

# GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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## UNFEIGNED FAITH

### Part 4

#### Walking Towards the Promises By Rayola Kelley

What does it mean to walk by faith? We know it begins with believing something as being true. If you believe a matter, you will come into step with what it. We see this in the lives of Enoch and Noah. They came into step with God's will and purpose, and ended up walking with God. As a result, Enoch was translated out of this world and Noah was delivered from God's wrath.



What does it mean to come into step with the Lord? To answer this question we must consider Abraham. The one Scripture that best describes Abraham's faith walk is found in *Hebrews 11:10*, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

When God called Abraham out of his country, he had no real consensus as to where he was going. Granted, he had somewhat of an idea of the direction he was to head towards, but he had no concept as to what was before him.

This brings us to a very important aspect of faith. Faith is exercised in relationship to the unknown. Abraham was walking into the unknown. All he possessed at the time was the word and promise of an unseen God. Obviously, Abraham would not be walking by what he could see with the eye for his destination was not within his physical vision. He would not walk according to what he understood. He had no point of origin in which to understand what he would be seeing or experiencing. He could not walk according to any fanciful notions for he had no real expectations about where he was going.

Abraham went out of his known environment because he trusted God.

Abraham's faith in God is what allowed him to take the necessary steps forward into a new life. His confidence in God made his steps steadfast. His trust in God would keep him on the strait, narrow path of obedience. His assurance in God would ensure that in the end he would come to the Promised Land.

Most people want a blueprint before they tread into unknown territory. However, faith does not walk according to a blueprint, but according to the character, word, and promises of God. Faith does not walk according to the light of this world or even man's religion. In reality, the false, temporary, fading lights of the world and man create darkness rather than light. True faith always begins when personal and worldly understanding ceases. This is the beauty about faith. It does not depend on the light of this world; rather, it walks according to the vision and promises of an unseen world.

For example, even though Abraham was walking towards the Promised Land, his real focus or vision was on the unseen city made by the hands of God. He also understood what his real portion or inheritance was. It was not some stretch of land, but it was the Lord Himself (*Genesis 15:1*). Abraham would never see the physical promises come to fruition, but he understood the spiritual implication of following the God of heaven and earth. All real blessings and promises attached to Him were of a spiritual nature that reached far beyond this world. It is from Abraham's example that we learn that genuine faith does not walk according to the present age of understanding or enlightenment, but according to an unseen age that is yet to come in power and glory.

It is for this reason that Abraham serves as an example as to how unfeigned faith responds to God. Scripture tell us that it is faith that identifies us to the unseen kingdom and family.

The Apostle Paul put it in this way in *Galatians 3:6-9*, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they who are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Greeks through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."

We know that the children of Israel thought that their biological identification to Abraham made them exceptional. However, John the Baptist put their physical identification to the great patriarch in this way, "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (*Matthew 3:9*).

Even though the Jews rightfully had claim to the Messiah from a biological standpoint, they could not be identified to the spiritual heritage except by way of faith. We see in some cases, such as recorded in *John 8:31-47*, that Jesus rebuked them because they did not believe. Although they knew their God was unseen, they still related to His many promises on a physical level that outwardly complied to religious rituals, but lacked any real heart belief or revelation. Jesus stated that they would draw near to God with their mouths but their hearts were far from Him (*Matthew 15:8-9*). In *Malachi 2:17*, we read these words, "Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"

Words are cheap if they are not backed up with action. There are many words, claims and declarations among those who claim to be Christians, but what do their works reveal about them? God was wearied with idle, meaningless words that had no consideration for His righteous ways. Such disobedient people proved they did not believe Him. It is for this reason the Apostle Paul clarified

that the faith that leads to salvation is indeed a matter of the heart believing unto righteousness. Notice in what way the heart believes God, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).*

We know that God counts that which is inspired, compelled, or motivated by faith as being upright to Him. In spite of Abraham being born in the Adamic fallen race, he chose the way of faith. Each step of faith led him to the place where God was calling him. Every time Abraham adhered to God’s instruction, God counted his response as being upright and acceptable to Him. Since God counted Abraham’s obedient responses as being upright, He could in turn bless him. In the end, Abraham’s steps of faith would allow God to fulfill His very promises.

