

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH ~ MAKING DISCIPLES ~ EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR MINISTRY

CURSES OR BLESSINGS—Part 3 **Discipleship Series** **By Rayola Kelley**

Most people think of Christianity as a belief system. However, this is a grave misconception. Christianity is the way we must live our lives as born-again saints. But, what does it mean to live our lives according to a heavenly calling and example? Since living is something that is a normal thing to do, most rarely think about what it truly means to experience life. The truth is there are various factors that determine how one will live his or her life. We are going to consider them.

Perception: We live our life according to our personal perception. Within this perception one will discover his or her disposition or state. In this state, attitudes are reflected, emphasis realized, agendas preferred, and priorities pursued. Each person possesses an attitude about God. This is why as Christians we are told to have the mind or attitude of Christ to ensure a right inner state. We have an emphasis as to what we will consider to be important. The Apostle Paul clearly established the main emphasis that every saint should possess: to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified. We have our personal agendas that determine our focus and priorities that influence what we pursue. The Bible is clear that our focus must be heavenward on Jesus, and we must pursue the type of life outlined in Scripture.

Desires: Desires are what often drive or motivate us. Most desires are attached to fleshly appetites and worldly attractions. After all, they will influence our preference, as well as the direction and focus of our affections. Ultimately, undisciplined desires can lead to covetousness and obsessions. The Bible encourages us to covet what God has ordained and become consumed with the desire to know Him. These activities point to faith. It is vital that we discern where our true confidence lies.

Light: The topic of faith brings us to the next subject: personal understanding. We either walk according to our personal understanding or according to our faith towards God. The Bible warns us that in our fallen state we prefer to walk according to our own darkness or understanding. Keep in mind that light points to the type of life that is in us. Whether we believe it or not, we walk according to the life that we possess. Such life represents what is natural to us. We are either bent towards our personal preferences or we are lining up to the eternal perspective of Jesus Christ. The Bible reminds us as believers that we are to be children of the light; therefore, we need to walk according to the life of Jesus in us. This requires us to not walk as fools, but circumspectly in a wise fashion, redeeming the time for the days are evil (*Ephesians 5:8-16*).

Environment: Another determining factor is what we expose ourselves to. We are in the world, but as saints we need to separate ourselves from the influence of the world. The world will actually desensitize us to its profane ways. It will condition us to accept its value system and philosophies. The challenge for most Christians is that much of the world is neither good nor bad, but if the matters of the world become a Christian's emphasis and pursuit, it becomes idolatrous. Once a Christian comes into agreement with the world, he or she will come under the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world simply works disobedience within people towards the matters of God.

This brings us to the quality of life. Depending on the type of life we choose will determine the type of character our life will take on. We know that real life comes from God. Life outside of God is simply a form of existence. In this existence people attempt to find some type of purpose to life. They seek identity in worldly relationships and material stuff. They seek importance according to the world's various presentations. They work for recognition so they can feel

good about themselves. However, such a feeling is temporary. They must therefore, continue to seek for such acknowledgement that will ultimately prove to be useless or empty. This is why Solomon summarized in *Ecclesiastes* that the activities of life that are pursued in light of the existence of this present world will prove to be vain. After all, worldly pleasures are temporary, for the activities of the world have no eternal value to them, and its ways lead to destruction.

God brings the issue of life to the forefront for the children of Israel in *Deuteronomy 30:19*: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live." Consider how God established that there is a record that He indeed set before the children of Israel concerning the ways of life and death. The quality of our life is associated with blessing, and the broad path of death with curses. God exhorted His people to choose life so they could actually live it. Such a life does not merely exist in this present world; rather it is experiencing the type of life God has ordained for His people.

Unbeknown to us, every day we are making life and death choices. We are either choosing the way of blessings or the way of curses. Again, blessings and curses stipulate the quality of the life we live. Let us consider how the quality of these two diverse environments will manifest themselves.

Let us begin with curses. Curses point to a life of contempt. Instead of appreciating it, one will despise his or her type of existence. It will be a life that will not be esteemed or desired. It will be considered vile and hard. Needless to say, curses point to the ways of death.

