

SEVEN MASTER KEYS TO

TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIAN LIVING



by Gordon Lindsay

7 MASTER KEYS TO TRIUMPHANT CHRISTIAN LIVING

This book represents a series of lessons which were carried in our publication a few years ago. These lessons aroused a very considerable interest among our readers and several of my friends have insisted that they be published. Actually they contain in compact form secrets of practical living which I learned in the many years of ministry and which I have found most valuable in my personal life.

As one example, a considerable proportion of Christians are actually victims of anxiety neuroses. The chapter of the Master Key To End Worry deals with this problem and shows the simple Bible way to end anxiety in a Christian's life.

The seven Master Key chapters are as follows:

Master Key To End Worry.

The Master Key to A Successful Life.

The Master Key to Faith.

The Master Key to Omnipotence.

The Master Key to the Impossible.

The Master Key to All Things Working Together for Good.

The Master Key to Guidance.

These chapters I believe will help answer many of the problems which Christians have, and give the key to the solution of many of the problems they face. God's will is that every believer shall experience a victorious, triumphant life.

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Chapter I

The Master Key to End Worry

One of the biggest problems that people face is worry. Men and women in all walks of life are nagged by persistent anxieties that take a toll on their lives. Physicians say that one half of all diseases are nervous disorders and owe their origin to worry. It is further claimed that a large proportion of hospital beds are occupied by people who have emotional problems. Worry is one of the most serious problems facing the human race today.

The late Dale Carnegie has written a classic on the subject of worry entitled, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. He advises people to concentrate on the problems of today rather than those of tomorrow. He quotes the words of Jesus, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Jesus of course did not mean that we should make no plans or preparations for tomorrow. He meant that we were to have no anxiety about it, and that we should not waste our energy reliving and regretting the blunders of the past. Nor are we to fritter away our strength worrying about the problems of tomorrow. We should live one day at a time.

Mr. Carnegie, in his book, gives three steps calculated to help people end worry: (1) Analyze carefully what could be the worst that could happen as a result of a possible failure; (2) Reconcile yourself to accepting the result, should it happen; (3) Use your energy to try to improve the worst which has already been accepted mentally.

Is this good advice? Yes, as far as it goes. Jesus said,

"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They are not wiser in the matters of the world to come—they are infinitely foolish in that respect—but wiser in matters of this world. Many Christians get themselves in terrible confusion in their daily affairs simply because they do not apply the most simple rules to carry on their business.

The Lord gave us a certain amount of intelligence, and He expects us to use it. If we do not, we can expect unnecessary trouble. Many people's trials are simply caused by their own foolish acts. They act on their emotions instead of getting the facts and thinking things through.

Neither does God put a premium on carelessness. We are to be careful. Some Christians are "accident prone." Failure to take proper precautions is sinful. God told the children of Israel when they built a house to put battlements around the edges so that they would not have an accident. If a farmer had a bull which was known to gore, he was to keep the animal fenced up. Men were not to leave a pit or open hole around for people to fall into. There is no magic remedy for irresponsibility.

The Christian does have a special set of problems, due to the fact that as a Christian he is automatically a special target of Satan. Alas, many Christians are unaware of their unseen enemy and their defense against him is wholly inadequate. Often their first knowledge of Satan's attack is when some tragedy strikes them. Like Job, one misfortune after another may come upon them until they feel they can take no more. And like Job, they usually fail to understand who is responsible for their troubles. Job said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away" (Job 1:21). Job, however, was wrong. It was the Lord who gave, but the devil who took away. The inspired writer shows us that it was Satan behind the scenes who destroyed Job's cattle, who sent the cyclone that destroyed his children, who produced the boils which caused him so much pain and misery.

People who have many troubles and trials often suppose that God is responsible for them, when in reality it is because they failed to build bulwarks against the devil. They are like soldiers who make no defense against a surprise attack of the enemy.

While many fear things that have no basis in reality, there are usually enough genuine troubles to cause them anxiety. Many Christians have neuroses and stomach ulcers simply because of constant tension and worry. In seeking relief they may resort to various remedies. Tranquilizers may make them feel better for a while, but these do not eliminate the cause. Hence the symptoms constantly recur.

Doctors have proved that stomach ulcers owe their origin to worry and tension. When the brain worries, the news is carried by nerve cords to the stomach. The stomach, reacting, fails to digest its food properly, and the resulting malfunction causes ulcers. Surgeons who find it difficult to get their patients to stop worrying have developed a simple operation called vagotomy which consists of cutting the worry nerves. Then the stomach does not know when the brain is worrying.

We live in a world of danger and sudden disaster. Some 50,000 people were killed on the highways in America last year, and a million and a half were seriously injured. It is natural for people to fear that something will happen to them. What if one of the children has a bad accident on the way to school? Automation is driving hundreds of thousands of people out of work each year. What will happen if the bread winner of the family loses his job?

What if a killing disease strikes a member of the family? What if the wife should be taken away, leaving her children motherless? What if the house should catch on fire?

How can you tell people to stop worrying when all these thousand and one things are happening to other people and might happen to them?

What we are about to say is not for lazy people, foolish people, or prayerless people. It concerns responsible, sincere, honest Christians. To such the Bible gives the master key to end worry. It is in Philippians 4:6: *"Be careful (anxious—R.V.) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*

Paul tells us to be anxious for nothing. This is what Jesus was talking about in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Take no thought of the morrow." He meant that we were not to be anxious about the morrow. Worry is destructive. It makes people ill. It shortens human life. Jesus, therefore, commands us not to be anxious.

This is the master key to prevent worry: Each day take time to get alone with God. Take time to recognize and become conscious of His presence. Take time to praise Him for what He has already done. Some people think of worship as consisting only of asking God for something. People who never thank God for blessings already received become mere beggars. The one thing that we can give God in return for His bounty is our worship. Many people are ungrateful. They never thank God for their blessings. Instead they go their self-willed way and when something goes wrong, they become sullen and are even indignant. "Why did God allow this to happen to me?" they say. Such people will never enter into the realm where they are free from worry.

We are to put the future, day by day, into the hands of God.

Then we are to make our requests known to Him, one by one. We are to commit our family, our children, our relatives, our friends, our home, our

finances, our problems, our physical health, our neighbors, our job, our office—all into the hands of God. We are to do this every day.

We are to do it sincerely and with full assurance that God will hear us, that He will lead us in all things in life, that our decisions will be right decisions. We are to pray thus in the full faith that our God is able to make "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

By this means do we move into the God-appointed pattern of life. As we consistently place each detail of our lives into the hands of God, the powers of the infinite are at work for our good. Bulwarks are built against the enemy. Vulnerable areas in which the enemy may attack us are closed off. Invisible angelic messengers silently guard us against unseen dangers. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivered them" (Psa. 34:7). Good things begin to happen to us. Instead of disaster and tragedy striking suddenly and leaving us stunned and broken, God is on our side. He anticipates the evil and overrules it, so that it never reaches us.

