

WALKING WITH THE GOD OF THE BIBLE



The Christian life examined through the lens of the
scriptures

Shayne Payne

Foreword written by Apostle John Mulinde

WALKING WITH THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

The Christian life examined through the lens of the scriptures

Shayne Payne

Copyright © 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – for example, electronic, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the author. The only exception is a brief quotation in printed reviews.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New King James Version.
Copyright© 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Cover photo by Shutterfly.

ISBN#: 9781072556428

Published by
ELIM Global Missions Initiative Inc.
www.elimglobalmi.com

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Authors note.....	6
Deep Calls unto Deep.....	9
He Sought You for Himself.....	19
Covenant Bond - The Two Become One	32
I Am My Biggest Obstacle	45
Who is the Real LORD?	53
The Value of Fruitfulness	62
Rethinking Prayer.....	71
Living a Life of Success	95

Foreword

“Walking with the God of the Bible” is a refreshing read!

In a time when there is so much simply passing for the Christian experience, it is refreshing to come across a book like “Walking with God” and its heart-searching message.

As I read through the book, a scripture kept coming to my mind, and it is 2 Corinthians 13:5-6.

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified” NKJV

This is exactly what this book does to the reader. It gently presents the reality of the Christian experience as was intended for us by the Messiah. It then challenges one to solemnly examine oneself whether one is really standing in the Faith and has that deep intimate relationship with Christ! It goes on to suggest that if one’s experience is not what the scriptures advocate for, ...maybe one has already become disqualified.

I have known Pr. Shayne Payne for more than ten years, and I know him to be “a man after God’s own heart”. He is constantly seeking reality with God and in this book, he invites all of us, readers, to join the quest for the truth that sets free. I believe that every sincere heart that reads this book will experience spiritual awakening and will be set on a journey to find a deeper and more fulfilling experience with God. I pray that your heart will not remain the same after you have read this book. God bless you abundantly.

Dr. John W. Mulinde

Founder and Global Overseer of World Trumpet Mission

Authors note

The Apostle John was given an assignment in the book of Revelations to relay a message to the church world or the 7 churches. Among the many things John saw, heard and learned that the Lord Jesus Christ was paying very careful attention to the realities and activities of the believers. Christ had expectations of the Church and did not lower the bar even in the case where a church was positioned where Satan has his throne (see Revelations 2:13).

The churches were given strong encouragement, warnings, and promises. The reward was only for those who overcame. Those churches that failed to meet the bar, were destined to grave consequence

John admonished: *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near* (Revelations 1:3).

We, as the believers of our generation, are subjected to the same encouragement, warnings, and promises of reward if we overcome. Christ Jesus continues to pay careful attention to our realities and activities. He has not lowered the bar but maintains the same expectations for us also.

This book is born out of my own journey of seeking to meet the expectations of this God. It includes several of the principals and teachings He used to bring awakening to my heart out of lackadaisical Christianity. If you carefully adhere to the following instructions, you will find practical solutions to the blockages that work to separate you for that intimate place of walking with God.

The book is written as a tool to challenge the reader to carefully examine your own walk as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It asks deep probing question and presents practical solutions to help overcome spiritual slumber.

As you read this book, ask the Holy Spirit to open your understanding to see even beyond what is written here. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as a faithful teacher to those who believes and obeys His commands (see John 14:15-15, 26). Expect Him to interact with you as you read. Listen for the questions He will ask or the comments He makes about specific areas of your own walk with God.

To make the most of the book, you will need your Bible and notebook. As you read, take the time to journal how your heart aligns with the principals presented in each chapter. The questions are pointers to help as you process the principles. Thoughtfully ponder each question in the order they are presented. The Holy Spirit will prompt you with further questions. Take the time to record those questions and provide answers for them. I urge you not to rush this process.

After you recorded your answers and see a gap between where you are and where you would like to be, look carefully for the cause. You will usually find out it has spiritual power backing it that cannot be overcome by will power. Write it down then ponder how does God feel about that very thing. How has He responded to others in the scriptures with that very same thing?

