

Motivated by God's Provision

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

These are crucial times for Christians. More than ever, we need to be mobilized to serve God through His grace and love. I am not talking about trying to energize people emotionally—there is far too much of that going on.

What we need is a realization of the provisions God has made available to us through His Word and His Body. So many believers are casual in their approach to the Bible and to the local assembly. They do not discern their need to keep divine appointments in fellowship and study. Meanwhile, Satan, the roaring lion, seeks those whom he may devour; he is working hard to immobilize Christians by victimizing them mentally, emotionally, subjectively, and physically.

God's provision is to give us the mind of Christ so that we will be equipped to have victory in every situation we encounter in our battle against the trends of this world system.

Chapter One

FEEDING ON ASHES

“He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (Isaiah 44:20).

Feeding on ashes means living in human provisions. It is feeding on something that is under the serpent—dust. When a Christian deviates from the divine dynamics of truth, he must feed on ashes in order to be sustained in some kind of purpose for his life.

Satan claims control over the dust and the material of the earth. Because he has been condemned to eat the dust, the devil tries to give us the food that he eats—the rubbish and worthless powder of this earth. A Christian who has been deceived by eating the dust holds a “lie” in his right hand—he has been deceived in his heart, led away by an evil influence. The lie comes from the adversary, who is the father of all lies

(John 8:44).

Believers who maintain a diet of ashes are apt to end up as alcoholics, drug addicts, or neurotics. They may go through several marriages. Some of these believers may attain a level of success, gaining a portion in this life through logistical grace. These are the toughest ones to reach because they *think* they are doing better than ever since they stopped living for God. And because of free volition, God says, “Oh, you want your portion in this life? Go ahead, have it. I won’t invade your rights.”

Satan’s Trend of Attack

The purpose of the kingdom of darkness is to victimize, immobilize, paralyze, and sterilize God’s children. This supernatural, invisible kingdom has a strategic plan to *victimize* us through our human frailty, our genetics, our needs, and our past—feeding on the dust of experiences stored in our memory center.

The second attack is *immobilization*, a lack of motivation due to a lack of energy. I may be extremely sincere in my Christianity, but still not motivated in victory. I may be engaged in spiritual warfare and still not get anywhere, because I am not energized for the battle.

Paralysis follows immobilization. When a person is paralyzed, he cannot use certain parts of his body. Though the brain is sending messages to an arm or a leg, for example, the limb is physically unable to respond. Many paralyzed people are unable to walk. When spiritual paralysis sets in, a Christian will come to me for counseling and begin to sob, "I know what you're saying, and I know it's *me*. I just can't do it." This person is sincere. He isn't evil or mean, he just can't *do* anything spiritually.

The final step in Satan's strategic plan is *sterilization*. Most people know that to be physically sterile means there is no capacity for reproduction. The sterile Christian has no capacity to reproduce Christ in someone else. Therefore, he reproduces what he is like in his natural disposition, but he has no spiritual children.

The person who has been sterilized in Satan's plan finds Body life unattractive. The Body, which is the fullness of Christ, has no effect on this believer because he refuses to draw near. When he hears categorical doctrine, it has no effect on his life. The Cross, though historically true and experientially available, is of none effect.

Chapter Two

THE PROVISIONS FOR VICTORY

As an alternative to feeding on ashes, God offers a divine provision through an *elative conclusion*: eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:53). Jesus Christ is the "living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51). Eating the Bread of Life refers to a daily intake of doctrine. Drinking His blood means to apply the New Covenant in the Finished Work.

The principle of the elative conclusion is found in 2 Corinthians 12, where Paul prayed three times for the thorn in his flesh to be removed. But God would not do it. Paul was using prayer as a human provision at a time when he should not have prayed. In this case, God's provision was, "My grace is sufficient," not prayer.

God's elative conclusion means choosing a divine provision instead of a human provision; it means God will supply all my needs accord-

ing to His riches in glory. The alternative is seeking a provision for myself according to my own understanding.

God will not leave us victimized by the kingdom of darkness. His life is available to give us something above and beyond what we ask or think. The process of deliverance comes by adjusting to and being established in the grace of God (Hebrews 13:9b).