Faith not only advances us in our walk, but it will bring us to the place where God will be able to reveal Himself to us and fulfill His promises in our lives. The truth is, faith is always walking towards God in expectation of inheriting His promises.

It is important to follow Abraham in his faith walk. His example shows us how faith responds and where it will ultimately lead a person in his or her relationship with God. Let us now examine the journey of Abraham.

*Opened:* One of the things I meditated upon about Abraham was why God chose him from among all the other people who lived during his time. Perhaps *2 Chronicles 16:9* gives us an answer to this question, *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore, from henceforth thou shalt have wars.”* From this Scripture we can conclude that Abraham had the type heart that God could reveal Himself to in order to bring forth His plan of salvation.

*The Call:* God is always calling

people. We see Him calling out to Adam in the garden. He sent prophets to the children of Israel to serve as His voice. Twenty centuries ago, He sent His only begotten Son to communicate His heart and desire to the poor in spirit. We read in *Genesis 12:1* that the Lord spoke to Abraham. No doubt, His call went out to Abraham, and he heard His voice. His call for Abraham was to leave his present home for a land that He would show Him.

Jesus’ call has gone out to all who will hear. He calls for people to follow Him into a new life. He has called the blind and leprous people to come to Him. He has called the Zacchaeus’s of the world to step down and sup with Him. He invites people to drink from the wells of salvation.

*The Promise:* Genesis tells us the first thing that God spoke to Abraham after His call was the promise. God made a promise to Abraham that He would bless Him, make his name great, and that he would become a blessing to many others. Keep in mind that God was able to bless Abraham because of his faith. His name is great because of the faith he displayed. He became a blessing to those who follow in his footsteps of faith. In Abraham, we see the role that unfeigned faith plays in the lives of God’s people.

The promise that is being offered to all of us is that of salvation. We are saved by the grace of God through the small measure of faith that clings to the promise of eternal life. It is the same faith that enables us to pursue the untold, unseen blessings that are attached to eternal life.

*Obedience:* Faith responds in obedience. Abraham obeyed the voice of the Lord. He departed from his homeland. He left behind the old in order to embrace the new. Genuine faith in the Lord will always lead us away from the old. Each step of obedience will lead us closer to realizing the fullness of the new way or new life that we are being called to. As we embrace the ways of this new life, we will draw closer to the reality of the promises attached to the new life.

Scripture tells us that if we love Jesus, we will obey Him. *Hebrews 5:8-9* tells us that Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. Unfeigned faith cannot help but obey what it knows is true, right,

and pleasing to the One who is loved, honored, and worshipped.

*Separation:* Abraham experienced separation from that which would keep him from inheriting the new. His father had already died, but he had to separate from the home he had always known and most of his family to a new, foreign place. He would later separate from his nephew, Lot. He would be required to send his son, Ishmael and his mother Hagar away to pursue the integrity of God’s promise.

As believers, we are continually being separated from that which belongs to the old way of living. We cannot combine the old with the new without destroying the old and defiling the new, leaving us with emptiness and vanity.

*Detour:* Abraham was a man. We see him taking a detour. Instead of going to the Promised Land, he went to Egypt during a famine. God did not call him to Egypt. Although God protected Abraham in his foolishness, He did not speak to Him until he came back into line with God.

Like Abraham, we will take detours, but we will quickly learn the vanity of such steps. We must turn back in repentance to the place where we last committed all matters to God to ensure the quality of our walk before Him. We must never settle for Egypt when we have yet to discover the fullness of God’s promises.

The question is, have you settled for the vanity of Egypt (the world) or are you in line with that which God has promised you. Keep your eyes on Him as you trust Him to lead you into that which He has promised you. Perhaps you cannot see it, nor do you understand what it all means for it is foreign to you. But, what must not be foreign to us is God. We may be walking into the unknown, but we are walking according to what we know is true and trustworthy. We are walking according to the call and leading of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. †



## REGRET

By Jeannette Haley

It is hard to believe that another New Year is upon us. I don't know about you, but when I was a kid, December 26 was my least favorite day of the year because waiting a whole year for the next Christmas seemed like an eternity. However, as one grows older, time seems to speed up as each year passes, and we find ourselves wondering where the time has gone.