Such a life is of course not for the half-consecrated Christian. It is for the one mentioned by the psalmist. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty" (Psa. 91:1). It is for those who go to the secret place of prayer and who regularly present all their problems to Him who has the power to deliver. It is for those who make prayer a business in their lives.

This then is the master key to freedom from worry and frustration. No man can be "anxious for nothing" unless he first learns by prayer and thanksgiving to daily make known his requests to God. But he who does this and is faithful in maintaining his prayer hour may have a peace and serenity in his inner soul which passeth understanding and of which others little dream.

Chapter II

The Master Key to a Successful Life

Have you ever wondered about the mystery of God's purpose in your coming into this world? It is natural for us to think of human life beginning at birth, but in the mind of God, you and I existed in the eternity past. The Scriptures spoke about John the Baptist and the manner of his ministry long before he was born (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3). His coming into the world was referred to by the Old Testament prophets centuries before the era of Christ. There were other individuals whose very names were mentioned long before they were born. There was Cyrus who gave the command for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Many years before, the prophet Isaiah named Cyrus as the one who would give this command to restore Jerusalem. (Isa. 44:28). Josiah's name and his work of restoring King Jeroboam's idolatrous altar was predicted centuries before his reign (I Kings 13:2).

All this seems mysterious and difficult for us to understand. Despite all of mankind's accumulated knowledge and wisdom, scientists have never yet been able to tell just what life really is. It is obvious, however, that God has foreknown every person that was to come into the world. The compatibility of divine foreknowledge and man's free will has long been a subject of theological discussion. Despite the many volumes written on it, these have been able to cast little light on the subject.

Yet one point is clear. As God had a plan for Cyrus, Josiah, and John the Baptist long before they were born, so God has a plan for every person born into the world. "He was the Light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world" (John 1:9). The purpose of light is to show man the way he should go.

That it was not the will of God that any be predestined to damnation is also evident from II Peter 3:9 which declares that the Lord is not "willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Although the above is true, it is just as apparent that a vast number of people living in this world never fulfill the purpose God intended for them. In the first place, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God," not to speak of fulfilling the divine will of his life (John 3:3, 5, 7).

That God has a special plan for every human being is reasonable, once we take time to consider it. What builder would attempt to construct an important edifice without a blueprint? In the case of modern skyscrapers, think of the thousands, even hundreds of thousands of man-hours that go into its planning. The lighting, the plumbing, the air conditioning, the heating, the ventilation, the telephone circuits, the intercom systems are only a few things involved in planning such a structure. Yet man is far more complex and is infinitely more valuable than the greatest building. The human body is a masterpiece of creation. It is constructed with a heart that pumps hundreds of quarts of blood through the veins daily. Day in and day out the stomach and liver perform prodigious wonders of metabolism that take energy from the food as it is digested and make it available to the bloodstream. The skin not only protects the body but by means of its thousands of sweat glands faithfully regulates the temperature of the body. When the body is normal the temperature hovers close to 98.6, even when the outside temperatures fluctuate from 60 below zero to 120 above. The eye, infinitely more delicate and complex than a television picture tube, has millions of nerves that respond to the sensation of light and color and send the impressions to the brain as a complete image, exactly reproducing the scene before the eye. The lungs gather oxygen from the air and feed the blood, which in turn takes the needed substance to every part of body. The lungs exhale the useless carbon dioxide. In that same blood stream there are millions of white corpuscles that are constantly on the alert for intruding bacteria. Upon discovery, the bacteria are vigorously attacked and destroyed.

Perhaps the most astounding fact of all is that the genes of two parents will unite to produce another human being in their likeness, who in turn possesses the same capacity to reproduce. But the body is the lesser of man's triune nature of body, soul, and spirit. No wonder the psalmist said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14).

Is it possible that God having made so wonderful a creation as man should cast him adrift, having no plan for his life? Is the Creator like a little boy who makes a toy sailboat and amuses himself by setting it in a pond to see which way the wind will blow it? God must have a purpose in creating man. If the Scriptures teach anything at all, it is that there is a divine plan for every life.

Two great questions face every human being. Man realizes, nearly as soon as he knows anything, that he must die. The question ever before him is: where and how will he spend eternity? That question can be settled only through Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The other question is this: what is God's will and plan for my life? What does God intend that my life should accomplish? The first question can be answered the moment the soul surrenders to Christ. The second is not answered so easily or so quickly. But it can be answered. *Men find God's perfect will only as they pray their way into it.* It is in prayer that we find an answer to our question. The highest position in God's kingdom is that of the intercessor. Moses the Lawgiver was great because he was an intercessor. Two million people would have perished had he not prevailed with God (Exod. 32:9-10, 30-35; 33:12-17). Daniel the prophet was called "greatly beloved" because he stayed on his face until the answer came (Daniel 10). Even Christ in His glorified state seated at the right hand of the Father occupies the office of the intercessor (Heb. 7:25).

The wonderful thing is that God calls every man and woman to this exalted work. He does not call all to be apostles, prophets, or evangelists. He does not appoint all to be preachers or teachers. But He calls all who will accept it to the office of the intercessor. Jesus taught in a parable that "man ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). "For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:8).

Thus we see that every one, rich or poor, small or great, has the opportunity to rise to the highest office in God's kingdom—that of an intercessor. Indeed in the hands of the intercessor lies the power to sway the destiny of nations. There is power to save nations. In the days of Ezekiel when judgment threatened, God looked for a man for an intercessor who would stand in the gap before Him that the land might be spared, but He found none. "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. Their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 22:30-31).

The king on the throne could not save Israel from judgment. Neither could the princes. But had an intercessor arisen in those days, the land could have been saved from judgment. Alas, God could find none. As it was in the days of Ezekiel, so it has been many times in the history of nations. Men aspire to every office but that of an intercessor. They will give their lives in battle for their country. They will make every sacrifice for lesser causes, but taking the role of an intercessor appears to be too humble a task. The fruits of one's labor are not so immediately apparent. So the greatest and most honorable task in God's kingdom goes begging.

God does not ask a man to stay on his knees all the time. The man of prayer can be a man of action. Moses saw plenty of action; so did Daniel. Indeed prevailing prayer opens the way for a ministry of action. God sets in the Church whom He pleases. He has a special place for every one of us. He has a perfect plan for our lives if we will seek it out. He makes plain what our place is in the Body of Christ. If we are not called actively into the ministry, He will show us for what business, or occupation, we are best suited. He will even guide us day by day showing us how we can best accomplish our life's work.

There are many people who are square pegs in round holes. They are doing things for which they are not especially fitted by nature. They are unhappy, and often they go from one thing to another and never feel satisfied. Finally time catches up with them. Life has run its course, and somehow they have failed to secure God's best.

On the other hand we have met people who we are sure found just that place in life that God had intended for them. It may be that God intends that person to become a faithful worker in the church, who by his prayers, service, and faithfulness will enable a congregation to weather the storms that beset each work of God. Or to be a mother in Israel whose prayers and counsel will save many a young person from spiritual shipwreck. Or to be a businessman who, although he does not preach, by his life and testimony may win many in his circle to Christ. Or maybe a humble housewife who like Susannah Wesley worked 18 hours a day for her large family of 17 children, yet took time to train each one in the way of the Lord. Two of her children were Charles and John Wesley, the apostles of the 18th century whose ministries were largely instrumental in saving England from the apostasy and infidelity that France fell heir to in the terrible French Revolution.

