

WAKE UP!

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Foundations for Spiritual Maturity
Volume 1

By J. C. Hedgecock

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The word *satan* in this book is not capitalized because he is
defeated by Jesus Christ and deserves no honor whatsoever.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to those Christians who truly have a heart after God but have struggled in their relationship with Him. It is also for those who long to become spiritually mature and are eager for revelation that will help them. To you I say, “Be encouraged.” Your Father loves you more than you can comprehend, and He has the perfect plan for your life. He has all of the tools you need to become everything you are ordained to be.

I want to give special thanks to those who have worked many long hours preparing this book for publication. To Patricia Hedgecock Ross, thank you for your faithfulness and commitment as the editor for my books. Your labor is much appreciated. Also, many thanks to Julia M. Arulsamy. You have done an excellent job as assistant editor of this book as well as previous books. To our granddaughter, Shannon Elaine Ross, thank you for your prayer, proofreading and input. You are a blessing.

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Introduction

The title of this book, *WAKE UP! TIME IS RUNNING OUT*, is a very sobering statement. We do not know when our time on earth will end. If Jesus comes back soon, then our time will end. If He tarries, our individual time will end at death. Either way, **time is short**. Now is the time to prepare for your future, both here on earth and in heaven. What are you going to do with the time you have left? Spend it wisely because it is all of the time you have to prepare for eternity.

1 Corinthians 11:28-30 says, “But **let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and **many sleep**.” This warning specifically applies to participating in the act of communion (the Lord’s Supper), but it can also be figuratively applied to your personal communion with the Lord. It is time to examine yourself (verse 28). **Are you spiritually asleep?**

I want to share some important truths with you. **Embracing these truths will set you on the right course for developing a deep and personal relationship with Jesus Christ**. These truths changed my life. If you will believe and obey them, they will change your life as well.

Some truths in this book are repeated many times. They are repeated because they are crucial and life-changing. If you do not take them seriously, your spiritual life will not change.

Who is the Problem?

Early in my walk with the Lord, I found it very difficult to move into God's presence and even more difficult to stay there for any length of time. I wanted to have the fellowship with God that the Bible spoke of, but this kind of relationship did not seem normal or easy for me or anyone I knew. At the time, that felt discouraging, and I came to the conclusion that something was seriously wrong. Either the Bible was wrong or what Christianity accepted as normal was wrong, so I chose to believe the Bible was right. That meant I was wrong.

If you do not accept this conclusion as truth, you are wasting your time reading this book. **Before going any farther, you must accept that you are the problem if your relationship with God is not as it should be.**

I came to the conclusion that if my life did not line up with the Bible, then there were no excuses for it. There were only reasons. When I began to search the Scriptures for those reasons (while being led by the Holy Spirit), I began to make progress. I discovered that the reasons could be identified and removed through repentance until there were no more reasons.

As this process continued, I began to change. Old things began to pass away and all things became new (2 Corinthians 5:17). My walk with God began to align with the rightly divided Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). As I became more comfortable with this process, I asked God to show me my greatest hindrances first. As I processed those hindrances through repentance, my growth dramatically increased.

What You Think You Know...

The devil uses many tricks to keep Christians from becoming spiritual and growing up spiritually. We must not be ignorant of his devious lies. God has given me many truths that expose the devil's plans. God wants all of His children to

know these truths. I have been sharing truth with Christians for over forty years. I have traveled to over one hundred different nations around the world. I have shared with believers from many cultural and denominational backgrounds. Some have had ears to hear while others have not. I have been astounded by the large number of Christians who do not know the basic truths God wants His children to know.

A few years ago I asked the Father, “What is the main reason Your children do not know what You want them to know?” He answered, “**What they think they know hinders them from knowing what I want them to know.**” I asked God what that meant. He replied, “When you think you know something, whether it is the truth or not, you release your faith into it. From that point on, this is what you believe about that particular subject. You no longer seek any more information on the topic because you already believe you know the truth. If someone tries to share something different with you, you will usually resist it because what they say is contrary to what you believe. You believe you are right, so they must be wrong. This is not a problem if what you believe is the truth, but what if it is actually a lie?”

How Do You Recognize Truth?

Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.” **One of satan’s most effective weapons against Christians is the way that seems right.** He comes as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and puts thoughts in your mind that seem true. If you do not bring those thoughts captive to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5) and properly test them, satan can easily bring you to conclusions that seem right to your reasoning and understanding.

Only God knows what truth is. He has given us the Holy Spirit to reveal and confirm truth. The Holy Spirit is called the

Spirit of truth in John 16:13. "...And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6b).

Sadly, I have discovered through my many years of traveling around the world that few Christians properly test what they believe. They do not ask the Spirit to reveal truth to them nor do they seek the Spirit's confirmation about what they believe to be truth. The proof of this failing is evident in the many different beliefs Christians have on the same doctrines. **We are divided because we use natural reasoning and understanding to determine what we believe to be truth rather than ask the Spirit to reveal the truth.**

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned." In this chapter, Paul explains the difference between the natural and the spiritual. God and His kingdom are spiritual and they can only be spiritually understood. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal spiritual things. **The mind of man cannot and will never be able to understand spiritual things because they must be spiritually discerned.**

If you want to be sure something is the truth before you release your faith into it, you must first test it properly. If you are not yet able to properly test every thought you have, at least take the time to test the conclusions you come to before releasing your faith into them as truth.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "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." The way God taught me to test my conclusions involved the entire Godhead. I share about this in detail in the booklet, *Three Infallible Witnesses*. (I strongly suggest you study this booklet and apply its revelations to your daily walk with God.) You need to practice these principles until they work consistently and accurately. The three witnesses are:

- The rightly divided Word of God, Jesus (John 1:1, 2 Timothy 2:15).
- The witness of the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:6b).
- The peace of God the Father that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:6-8, Colossians 3:15).

Practice using these three witnesses to correctly test what you believe. It takes time and adjustments in your thinking for this to become a consistent practice. If you want to be a spiritual Christian and come to maturity, then you must make these changes. It is not enough to have knowledge of how to test conclusions properly. You must be a doer of the Word. If you hear the truth, but do not do it, you deceive yourself (James 1:22).

Purifying Your Faith

1 Peter 1:7 says, “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.” Allow the Holy Spirit to examine your faith to find out if it is contaminated or misdirected in any way.

The devil is an expert at influencing God’s children to misdirect their faith into ways that seem right. Once he has convinced you to release your faith into a lie, it is easy for him to hinder you from finding the truth or believing it when you do find it. When he succeeds in this endeavor, he has taken you captive (2 Timothy 2:26b).

When you hear a truth, you cannot believe it until you first quit believing the lie you already believe to be truth. Once you recognize the lie and choose to stop believing it, your faith returns to you and you can release it into the truth. This is how you rescue yourself from the snares of the devil.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 says, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.”

When you release your faith into a thought or idea, you give it the authority to be activated in your life. The author behind what you believe is either God or satan. It is so important to be careful about what you believe! Your faith can be a blessing or it can be a curse. It depends on what or who you release your faith into. **Spend quality time in the presence of the Holy Spirit, asking Him to purify your faith by exposing the lies you believe to be truth.** This will be time well spent!

Ask the Spirit to purify your faith by exposing the lies you believe to be truth.

If you will take the time to move into the Spirit and seek Him for revelation without any preconceived judgments or opinions, He will bear witness to the truth. **You do not have to understand truth to believe it.** You must decide whether or not you will trust God and His Word. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33), so if you are struggling with confusion and lack of understanding, this confirms satan is ministering lies to you. **If you try to figure out the Word of God from your natural mind, satan will do everything in his power to deceive you and misdirect your faith.**

The Anointing

Many Christians dream of being anointed by God and having the Holy Spirit abiding in them, directing and

manifesting through them. They want to see Him do miraculous works through them, but very few see this happen. Those who do see it do not see it very often.

I ask you, what are you most interested in? Are you focused on God's anointing manifesting in you or are you more interested in the type of work He does through you? **If the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit are more important to you than having a consistent anointing from God on your life, then your priorities are wrong.**

In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus said, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." The word *anointed* is defined as, "to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service" (Strong's Greek #5548).