God clearly explains the ways of death in *Deuteronomy 27:15-68*. As you study the concept of curse, you will realize that God is simply withholding His blessings. The reason for God to withhold His blessings is because man has lightly esteemed Him. He has proven to be rebellious and treacherous towards God's commandments and covenants.

This brings us to the subject of blessings. Blessings imply that which benefits the well-being of a person. Such benefits point to prosperity, happiness, contentment, and pleasure. Therefore, all that is beneficial to man's well-being comes from God. *Acts 17:28* gives us this insight: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

We cannot live, move or have our very being without God. Everything that sustains our physical existence and our inner life comes from God. *James 1:17* says: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Sadly, man thinks that he is the one who acquires worldly possessions to better his life in some way, while failing to recognize that all such blessings come from above. If God was not blessing man's work, activities or accomplishments, he would have nothing to show for his labor. Since man sees himself as providing those things that prosper his life, he will prove to be a fool in the end, as he fails to bless God in awe, adoration and worship for his many blessings.

Obviously, God blesses, but in what way? There are actually two types of blessings. There are worldly and spiritual blessings. It is important to understand how these blessings work. The first blessing is worldly blessings. God blesses man so he can live. He provided his need and opportunities to function in this world. However, in this arena, blessings are not meant to heap upon self. In fact, when man seeks life in such possessions, he will end tasting the vanity of this world. Jesus said: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (*Luke 12:15*).

Jesus is saying that our possessions cannot bring us well-being. When God prospers a person in the arena of physical possessions it is so he or she can turn around and bless others. You see this principle through the Law. The people of Israel were to help the widow, the fatherless and strangers. They were to be liberal in their support of God's servants and

work. God even established that His people would enjoy such fruits of their liberal giving when it came to providing for their different religious celebrations.

The second type of blessings are spiritual (*Ephesians 1:3*). As you study the different covenants of God, you can see that they were made up of promises. These promises were conditional. In other words, the people had to keep their end of the covenant in order to experience the fulfillment of God's promises in their lives. What flowed from these promises were God's blessings. However, the greatest type of blessing that could be obtained were the spiritual blessings. These spiritual blessings proved to be far more reaching than the worldly blessings.

For example God's covenant with Abraham involved bringing forth an earthly nation. But, the spiritual blessing that flowed from Abraham's life in God was of far greater significance. It is found in *Genesis 15:1*: "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward." The real blessing that flows through God's many promises is God Himself. Abraham had the great privilege and opportunity of knowing his Creator in an intimate way. Knowing God in such a way means that His people possess the blessing of His incredible life.

Possessing God caused Abraham to acquire a vision that took him beyond the physical realm into the spiritual. This caused him to see that his real hope was not in God fulfilling earthly promises, but in realizing the spiritual blessings that were clearly attached to having a relationship with Him. *Hebrews 11:10* gives us this insight about Abraham: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

God establishes a place of covenant in order to fulfill His promises to His people. His people inherit the promises through faith (*Hebrews 6:12*). It is by faith that God's people fulfill the responsibility of the covenant by walking it out in obedience. Out of such obedience flow the spiritual blessings. For example, God's people prosper when they are rich in faith (*James 2:5*). They know contentment by being godly (*1 Timothy 6:6-7*). They experience lasting happiness when God is truly their God (*Psalms 144:15*). Lasting

pleasures are attached to His presence being in the midst of them. King David summarizes this blessed life in this way: *Thou wilt show me the path of life; In thy presence is the fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*" (*Psalms 16:11*).

There is great inner satisfaction in gaining and possessing such life in our Lord. King David understood this when he stated: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness" (*Psalms 17:15*).

It is clear our life must be in God, knowing that it is contrary to the existence we often seek and obtain from this world. The world stands cursed in its wicked ways. Regardless of the riches it brings, the temporary happiness it offers, and the useless pleasures it promises, the things of the world will lead to spiritual ruin for those who pursue them. In *Galatians 3:13-14* we are told: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

People must choose God's life to ensure they do not stand outside of His promises. Outside of God is a cursed life that leads to judgment, ruin and destruction. In Christ we meet God at the point of the new covenant secured by Christ in order to inherit His promises and experience heavenly blessings.

