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## SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

### Deviation - Part 13

By Rayola Kelley

As I watch the present age winding down to the coming of Christ, I often meditate on what it will mean to survive these end days. Even though there are many Christians throughout the world suffering persecution, my main concern for believers, especially here in America, is whether they will survive the tidal wave of delusion rolling through the various kingdoms of the world, including the religious realm.

It was also Jesus' main concern in *Matthew 24*. He stated if it was possible even the elect would be deceived. *Matthew 24:13* states that only those who endure to the end will be saved. As believers we must endure the travailing of this present age caused by wickedness, whether it comes in the form of persecution or delusion.

It is hard to grasp the extent of the deception that exists. After all, who in their right mind would prefer or set out to be deceived? Yet, the warnings in Scripture about many being deceived, even among those who call themselves Christians, are numerous.

Deception points to deviation from the truth. We must ask ourselves how far away from the truth can we afford to stray before we will totally miss the mark and fall into the abyss of delusion? The harsh reality is that any deviation from the truth puts one on the broad path of falling into the abyss. We cannot afford to deviate from the truth without putting ourselves in danger of falling prey to the destructive ways of the kingdom of darkness. We must always keep in mind that there is no darkness or variation



to the truth. It will not downplay what is real, nor will it be tolerant towards that which constitutes a lie, and it cannot be forgiving or compromising towards that which is contrary to its light.

Scripture is clear that the truth will remain standing when all else has collapsed due to faulty foundations. And, as the darkness of deception grips this world in greater ways, it is obvious that truth is becoming extinct in many arenas of the world. As this spiritual darkness becomes greater, the contrast between light and darkness also becomes more distinct. In a sense, it is as if a line is drawn into the sand. This distinction will force many to make a decision because they can no longer hide in the grey shadows of compromise and hypocrisy. They will be forced to choose light or darkness. The prophet Joel put it well, "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision*" (*Joel 3:14*).

The question is how can we be assured that we are not being carried away by some form of delusion? Jesus gives us the first clue that we must be part of the elect, in other words those who are saved. As the elect, we have been appointed to a certain life, purpose, and destiny. We must live according to the life given from heaven, ensure God's plan for our life is being realized, and be preparing for the glory of the next world.

In order to be part of the elect, we must be born again of the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who seals or identifies us until the fullness of redemption is realized. The way we are born again is we believe what the Word of God tells us about our spiritual plight of sin and death and by faith receive God's provision of His Son, Jesus Christ who redeemed us from the curse and judgment of sin and death.

The next thing we must discern is the environment. Through the

years, I have studied the dynamics of deception in regard to how it takes root and eventually manifest itself. Its conception, development, and impact will be determined by the environment. Here are some examples of how deception finds its target and is brought to fruition according to the environment.

*Divided Heart:* People who have a divided heart between the devotion of religion and the attractions of the world are susceptible to delusion. Such a heart points to idolatry and carnality. The reason that those with a divided heart can easily fall into delusion is that they must justify the carnal preferences in their lives. Each justification will not only prove to be treacherous to the truth but it will silence the religious conscience of the heart. If a person justifies the deviation in his or her heart long enough, he or she will end up searing it to the point that it will become indifferent to the sweet conviction of the Spirit (*1 Timothy 4:2*).

*Arrogance:* Another environment that is conducive to deception taking root and being developed is arrogance. Those who think they cannot or will not be deceived, are most likely already deceived. As we know, any type of pride comes before a fall, and there is nothing that can create the greatest heights of delusion from which to fall as arrogance. It is the board in our eyes that keeps us from seeing the foolishness that reigns through personal pride (*Matthew 7:1-6*). This pride is the product of the fallen condition of selfishness which prefers its own take on truth. It will deny or adjust truth to maintain its idea of reality, while the intellectual conceit of arrogance will actually pride itself that there is no way it can be deceived in its present understanding. This is why we are warned that knowledge alone will exalt itself. Often such knowledge produces vain imaginations that will actually pay tribute to its personal ideas of God and religion (*Proverbs 16:2, 1 Corinthians 8:1; 2 Corinthians 10:5*). In an environment like this, a person's understanding about God may become repro-

bate. It is for this reason that we are told not to think more highly of ourselves than we should and not to mind high things, but condescend to men of low estate as a means to avoid becoming wise in our own conceits (*Romans 12:3, 16*).

