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# Onslaught of Ekklesia

A Christian Manifesto

Paul Bock

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## Acknowledgments

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Above all I thank my Savior and King. I look back on my life and am overwhelmed by how I don't deserve your love and mercy. Thank you for dying for me, and thank you for the gifts you have given.

To my beautiful wife Kelsey, thank you for waiting for me, for all your support over the years, and for your strength. You have been such a help in this little project. You truly are the essence of Proverbs 31, forever and always.

To my dad, thank you for always being an example of what a man who continually seeks after the Lord looks like.

To my mom, thank you for your patience and prayers, even when I wore plaid pants. Thanks for all the late hours you spent helping me with this.

And to my daughter, even now I see God working in you. I pray you grow to love him more each day, and that you're a brighter light for Christ than I could ever hope to be.

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## Introduction

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Patricia Heart of the Koinonia Institute said, “I really long and look for an increase of the gifts and fruit of the spirit in the life of the Bride. There is no distinction between a Biblically well-educated person and a secularly well-educated person except the content of their facts if the Holy Spirit is not at work. The Holy Spirit's gifts and fruit are what turned the world upside down. We need His work in the earth.”

I’m not a writer, nor do I pretend to be. I’m a much better speaker. Because I’m communicating this through the written word, you won’t hear my intonation. Plus, this is probably going to be the shortest book you’re going to read for a while. However, my prayer is that you hear my heart. We are family in Christ; and even though I don’t know you, you’re precious to me. My desire is to see every believer fulfill the mission God has laid upon each of our lives.

I would encourage you to begin with Acts 17:11. Paul traveled from Thessalonica to Berea and wrote of the Bereans, “Now these people were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (NASB). My encouragement to you is to be like a Berean, receive what has been written here with eagerness and an open mind, and take the time to pore over the Scriptures for yourself. As I said, this is going to be a fast read, but I hope you take the

time to study everything I say here and come to your own conclusions.

There's no other way to say it: for too long we have stood by as this world has turned into a wasteland. We scurry away from the battlefield in fear. We have living water but choose to hide and hoard the truth. The Messiah called us the light of the world. We are supposed to be a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Instead we maintain a flame the size of a candle hoping to God no one sees our light when we should be raging infernos that illuminate every place where we come into contact with the darkness. How can we continue to ignore the carnage right outside our doorstep? Our world fills to the brim with the blood of inconvenient children, with widows, the thirsty, the hungry, the damaged, the lost, the sick, the abandoned, and the despairing.

What Micah Kinard from the band Oh Sleeper said before, I ask of you now:

*“What keeps this family of fighters from facing the war that they were bred for?”<sup>1</sup>*

Our time on this earth is short. This conflict is coming to a head. I pray this book sets fire to your heart as a believer with a renewed love for the King. I also pray these insights ignite a movement within the body of Christ to take the message, power, and gifts of Jesus to the world. At this point in history, the body of Christ can no longer afford to live in the

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<sup>1</sup> Oh Sleeper. “The Color Theft.” *When I’m God*: Solid State Records, 2007

shadows. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14), and we have been called to fulfill the great commission (Mark 16:15).



## Chapter 1

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### *Let's Be Honest*

This chapter may seem rough—possibly even judgmental. Please know that this is neither my intent nor my heart. My goal is to expose some things in love, set a base so all things may be built up from a foundation of truth, and launch us toward new levels in our walk with Christ. I love the saying, “If you throw a rock into a pack of dogs, the one that barks the loudest is the one that got hit.” Maybe you feel these things don’t apply to you or your church. Great! What I pray is that we all self-examine to the standard of God’s word and that we are honest about where we are as the Ekklesia. Understand this also: I tie myself to all that I’m writing too, realizing how much I have failed my King.

Look at the church within the pages of Scripture. We see all they accomplished, all that was promised, and all that we are called to in the service to our King, but where do we see these things happening today? Like me, you may feel in your Spirit that something is missing within the body of Christ. Yes, there are pockets of believers who are sold out for Jesus, but they’re few and far between.

Right now, stop reading, take five minutes, and YouTube Underground Churches in China Rare Video Clip:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc2d66m4>

After watching these brothers and sisters, we cannot help but ask the questions, “What have we missed? What’s holding us back?” One word: Fear.

Let me be frank. We fear persecution. We fear losing our jobs, our standing, and what people may think. The fact is, if you walk out everything you’re called to as a believer, you will experience some level of persecution. This is a promise: “Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in union with the Messiah Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12).

The Gospel is an offense because, in order to accept it, we must acknowledge our sin. Christ makes it clear: “Everyone who practices wickedness hates the light and does not come to the light, so that his actions may not be exposed” (John 3:20). We as the light of the world bring exposure to the darkness and have the ability to show the lost true reflections of themselves. This is something the world does not want to see, so persecution is to be expected.

Allowing a fear of persecution to dictate our responses means that God takes a back seat to our pursuits. One example is the contrast between how we worship the Messiah and how we devour our sports entertainment.

We go to church and usually begin with fifteen to thirty minutes of praise. I don’t say, “worship,” because there is a stark contrast between praise and worship (praise can be insincere; worship assumes an intimate and transformative connection). We sit in the pews, sing songs, and muddle through the service with no real emotion or passion.



Of course it's hard to be passionate when we sing songs that are all about us! The issue isn't the music; the problem is the lyrics and what they do (or fail to do) in our hearts.

If you read the lyrics of most church music today, you can't help but notice that *we* are the subject of the song, not the Lord. And as we sing praises, there is unfortunately little to no outpouring of ourselves to the glorification of the risen King, the God of Heaven who purchased us with His own death.