What about you? A lot of people are seeking the blessings of this present world, rather than the unseen blessings of heaven. Some are running around claiming to be blessed when they are really outside of God's promises. The key is that as His people we should desire the unseen blessings of heaven. These are the blessings that make an impact on our lives for eternity. If you have not chosen life so that you can truly live in the light of His eternal blessings, now is the time to do so. You must come into the place of the new covenant by recognizing your sin has separated you from God, who has provided Jesus Christ as a sacrifice on your behalf. By receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior, you will place yourself in His hands as your owner, and He will deliver you from the old way to experience the new, everlasting way of His life.

A WORM IN THE APPLE

By Jeannette Haley

Someone once said that what is worse than finding a worm in your apple is finding half a worm. Either way, nobody wants to take the risk of biting into an apple that could possibly harbor a nice, juicy worm. When it comes to putting produce on our tables, and in our stomachs, we want the best we can find.

Amazingly, it's a different story when it comes to what many (and I do mean many) people partake of spiritually. People, who are usually discerning and picky about physical fruit, seem to have lost, not only common sense on the one hand, but any real knowledge and understanding of what God's Word says about spiritual fruit on the other. It's beyond me why anyone would rather eat the worm than enjoy the good fruit.

I suppose, however, if people are brainwashed long enough into believing that the real deal is in the worm rather than in the apple, they will gladly check out their brains and go with the flow. It's a truly frightening thing to behold how easily people can be led astray, and that includes you and me. If you think that you can't be deceived, you're deceived already.

If you don't believe that, consider the *millions* of devotees and followers of Jim Jones, David Koresh, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell, Ellen G. White, "Reverend" Moon, the Pope, and Mohammed, not to mention Hitler and others of his ilk who litter the pages of history with their bloody atrocities.

We are definitely living in the end days, days when Paul's prophecies to Timothy that *"the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"* and, *"the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"* 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 1 Timothy 4:1. When it comes to the devil and his doctrines, he is the world's best expert at convincing people that the worm is the genuine "fruit of the Spirit." Any other biblical definition is, after all, just the "old wineskin"

that must give way to the "new." Obama and Oprah Winfrey aren't the only ones promoting "change." It's been happening within the church world for decades. The question is how many Christians today are truly willing to step outside of their carnal comfort zones and *humbly seek God's perspective about all the ungodly garbage that's going on?*

As for the "old wineskin," just what do these peddlers of false prophets and doctrines of devils mean anyway? It may sound exciting to those who, for one reason or the other, are always looking for some new, exciting "wave," but have any of them stopped to define what Jesus was talking about concerning the "old wineskin?" Simply put, the "old wineskin" represented the old covenant (of the Old Testament) giving way to the new covenant, given to us by way of Christ's blood. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance"* Hebrews 9:14, 15.

"But" argue the defenders of every false prophet and so-called revival, "look at the power, and all the people, and the *fruit!*" As touching the power, Jesus warned, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?"* Matthew 7: 21, 22. (Emphasis added.) The key is not in the supposed "power" of "signs and wonders" but in knowing Jesus (the Jesus of the Bible) and doing the will of the Father.

As for multitudes of people, and even worldwide acclaim, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that God is not impressed with numbers. In fact, Jesus declared, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* Matthew 18:20. Note that the condition for Jesus being in the "midst" is coming together *in His name*. This means that there is agreement as to who Jesus

is—the Jesus of the Bible, His work, and character in order to come together in truth and the right Spirit. If people meeting together do not come in the right spirit according to who He is, then they are as those who will cry out "Lord, Lord, in your name..." who shall be eternally damned.

Concerning the exclamations of "fruit" being produced by false workers of false revivals, my question is *what fruit?* Can we accept this argument at face value, without first determining the essence and validity of such "fruit" in light of Scripture?