Don't justify anything. Even if it has been evident in your life or your nation forever. We are commanded to depart from iniquity (see 2 Timothy 2:19), flee from sexual immorality (see 1 Corinthians 6:18) etc. God's solution is for us to turn from our wicked ways. We must make the first step (see James 4:8).

Bring that "thing" before the Lord in prayer acknowledging it as sin or iniquity or a wrong. Ask Him for forgiveness based on the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. Forgiveness gives you the power to denounce it legally and to break its power in your life.

When you have secured victory, you will be empowered to help others around you burdened with the same or similar challenges. Look for opportunities to patiently lead them through to the same victory. Every step of victory or breakthrough brings you closer to walking with the God of the Bible.

I pray that the Lord grants you eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to understand as you read.

Deep Calls Unto Deep

Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All your waves and billows have gone over me (Psalms 42:7).

For many years as a believer, I lived torn between the realities of Western Christianity and the Christianity portrayed in New Testament. The standards for both lives are drastically different. If I am a good church member, faithful husband, and father and care somewhat about my community, then I am considered a good Christian according to today's standards. In some circles, if I add the ability to speak in tongues, quote scriptures at length and or pray for more than 30 minutes at a time, I would be considered a spiritual giant in the western world Christian circles.

The contrast was the lifestyle of those I read about who served Jesus Christ. Those people lived radically different lives from everyone I know today. The fruits of their lives were plain for all to see. They touched people with their faith; literally shook houses with their prayers; healed people with their shadows; turned cities upside down with their preaching; and, changed the culture and traditions of nations.

The Christian media advised me that I have enough and should be content. They summarized that the lifestyle for those new testament believers was only for that time. The pastors told me to settle. They assured me that I have been born again and will make heaven when Jesus returns. They said heaven is guaranteed for everyone who confesses Jesus Christ as LORD and that our works today is only to determine the number of stars in our crowns when we eventually stand before Him.

- Have you also been taught such things?
 - Are these teachings based on the scriptures or good, convenient theology?
 - If you agree they are biblically based, can you find the verses that clearly ratify these teachings?
-
-
-

I can distinctly remember the voices of several believers at the pinnacle of what we call church success, asking, "Is this all there is?" As the ever-mounting pressure called me to conform, there was a competing growing restlessness deep within me.

I felt God calling me to more! He opened my understanding to see what is possible among His treasured people if we would just believe as He challenged the listeners in the gospel of John. His words are true today as they were when He spoken them. None of His words were idle or crooked. For those who had ears to hear, He spoke very specific things so that we today would believe.

Consider what He told the disciples: *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down* (Matthew 24:1-2).

This was inconceivable to the disciples when He spoke those words. Today however, the temple was completely erased. Not one stone was left on another. The wailing wall where the Jews meet to pray today was part of the retaining wall used to expand the footing of the temple complex. It was not part of the temple.

If His words are true and cannot return to Him without accomplishing what He sent them out to do, then I needed to decide what to do with them. The following passage solidified it for me. *If anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, do I speak* (John 12: 47-50).

Listen to what Jesus had to say. *But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day comes upon you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man* (Luke 21:14-16).

Note that He was not talking to the multitudes. This message was for the disciples; those who left everything to follow Him. He challenged them to be careful how they lived their lives so that they would be found worthy to stand before Him on that Day.

If He does not speak idle words, and if I will be measured according to the standard of the word on the last day, what sort of life should I live today?

That question gave me license to ignore the voices around me, and to devote myself to seeking hard to know the God of the Bible. The process of seeking involved spending considerable time reading the Bible, meditation and prayer. I needed to learn firsthand about His character, His ways, likes and dislikes and how He responded to them, His thoughts and most importantly, His works.

If I was to walk with Him, I needed understanding so I could agree with Him. ...*Can two walk together unless they are agreed* (Amos 3:3)? If I was to serve Him, I needed to know what He was doing. Jesus served Him knowing fully well what His father was doing. *For the Father loves the son and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel* (John 5:20).

This quest demanded much more than the “devotional” approach which required me to spend a few minutes to read a few verses and think through some inspirational messages. Instead, I opted for saturating my mind with the word by reading large chunks of the Bible, 10, 15 even 20 chapters at a time. I read the Bible from cover to cover then started over again.