The master key to living then is to find God's special blueprint for one's life. This plan that God has for every man is not found by the shallow and superficial but only by those who sincerely and faithfully wait before God until it is fully revealed. The Lord will not fail to manifest His will in this matter. Indeed His highest pleasure is found in those who will not be satisfied until they have sought and found and entered into His perfect will.

Chapter III

The Master Key to Faith

"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

The scriptures give many examples of the unlimited possibilities of faith. By faith the worlds were created. By faith Abraham, after his wife passed the age of childbearing, became the father of many nations. By faith Moses led the children of Israel through waters of the Red Sea to the Promised Land. By faith Joshua's armies marched around the walls of Jericho until they fell. By faith the sun and moon stood still until the children of Israel had time to destroy the host of the enemy. By faith the three Hebrew children were shielded from the flames of the fiery furnace. By faith Daniel was unharmed in the lions' den. By faith the apostles wrought signs, wonders, and miracles, so that with great power they demonstrated the reality of Christ's resurrection.

With such examples before us, Christians not unnaturally look with longing eyes to a practical realization of this mighty faith and its possibilities. Nevertheless, for some reason or other most people do not seem to enter into the promise. Why do they fail?

During the last week of Christ's earthly ministry, as He and His disciples were coming from Bethany, Jesus passed a fig tree. Going near the tree to partake of some of the fruit, He found that it was barren. Then Jesus spoke the words, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." Peter and the disciples, looking at the tree that Jesus cursed, saw no change whatever. Everything appeared exactly as it was before. But on the next day when they passed that way again, all the leaves were withered. And Peter, ever alert to what was going on around him, called attention to the fact that the leaves were now withered.

Note what was said by Jesus in response to Peter's exclamation: "Lo the fig tree which thou cursedest is withered away," *for in His answer lies the clue to the master key to faith.*

Jesus said, "Have the faith of God" (R. V). The Lord was not referring here to natural faith but to supernatural faith. Every person is born with a

measure of faith. Some people lose that faith because of sinful living or as the result of absorbing the teachings of infidels. But in early life all people have a natural faith. Yet there is another kind of faith that comes from God which is supernatural—"the gift of faith."

This gift of faith is often manifest when an element of danger is involved, such as when the three Hebrew children were cast into the fiery furnace and when Daniel was put into the lions' den. Supernatural faith is needed when a miracle is required, be it a miracle of healing, a miracle of deliverance, a miracle of supply, or any miraculous answer to prayer. What is the secret of receiving this supernatural faith?

Notice closely what took place in the incident of the fig tree. When Christ cursed it, nothing seemed to have happened. The disciples looked at the tree and saw that its leaves were as healthy as ever. But they saw only with their natural sight. They were merely believing what they saw, and that is the way most people's faith works. They look at the circumstances, the conditions, their symptoms, their feelings. They believe only what they see or feel. If they feel better, they believe they are getting their healing. If they feel the same, they suppose they didn't get their healing.

Jesus saw the fig tree through the eyes of faith. It mattered not after He had spoken that the leaves were still the same. He wasn't looking at the leaves. Instead, by the eye of faith, He saw the roots dry up. He knew the leaves would automatically die in consequence. And that is what happened. Thus it was that Jesus said,

"Whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea and shall not doubt in his heart but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith."

In other words, *we shall have what we say*. But alas, many say what they feel rather than what God says. In either case they get just what they say.

Most of us base belief on what we see. We react to what acts upon our natural senses. Do we have a pain? Then we must still be sick. Do we still see the symptoms? Then the disease must still be there. We are slaves to our sense knowledge. To believe we are healed *after* we are healed is not faith. *It is only faith when we don't see anything and we don't feel anything*. We must say, not what we feel, but what God says. Faith is something absolutely apart from what we see. Notice this: doubts begin when we decide to base our belief upon what we see rather than upon God's promise. Faith is not a mysterious thing—a trying to work up some strange feeling. It

is merely the quiet irrevocable decision of our soul to base our faith upon what God has said. It is a decision to believe God's Word is true and anything to the contrary is a lie.

We therefore say that a thing will come to pass, not because it will happen by the natural course of events, but because the law of faith must bring it to pass.

It was this supernatural law of faith that Jesus was talking about that day. He had demonstrated the law of faith to His disciples in the withering of the fig tree. He spoke to them of the infinite possibilities of faith. Then He gave them the master key to how they could exercise this faith:

"What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

This is a simple statement, yet profound in its implications. Let us examine it closely. Notice that it is not addressed to some special person but to "whosoever" (verse 23). Second, the promise is unlimited—it says, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray." This is all-inclusive. Naaman supposed that for a miracle to be performed, the man of God should strike a pose, lift his hand to heaven, and with a grand gesture call the powers of deity into action for the cleansing of the leper. But this, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray," may be brought to pass by the simple act of faith. As an act of faith Naaman, believing the promise, dipped in the Jordan and was made whole.

Here is the master key of faith: **"Believe ye receive them and ye shall have them."**

Man is sharply distinguished from the animal kingdom.

Many animals have amazing sense faculties, but uncanny as their powers may be, they function solely in the natural realm. Animals have no God-consciousness, and their powers of imagination are strictly limited. People without faith are like animals which believe what they see, hear, feel, taste, or smell. Such people hope for a miracle.

They can, like Peter, tell when the fig tree has withered away. *They enjoy and appreciate the miracle after it has taken place.* But their faculties for bringing the miracle to pass lie dormant.

"Believe ye receive them and ye shall have them." In other words when the command of faith is given, we are to visualize the answer. We are to see in our spirit the answer. *We are to consider the miracle as already having taken place.* We are to reckon the answer to our prayer as already in our hand. This is not mind over matter, although the mind does influence the

body. Jesus was talking about something else—the power of God. He recognized that sickness actually existed, but He also revealed the divine power that destroys the sickness and heals the body as we believe.

When we pray we are to visualize the answer to our prayer. Many people do just the opposite. They look at the symptom to see if they are still sick. Others look at their empty purse to see if they are still poor. Many look at the conditions, the circumstances, and when they appear to be unchanged, they believe that which they see rather than what God said would happen.

To our natural eyes we may expect things to be unchanged for the moment. But what our physical eyes see is irrelevant and has no bearing on the matter. If there were no divine promise, no God in heaven, then of course it would be foolish and even ridiculous not to believe what our eyes tell us. But **"By faith we understand that the world was fashioned by the word of God; and thus things visible were made out of things invisible"**

(Hebrews 11:3). *So when we believe we have the answer to our petition, our faith is not based upon what is visible but upon the Word of God. This then is the master key to faith.*

This master key to faith can unlock many doors for those who will use it. A friend of mine by the name of Fred Wilson was in desperate need of healing. A barber had shaved him with an unsterilized razor, and he had contracted a skin disease so resistant to treatment that no doctor could clear it up. In addition to the suffering the disease had left him with an unsightly appearance.

