeling the fiery trials that you are going through right now. We're in the midst of battles ourselves. And it's in these times that I will sound like an uncaring drill sergeant. But that's not what this is. A drill sergeant is so tough because he or she knows what kind of warfare the soldiers are going to face. Last month, DeVata Davis talked to us about military preparation that is so hard that lives can be lost in the training stages.

Now we're at the place where we cannot quit. We've come too far. You've come too far. It really doesn't matter what the enemy is saying to you right now. You know that since he cannot do anything but tell lies, that everything you're being told by him is a lie.

We have God's promise from Matthew 6:31-34: *"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

This is so clear that it's radical. We don't have to worry about the future as long as we seek first the Kingdom of God. That means living according to Kingdom principles and in Kingdom of God lifestyles. This means making everything concerning the kingdom the priority of our lives.

That's why we cannot stop and focus on the trials. There are times when you receive a blow, but you must keep going after God. I'm not talking about church attendance. I'm talking about the pursuit of the heart and will of God.

We know it's hard to keep focusing on our divine assignment when it looks like our personal lives are collapsing in disaster;

but this is the fight that most people never overcome. Every time the trials hit, they quit because it seems like the battle will be easier if we pull back on some of our Godly commitments. But we have learned that *compromise is suicide*. It doesn't get easier if you give up. It just means the defeat is going to be swift and the loss will be great.

At some point in our lives we come to a place where we decide, "I'm not going down without a fight!" Then we come to a point where we decide, "I'm not going down (in defeat) at all. I may get knocked down in this brawl, but I'm not going out. If the enemy tosses me out of the ring, I've got enough determination and faith to keep climbing back in there."

I wonder what goes through the mind of the enemy when he encounters those believers who trust God so much that they just smile after taking a hard blow. They get up and say through a bleeding mouth, "Now God's got you right where He wants you."

Why does this church family keep going on in spite of every set back? It's because we are living out a Kingdom principle. We are seeking first the Kingdom of God.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. Matthew 13:46-48

For our church, this is the Kingdom dragnet principle. We cast out the net (Fruitful Living radio, our website, our publications, music and seminars). We draw the fish into the boat (Sunday services – a closer look at what we're about). Then we take them to shore (invite them into our home/small group).

After that, the good fish (the ones who are ready to receive and learn more about God) we gather into vessels (connect at a relational level. They don't join a church. They join a family). The bad fish (those who are not ready to receive) are released. We don't try to coerce them or force them to receive. We trust God

that when they're ready, they'll be caught in another dragnet. We pray that they won't lose their lives before that happens.

We realize this is very different from other churches and ministries that you may have been a part of, but that's because God is moving in a different way in the 21st century. House churches, small groups, question and answer sessions, websites, and multi-media will become a normal part of the new church family. The emphasis will be on relationships and not on talents and skill. The pastor won't be the focus of the church. Jesus will be the focus.

This month's "**Sunday Morning Live**" went quite well. I was really glad to get back to the ministry style the Lord has given me. I'm a writer and for most of my ministry life, I have written my thoughts and then read them to the group or audience. Then I stop, as the Lord leads me, and expound or explain various points along the way. I've only ministered that way once since moving to this area. It was great to get back to being myself and being the writer and communicator God called and made me to be.

We trust that you were ministered to as we worshipped, viewed a video clip, and received the message called "**What If?**" which the Lord gave me to share with all who would come. This title comes from a song that I wrote many years ago when Carol and I were teen ministry pastors.

I have this evangelistic, soul winning motivation within, so we must do things as your leaders to keep us from becoming complacent and comfortable in the house setting every week. Many leaders make that mistake and they stop growing because they allow their family and congregations to stay within their comfort zone.

As usual, you guys did a wonderful job of making people feel right at home and welcome. The one thing we must always do is to make people feel welcome. We are a close family, yet we will never act like some exclusive club that looks down on others as though they are invading our precious territory.

Carol and I cannot express enough how much we love people. All are welcome. There are no strangers in this ministry's setting. Even though our main emphasis is the home group environment, we use the Sunday gatherings and our website as strategic means to allow people to check us out in a non-threatening atmosphere. Remember, we're not trying to fill up a church building or recruit church members. We're here to build people.

While we were setting up the hotel room on Saturday evening, I kept feeling like we were going to have more people to come this time. Preparing the message and making the PowerPoint presentation was a step of faith because, as you witnessed, it was the kind of message that could only be delivered if there were more people present than just the immediate church family.

Sunday morning arrived and we engaged in our opening of prayer, praise and worship. As soon as people started coming in, I knew that God was answering our little prayer. This was not just a Chris and Carol idea. Let me say that it's not that we were going to quit and pack up the ministry. We just don't believe in wasting time, energy and money. People waste their resources when they're trying to make a name for themselves. People waste their resources when they're trying to build a ministry. We have nothing to build and nothing to prove. Unless the Lord builds the house, all our labor is in vain. This is about being a good steward.

God has just proven to us that He wants us to do this and to do it this way, so come on family, rejoice! This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous to behold!

Now we declare to you that we will see God do special things in the lives of our family, friends and co-workers. As we continue to do our part of just casting out the net (radio, website, publications, music and seminars), we will gather them in the boat (Sunday Morning Live) and take our catch to the shore (home/small group meetings) where we will be able to do just what the parable says, and that is to separate those who are

ready from those who are not ready. This is a Kingdom of God principle for soul-winning and discipleship.

We will continue to walk together through personal trials and triumphs. We will see mighty breakthroughs in the lives of people in this generation. God is making you a model and a trophy of His grace. People will be able to look at you and your lifestyle and see that God is a good God. They will see that God is trustworthy. They will see that God is not about religion, and that He is about relationship. You will be a living example of the Bible in modern times.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Bless the Lord at All Times

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will continually be in my mouth! Carol and I are stirred in our spirit for you this week. God has done the miraculous and we know that it is not only a beginning, but it is the evidence of that which has already been released and broken forth in the spirit.

Last week we were hit with an \$800.00 auto repair just when our monthly lease on our town home was due, along with several other monthly expenses like car insurance and utilities. That huge chunk left us with no way to pay all that is due. Our response was to do what we have always done and that is to offer the sacrifice of praise. We immediately began a fast, turning off the television and pulling away to be alone with the Lord. I had Carol to prepare to teach on Sunday morning. She was going through a personal crisis of her own and yet, God was requiring of her to give and pour out in spite her own battle. I found myself in intercession all of Saturday night.

This was about more than just the finances. This is about the kind of stuff that seems to happen every time we're on the verge of making significant progress in our personal, professional, and ministry aspects of our life.