John the Baptist minced no words when preaching about fruit. He said, *"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance...every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire"* Matthew 4:8, 10b. The basis of true revival always has been, and always will be, true repentance. Jesus gave an example of true repentance in His parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. (See Luke 18:9-14.) True repentance involves brokenness over one's fallen state, deep conviction of one's unworthiness before God, humility and lowliness of mind, sobriety and recognition of one's utter inability to show forth the glory of God, and confession of sins committed and omitted. Bringing forth good fruit that is acceptable to God is only possible through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in and through one's life as one seeks to walk in obedience to Him. True repentance involves mortifying the flesh (the old man), and through obedience putting on the new man, while working out one's salvation in fear and trembling. (See Philippians 2:12.)

The evidence of the new creation in Christ is the fruit of the Spirit. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"* Galatians 5:22, 23. Note that this is the fruit of the *Holy Spirit*, not our natural spirit. This fruit is the life of Christ being worked in and through our lives, not something that we pretend to possess when others are watching us. The fruit of the Spirit is not an instant or temporary result of an emotional or fleshly event, but it is lasting fruit as long as we walk in obedience to Christ, for it is His life coming forth. And, this life is always in line with the Word of God in Spirit and Truth. The regenerating work of the

Holy Spirit cannot take place if we insist on defining, and redefining God and His ways according to our own fleshly preferences, ideas, perceptions, platitudes, and imaginations. God is Who He is: immutable (unchanging), omnipresent (everywhere present), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). He is the great I AM, and He is not, nor will He ever be, subject to the wicked whims of mere men who refuse to acknowledge Who He is as revealed in the Holy Scriptures while making Him out to be the ringleader of a "spiritual circus" for man's entertainment and fleshly benefit. There awaits a fiery judgment on all who hold the truth in unrighteousness. *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" Romans 1:18.*

Therefore, when people defend false prophets, movements and revivals with the cliché of "check out the fruit," they hope to silence those who discern differently. Again, the question is "what fruit?" The fruit of the Spirit, as defined by God's Word, or is there another definition of "fruit?" The souls of people being saved, edified, and established in the faith is real fruit. Bearing the likeness of Jesus Christ is the real fruit of the Spirit. If the real Jesus of the Bible is not being lifted up and honored according to who He is, and "another Christ" is being exalted, what is the nature of this so-called fruit? The answer to that is a substitute or antichrist spirit.

Such a spirit will appeal to the flesh. It is sensual, worldly and unholy. This prideful spirit mocks that which is true, pure and holy while redefining the clear intent and meaning of the Word of God. It seeks to alter people's perception of God, making Him into a modern, hip, politically correct and congenial being that operates outside of the known perimeters of God's Word. This counterfeit spirit deceives through psychological conditioning, mass hypnotism, lying signs and wonders, and, much to the horror of discerning Christians, demon possession.

The Bible clearly spells it out that in Christian assemblies, *"Let all things be done decently and in order" 1 Corinthians 14:40.* Why? Because *"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the*

saints" 1 Corinthians 14:33. How can 45 minutes or more of ear-splitting music with everyone frantically jumping up and down be glorifying to Almighty God in heaven—the LORD who calls us to peace, decency and order? How can this be the fruit of the Spirit?

Concerning the "new thing" that we always hear about every time another unknown "false Christ" (meaning a so-called "anointed one") comes on the scene, what is the spirit behind it, and where is it leading people? Is there really going to be a big worldwide revival in these last days where millions of people turn to Christ? Not according to my Bible. Instead we are told that evil men shall become worse and worse, that truth will fall to the streets, deception will be great, false prophets and teachers shall abound, that the night is coming when no man can work, that the love of many will grow cold, and that Jesus will return to a world with little, if any, faith.

The Apostle Peter tells us what God's people are to be like. Take heed to what he wrote: *"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" 1 Peter 3:11, 12 (emphasis added).* Did you catch that? *Holy and godly.* There can be no holiness or godliness without having "put on Christ" in all humility, and reverence, with no respect of persons, love for the world and the ways of the world including the defining marks, music and practice of paganism. God is not, never has been, and never can be, in any such perversion, regardless of how "big" it may be, or how "exciting" it may be, or how "popular" it may be with its ungodly acts, attitudes, actions, activities and acclamations. God is *not* in it.