Many usher in the New Year with outlandish celebrations and parties, but I question, "Why"? I have never been able to figure out why people get so excited about going into a New Year, especially since the world is getting worse by the day. I guess you could call me the a "New Year's Eve Grinch" since my conclusion to all the drama and excitement about another New Year is the underlying expectation that most people have that the world is somehow going to get better, especially where they are personally concerned. Naturally, that feeling is most likely the perennial optimism most human beings seem to possess. However, we "Grinch's" know that by looking to ourselves, our "New Year resolutions," and the world for true happiness and well-being is just not going to pan out in the real world.

Nevertheless, there seems to be some sort of a "fantasy cloud" hanging over much of the world that gives the delusion of personal renewal on the first day of a New Year. It is as if all the "old" belonging to the outgoing year has been magically and permanently done away with, including one's personal failures, bad decisions, broken relationships, financial woes, inadequacies, unresolved issues, missed opportunities, stupid mistakes, and other miseries—and don't forget that little politically incorrect word—SINS. It all adds up to one big fat pile of regrets that another New Year cannot resolve.

Regrets fall into two categories. Up front, most people think of what they have done that they wished they had never done, which falls into the category of commission, or things committed. The other category, which is equally important, is those things that we should have done, but did not

do. The first consists of the sins of commission, and the second are the sins of omission. The Old Testament emphasizes the sins of commission while the New Testament emphasizes the sins of omission. King David understood the insidiousness of both when he wrote, "*Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD*" *Psalm 25:7*. I must admit, I have prayed that prayer right along with David many times.

David was even concerned about those things in his life that offended and displeased the Lord that he wasn't even aware of, and wrote, "*Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression*" *Psalm 19:12, 13*. In *Psalm 90:8* Moses, the great Lawgiver, acknowledged, "*Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*"

Arguably, not every regrettable thing a person does in his or her lifetime is necessarily a sin of either commission or omission. God's people do not get up in the morning and make a conscious decision to sin in whatever decisions they face that day. The rub comes, however, in the fact that regardless of how hard we may try to walk the way Jesus walked, we are imperfect human beings who are still in the process of being sanctified, or perfected. Bluntly put, we have not arrived at the point where we will never miss a beat in our daily lives. There will be things that we think, say, and do that are not in line with the Spirit of God within us, and there will be times when we overlook, or are insensitive, or downright oblivious to the needs of those around us. If we are truly God's people, then when those thoughts, words, and actions come forth, we will be checked (convicted) by the Holy Spirit in our spirit, and will be quick to recognize it for what it is, humble ourselves, repent, and do what is right. Otherwise, regret will begin to fester within us, giving a place for Satan to bring condemnation. God's will is always for reconciliation, but condemnation is a huge roadblock to reconcilia-

tion if it is not recognized for what it is, and the pride that often accompanies it.

I don't know about you, but in my own life, as I look back on these two avenues of regret, there is a difference in how I view the deeds committed as opposed to those I omitted. Naturally, I have done a lot of repenting. In addition, I must admit that many of the stupid decisions I made when I was younger was-- because I was young and stupid! I am sure some of you can relate. But, the times in my life when I omitted to do what was right which would have been an opportunity to express the love of God in the most simple, tender, loving, and kind ways because I was too self-absorbed, too busy, too insensitive, or too much in a hurry, bring not only sorrowful regret, but teach a poignant lesson. As God's people, James does not let us off the hook. He wrote, "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*" *James 4:17*. Have you given much thought to this admonition?

Being human, we all tend to think that it is the "big things" that we do that impress both God and man. This idea, however, originates in the world and appeals to our pride. God, however, sees all things, whether small or great, good or evil. Concerning those who work evil, it might encourage you who are horrified at the unabated wickedness taking place in the world today to know that the Lord says, "*Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? And who knoweth us* *Isaiah 29:15*? We read in *Ezekiel 8:12*, "*Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.*" For the righteous, knowing that God is aware of every hidden and secret thing that we think, say, or do, is a joy; but, to the wicked, it is a terror.