When I first began to walk with the Lord, I believed the anointing was the Spirit of the Lord upon someone. But Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him because He was anointed. In Luke 4:18-19, He listed several things He was anointed to do. Jesus was anointed; that is, He was consecrated to fulfill His office and service on earth. *Consecrate* basically means, "to be set apart." The different ministries listed in verses 18 and 19 are what God ordained and authorized Jesus to do. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to confirm the ministries He was authorized and enabled to do.

With God's anointing comes everything you need to obey what He has authorized, but you must believe this truth for it to work. **Whatever God commands you to do, He gives you the authorization for it to be done.** In other words, everything you need, He provides; but this must be activated by faith. Then you must carry out His instructions in the Spirit as you give the glory (credit due) to Him for what He does through you.

I asked my Heavenly Father to show me how I could have His anointing in my life. He said, “If you trust Me and acknowledge Me in all your ways, then I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5-6). Once I have given you an instruction, I have authorized the grace, strength and abilities to obey. My anointing means I set you aside and authorize you to do this work. You should expect the Holy Spirit to be on you, enabling you to complete your assignment, regardless of how small it is in the eyes of man. It is not small in My eyes because this is the way I qualify you for greater things.”

From that day on, I sought God for directions in all areas of my life, large and small. My number one motive was to express my love to the Lord through my obedience (John 14:15). **Obedience with a pure heart made the way for the Holy Spirit to manifest in my life in everyday situations as well as in challenging, life-changing circumstances.** When this happened, my relationship with God deepened dramatically.

My advice to you is to keep it simple. Do not complicate what the Lord reveals to you. With revelation comes anointing. This includes conviction as well. When God speaks to you, He provides the anointing (authorization) with the word to do what He says.

Do not prejudge how you think the Holy Spirit should manifest to you and in you. Do not be discouraged if you do not sense a dramatic flow of His presence. He may choose to manifest in peace, joy, comfort, conviction or any number of other ways. Be content with how He chooses to manifest. As time goes on, you will experience His presence in many diverse ways. When this becomes a way of life for you (as it should), you will no longer be tempted by anything the world, your flesh or the enemy has to offer.

Foundation Stones Set in Place

Many of you who will read this book series, *Foundations for Spiritual Maturity*, are familiar with Servants of the Lord Ministries. You are acquainted with the teachings I have shared about walking with God, living in the Spirit, and developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. **You know that having a personal relationship with God is the foundation for all of His provisions.** However, there is a vast difference between getting to know God and being one who is spiritually mature. Developing the necessary foundation for spiritual maturity requires a much deeper work of God in your life.

The books in this series will include teachings that are beneficial to believers who are young in the Lord as well as those who have walked with God for years. **These books will include key foundation stones of truth every Christian needs.** (Foundation stones are basic, essential truths you believe and obey to the point that they become part of your spiritual groundwork.) **If these foundation stones are not laid correctly and built on properly, spiritual maturity will not be produced.**

Before we go on, I have the following questions for you:

- Have the necessary foundation stones of truth actually been set in place in your spirit; that is, has your character changed?
- Does the fruit of your life prove they are firmly set in place?
- Are you still inconsistent spiritually?
- Do you continue to struggle with your flesh, especially when you are under pressure?
- Are you growing at the pace you know you should be?

- Have you been faithful to build additional truths on top of the foundational truths you have been taught?
- Is Jesus consistently the literal, functional Lord of your life?

I ask you to stop at this moment and ask the Lord to show you the answers to these questions. You cannot deepen your spiritual foundation if God's truths have never been properly placed in you. **This work must be done between you and the Holy Spirit.** I can teach you vast amounts of truth, but if you do not allow the Spirit to imbed those truths into your heart and life, they are of no value to you.

Before you go any farther, spend quality time before the Lord and ask Him to reveal the answers to the questions previously listed.

Reference Verses for Introduction

1 Corinthians 11:28-30

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

2 Corinthians 11:14

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 10:5

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.

John 16:13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

1 John 5:6b

...And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Philippians 4:6-8

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God; and 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.

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

1 Peter 1:7

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.

2 Timothy 2:26b

...having been taken captive by him to do his will.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Luke 4:18-19

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Chapter 1

Getting Started

God has authorized you to have an intimate relationship with Him and His Son. John 17:3 says, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” The word *know* means, “to know in a great variety of applications (absolutely) and with many implications...allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know(-ledge)...come to know, get knowledge of, perceive...” (Strong’s Greek #1097). One root definition refers to the intimacy between a husband and wife. In other words, it means to know deeply and personally.