But, Satan is. Consider the following excerpts from a report by Jan Markell of Olive Tree Ministries, <http://www.olivetreeviews.org/> concerning another "wave" of so-called revival that is taking place as I write this:

FOOTPRINTS OF A PROPHET OR TRACKS OF A WOLF?" I am writing the "inconvenient truth" today. I have been blitzed with e-mails about the Todd Bentley "revival" in Flor-

ida. Before you fall for his stories and "signs and wonders," please allow me to make some comments. I realize this will not be received well by many.

This is a Charismatic happening called the "third wave." The "first wave" was Toronto, and it fizzled out. The "second wave" was Pensacola, and it had the same fate. Now Bentley has brought in the "third wave," and folks are coming from around the world for the "anointing." Even the Charisma Magazine editor Lee Grady says --sounding a warning -- "My inbox has been full of messages from Charismatic leaders who are concerned about everything from Bentley's tattoos and body piercings to his claim that he once interviewed the apostle Paul in Heaven. When I called for scrutiny of some aspects of the Lakeland Revival, I was labeled a Pharisee and a 'religious policeman.' I had suddenly become the enemy."

Who is Todd Bentley? He is an ex-Satanist, a pierced and tattooed signs and wonders guy, and a man who gets messages from angels, particularly one named Emma. He does not open the Bible and preach. When he is "under the anointing" he can cause tumors to "explode," he says. The Holy Spirit told him to kick a lady in the face with his biker boot so he did so. If he tries to deal with someone he thinks might be demonized, he gets nothing short of violent, virtually choking a man he is trying to exorcise. He also gets violent when he uses the word "bam."

As Mike Oppenheimer from Let Us Reason says, "Instead of people getting saved, they are getting lost--by listening to a man's experiences of the supernatural that are unbiblical and untrue."

Oppenheimer continues, "This revival has all the spiritual sensations and activities of the other revivals combined: Roaring, groaning, burning sensations in the body, head, and stomach; shaking, jerking, spiritual drunkenness and uncontrollable laughter and then some new manifestations. People have their eyes rolled back in the back of their heads. There are reports of women gyrating and pulsating like they've been ravaged from behind by some unseen force. Holy or un-holy may still be debated

by some but to those of us who are knowledgeable of the previous 'revivals' and the power of the occult, the jury is in. The source is not the God of the Bible. This may disturb some but if they will use their Bible, pray, and think it through, they will gain discernment and spiritual understanding."

The shakes, jerks, twitching, frozen stillness, laughter, animal sounds, and more have all been standard in other "revivals." The Florida Revival is nothing new but it is preying on young and new believers who do not know their Bibles. It is also preying on the desperate: Sick people who can find no medical help.

Critic Jacob Prasch says, "The crowds following Bentley are seen being overcome by ugly spirits of drunkenness and stupor. It reflects the faulty theology of those in 'the river' movement popularized by the so-called 'Toronto Blessing.' Song lyrics reflect Kingdom-Now visions of the church taking over all the elements of society and setting up a kingdom on earth before the Lord returns which the Bible contradicts."

Todd himself talks about the mad chaos--totally uncharacteristic of God. He says, "During a visitation, the pastor's wife got totally whacked by the Holy Ghost. She began running around barking like a dog or squawking like a chicken as a powerful prophetic spirit came on her."

The research site "Lighthouse Trails Research Project" reports that, "The following information will show Bentley's spiritual resonance with a man named Sundar Singh (1829-1929). At one point in Bentley's ministry, he had a vision of Sundar Singh. This vision influenced Bentley. According to the biographer of Singh, Singh spent much of his life in deep trance-like states communicating with spiritual beings." Through this he saw the "glories" of the spirit world. He combined East and West in his meditative disciplines. He had long hours of meditation and days of silence.

Bentley talks about himself being possessed by demons, undergoing a deliverance, his past Satanic worship, his mother levitating, and demons writing 666 on his cupboard in his kitchen.

