

Divine Authority and Divine Order

By Sandy Brunson

We need to keep in mind God's position on the subject of *authority...especially Divine Authority which produces Divine Order*. It is insight much needed in the Body of Christ, and gives explanation as to why some "send themselves" and are not "sent" by God. For that which God does, has his "certain sound and quality" to it ...*AND it produces His fruit*.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Even tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them." Matthew 7:15-20

In the late 90s, I was blessed to teach for three years at Midwestern Bible Institute in Emporia, Kansas. During that time, the Lord gave to me some insights on the subject of "***Divine Order and Divine Authority***" which I shared with the students. As many of you know, there is a great difference between "information and revelation" concerning the things of the Lord. This series of articles came to me as *revelation* on the scriptures...especially concerning parts of ***Psalms 50***. I pray that they are a blessing to you as you *carefully consider* God's position on this all important subject, and His expectation of us in relation to it. If we do not understand it, we will find confusion and even open sin operating in our everyday lives in relation to people we live and work with...and yet we may not understand why. It affects our lives, at home, work, and in church. Each of these groups is made up of people in relationship, and the way in which we inter-relate among ourselves is very important in the Kingdom of God.

This document is made up of material that addresses the essential subject of the Authority of God and order among His people....the Body of Christ. Jesus is the Head of His Body. The Head holds the Authority, and the Body must submit to the Head for there to be a living expression of Jesus Christ in the earth today.

The Lord Is the Righteous Judge

God has something to say about *everything*. He speaks about times and seasons; He knows all times. He speaks about positions of **authority**. *He puts people in places; He takes people out of places*. He has insight into the true nature of things, and He knows all things in their right relationship. This is because He is Wisdom, and He has all understanding. When God comes upon the scene as Righteous Judge, He does not simply make a decision and choose between sides of a matter....rather **He "sets things in divine order."** His is not a judgment of men, but it is *righteous judgment*. It is established in truth, and it is *supreme*.

This study, taken primarily from **Psalm 50**, reveals the Lord as the **Righteous Judge**. Referred to as El Elohim, Yahweh, the Mighty One, God the Lord, these names emphasize His strength, His sublime nature, and His unchanging character. This Mighty One speaks to the "*earth and all its inhabitants*", who are witnesses of what is said: "*From the rising of the sun to its going down. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.*"

As the Mighty One, who is the *perfection of beauty*, God is described in the Hebrew as *one of splendor, brightness, fairness: perfect in physical form; flawless in symmetry*. He knows the "order" which He has set, and it is perfectly fair as He is fair. We may not always agree with His fairness; but we only have our opinions, and they do not ever stand above His Word. He is God.

"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: 'Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.' (Those who have cut an agreement with Me by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus, My Son.) *Let the Heavens declare His righteousness, for **God Himself is Judge**. Selah."*

*"Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! I will rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me. I will not take a bull from **your** house, nor goats out of **your** folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine."*

These are the words of God who is *omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; all-knowing, everywhere present, and all-powerful!* Though the earth and all the fullness is His, He has made provision for sacrifice unto Himself. Under the Old Testament, His people could only offer the sacrifices of animals. But even so... it all belonged to Him!

Yet what can we offer to Him for a sacrifice? Nothing we can offer of our own rises to a level of acceptance. *Even the sacrifice of the Son came from Him...*and not us. We are but to accept the gracious gift of it and walk under the provision of our righteous God. It, alone, makes us acceptable in His sight, and gives us a standing of righteousness before this Righteous Judge.

To His people, He speaks on: "*If I were hungry, I would not tell **you**; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.*" (**He is supreme. Authority belongs to Him.**) "*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.*" These words of comfort He speaks to His own.

Sadly, God's modern day people seem very much like their old testament counterparts. They seem to act as if they have a sense of "*entitlement*" to God's blessings *regardless* of the way they

conduct themselves and behave in light of His commands. Yet God NEVER CHANGES in His holiness and truth. These things are NOT relative to individual interpretation. They do not change because people are part of a *modern* society. God's ways *then*, are still God's ways *today*!

"Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!" (Hebrews 13:8)

To Obey Is Better than Sacrifice

Obedience is clearly an issue of submission to Authority. God clearly spoke to this issue through His prophet Samuel to a disobedient King Saul words that He is still saying to us today. *"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, 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 15:22-24)

He goes on to tell Saul that he had *"rejected the word of the Lord"* (the Righteous Judge...the One with supreme Authority to decide); and because Saul rejected God's Word, God said that he would reject Saul from walking in the authority of Kingship. If we expect to walk in *any* position of appointed authority, we *must* submit to God, walk under His authority...in obedience to His Word.