You may be familiar with this verse, but stop for a moment and meditate on it. You were given the gift of eternal life so you could know your Heavenly Father, Jesus your Lord, and the Holy Spirit who is your Teacher and Comforter. God longs for an intimate relationship with you!

Everything in this book is about developing a deeply personal relationship with the Godhead. **This relationship has nothing to do with works, ministry or maturity.** Your primary focus should always be on having John 17:3 working in and through your life consistently.

It is time to go back to the first works. **I strongly encourage you to read this book as if you are starting over.** Even if you are a seasoned, mature minister, go back and make sure the first works are established in you. **Remember that your trust in Jesus is directly proportional to the level you have fallen in love with Him and know Him.** When you love Him unconditionally, you will acknowledge Him in all your

ways and obey Him because you trust Him with your whole heart.

You only trust God to the level that you love Him.

What to Expect

You should start to see obvious growth in your relationship with God as you process the truths in this book. Your ability to acknowledge God and obey Him should dramatically increase. Both your love for Him, and your trust in Him, should deepen. The process of old things passing away and all things becoming new should become a way of life as you continue to repent of the hindrances God reveals to you (2 Corinthians 5:17).

In the beginning, you should expect your basic communication, as far as direction from God, to come primarily through reading the Word. (A reminder: Be sure you are in the Spirit rather than the flesh when seeking direction from God.)

Allow the Spirit to show you what you should repent of. This includes sins of omission and commission: things you are not doing that you should be doing and things you are doing that you should not be doing. **It is very important to process conviction properly through repentance, and repentance should take place in the presence of your Father.** Do not be discouraged as you go through this. It is necessary and it is good for you!

The Proper Response to Conviction

Let me take a moment to restate what I said in the previous paragraph. **Confession and repentance should take**

place in your Father's presence. Do not allow satan to have any part of this process. If thoughts come to you to suggest that you are a failure and you will never be able to walk with God because there is too much wrong with you, you must rebuke this lie from satan.

Your Father loves you and He convicts you because He does not want sin to separate you from fellowship with Him. Jesus' death is the provision for your sins to be removed. His blood is available to cleanse you at the moment you confess your sins.

If you believe you cannot walk with God because there is too much wrong with you, you must rebuke this lie from satan.

1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When the Holy Spirit convicts (convinces) you that you are guilty of a particular sin, godly sorrow becomes evident (2 Corinthians 7:9-11). Its purpose is to lead you to repentance. When you are convicted, immediately repent of the sinful fruit that broke your fellowship with God and believe He will forgive you as He promised He would do. (Remember that trusting God means you believe He is trustworthy to do what He says He will do. This includes forgiveness!)

When you confess and repent, the godly sorrow you feel should immediately go away and you should move back into fellowship with God. His peace should return. Then you can ask the Holy Spirit to show you the reasons why you sinned and where the manifestation of the bad fruit came from. Because you are in His presence, you should be able to hear His instructions.

Meditate on each truth the Holy Spirit reveals to you. Ask Him to show you how to break the habit of the sins He

exposes. Ask Him to show you directly or through the Word what is correct instead of what you were doing wrong. The process of moving from the carnal nature to Christ's nature through repentance will be a continual process, and conviction will be more prevalent in the beginning. **The more you repent, the more Christ-like you will become!**

Before I go on, let me remind you that you must approach conviction and repentance in the Spirit. **Godly sorrow is ordained by God to lead you to repentance** (2 Corinthians 7:10). His goal is to remove any and every hindrance that keeps you from enjoying consistent fellowship with Him. **His motive is always love!** He convicts you because He loves you, and with conviction, He has made the provision for the sin and godly sorrow to be removed. He has promised to forgive you when you repent. However, if you do not believe this truth from your heart, you will continue to struggle with condemnation and will have trouble becoming free in your spirit after you have been convicted.

If you repent but godly sorrow remains, it is likely you do not believe you are forgiven. Matthew 9:29b says, "...According to your faith let it be to you." Spiritual principles are always activated by faith, so if you believe you are forgiven, you are. However, if you believe you are not forgiven, you will not be. **If you do not move back into God's presence as soon as you repent, this is confirmation that you are not trusting God and His Word with your whole heart.** (I suggest that you stop a moment and ask the Lord if this has been a recurring problem in your spiritual life.)

