

FRUITFUL LIVING IN WINTER



SEASON OF WAITING
AND PURIFICATION

CHRIS & CAROL
GREEN

Fruitful Living in Winter

By
Chris and Carol Green

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

Fruitful Living in Winter

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Dedication

To our parents:

James and Jane Green (Chris' parents)

Mary Dennis (Carol's mom)

They taught us how to hold on through the winter seasons.

Preface

This book was written in the winter. We began the season with a disappointing snow/ice storm that swept across the area on a Saturday night. The power went out and the roads were bad. There was no way to meet for our Sunday service, so my first email was written with a heavy heart and a strong front. I was desperately trying to keep a positive outlook even though I was greatly disappointed and discouraged.

Please excuse the sadness and melancholy note of the first couple of emails. Sometimes we were hurting so badly that all we could do was write about the schedule, planned events, or just repeat or recap past activities. But suddenly something clicked inside of me and the real purpose for being in this region and the real purpose for writing each week to this family was accepted and embraced.

In the winter, there are many things that you plan to do but you just can't. This is the season where our desires meet the issues of timing. All you can do is settle down, pack it in, and rest. You just have to wait. If someone were to ask me how to spell winter, I would say W.A.I.T.

Winter is cold, harsh, and indifferent. We're all going to have winters. This season has nothing to do with your faith or your commitment. You cannot prevent it or get around it. It's just a reality of life.

Winter is a time of purification. Motives are tested and tried. We were forced to encourage the family and encourage ourselves. We had to learn to receive and get past pride. We had to learn the humility of not having it all together all the time.

There is no specific method to reading this book. It may be a devotional for some or it may be inspirational for others. You might need to read it every day in sequential order or read sections in random. 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 has given to you. Just remain open to Him.

This all began when we received the following email from our spiritual sister, 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, don'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. We started sending them because it was our 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.

Winter

Midweek Connection

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

Shared Assignment

We really missed seeing all your faces this week. The freezing rain, ice, and sleet swept in here on Saturday night and we decided to cancel for this week. It was a tough morning for us as we were awakened with the sound of everything flickering on and off before the power went out completely. It was off for a while.

I (Pastor Chris) was up late in prayer Saturday night until around 3:00am Sunday morning. I was at peace with the decision to cancel. It was as though I already knew. You have been on our hearts and we continue to pray for each of you. Just remember, you are not alone. God always has someone thinking about and praying for you.

In the meantime, we made contact with the director of the Youth With a Mission (YWAM) in Denver, Colorado, through our Worship Center friends in Lancaster, PA. A couple of members from their church are stationed at that facility, so the Lord has made a way for us to be a blessing to them.

You may wonder why your pastors are so concerned about a ministry some 1500 miles away. It's because we believe that the Lord's desire for us, as A Praying Church, is to see the whole world as our members and not just the people that attend our services. Even though we cannot reach and touch everyone, we will be a church that focuses on others and not just on ourselves and what we are going through.

After the tragic events in Colorado last Sunday, we understand better, why we are being called to fasting and prayer. We still hope and pray that it doesn't take something like that to happen here before people are awakened out of complacency. I'm not saying that the people in that church were complacent. I just know that this could have happened anywhere and we don't need to wait for such a thing before we get serious and change.

We sent an email to encourage the people in Colorado and we received a thankful response from the director of the YWAM base in Colorado.

We will send an offering from our Missions/Outreach account to a scholarship fund that has been set up in the names of the two young people who were killed at YWAM. If you want to learn more about these two young people and the YWAM ministry just visit their website at <http://www.ywamdenver.com>.

Since we didn't meet last Sunday we don't have our usual audio clip for you to review; however, we do have the audio clip from our meeting with the Prime Time Ministry in Lancaster, PA. We have received good reports from our spiritual mom and dad in Lancaster. There is no way to describe the healing ministry of the Holy Spirit that day.

We're looking forward to next Sunday morning. The young people are preparing another video production for us. I expect it will be fun just like the Mother's Day video. We just love the creativity in this church family.

This week's **EXPRESSION** (*Poetry and Prose by Pastor Carol*)

Forever Love's Strong Hold

Thank you Lord for reaching out to me
With your most precious love
It's most amazing to me – your love
It's so patient and it forgives
You don't remind me of the past wrongs I have done,
But you continue to reach out to me
Sometimes when I think about your love
I close my eyes to see gentle,
But strong loving hands reaching out to me
I then reach my hands out to yours and grasp them
I do not have to hang on by my fingertips,
Nor do my hands slip out of yours
The grasp is strong and will continue to be
As long as there is Love.

Carol L. Green

To everyone, Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

You Don't Know What This Means to Us

Merry Christmas to family and friends! This is our last Midweek Connection email for 2007. Yes, we're sending out a short holiday issue for this week. We're home and enjoying the week off from our secular jobs. We're enjoying the week off to spend time with our sons.

Sunday was an awesome celebration for us. First, we shared a brief word about the true meaning of the season. Then, led by Pastor Carol, we sang a few traditional Christmas songs. That was followed by the singing of our on-going theme song for all seasons, "Totally Because of You."

Just before playing this year's video production, which was written, directed and produced by our youngest son, David, the church family presented a special gift to our family. What they did not know was that I (Pastor Chris) had just written out a list before the Lord of several items that we need for the upcoming year. Included in the list was a new digital video camera. When we opened the presents, we found a new digital video camera, a supply of digital tapes, memory cards and video editing software. Truly, God knows what you need before you ask. It was a very special moment indeed.

Afterwards, the Christmas video production was played for all to enjoy.

After the meeting, Carol's mother had a load of gifts and presents for her daughter, son in law, and grandsons.

Let us put all of this in perspective. Due to our personal financial setbacks (emergency auto repairs) we had no money for gifts and presents for our sons or even for one another. We had resolved ourselves to purchase a couple of board games and share a Christmas dinner. We were not going to complain, but we chose to be thankful for what we had. In light of the acts of violence over the last couple weeks with the random shootings across the country, we really were just grateful that we were spending the holiday with our family.