Interestingly enough, this was a week filled with encouragement. Here are some examples of emails that we received:

Pastor Chris and Carol,
I was up last night into the wee hours looking at the videos that you had online. My heart was stirred so for you all. Thanks again for encouraging me and being so transparent. And the guys' That Good Stuff shows are FUNNY. I was trying not to wake anyone. And the message was so clear. Great presentation. You guys are so wise in the techniques that God has given you all as a family to win souls for Him.

Here's another email:

I really wanted to thank you all again for loving us and continuing to minister and speak into our lives as you have done for so many. Remember thousands of lives continue to be touched by your words and your wisdom. Everyday...Wow, that's amazing.

And finally this one:

Yes. Yes. And Amen!!!! This is the movement of God. Some will see it and embrace it quickly. Some will see it and reject it quickly. Some will see it and be confused. Some won't see it at all. God is sovereign. He is NOT asking for our permission. He is INVITING us to come. It is an invitation. Come.

Following these emails, we were hit with another financial setback. Refusing to give in, we sent out our tithe to our home church and decided to work with what was left. I literally submitted our tithes in defiance of the enemy.

To cut to the quick of the matter, we write this week's letter with the lease having been paid on time. We were given the money to make the payment. The significance is beyond words, because this giver and we, the recipients, are now a part of a new breakthrough that has been released. Something has been broken off of this ministry. The chains are off. The wall that has held up our blessings has been bashed through. It's not just a little tiny crack in the wall. Now there's a huge, gaping hole!

This past Sunday, Pastor Carol talked about the season in King David's life where he had to learn how to minister to others while he was still in need himself. As a family, that's where we are right now. We're at the cave in Adullam where people who were distressed, in debt, and discontented came and joined themselves to David. However, David felt like they did. So how

do you minister to others when you're in the same situation as them?

Just before arriving at this place, David had gone to the priest asking for food and a weapon. He was given communion bread and the same sword which he had used to cut off Goliath's head. In David's desperate hour of running from Saul, he was reminded of communion and covenant with God. He was reminded of how God had used him in the past. In other words, the answer to our current crisis is not in the future, it's in the past. Look back at what God has already done. Rehearse the covenant and the promise that God has already given you. Partake of the communion with the Lord and eat from His Word. Take in every morsel that is proceeding from the mouth of God. Carol and I are excited, but it's not in a giddy kind of mode. It's a vigilant war-like posture. The fight is not against the enemy because he's already been defeated. As Pastor Carol taught us Sunday, we must fight thoughts and images of defeat. She especially urged the women to fight the emotional response to the disappointments and the bad news that comes our way. Little did we know that while we were ministering, God was preparing someone to minister to our need. And that is what's happening for you right now.

Give God the sacrifice of praise. Defiantly against the enemy, give of your time, talent and treasure to the purpose of God. Refuse to give in to fear. Your answer is in your praise! Your deliverance is in your worship. Our bishop taught us that worship is losing yourself in the presence of God and losing yourself in the will of God. So, we've been called to a *life* of worship and not just an activity of lifting our hands and voices.

Our church is a family of worshippers, not just a church with a worship team. Our church is a family of intercessors, not just a church with an intercessory prayer team. Our church is a family of evangelists, not just a church with an outreach team. 'Missions' is who we are and not just certain select few who are willing to travel overseas. Benevolence is our heart and not just a church department that gathers to distribute food to those in

need. Prophetic is what we are, not just a certain man or woman who stand and encourage the body of Christ.

Even with all our faults and failures, God has still chosen us to do this. I'm so glad that God uses ordinary people. If we had to be perfect to qualify, none of His promises would ever come to pass in our lives.

We mess up. We make mistakes. We even suffer from the consequences of those mistakes. But God still uses us anyway. He still speaks through us and heals through us. He still comforts through us and loves through us. As we allow His life to flow through us, that same flow is cleansing and healing us as well.

This email goes out to a lot of different people in all kinds of situations. So, this week, I'm speaking a little bit beyond the church family. I'm telling all of you who get this letter each week to hear the words of this old familiar song, **Turn your eyes upon Jesus** (by Helen Howarth Lemmel and Jon Bauer).

Sometimes this song was used to express our blessed hope and the coming of the Lord, but that's not what I'm talking about right now. I'm talking about the rapture in our soul when the glory and grace suddenly comes forth within us. Allow Him to rapture you out of the fear and doubts so that you can be ushered into His presence. In His presence there is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures evermore. When I'm in His presence, I see things from His perspective. He takes me and sets me on His lap like a Father with His child. I'm moved from having a view *OF* the throne of God to getting a view *FROM* the throne of God. And from this point of view, "Nothing is too hard for the Lord!" Now I see my life and the circumstances from *His* viewpoint.

Yes, we realize that this sounds radical, but we believe we are in tune with the heart of God for the 21st century church.

There's a song the Lord gave me many years ago that expresses what's happening to us. This is the kind of praise you give to God when you're at the lowest point or in the worst state

of fear and doubt. It's called **The Lord Most High**. The lyrics are:

**HE'S A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, JEALOUS GOD
WE BOW BEFORE HIM
LET HIS KINGDOM REIGN, GIVE HIM PRAISE
THE LORD MOST HIGH**

**HE'S FULL OF LOVE, A MIGHTY GOD
WE DO ADORE HIM
WE PROCLAIM HIS HOLY NAME
THE LORD MOST HIGH**

HEART OF THE NATION MUSIC 1995

It's the song I had to sing to myself when one of brothers passed away. This is the kind of praise and worship that will take you into the Lord's presence when nothing is making sense.

So we urge you to praise, worship, cry out and chase after God this week. Don't just lie in bed and worry all night. We know it feels crazy, but go for God with all your heart. There is no secret formula. There are no ten steps. Just make the choice. I will bless the Lord at all times! His praise will continually be in my mouth!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

God is Doing Something New

This week my heart is stirred and my sleep has been filled with intercession for the people of China where thousands have perished in the earthquake that struck on Monday afternoon. We're also burdened for the people of Myanmar where millions are struggling in the aftermath of a cyclone that has already killed thousands. Carol says I have been groaning in my sleep. This always happens when the Spirit of God is heavy upon me in intercession.

We ask you to join us in prayer for these nations. We plan to send offerings for relief efforts, but our prayer will go a lot further than our finances. The enormity of these disasters is beyond our comprehension. Whole families and communities have been lost. I cannot imagine what so many are going through with the sudden loss of children. There are very sad reports of orphaned children in the temporary camps for the homeless. Let's just bow in prayerful intercession for the Body of Christ in these nations. They have a great task in the midst of devastation. God has a way of shining forth with His glory through His people in these situations.

Praise Report! Carol and I were picking up the mail from our post office box and there was an envelope with just initials on the return address, but no name. Within it was a letter, but it did not have a name. It only said that the Lord told them to send this to us. I unfolded the letter and it had a bank draft for \$1000.00. The check wasn't made out to the ministry. It was written to us personally. Carol just simply burst into tears.