When he was prayed for, Fred Wilson tried to believe that he was healed. But every time he looked into the mirror, his reflection told him otherwise. His faith fell as his doubts took over. Why was he not healed? The answer was his lack of faith. The day that he realized this was the cause of his not being cured, he purposed in his heart that he would believe God—and have no doubts that God would hear and heal. From that day he claimed his healing. He no longer looked for the evidence of it in the mirror. He *believed* that God had answered his prayer, and the doubt that had weakened his faith before was gone. Fred Wilson had unlocked the door to faith, and everyone he met saw his miracle as evidence that God does hear and answer the prayers of the faithful.

This power brought into action by faith is not to be employed recklessly and without consideration of God's will. Healing is always God's will. But

when James and John thought to use their faith to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, the Lord rebuked them severely saying, "**Ye know not what spirit ye are of for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them**" (Luke 9:55-56). We see therefore that the divine will clearly enters into the use of this power. The greater the power, the more carefully we must guard against its misuse.

A reminder that there are conditions involved in putting this law of faith to work is found in the very next words of Jesus,

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25-26).

The manifestation of this unlimited power is for those who live humbly and walk softly before God. He who does this and believes that he receives shall have whatsoever he saith.

Chapter IV

The Master Key to Omnipotence

As we read the words of Jesus, we are struck by the fact that He apparently placed omnipotence into the hands of His followers. It was upon the basis of this extraordinary transfer of power to His disciples that He gave them the Great Commission, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:18- 19). This omnipotence was given through His Name. His disciples were to heal the sick and cast out devils. How? By the power of His Name. *The use of the Name is the master key to omnipotence.*

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24).

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:26-27).

"And these signs shall follow them that believe;

In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

The above verses clearly carry the implication of the tremendous power represented in the Name. It was the Name that gave power to the credentials of the apostles. And that power they used with an abandonment that is absolutely thrilling.

Why is the Name of Jesus so powerful in the hands of His disciples? Dr. E. W. Kenyon relates an incident that took place where he was holding a meeting in Tennessee some years ago. One day while he was giving an address on "The Name of Jesus," a lawyer interrupted him asking, "Do you mean to tell us that Jesus gave to us the power of attorney, the legal right to use His Name?"

Dr. Kenyon replied, "Brother, you are a lawyer, and I am a layman. Tell me, did Jesus give us the 'power of attorney'?"

The lawyer replied, "If language means anything, then Jesus gave to the church the power of attorney."

Dr. Kenyon then inquired, "What is the value of this power of attorney?"

The lawyer replied, "It depends upon how much there is back of it, how much authority, how much power this Name represents."

Jesus taught that His Name represents omnipotence. "All power in heaven and earth is delivered unto me."

This means that no power in the universe can thwart or prevent the believer who uses this Name from having the answer to His prayer, assuming of course that he is asking in the will of God. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). All of us are convinced that Christ entered into the realm of omnipotence, but most of us do not realize that the Lord intended His followers to do likewise. Yet that is what He meant when He said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21).

One of the seven promises involving the Name is "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full." The promise is staggering in its implications. Here Christ gives us the use of the Name of Omnipotence. All that Christ could do locally when He was on earth now can be done locally by a believer. That is the reason why Jesus said that we would do the works that He did, and even greater works:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Some of us at times have experienced the authority invested in the Name of Jesus. We have witnessed the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk. Even death has yielded to the power of the Name. A few times the writer has seen death give way before the authority of the Name. Nevertheless, the Church to a great extent has not taken a permanent place in the privileges of the Name to abide and enjoy the fullness of its mighty power.

Yet there is a growing conviction among many that before Christ returns there will be an army of believers who will learn the full secret of abiding in the power of the Name and reigning with Christ in victorious resurrection life.

Men are only slowly grasping the full impact of the truth that Satan is paralyzed, stripped of his armor, and is a fallen foe before the power of the Name.

Dr. E. W. Kenyon relates the story of his personal discovery of the power in that Name. He says in his book *The Wonderful Name*:

"In my own ministry for years, I found a great deal of trouble that perhaps every preacher or evangelist finds with certain types of people who were always trying and never seemed to get settled with God. They were always standing up for prayers but never seemed to get any further.

"Another class seemed to get the light, but were held by some unseen powers. These people naturally caused me a great deal of trouble—I wondered how I could help them, and one day I was strangely led beyond myself to command that unseen power broken over a person whom it was holding.

"I prayed in the Name of Jesus. I cried: 'In the Name of Jesus, I command your power broken over this life.'

"Instantly, the person was delivered, and I stood amazed at the effect. A strange fear came over me that I had been able to exercise, by this simple command in Jesus' Name, this marvelous power, and since that time,

I have seen many startling results in revival services through using the Name of Jesus.

"I found that the reason many men did not accept Jesus as their Saviour was because they were held by the power of demons. The people are hungry; they want deliverance from sin; they crave eternal life, but they are unable, many of them to break loose from the bonds that are holding them.

"Hundreds of people have said to me, 'I cannot become a Christian. I want to, but something holds me.' I have simply laid my hand on their shoulder and said, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I command the power that holds you broken. Now, in His mighty Name, get on your feet.'

"With tears of joy they have obeyed.

"I have prayed with men who were held by habits— tobacco, liquor, lusts, and in the same mighty Name, I have seen them delivered, usually instantaneously. I have found Christians who were unable to testify or lead in prayer, in public meetings, who felt their mouths closed while their hearts cried for liberty. I have scarcely met a case, for whom I have prayed in the Name, and over whom I have commanded the power broken, but what they have had immediate deliverance.

"I cannot conceive how successful work can be done today, or how believers can be in the place of continual victory, unless they know that the source of their danger lies in demoniacal power, and that the power to conquer it is in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God."

In praying in the Name of Jesus we are acting as His representative. We are taking the place of the absent Christ, using His name and authority to fulfill His will on earth. *We are acting on the power of attorney that He gave us to carry out His will on earth. This is the master key to divine omnipotence.*

What is our need? Is it the salvation of an unsaved son or daughter? Is it prayer for the healing of a sick one at a distance? Or is it deliverance for ourselves from some chronic affliction? Perhaps it is a serious financial problem. Whatever our need is, we can take the place of Christ as we use His Name just as if He were present in person.

When Peter told the lame man to rise in the Name of Jesus he did not even pause to pray for him. He just recognized the authority that Christ had given him and said, "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk."