When we went to church Sunday morning, we had nothing. When we came home, our SUV was full of gifts. We felt badly that we had nothing to give to the church family. We said something like, "You

just don't know what this means to us", to which they responded,
"No, you don't know what this means to us."

We are truly thankful!

To everyone, Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Happy New Year

It's the start of a new year. It's a chance for a new beginning and we're taking the position of prayer in this new season. We're always very reflective during the New Year season. Carol and I always find ourselves taking inventory of our lives, often asking if it has really been worth the time, energy, effort, and expense.

As we draw closer to becoming "empty nesters" we've been looking back over the years to assess how well or bad of a job we have done with our children. As we closed out 2007, we spent the entire day and evening with our family.

The first part of the evening was with another very special church family. Having been asked to participate in a jazz band, I was able to play the drums in a formal event for the first time since we moved here. Along with a long time brother and friend, Madison Walker, I was able to team up with Pastor Raleigh Wingfield and a couple of other gentlemen from the community and play through several popular praise and worship songs that Madison arranged as instrumental tunes.

Even though I felt grossly out of shape and rusty, I was glad to be able to play again and experience the joy that comes with musician comrades. I sat on the drums and saw my wife and children watching me proudly along with the church family that was able to attend.

One of the special things that happened that evening was actually during our warm-up rehearsal. The conga player turned to me and said, "That woman is looking at you like she's in love." I turned to see my dear wife watching me as I played.

Another special thing happened later in the evening when Carol and I were asked to come up and sing. Usually we are prepared with a sound track or something, but I was so focused on playing the drums that I really had not thought about singing.

Well, we stood up anyway and I began to talk about the connections that God had made through the years for us to be involved with this particular pastor and church. Then the Holy Spirit moved upon me

and I found myself speaking prophetically to the congregation and the leaders.

In that one overwhelming moment, I felt everything that I was supposed to say and share with this congregation was released. It was as though the whole point and purpose of ever meeting this pastor and being joined with this congregation was summed up in one final message, in this single moment. I was literally spent after prophesying and praying. I felt like I had been preaching for an hour, but it all took place in a few minutes.

From there, we left this church's year end/anniversary celebration to go to our home to bring in the New Year together as a family. It's just a family tradition of ours.

Then we took the time to pray for each member of the family. Afterwards, everyone gathered around us and prayed for us. Our sons spoke the most profound words that children could ever say to their parents.

Chris, who really has a strong prophetic ability to see what God is doing, told us that he's just doing what he was taught to do by his parents (by example).

David told us that he felt like we were wondering if we had done a good job as parents and he wanted to let us know that we did.

Jonathan said that we should know that we are doing a good job because we have three sons and nobody is pregnant by them. Then he recalled how Pastor Wingfield introduced us as "golden people" and reminded us of the word God had spoken about us coming out as pure gold.

I can't tell you everything that was said and done that night, but we came into the New Year in prayer. We came into the New Year as a united family.

For that, we are very thankful.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Called to be Champions

Have you ever been on the losing end of a lopsided basketball game? The other team is winning 75-20 or some ridiculous score like that. All you want to do is get the game over with and it's only the first half of the game. What does a coach say to a team that is so far behind that it seems crazy to continue playing? I've played in games like that and I've watched games like that. I've also seen and played in games where we came from a long way back to finally win.

I don't know how far you are behind in your bills. It might be so far that it seems no longer worth it to even keep trying to pay them.

Some of us are far behind in relationships. There are so many deficits that the possibility of restoration with some friends or family members is nowhere in sight.

The last medical report may show that after all that has been done, things have only gotten worse.

Others may have deficits in your emotions or in your spirit. You expected to be in a certain place in your life by now and the years have gone by and the deficit between how long it takes to accomplish some things and how much time you feel you have left is staggering. Someone told you that if you don't get your big break in life by the time you're 21 or 30 years old, then it's too late.

We know how you feel. Just read some of my blogs and you'll know we know how you're feeling. More importantly though, the Lord knows how you feel.

Right now, it does not matter how far you are behind in this game. Your coach, the Holy Spirit, has called a team meeting and He has something to tell you before sending you back out in what seems to be a pointless exercise in futility.

God says in His word:

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes,***

*though it is tested by fire, **may be found to praise, honor, and glory** at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:5-7)*

*Yet in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:36-39)*

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:2-5)*

*And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection,** lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:25-27)*

*Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,** bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)*

*You therefore must **endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.** No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. (2 Timothy 2:3-5)*

Come on Family, we can get through this. There's been a strong wave of discouragement and doubt that has come against us. However, we are called to be champions!

God has given us the strategy for breakthrough. He told us to fast and pray. I just completed my first weekend of fasting and prayer and I kept hearing the question, "*How bad do you want it?*" to which I kept answering, "Lord I want it more than food!"

How bad do you want to see God's promises explode over your life? Stop seeking the promises and start chasing after God himself.

I encourage you to join with us in daily food denials. Whether it is breakfast, lunch, or dinner, take one mealtime and decide to get in the presence of the Lord. Read your word, put on your headphones and listen to some worship music and really go for it and lose yourself in the presence of God. When you do that, you'll find it easier to begin to lose yourself in the will of God.

I encourage you to join with Carol and me in our home on Sunday mornings for prayer. Don't let your schedule, your *to do* list, and even the *must do* list, take the top priority in your life. We're not meeting to talk about prayer and we're not just teaching it - we're doing it!

God is changing us already. As your pastor, I've already been deeply impacted by the presence of God. My attitude has changed. From this point on, we are not coming out weak. Just say that to yourself right now, "**There's no defeat in me!**"

The enemy has a big lead after the first half of this game, but we're in the locker room right now and it is halftime. Coach is talking to us and He's strengthening us. This is more than a pep talk. This is a life impartation. We're receiving the life, energy, and power of God.

This is your word for this midweek connection. We look to see you again this Sunday and we're coming with new expectation. Let's step up our confession from, "God *can* do anything" to "God *will* do anything!" God will do it for us. Come on family! Believe God! Believe God! Believe God!