The things which God testified against His people and rebuked them for *back then*, He still does *today*. Those of His people who live their lives in an unholy, untruthful, and disobedient manner today...He calls WICKED! Many modern day "believers" in Christ Jesus *erroneously think* that if they have the label of "Christian" upon their life, they could never be found in the category of the WICKED! But who does God, *the Righteous Judge*, call WICKED?

Those who do not walk uprightly, pursuing holy lives in God's righteousness, acknowledging and obeying Him as the One of Divine Authority are the ones who are not walking in Divine Order. These are found among the *wicked*, and they are members (*outwardly*, in good standing) in the modern church of today! This is what the Mighty One, God the Lord said: *"What right have you (wicked ones) to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you?"* He is speaking even of simple things such as offering to God thanksgiving, keeping your word to Him (paying your vows) and calling upon Him in the day of your trouble rather than trying to work out things for yourself. Such simple instructions, you cast these things behind you. Simply put...you do not *obey* God's Word.

The people who *"hate instruction"* and (in practice) *"cast His words behind them,"* He calls.....WICKED! What can this mean to people in the modern day church?

When people *"cast His words behind them"* by not obeying them, they are casting aside His righteous ways, laws, government, policies, procedures, responsibilities, and ethics...in other words, *His Authority, His holiness, and His order*. We must pay close attention to God's words and carefully APPLY THEM in our daily lives if we are to be found walking under the blessings of His Divine Authority and in His Divine Order.

Words and *authority* are directly related to one another. God releases His authority through His words. He established His authority with His words, and His Word is His authority. It is final, highest, and divine. There is not any other law in the whole universe, anywhere, any place, any time that is above His Word. We cannot add anything to it. We cannot take anything away from it because *what He says is the way it IS!!!* He does not change; rather, WE are to change to get in line with Him and *His ways*!

The word "instruction" in **Ps. 50:17** is the Hebrew word, "musar". It literally means, *correction, chastisement, instruction, discipline, admonition, rebuke, or warning*. It comes from the verb "yasar" meaning *to reform*. It appears 50 times in the OT, 30 of which are found in Proverbs. It is broad enough to encompass chastening by words and by punishment. We are not to hate instruction, correction, or "reformation" in our lives.

"And have you forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening (correction, discipline, reformation) of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.'" This may not be comfortable and we will not "enjoy" it, but we are exhorted not to "hate" this correction and instruction which is necessary in the growth of every believer.

"For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom he received. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons." (Hebrews 12:5-8)

In Proverbs 3:11 we are urged again "not to despise the chastening of the Lord" nor to grow weary of His correction. A wicked man may even "die for lack of instruction." (musar) Thus, "musar" includes all forms of discipline and correction intended to lead to a transformed life. (Notes on "musar" taken from Spirit Filled Life Bible, Word Wealth).

We confirm that in 2 Tim. 3:16-17: "All scripture (words of God) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (training) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

None of us likes correction, chastisement, or discipline because it does not *feel* good! A recent quote on the times we live in was noted: "The American culture is more interested in 'feeling good' than in doing what is right!" As God's people, we must not be culturally led, but rather obedient to the Spirit of the Living God! Often, to do what is right does NOT feel good, but we are to cling to the truth in obedience, suffering for righteousness, if need be, rather than enjoying sinful pleasures for a season.

Willingness to receive instruction and God's words is *central* to the idea of DIVINE ORDER AND DIVINE AUTHORITY. God speaks to the wicked saying, "What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you?"

To those who live this way He has further words to speak: "When you saw a thief, you consented (ran) with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers." (Thieves and adulterers do not keep their words and their actions betray good sense, decency, divine order and obedience to authority.) "You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit."

These wicked ones do not speak in purity, nor do they speak truth. They speak lies; they swear falsely; they perjure themselves before a righteous God. They are people in whose mouth is found that which was NEVER found in the mouth of Jesus Christ.... *guile!* (lies and deceit)

Order Your Behavior Aright

*"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should FOLLOW HIS STEPS: Who committed no sin, **nor was guile found in His mouth**, who when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:21-23) He submitted Himself to His Divine Authority...His Heavenly Father.*

Jeremiah 5:1-3, "Run to and fro through the streets and see now and know; and seek in her open places if you can find a man, if there is anyone who executes judgment (justice), who seeks truth, and I will pardon her. Though they say, 'As the Lord lives,' surely they swore falsely. (They committed perjury. They lied.) O Lord, are not Your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; You have consumed them, but they have refused to receive instruction (musar). They have made their faces harder than rock. They have refused to return." (Refused to return to the truth of the Righteous Judge!)