I recall the case of a demented man whom it took several men to hold. He broke loose and came fighting with his hands flailing wildly and his eyes gleaming like those of a demon. I had no time to do anything but throw my hands up protectively before my face. As he came toward me, I commanded him in the Name of Jesus not to touch me. He struck at me a number of times with all his maniacal strength; each swing could have been a stunning blow had it landed. But an amazing thing happened. It was as if his hands struck a solid one-inch thickness of glass! Not a single blow could get through. At that moment two policemen appeared on the scene and the man wildly turned on them. He knocked them down and they rolled back and forth on the grass for several minutes before they could subdue him. The Name of Jesus brought forth omnipotence, and the demon in the man was powerless to harm the one who used the Name. Moreover, the man was completely delivered from his dementia by the power of the Name of Jesus. *The use of the Name of Jesus is the master key to divine omnipotence. Start using that key today!*

Chapter V

The Master Key to the Impossible

Every pastor has people now and then who come to him in discouragement sometimes even in despair, and beg him to tell them the reason why they cannot get their prayers answered. They will declare that they have prayed long and earnestly. Yet nothing seems to come of it. It may be that a loved one is desperately ill. Perhaps a member of their family has some dreaded affliction such as cancer and is slowly dying. There may be some extremely frustrating problem that has arisen in the home, or again the finances of the family may have fallen into a precarious position. "What shall we do?" is their troubled cry.

Such cases are not restricted to unstable members of the congregation who go from crisis to crisis. They may be faithful Christians who in the past had wonderful answers to prayer. They may number among those who have experienced a remarkable healing. Nevertheless, despite victories of the past, their present problem has thus far defied solution.

It is probable that the majority of Christians at some time or other in their lives meet a situation in which the answer to an important need does not appear to be forthcoming.

In approaching the problem of why some prayers are not answered, let us turn to the case of the epileptic child (Mark 9:14-29). Nine of the apostolic party had prayed for the child, yet apparently their prayer had not been answered. Was some mysterious element in the will of God responsible for their failure? Modern theology and the pride of man incline to such a solution. It is gratifyingly easier to explain why the sick are not healed by putting the blame on God. However, as we read along in the narrative, we see that Jesus refuted that explanation for the failure by healing the child. He proved that there was no mysterious cause as far as God was concerned that prevented the child from being healed.

The disciples, after they had gotten Christ aside from the multitude, asked Him why they could not cast out the devil. Jesus answered their question, and *in so doing He revealed the master key to the impossible.*

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain. Remove hence to yonder place; and it

shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:19-21).

Jesus said that all things are possible; nevertheless, there was a condition attached to getting an answer to certain difficult cases. He said, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Here is our answer: *if prayer and fasting accomplishes what nothing else will, obviously it is the master key to the impossible*. Let us, therefore, examine the Scriptures and see what they teach concerning the subject.

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, he was confronted with the greatest crisis of his life. During his absence, Israel had sinned by making a golden calf. For this act of apostasy, God had declared that judgment would fall upon the people. In their place God would raise up a nation through Moses (Exodus 32:9-10). Then it was that Moses in a selfless intercession of forty days and nights stood between the living and the dead. His self-effacing prayer is recorded in Exodus 32:32-33:

"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

As a result of Moses' intercession Israel was saved, and two million souls that would have perished were spared. Through the master key of prayer and fasting, the impossible became possible.

To Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, there came alarming news one day. A messenger brought the tidings that powerful forces were marching against Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat realized only too well that his little army was no match against this greatly superior enemy. From the natural standpoint the situation seemed hopeless; nevertheless, the king called for a period of national humiliation.

"And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord" (II Chron. 20:34).

The king not only humbled himself, but he called for a fast throughout the land. The people responded and thronged into Jerusalem to join the king in a national mourning with prayer and fasting. What happened? God sent His prophet to them to tell them that they would not need to fight the battle, but they were to "stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord" (II Chron. 20:15-17).

Suddenly confusion spread among the camp of the enemy; pandemonium broke loose, and they began "to destroy one another until there was left not a man."

The story of Jonah is familiar to most Bible readers. Nineveh was a wicked city, and Jonah was sent to cry against it. The prophet fled from the face of the Lord, but after his bitter experience in the fish's belly, he obeyed the call, went to the city of Nineveh, and began to cry out, **"Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown"** (Jonah 3:4).

With judgment hanging as it were by a thread over the capital of the Assyrian empire—then the world's most important city—things looked dark indeed. Other great cities had fallen before the judgments of God. Was not Nineveh also doomed?

But the king of Nineveh took due heed to the warning. He sent out a proclamation that all from the greatest to the least should put on sackcloth with fasting and cry mightily unto God (Jonah 3:5, 8-9). And what happened? The record says, **"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do unto them: and he did it not"** (Jonah 3:10). Prayer and fasting had averted divine judgment.

Likewise did Esther the queen through her fasting and her maidens' rescue the Jews from Haman's wicked plot to destroy them.

In the ninth chapter of Daniel is a remarkable story of how the prophet set his face before God to pray for the deliverance of his people from captivity. **"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes"** (Dan. 9:3). God gave Daniel the answer, not only promising him that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but He revealed to him the very date the Messiah would appear some five centuries later. The tenth chapter records Daniel's entering still another fast—this one 21 days in length. The prophet's prayer was once more for his people's deliverance and welfare in the latter days (Dan. 10:2-3).

On this occasion Daniel met tremendous opposition from the powers of darkness. The answer to his prayer was delayed three whole weeks. The prophet did not know why. Then an angel came and explained the mystery. The answer had been dispatched even the first day of Daniel's praying, but the powers of darkness had fought against the angelic messenger for 21 days and delayed him in carrying out his commission.

Here in this unique glimpse into the unseen world, we see the forces of darkness in a desperate struggle against the holy angels of God. The apostle Paul also refers to this in Ephesians 6:12:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Daniel's tenacity in prayer enabled the hosts of heaven to break through the power of Satan so that the answer ultimately came. Prayer and fasting had made the impossible possible.

Christ fasted 40 days and nights in the wilderness and returned to minister in the power of the spirit (Luke 4:14).

Paul prayed and fasted three days and nights and then received his sight as well as the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:9-11).

Cornelius was fasting at the ninth hour of the day when an angel appeared and told him how he might find the way of salvation (Acts 10:20-21). This event marked the opening of the door of the gospel to the Gentiles.

Prayer and fasting preceded the first great missionary enterprise of the early church (Acts 13:2).

Prayer and fasting saved Paul and 276 people from perishing in a watery grave.

Just as there is a right way to pray, a right way to worship God, a right way to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, so there is a right way to fast. Great as the results may be that are obtained through the fasting prayer, yet it is quite possible to fast in a way that will do more harm than good. It is important that we avoid those things that might lead to such consequences.

The right method of fasting is a matter of such importance that Christ called attention to it at the beginning of His ministry. Later He would show His disciples the power that was in fasting—that it could result in a faith that would move mountains, faith that would cast out the most powerful demons. But in His first lesson on fasting, He showed how such could be used merely to exalt the pride of men. He called attention to the Pharisees, who appeared before the people to fast, that they might be honored of men. He warned against this, saying:

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face" (Matt. 6:16-17).

Of those who boasted of their fasting was the Pharisee mentioned in Luke 18. This proud formalist who looked with scorn on the penitent publican confessing his sins, was boasting of his own deeds which included fasting twice a week.