*Flesh:* In our fallen condition we are naturally bent towards attractions of the world that would make us feel elite in our association and superior in our understanding. Due to this bent, we are prone to be manipulated by those who know how to use such attractions to entice us. It is hard for many to believe that the flesh makes them vulnerable, but Jesus said the flesh was weak and put its perverted preference in perspective when He asked what does it profit a man to gain the world, while losing his soul. Instead of buying truth and gaining wisdom and understanding, many sell their souls to gain some place in the world and recognition from it (*Proverbs 23:23; Matthew 16:25-26; 26:41*).

*Half-Truths:* Many people who operate in delusion do so from the premise of half-truths. They believe that because there is some truth in a matter, they can maintain the integrity of the situation. However, half-truths are nothing more than forms of propaganda. Propaganda's goal is one of indoctrination that is designed to take one away from all truth into complete delusion. It is about subtly changing the worldview or viewpoint of someone. Truth taken into extremes will prove to be an utter lie in the end as it reverses one's thinking, but half-truths are laced with bits of poisonous lies, like a small bit of leaven, which will taint what is pure, defiling it as a whole. In the end, the person will believe a lie.

*Unbelief:* We must embrace all truth by faith. We must approach it to believe it is so. If we fail to believe truth, we will go into unbelief about the matter. Unbelief causes a hard heart towards the truth. It will prove to be obstinate in its ways, always erring in its attitude and understanding about the matters of God's kingdom. Such unbelief will cause a darkness to cloud the mind as it succumbs to the deceitfulness of sin (*Hebrews 3:8-14*).

Last month I made mention of

how false religions will manifest themselves. They are based on a faulty foundation of lies and deception. As believers, we must keep in mind there is only one true religion. *James 1:27* tells us how it will express itself, "*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*"

Religion that takes on fleshly attitudes and actions will manifest itself in *paganism*. Paganism is worldly in attitude and sensual in practice. It operates from the sensual height of emotional hype as it dances in and out of the aisles of religious fanaticism. It gives the appearance of godly devotion as it clothes itself in the robes of religious rituals. However, it is profane before God. He will never be found in such foolishness.

The next type of false religion subtly exalts man in some way. Whether it is exalting some type of goodness in man, his practices, knowledge, or abilities, man becomes the center of attention. We know there is no goodness in man apart from God. His best is filthy rags, his practices are pagan, his knowledge tainted, and his abilities limited. In spite of the fact that man is far from righteousness, he is subtly raised up as a standard as to what is right and acceptable to be admired. However, such an environment is man-centered. The reality of such exaltation is that it is amoral in attitude, proving that it is nothing more than *humanism*. True Christianity is Christ-centered, not man-centered. Any environment where man is exalted produces an antichrist atmosphere in which man takes on the nature and position of deity in some way while denying the one true God and His truth.

The New Age has made many inroads into Christendom. It presents itself as being *metaphysical*. In other words, it promotes the supernatural. It often combines every god and religious belief while cleverly denying the one true God of heaven. It wears a cloak of mysticism to appear spiritual in nature, but it is a door into the occult. It heavily relies on experiences. Such experiences become more real to these individuals than the truth of the Bible. People who have such experiences cannot imagine that they are wrong because

their experiences not only seem real but they often bring so-called "spiritual enlightenment" that seems to make sense to their present understanding. However, the spiritual enlightenment is nothing more than a false light that blankets these people's soul, blinding them to the truths of the Bible. Sadly, this false light has blanketed many in the church with heretical religions such as Scientology and Unity, as well as rides on the heretical shirrtails of such beliefs and movements as Positive Confession, Kingdom Dominion Theology, contemplative prayer (soaking), and the Signs and Wonders Movement to name a few.