The more I read, the more I realized how weak my faith was in comparison to the saints of the scriptures. The notion: *Elijah was a man just like us* (James 5:17), challenged me to the core. He singlehandedly challenged the institutional worship of Baal in the nation of Israel and prevailed. I felt nothing like Elijah. In fact, I could not relate to the strong and sure faith Elijah operated in, even though I have the complete Bible as a reference when he only had the Law of Moses.

Saturating in the word challenged me to see God through the lens of the saints of the scriptures. Men like Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Gideon were all ordinary men who interacted with this great God. They did not simply pray to a stranger in heaven. Rather, they interacted with a real supernatural being who revealed Himself to them.

Jesus taught us that we can approach God as children coming to their Father. He said to His disciple, *I am going to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and your God* (John 20:17). He further said to them, *As my Father sent, Me I send you* (John 20:21). That convinced me that I can have the same level of access to God as His Son Jesus did on the earth. These kinds of scriptures are all over the Bible. God is still calling people to a living, tangible relationship with Him today.

I was challenged to my core to believe that I too can interact with God. It changed the way I engaged in prayer. At first, it was strange but then as I grew more comfortable, He challenged me to just believe He really is who He said He is.

Once, I petitioned the Lord to give me the same level of access to His presence as Moses and Abraham. I was praying this prayer with all my heart when He interrupted me to say, "Don't limit me!" He later told me their level of interaction with Him was based on their assigned work. His appearance to them was necessary and their book is complete. My book is still being written and I can exceed their levels of interaction with Him. This was to be expected of every believer.

If that was to be the real normal life in Christ, then I was lost. I was a captive to the world system or the way of life around me even though I confessed otherwise. Jesus knew His disciples would face this same world system and needed to overcome it even as He Himself overcame it. He therefore petitioned His Father, *I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.* (John 17:14-19).

Yes, I believed in God and Loved God...but was there any meaningful difference in my life compared to the others around me? I certainly did not feel hated by the world. Jesus sanctified Himself from the world so I too can be sanctified or set apart exclusively for His purposes. But the real bomb was in the words He spoke... *As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them.* The same way Jesus was sent so He sent all who believed in Him. There can be no excuses.

At that time I understood that I believed in God as the Bible requires. I was a believer and was convinced I believed. This conviction however was solely based on viewing my life through my own lenses. Every day I am being bombarded with images and or opinions about God; most of which are shaped by the world system. These shaped my perspective of God and gave me tinted or colored lenses through which I see Him.

As I saturated my mind by just reading large chunks of the Bible daily, I began to clearly see the God being revealed in the Bible is very different from God I knew. I was now seeing through new lenses formed by just allowing the Bible to reveal God's nature, character, plans, purposes, desires etc. examining my own life through the lens of the scriptures convinced me that His nature and character; His ways and thoughts were different from mine.

Listen to His admonition to Israel, His covenanted nation: *Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are MY ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts* (Isaiah 55: 6-9).

This brought me to a fork in the road. Either I was going to believe the Bible is true and live the life He was calling me to live or I would continue to listen to theologians and Bible scholars and or the world system explaining it away. The New Testament Christians believed with all their heart and were willing to put their

whole lives in God's hands. There was no doubt that God was with them. Even the unbelievers testified of those people that they knew God. The other alternative was to close my eyes and continue down a path that eventually leads to a world where God is a concept; not a real being.

Following the God of the Bible required me to put my whole life into His hands and trust Him. Trust however is developed and is largely based on relationship. I found out God was serious when He said: *You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart* (Jeremiah 29:13). That was my quest. I wanted to find Him; to get to know Him; and, to experience this God in His fullness.

Forerunners like the Apostle Paul, Phillip and Silas sought Him and found Him. When they did, they lived a life radically different from their religious peers. This new life was fulfilling and infinitely meaningful. Everything necessary for that life was found at the source; the Bread of Life. There was no ambiguity about their convictions. They lived; overcame; and, encouraged a generation to: *Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ* (1 Corinthians 11:1).