When I first began to walk with the Lord many years ago, I learned to be a fast repentor. When I was convicted, I immediately asked for forgiveness so I could move back into God's presence. I chose to trust God and believe that His Word was truth. I have not wavered in this commitment for many years, and I am rarely out of God's presence because I am quick to confess any sin God exposes.

I encourage you to look at this process from God’s perspective. Have the same goal He does, which is for you to stay in fellowship with Him. Be quick to trust Him and obey, especially when it comes to conviction. Become a fast repentor!

The Importance of Conviction

It is important to understand why conviction is paramount in the beginning. God is convicting you about sins that move you out of the Spirit. His goal is to do whatever is necessary to bring you closer to Him. He wants you to remain in the Spirit and be in a safe environment where you will grow up spiritually.

God says in Hebrews 12:5b-7 that He does this for us because He loves us. “...‘**My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.**’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” This work should encourage you because it confirms you are God’s child. Hebrews 12:8 says, “But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.” You should embrace the work of conviction and repentance. **Embracing conviction will produce the greatest amount of fruit in the shortest amount of time.**

**Embracing conviction will produce
the greatest amount of fruit
in the shortest amount of time.**

Each time you are convicted, a hindrance to your spiritual walk and maturity has been identified. Each one is a reason why you do not stay in the Spirit consistently.

Conviction is an alarm to warn you that it is time to deal with a specific issue. Instead of viewing this as a negative experience from a fleshly point of view, look at it from God's perspective. **He convicts you so you can repent and remove another sin that hinders you from walking closely with Him.** He does this because He loves you so much and does not want anything to separate you from fellowship with Him.

Conviction is a blessing! Yes, it is uncomfortable but what wonderful eternal fruit it produces! If you think about it, you will realize the negative feeling of conviction is merely your flesh reacting because it does not want to die.

Colossians 3:5 says, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." You may think you are not guilty of such blatant sins, but I would remind you that loving anyone or anything more than you love Jesus Christ is idolatry. **Remember that God sees the fullness of what is in your heart and mind even if it does not manifest in outward behavior.** Let the Holy Spirit examine your thoughts and the desires of your heart.

Allow God to have access to every area of your life. **Do not set boundaries on His work in you.** When it does not make sense to your natural mind, you must choose to trust Him. Remember that trusting God is a choice, not an emotion. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."

God is making decisions for your life that will cause you to become a spiritual being and reach maturity. He wants you to fully enjoy your spiritual heritage. **It is important that you do not waste time trying to understand God's decisions from your human perspective.** Simply choose to trust and obey Him. When godly fruit is produced, you will see the results of His work.

Trusting God is a choice, not an emotion.

A Personal Testimony

When I first began to know the Lord, I made the decision to trust Him completely with every area of my life. I decided to trust God 100% for an entire year. I knew that in that amount of time I could compare the fruit of Him being Lord to the fruit of when I had been lord. When I saw the good fruit His Lordship produced (long before the year ended), I gave Him my complete trust forever.

At first, it seemed everything God said convicted me. I did not understand it at the time but now I do. The most important thing to God was to close the doors in my life where satan could take me captive at his will (2 Timothy 2:26). These areas of sin had to be dealt with so I could have the communion and fellowship with God that I desired.

In the beginning, I did not understand how important the purifying of my faith and obedience were. God convicted me and made choices for my life without any explanation. It did not seem fair at the time. When I sought Him for explanations, His response was, “Do you love Me?” I replied that I did. He would then say, “Keep My commandments.”

Jesus gave us the standard for expressing love to Him in John 14:15. “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” From that time on I decided to trust Him and obey Him for one simple reason: to show Him I loved Him. Everything became much easier after I made that decision. My love grew and my faith was purified. This accelerated everything else.

Do not get discouraged when God begins to expose multiple sins in your life! **Before God can build the eternal things He wants in your life, He must first tear down the carnal, temporal things you have built.** For a short season, it may look like you are going the wrong direction. Once the “old” is mostly cleared away in different areas of your life, the “new” will come very quickly and it will become much easier.