The final false foundation involves the *occult*. The New Age and the occult have similarities. The greatest similarity has to do with so-called "spiritual enlightenment." The difference is that the New Age pursues experiences in order to possess some type of "spiritual enlightenment", while the occult pursues hidden knowledge that often results in experiences. For this reason many of the heretical teachings and practices mentioned above ultimately take on the nature of the occult. The main goal of the occult is to change the reality of people in order to seduce them into utter deception in regard to God. Needless to say, the god they end up serving and worshipping is the god of this world, Satan.

One popular occult practice that has taken root in the church that is changing people's reality is journaling. Some Christians have opened themselves up to this practice to "supposedly" give the Holy Spirit opportunity to reveal "hidden truths" to them. However, the Holy Spirit has already supplied the necessary truth that we as believers need to know to obtain everlasting life, and it is found in God's Word. What these Christians do not realize is that their show of unbelief towards the Bible as the only trustworthy word from God is opening them up to the occult. What will come through the door of their understanding is a demon and not the Holy Spirit. Granted, they may walk away with what they perceive to be "greater" wisdom, knowledge, and experiences but it will all be based on an utter lie.

The Bible is clear that believers must operate according to Spirit and truth. Christianity is not some belief,

experience, occasional practice, or something you must conjure up in the mind; rather, it is a life that must be lived, a walk of faith that must be executed daily, a truth that will not be manipulated and changed, a way that is steady, and a hope that is sure. Christianity changes a life with repentance and salvation, transforms the mind with truth, and renews the spirit with Living Water. It is not top-heavy with arrogant, vain knowledge, weighed down with oppressive burdens of useless religious exercises, or swinging from branches of unrealistic experiences. It is practical, real, beneficial, and eternal.

What about you? Are you surviving the great wave of delusion because you stand on the foundational truths of God's Word, and will you withstand it because you love the truth with all of your heart? Our prayer should be simple, "Lord, shake all faulty foundations underneath us until they lay in ruin, gird our minds against the temptation to think there is more than what You have already provided us through Your Spirit and Word. Give us a love for truth that will cause us to flee all things that would prove to be contrary to it. Help us to hide in You, knowing that it is You who will fulfill the promises of Your enduring, eternal Word." †

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### THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT By Jeannette Haley

*"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." — 1 John 4:1*

How many of us actually try, or test, different spirits, both in the world and in the Church today? Discerning of spirits is one of the gifts of the Spirit, yet most people do not seek for discernment, but instead crave the title of "prophet." This should be a matter of grave concern to God's people. The gift of prophecy is two-fold; that is forthtelling (preaching the Word) or foretelling (future events.) The reason for this stampede to claim the title of "prophet" is simply because people, who have never recognized and repented of their pride, desire to be recognized as possessing the same power and anointing as the Old

Testament prophets. In short, they want a following.

The repeated warnings of Jesus (see Matthew 24) concerning false prophets in the end times is generally glossed over by Christians. This has always been a grave concern for this ministry. I cannot begin to tell you how many people we have met through the years who have been either led astray by some false prophet, or who have gone so far as to dub themselves as being a prophet. The tragedy is, whenever a professing Christian desires to be "great" in the Kingdom of God without sitting at the feet of Jesus, being properly disciplined, coming under His yoke through submission, humility, and obedience, along with denying self, receiving a love for truth, being Spirit-led, and paying the price to be a seasoned minister (servant), then such a person is wide open to receive a religious spirit through the door of pride.

Religious spirits, as with any other spirit or demon, play on people's pride and high opinion of themselves. Their goal is to gain a following of people who are deluded into giving them the recognition, attention, adoration, and worship that they desire. To put it bluntly, in the demonic realm, from Satan on down through the ranks of fallen angels to the lowest demon, every last one of them craves attention and worship, and they will work unceasingly to get it by any means available. This is the very thing that Satan was tempting Jesus to do in the wilderness. (See Matthew 4.) Satan desires to be worshipped as God.