The following scripture spoke and continues to speak volumes to me, encouraging me to step across the line and pursue Him.

For I know that thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

It was not enough for me anymore to know that I can pray, and God listens. He promised significantly more than that. I discovered that I can seek for Him. More importantly, I found out I must seek Him in order to find Him. He promised to reveal Himself when I search with all my heart.

My journey continues today as I have discovered My God is like a never-ending stream. The more I find out, the more I realize I do not know. Yet, He keeps calling me forward...deeper still!

Consider the following questions:

What does it require to walk with God? *LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill* (Psalms 15:1)?

How is the God of the scriptures different from the one modeled in the churches today? *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8)

Since He has been calling you to go deeper with Him, what do you have to do differently to join Him in that next place? *Call to Me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know* (Jeremiah 33:3)

He Sought You For Himself

No man comes to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him (John 6:44).

Here is fantastic news! It has pleased the Lord to choose you for His purposes. The desire you have towards God was initiated by Him. He sought and relentlessly pursued you until He had your attention. This choice was not a mistake. God does not make mistakes! He knew and considered everything about you, then made a choice to reveal Himself to you in a way that captures your attention.

Listen to what He said to King Asa: *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him...* (2 Chronicles 16:9). To Ezekiel, He said, *I looked for a man among them...* (Ezekiel 22:30). In His search, He chose you... but for what purpose? So, you can covenant with him as an heir in His work and serve His purposes in your generation.

No man or woman can successfully do the work of God. God does not require you to work for Him. His work unfolds over generations and encompasses the destiny of nations, kingdoms, ethnicities, natural resources, etc. It is far too complex for the human mind to fully understand. For those God chooses, He prepares them so He can work through them to accomplish His purposes. He must prepare you as a vessel so He can do His work through you.

In the same way your DNA is different from any other person who ever lived, so is your purpose before Him. You are specifically created for a unique purpose. The preparation for you to function in excellence in that purpose is a process that can be short, or it can be drawn out over many years. That span of time depends on just how much you are willing to submit to Him completely. He begins the preparation with clear goals and timelines in His mind. He knows the time will come when you will need to stand on a platform with His nature and characteristics fully developed in you.

He did not wait for you to choose to serve him. God went ahead of you and began the process before you were born. He spoke such words to Jeremiah: *before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you a prophet to the nations* (Jeremiah 1:5).

Everything about your life are tools He uses to shape you to become that effective tool in His hands. Your parents, nationality, upbringing, education, career path, etc. are all tools in His hands. Even your accidents and or consequences of poor choices are used for His good purpose. *And we know that all things work together for the good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

God is in no way obligated to tell you what He is doing with you (see Isaiah 45:9). He does not work with a man who considers himself equal to God. He does not need counselors nor will He ever ask you for your advice. Consider what He told Isaiah: *who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD or as His counselor has taught Him? With*

whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him the path of Justice? Who taught Him the way of Understanding (Isaiah 40:12-14)?

He sits on His throne as King over all the earth (see Psalms 47:2,7), and as such, has the right to decide the role you play in His work. He chooses some people to be vessels of gold and some of silver. *But in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work* (2 Timothy 2:20. See also Romans 9:21).

Note well the anointing of God is the divine enablement necessary for His work in you but the character is the foundation. If the foundation is faulty, it will not sustain the weight of anointing. God is careful to give you everything that is necessary to develop the character necessary for His work and will test you often to verify worth. Consider this thought from Job: *Lord what is man, that you should exalt him, that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment* (Job 7:17-18).

Many great men of the Bible and even some celebrated giants of the faith today stumbled under the weight of the anointing even after amassing incredible testimonies. There are very few who have been entrusted with great anointing and finished well. The anointing will fall on a man or woman when his or her time has come. But oh, the cost. *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. As it is written* (Romans 2:24).

It is easy to see the blunders of anointed men like King Saul, King Solomon, Samson, King Jeroboam or King Ahab. But what about those legendary kings such as Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, Uzziah or Josiah, men who were used for great spiritual reformation in their nation? One after the other, the Bible shows them making compromises, covenanting with the enemies of God or, violating the very word and or commands of God that made them great in the first place. These men, after they became great, all had or revealed an exaggerated sense of their own importance or ability... the definition of arrogance.