Many of God’s children never deal with His Lordship for the same reason many stopped following Jesus when He was

on the earth. Jesus' preaching did not make sense to their carnal minds, and they did not want to follow Him because it seemed too hard (John 6:60-66). But the disciples chose to trust and obey Him and they became the heroes of faith. **So I ask you: What will you do?**

Life Changing Scriptures

Two scriptures helped me tremendously when I first began to develop my personal relationship with God. Remember that my only goal was to know the Lord. I was not seeking for blessings, ministry or any other thing. I simply wanted to know God in a deeply intimate way. I wanted to hear His voice and I looked for ways to obey Him to show Him I loved Him.

Psalms 46:10a is a simple instruction; if you obey it, it will change your life. "**Be still**, and **know** that I *am* God..." Some of the words that define *still* are, "...abate, cease...(be) slack, stay, be still..." (Strong's Hebrew #7503). You must learn to cease from your own labors and stay quiet before your Father. The word *know* includes the following, "to know (properly, to ascertain by seeing); used in a variety of senses...including observation, care, recognition...acknowledge, acquainted with..." (Strong's Hebrew #3045). **God wants you to personally experience an intimate relationship with Him.**

James 1:19 says, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." **If you want to know the Lord intimately, you must learn to listen attentively and be quiet!** Many of your spiritual struggles will stop if you simply obey these instructions. Be eager to hear what the Lord says, and stop telling Him your preferences and opinions.

Listen attentively to the Lord and be quiet!

If you are honest, you will have to admit you have spent a portion of your spiritual life giving God instructions on what you would like Him to do or what you think He should do. He has been in control for eternity and He does not need your advice! **When you begin to ask Him for directions then wait quietly as He speaks, you will find you can hear Him more clearly than you ever have.** You will find that His peace and joy begin to flow over you in a new and deeper way.

The end of James 1:19 says, "...be...slow to wrath." **If you have struggled with Jesus' Lordship for much of your Christian life, it is possible you are angry with God because of choices He has made or situations He has allowed in your life.** This may be hard for you to admit, but I ask you to stop right now and ask Him this question: "Do I have buried anger and judgments against You for things that have happened in the past?" The answer may surprise you.

If you find you have anger or judgments against God, you must confess this sin before you go any farther. Spend time in God's presence seeking answers in this area. Ask the Lord to forgive you for each sin you have committed against Him. Do not let satan minister condemnation to you as you confess. Your Father loves you and wants to forgive every sin you have committed against Him. (Chapter 7 explains how to repent in detail.)

Whatever you believe that questions your Father's love, faithfulness, integrity or holiness is a lie. You may think you have evidence proving God is wrong, but if all of the evidence is presented, you will always be the one who is wrong. I make this statement based on what the Word of God says and my personal experiences.

Ways That Seem Right

James 1:22 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." If you desire to know

God and walk with Him, satan will not be able to seduce you with obvious evil. He has to use ways that seem right to you. Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 say, “There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death.” **Remember: It is when you believe you are right but are actually wrong that you are deceived.** Do not waste your time looking at areas that are obviously wrong. These areas indicate that you are in rebellion and should be easily recognized. They should be dealt with immediately through repentance.

The areas you believe are right cause the most trouble. If you are seeking a relationship with God but it is not working, your problem is that you are already deceived. You have to face this truth! You must constantly examine the fruit in your life to see how it compares to God’s Word and His personal revelation in your life.

If your life does not reflect what God says, something is wrong! Believe me, it is not God’s fault if you are not where you should be spiritually. This is why I will continue to encourage you to examine each fundamental truth presented in this book and ask the Holy Spirit to show you why it is not in place in your life. **You will never change if you continue to make excuses.**

The Danger of Spiritualized Flesh

On every critical point the Holy Spirit reveals to you, simply ask Him if you are, or are not, obeying that particular revelation. If you are not, stop making excuses. Ask the Spirit to show you why you do not or cannot obey. There are no excuses, only reasons. Reasons can be identified by the Spirit and can and should be eliminated through repentance. Let me remind you once again: **Everything you get convicted about is another reason why your spiritual life is not working.**

Remember: Every part of this work must be done in the Spirit, not in your spiritualized flesh. **In spiritualized flesh,**

you develop good ideas from your natural, “religious” mind (from your lordship) rather than asking God what He wants you to do. If God commands you to do something, it can be done. If you cannot do what God says, the Spirit as your Teacher is eager to show you what hindrances are keeping you from obeying. He longs for you to have intimate fellowship with the Godhead. You can trust Him!