Being the gullible sheep that we all are, we dangerously assume that just because a person goes to church, quotes the Bible, and appears to be religious that they are of the right spirit. The bottom line is, anything God does Satan can counterfeit, right on down to false fruit. This is why discernment is a must—not judgmentalism, or a critical spirit which comes from a lack of integrity, good character, and love, but true spiritual discernment. If believers fail to discern spirits, how will they recognize an antichrist spirit, or even the antichrist who will step on the scene to deceive, if possible, the whole world? A few years ago we met an entire church full

of people who all possessed an antichrist spirit because they had bought the lie that Jesus is not God Incarnate. They thought they had the right Jesus, but they had all received "another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel." (See 2 Corinthians 11:4.) They believed that the false light they had was the "real thing," yet every one of them had spiritual problems.

*Acts 16:16-18* gives us an account of Paul's encounter with a spirit of divination, or a religious spirit. "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." If such a person were to stand up in the church and proclaim that the leaders were "servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation," how many of us would nod in agreement without first testing, or discerning, the spirit behind it? The truth is, Satan and his workers must be *discerned* because they not only counterfeit what is of God, but they put forth a false light. Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness" *Matthew 6:22*.

Rayola explains: "Light" in Matthew 6:22 has to do with understanding. If people perceive they understand a matter, they feel they are indeed enlightened. Since they perceive they are enlightened, they walk according to their understanding. Even though what they perceive could very well be darkness based on ignorance or deception, the intellectual pride that is intertwined with their understanding deludes them to the real state of their understanding. The greater the level of pride, the more the false light of understanding hides the real darkness. Clearly, such light hides the fact

that there is no truth in the person's understanding, failing to bring contrast and clarity. It is important to point out at this time that the light of truth not only brings clarity, but contrast as it reveals the difference between that which is of the true light and that which is of darkness."

Satan could not deceive anyone if he appeared as the ugliest Halloween costume you ever saw. Instead, he deceives through a false light, the very same light that so many unsaved people declare they have seen in near death (or even after death, before resuscitation) experiences. The Apostle Paul warned the Christians at Corinth of false apostles, deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ. He went on to say, *"And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works"* 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. Satan's workers also have power to deceive. Jesus warned in Mark 13:22, *"For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."*

Many years ago I was invited by a friend to attend a certain Bible school in Everett, Washington. At first, I was thrilled at the excellent, biblical teaching. It was spot on. After a time, however, my spirit became agitated, yet I could not put my finger on any doctrinal discrepancies. Then, both my friend and I began to notice something. It was as if the seemingly "perfect" and smooth talking teacher had a strange "light" about her. This was my first introduction to an "angel of light spirit." In time, strange and frightening things began to happen as she appeared in dreams, and not only that, would tell us things that we had thought or said when in the privacy of our own homes, indicating she also had a familiar spirit. Eventually, we both had to drop out of the school and concluded that the education we got was far more valuable in the realm of spiritual discernment than the Bible lessons ever were.

This brings me to another important point, and that is this: religious spirits are generally always to be found in churches, where Christians gather

together, and, of course, in cults and false religions. That is where we have always seen them in operation because, after all, Satan and the demonic realm is an unseen, spiritual, religious realm. I have yet to go to the bank, Post Office, gas station or grocery store and hear a religious spirit trying to gain an audience, although that is not to say they don't ever appear in public places trying to gain an audience. On the other hand, I couldn't begin to name the number of churches we have been in that didn't have at least one religious spirit.