Compare these men's lives to those of the apostles, who after spending preparation time with Jesus, were reputed as men who turned the world upside down. What was the difference? These later men went through the process of discipleship and developed the character necessary to carry the great anointing. They all ran their race with patience and finished holding up the standard with their faces fixed on Jesus as their great reward.

The preparation process is to rid man of that carnal, fleshly, worldly or self-nature that according to Romans 8:8, cannot please God. Fallen man was born in that nature. It is in his DNA. That nature is rebellion to God and will only submit to its real master, the prince of the power of the air (see Ephesians 2:2). We will look at this further in subsequent chapters.

The Apostle Paul, who considered himself to be the least among the apostles, summarized his platform of authority in this verse: *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and*

the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

This process is by far the most difficult. Satan of course knew this and uses it as his most potent secret weapon. When all else failed, he pulled out this weapon against Job. He told God: *Skin for skin, a man will do anything to save his own life (Job 2:4)*. Man is still willing to do whatever it takes to hold on to his own life when Jesus is asking us to lay it down. The only way to fulfill the purpose of God is to offer up the life you know and live out the rest of your days as a living sacrifice (see Romans 12:1). Man overcomes when he does not hold his life dear to himself (Revelations 12:11).

John 15 lays out the process – abide in Him and let your life be only about Him. When you focus on your pain, frustrations, disappointments, sacrifices, etc. then your life is still about you. When you can truly celebrate God in the pain then you are well on your way to becoming that vessel with a character God can work through.

A branch that begins to bear fruit is pruned. The pruning is to strip away the unprofitable distractions, habits, ways, etc. so the branch can focus on its single mission; bearing fruit that satisfies the Gardener. No branch enjoys the pruning process. It is during these times many people plead with God for deliverance. They want to be delivered from the pruning. But He knows the window of time for preparation is closing and continues the pruning until the person chooses with their own free will to stop the process. Then it stops.

The Apostle Paul understood this. Notice his response to the process God chose for him: *To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now (1 Corinthians 4:11-13)*. He went on to say, *Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me (2 Corinthians 12:9)*.

Are you ready to undergo the preparation so that the Power of Christ will rest upon you?

FORERUNNERS WHO PREVAILED

Before looking at the price, consider this amazing similarity in the lives of these four legends of scriptures still being celebrated in Jewish culture. These men: Noah, Moses, Joshua and Gideon all served God's purposes in their generation. What was their secret?

Noah lived in a time when God assessed humanity and regretted that He made man. *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He has made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart (Genesis 6:5-6)*.

His Solution? *I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them* (Genesis 6: 7).

Noah however found favor in His eyes. He said of Noah: *Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation. Noah walked with God* (Genesis 6:9). It would be safe to assume Noah knew the voice of God since he walked with God. Hearing, knowing and trusting that voice would prove critical in his journey with God.

The scenario: it had never rained on the earth. The people were still living together in communities in direct contrast to the ways of God. God comes to Noah and said He will destroy all flesh on the earth, but he (Noah) is to make himself a giant boat to escape with representatives of every living species on the earth. Huh?

I would have asked God many questions before even considering obedience. What is rain? There is not enough water in the seas to flood the whole earth. How are you going to flood the whole world? I am not an expert in boat building. What if it leaks? Did I hear right...every living thing? How do I find them? Do you know some of these animals do not do well near others? What about the smell inside the ark? Could I not go up to the top of the mountains and you preserve me there?

God left nothing to chance. Noah was given very specific instructions that left nothing for him to figure out. God was not looking for man's input but rather his simple obedience. Noah did his part as instructed, and he experienced the work of the sovereign God over all creation. Noah's simple obedience was the tool God used to fulfill His own majestic purpose!

The next hero is Moses. He has escaped execution in Egypt and fled to the deserts where he spent the next 40 years rebuilding his life. The privileged life of Pharaoh's palace was behind him. He had to assume a new identity and learn a new way of life, far away from anyone who could recognize him. It was there in the barren wilderness of Midian where God chooses to present himself to Moses to begin his journey.