For the past few weeks this has been happening to us. Not since our first year, have we seen such an outpouring. We couldn't wait to share this with the church family because OUR breakthrough is YOUR breakthrough. That's why we went on a fast and called out to God. It was not about the money. It was about this kind of smash-the-devil-in-his-face breakthrough that we have seen God do in our life for many years. In my cartoon-animated mind I can see the enemy getting slam dunked with the

words, “There – take THAT! When you mess with my kids, you pay the price!” Sorry, I’m still a big kid at heart.

Our frustration was that it seemed like this was the first place we have ever been where things seem like they were not working. That’s why we sometimes thought we must have missed God. We have ALWAYS seen breakthrough, no matter where He called us. When we lived in Tulsa, there was breakthrough. When we lived in St. Louis, there was breakthrough. Then we moved here and it was as if though the windows of heaven were suddenly shut. Of course, we realize that we have actually been going through a wilderness season; a time of testing and preparation for what we are actually supposed to be doing here.

Fruitful Words: We are thankful for the increase in offerings, the anonymous gift and for the developing ministry to people who want to talk about marriage and relationships. Even with these blessings though, ***Carol and I are not satisfied until we see this breakthrough for the entire church family.*** So just know that we are standing in intercession for each and every one of you.

We want you to know that you are in the right place at the right time. God has allowed some difficult challenges to come upon us. As I look back over the past four years, I can see how God, in His infinite wisdom, let things fall apart. There were so many expectations locked in my mind that He literally had to strip me of my dreams. He had to let us lose everything so that He could give back to us only those things that He has actually called us to do here.

You are a part of what the Lord has given back to us. Your faces were new to us, but what has been given back was the emphasis on family ministry. What was given back was the emphasis on covenant relationships. What He stripped away was the pursuit of the “fame game” as my Bishop calls it. It’s something we don’t like to admit about ourselves. Deep inside, we really do want a big church or a big business. We really want to be rich and famous or at least to have the money of the rich, if not their fame. But God allowed us to be stripped.

One thing I love about this transition we're in right now is that this time, God is revealing our dependence upon our own labor and our own resources. He's getting our faith built up to look to Him alone. Don't be alarmed or shaken as God totally rocks our foundation over the next few weeks and months. It's part of what's necessary to get us to keep walking on the water.

By having the Lord speak to people about giving financially to us and to watch them respond to the Lord, I have been humbled. Secretly, I was feeling like Elisha when he was trying to get across the Jordan River after Elijah had been taken up. He struck the water with the mantle and asked, "Where is the God of Elijah?" I must admit that I've been asking, "Where is the God of Raphael Green? Where is the God of my overseer? Are you going to be with me like you were with him?"

Well, God has shown me that not only is He with me and with us, but He's always been there. He has never forsaken us. It is a miracle that we are still here. God has provided for us and opened doors. He's been doing it all along. And I must tell you again, that the anointing that is upon us is flowing upon you as well. Do you know the song **God will make a way?**

(Don Moen Copyright 1990, 2006 Integrity's Hosanna! Music).

The verse of that song says:

*By a roadway in the wilderness He'll lead me
And rivers in the desert will I see
Heaven and earth will fade
But His Word will still remain
He will do something new today*

God is doing something new today! Carol and I urge you - come on. Keep walking. Believe God. He won't fail. You won't be left in shame. Refuse to receive that image where you are humiliated and cast aside with no home, no job, no help and where everyone that knows you is shaking their head or laughing at you. It's all a BIG FAT LIE!

God has already made a way. Can't you see? **You're already walking on the water.** You've been doing it all along. You've been doing it for a long time. Now that you've noticed that the wind is blowing and waves are tossing, don't take your eyes off Jesus. He's the one that called you out there. The wind was blowing when you stepped out of the boat last year and the many years before that. The waves were tossing when you believed and trusted God last month.

All I'm saying is, "What's so different that you would take your eyes off Jesus, now?" The wind and waves were blowing and tossing when you stepped out in faith before. Don't drop your gaze and ask yourself, "How did I get out here?" You got out here because you obeyed and trusted God. Like Peter, you asked, "Lord, if that's you, then tell me to come out there?" Before you took the steps to change your life, you asked Him, "Lord if that's you then tell me to take this step."

He answered you and said, **"It is me... so come!"** And you were so caught up in the Word of the Lord to come that you climbed out of your comfort zone and started walking on your circumstances and your bills. You started walking on your shattered dreams and deferred hope. You started walking on your fear and doubts. You started walking on your shame and messed up family name. You've been doing it for weeks, months, and years because you had your eyes on Jesus. All that mattered was that you knew it was Him and that He said **come.**

Now, just because an unexpected wave has heaved up on you and a surprise wind blew against you, doesn't mean God is going to let you drown. Don't you dare give up now!

Even when Peter began to sink, another miracle was done on his behalf. The Bible clearly shows that he had not reached Jesus. So when he cried out as he began to sink, Jesus was suddenly there. Whatever the distance that needed to be made up for Jesus to reach Peter, was overcome in an instant. So, if you're at that point where you've begun to sink because this seems too overwhelming right now, just cry out to God because He'll be

right there in an instant. He will make up the distance. He always does when we fall short. He will not let you drown.
Somebody praise God with me right now!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

The Waters Have Burst Forth

All I can say as I write this week's email is, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." When you go through a long wilderness season you learn to be thankful for everything. You learn to stop taking small things for granted because there really are no small things. Everything matters. You just don't know it until something goes wrong. You may never pay attention to your smallest toe, but just let something go wrong and suddenly you can't pay attention to anything else because of the pain or discomfort.

We have learned to not be disappointed if only five people show up for a Sunday meeting. Our expectations may have been for fifty; therefore we can miss the opportunity to pour into the five that came. What we have learned is that those five will one day bring five and those five will bring five. If you pass up the opportunity that God is bringing before you now, you could be closing the door of potential.

Now that we have grasped the lesson of appreciating potential, God has been releasing a little more responsibility upon us. That's why we seem to suddenly have a few more people interested in coming.

Fruitful Words: Last night I was tossing and turning because I could not sleep. I could not sleep because I'm so excited. The waters have burst forth and I can still see it pouring through the wall that has always been able to hold up the provision of the Lord for His people.

I just want to remind you to keep on praising God. You've already won. Things are already moving in your favor. Behind the scenes, people are talking about you in a favorable way. They are planning on hiring you or they are planning on promoting you. There's somebody negotiating a higher salary than you thought you would get. There's somebody putting together your benefit package. Somebody is calculating your discount on a major purchase and somebody is about to write a

check to free you up to do the work of the Kingdom of God. Somebody is going to invest in God's potential.