Just because the enemy has a big lead on us doesn't mean he's won. I made all kinds of blunders and mistakes when we moved here. The game started and we got whipped from the opening tip-off. We fumbled the ball, we committed fouls, we missed shots, we missed passes, and we tripped and fell. Have you ever seen a basketball team looking really bad? We dribbled the ball off our feet. We called timeout only to come back out and keep messing up over and over again. And all the while, the enemy has been scoring and running up the points against us. By the time we started getting ourselves together and scoring a few points, we were way behind on the scoreboard.

For three years, we've been playing from behind and falling further into a deficit. But, I found out something in my first weekend in the Lord's presence. God just wants the victory to be that much more spectacular.

Nothing is sweeter in athletics than the come-from-behind victory. And we're not going to win by one point on the last second of the game either. God's going to cause the comeback to blow the enemy away. It'll be so big that you will call the fruit of your victories Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh means **"For God has made me forget all my toil."** Ephraim means **"For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."**

If you find yourself saying, "I'm tired. It won't make any difference. Things will never change," then please allow us to speak this over your life:

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. (1Peter 4:12-13)

*For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; **But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.** I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows. (Psalm 66:10-13)*

*The **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, **will guard your hearts and minds** through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:7-9)*

We can't force you and we'll never try to manipulate you, but we strongly encourage you to shake off the heaviness right now, in the name of Jesus Christ. You will win! We will win! We've already won!

After we spend this time in the locker room, we're going back out there and we're going to score. Our defense will be devastating to the enemy. He's doesn't know it, but he's scored all he's going to score. He doesn't know it, but he hasn't seen us execute God's game plan yet. He won't be able to concentrate on one player because God's going to use everybody. From slam dunks to a downpour of three's we're bringing the rain and the rim shakers. *(That's sports talk for the uninitiated).*

Now, instead of dreading going back out there, we can't wait to get back out there. Now we have to pace ourselves and stay before the Lord to get His will. We have to receive His strength. We must remain humble and not get lifted up in our abilities. We've been pretty weak and this has gone on for a long time, but that's all over now.

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

For those who get this email outside of the church family, I urge you to gather with your church family and pray. Let the Spirit of God revive that sense of intimacy and openness to the Lord. When was the last time you cried, just because you love Him? Spit that

complaint out of your mouth. Reject focusing on yourself. Refuse to give in to fear.

Come on family, let's do this!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

People the Lord Can Count On

Today we have another praise report for you. It looks like God is making us examples to the flock just like Peter admonished the leaders of the early church. As we started our day yesterday, I read my daily devotional scriptures. I usually read from Psalms, Proverbs, the gospels and the letters of Paul. The Psalm for yesterday was Psalm 18 which said:

The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;

It went on to say specifically:

The pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

Well, on our way home from work, we were traveling along 81 North, where 83 North traffic merges with it. A tractor trailer was coming onto 81, but a car was traveling in the lane that the truck needed to merge into. We were watching this and moving up alongside of the car. Suddenly, the car swerved to avoid the truck, forcing us off the highway and into the grassy medium that separates north and south bound traffic. Those of you who know about SUV's know that the worst thing you can do is drive an SUV, at any speed, into a center medium.

The medium was sloping downward and this was very rough terrain. We bounced and tilted violently in what we knew was the familiar roll over action of an SUV. I just said, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" In that instant, He was our only hope and help. Carol just cried out, "Lord protect us!" Suddenly, I had control over the truck and we slowed down to a stop just before hitting a declining section that would have caused us to roll over. I was able to drive slowly back toward the highway. We just quietly thanked the Lord as we got back onto the road and continued on home.

Once again, God has proven Himself to be faithful to your pastors. We know that this is not a strange thing, to come under such a vicious attack. God has us on track with His plan for the church family. God is blessing us. God is protecting us. When I say us, I don't just mean the Green family; I'm talking about all of us.

This only makes us even more determined to pray and obey. We had been planning on teaching on the aspect of prayer that involves lifting our voices and crying out. Once again, the Lord allowed us to live it and do it before we taught it.

For those who are able, we will meet for prayer tonight. We also look forward to seeing everyone this weekend. We plan to meet late Saturday night at 11:00pm. We will go all night in prayer, fasting, and sharing in the Word of God. We have a lot to share and we want to hear what the Lord has been speaking to you during your fasting and prayer season.

We just know this is of the Lord and the enemy is trying to stop something special that God is doing. He doesn't know what God is doing, but he knows if God can find some people who will really do what it takes to trust and obey Him, the days of darkness will be over in many, many lives in this generation.

The challenge is this: Will you and I be a part of those people the Lord can count on? Can we become part of the chosen?

Come on family, let's do this!

Remember, we're not here to build a ministry. We're here to build people.

This week's **EXPRESSION** (*Poetry and Prose by Pastor Carol*)

God Is Only A Thought Away

Anytime, night or day
God is only a thought away.
I used to think God was always at some far distant place,
Reviewing our progressing lives like a court case,
But I've found since I allowed Him in my heart,
He keeps His promise, that from me, He will never part.
He counsels me in all that encompasses my life;
He comforts and gives wisdom through times of stress and strife;
And is concerned with even the smallest details of my life.

Carol L. Green

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

We're Building People

Our overnight time of fasting and prayer together was really wonderful! God is bonding us and uniting us in a special way. It was a life imparting experience in the word, prayer, and sharing together as a family.

After opening with worship and prayer, we took the time to listen to an audio clip of Bishop Raphael Green recounting the early days of our home church in St. Louis. Immediately, the church family picked up on the similarities of our journey in these early days for us. We took the time to talk about it in great depth. That's what made the time so valuable. There was no time limit so we were able to really talk and share our hearts fully all night.

Then we played a video clip of some prophetic words that we have never released publicly. In this video we listened to the prophetic words and warnings that came to us regarding the assembly of a core leadership team. The emphasis was on guarding against division and strife. There was also an exhortation for us to make integrity the hallmark of this ministry. The Word of the Lord was for us to demand it of our people and of all of those who were following us. Afterwards, we had a very long and in-depth discussion regarding the price that must be paid to lay a foundation for this ministry to build upon.