In the process of deliverance, learn to give yourself grace, even if you cannot achieve victory yet. I am not talking about antinomianism, professing to know God, but in your works denying Him; or lasciviousness, using grace as a license to sin. Of course, you must rebound as often as necessary until finally you are kept by God in your area of weakness.

First, you must be established in grace, then you begin to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). As you practice Proverbs 24:16, rebounding seven times in a day if necessary, you aren't continuing in sin, but you are simply obeying God until you become established in the grace for victory.

Growing in Grace

We grow into different levels of grace so that

situations will not become the controlling factors in our lives. First, grace for salvation is imparted to us the moment we receive Christ into our hearts. Grace for rebound enables us to recover quickly from failure and get back into fellowship with God. As we grow, we receive grace to suffer, grace to take up our cross, and grace to minister to others even when they don't deserve it.

God gives us grace to adjust to anything the plan of God brings our way. As we grow in the depth of grace, we receive the abundance of grace for deeper trials and deeper situations. Through this process, God is able to develop in us a capacity for greater grace, in James 4:6. Greater grace carries us through some of the worst situations that could ever happen to a human being. Once we have become greater grace Christians, we are promoted for warfare in the angelic contest as supreme grace believers.

Finally, in heaven, we will enter into perfect grace. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

Little By Little

"And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts

of the field increase upon thee” (Deuteronomy 7:22).

We may win many victories all at once, and certain problems may be gone almost instantly. Still, sometimes God drives out our enemies “little by little.” *Beasts* in Deuteronomy 7:22 speaks of unclean spirits. The enemies are driven out little by little so we won’t become proud in the achievements of our flesh.

Many Christians condemn others when they themselves are failing in the same areas. I have been through many processes in my life simply because of my age and my experience. But I cannot be critical of someone else who hasn’t had the same time to grow as I have. We are all in a process of growing in grace.

“By little and little” means there will be times when we will need to use rebound. We will need to go from faith to faith and from glory to glory. We will continue to grow in grace. We won’t quit. We won’t give up. If we fail, we won’t stop and condemn ourselves, but we continue to go forward. God will honor this type of integrity and it will become our strength in the honor and dignity of grace.

Chapter Three

TABLES IN THE WILDERNESS

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the path of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:* thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23).

God prepares a table in the wilderness in the presence of our enemies (Psalm 78:19; Psalm 23:5). He furnished a table for the nation of Israel for forty years by providing manna from heaven and water from the rock. Because of His

love for us, individually and corporately, God always prepares a table for us in the presence of our nearest enemy.

David wrote Psalm 23 at a time when his son Absalom was trying to take over the throne. David lost his kingdom, his scepter, and his polished boots. He was in the Judean hills on a moonlit night with just a bag of clothes. He had lost everything, and he felt he would die.

The most unbelievable things were happening to David—his son wanted to kill him and take everything away from him. But, in spite of it all, David loved Absalom so much that he would have been willing to die for him (2 Samuel 18:33). Even though David had contributed to the problem by not letting Absalom into the palace for two years, Absalom still made the negative decisions leading to his rebellion. In the midst of everything, David was inspired to write Psalm 23.

Green speaks of mercy and *pastures* refers to food. In the presence of David's enemies he was receiving merciful doctrines. *Still waters* speaks of divine quietness. In the Hebrew text, *shadow* is in the plural form. David had faced death many times. But in those shadows, he always found that God was with him. In other words,

though David had lost everything, he still had the *source* of everything: God. In the presence of his enemies—fear, insecurity, and Absalom with his army, which outnumbered David’s twelve to one—God prepared a table for David. By grace through faith, David reached *into* God’s elative conclusion, rather than settling for a human provision for his flesh.

Discerning God’s Practical Provisions

When I seek God with all my heart, the Holy Spirit will guide me into the truth of divine discernment and I will realize God’s provision.

Suppose I have the flu. I need to discern the source of the sickness. Does it have a natural cause? Is it coming from the air? Or, is it because Satan doesn’t want me well? If I discern that my illness has nothing to do with the angelic conflict, my sickness *still* has a source. Have I been careless? Have I violated natural laws that God has taught me about good health? I must plan to be careful, and I must plan to be healthy. Don’t be condemned if you’re not healthy right now, but make a plan to have a lifestyle that promotes health.