It is hard to tell the difference between the words of Bentley and those of Satan! Todd says: "You see, I want to be fruitful; I want to be far above. I want to be a conqueror; I want to be a mountain of strength; I want to be greatness. You know, we like that word greatness. Well, he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High automatically comes into everything that the Almighty is. It happens." Sounds like Isaiah 14:12 - 14 to me.

Angelology plays a large role here. He talks to an angel named Emma and he says, "So when I need a financial breakthrough, I don't just pray and ask God for my financial breakthrough. I go into intercession and become a partner with the angels by petitioning the Father for the angels that are assigned to getting me money: 'Father, give me the angels in heaven right now that are assigned to get me money and wealth. And let those angels be released on my behalf. Let them go into the four corners of the earth and gather me money.'"

As reported by Jacob Prasch, "Bentley refers to his angel as 'the angel of the Lord' and also waits upon Emma for the signs and wonders to manifest. However, according to Bible scholars, the term 'the angel of the Lord' is an Old Testament reference to the pre-incarnate Christ, also called a Theophany. It seems that Emma is really overstepping her bounds to be referred to as 'the angel of the Lord.'" She is most likely a demon.

Bentley and his close friend, the exposed false prophet Paul Cain, look to disgraced "prophet" William Branham. Pentecostal pastor Bill Randles says, "The only problem was Branham's teaching. He had a few quirks, such as his belief that the doctrine of the Trinity was of the devil, his belief that the zodiac was as valid as the Word of God, and his unfortunate belief that he was the angel of the Church of Laodicea! When he died in a head-on auto crash in 1965, his followers were so obsessed with his 'works of power,' they delayed burying him for several months, hoping that he would be resurrected the following Easter! He was that GREAT!"

We are warned in the Bible that the devil will "transform himself into an angel of light," and that in the last days will come "lying signs and wonders"

that will deceive, if possible, the very elect" (II Thess. 2:9). Doesn't the Bible tell us that the devil is capable of the supposed "miracles" at the Bentley meetings? Tragically, many pastors are having hands laid on them to receive this "Florida anointing" and further spread this chaos.

So what started April 2, 2008, at Ignited Church in Lakeland, Florida, is now spreading everywhere. With today's death of discernment, guys like Bentley flourish and prosper. We are in a season of weak gospel-preaching as well. This longing for the signs and wonders of one man is but paving the way for the "man of sin," the "lawless one," the Antichrist. What many believe is the anointing of the Holy Spirit is really nothing but "kundalini power" which in sanskrit means coiled as a snake. You can watch Todd exercising this power: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUJAaThoH7w&feature=related]. You can learn much more in Caryl Matrisciana's brilliant film, "Yoga Uncoiled" as well as her film "Supernatural Powers" which deals with God's angels and fallen angels. [Order from Olive Tree Ministries, see link on GSM's Web Site.]

It says in II Timothy 3 that in the last days evil will wax worse and worse with men seducing, deceiving, and being deceived. Todd Bentley is a deceiver who is himself deceived. He will likely stand before the Lord some day and say, "But Lord, I did this all in Your Name." But he is exercising serpent-power, not Holy Spirit power.

Pray for Todd and the legions following him and believing every word out of his mouth. Pray that their eyes would be opened before they are further spiritually damaged. We are not trying to demonize Todd; rather, we hope to protect some sheep, which our pastors should be doing but many are not.

The day is coming when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" Romans 14:12. Therefore, "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.

Are you ready for that day?

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."
"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the

RAYOLA'S Q & A~~

IS GOD DOING A NEW THING?

Q: *I have been hearing how God is doing a new thing in a "so-called" revival happening in Florida, but there is great debate going on as to whether it is from God. Could you explain what it means for God to do a new thing?*

A: In Jeannette's article for this month she deals with the subject of this revival, and also makes reference to God doing a new thing. However, I will be glad to elaborate on this subject for your edification. There have been a lot of movements roll through Christendom that have been purported as "God doing a new thing" as mentioned in *Isaiah 43:19*. As you study all these different claims, you would have to conclude that God has been doing a "new thing" at least every five to ten years.