Psalm 50:20-23: "You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's so. (your brother). **THESE THINGS** you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; (because I did not correct you AT THE TIME); But I will rebuke you, and **SET THEM IN ORDER** before your eyes!" "Now consider this, you who forget God, (forgetting His way, **His authority**, His rule, **forgetting Who is in charge**), lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who **ORDERS HIS CONDUCT** (behavior) aright, I will show the salvation of God!"

What about the ones who will **NOT** order their behavior aright? If this verse is true, they will **NOT** see the salvation of God. *Our behavior* matters to God. We must seek to have the mind of Christ about it and obey Him concerning it to be transformed into His image as He calls us to be.

These are serious, grave, and solemn words, worthy of great consideration. Most study Bibles and commentaries speak of Psalm 50 with the subtitle, "*God the Righteous Judge*." He is the One who comes to **SET THINGS IN DIVINE ORDER!** *And this includes the behavior of our lives.*

In Psalm 50:21, He has ruled on indictments against these 7 THINGS:

- * **hating instruction (hating correction)**
- * **casting away His words (not applying God's Word to one's life)**
- * **running with thieves (taking that which is not one's own; this includes envy and covetousness)**
- * **being partakers with adulterers (does not find and keep God as one's "first love")**
- * **speaking evil (verbally disagreeing with God's truth)**
- * **speaking lies and deceit (not telling truth, swearing falsely, perjury, guile in the mouth)**
- * **slandering family members (malicious speech against family and God's family)**

Those who *practice* such things....do not "agree" with God. He has set forth His verdicts for the wicked as **GUILTY!** Yet, His judgment is tempered with mercy: *a space of time to consider their ways and repent*. Those who truly **REPENT** do not just "say" they are sorry, **but they must STOP DOING those things!** They respond by restoring pure and righteous living and worship of the one true God by their words and actions. They are saved from impending judgment. Those who do not, receive judgment along with all the guilty wicked.

This background, this insight, establishes for us what is considered the "bottom line" as far as the Mighty One, God the Lord, is concerned. This is **HIS Kingdom**. It is **HIS rule**. It is **HIS call**. It is **HIS Divine Authority** that has come to establish **HIS Divine Order** in our lives; for He, alone, is the **RIGHTEOUS JUDGE** to Whom all honor and all praise is due!

Worship HIM! Be holy as He is holy. As we order our conduct aright... we will see the salvation of God!

Get Wisdom and Know Understanding

In Proverbs 4:1-13 we find a key passage which relates to the study of the place *Divine Order and Divine Authority* have in our lives. These things are directly related to whether or not we receive "instruction" (musar) from our Heavenly Father. He who is God the Lord tells us to "**give attention to know understanding**. For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law. When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother (Father and mother being our first figures of authority), He also taught me, and said to me: 'Let your heart retain my words (DO NOT cast them aside by hating instruction). Keep My commandments and live!'"

Receiving our Father's instruction brings Divine Order to our lives! Casting it behind us separates us from His Divine Order for our lives.

And then the Word instructs us in two very specific things in verse 5: "**GET WISDOM! GET UNDERSTANDING!**" This means: Get *insight into the true nature of things* and get *knowledge of things in their right relationship!* In these commandments of the Father, He says what He means, and He means what He says!

"Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; Love her, and she will keep you. WISDOM is the principle thing; therefore....**GET WISDOM!** And in all your getting.....**GET UNDERSTANDING!** Exalt her and she will promote you. She will bring you honor, when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you." (verses 5-9)

Understand the "way" of the Lord. Could He have put it more strongly or clearly?

"Hear, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life will be many. I have taught you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in right paths. When you walk, your steps will not be hindered; and when you run, you will not stumble. Take firm hold of instruction, (musar), do not let go; Keep her, for she is your life!" (verses 10-13)

What is our life? A very great part of it results from *correction, chastisement, instruction, discipline, admonition, rebuke, or warning!* These are a necessary part of being under the authority of the Mighty One, God the Lord; for He, alone, is Wisdom and Understanding, and He has come to instruct us in insight into the true nature of things and to give us knowledge of things in their right relationship! Therefore, we are not to *hate* these things.

Followers of Jesus Christ (and *especially* those who are functioning as leaders) are to GET WISDOM and GET UNDERSTANDING. *This is not an option!* These things He **COMMANDS** us as those who are to represent Him before the Body of Christ and before people of a lost and dying world!

In a 1997 book by John Bevere called *The Fear of the Lord*, he lays out a clear and reasonable case for ORDER, GLORY, and JUDGMENT. They have an unbreakable relationship with one another. We recall in Hebrews 8:5 and also, in Exodus 25:40 these words God spoke to Moses, "**See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.**"

John Bevere says, "It was of extreme importance that all was done *exactly* as shown. This would provide the divine order necessary before the King's glory would be manifested in their presence."