Jesus showed us by His example in both word and deed that it is the small things that are done in His name that are the Father's will. He said, "*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a*

*cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" Matthew 10:42. Consider Jesus, God Incarnate, stooping to wash the disciple's feet, who said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" John 13:14-17. The example that Jesus left us is that we are to humbly love and serve one another in practical ways. He made it abundantly clear that if we want to be great in God's kingdom, then we must be a servant of all. Some examples of true service are Mary, who anointed Him for His burial, the widow who gave all her living, and the women who ministered to Him. To neglect, or omit, the clear teachings and commandments of Jesus and the Apostles will bring deep regret to our soul, and anguish of heart for leaving undone that which should have been done, however seemingly small or insignificant. In the end, we shall be judged for it, as 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

The "love chapter" (1 Corinthians 13) makes it clear that regardless of how gifted, talented, intelligent, or what "great" faith we may possess, if we do not have charity (that is, love in action) we are nothing. *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" 1 John 3:18. God does not ask us to do "great things" for Him nor will He do "great things" through us if we neglect to be obedient in the small things. After all, His eye is upon the sparrow, so how much more does He see each of us, and what we do, or fail to do?*

Allow me to share a couple of examples of the "small things" from my past that I now know are as important to God as what could be considered by some as the "bigger things". What has come to mind lately still stirs me to tears. Many years ago, I visited

a nursing home with a small group of Christians who played music and sang hymns for the residents. At the close of the little service, and as we began to file out, a fragile elderly woman who was confined to her wheelchair, lifted her sad, imploring eyes to me and in a barely audible voice whispered, "Would you please just hold me for a minute?" Of course, I complied, but it never occurred to me just how deeply her lonely heart ached to feel human compassion through physical contact, and to be wanted, loved and protected. I often wonder if anyone else ever visited her, held her, and comforted her. I regret that in my busy life I did not set aside the time to return and seek her out.

Another incident that took place about three decades ago involved my closest friend (who suddenly left this world for her eternal home recently) and her husband. I lived in western Washington with my husband. Her husband, a logger, and mine (who worked at a pulp mill) depended on the logging industry for work. The earth-worshipping environmentalists were inching their way through the "system" until they managed to close down logging operations, and my friend and her husband suddenly found themselves scrambling to pay bills and put food on the table. His large inventory of logging equipment that he had to pay for suddenly became worthless.

In the meantime, the mill that employed my husband shut down; however, he was able to find employment in another mill that had not yet been closed down by environmental insanity. Thus, we were still financially doing well, and we continued to support our big church, and other ministries. In the meantime, my friend was finding day-old bread that a certain kind-hearted man brought to the foyer of our church for people in need. I am ashamed to say, but it took me several weeks before I realized that it was the responsibility of my husband and me to help them in their time of need. Instead, we were giving to an institution that spent money given for God's work on such things as new carpets and remodeled bathrooms that the church did not need. I began to wake up to the fact that organized

religion was failing to teach and live by biblical principles and examples. I regretted being so "heavenly minded that I was no earthly good" as the saying goes.

Around that same time, I was busy teaching painting, and producing paintings for Western Art Shows. The Holy Spirit impressed upon me to go visit two different people and share the Gospel with them, but I was trying to finish projects, so I put it off. I have to admit, I deeply regret to this day my disobedience to the Lord, for one person missed a sharp curve in the road, her car plunged into a lake, where she drowned. The other person, whom I knew and loved, suffered a heart attack and died on the way to the hospital. From that time to this, when the Lord lays someone upon my heart, I do my best to obey Him. Even though the Lord forgives us when we repent, nevertheless, we never forget those things that we do, or fail to do, that grieve Him. These regrets are a stinging reminder of how easily we can fail our Lord, and yet how gracious He is to forgive us when we repent.