**Do not try to process truth
through your spiritualized flesh.
It will never work!**

There may be legitimate reasons why you cannot obey a particular command God has given you. You need to seek the Holy Spirit for revelation about why you cannot obey. You may have a problem with trusting God or your love may not be as pure as it should be. The Spirit will show you every reason why you are struggling and how to overcome each reason.

It is possible you cannot obey a particular commandment because it is not required at your current level of maturity. **Do not make any assumptions!** The father of lies (satan) loves to bring condemnation as an angel of light (John 8:44c, 2 Corinthians 11:14). He will tell you that you are a failure when it may be that God is not telling you to do a particular thing. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you exactly what you need to do.

Let me say this one more time: **Do not try to process truth in your spiritualized flesh.** Operating in the flesh always keeps a door open to satan. Pray a covering over yourself as you seek God about these matters. Submit yourself to God and resist the devil! He will flee from you (James 4:7).

If you continue to process truth in your spiritualized flesh, you will continue to be deceived. It is imperative that you stop doing this! If you continue to struggle with your walk and proclaim, “I have done everything I know to do and it still is not working,” then you must face the fact that you are deceived.

The only way to stop deception is to humble yourself before the Lord and confess your sin. When you have repented and are confident you are in the Lord's presence, ask Him to show you the ways in which you operate in deception. Your Lord longs for you to be close to Him and be free from the deceptions of the enemy. Repent of every problem He exposes. Trust Him to show you how to be free from the lies you have believed.

I have said it before and I will say it again. Keep it simple! **It is time to work on the foundation of your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.** As you willingly submit yourself to the Lord who loves you, He will show you every hindrance that is keeping you from having the relationship with Him that you desire and the spiritual maturity you have been longing for.

God's Laws and Exceptions

God's kingdom is a kingdom of order. He created the laws of His kingdom. Many blessings and benefits result when we obey Him. There are also penalties and losses for disobeying His commands. Only the one who makes and enforces the laws can change or make an exception to them.

If God chooses to change one of His laws then whatever the law was before is no longer binding. For example, His laws changed from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. In the Old Covenant, sacrifices were required to cover sin and there were numerous laws that had to be followed. In the New Covenant, Jesus fulfilled the Law. We are now made righteous through faith in Him instead of obeying the laws of the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:7-13).

If God chooses to make an exception to one of His laws, for whatever reason, it does not change the law. No person has the authority to change or make exception to any of God's laws. When we break God's laws, we sin. The Bible

explains the penalty for breaking God's law, and the exception to the penalty, in Romans 6:23. "For the wages of sin is death (the penalty of the law), but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (the exception to the penalty of the law)." 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **When we confess, God makes an exception to the law and does not penalize us for our sins.** This is grace, God's unmerited (undeserved) favor.

Gifts with Conditions

As believers, we have been given a great heritage by the grace of God. There are many gifts and opportunities available to us to become vessels of honor in our Father's house (2 Timothy 2:21). Many of God's gifts to us have conditions, and many opportunities require that we qualify for them.

I believe the greatest gift God gave us was the gift of eternal life (John 17:3) and the new birth. The privilege to know the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in an intimate way is available to every Christian, but there are conditions we must meet to enjoy this gift. **Jesus must become your first love and the Lord of your life for this gift to manifest as it should.**

John 14:15 and John 14:21-23 explain the conditions you must meet to enjoy a deeply personal relationship with your God. Verse 15 says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Verses 21-23 say, " 'He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.' Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will

love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’ ”

You cannot get to know God if you do not spend quality time in His presence. Fellowship with Him will be greatly hindered if you do not obey Him from a loving heart. As you obey and trust Him, your relationship with Him will deepen. As it does, God will give you multiple opportunities to serve Him.

Matthew 22:14 says, “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.” When God calls you, which means He gives you the invitation to serve Him, the Holy Spirit is released to teach and prepare you. When you qualify through obedience, you are then chosen, which means you are accepted. Once you are accepted, God begins to train you in His school, and He anoints (authorizes) you to function in the work He chooses.