Remember also, that the Mighty One, God the Lord, is the Righteous Judge. **He does not come to "choose sides", but rather to set things in divine order!** He does much of this as WE apply His instruction, (*musar*) correction, and discipline in ordering our lives "according to the pattern" shown us on the "mountain" (the place of His Presence).

Let all things (in our lives) be done decently and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

God's pattern is that there be divine order, *before* He visits His people with His glory. (individually and corporately). God's glory is all that makes God, God! It includes His *splendor, abundance, honor, goodness, greatness, holiness, excellence, authority, power, order, wisdom, and understanding*...literally the immeasurable weight and magnitude of God. Nothing is hidden or held back. The glory of the Lord is all that makes up God! Before we can experience this, as a people, we must make a *place* (according to the pattern) that is *suitable* for Him. DIVINE ORDER! We cannot escape it if we are to walk pleasing unto Him and be conformed to the image of His dear Son. Jesus had no problem submitting to the authority of His Father. We must do likewise.

According to the Pattern Shown You on the Mountain

In the Old Testament, God specifically gave instructions for the temple to be built by skilled artisans and craftsmen. He instructed that it be maintained by a certain tribe of people, set apart unto priestly service, called the Levites. They were to wear priestly garments. Everything from curtains, screens, poles, the ark, the tables, lamps, altars, lavers, down to the anointing oil had to be consecrated and used *according to a specific pattern* and in a *particular way*. It had to be "just so".

The Mighty One, God the Lord, always "*says what He means and means what He says!*" When divine order is in place by the Word of God, and the people are submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit...then, *and only then*, will the glory of the Lord come and visit the people. The pattern is divine order FIRST...and THEN the glory of the Lord is revealed!

When His glory is present, *righteous judgment* takes place: any thing that is still "out of order" will come into divine order in that atmosphere. It makes for a *continuous circle, an orderly place of safety* for God's people to continue to grow and develop in the knowledge of His grace and truth.

John Bevere speaks specifically about the priests and how they figure into God's pattern. He says: "These men were set apart and trained to minister to the Lord and stand in the gap for the people. Their duties and parameters for worship were outlined in very *specific* instructions (remembering that instructions are an *essential* part of *order*) passed on from God... to Moses...to them. Their training was a part of *divine order*. (This is an example of God's WAY. Many times, "training" comes from life experience and walking alongside others of the faith who have gone before and have a mature spirit in Jesus.)

Following this instruction and training came the actual consecration of these men. With everything in place...*their ministry began*.

Those called to lead in the church today must be set apart from the world: spirit, soul, and body. They must be trained specifically in the ways and purposes of God and prepared by the Holy Spirit to live a life of holiness and sanctification to lead by example, as a servant, before the people of God. Sometimes this takes many years of refining as by fire, but the wise one will WAIT upon the Lord until he/she becomes that vessel of honor God intends for them to be as a result of instruction and training in life that results in Divine Order and Divine Authority.

God's Process Toward Safety for His People

There is "a time to speak, and a time not to speak," (Ecclesiastes 3:7) Until these essentials begin to be implemented and applied in one's life, the time is still considered as "a time NOT to speak." How God's people need to learn this.

To whom much (responsibility) is given, MUCH is required. In Luke 12:47-48, it actually says in the parable of the faithful steward: "*And that servant who knew his Master's will **and did not prepare himself or do according to His will shall be beaten with many stripes....for everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him, they will ask the more!***"

We MUST take God's Word seriously. It is simply God's WAY of "divine order" for those who represent Him to live a life worthy of their calling and conduct themselves under His Divine Authority. They are called to speak for and represent God before the church and before the world. This comes through much preparation, much study, much prayer, much training and experience of living. It comes over time...time for godly maturity by which His called ones will truly learn to "*speak the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, Christ Jesus.*" (Ephesians 4:15)

Jesus prepared Himself for 30 years to minister *effectively* for 3 years. So many today, prepare for 3 years and appoint themselves to "positions" for 30 years! How wrong this is. Instead, God has a process toward safety and spiritual growth for His people.

- * **With CALLING comes PREPARATION**
- * **With PREPARATION comes PROMOTION**
- * **With PROMOTION comes POSITION**
- * **With POSITION comes AUTHORITY (responsibility)**
- * **With AUTHORITY comes ORDER**
- * **With ORDER comes UNITY**
- * **With UNITY comes SAFETY**
- * **With SAFETY comes GROWTH**

These are things *not* to be taken lightly. We can trust God's Way. Authority is not some "position" people use to "lord over" others. Rather, authority and position are tremendous RESPONSIBILITIES which must be entered into with much humility, holiness, and love. Order will *never* come apart from humbly submitting to instruction that includes much correction and discipline over the course of one's lifetime.