Some fast in order to secure personal power; others fast for health reasons. Still others, so the Scriptures state, fast for strife and contention:

"Behold ye fast for strife and debate" (Isa. 58: 4-5). But others fast to make the impossible possible!

The essential purpose in fasting is that the faith of those who seek deliverance may be strengthened. Fasting is for the purpose of drawing men from the natural realm into the supernatural. It can break the power of the most deadly disease. It will implement faith so that the most powerful demon may be cast out. In short, *prayer and fasting is the master key by which the impossible becomes possible.*

Some Information on How to Fast

The Bible speaks of three kinds of fasting. The first is the supernatural fast in which neither food nor water is taken. The supernatural fast rarely appears in the Scriptures, but it did occur in the case of Moses who did not touch food or drink for 40 days (Ex. 34:27-28). Since man cannot be without water for more than a few days at a time, the supernatural fast should never be attempted unless divinely directed.

There is also what may be called the total fast in which the person takes no food, but he does drink water. The body is composed of 80 per cent water, and because it may lose several pints in a day by evaporation, the supply must be continually replenished. This is the common fast mentioned in the Scriptures.

There is, however, a third kind of fast in which a small amount of food is taken. Although little is said about this fast, it does appear in the Scriptures. For those who have never been able to fast successfully for any length of time, the partial fast can be highly effective in many cases.

Daniel the prophet mentions that during a certain fast he "**ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth**" (Daniel 10:3). He does not say no bread came in his mouth, but he declares that he ate "no pleasant bread." The word "pleasant" in the Hebrew is *chamudoth*." Moffat's translation is, "**I ate no delicacies.**" It does not say that Daniel ate nothing at all, but that he took nothing pleasant to the appetite, nothing to stimulate him, or that would appeal to the palate. What he may have eaten we do not know. It probably was very little, although the indication is that it was not a total fast.

Here is something that has been missed by many who teach on fasting. They consider only the total fast, which many Christians have not the faith nor physical fortitude to undergo. These people often attempt fasting but become so weak that they are unable to continue; or if they do, they are

unable to pray effectively, and the result is that instead of a victory, they experience a defeat.

Many people must continue their daily work while fasting. They realize that it would be best for them to suspend their regular duties until after the fast, but modern life is so set up that it is almost impossible for them to do this.

What is meant by the non-total fast? The drinking of juices, such as orange, tomato, and pineapple, which have very few calories, permit the system to get into the true state of a fast, which is the absence of hunger, but at the same time the minerals and vitamins continue to be supplied to the body. The stomach is quiet, and there is little nausea and nothing like the weakness that many people experience in a total fast. They now have sufficient strength to pray and seek God, which is so important in securing the benefits of the fast. It is obvious that one who fasts, drinking some juices, and who has strength to pray and battle the enemy is getting along much better than the one who tries a total fast, but who is sick and nauseous much of the time and has no strength to pray. Moreover, fruit juice fast can be broken in a short time; whereas, the total fast will require days.

No doubt the total fast is the most effective for the person able to do it. But we are interested in helping the thousands of people who so far have found it impossible to fast, or who at least do not fast, yet face battles which can only be won by prayer and fasting.

For those who enter the total fast, remember this: such a fast must be broken slowly. The first day or two, only diluted juices should be taken. Then light fruit for a few days. After that the diet may gradually include heavier foods. To eat a heavy meal after a long fast is to invite serious trouble.

Another suggestion that we have found helpful in beginning the fast is this: If at the end of the first day, you feel an enervating weakness and perhaps a strong hunger, it may be advisable to take a small amount of nourishment. On the second or third day the feeling of hunger gradually diminishes, and the weakness will not be so pronounced. Just as the body needs to adjust gradually when the fast is over, so there is a need of adjustment while getting into the fast. However, the requirements of different individuals vary. Each one should learn the method by which he can most easily enter into his fast with a minimum of physical and mental weakness.

Chapter VI

The Master Key to All Things Working Together for Good

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Romans 8:28 is one of the most comforting Scriptures found in the entire Bible. Yet to many people it is one of the most perplexing. How can all things work together for good, when our daily experiences do not seem to bear this out?

Let us look, therefore, a little closer at these words. We note that they apply to those who love the Lord—not to those who have left their first love or whose love has grown cold. Obviously they do not refer to the self-willed and the disobedient. All things do not work together for good with them. Rather the reverse is true. All things work together for bad for the impenitent and the backslider.

Many Christians of mature years, looking back over the events of their past lives, can see a pattern unfolding which at the time seemed to be disconcerting and even detrimental to their interests. Yet eventually they were able to see the providence of God leading them into His perfect will.

Hannah Whitall Smith in her classic, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, admirably states the case of all things working together for good. In her chapter, "Is God in Everything?" she says:

"One of the greatest obstacles to an unwavering experience in the interior life is the difficulty of seeing God in everything. People say, 'I can easily submit to things that come from God; but I cannot submit to man, and most of my trials and crosses come through human instrumentality.' Or they say, 'It is well enough to talk of trusting; but when I commit a matter to God, man is sure to come in and disarrange it all; and while I have no difficulty in trusting God, I do see serious difficulties in the way of trusting men.'

"This is no imaginary trouble, but is of vital importance; and if it cannot be met, it does really make the life of faith an impossible and visionary theory. For nearly everything in life comes to us through human instrumentalities, and most of our trials are the result of somebody's failure, or ignorance, or carelessness, or sin. We know God cannot be the author of

these things; and yet, unless He is the agent in the matter, how can we say to Him about it, 'Thy will be done'?

"Besides, what good is there in trusting our affairs to God, if, after all, man is to be allowed to come in and disarrange them; and how is it possible to live by faith, if human agencies in which it would be wrong and foolish to trust, are to have a prevailing influence in molding our lives?

"Moreover, things in which we can see God's hand always have a sweetness in them that consoles while it wounds; but the trials inflicted by man are full of nothing but bitterness. What is needed then, is to see God in everything, and to receive everything directly from His hands, with no intervention of second causes; and it is to just this that we must be brought before we can know an abiding experience of entire abandonment and perfect trust.

"The question here confronts us at once, 'But is God in everything, and have we any warrant from the Scripture for receiving everything from His hands without regarding the second causes that may have been instrumental in bringing them about?' I answer to this, unhesitatingly, Yes. To the children of God, everything comes directly from their Father's hand, no matter who or what may have been the apparent agents. There are no 'second causes' for them.

"The whole teaching of Scripture asserts and implies this. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. We are not to be careful about anything, because our Father has charged Himself with our defense. We are not to fear, for the Lord is on our side. No one can be against us, because He is for us. We shall not want, for He is our Shepherd. When we pass through the rivers they shall not overflow us, and when we walk through the fire we shall not be burned, because He will be with us.

He shuts the mouths of lions, that they cannot hurt us."

A close study of the Scriptures bears out this excellent writer's contention that there are no "second causes." Everything that happens to us is in the hands of God. We must understand, therefore, that everything that pertains to our life is held in the providence of God and that only those things can happen that He deems should happen. While we cannot always control circumstances, we can control our reaction to them.