The question is where would we all be if God had not sent His Son to be the sacrificial Lamb who shed His blood so that all of our sins can be remitted? What would we do if we had to bear the weight of all our sins of both commission and omission straight into eternity where we will see Him face to face and give an account of all of our deeds? Do you know Him, love Him, obey Him, and long for the day when He shall return to set up His everlasting kingdom? Is He truly your hope or do you look to another New Year to bring you peace, joy, and happiness in spite of the fact that our nation is being destroyed, and the whole world lies in darkness? The time has come to consider our ways, and turn our hearts to the Lord, for although we may suffer a little while for well doing, His promises remain true. Be encouraged, *"Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the*

*end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him" Psalm 37:34-40.*

As we enter this New Year, may we consign our regrets into the Lord's hands, learn from them, and then go on to live each day by God's Word. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13. †



## RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

### WHAT ABOUT GIVING?

**Q:** *I would like to know your take on giving. There are those who believe that churches, ministries, and ministers should not let their needs be known except to God. What do you think is the proper procedure in this area?*

**A:** I am aware of the different philosophies that Christians hold to in relationship to giving. We have been criticized by certain people when we have let some of our needs be known to our friends and supporters of this ministry.

I first want to state that I understand the confusion, misunderstanding, and suspicion that believers have concerning this subject. We all know that there are plenty of charlatans, imposters, and heretics fleecing the sheep and robbing the kingdom of God of resources. However, the Bible is clear that believers are to recognize, esteem, and support those who are living by the Gospel

and are investing in their souls. The laborers are worthy of proper support, and should not be muzzled or hindered in any way. We are to actually bear one another's burdens in love, as well as in submission to that which is worthy (Luke 10:17; 1 Corinthians 9:9-14; Galatians 6:2, 6; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7).

To me, the problem in the kingdom of God is that many people have an unrealistic attitude towards the work done on behalf of God's kingdom. People seem to have one set of rules for the world and an entirely different set of rules for those who labor in the harvest field of humanity. For example, there are those who perceive that God's servants should always work for nothing, yet they would never work for nothing. People have to pay their bills regardless of what vocation they are working in. In spite of what people think about God's kingdom, money just does not fall out of the sky nor does it grow on trees.

Although servants of God must first seek Him for their needs, the reality is that He has blessed others so that they can meet those needs. We see this in the case of the people of Israel. They were slaves, yet they left Egypt with the necessary goods to see them through the wilderness and build the tabernacle. God never blesses so His people can heap things on themselves. He blesses so that His people can bless others.

Another aspect of this subject that proves that Christians are not always realistic or practical in their ideas concerning the kingdom of God involves servants of God asking for help or making their needs known to the Body. James 4:3 says that since they did not ask, therefore, they did not receive. When you consider that God, who is all-knowing, requires us to make our needs known in prayer to Him, how can Christians be critical towards those who let other believers know about their personal or financial struggles? The Jewish people were asked to give in relationship to the tabernacle in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, when the churches were made aware of the famine in Jerusalem and the Apostle Paul's plight, they responded in a show of benevolent support. Note: these needs were made known in some way.

When I hear Christians criticizing churches, ministers, and ministries for making their needs known to the Body, I wonder how they would be able to criticize such a matter unless it was first made known to them. After all, man only knows in part. He walks in a very limited plane as to what he is able to perceive and know. Everything he knows and understands must be unveiled to him in some form or fashion. The reality is that we live in small worlds. The fact is, I usually do not know the needs of those I am involved with unless I am informed.

As Christians, we are not called to be critical towards those who have needs; rather, when we hear of a need, we have a responsibility to be open to whether or not God wants to use us to bear the burden of those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:2, 10). When Christians criticize people in their plight rather than humble themselves before God to seek His face about such matters, I often wonder if such individuals are hiding a critical, unloving spirit because they do not intend to help anyone except themselves.

I have no problem with servants of God making their needs known to the Body. We have had supporters ask us to let our requests be known so that they will know how to pray for us (Ephesians 6:18). We also trust that God is trustworthy to lay such burdens on the hearts of those who are open, receptive, and rich in faith as a means to express His love, thereby, bringing Him much deserved thankfulness and glory. †

### QUOTES FROM FENELON

Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul; we may preserve it in the midst of the bitterest pain, if our will remains firm and submissive. Peace in this life springs from acquiescence to, not in an exemption from, suffering. — Mankind, by the perverse depravity of their nature, esteem that which they have most desired as of no value the moment it is possessed, and torment themselves with fruitless wishes for that which is beyond their reach. — I would have no desire other than to accomplish thy will. Teach me to pray; pray thyself in me. — Discouragement is simply the despair of wounded self-love. †