Plan to be careful on the roads to avoid accidents. Expect people to run red lights; drive de-

fensively. Never take your eyes off of the road. Be extremely cautious. So many things can happen when we are not prepared. Every Christian should pray for wisdom from above. It is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated. With this wisdom, you can develop a lifestyle of planning and preparation to protect yourself against the unexpected and the unknown.

Chapter Four

MOBILIZED TO SERVE

Growing in grace leads to spiritual mobilization in the faith, enabling me to utilize divine assets. As a result, I sin less and less. I am no longer occupied with what people think of me. I am not proud. I refuse to be occupied with weakness, yet I won't surrender to a natural lifestyle.

As I utilize divine assets, God produces divine motivation. This motivation brings divine energy from a divine source into my relationships. It allows me to deal with every situation with the creativity of faith in an attitude of love. Instead of a husband blaming his wife for certain problems in the marriage, he brings in the divine energy of unconditional love to produce in her a capacity for life.

Suppose my wife had a weakness in her schedule—she doesn't and I would never uncover her even if she did. Instead of criticizing,

intimidating, and indicting her, I would take her hand and say, "I love you. Thank you for being you." This makes her want to be around me. She has more fun with me than with others. She feels comfortable. This develops in her a capacity to please me without me ever indicting her weakness. It's not enough just to avoid saying something negative; I may say nothing and still be reactionary in my spirit. Rather, I must live in the Spirit of God and communicate something positive to her.

The Manifestation of Life and Power

As I am motivated through the release of divine energy, God begins to manifest His life and power in my soul. Then, and only then, will God do beyond what I'm asking or thinking, according to the power that works in us. His power doesn't just work *for* us, or *toward* us, but it works *in* us and *through* us.

When God's power is working for me, I thank Him that I am saved, even when I'm failing. His power is working toward me when another believer comes and communicates the truth to me in love. When I receive the truth in meekness, the Holy Spirit works in me. But, when the Holy Spirit works through me, I enter

into a manifestation of His life. The power that is working in me, now works through me, so that as God *is* in heaven, so I *am* in this world (1 John 4:17). I reveal the person of Christ in a spiritual manifestation (Galatians 1:15-16).

This manifestation develops my capacity for the Kingdom of God within me and, as a result, I become stabilized. “Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times” (Isaiah 33:6a). We now experience the presence of God through divine realization.

I don’t have to live in self-denial; I can stand naked before God (Isaiah 1:5-6; Jeremiah 17:9). I can say, “Pray for me, I am eight percent insane.” You may laugh, but I am serious. I used to be twenty-five percent insane! In fact, with regard to Truth and the provisions of grace, every Christian is dealing with a measure of insanity—not human madness, but madness in the realm of the psyche as it relates to God. But through divine realization of God’s presence, I can define my enemies and protect myself in the battle.

Spiritual Living

Instead of operating in psychological living, we can live in a spiritual provision. Psychological living is a most frustrating existence. In this

state, a person knows what he *should* do. He knows what he should confess, and he tries. But it's only a form of godliness operating in the human soul that is detached from the human spirit's provision from God.

Spiritual living is growing every day, living in the divine origin and image of Christ's life in our humanity. At this point, we enter into the process of 2 Corinthians 4:10-12: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you."

CONCLUSION

When God sees that we are stable and mature, and that we have been established in grace, He can use us in the angelic contest. Instead of fighting battles within, we represent God as we battle the demons without. We are delivered to the death of the Cross daily through circumstances and the details of life, so that we will manifest the resurrection life of Christ.

We don't condemn, criticize, or talk behind people's backs. We operate under another plan. As God delivers us to the death of the Cross, the life of Christ is manifested through our little mortal bodies. Death works in us, so that life may work in those who are not spiritual.

God wants each of us to advance into a greater grace life, using rebound when we fail. We are not there yet, but we are growing into it in degrees (James 4:6). That grace becomes the controlling factor instead of the situations we face. We can be relaxed and experience perfect

peace in the midst of adversity, pressure, and stress. Every Christian has the potential for this kind of life because the love of God honors our faith in the Finished Work—the faith that pleases Him.