It was a precious moment as we listened to the church family talk about how just hearing this word was affecting them. My only caution is that we don't harshly judge those who cannot make a commitment to joining us in our mission. Everyone that comes to our church is not meant to stay at our church. Some will come, receive what they need, and move on. Others will receive what they need, make a life investment to help us, and then move on. Some will be with us for the rest of their lives. That's just how it is.

We should never look upon those who come and go, as if they are doing something wrong against us. For many people, this ministry will be a hospital. They will come, get healed, and leave. You don't expect patients to stay in a hospital. It will be the same for many that come. Some people, after they get healed, will want to stay and learn how to allow God to use them to bring healing to others. It

doesn't make one type of person better than the other. God knows where each person is in their maturity and their capabilities.

Our role is to be a mom, dad, brother, sister, or friend. We are to be an example of unconditional acceptance and total commitment to what is best for them. For some people, the best thing for them is to move on after they get healed. For others, the best thing will be for them to stay a while. Our attitude is to be one of love and acceptance, no matter what type of person comes our way. That's why we're fasting and praying - so that our hearts and minds are ready to receive people, no matter how they come or go.

We also disclosed our new slogan, "***We're Not Building a Ministry - We're Building People.***" You may have noticed it on the website already. It's just that we're making it official now. We also announced that the name of the ministry is simply **Fruitful Life**. We're dropping all other tags like *Ministries, Worship Center, and Church*. For now, we're just simply calling us "**Fruitful Life.**"

Yes, we are still a church, but the name of the church is simply Fruitful Life because, as most of you have expressed over and over again, "*It's an experience.*" Fruitful Life is a lifestyle. Fruitful Life is a house of prayer. Fruitful Life is family fun and fellowship. Fruitful Life is multifaceted. We have discovered that the best way to describe this church is in its title - "**Fruitful Life**". The title is not only the name of this body of believers, but it is a promise to all who embrace the impartation of the Word and life of God as it flows through us.

We also took the time to go through the annual profile and financial report that we file with our overseer, Bishop Raphael Green, and the Presbytery elders of our home church. We combed through our brief history as well as the financial section of the report. It was received with applause and praise to God for His miraculous hand in our young life as a church.

Finally, we concluded by disclosing the strategy for 2008. One of the biggest events planned for this year, is the official confirmation of our newest members of this church during the celebration of our third anniversary. The celebration will take place in March during Resurrection weekend.

I want to encourage you to keep fasting and praying with us. I will continue to fast each weekend until we see the breakthrough. Those who desire to join me, please do so as the Lord leads.

As we taught during our overnight sharing, God uses fasting and prayer to change us in a way that makes us able to handle the responsibility of the breakthrough. We are asking God to send more people, but we must be able to handle the attitudes and issues that come with more people. We may ask God for more money, but we must be able to handle the increase in expenses and financial pressures that come with having more.

Jesus said, *"No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."* (Matthew 9:16-17)

Many years ago, God gave me the following song:

NEW WINE, NEW GARMENTS

NEW WINE IS FOR FRESH WINESKIN
NEW GARMENTS OF PRAISE
FOR THE MOVE OF GOD WE'RE IN
DON'T LOSE THE PRECIOUS WINE
BECAUSE A HARDEN VESSEL BURSTS
NEW WINE, NEW GARMENTS, LET HIS GLORY FILL THE
EARTH

GIVE ME A NEW GARMENT, I WON'T SEW A NEW PATCH
IT JUST TEARS AWAY,
REVEALING THE RESISTANCE OF THE FLESH

GIVE ME A NEW GARMENT,
THOUGH IT MEANS A TIME OF SHAME
A MOMENT OF EXPOSURE, YET I'M COVERED IN YOUR NAME

MESSAGE IN THE HOLY OIL
THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DEALING
MAKE ME FLEXIBLE TO YOUR FLOW

ABLE TO CARRY THE WINE AND WATER OF YOUR HEALING
IT'S A NEW GARMENT AND I'M GIVING UP PRAISE,
NOT A NEW WORD, JUST FLOWING IN A BRAND NEW WAY

IT'S A NEW GARMENT AND I WON'T BE ASHAMED
GIVING GOD EXPOSURE BY LIFTING UP HIS NAME

MOVING IN THE HOLY REALM
THE ANOINTING BREAKS THE YOKES WITH POWER
AND I'M YIELDING TIL I KNOW
THAT GOD ALONE GETS THE GLORY AND HONOR

God will not sew His new move onto our old ways of thinking.
He will not pour in new wine and fresh revelation into our old, stiff,
hardened wineskin. Fasting and prayer enables God to give us a
new garment and a fresh wine skin so we can handle the new thing
that HE wants to give us.

If we are not changed, we'll do and say things that will turn people
away from the Lord. We'll be no different than any other group of
people that turned people away. We will only receive the kind of
people that we like. We'll expect people to behave a certain way
when they come.

However, people don't always come to a church with right attitudes
and committed hearts. Many will have their defenses up because
they have been beaten down so many times. Many will come with
suspicion. They will come disgruntled, complaining, uncommitted,
and sometimes rebellious. People are hurting and many are
desperate. They will pull on you or lash out at you. Some will rub
you the wrong way. They will offend you and not give it a second
thought. So what prepares us for this harvest? Fasting and prayer
prepares us.

We have learned that no amount of money and no great anointing
will compensate for dealing with these issues in a church. Carol
and I are just a husband and wife, a mom and a dad, whom God put
His hand on. We have failed over and over again, but our heart is
to follow hard after the presence of God. So we encourage you to
follow us as we follow Christ.

Come on family, let's do this! Remember, we're not here to build a ministry. We're here to build people.

This Week's **EXPRESSION** (Poetry and Prose from Pastor Carol):

Your love is dear to me Lord, Full and sweet
Complete and satisfying
It comes when I'm feeling low and unwanted
When I'm feeling alone and incomplete
When I feel I just can't go one step further
You're there with your love and gentleness
Encouraging me to go on;
Telling me how much you love me
And will never let me down when I need you
I love you Lord
With the peace and joy you have given me in my heart

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

The Chosen Few

I'm in the midst of an extremely busy week on my job, so I'm sending this one out early this morning. First let me say, it is truly amazing how God meets us in such a unique way each and every week. This past Sunday, we continued our teaching on **"Becoming A Praying Church"**. We intended to pray about this year's initiatives and plans, but instead, the Lord moved upon us to pray about matters concerning specific members.