No longer will you say, "It will never happen for me." I call forth faith to arise in you today. God will make the paths clear and the decisions will be obvious and sure. The peace of God will lead you. The territory may be unfamiliar, but the peace of God will be the one sure and familiar thing that you will know.

God is moving us out into new places with new people in a new season. Get your heart ready to expand to receive more people and more relationships. He will stretch us and change us so that concepts and ideas can be enlarged to encompass more of His will. As He expands us, we will start to see more of what He has had in mind all along.

He cautions us to not run ahead of Him when we see the bigger field and the larger harvest. He cautions us to stay in step and in sync with His plan and His strategy. We will be tempted to go forth with our own ideas and plans because we will see so much that **can** be done, and so much that **needs** to be done. But we cannot be led by the needs and we cannot be led by the crowds. We must be led by His eye and led by His voice.

The same God who heard our cry when we had nothing, when we were desperate for His direction, will now take us through **the test of prosperity**. Can you hear Him when it seems like you don't need Him anymore? God tested Abraham and Lot with prosperity. Abraham passed the test and kept the will and plan of God in focus. Lot was distracted with wealth and prosperity and wanted the best for himself and even camped as close as he could to the world (Sodom and Gomorrah).

Today we declare to you, Lord, that we are like Abraham. You sent us out in search of something not built by man. You are the builder of this ministry and we keep our eyes on you and not on what you have and will give to us. We exalt thee O' Lord.

Overcomers, Under Orders,
Chris and Carol Green

Whatever and However

Fruitful Words: This past week, Carol and I have been experiencing dreams involving the stronghold of “covenant breaking”. Carol dreamed about a friend of ours who was trying to marry someone else.

In my dream, one of my high school friends was asking me to conduct a wedding ceremony in which he was going to marry someone else. I challenged him and asked him about his wife. He wouldn't answer me and suddenly his speech became unintelligible. He fell across a sofa and began to manifest a demonic fit.

In the dream, I commanded the spirit to let him go, but he stood up and extended his hands toward me as if though he was trying to get his hands around my neck to choke me. Instead of stepping back, I stepped toward him and commanded the spirit to let him go and to come out. It was so intense that I instantly woke up at that very second. I knew that it was not just a dream. We are in a battle against a principality in this generation.

First, let me say that I don't believe in chasing demons and looking for demons everywhere you go. But I also don't believe in backing down from a demon either. Jesus is my example. He didn't go around chasing after demons or talking about them all the time. But when one got bold and tried to challenge Him, he would tell them to shut up and get out. That's our approach to the demonic challenge: “Shut up and get out!” We don't magnify demons or exalt them. I don't seek after them or call every battle we face a demonic manifestation. At the same time, we're not backing down when they present the challenge. We submit ourselves to God. We resist the devil. The word of God says that he must flee.

I knew that it was not a coincidence that this spiritual challenge came through our dreams. Carol and I had just taken the couple we've been preparing for marriage, out to dinner. During the dinner, they gave us a thank you card expressing their gratitude

for what they have come to learn and understand about love and relationship.

This was a profound breakthrough. Simultaneously, two other couples have expressed a desire to go through the premarital preparation lessons. Along with that, God has us ministering on the subject of relationships and covenant with the church family. So, something has happened in the spirit world. The stronghold has lost its grip. To suddenly have young people asking about marriage in this day and time means the stronghold over this generation has been broken. Eyes are being opened to the truth.

Please allow the Lord to open your eyes and see this for what it is. The spirit of God is breaking forth upon this generation. Carol and I didn't recruit these young adults. They have asked because God has moved on their hearts. The spirit of God has been loosed to move upon the hearts of people because we have taken our rightful place in authority.

We don't ask, beg, or plead with the stronghold of covenant breaking. We command it to *"Let the people go, in the name of Jesus Christ! Spirit of God, move forth upon the land. Let the cry for love and the thirst for love in their hearts and souls be quenched. You promised that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness would be filled. These young adults and thousands more are now hungry for righteousness. They want the real and they want the right way. Fill their hungry souls, O' God."*

Come on; join in with me, because I've started praying already.

"Lord, You gave the prophetic song through our sister DeVata a couple of months back. That is indeed the cry in this generation. So, we pray in agreement, O' God, with the prophetic song. Restore our souls. Fill the hungry souls."

I speak courage and strength to our church family. I speak courage and strength in the midst of weakness and discouragement. Though it feels like and seems like nothing is

happening, I thank you for providing the ability to hold on to your promise - not just the promise for personal breakthrough; not just the promise for personal finances; not just the promise for personal blessing and benefits - but the promise of breakthrough in this city.

You told us to seek the welfare of the city because if all goes well for the city, then all will go well for us personally.

And now we thank you for providing the place that will be like an oasis and shelter for the few and the many, who will become the thousands. We're not going to tell You how to do it and we're not going to just tell You what we want. We thank you for leading us to the place that has already been provided for us; the house from which we will minister to these hungry souls.

We thank You for honoring the sacrifice of the church family, who have given of their time, talents, treasure, and trust. We ask You, Lord, to break open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that they will not be able to contain it all. I thank You for showing them the ones they should give to out of their overflow; not to Carol and me, but to the hungry souls that You will send. We declare that our church is so blessed that they are a blessing to everyone around them!"

And now I hear the word **narcissism** which means egoism, egocentrism, or the love of one's own body. The word egoism means that individual self-interest is the actual motive of all conscious action. Individual self-interest is the valid end of all actions. It also means excessive concern for oneself, with or without exaggerated feelings of self-importance. This is what leads to some becoming egotistical, which is the practice of talking about oneself too much or an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

Ever since we first moved to this region, this word has stirred in my spirit. This is a problem across the nation, but the Lord has identified it as having a stronghold in this region.

So let's pray again:

“Lord, we do not recognize that many things that we are doing, even though we say it is for You, it’s really all about ME. So Lord, strip us of this attitude. Destroy this foundation within us from which we have built our lives. Show us every area in which the true motivation for what we do is really for self-interest. Show us where we think it is valid to be this way. Show us how our real concern is for ourselves and not about souls and not about your kingdom being established in the earth.”

This has been a constant issue for us. The Lord allowed us to be stripped when we moved here. Our true motivations have been tried and tested. Now that we have no reputation to uphold and no name to try to live up to, He is allowing people to hear about this ministry. I’m not saying that we have arrived in this area. I just know that this is a dangerous prayer if you really don’t mean it.

God allowed us to lose almost everything to show the true motivation in my heart. This is the reason Carol and I often declare that God is in control. GOD won’t respond to a prayer for financial breakthrough just so we don’t have to suffer loss. If the suffering and the loss is what it takes to get His image on us, then, like silver, He’ll keep us in the center of the flames until all impurity is gone; until His image can be seen.