Perhaps one of the finest illustrations of this truth is seen in the life of Joseph. Certainly Joseph could not see how it could work for his good when

his wicked brothers sold him to become a slave in Egypt. What occurred during the next 13 years seemed to prove that this wicked crime on the part of his brothers only worked for his harm. He was rooted out of his home and from his father's love. For 13 years he was a slave in Egypt. His refusal to acquiesce to the enticement of his master's wife resulted in his being apprehended and confined in a dungeon for two years. And what about his father, Jacob, who believing him dead, never ceased to grieve for him and said, "All these things are against me"?

Yet we know Jacob's words were far from true; *circumstances were working for his good*. For the day came when Joseph was taken from his dungeon to become lord of all the land of Egypt. Not many days after Jacob had spoken these words, father and son were united in one of the most touching scenes in the Scriptures. Certainly his brothers' cruel act in selling him to the Midianites was wicked and contrary to the will of God. But Joseph could say to them,

"As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good ... Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 50:20, 45:5).

But let us pause a moment. The idea may be implied that if God is in everything, there is nothing for us to do but to resign ourselves to whatever comes our way. This is one of the most serious errors that could be made. God does not permit trials, troubles, and misunderstandings to come our way just to serve some mysterious purpose that we cannot fathom. A resignation to every evil that we meet would be an open invitation for the devil to destroy us.

Suppose that Jacob, when he saw his brother Esau advancing with 400 men of war to take vengeance against him, had said, "All things work together for good; I will just sit down and wait for the inevitable to happen." Instead Jacob accepted the situation as a challenge, and that night he wrestled with the angel of God and would not let him go until he blessed him. As a result the whole order of events was changed. Esau instead of destroying Jacob and his company, could only weep in the arms of his brother.

The event worked for Jacob's good in three ways: (1) It showed him that he had been the cause of his own troubles and that in trying to overreach another, he had overreached himself. (2) The incident became a challenge to Jacob's faith. It resulted in his prevailing prayer through which he became a prince with God. (3) Finally it resulted in the resolving of a serious

misunderstanding that was of Jacob's own making and which had hung over his head for 20 years.

It is therefore no coincidence that the words in Romans 8:26- 27 should precede what is said in the 28th verse. Even as Jacob wrestled with God in prayer, so those who truly love the Lord will labor in prayer. We are to wait on God until the very Spirit of God intercedes through us to victory. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26-27). When the Spirit of God prays through us, we can know for certain that all things will work out for good.

Certainly nothing can happen to us except God permits it. He may allow situations to arise that are frustrating and perplexing. Why does God allow these things to happen? He does it so that we may have an opportunity to develop our faith and our spiritual faculties and by these means overcome.

We are to accept the frustrating circumstances that come our way as permitted of God, but not to sit down and resign ourselves to them. That would be the doctrine of Satan. All things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose, and it is His purpose that we find His way out of our difficulties. Our faith in triumphing over circumstances is the master key to all things working together for good.

Perhaps we find that we have unpleasant relations with a great number of people. We don't seem to be able to get along with folk, and we have clash after clash. We say to ourselves that we could be happy if only the people we live with or work with were the right kind. Why should God allow such people to irritate us constantly? The answer is that there may be something wrong with us. We may have a character disorder in our own life; for this reason we are unable to get along with our fellow human beings.

Now I suppose God could pick out persons who would pamper us and continually make allowances for us and be careful never to rub the fur the wrong way. But what would happen? Our personality disturbance would only become fixed. We would have a universe made especially for us, one in which we could order people around, and they would never say a word in return. We would have a universe in which we could put people in their places, and no one would ever try to put us in our place. We could make cutting remarks and set people right, but they would never point out our faults and set us right. What would happen if God let us make a private

universe for ourselves of this kind? We would develop into an egocentric of the worst kind.

Or perhaps we have other kinds of trials. A family finds itself in serious financial difficulties due to unwise spending of money. God could in some mysterious fashion send the family special windfalls so that their financial problems would all be resolved. But if He did so, what would happen? Those with a weakness for spending money recklessly would be further encouraged to become wastrels and totally irresponsible. So God allows pressure to come upon them in various ways. They receive bills in the mail. The bill collector is on their trail. The credit bureau lists them as poor credit risks. The reposessor may be after their car or furniture.

Do these people blame themselves? Rarely. They blame their troubles on others. They will tell you they were counting on this or that, but somebody failed them. And so they go through life having these humiliating experiences. They can't understand why God lets these things happen. But there is no mystery about it. God wants them to be awakened to their faults so that they will correct them.

And so we see that things that seem to be working against us are for us all the time. The trials that we go through are teaching us necessary lessons. If things happen that annoy and frustrate us, let us accept them as a challenge from God. They have come for our good. If we learn each lesson well, we will not have to learn it again.

This then is the master key for having all things to work together for good: that we react to every trial, every temptation, every unfavorable circumstance as Christ reacted. Then we will go on from victory to victory and from glory to glory. When this happens things will not only work for our good, but they will do even better, they will work for our best.

Chapter VII

The Master Key to Guidance

Divine Guidance is one of the most important subjects affecting Christian living; for he who is truly led by the Spirit enjoys the most satisfying life it is possible for a human being to experience in this world.

Twelve men once had the privilege of being daily led by the Son of God. These were the disciples who walked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Who will not say that the privileges enjoyed by these men exceeded that of any who ever lived before them? As Jesus said:

"But blessed are your eyes for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matt. 13:16-17).

Today not twelve but all men have the privilege of being guided by a member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, the very same Spirit that led Jesus.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Many people make the grievous error of supposing that Christ during His earthly ministry possessed all the attributes and powers of His pre-incarnate existence. They altogether overlook what Philippians 2:6-8 plainly teaches, that Christ **"being in the form of God ... took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men."** Hebrews 5:8 goes even further and says, **"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered."** In other words Christ had to obtain guidance and direction in His life the very same way that we all do.

This means clearly that Jesus when He was on earth did not at all times know all things concerning the future, but He had to avail Himself of the same means as you and I. Of course, He could have retained all the powers of deity, but in the counsels of God and infinite wisdom, it was considered best that He divest Himself of the powers of the Godhead and take His place with humanity in dependence on God. Only in this way could Christ become an example for His people for all time.

So it was that Christ, being moment by moment led by the Spirit, was able in three short years to bring into being the most dynamic faith the earth has ever known.

It follows then that if we, like Christ, can enter into the divine will and be completely led by the Spirit, our life will become a success (though not necessarily in the eyes of the world) beyond our fondest hopes and dreams.

The family of Christ was very poor—so poor that the Lord's mother was able to offer only a sacrifice of turtle doves at His birth rather than the lamb which was the customary offering. Jesus was poor all His life. He was born in a borrowed manger. He slept on a borrowed pillow, preached from a borrowed boat, rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed animal, had the Last Supper in a borrowed room, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. Only the cross was His own.