Our teaching had emphasis on that aspect of prayer that involves crying out, lifting our voices, and emoting in prayer. Even though this type of praying might be considered to be nothing more than an emotional outlet, we highlighted a few scriptures that clearly indicate that this is a perfectly legitimate and necessary part of our prayer life.

The Spirit of God led us to pray for different ones, but we had to pray in the manner that we had just taught. Carol and I had to lift our voices and cry out to God. We had to take a bold and authoritative stand against the works of darkness that have come against the lives of our church family.

We watched God bring immediate deliverance, freedom and healing. Praise God! Praise God! Praise the Lord, our God!

Afterwards, we took a break to share a lunch. During our lunch break, I took the moment to disclose some of the details of our ministry agenda from this point forward. For the first time, everyone was shown the true scope of this ministry.

We are still very encouraged as we look forward to what God is going to do to make us ready and available to reach this generation. We are in excited anticipation of how God is going to use each of you to speak to this generation. That's why we've been in so much prayer. We need a strong prayer covering before launching such a campaign. Many churches and ministries, including ours, have suffered great losses when they aggressively advanced the Kingdom of God like this.

The difference is, THIS TIME, we're moving forth in the grace and timing of the Lord with the necessary unity to accomplish the task.

Many have been called to walk along side of us, but you have proven to be the chosen few who could continue with us through our trials. Now we are following the Lord as he leads us in the next few steps.

As I write this to you, I can see the tower of religion that was in my dream. I can see the prisons from the other dream that the Lord gave me. We thank God that HE has provided the first core group to help us deliver His people from the tower of religion and the prisons of sin.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Chosen by God

Yesterday, my daily Bible Reading included one of the scriptures that are part of the foundational makeup of my heart and life.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (New King James Version):

*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, that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

I just sat and worshipped for a minute after reading this word. I was preparing for an extremely busy day. Three briefings, including two sessions with high level people, were awaiting me. In a couple of hours, I would be sitting in rooms with some powerful and influential people. They are power brokers. They have money, reputations, influence, affluence, education, and skill.

I have none of the things that they have. I will sit at a desk and advance the slides of a Power Point presentation. I'm not belittling myself. It's just a reality for the day that awaited me. But the Lord took the time to remind me that it's not many earthly wise, noble or mighty people who are called. He has chosen the foolish, weak, base and despised things.

How good it is to know that from the criteria of God, I qualified to be one of His choices. I knew that I must share this with the church family this week.

As we continue to prepare for a new launch in March, we are aware that our church family is one of those foolish things that God chooses to confound the wisdom of this world. How can a small gathering - a family - reach an entire generation? We don't have the wisdom of this world. We are not born of nobility. We have no connections and high rankings. In fact, we are base. That word means we are just common, regular, everyday people. We are not

the most talented and gifted. By comparison to others, we are weak. Yet, God has chosen us –

Of all the descriptions that can be attached to us, the only one that matters is this: **We are chosen.**

Remember, one of the theme scriptures of this ministry is **John 15:16**, *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”*

So, we just want to encourage you today. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are in your life right now. It doesn't matter how things are going on your job. It doesn't matter how stressful and intense it may be in your family relationships. The bottom line is that **God has chosen you.**

So we insist that if you are trying to be accepted by those who seem to have the wisdom to excel in this world, remember God has already chosen you. If you are trying to be accepted by the noble or the mighty of this society, then remember, God has already chosen you. This is part of our calling. We will be despised. That's been part of our learning and preparation process. We've had to learn to stop striving to be accepted. God has already chosen those who will be part of ushering in His new move in this generation. We're just raising our voices and lifting our hands to say, “Those who are chosen to unite with us in this calling, come on home!”

Many years ago, the Lord gave me a song called “Base In Your Face”:

GOD'S CHOSEN FOOLISH THINGS TO OPEN OUR EYES
SIMPLE THINGS THAT YOU MIGHT DESPISE
THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES, NO ONE CAN ERASE
WHEN HE PLACES THE ANSWERS BEFORE YOU
WHEN HE PUTS BASE IN YOUR FACE

BASE IN YOUR FACE, TO CONFOUND THE WISE
THE SIMPLE THINGS YOU CANNOT DENY
THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD MAKES IT EASY TO TRY
THE WISDOM SEEN IN GOD IS FOUND IN JESUS CHRIST

TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IS A FOOLISH THING
TO THE HEARTS THAT WON'T BELIEVE
THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES, YOU CANNOT MISTAKE
WHEN HE PLACES THE ANSWERS BEFORE YOU,
PUTS BASE IN THEIR FACE

GOD'S CHOSEN FOOLISH THINGS,
THE BASE TO CONFOUND THE WISE
GOD'S CHOSEN FOOLISH THINGS, JUST TO OPEN OUR EYES

IF YOU DO THIS SIMPLE THING IN RECEIVING JESUS CHIRST
YOU WON'T DO A FOOLISH THING,
GAIN THE WORLD AND LOSE YOUR LIFE

GOD HAS CHOSEN FOOLISH THINGS
TO DEFEAT THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD
SO WE ALL CAN UNDERSTAND,
EVERY MAN, WOMAN, BOY AND GIRL

I repeat what I wrote to you last week. I see the tower of religion that was in my dream. I see the prisons. We thank God that HE has provided the first core group to help us deliver His people from the tower of religion and the prisons of sin.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Giving It One More Shot

We're in the midst of an ice storm today and are not scheduled to go in to our jobs until late morning. So we're taking advantage of the opportunity to send you our letter for the week. We hope that you find these letters helpful. We wanted you to be able to hear from us and stay encouraged in your journey to wholeness and healing.

Right now, as a church family, we are in a season of connecting and covering. As we explore the foundational things that make this ministry what it is, we are so thankful to know that you are part of the essence of this ministry.