That’s why I can declare to all of the church family and to all who receive this weekly email, “Your biggest need is not for more money. That’s not the issue. If you still believe that the answer to your financial challenge is more money, then God has to keep you in the flames until the impurity is out. What is the impurity? The impurity is the sub-conscious belief that “I need money”, or it’s the belief that “I need God to give me more money”. What is the image of God? It’s Christ-likeness. Jesus never prayed for money or asked for things. He was focused on doing whatever the Father was doing and saying whatever the Father was saying.

“But that’s crazy pastor Chris! How can you say that? Do you know what kind of bills I’ve got? Do you not understand that I

live in a real world with real bill collectors who will really put me out or take my car?” Yes, we understand.

We've owned three homes and lost two of them. We've gone through many financial trials. We managed our finances, and did all the stuff you're supposed to do. At one time, we had no debt except our mortgage. We owned two vehicles (that's right- no car payments) and had no credit card or any other consumer debt. But then I began to make decisions based on narcissistic understanding. The true motivations were hidden underneath, "I'm doing this for the Lord!" Only by God allowing us to lose stuff did I come face to face with the reality of what was done for me versus what was done out of obedience to God.

Let me tell you as your leader: Don't wait for everything to fall apart before you surrender your will. Stop holding on to that image that is dictating how you want God to bless your life. When you do that, the closer you get to the deadlines, the more you get discouraged as you begin to see that the picture is not unfolding the way you thought it should. You begin to see that God is not going to do it the way you imagined it.

But when your heart is truly open to WHATEVER God wants and HOWEVER God wants to do it, you don't get discouraged with the approaching deadlines because you don't have a set picture in your mind. All you know is that God is going to do something. He will use unexpected people from unknown places. He may cross your path with someone who is not the person who will help you, but they will connect you with the person that God is going to use. We've even had God go past the deadline because HE has such a different plan in mind. The issue will be this: **CAN YOU TRUST HIM?**

When breakthrough has come, the enemy of our soul works diligently to get us to quit before we see what has already happened on our behalf. He projects images of failure, or, here's a real slick trick: **he projects images of victory**, but they're not God's way of bringing the victory. So when God starts moving the way God wants to move, we reject it because we have embraced the enemy's picture of our victory. It is a false image.

It's like bowing down to worship a false God. It's like holding on to a false God.

So let's join together and pull down every vain imagination that exalts itself against THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. And how do we do that? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge. So we reverence and worship the Lord. We bow before Him and honor His will above our own. We submit to His will and not our own.

I hope I'm making sense to you today. I feel this so strongly. I hear the song the Lord gave us for this church, "**I Just Know We Win!**" This song just simply means that I don't know a whole lot about a whole lot of things. I don't have all the answers and I don't even have all the scriptures to say - all I know is that **We Win!**

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

It's Me, Don't Be Afraid!

Today is the day we take another big step in our journey of life and love. Eighteen years ago, Carol gave birth to twin sons (*without any anesthesia I might add*), and we named them Jonathan Mark and David Matthew. What a wonderful life we have had raising these mighty men of God. Now those long days of wondering when the diapers and toy clutter would ever end have progressed to days of wondering where all of the time has gone.

Tonight we will attend the high school graduation of our twins and, like so many millions of parents; it is another step in releasing them into their purpose in life. They both have dreams of post-secondary education and, like many parents, we have no earthly means of providing it for them, so now it is time for them to learn to depend and trust in the Lord in a whole new way.

I still recall when I was their age dealing with the fear of facing the unknown. But there was also the excitement of chasing a dream. Now we must release our sons. With their elder brother, Christopher Michael already in route in his pursuit, it won't be long before our household will be a little different for the next few years.

We've been in a routine of hearing our sons get up and go off to school every day. We've had countless summers together. We have always been a very close family. We've had our share of fights and battles, but the time here has made us closer than we could ever have imagined. We've shared a common struggle and been united in a common purpose.

This brings to mind a prophetic word we received back in 1999 concerning our sons. This word has guided us and comforted us these past four years. It was spoken like this:

“And you asked the Lord, ‘What shall we give our children since our funds are meager and our provision is scarce. What shall we give to them?’ And the word of the Lord is, ‘You shall pass on purpose, you shall pass on purpose, you shall pass on purpose,

and that will be enough. I will make them prophets in My house and I shall make them men of war,' says the Lord. 'And with the clarion call they shall go. You will give them purpose, you will give them purpose, you will give them purpose, and that will be enough. That will be enough.'

Even as I write this today in remembrance of that prophetic word, I feel the presence of God. We really don't have anything to give our children. There is no saving account and we don't even qualify to co-sign for student loans. All our children have is just the purpose of God in their hearts. They know exactly what they have been called to do. They are not approaching secondary education with any doubts or questions.

When we received that prophetic word, we had no idea it would be so accurate. So we turn to the Lord as we literally place our sons into His mighty hands. That's our part in this graduation ceremony and celebration.

We battled the thoughts that we have somehow failed our children in not having any funds to send them forth into the next level. We have spent the past 25 years serving in ministry and the Lord has promised that He would protect our investment of giving our all to Him.

So let's just say that we've experienced that crossroad moment between what parents are supposed to do according to financial planners and all of society, versus seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and resting in the promise that all these things would be added. We made the choice to seek first the Kingdom of God. Now we trust the Lord to honor His word and His promise.

Fruitful Words: During one of my morning devotional times my daily Bible reading was from John 6. What caught my attention that particular morning was verses 16-25.

"Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then

the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going."

After reading this text, I bowed my head and prayed; *"Lord I receive you into my boat."* The past few days, the Lord has been impressing thoughts upon me regarding expecting the miraculous. Jesus had walked 3 or 4 miles on water. God will defy nature to get to me. Walking on water was a miracle all by itself; but then I noticed that Jesus had walked a long way for a pretty good while on that water. And Jesus had walked through the storm as well. Do you realize that Jesus had to walk through the storm to reach them? Oh I hear so many things for us in this passage.

God is walking through the same storm that you are in right now. He may not be in the boat, but He's walking through that storm. And why is He walking through it? He's walking through the storm to get to YOU.