Years ago we attended a church where the late author and evangelist, Betty Swinford, was holding special meetings. Betty was a woman who truly knew and operated in the Holy Spirit. Her anointed preaching was direct, simple, and anointed. The power of the Spirit was so strong that people were saved, delivered, and healed in great numbers. In this one particular church on one of the nights when she delivered a powerful message, the Holy Spirit filled the sanctuary. People were streaming to the front for ministry. Rayola and I were sitting towards the back, and watched as a tall young man standing a few rows in front of us began to sway, and repeatedly yell, "Jesus! Oh Jesus!" We instantly discerned that he was operating in a religious spirit. He was not only out of order, disrupting the flow of the Spirit, and causing confusion (which is not of God) but he began to manifest physically. Suddenly, it was as if an unseen force slammed him against the wall of the church, head first. As we watched him slump to the floor, we noticed a gash on his head that was bleeding. Incredibly, the people close to him surrounded him, arms raised, praising God as he lay writhing on the floor. Not one of the people there discerned the religious spirit that was manifesting and deal with it.

Later that night while visiting with Betty, we asked her if she had heard or seen this incident. She was so involved in praying with people at the front of the church that she hadn't witnessed it, and commented with a slight chuckle that it was a good thing too, or she would've had to go take care of it herself.

Another example of a person

with a religious spirit is Judas Iscariot. We gain a glimpse of it in *John 12:5*, where, after Mary anointed Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, Judas asked, *"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?"* We know that Judas didn't care for the poor according to the following verse, but his outburst was a put down to both Jesus and Mary because Jesus graciously received Mary's loving sacrifice, and Mary had wasted no expense on Jesus. In spite of Judas' attitude, his sanctimonious remark may have impressed some of the people that were present, but it brought a swift rebuke from the Lord. According to Mark's account of this event, in Chapter 14 verse 9, Jesus defended Mary, and uttered a prophecy honoring her. Immediately after this incident, Judas sought to betray Jesus. After all, he was rebuked by the Lord in the presence of a number of people, which was bad enough, but for a woman to be defended and exalted in front of the crowd was more than his pride and religious spirit could bear. A truly godly man would have rejoiced to see the Lord honored so by His handmaiden, and would have known in his heart the full meaning of His anointing.

Christians need to examine their own hearts to determine if they have personal agendas, goals, and causes that are not of God. Even though someone's personal agendas and causes may appear to be "religious and right" in his or her own eyes does not mean that they are of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, people with personal agendas that include them being exalted somehow are wide open to religious spirits, and such will look for a platform in which to operate where they can be seen, heard, and gain a position for themselves that others may deem as "indispensable." This is very dangerous. We have witnessed more than one church split because of religious spirits that have worked their way into positions that give them power to delude, deceive, and call attention to themselves as "experts" or "authorities" on a matter. In addition, through the years most of the people we have met with a so-called "deliverance ministry" needed deliverance themselves from religious spirits.

When religious spirits are involved with worship, which is not uncommon in our experience, you can discern them by asking yourself the following questions: 1) During worship, when you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, and your heart enters into true worship in Spirit and truth, is it suddenly interrupted, cut off, and stifled by a leader who habitually draws your attention to themselves? 2) Does a religious person make you feel like you are being talked down to, or “pushed” to believe or perform a certain way? 3) Does the spirit in a person make you feel inferior, while giving the impression that they are superior? 4) Is there something about a “super religious” person that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous, agitated, confused, or robbed? 5) What does their fruit consistently say about them? 6) Do they jealously guard their “position,” fearing any competition? 7) Are they controlling?

How does a person end up with a religious spirit? Here is a list of some of the ways this can take place: 1) When a Christian resists making Jesus LORD of all because he or she still wants to call the shots in his or her own life, and simply plays the game. 2) Pride. *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” 1 John 2:16.* 3) Adapting to the “Christian culture” because it serves their purpose without ever coming to true repentance and salvation. 4) Using religion as a means to exalt self. 5) Having a religious façade as a means to cover sin. 6) Idolatry—putting self and one’s personal causes and agendas above God. 7) The wrong laying on of hands.