Monday night, we had a conversation with one of the couples we consider very special to us and our family. They spent most of the conversation encouraging us to go forth in doing what we have always done. Their encouragement came at just the right moment for us. In many ways, we feel that we are giving this effort to reach out to this generation ONE MORE SHOT. We are taking one more swing with this sledge hammer against this very strong wall. We've taken swing after swing, but it seems to be standing as strong as ever.

Now that we are establishing another core group of people, we find that have become a team and a family. God has brought us together and He has given us a very different type of ministry. As our spiritual son and daughter told us last night, it's a ministry that doesn't sparkle like others, but it still catches people's attention. This ministry does not provide a short term fix, but it is long term care for people. You don't see instant results because it brings slow healing over a long period of time. They described this ministry as being very slow and methodical in a fast paced world. It will force people to have to slow down to hear and receive from God.

We thank God for those words of encouragement as well as the reminders of how God has called us to minister. So, family, we will continue to take it one step at a time, just like the Lord is leading us.

Overcomers, Under Orders,
Chris and Carol Green

Casting Out the Net

We pray that the Word that God brought into your life on Sunday has found good soil. Don't allow the cares of this life or the deceitfulness of riches to choke out the seed of God's Word. We pray that you did not just receive the seed of the Word merely at an emotional or mental level and that it has not dried up because of the testing that followed. We pray that the enemy was not able to snatch up the seed of the Word before it took root in your heart. Our prayer is that the Word has found good soil and that you will see harvest in the weeks, months, and years to come.

As I told you last week, we believe the Lord has given us a strategy to return to the radio for a season. During our broadcast, we'll invite people to our monthly sessions on the last Sunday of each month and to our Anniversary Celebration. We are targeting those who have no church home, or if they are in transition, looking for a church family.

It's a strategy based upon the principle Jesus taught when he gave the parable of the dragnet.

Matthew 13:47—48: ***“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.”***

This is a season for us to cast the dragnet over this generation by way of the radio. We will send out church community announcements on other radio stations and prepare ourselves, stretching the tent pegs, for the multitudes which the Lord has commanded in the **prophetic word** we received back in May 2007.

I encourage you to join us in casting the net. On the broadcast we will invite family and friends to our anniversary on Easter Sunday. We've asked our young people to prepare another video production for that Sunday. We also have a special couple from our home church (and our weekly home cell group), coming to bless your life that weekend.

God uses Quincy and Sherri Moore in a unique combination of humor, exhortation, encouragement, and the prophetic. We've

asked them to share with you, in a personal and intimate time on Saturday evening in our home. We always like to give you a chance to get know the people that we invite, before you see them "on stage."

Since we are inviting people who have not been in church for a long time, we felt that Quincy and Sherri were picked by the Lord to speak to them, and to all of us, on the anniversary theme of Recovery and Restoration. We know they will be humorous as they share from their own lives, but they will also be mightily used of God to speak to people who have gotten hurt or disappointed and been away from the church, and to those who have been trapped in religion and tradition. It's going to be an exciting weekend.

We'll make some more fliers and cards/invitations for you to give to others as we prepare for our anniversary theme of Recovery and Restoration. We don't know how many people will show up, but we're going to cast out the net anyway. Family, we're going to do our part to get ready for whatever God wants to do that weekend and beyond.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Set Up to Step Up

You know that we're busy getting prepared for the new member confirmation and the celebration of three years of ministry, but we don't want to lose sight of what's really happening.

Do you realize that God is setting you up to step into His purpose for giving you life and breath? All of us have been through storms, rains, heartbreaks and shame. From the second you were born, the forces of sin and evil have been set against you, to keep you from coming into the knowledge of the glory of God.

All through your childhood you were attacked and tormented as everything the enemy could send was launched against you. Demonic forces tried to get you to blame God and hate Him. They tried to get you to hate yourself and everyone around you. Your parents were under this assault and you were born in the middle of a war. There have been waves and waves of destruction that have come to steal, kill, and to destroy you and the purpose God had for you.

In spite of all of that, God, by His spirit, still got through to you and rescued your soul from death and hell. Since the time that you gave your heart to Jesus, the demonic forces that were assigned to take you to hell were forced to adjust their tactics with another goal. Since they couldn't take your soul, they have worked to destroy your life. So they attacked your relationships and your finances. They attacked your self-worth and your physical body. You have battled with disappointment and discouragement all of your life and cried out to God, often wondering if life could possibly be any different.

The children of Israel cried out to God while under the bondage of slavery and God heard their cry. God used a family. It was Moses, his brother Aaron, and their sister Miriam. God sent an insignificant looking family. Born and raised in the oppression of slavery themselves, God preserved the calling that He had on them. Even though the focus is on Moses, God actually used the family. Moses had a speech impediment so Aaron actually did the talking for him. When they had their first victory, (crossing the Red Sea), Miriam led the entire nation in praise and worship.

What am I saying? God has raised up another little family and you are part of it. Could it be that you are called to be a part of something so awesome that it goes beyond what you could have ever thought or asked?

When I look at the high intensity of battles and struggles each of you has had, it is an indicator that you were meant for something great. Thousands of babies were killed all around baby Moses, but he was preserved. God has also preserved you for this very time in the history of mankind. Don't be afraid to believe such a great thing about God. You didn't choose yourself. HE chose you.

Now, out of the ashes of destruction, divorce, detours, distractions, disease, desertion, devastation, discouragement, disappointment, and even death comes a group of people - a family that God has brought together to fulfill His purpose in the earth. He has not called us to be famous, but we are called to be faithful. That is part of the story of all our lives. God has been faithful to us through it all and He now calls us forth to be a faithful church in the midst of an unfaithful generation.

So, as we make all of these preparations for next month, we want you to keep in mind what this is really all about. God has called you and He has chosen you to do something great with Him in our generation.

The enemy could not stop you. He has tried for many, many years, but here you are, standing on the brink of the greatest adventure of your life. It's not a fantasy and it's not a fairy tale. This is the real thing. Come on family. Let's do what God has called and chosen us to do. We have a commission and we don't want to forfeit it because of fear, frustration, pride, or unbelief. That's what all of this is really about!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

Once in a Lifetime Opportunities

We're still rejoicing in the Lord from the wonderful way in which He ministered to our souls last Sunday. We completed our session on the Beliefs of this church, but afterwards, the Lord gave us a word to share with everyone regarding **Once in a Lifetime Opportunities**.