Leaders are life-long learners and obedient servants who, in the fear of the Lord, do NOT hate instruction NOR cast God's Words behind them! These people are *under* God's authority, so as a result, God places them in positions that allow Him to flow through them by delegated authority.

"*God is a consuming fire!*" (Hebrews 12:29)

"*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all!*" (1 John 1:5)

Judgment Does Not Come Without Warning

Paul said to Timothy that God's glory is an intense light, "...unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see." (1 Tim. 6:16) The light experienced on the road to Damascus, Paul said was "*brighter than the sun!*" (Acts 26:13) In such light there is simply no place for darkness, (sin, rebellion, disorder, disrespect, or confusion). And if there is any present in the people who are assembled, the unfolding pattern of God's way calls for judgment against such darkness. Change must come, for God's glory cannot manifest in the rebellion of His people.

God has made it clear that any irreverence, or disrespect, (in word, deed, or conduct) cannot survive in the presence of a holy God. He is not mocked. Today is no different. He is the same Holy God. We cannot expect to be admitted into God's presence with an attitude of rebellion, disrespect, or disorder; for such attitudes render us unprepared to truly represent Him before those who need to see Him as He is.

John Bevere has noted in his book *The Fear of the Lord* that "Following the revelation of God's glory, over and again we see, in God's people, irreverence towards His presence and Word. Though the Israelites knew His will, their hearts grew careless toward what God calls sacred and holy."

People began to act apart from decency and order so God sent others of His people to sound alarms and give warning that they may "*hear*", (Jeremiah 6:10). But they would not heed the alarm nor pay attention to the warnings of coming judgment. Billy Graham is quoted as having said, "*Judgment does not come without warning.*" Truth comes from the heart of a merciful God. IN His mercy, He warns His people before His judgment and wrath fall.

AWAKE! ARISE! ALERT! ALARM! Where is the fear of the Lord?

"But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chronicles 36:16) They would not listen! They would not respond appropriately to the alarm, to the warnings!

God has given me five specific dreams over a 10 year period which depict this scenario. I "see" different groups of people in burning buildings. I go in, at great risk, sounding an alarm, pleading with them, giving warning that they may hear; but they just ignore me, laugh me off, motion for me to go away, or mock me as if I am the crazy one. I beg. I implore with tears, and yet they continue to revel in a frivolous partying atmosphere, unconcerned that any danger is near.

I have felt deep grief and remorse, a heaviness of spirit which has resulted in an intercessory prayer burden for these people; for they are the people of God who are *inattentive* to the warning and the alarm! I have felt the sorrow of the Father's heart at this disrespect for His words. I have felt the heavy heart of Jesus who lamented over the people in Jerusalem, "*How often I would have gathered you under my wings (my protection and refuge)...but you would not!*" (Matthew 23:37)

Jesus makes it clear that to follow Him, we must first count the cost...the price of nothing short of our lives, our all, our complete surrender! "*Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*" (Luke 14:33) One cannot stay where they are and "go" with God. It requires faith and obedience...plain and simple. To *obey* God means that something will have to change....and it will not be Him; for we know "***Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!***" (Hebrews 13:8)

Inward Order of the Heart

Divine order is *inward order of the heart*. Outward order in our lives and in our gatherings will become reality when the individuals of the group who gather together find inward order of the heart. Our lives, our behavior, speak louder than our words. What we say must be backed up by what we do! Psalms 50:23, "*To him who orders his conduct (behavior) aright will I show the salvation of God.*"

Isaiah prophesied of John the Baptist: "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord....every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places (deceitful places) shall be made straight and the rough places (wrong behavior and conduct) smooth; The glory of the Lord shall be revealed!'*" (40:3-5)

"These mountains and hills were not fortresses of natural elements," John Bevere says, "but rather the *ways of man* that opposed the ways of God." The towering and lofty pride of men had to be made low. The irreverence and foolishness of man would be confronted and leveled in preparation for the revelation of the glory of the Lord.

John the Baptist came preaching a baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4). The Greek word for "baptism" is *baptisma* and is defined as "immersion." According to Webster's dictionary, *immersion* means "to plunge." So John's message was not of partial repentance but of a radical, complete change of heart...*a total surrender!* The lofty mountains of pride and haughty hills of religion were made flat, preparing the people to receive the ministry of Jesus. To do this, as God's people, we must not be found amid the wicked who "*cast God's words behind them and hate instruction!*" (Psalm 50)

God's word....when received....will bring divine inward order in our individual lives. Our hearts will *be changed*. Our thinking and attitudes will change, and the result will be transformed wicked behavior that results in holy, pure behavior. Brooks Bryan, a fellow Foursquare leader, has said, "It is not enough to believe in Jesus, *we must learn to think like Jesus!*" To learn to "think like" Jesus requires in inward change within us which results in an outward change of character and behavior. As we stand shoulder to shoulder as God's people in *outward divine order*, we will be standing as those who have undergone a preparation for presentation to the King of kings and Lord of lords!