## QUOTABLE

### REJECTING ALL ELSE Accepting Christ Means Rejecting All Else

"The notion that we enter the Christian life by an act of acceptance is true, but that is not all the truth. There is much more to it than that. Christianity involves an acceptance and a repudiation, an affirmation and a denial. And this not only at the moment of conversion but continually thereafter day by day in all the battle of life till the great conflict is over and the Christian is home from the wars. To live a life wholly positive is, fortunately, impossible. Were any man able to do such a thing it could be only for a moment. Living positively would be like inhaling continuously without exhaling. Aside from its being impossible, it would be fatal. Exhalation is as necessary to life as inhalation. To accept Christ it is necessary that we reject whatever is contrary to Him. This is a fact often overlooked by eager evangelists bent on getting results. Like the salesman who talks up the good points of his product and conceals its disadvantages, the badly informed soul winner stresses the positive side of things at the expense of the negative." - A. W. Tozer

"Half a dozen men on their knees for 60 minutes waiting upon the Lord with the absolute conviction that they have no answer, that their human ideas and programmes are ineffective and bankrupt - they will accomplish more than 50 men around a table discussing problems for a whole year." - Alan Redpath

[Born in England, the late Alan Redpath served as pastor of Moody Memorial Church in Chicago from 1953 to 1962.]

"It hurts to see others struggling even when you're in the middle of one of your own struggles but you want so badly to point them to Jesus as their only Answer...we fall so easily for the feel good, felt needs nonsense that's out there - that "new" Cross . . . a hungry heart will always be led to the River of Living Water that flows from Calvary." - Email

## COMMENTS FROM READERS

"I've greatly appreciated your website and articles over the years. I've even written to you once or twice, when I felt like I didn't have anywhere else to turn. I know that God is faithful, and that if He has been faithful to me, how much more will He be to you, who have done so much in His service. May the Lord bless you and your ministry." - Jerusalem

"I am so very thankful for your ministry! I would not be where I am today spiritually without you all. I will continue to keep you all in my prayers! The Lord bless you and keep you! - ID

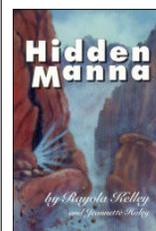
"I was up until 1:30 AM reading articles you have written! I think every person who claims to be a 'Christian' should have to read a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *The Cost of Discipleship*. I am sure you are probably familiar with it since you are an oddball for a modern American....'cause you actually READ!! Anyway, as I am sure you will agree, most folks in this country are too soft spiritually and physically to survive what's coming our way....perhaps very soon....Everyone is into "easy Christianity"....I enjoy your site....well done. - OR

"Some real questions that I have had were answered for me while reading the December newsletter. The answers were right there in plain sight, I just needed someone to highlight them and put them in perspective for me. So, I felt like God had heard me and answered some things for me. The first was concerning Abraham and the offering up of Isaac. I had believed it but had not understood it. Hebrews 11:17-19 answered my question and put things into perspective for me. I liked the statement: 'It does not live in denial of what is going on; rather, it faces the reality of a matter in order to walk through it in the strength and power of God.' I also appreciated Rayola's testimony of her early walk with the Lord and the valuable lessons she had learned. Faith in God pleases Him. Another question that has meant

something to me that I had put on the back burner was about Mary. While reading the comments from others in the newsletter concerning the church that separated the men and women, I pondered the fact that God chose Mary out of the lineage of David to give the Messiah. A woman. A humble woman. The world has perverted her role. But, I keep thinking that God does not think as we do. He does everything perfectly and according to His ways. Man just does not understand His ways nor can he unless God has His way in the person. The last thing that God answered for me came from your article [Jeannette's] concerning shekinah glory. I had done a study a long while back and got nowhere. It was interesting to me that "glory" means weight or heaviness. I need to meditate more on this. Dwelling of God's presence in their midst. Fire and smoke. 'And His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.' When it states that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. God is, what He states, He will do, it is already done. He is coming and we must be ready. We must know Him, love Him, commune with Him, we must have nothing that is not already dealt with so that there is nothing left undone when I see Him face to face. Faith responds in action, sees into the future, and expects the infallible word of God to happen." - ID

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