From the parable in Matthew 25, in which Jesus talked about the wise and foolish virgins who were waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, we were able to extract a Kingdom of God principle. Even though this passage is mainly taught about from the standpoint of being prepared for Jesus to return (and rightfully so, this is the correct teaching), there is an application of this scripture that can be made to our lives every day.

The point the Lord gave us to emphasize, was that **once in a life time opportunities are coming**. There is no doubt that your expected breakthrough is coming. The issue is this: ***Will you be ready when it comes?*** Are you preparing yourself for the next level of your life? You must be prepared when the offer comes to financially assist you with your education. You must be prepared when the opportunity comes to start a business. You must be prepared when God brings your spouse into your life. You must be prepared when God brings explosion to the ministry.

This parable is the reason why we have spent so much time in preparation as a family and as a church. Scores of people are going to be caught in the net that we are casting out. Hundreds of families are going to be brought into our midst. Thousands of lives will be impacted by this ministry, but we must be prepared for the responsibility and the battles that come with the breakthrough.

Now is the time to let God deal with us regarding our personal fears and prejudices. Now is the time to face our feelings regarding certain types of people or attitudes that we just can't tolerate because those are the kind of people that are going to come to this church. Now is the time to trust God in helping us to overcome the small obstacles so that we can trust Him when we come up against the giants that are waiting for us to march into their territory. Now is the time to get planted and rooted in the Word of God so that the life

of God can be pushed up and through us like the sap that is pushed through a tree and into the branches to produce leaves and fruit.

As I told you Sunday, winter is over and it's been a long, harsh, and bitterly cold one, but the season is changing. The atmosphere is changing in this generation and we're beginning to see new life. New leaves will come forth. New fruit will be brought forth. The past three years have been very, very hard. God is redeeming and restoring things in our lives. Yes, He is healing our wounds and rejuvenating our souls. After we relocated, we could see that God was repositioning us. He was putting us in a position to be blessed. He was putting us in a place to become a blessing.

Now, as the spring returns in the natural, it's another season of new life and new beginnings for us as well. At this same time last year, we were celebrating with an expectation that God was going to do something special. We were facing foreclosure and had no way to move forward and we could not go backwards. All we knew was that by 2008 we would be in different place.

Well, it's 2008 and we are in a different place. Once again, we know that things will be different by this time next year. Once again we sense that God is going to move us, but this time it won't be a rescue move. It will be a recovery move. God will recover and restore all that was lost.

Now we can see that the past three and a half years have been part of the purchasing of the oil for our lamps. Now were are trimming our lamps and awaiting the coming of the bridegroom. And when that once in a lifetime moment comes, our church family will be ready.

Having said that, I have one word of caution. This word of caution comes from 30+ years of life and ministry experience. My caution is this: don't allow the picture that you have in your head to dominate the vision and process that God has for us. I have found that most of the time our expectations are very different from God's plan. The Lord knows that we have needs and He knows we have petitions and requests before Him. But please know that God does not have to, and will not answer those prayers in the ways we think He should do it.

As we approach our anniversary celebration, we are looking for God to do something great, but my expectation is not in the number of people that come. It's in the number of people that are impacted by the presence and the word of God. Carol and I are praying about WHO comes, not HOW MANY people come. We have learned through the years that big crowds don't mean big impact. Large crowds don't create long-term change. We are after long term, permanent change.

My experience, with various people in the church has shown me that people are trying to launch big, gigantic events and big, gigantic churches that they think will change this city. I've been in meeting after meeting where people and pastors were trying to put together events that would draw huge crowds. That effort fails time after time, and over the past 30 years it has not brought about the necessary change.

What God is telling us to do is to follow the principles of the Kingdom of God. These principles say cast out a net and then separate the good from the bad. After the separation, there is usually a very small number of good. With that small number, you start building.

These principles say the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds. I've actually seen a mustard seed. It's so small you can barely see it in your hand. The Kingdom of God is like that mustard seed. It starts out very small but after it is planted it eventually becomes a very large tree.

This is what we see. God has assembled a small group and now we are casting our net and God is going to increase us a little more. If we prove ourselves to be faithful with the next set of people, then He can add a few more. We don't see a giant leap in attendance. We see the kind of steady growth that the Lord promised through a prophetic word from our Bishop.

Remember the prophetic word was that our growth would be faster than our home church, but God would cause it to be a slow steady growth. That sounds like a contradiction but it's not. The history of our home church was that the growth would come in sudden spurts. We'd go for months with no growth and then the attendance would

suddenly jump by 25 to 50 people in a month's time. We grew from 7 people to 700 people over a course of ten years.

Since the Word of the Lord is that our growth would be steady that means we will start out very small, as we have, but we won't see giant leaps of attendance. It will be a few people at a time attending and that will be steady and consistent. We share this with you so that you are not disappointed by our growth and attendance. We are looking for God to do it the way that He told us He would do it.

So we are purchasing our oil now. We are making the sacrifices in prayer and fasting. We are studying the Word of God and becoming familiar with His presence and His voice. We will be ready for that once in a lifetime moment of opportunity. The opportunity is not an event. The opportunity is a spiritual breakthrough that will come in hearts and lives.

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

God's Way or No Way

There is great encouragement in my heart for you as I write this week's letter. This is a season in which we are placing everything before the Lord. It's a time in which we are declaring, ***"God, it's going to be your way or no way!"***

When Carol and I are speaking to you each week, it is not a mere pep talk. This is not a high school pep rally to fire up everyone before we go into a sports game. Pep rallies are conducted all over the country yet everyone knows that somebody is going to lose the game. Some pep rallies are nothing more than a time to hype up everyone and get them prepared for the inevitable defeat.

Well, that's not the case with our church family because our weekly gatherings are not pep rallies. These are solid strategic moments in time in which God is making powerful impartations into your spirit. He is driving out all fear and replacing it with faith. He's driving the fear out with His love, with His unconditional acceptance, and His total commitment to fulfilling His purpose and will through your life. If you didn't have a purpose, you would never have been born.