Another miracle awaits us if we do what the disciples did. They had to get over their fear and become willing to let Jesus into the boat. I know that you're afraid that the word won't come to pass. I know it feels like you stand a better chance if you keep working and rowing and trying to get to the land on your own. But hear me today. Your Word, your Promise, your Answer is walking toward you in the midst of the storm. Your Word, your Promise, your Answer is shouting out to you and saying, *"Don't be afraid, it's me."*

Obey the word of God. The word was made flesh and the word dwelt among us. The word was in the flesh and talking to the distressed disciples. For the disciples, the word of God, the promise of God, and the answer of God was walking toward them while they were in a panic. The Word, the Promise, and the Answer were right there while they were in a life and death situation. The Word, the Promise, and the Answer were giving

them the solution. Can you hear it for yourself today? Your Word, your Promise, your Answer is saying, *"It's me!"*

Can you hear Him today? He's the one who never lies, and who never fails. The first thing He says to you in the midst of your storm is, *"It's me!"* I find it interesting that He didn't say don't be afraid first. Before He told them to not be afraid, He gave them the reason to dispel the fear. He simply said, *"It's me."*

I don't know what happened over the past week and I don't know what storm suddenly came upon you. It always seems like every time we make a decision and we reach a point of no return, storms come up. After we sign the contracts, shake hands with the agreement, approve the lease, or lay the foundations, contrary winds always start blowing.

But even though we're three or four miles into the journey, I want you to know that Jesus is already on the way. He's not waiting until the storm subsides and He's not waiting for things to blow over. He's walking right out there, coming towards us, with the winds blowing and waves churning. I've only seen the ocean a couple of times when the weather was bad and it has to be one of the most frightening and terrifying things to behold.

But here is our God, our word, our promise, and our answer walking towards us in the midst of this awesome terror. Then, when He reaches us, before He tells us to not be afraid, He says the one thing that should settle every fear anyway. God is saying to you right now. *"It is I. It's me. Here I am, right here, right now!"*

Then He tells us to do the one thing that the first revelation should automatically produce within us. Perfect love cast out fear. Our wonderful, loving, covenant-keeping God says, *"Don't be afraid."*

This has got to be one of the greatest combinations of phrases to ever produce faith in the life of a believer. *"It is I! Don't be afraid!"*

I think of fretful and fearful moments that our children have had. I find myself weeping as I write this and remember how I would pick up one of my fretting, crying baby boys and say “It’s okay, daddy is here.” If you could just allow yourself to see God putting His arms around you right now. He’s picking you up and saying the same thing. *“It’s okay. Daddy is here. Don’t be afraid. Everything is okay now.”*

At that point, the next move was the disciple’s. They could scream in terror and try to row and get away from Jesus and the storm, or they could believe the words they had just heard. The Bible says that they willingly received Him in to the boat. That’s why I just bowed my head that morning and said, *“Come into my boat.”*

I realized, in that moment, that even though we had sailed three or four years from the shores of Metro Christian Worship Center in St. Louis, and even though we were caught in a storm, God had walked through the years of this storm and caught up with us. Now the answer for me and Carol and our family, was walking toward us and saying *“It’s Me. The Word is here. The Answer is here. The Promise is here. Don’t be afraid.”*

When you’re in the storm, there’s no time for asking, “Where have you been? This is not the time to try to figure out why we left the word, promise, and answer behind. This is not the time to try to analyze the issue of whether we should have left or waited. He’ll correct those issues and answer that stuff later. Right now, I just need to know that the answer is here. The word is with me now. The promise is with me now. The Spirit of God is with me now. That’s all I need to know right now. So we let Him into our boat willingly. We surrender. We submit. We worship. We repent. We believe. We receive.

Then the Bible makes this awesome disclosure. I was so excited when I read this that I couldn’t wait to share this with you this week. After they willingly received Him into the boat, the Bible says: ***and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.***

The most profound miracle of them all took place. Suddenly they were at their destination. Suddenly they were in the place where they were trying to reach all along. Whatever amount of time had been lost was made up immediately. The Bible doesn't say for sure, but perhaps they got there ahead of schedule. All we know for sure is that they didn't have to do anything to get to where they were going. God did not use their efforts, labor, ideas, or strength to get them to the land. Suddenly they were just simply there.

Life can provide some suddenly storms and satan can send some sudden attacks, but **God's got a suddenly** that wipes out the storms of life and the attacks of the enemy. **God's got a suddenly** that transcends time and space. The same One that walked three or four miles on stormy water is that same Word that has walked three or four months of rough going; the same Promise that has walked three or four years through contrary winds; the same answer that has walked three or four generations of relentless waves.

Today He has defied distance and time to take us where we're supposed to be. When God's Word, promise, and answers have been received willingly, He will take us, in an instant, from all fear, labor, and turmoil into the land of promise, the position of power, and the prosperity of purpose.

Father God, Carol and I stand before you on behalf of our church family. In this very moment, we receive YOU into our boat. We are not afraid because we see that it is really You. For You are the Word. You are the Promise. You are the Answer. We welcome You today.

As I was completing this newsletter, someone sent me an email that ended with this phrase: **"Don't tell GOD how Big your storm is. Tell the storm how Big your GOD is!"**

Overcomers, Under Orders,
Chris and Carol Green

Continue With Jesus

We are in the final days of spring, but a heat wave has hit us so it feels more like summer. The time seems to be passing at a lightning pace. It creates a sense of urgency as you get older. There are so many things you always wanted to do but you realize that time is passing faster than open opportunities, so we're learning to embrace the moments that we have.

Carol and I made an agreement to "make memories" and that has proven to be one of the most important pacts in our marriage. We have not wasted a lot of time and energy in petty arguments and fights. We've had some good fights over the years, but believe me, when we had one it was something worthy of the time and energy. So we're embracing every moment as spring now gives way to summer. As summer approaches and the temperature changes, even spiritually, things are changing for us and for our church family.

Sunday morning I was awake, as usual, well before the rest of the family. I was meditating and spending some time in worship. The Lord had me to play a song that He gave me back in 1996. I published it in 2000 as part of our 20th marriage anniversary celebration.

We had been teaching the youth about perseverance and faithfulness to God. The Lord would always give me a song for what we were teaching or for what we were going through. At that time, we were going through a trial and teaching the youth how to go through difficulty at the same time.

I began to realize that many people are willing to go through some things as long as they see that they're going to get some glory or personal benefit. Some people take advantage of their trials and difficulty by writing a book and selling it or writing songs and selling them. In other words, in a capitalistic society like America, you can always make money, even off of your pain and suffering.

Well, I was forced to deal with my true motivation for being a youth pastor and working in full time ministry. Was I aspiring for notoriety and fame or was it a genuine desire to walk close to Jesus no matter where He was leading me?

When I was growing up in our old Baptist church they would sing some great songs. One of my favorites was **Where He Leads Me I Will Follow**. I didn't always understand the words like I do now, but my favorite line in that song was, *I'll go with Him through the garden...I'll go with Him all the way*. It wasn't until later in life that I came to understand that the garden was the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus agonized over the decision of His Father that the Son would become separated from Him because of sin. Jesus became willing to, not only be the lamb that was sacrificed, but also the scapegoat that would take the sins away. Jesus was willing to become the ransom that would pay the price for our freedom.