The wrong laying on of hands is something every believer should be acutely aware of. For example, remember the “Toronto Blessing” movement? Many years ago, when the Toronto Blessing phenomenon was in full swing, several women who had gone there to receive their “blessing” came to us for ministry. I was shocked and horrified as they filed through the door of our house in eastern Idaho, for one look into their eyes and I knew a huge battle was about to take place. One lady kept folding her arms across her stomach, loudly groaning, grunting, and doubling over. All of them had

weird, ungodly and, to be honest, scary manifestations of powerful demons which they had received at the so-called “blessing” debacle. In their religious zeal (without knowledge) they had opened themselves up to major religious spirits that had to be cast out.

At an earlier time, a young missionary to India and his wife came to our office in Washington. They had visited a mega church pastured by a world-famous pastor (now deceased). At that time, the pastor’s wife laid her hands on the missionary and prayed for him. Immediately he felt his great love and desire towards the Word of God lift and disappear. Struggle as he might, he could no longer read or study his Bible. This woman had, through the laying on of hands, imparted a powerful spirit on him that greatly hindered him in his personal life with Christ and his ministry. He was utterly distraught, but after prayer and deliverance, he was set free from the spirit, and returned to his passion and ministry.

Years before this incident, a friend of mine was concerned for her teenage son. They lived on an Indian reservation, and her son’s closest friend was a young Indian boy. This boy was deep into witchcraft and the occult because of the “power” that he was supposedly given. (Demons may grant people enough power to deceive and delude them, but in the end, their victims discover to their great horror that they have no power at all.) One day the boy took my friend’s son to his house, laid hands on his head and said, “I want you to have the same spirit I have.” Immediately an evil spirit was imparted to him that caused a great deal of angst and trouble for my friend and her son.

The Bible warns us about the wrong laying on of hands. It is very powerful and very real. If we are ever caught in a situation when someone with the wrong spirit lays hands on us, we instantly rebuke it and come against it in the name of Jesus.

While this short article touches on the religious spirit, there are many other spirits that Christians need to beware of, examples of which are in the Bible. When did we, in America, become so sophisticated, so special that we dismiss demons as quickly as we would a gnat zipping past our nose?

The question is, can a person operating with a religious spirit be truly set free from it? The answer is, yes, *if* religious pride is genuinely repented of in brokenness, bringing about (as Charles Finney would say) true conversion. This means being converted to the ways of righteousness. Without humility there can be no agreement with God at any point. (An excellent little book on this subject is *Humility* by Andrew Murray.) Pride is an open door for not only a religious spirit, but a host of other hindering spirits. Satan fell through pride, he tempted Eve through pride (to be “as gods”) and he tempted our Lord in the same manner, but to no avail. Jesus had one goal, and that was to obey the Father. Surely, if we are to walk in a manner that is pleasing to God, then that should be our priority as well.

If we are to survive great spiritual deception in these latter days, then we must pray for discernment! We must gain understanding and wisdom through the fear of the Lord, love for truth and God’s Word, and be ever ready to repent of our sins, either of commission or omission, pride, self-will, rotten attitudes, and unbelief. Our churches in America are in the mess they are in today because of a lack of preaching against sin, and overlooking discernment of spirits and the false doctrines that they promote. God still has his remnant of true believers, and godly pastors, who love Him; nevertheless, how many churches are truly Christ-centered rather than man-centered, and know how to worship God in Spirit and truth? How many can discern between what is of the flesh, what is of a religious spirit, what is of the world, as opposed to what is in reality of God? There can be no true revival if our churches insist on doing business as usual. If the Spirit is not clearly moving upon hearts and lives in humility and repentance, each body of believers must step back and discern why the Holy Spirit is not landing, confirming, saving, and reviving souls. Perhaps in such examination, each ineffective body will remember the commission and once again catch the flame of the Holy Spirit to burn brightly in these end days. ✠

## RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

### WHO FAILED?

**Q:** *"That verse in the Bible, Psalm 37:4 which says, 'Delight yourself in the Lord; and he shall give you the desires of your heart' is simply not true. I know because I am a Christian and no desire of my heart was ever granted by God. I have had nothing but problems all of my life. So, how do you explain that?"*

**A:** *Romans 3:3-4 is clear, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."* In short, you may feel you have a right to call God a liar because He did not give you what you desired, but the Bible is clear that you need to judge such contrary conclusions about God as being lies, and whatever God has declared you must say to it "Amen, so be it, for it is so!"