I **know** *(and you can hold the word know for about ten seconds)* what I'm preaching about right now. I was in my mother's womb while she was wailing in the pain of grief and loss. She had suddenly lost her youngest child by a horrible food choking accident. Two months later she still had to find the strength and the will to give birth to another. When I came into the world, there was the shadow of death all over my family. Still, they gave God the sacrifice of praise and worship.

Then the Lord gave my mother a vision for the baby boy she had just given birth to. He showed her a tree with large fruit. The tree was full and yet not one single piece of fruit was on the ground. If you've ever seen any kind of fruit tree, you know that is a miracle. There is always some piece of fruit on the ground under a fruit tree but God showed her a tree with no lost fruit. When she asked the Lord what the vision meant, the Lord answered her and said, ***"I'm going to make this child very fruitful from his life."***

I declare this, not to boast of myself, but to speak in the boldness of the Lord. This ministry was named **Fruitful Life** because of the

word over my life as a new born baby. This ministry is connected to God's word. It's about God's purpose. It is connected to God's promise. Throughout the Bible we see where God chooses a man or a woman and we often see His word declared over them as babies, children, or as young adults.

Before I knew my own name, God had given me a purpose. I was born after great loss. I was born to declare life after death, recovery after loss, restoration after destruction, success after failure, provision after poverty, and purpose after pain.

It's not about the messenger. It's about the message. I'm just a messenger, but God sent the message. God sent us to here to speak life. He sent us here to bear fruit. According to His Word in John 15:16, that fruit will remain. You won't fall off the tree because of premature growth. You won't fall off the tree because someone held you back and you became overripe. No, you will be handpicked by the Lord himself, at the right time.

Now comes the really good part. God knew that we could not do this great work alone so He assembles those who are called to labor with us. He assembles those who are called to build with us. He assembles those who are called to groom the harvest with us.

Carol and I know that God has brought us to a season where He will call forth those who will come to receive of His mighty impartation. Some will be healed and come alongside to help us in this new move of God. The Lord has been moving on me in crystal clear prophetic foresight lately and I'm greatly encouraged because I'm seeing God send laborers from around the nation and the world to come and help us in this generation. Take courage because **help is on the way!** So don't worry Family. God answered our cry when we asked Him to send forth laborers into the harvest.

Back in our home church we used to have a saying amongst the young adults - one phrase to sum up our hearts when it came to paying any price or making any sacrifice. We gave a certain salute and we would say, ***"For the harvest!"***

That phrase meant, *"I'll do whatever God says. I'll go where He tells me to go. I'll stay where He tells me to stay. I'll do whatever it takes. I'll obey Him, no matter what."*

I know you're going through many things in your life right now. We are too. But, when we think about the losses we've had since we've been here, it's worth it because it's **for the harvest!** When we think about the long nights and heartbreaking days, it's worth it because it's **for the harvest!** When I think about how much we've longed to be with our family, friends, and spiritual sons and daughters in St. Louis, we can endure the separation because it's **for the harvest!** When we look back over the past couple years of being buried in the ground and abiding alone like a seed in the ground, we can say that it's worth it because it's **for the harvest!** When we look back and see how God has stepped in and changed your lives and united us as a new family and ministry, it's worth it because it's **for the harvest!**

One of the songs the Lord gave me a few years ago was based on this mindset. It's called "**Whatever You Want**".

Take a moment to listen to it at <http://www.fruitful-life.net/music/ThisTime/Whatever.mp3>

So, be encouraged church family. God is doing what He promised He would do. God has not forgotten your labor of love and your breakthrough has already been released for you. We must hold on until we see it break forth in the natural realm. There are many forces at work trying to delay the move of God, but you keep uniting with us. One of us can set a thousand to flight. Two can send ten thousand fleeing. Let's keep uniting in prayer and fellowship because the enemy can't stop us as more and more of us unite in prayer, praise, and worship. Praise God!

Overcomers, Under Orders,

Chris and Carol Green

This completes the emails of the winter season.

In Reflection

I look back over this winter season and I notice how, at first, I was simply writing about the plans, the events, and the promises. We were really struggling with the purpose for being in this region and trying to find reasons to stay beyond the precious people we were joined to in spirit.

That's when it finally dawned upon me that there was no need to find another reason beyond the church family. We settled the issue once and for all. If God sent us here to minister to this small band of believers, then so be it. Jesus only had twelve, so we could be faithful to our group of ten people which included our three sons. And what a marvelous opportunity we had to spend such personal time with our soon to be out of the house sons.

From that point everything completely changed. I stopped writing from a heavy heart, filled with sorrow and regrets of my mistakes as a pastor. It was time to pour out everything into the lives of these ten souls.

Beginning with our second email in the New Year, I began to write and communicate like the leader and encourager I was created to be. Something was sparked in me from long ago when we were pastors of teenagers. The flame was lit again as a new strength came into my being. It was time to release the Word of the Lord.

With no big congregation to impress and no critics to try to disprove, we simply gave the Word of God to the church family. It's amazing how differently you communicate when you're no longer concerned about public performances or evaluations. You give the Word of God to the people God in purity and sincerity. You don't edit yourself and you don't second guess yourself. You just write down the thoughts of God as they come pouring through you.

It no longer occurred to me that we were still in winter. The emphasis changed from focusing on the snow and cold

(spiritually speaking) to getting the people of God ready and positioned for the purpose of God to be released in their lives.

I realized, after I read through the emails again, that we didn't focus on the fact that spring was coming. We just declared the Word of the Lord. God taught me some valuable lessons during that winter. It was as if we were blooming in the winter season. God caused new life to spark in us even though it was winter.

I always wondered how trees and vegetation could possibly have life within them in spite of the bitter cold of winter. After all the ice and sub-zero wind chills the leaves would return and the grass would slowly change from brown to green. Now I have a better understanding after the way the Lord dealt with us during that winter. Now I can see that the radiant life within is greater than the chill of death without.

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Much thanks to James and La-Verna Fountain. We still get choked up at the very thought of you in our lives.

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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