But there was one thing that Jesus, in the providence of God, did have. He was permitted to grow up in a city where the Scriptures were read. In Luke 4:16-17 we are told that it was His custom to go into the synagogue and read the Scriptures. The gospels clearly indicate that Christ had mastered the Old Testament in His youth. Therefore, when the devil came tempting Him, Jesus did not have to seek special wisdom from heaven, but having the Word of God in His heart, He was able to refute and rebuke Satan's suggestions.

The devil had said, "If thou be the Son of God command this stone that it be made bread." Christ had been fasting for forty days and was hungry. Despite the temptation, He refused to make bread for the devil but countered it by saying, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). He would not make bread to supply His own hunger, though later He made enough bread to feed five thousand.

In seeking God's will we must begin with the Word of God. When in doubt, we should always consult the Scriptures. One must not expect a special revelation until he has searched out any revelation already given. Daniel the prophet who received some of the greatest revelations ever given to man carefully studied the prophecies already given (Daniel 9:2).

No one can expect to live consistently in God's will unless he thoroughly familiarizes himself with the Scriptures. Many people who miss the will of God and get themselves into awkward predicaments do so not because they have no divine revelation but because they ignored the revelation already given.

It is remarkable how widely the Bible covers the range of human problems. But this information is not arranged in alphabetical order. It has to be searched out. That is why Jesus said,

"Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Do you want to know if divorce and remarriage are permissible? Read Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:3-9.

Do you wish to know whether a New Testament believer should pay tithes? Read Matthew 23:23 and Hebrews 7:8.

Do you desire to know whether Christians must forgive? Read Mark 11:25-26.

What about avenging those who injure us? Read Matthew 5:38-48 and Romans 12:19-21.

What about conforming with the world? The answer is at hand in Romans 12:2; I John 2:15-17, and James 4:4.

What does the Bible say about those who worry? The answer is found in Matthew 6:25-34 and Philippians 4:6-7.

Is it the will of God for all the sick to be healed? Read Matthew 8:14-17.

To search the Scriptures entails labor, but no one will ever have a clear knowledge of the divine will unless he thoroughly studies the Word of God (II Timothy 2:15).

Although the Bible covers generally the principles of daily living, there are problems of a nature that one has to find guidance in other ways. One of the ways is through divine providence. If God is leading, He will open the door. As Christ the Good Shepherd says, **"And when he putteth forth his sheep he goeth before them and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice"** (John 10:4).

If God is calling us to a work, He will open the door. Right here many a mistake occurs. The writer personally has known those who had ambitions to do something big. When God did not open the door, they moved in the flesh. They launched into a "big program" and failed. In a desperate effort to succeed, some actually became dishonest, misappropriating money that came into their hands.

There are those who try to move with the doors shut against them. One lady with six children had made no preparation to be a missionary. Yet she talked about going to the mission field. She said that God was punishing her because she did not go. Providence and circumstance clearly showed that this could not be true. She did not seem to understand that she had a full time job in properly raising her children in the fear of God.

There is yet another means by which God leads His people: spiritual intuition. There is not the slightest doubt that God at times guides by the

inward witness. The history of the Church is replete with instances in which the voice of God spoke audibly to give His people guidance.

Yet there are dangers here. A Christian should be alert to see that all means of guidance agree. A young lady claimed that the Lord gave her the witness to marry a man who later proved to have never been saved. The marriage ended in total failure. Her statement concerning divine guidance was in direct opposition to the spiritual admonition which says, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." What was wrong? She was acting on an impression that came from her own spirit. She failed to check it with the Scriptures. God does not have different voices saying contradictory things.

God is merciful. Often He gives us a "check" before we take a course of action that is out of His divine will. We may begin to feel uneasy. Somewhere we have moved out of the mainstream of God's plan for us. We should always mind the "checks." If we ride over them roughshod we will probably pay the price with trouble and heartache.

And now we come to a curious fact. There are many Christians who understand these things, and some are well versed in the Scriptures. They can also point to definite instances in which divine providence has been manifest in their lives. There is no doubt that God has spoken to them supernaturally on occasion. Nevertheless, there are times when these people seem to miss the will of God altogether—indeed in such a way as to get themselves into profound difficulties. What has gone wrong?

Notice what Jesus says in John 7:17: **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."**

A man can know the will of God in any matter if he is fully willing to do the divine will. Secondly, Christ applies it to Himself. He shows that it was possible for even Him to speak the mind of God or His own human mind. "He shall know ... whether I speak of myself."

However, the great difficulty lies in the fact that people want very much to do certain things irrespective of God's plan for them. In this state of mind they are unable to ascertain the will of God. It is important that we get quiet before the Lord, equally willing to take or not to take a certain course; equally ready to go or to stay.

Here is where Balaam made his fatal mistake. Messengers from Balak came to Balaam with "the rewards of divination" in their hands. The king wanted Balaam to come and curse the children of Israel. Balaam sought the

Lord concerning the matter, and God gave him a definite answer. "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (Numbers 22:12). Nothing could be clearer than this. But what happened? Balak sent more princes than he did the first time. Balaam sought the Lord the second time. He should have known better. If it were wrong to go the first time, the fact that a larger committee was now sent to him could not change the situation. But Balaam was influenced by the reward; so when he asked the second time, the Lord gave him what he asked for: permission to go to Balak. But as we know, it was a journey that did Balaam no good.

God allows many people to do things simply because they want to do them, rather than because it is His will. The fact that people fear the Lord will ask them to do things that they do not want to do is the very reason they do not seek the Lord's will in the first place. What they fail to see is that with those who are perfectly yielded to His will, God works *in them to do His will and to do His pleasure* (Phil. 2:13). This is one of the greatest mysteries of the Spirit. As we wait on God, suggestions will come to us and spring up in our hearts that will originate in our will. We shall feel that the desire is our very own, and that we must do it; yet it is God who is willing within us. *This makes our service one of perfect liberty.*

Here then is the master key to divine guidance: instead of dreaming up plans with the natural mind and then trying to persuade God to help us carry them out, we wait prayerfully upon Him until He wills within us. Then although the suggestion truly comes from God it appears to spring from our own desires. It is God and man in copartnership.

Once we feel that God would have us to follow a certain course, then we shall carefully commit it to Him. Next we should apply the other tests: (1) What the Scriptures have to say about the subject; (2) Sanctified judgment, and (3) Providential circumstances. If all these agree, we may be sure that we are moving in God.

Sometimes, however, in spite of all our seeking the will of God, we are not sure whether a certain course is God's will for us. In that case we should daily submit the matter to Him. When George Mueller felt God had put it in his heart to build the great orphanages at Bristol, he realized that the undertaking involved so much that he felt even as Gideon who put out his fleeces; he had to make doubly sure. For a whole year he waited as he daily put every detail of the proposed plan into the hands of God. At the end of

that time a solid foundation had been laid in the will of God. In George Mueller's lifetime over seven million dollars came in to be used in the work that God had given him.

A life lived in the will of God is the happiest and fullest life that it is possible for a human being to attain.