It is important to point out that God promised to do a new thing in the singular text, not in the plural. It was also clearly written to the people of Israel. "New" implies that God would do a fresh work that the people of Israel would not necessarily be familiar with. Sadly, many in Christendom have applied this term to every new movement that has gained popularity in the religious world. When you consider these "new things" that have dotted the religious terrain, many of them have conflicting results that appear to be faddish and temporary, often bringing division among Christians. However, the one thing they have managed to do is to condition people to accept, as well as pursue, the next "new thing" that hits the scene.

There is a simple test in which to properly discern these movements. Do they line up to and uphold the character, ways, work, and Word of God? God will never move outside of His holy character, His ways of righteousness, His main work of establishing man in His everlasting kingdom, and the complete counsel of His Word. The problem is that many do not know God, and as a result they do not understand His ways, recognize His work, and know how to rightly divide His Word.

Since people do not know God or

understand His ways, they fail to discern the work He is doing, and often accredit Him with work that is contrary to every aspect of who He is. God's work always builds on what has already been clearly established in Scripture. He works according to covenants that are legally binding, not movements that prove to be nothing more than a "flash in the pan."

When God made reference to doing a "new thing", it was in reference to establishing a new covenant. He stated that He would put a new heart, and His Spirit in people, enabling them to obey Him (*Ezekiel 36:26-27*). *Hebrews 10:16-18* makes reference to this by quoting some of *Jeremiah 31:31-34*: "*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*"

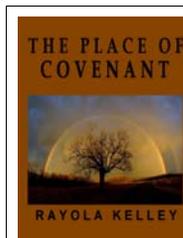
The new covenant that was established through the offering of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, on the cross actually fulfilled the intention and requirement of the old covenant of the Law (*Matthew 5:17-18*; *Romans 10:40*). After all, the Law addressed the depravity and end of all flesh, for it revealed the rebellion of man against God, as well as pronounced the judgment of death upon all in order to point man to God's ultimate solution. The new covenant represents a more excellent way in that man's sins could be taken away so he could be forgiven, saved, and restored back into a relationship with His Creator. The new covenant brings people under the influence of the Spirit of God as He enables them to realize the very life of Christ in their inner man. As the New Testament Church, we have been established according to this new covenant.

Since Christ is the fulfillment of the old covenant, and the essence of the new covenant, there is nothing more that can be added to it. As Jesus stated on the cross concerning His mission and work on earth, "It is finished!" Therefore, the concept of God doing a new thing these days is not in line with His immutable character, His way of drawing man to Himself through the preaching of the Gospel, His work of salvation on behalf of man, and according to the full counsel

of His Word.

As I have observed these "new things" or moves in Christendom, they clearly differ from what has been established by Scripture. For example, revival, not repentance is the main theme of many of these moves. Jesus' preaching was for repentance. Their emphasis is not Christ crucified, but signs and wonders. Jesus stated of those who sought signs and wonders during His time that they were an evil generation, and that the false Christ's and prophets in the end days would use signs and wonders to deceive many. Although the Holy Spirit is accredited with much of the activities that are occurring in these "new things", He is quite absent from all of it. The real work of the Spirit is to bring a powerful conviction of sin by exalting the real example of righteousness found in Christ. This allows Him to reveal the judgment that is already upon those who have not come to the truth of Jesus Christ's redemption.

My advice to people is to flee from anyone claiming that God is doing a "new thing." It is no doubt a counterfeit or poor substitute for the work that He has already completed. It is clear that the last new thing He did on behalf of His people was 20 centuries ago. It was clearly outlined in Scripture so man can recognize and embrace it with simple faith, and truly be saved from the harsh dictates of sin, and the sentence of death upon his soul.



THE PLACE OF COVENANT

You have heard how God is a covenant God, but how many believers understand the significance and purpose of covenant? *The Place of Covenant* reveals the importance of God establishing these binding agreements with His people. These agreements not only reveal His intention and plan for His people, but also His faithfulness and power to carry them out.

This book will bless and encourage you in your Christian life as you realize that your salvation is based on a new and everlasting covenant that assures God's abiding grace upon your life.

(Available as an e-Book soon!)