I don't know if you ever thought about this in detail. Jesus was willing to enter into eternity separated from the Father so the Father could get His children back. When a ransom is paid, the payer does not get the money back. He pays the money and gets the kidnapped person back. He doesn't get the money back. Jesus was willing to be the ransom, the payment, and the money that would be given in exchange for us. It's a thought that boggles my mind because we know that Jesus knew that He would be raised up again, but in that moment He had to make an eternal decision.

I personally believe that part of the agony was because Jesus became willing to be eternally separated from the Father. He had never been, in the realm of eternity, separated from the Father. If you allow me to say it this way, Jesus became willing to be eternally separated from His Father just so His Father could be eternally united with us. What an incredible exchange.

I found myself, as an obscure youth pastor, having to decide if I was willing to be a ransom for the lives of these teenagers. The Lord asked me if I would I be willing to give up my aspirations and dreams so that these young people could fulfill the will of

God for their lives. I had followed Jesus into the garden of Gethsemane, and I was kneeling right beside Him and agonizing over being like Him, of being willing to give my life, like a ransom, so that the purpose and will of God could be released in someone else.

I knew that the scourging would follow. I knew that the crucifixion of my flesh would come. I didn't know what it would look like or how it would play out in my life. I just knew that I had to be willing to stay close to Jesus as this part of my walk with Him was unfolding.

I did a lot of crying that day. From that moment, in the presence of God, I wrote the following song:

CONTINUE WITH JESUS

THE STUDENTS OF JESUS FOUGHT FOR POSITION AND
POWER
WHO WOULD SIT ON THRONES IN GOD'S FINEST HOUR
JESUS SAID THE LEAST AMONG YOU IS THE GREATEST
OF ALL
THE MOST WORTHY IN HIS OWN EYES WILL BE SMALL

HIS WORDS CARRY MEANING FOR US TODAY
TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO JESUS,
YOU MUST SERVE HIM THIS WAY
STAY CLOSE TO HIM THROUGH THE WHIPPING OF THE
FLESH
CONTINUE 'TIL YOUR LIFE HE RESURRECTS

**I WILL CONTINUE WITH JESUS
IN THE GARDEN OF DECISION
CONTINUE WITH HIM
WHEN I'M RUNNING ENDLESS MILES**

**CONTINUE WITH JESUS
THROUGH THE TIMES OF TRIBULATION
CONTINUE WITH HIM THROUGH HIS TRIAL
CONTINUE WITH HIM THROUGH IT ALL**

THE STORM OF SIN RAGES, BUT LOYALTY MUST REMAIN
AS THE LIFE OF CHRIST IN ME FACES STRIFE AND PAIN
IN THE MIDST OF TEMPTATION, DON'T WILLINGLY GIVE IN
STAY TRUE TO JESUS AND CONTINUE WITH HIM

I KNOW ITS CHRIST WITHIN, GIVING ME THE GRACE
TO STAND UP IN THE TRIALS, THE TEMPTATIONS TO FACE
JESUS STOOD BY ME IN MY FAILURES AND FALLS
I WILL CONTINUE WITH HIM THROUGH IT ALL.

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Heart of the Nation Music, 1996

Moments like the one I just described and songs like this are the reasons why we are not promoting ourselves and doing all the typical stuff to make a church grow. This is continually about giving our lives as a ransom so that others can experience the fruitful life in Jesus Christ.

So as you are kneeling before the Lord in the garden with Him, I encourage you to make the ultimate choice of your life. This is what we are called to do in this generation. A couple of weeks ago I mentioned getting free from being self-centered and self-absorbed. Well, the garden of Gethsemane is where we die to that attitude.

It makes us feel like Abraham who was called to slay the promised son that God had given to him. Nothing can be more important than God; not even the promised seed.

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. The son so loved His Father that He gave His life. And now, as sons and daughters, we are called to do the same thing that Jesus did. We lay down our lives for a higher purpose than our own.

If you ever wondered how we got through the times of loss, injury, disappointment and discouragement, I'm telling you how we've done it. We haven't always given God the right response, but the times we got it right; this was the way we did it. We would go back to the original reason God called us in the first

place. You see, once you've lost everything like we have, you're no longer afraid of losing material things. All that matters now is to never lose your purpose. We can get back our stuff and relationships can be restored or replaced. We never want to lose the presence of God and the purpose of God.

This has been a wonderful spring season for us. God has paced us along as new life has slowly and steadily come forth. New trials and challenges are before us, but you must refuse to go back to responding to trials in the same old ways you did in the past. God has proven Himself over and over again. You must not be afraid. You must not despair. You must bless the Lord in spite of what you see and hear. Release the past and take a step toward a new future. I hear someone saying, "Pastor, I tried this before. I'm afraid to try this again!"

We know how you feel. We've said the same things. We tried this before. It's really scary to try this again. But Carol and I choose to believe that something is different about this time. I don't know all the reasons why things didn't work out for you last time. I know a lot of things haven't gone as planned for us and I know it was because of the mistakes I've made. I know I've messed up. I know the decisions of others also affected my outcome. So you see, we know what you're talking about. It's just that this is a new season. We've been through autumn and winter. Spring is here.

We choose to believe that God allowed the setbacks for a higher purpose. Now I'm thankful for losing the building and first congregation. We're thankful for the autumn and the fallen leaves. We're thankful for the winter and the frozen branches. Now it's spring. New life is all around us.

Don't let the past dictate your future. It's time to embrace new opportunities. God is going to totally change the landscape of your life. He's going to break up your routine and shatter your expectations. He has to do it because your goals are too low. God is targeting you to go higher and further than you're thinking. Everything that has been a setback is actually a launching point.

Like an archer pulling the arrow back as far as he can, on the string of a bow, God is pulling you back. The sudden and unexpected changes are God pulling you back on the string of the bow. You feel like you're going backwards and things are only getting worse, but it's simply God pulling you back on the string of His mighty bow. He's aiming you and me in the direction He wants us to go. God is targeting us for something higher and further than we ever thought possible.

Stop right now and just say, "Yes Lord."

Father God, I thank you for the spring season for every member of this church (and our extended family of supporters who receive this email each week). We're moving into summer and you have brought new life.

We thought the life would come forth in financial wealth first, but You have trusted us with that which is most valuable to You, and that is the hearts and souls of those who have inquired about this ministry. You have trusted us with the lives of the couples and individuals who are coming to our Friday night sessions to receive wisdom and understanding about relationships and marriage.

So we will be faithful with what seems like a little, because we know that it is really much. Give each of us a heart to look past our own pain and disappointments and see the fields which are ready for harvest. We will continue with You, Lord. We will be found faithful to You.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

This completes the emails of the spring season.