God asked Moses to go on a mission to Egypt where he was to free the entire population of slaves and bring them out to meet Him in the wilderness. I can just imagine Moses thinking, "God, do you really know what you are asking me to do? You want me to leave the solace I have come to embrace for the past 40 years and go to confront the most powerful nation on the earth? You want me to tell Pharaoh to release their workforce which they have ruled over for more than 400 years? You know this would result in their national economic collapse and change their lives forever, right? Do you know they have real weapons there? Are you aware that their priesthood is very powerful in the dark wisdom? Please, if it pleases you, send someone else".

When he finally agreed to go on the mission, God carefully laid out the plans so that Moses could understand. Nothing was left up to chance on his mission. There was no room for sidebar input from Moses. Moses had no real hand in this work but only to allow God to use him as a vessel. Moses' work was simple. God said "Tomorrow I am going to bring this plague. Moses, you will go to Pharaoh and tell him this will

happen". Moses had to hear and know the voice of God and simply obey, while at the same time ignoring all the competing voices trying to convince him God's way is madness.

Joshua came on the scene serving as Moses' servant. For those two years before the 40-year sentence in the wilderness, Joshua was being introduced to the presence of God; staying in the cloud or even ascending the mountain when the multitude was not permitted. He was prepared to stand in his position of leadership. What was the requirement? He learned the voice of God and knew obedience would guarantee success.

When it was time to cross the Jordan, the river was at its highest flow. Joshua did not have to figure out what to do. He knew to wait for instructions. The priests' feet touched the water and then Jordan river dried up from Adam to the Dead Sea, a distance of approximately 25 miles. At Jericho, Joshua understood God would give instructions; so, he waited. All the other nations were defeated with the same strategy. Joshua followed God's commands and prevailed.

Joshua began to have trouble only when the Israelites began to attribute victory to their own power, strategy or wisdom. Notice that God allowed them to go up to Ai knowing they would be defeated. He allowed them to covenant with the Gibeonites knowing He would have to honor the covenant in contradiction to His planned destruction of Gibeon. He was dependent on the obedience of his covenant partner.

Gideon started his journey with an angelic encounter. With the encouragement of the angel, Gideon gained strength and courage to break down a family altar to Baal and raised a proper altar to the LORD. Having passed that test and surviving the death threat of his fellow Israelites, he was then advanced to his real assignment – to destroy the Midian army and set Israel free.

The nation of Midian was given authority to rule over Israel for seven years. But unlike other conquerors, Midian was not just interested in the wealth of the nation; they wanted to crush Israel. Year after year when Israel labored to sow their crops, the Midianites along with the Amalekites and the people of the East came up against them.

So it was, whenever Israel has sown, Midianites would come up, also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. They would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza and leave no sustenance for Israel; neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD (Judges 6:3-6).

God's plan to deal with these mighty enemies was to send 300 men armed with lanterns and trumpets. Gideon implemented God's plan with step by step instructions that resulted in multiple mighty armies completely destroyed. Instead of killing Gideon and his army, they began to kill each other, or flee from the very battle they were prepared to fight!

What was the secret of these and so many of the other heroes in scripture? They all eventually understood that God was at His work. This work was much bigger than their capacity to understand. They learned to simply trust and follow God's instructions and left the battle for God to fight and win. What price did they pay? They had to die to self and totally depend on the God who was careful to reveal Himself.

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and their children forever (Deuteronomy 5:29)

Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifices, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry... (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

What about you? Are you ready to walk closely with Him? Consider the following questions:

How has God revealed Himself to you so that you know beyond all doubt that He is real? *He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel (Psalms 103:7)*

How does He speak to you? Are you able to recognize His voice? *My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27)*

What are those things He is asking of you that seems impossible to accomplish? So, I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap

before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found no one (Ezekiel 22:30)

How closely have you obeyed His voice when He gives you a command? *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believed in Me, the works that I do he will do also and greater works than these he will do because I go to My father (John 14:12)*

This amazing covenant position is not you are striving for the presence of God but rather you dying to self so that He can work through you. What is standing in the way?