If you are faithful, then He will give you more opportunities to obey. Remember: To whom much is given, more is required (Luke 12:48b). God’s ultimate goal is for you to qualify to rule and reign with Him in His kingdom for eternity. All of these opportunities are given to you by grace through faith, and it is not based on any qualities you possess.

Assignment

Ask the Lord to answer the following questions:

- Do I enjoy the gift of eternal life in a limited way?
- Do I process conviction in the Spirit or in the flesh?
- Do I consider conviction to be a blessing?
- Do I obey Proverbs 3:5-6?
- Do I operate in spiritualized flesh?

Spend time meditating on Psalm 46:10a and James 1:19. Ask the Lord to show you if you obey these scriptures; and if so, to what level.

Reference Verses for Chapter 1

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 7:9-11

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Matthew 9:29b

...According to your faith let it be to you.

Hebrews 12:5b-7

“...My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

Hebrews 12:8

But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Colossians 3:5

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

2 Timothy 2:26

And that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 6:60-66

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

Psalm 46:10a

Be still, and know that I am God...

James 1:19

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

James 1:22

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

John 8:44c

...there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

2 Corinthians 11:14

And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Hebrews 8:7-13

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I

disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 2:21

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:21-23

"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and

My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

Matthew 22:14

For many are called, but few are chosen.

Luke 12:48b

...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Additional Books

by J. C. Hedgecock

The ISBN numbers indicated are for the original title. Some of the books are available in other languages.

My Sheep Hear My Voice (Revised Edition)

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This Study Guide has been prepared by Servants of the Lord Ministries to help you apply the teachings from the book “My Sheep Hear My Voice”. It is intended to help you as you seek to hear the Lord's voice and have deeper communion with Him. This guide focuses your attention on the main teaching points and provides added emphasis on the areas that will produce a rapid change in your relationship with God, should you apply them to your daily life.

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(21 pages) ISBN 0-945255-05-5

Available online in other languages.

My Friends Obey My Voice

This book has been written as a sequel to the book, *My Sheep Hear My Voice*. It is primarily for those who have heard the first teaching and have studied it many times. If you are not walking in the fullness of the first message, this book will provide help in understanding why you do not obey when you have heard the Father speak.

(66 pages) ISBN 0-945255-09-8

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In the last days, at the closing of the church age, there will be a manifestation of the sons of God. The only question you have to answer at this time is: Will you be one of them?

Now is the time to prepare. Satan has produced counterfeit sons by deceiving spiritually immature, proud people, but this does not mean that God is not developing true manifested sons who are mature and humble.

We are living in a glorious age. Do not miss the tremendous blessings and opportunities that God is presenting to His children. Seek Him with your whole heart and you will find Him. This book gives a detailed view of how to come to maturity and what our future is as sons of God.

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Light was written for the children of God who are lights in a world of darkness and who desire to shine even brighter. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 (KJV), "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." When revelation comes from God, it sheds light in our spirits and minds. Darkness and ignorance are exposed as revelation comes forth. In this book, Reverend Hedgecock shares revelation he has received on a variety of subjects. ***Light*** will encourage, challenge, and equip you, and it will increase the light you already have. **Many key truths await you in this book.**

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(302 pages) ISBN 0-945255-50-0

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But what about now? This book shows you how to live in the kingdom of God now. It explains in detail how you can move into God's kingdom and stay there. Part of your inheritance is not available until later, but many of God's promises are available now. You can start enjoying what He has provided for you immediately!

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Foundations for Spiritual Maturity Volume 1

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time to wake up because time is running out. Whether the Lord returns soon or you go to Him in death, now is the time to get prepared.

Wake Up! Time is Running Out gives simple, detailed instructions about how to identify spiritual hindrances and the steps needed to eliminate them from your life. It gives practical examples of how to move into God's presence and learn how to have a consistent, fulfilling relationship with Him. Not only will you begin to recognize how much God loves you, you will also enjoy fellowship with Him as He reveals His purposes for your life.

(174 pages) ISBN 0-945255-90-X

Also available in German.

In addition to the books described on these pages, individual teaching cassette tapes, CDs, video tapes, DVDs, study guides and other materials are available in different languages.

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