The Acceptable Way of the Lord

Jesus is the Master Builder....exemplified not only by His teachings, but by the life He lived. In every way He showed forth to mankind the "acceptable way of the Lord." This is the "acceptable way" to live life. Jesus Christ lived His life in Divine Order, and He walked in Divine Authority! So must we! We are specifically called to be conformed to His same image. This will effect every part of our being in the here and now!

God calls us to be like Him, for He will not be as we are. After enumerating the seven indictments against the people in Psalms 50, God, the Righteous Judge said, "*These things you have done, and I kept silent;* (Because He was silent, He said that we) "*thought He was altogether like us*" (overlooking these wrong things.) "*BUT*", He said, "*I will rebuke you and set them in order before your eyes!*"

Remember, *divine order precedes revealed glory*. Once the glory is revealed, disorder is met with immediate judgment to assure the maintenance of divine order. God promised those whose judgment is hanging in the balance: *Know for sure there will be order, for the Righteous Judge will bring it!* In prophetic preaching and writing, God seeks to warn us in order to keep us from His judgment! His message of judgment is, therefore, one of mercy! Hear the Word of the Lord on

Divine Order and Divine Authority!

"He who called you is holy. You, also, be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:15-16)

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. In the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. There I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts and they have not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" (Hebrews 3:7-11, 15; 4:3,7)

AWAKE! ARISE! ALERT! ALARM!

Sanctify and Consecrate Ourselves

In the book of Exodus, an insight into a serious warning from the Lord is recorded. *"And the Lord said to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord and many of them perish. And let the priests who come near the Lord SANCTIFY themselves, lest the Lord break out against them.'*

"And Moses said to the Lord 'The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, Set bounds around that mountain and sanctify it.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest He break out against them.' So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them." Exodus 19:21-25

When the Lord calls us to Himself, by way of being justified by His Blood sacrifice, we freely receive the most beautiful gift from Him. *But what begins in freedom...can result in chaos...if we are not willing to sanctify and consecrate ourselves before Him in lifestyle...in spirit and in truth. This is ESPECIALLY true for those who are called as leaders in the Body of Christ.*

In this Old Testament example, many people in "positions" of leadership, and the people under them, *broke all restraint*. They believed they could *"break into God's presence" AT WILL...without coming with appropriate authority and boundaries*. They thought they could just "come up" into His Presence without doing things *decently and in order* before the Lord.

Anything spiritual that is not in divine order will not bring forth godly results. A great number of appropriate boundaries have seemed to be erased in this "permissive" modern society in which we live today. Many people, including Christians, seem to *"do what is right in their own eyes"...*and seem to have little to no respect for God, His Authority, those He calls and appoints to leadership in some areas, much less to decency and order in living their lives.

Praise God we live under the New Covenant instead of the Old. We come to God, today, by a *"new and living way"* through Christ Jesus, but *some* things never change! A Christian leader, today, must still SANCTIFY themselves, CONSECRATE themselves in the pure manner which the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ calls for in order to speak on behalf of a Holy God and to lead others in prayer and action on behalf of a Holy God and His Kingdom business.

We cannot speak out from under His authority and expect to be able to *"break in upon the Lord"*, at will, living impure lives in any way...and go out and speak with *His authority and anointing* to the people. *HOW we live our lives in obedience to Him, His purposes, and His ways, has a direct effect on our right to represent Him before others!* How we conduct ourselves, in THIS life, in His Name and on His behalf, also must continuously be *decent and in order...*in humility and under His direct Authority.