In Reflection

The Sunday before I wrote the last email of the spring to the church family, Carol and I got together with Dave and Geri Parker. They are two very special people we have been connected to since 1982 when we met them in Jersey City, New Jersey. We have seen each other off and on through the years, but when we moved to Pennsylvania, we discovered that they attended a church and lived in Lancaster, PA (very close to Harrisburg).

How wonderful it was to talk with them. From ministry to parenting, they related to what we were going through. In so many ways, they understood our feelings and frustrations. This time together became a great moment of settling some issues in my heart and mind.

As we sat and talked at the restaurant, I was reflecting back on our first years in Harrisburg when 'Mom', as we like to call her, said to me, "It was not a mistake and it was not a failure. You had to find out and see what would not work here." All I could do was just say, "Yes, ma'am. You're right. I receive that."

With just those few words of encouragement, the past two years of feeling like a failure were wiped away. It was like the final page of a chapter in a book was turned for me. It was as if though God used her to turn the page. I had become so trapped by the outcome of all that had happened, that deep inside of me, that page of the story was still open. Even though a lot more has been written, said, and done since that time, it's been like having a bookmark set in that one place, so that every time I come to the book, the story always opens up to that page. God used Mom Geri to remove the bookmark and turn the page. Finally, that chapter was closed. I told her that Carol has always expressed the same thing, to which she said, "God has sent confirmation." Then Dave told me a couple of stories of his own, both concluding with "lesson learned."

I feel like I've been set free from a heavy steel ball that had been chained to my leg. Over the past few months, some of my online

blogs had been filled with venting, ranting, and regretting. It was basically because this page had never been turned.

At the time of this book's release, God is doing something special in this ministry. Carol and I are ministering to an expressed specific need in this region. People are actually asking for help regarding relationships and marriage. When it happened we realized God had literally placed a legitimate ministry into our hands. It was like the TV commercial where the person kind of pops themselves on the forehead because they suddenly realize what was available to them. For us, this is our forehead slap.

Then Dave told me, "You weren't ready to receive this ministry three years ago." And he was so right. I was so focused on ministering to this generation from the church and the pulpit that I was not ready to address the real needs that God was planning to bring before Carol and me.

We had been in fulltime ministry since 1990, so God took us totally out of the church world, gave us secular jobs, and let us live the typical life and lifestyle of everyday people. He let us experience their frustrations, disappointments, and pain. Then, after we came to KNOW AND UNDERSTAND, God suddenly released people to come and receive what He has for them through us.

Everything is new. Everything is fresh. It has truly been a spring season. Learning to be fruitful in the spring was not as easy as it may sound. What could be so difficult about being fruitful in the spring time?

I believe that the Lord used the spring season to teach us to press toward the goal and forget the past.

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14-15

Fruitfulness requires forgetting the past. If there are lots of mistakes and pain in your past, you have to let it go and embrace the new life that is emerging all around you.

That's where we found ourselves in the spring season of this church. God started bringing new people and a new ministry, but we had to let go of the negative experiences from the first years of attempting to do this. In this new season, Carol and I took a step toward the destiny of God for this ministry in this community. All I can say is that by the grace of God, "WE'RE BACK!"

God has been so faithful to us. Everything is not what we'd like for it to be, but we're so thankful that it's not what it used to be, and certainly not as bad as it could be.

In every way, we can just sense that the new thing has already begun. Our main focus is to stay in the place of rest. God is doing this so we're just staying out of His way. As Mom Geri told us that Sunday afternoon in June, we just need to be available to Him. She added, "Now God has your ear." When she said it I thought to myself, "You got that right, Mom. I don't want to make a move unless I hear from Him."

Then I also thought about making sure I don't get too busy. Even though we're writing, teaching, and flowing in a new ministry, the point is for us to stay open and available to the Lord. We have to minister from hearts and lives that are connected to a fresh source and supply of His spirit.

I just thank God for the timely word of encouragement. It brought such closure that when I woke up the next morning, it was the beginning of not just a whole new chapter, but a whole new story. This is the beginning of a new book in this on-going journey with the Lord.

We pray that God has used these emails to bring closure for you as well. The spring season closes the door on the autumn and winter. It's the signal for new life and looking ahead. Just rest in God, believe His promises, and trust His Word.

My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. Psalm 62:5-6

Acknowledgements

To Kim Tolliver . . .

You believed in us. We go back a long way. You have always kept it real. Your words of support were backed up with actions to match. You have been a sister indeed.

To Dave and Geri Parker . . .

You have become a dad and mom to us in this foreign soil. Where would we be without your care, support, encouragement and prayers? We pray that the new season brings more than you could ever have asked or thought to ask.

To Quincy and Sherri Moore . . .

You ministered to us while you were in need. You shared out of your heart and gave in spite of your own places of lack and loss. We pray that every seed that you sowed into this ministry will bring forth a mighty harvest in your life.

To Mike and Mary McCollum . . .

You ministered to us from across the country with timely phone calls and words of encouragement. We pray that you will remain fruitful through every season of life.

Special thanks to our editor, DeVata Davis, who keeps us on the cutting edge with excellence and integrity.

About the Authors

Chris and Carol Green are a husband and wife team that was sent to south central Pennsylvania to help rebuild, restore and renew hearts and homes. They are certified master life coaches, urban marriage and family advisers, leadership and community outreach consultants, and ordained ministers.

They served in local church pastoral leadership in St. Louis, MO and Harrisburg, PA for a combined 27 years, before they launched a three-part initiative that would synergies their professional expertise with their ministry experience in a network of community services and leadership training.

Their community-supporting initiatives have included hosting monthly workshops in a state-funded unemployment center, on-call life coaching support for a women's transitional housing shelter, consultation and training for local outreach organizations, collaborating with various community outreach efforts, and maintaining an itinerant schedule of local and national speaking engagements and opportunities.

For their community service, they received a United Way 2017 Volunteer of the Year Nomination. They have also received Urban Leadership Awards (2016) and Community Ambassador Awards (2015) from iChange Nations™ and were appointed Goodwill Ambassadors of World Peace, as part of an interfaith peace-building initiative to the United Nations, by Golden Rule International.

Chris Green is a social media veteran and an award-winning producer of a local cable television broadcast (1999). Together, they have been international columnists/writers with a Global Journalism Award-winning social media news team, the authors of several inspirational life-building books, and the creators of numerous blogs and eNewsletters. They are also accomplished songwriters, having penned and produced over 150 songs since 1992.

Their travels have taken them from coast to coast in the United States, to Hawaii, the Bahamas, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, and West Africa.

They have been married since January 3, 1981 and have three adult sons, two daughters-in-law, one granddaughter, and a host of people throughout the world who call them 'mom and dad'.

Access more insight and inspiration from Chris and Carol Green's devotional books at:

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