The problem with your deceitful conclusion is that it is based on ignorance towards God and not faith towards Him. It is important to point out a couple of facts. First, *Psalm 37:4* is a promise. Promises of God have conditions attached to them. *Hebrews 6:12* declares, *"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* God's promises are not obtained overnight. The significance of being patient is that it points to unwavering faith that keeps advancing towards coming into a specific promise of God. The faith walk speaks more about the importance of the journey than the promise. The reason for this is because walking by faith allows a person to discover God in greater measure, for a revelation of God is at the end of every one of His promises.

Secondly, this brings us to the actual condition. We are commanded to first, "delight ourselves in the Lord." Clearly, in order for the Lord to give us the desires of our heart, we must first delight ourselves in Him. What does it mean to "delight" ourselves in the God of the Universe?

According to *Strong's Exhaustive*

*Concordance*, "delight" in the Scripture points to one being soft or pliable. Clearly, "delight" in this Scripture means to have a proper attitude towards the Lord, and being tender before Him. How can one delight in someone whom he or she is not tender towards? To approach God in hardness due to personal agendas and unbelief, in arrogance because of self-serving ways, or in casualness due to lack of respect and ingratitude will not end in delight for either party.

This tenderness also points to being effeminate, which is marked by delicacy or over-refinement. The reason we are to be delicate in attitude and approach is because we realize the only way we can delight ourselves in Him is when we bring delight to Him.

The only reason God can answer the desires of our heart is because they are His. He is the One who puts the right desires in our heart so that He can honor them. However, they can only be revealed when we seek to delight Him by doing His will. In summation, these desires will line up to His will. We are told by *1 John 5:14*, that He can only answer the prayers that are in line with His will. It is for this reason that it should be the heart desire of every Christian to seek out God in order to delight in doing what is right, acceptable, and perfect to Him.

If your desires are so important that you have slid into a state of unbelief towards God and now are judging Him because He has not bowed down to them according to your standards, I suggest that you begin to delight the Lord. In order to bring delight to Him, I would suggest that you discern the real spirit behind your attitude towards Him, repent of any unbelief and a possible angry attitude. In other words, admit that it is not God who has failed you in His promise; rather, it is you who have failed to meet the required holy conditions of His promise. Keep in mind these conditions are what ensure a right environment. A right environment will maintain the integrity of our attitudes towards God, as well as a healthy relationship with Him. †

*There is a vast difference between being a song leader, and being a worship leader.*

## QUOTES FROM A.W. TOZER

The purpose of God in sending His Son to die and rise and live and be at the right hand of God the Father was that He might restore to us the missing jewel, the jewel of worship; that we might come back and learn to do again that which we were created to do in the first place—worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, to spend our time in awesome wonder and adoration of God, feeling and expressing it, and letting it get into our labors and doing nothing except as an act of worship to Almighty God through His Son Jesus Christ. I say that the greatest tragedy in the world today is that God has made man in His image and made him to worship Him, made him to play the harp of worship before the face of God day and night, but he has failed God and dropped the harp. It lies voiceless at his feet.

Worship also means to "express in some appropriate manner" what you feel. Now, expressing in some appropriate manner doesn't mean that we always all express it in the same way all the time. And it doesn't mean that you will always express your worship in the same manner. But it does mean that it will be expressed in some manner.

And what will be expressed? "A humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder." It is delightful to worship God, but it is also a humbling thing; and the man who has not been humbled in the presence of God will never be a worshiper of God at all. He may be a church member who keeps the rules and obeys the discipline, and who tithes and goes to conference, but he'll never be a worshiper unless he is deeply humbled. "A humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe." There's an awesomeness about God which is miss in our day altogether; there's little sense of admiring awe in the Church of Christ these days. —Excerpts from TOZER ON THE ALMIGHTY GOD

*"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24*