Decently and in Order

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all, but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all..." 1 Corinthians 12: 1, 4-7

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing,**" 1 Corinthians 13:1-2*

*"I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding...Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature...How is it then brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification....let all things be done decently and in order,**" 1 Corinthians 14:15, 20, 26 & 40.*

There is much to be said of these above things written in Corinthians. Obviously, our God longs to move in the midst of His people. When His Holy Spirit is present in the midst of some gatherings of His people...when He does move....great RELEASE and IMPARTATION can and does take place. People can be healed, delivered, and set free...sometimes instantly...and if not instantly...the power of His manifested Presence can go with them from such places and set lives into His divine order afterwards. These times are precious, and great grace can come upon people that is **life transforming!** This can happen in large numbers as well as individually. And it can be done...as Paul instructs: **"decently and in order."**

Yet in some meetings....*chaos* reigns. This often happens where there is no authority except for a "lone ranger leader", and independent or "traveling one" who does not abide with the people, nor submit himself or herself to others. Not in all, certainly, but working through some such people there have been some extremes and abuses of these types of things. Yet graciously, the Lord speaks to say, **"Misuse does not mandate NO USE...but I am calling forth 'right use' of the gifts of the spirit to bring forth release and transformation to and within My people."**

Years ago, in the 80s and 90s, I began to notice some spiritual abuse and misuse of the precious gifts of the Spirit in some believer's meetings across the country. This was especially so in some intercessory and prophetic meetings at that time. One was a lack of accountability in some who found themselves in "prominent leadership" positions...traveling and leading, mostly, separated from any commitment to a local group of believers. When one does not live among a people, the people cannot *"know them that labor among them"*. (1 Thessalonians 5:12) False teachers and prophets can hide behind the cloak of their character and lifestyle *not being known* and come in to do and say anything they choose "in the name of the Lord"...justifying themselves verbally.

There was much talk about "taking our cities for God", but most of the people who brought the message did not stay or live in one place long enough to get to know or work with the people in a local area. They did not abide there nor live in *commitment* with people to see the task carried out. I began to long to see a move of God's power and presence in and among the local bodies of believers...and not just when the "traveling prophet" or traveling teacher" was there. How we need the presence of God begin to abide in the hearts of local people, daily, weekly....all of the time. May there be a local hungering and thirsting for God and His ways...a seeking for His *abiding* Presence...to be manifested among His people and under His appointed authority in each place. May "impartation" of His powerful holiness and love be given and received.

The move of God will always be done under His authority. He works through authority and when He comes to "*set things in His divine order*", He will move to and through His people..... "**decently and in order.**" His move will bear the fruit of the Spirit, for He teaches us to "*know a tree by its fruit.*"

Strange Manifestations

I have been present and have witnessed many times in some Christian gatherings, certain things done "in the Name of Jesus" that have grieved my heart and the hearts of many others, also. Sometimes such things happen in meetings where some "traveling" guests see themselves as "lone ranger leaders". Many of these do not answer to God nor to those Christians who have some *local* authority. Other times, they happen at the hand of some local leaders who are simply deceived about this matter or are immature.

Many extreme, ridiculous, and oft times repetitious "manifestations" have occurred - resulting in confusion and sometimes even in *chaos!* Demonstrations of these kinds of extremes have been defended on the premise that without such unusual public "manifestations" that the atmosphere in the gatherings was "dead". And that apart from such *bizarre* actions and movements...the people had no "spiritual life" in them. Such things tend to "cloak" themselves in the guise of "fire" or "anointing". Though the "fire of the Lord" may truly fall in the midst of His people, and the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit can surely come whenever He desires, sadly, a great deal of things that go on are bizarre actions...some of which have even been demonic. There are those who go out in the stated purpose of delivering people FROM the "demonic"...and they, inadvertently, wind up being moved BY the demonic themselves. *For demons always seek to discredit and undermine true things done in the Name of Jesus.*

I don't mean to raise a controversy here...but I humbly address those who know of what I am speaking of to "hear" what the Holy Spirit is pleading with His people. Again..."*Misuse does not mean NO USE of the gifts of the spirit...but it does mean 'right use'*. All things must be done...*decently and in order!*

I have personally witnessed large numbers of people in some services acting out as all manner of animals, acting like whirlwinds, throwing pitchers of water over rows of people (and even the pitcher one time!), throwing flowers from an arrangement in front of the pulpit, wildly moving their heads in circles while attempting to "prophesy" loudly, jerking people around, slamming them on walls and floors, hitting people on parts of their body with their fists, slapping people, pinching mouths shut, standing up and yelling loudly, "I am God! I am God!", giving out various "flaky words" that had no power or authority....and the list goes on and on and on to ad nauseam.

*God is God and He can do ANYTHING He desires...*but words and actions that are by *His* Holy Spirit will have credibility and will be honorable and excellent! They will be *decent*, and they will be in *order*...for He has spoken in 1 Corinthians 14:40 that "all things" are to be that way.

When God is moving by the Holy Spirit, all things will come forth *in the strength of God*. They will never deny *His Holy nature or character*, nor will they demean, belittle, or embarrass His people. Jesus came to lift up His creation and restore dignity to His fallen man. He did not come to publicly "make sport" or demonstrate some kind of "spiritual entertainment" of His precious creation in front of a crowd of people...or even in front a small group or just one.

Satan is Satan; and he and his demons "use people" to make various kinds of foolish and ridiculous outbursts and attribute them to the name and cause of Jesus. If left unanswered, or unchallenged, by those who truly do have some *appointed* authority (because they themselves are humbly *under* authority), some such foolish demonstrations "seem" to stand in some meetings "as though" they are of God...when in truth...*they are not*

In Patience Possess Your Souls

As God's people we are called to the practice of prayer. It is part of our spiritual DNA. We need to learn to pray and to pray *patiently* as He did. Jesus knew how to *wait* upon His Father. He knew how to "*watch and see what He was doing!*" and to "*listen to hear what He was saying.*" When walked the earth, *He* took time to do this and never compromised His character or holiness in the applying of what He "saw and heard". He never got in a hurry nor was hasty. He could move swiftly if need be, but He did so in wisdom and under the direct orders of His Father. To be able to fulfill the call to *practice patient persistent prevailing prayer*, we each must *learn obedience*, as Jesus did on this earth; and "*in patience...possess our soul.*" Luke 21:19

I believe that there is often a misuse of some of the ministry of prayer including the vitally important intercessory and spiritual warfare prayer message. I was a part of a vast number of Christians involved in a movement of prayer in the 70s and 80s; and as I look back to those *years past*, I see that in many of us, there was a "*lack of **patience***"...a lack of that *necessary fruit* through which we are to "*possess our souls*". Some of this was inevitable, for many in that generation which sat under this strong prayer message in the 70s and 80s - had not yet *had the time* to allow the Holy Spirit to work *deep* in their souls - many teachers as well as many of us who sat listening. *Effective prayer is the result of **patient preparation in the soul***. These can pray fervently due to holy boldness.

PATIENCE...by its very nature...*requires time!* It is one of those things that comes by no other way than...one day, one step at a time...*over a PERIOD of TIME!*

I am not saying this "across the board".....but *one* mis-step in the demonstration of intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare was that many people failed to take charge over the *excesses and extremes of the flesh*. Sullied messengers brought reproach to a *spiritual message* that was not at fault. The result was that many were "turned off" by the message because of the messengers...and so *God had to WAIT*...until His people could recover and begin *anew*, start *afresh* and learn to let the patience of God be worked in their lives - especially where this message of persistent prayer was concerned. In some cases, He had to raise up another generation of intercessors to carry and practice this kind of prayer. There is much to learn about prevailing prayer; however, knowing "about" prayer that prevails is ONE thing...**PRACTICING patient, persistent, prevailing prayer is another thing!**

God gives each of us the time to "*possess our soul*"....time for us to "*renew our mind, discipline our emotions, learn to make right choices with our will*". We must take time to grow and mature in relationship with Him as well as in various kinds of spiritual exercise including Bible study and all manner of prayer. I never forgot what a pastor said to me in the early 1980s...about it taking *patience* to wait on people to grow and be "prepared and ready in their hearts" to go to the "high places" with God... fighting through the principalities and powers of darkness. I count his remarks as some of the Lord's most precious wisdom poured out upon me.

If they are to be victorious and gain ground, there must be a very real period of *patient preparation* in God's people before they are thrust out into intense spiritual warfare. This is often overlooked, for many try to put "Saul's armor" on the "David's"...and it is not only too heavy...*it does not fit*. David knew best what would work for him to kill the giant, even in his youth, and as he trusted in the Lord and His plan for him....he was victorious!

Intercessory prayer, spiritual warfare, and prophetic intercession are *all powerful forms of prayer* that take place in the realm of the spirit. They are *vital* and *necessary* to the pulling down of strongholds and to the progressive growth of people in the Kingdom of God; but they must **NEVER** be done in a way that brings reproach to the nature or the Name of Jesus Christ! This, too, must be done under Divine Authority and in Divine Order. *Our God is One who is righteous,*

honorable, tender, kind, and wise. There is a *holy dignity* that attends the Master, and we must always imitate *Him* and walk in *His ways* in reverence. Even though prevailing prayer is a fervent labor, hard work, and a persistent endeavor, it must always be done in the prevailing holiness, wisdom, and excellence of our Lord God, *decently and in order.*

To bring forth RESULTS that reveal a clear and distinct difference between those who live in the kingdom of darkness under the rule of Satan and those who have been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son and the Kingdom of Light, those prayers must be presented before Almighty God *in the manner* which He has set forth in His Word. They must be from prepared hearts that are pure, holy, humble, *and patient*...based upon His revealed Word. Such prayers come from sanctified souls which have been *patiently possessed* by those who have walked in obedience to the Holy One.

Persistent prayers from these vessels...will prevail!

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