Yet when our favorite team is playing, we'll raise our hands in the air, yell, scream, and throw our whole heart into the game for its duration. We can give detailed team, player, and game stats, but how many of us can show, using Scripture, why Jesus is Messiah? This is not a slight imbalance; this is unbridled idolatry! We identify with our teams, but not with Jesus.

Finally, in most churches, a three-point message is given for about thirty minutes that may stimulate the mind but will almost never be taken out into the world. The mind is tickled, but beyond that there's no real-life application except what's in it for us. We have completely diminished, even debased Scripture down to simple intellectual jargon that stimulates us to feel good about our present situation and who we are. We have turned God into Santa Claus and Scripture into a self help book.

We must remember that this is a war. It is a spiritual battle, and the costs are far beyond what we can comprehend. We must begin to acknowledge this. How can we expect to bring a message

of freedom to those around us when we are still bound by the very flesh we are supposed to die to?

One of the biggest issues within the body is that we don't die to ourselves, and worse, that we are seldom taught to do so. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Galatians 2:20 NASB). We act as though we don't know we are new creatures: "Therefore, if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and—look!—all things have become new!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Where is this change in us? Where is this transformation in us? Where is the revelation that brings the understanding that we are nothing, and Jesus through the Holy Spirit is working in and through us?

I read an astounding statement from Bill Johnson that I completely agree with after having been in the church for thirty-five years:

*"In the early church, if the Holy Spirit had been removed, ninety-five percent of its activities would have ceased. In today's church, if the Holy Spirit were removed, ninety-five percent of the activities would continue."*<sup>2</sup>

This should scare us!

We have become like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, to whom He said, "You examine the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me. But you

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Johnson, "Hosting the Presence," (Shippensburg, PA: Image Inc, 2016), 21.

are not willing to come to me to have life” (John 5:39-40).

We can learn and quote Scripture, and we may have a grand understanding of all the “-ologies,” yet our lives have not been changed. We have become carnally minded and hold Scripture low—not intellectually—but in its application, in the pursuit of our relationship with our King. We either pick and choose what we want to accept from the Scriptures and shrug off what makes us uncomfortable or we ignore the passages that disagree with our preconceived ideas.

We hold to God more as an acquaint-tance. Every now and then we hit the “like” button or post a comment to Him. He has become an afterthought rather than the essence of our lives. In Acts 17:6, believers held a reputation of having “...turned the world upside down...” right where they lived. Why? Because their whole lives reflected both their declaration and their relationship with Jesus. The unsettling part of this problem is that while most Christians believe we should evangelize and speak knowledgeably with non-believers, the vast majority of the body doesn’t—and in many cases cannot—carry out this task.

It’s time for us to take Scripture for what it is, believe what it says, die to ourselves, and carry out the great commission. Family, this is not to beat us up but to state clearly where we are. The beauty of this is that once we realize where we are, we can see where we need to go.



## Chapter 2

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### *Is God Serious about what He Has Spoken through His Word?*

Does it matter how we interpret Scripture? Everything we believe must be rooted and grounded in the word of God. We can't pick and choose what to believe but must believe what Scripture *actually* says. Obviously, there are idioms and metaphors in the text, so I'm not saying God has feathers (as in Psalm 91:4). But in order to establish how important it is to take the Word as it was written, let's examine some Messianic prophecies and how they've been fulfilled.

The Gospel is defined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: "...The Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." The Scriptures in Paul's day were what we now call the Old Testament.

We see the death of the Messiah by crucifixion in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. The foreshadowing of the Jewish Messiah through the story of Abraham and Isaac is beautiful in Genesis 22. We see a father willing to offer his son as a sacrifice. This is the first time the word *love* appears in Scripture.

In Numbers 21, the brass serpent is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Christ and hints at its purpose. The serpent represents sin, and brass represents judgment (because of its ability to survive fire). So, when Israel looked at the figure,

they saw sin judged. Jesus uses this model during His discussion with Nicodemus to prophesy His own death in John 3:14.

The prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the three days between Christ's death and resurrection are not as clearly defined. Jesus himself points to Jonah as a foreshadowing of the three days: "...just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea creature for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40). There are many three-day periods in the Old Testament like the examples of Jonah, Abraham, Isaac, and the *tola* (or scarlet) worm of Psalm 22.

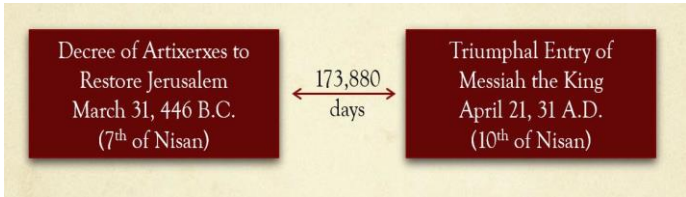
The weight of all these passages is incredible. They reveal the depth, beauty, and design of Scripture. More importantly, they demonstrate that God says what He means to say.

To drive this home, let's examine Daniel 9. Our concern is not the entirety of the seventy weeks mentioned in v. 24 but the sixty-nine mentioned in v. 25: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9.25 KJV).

The prophecy states there would be sixty-nine weeks from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah presented Himself. The word for *weeks* in Hebrew means seven, as a seven year period, much like we understand a decade to be ten years. It also must be understood that the biblical calendar

consists of 360 days. Thus, Gabriel gave Daniel the exact timeline for when the Messiah would present himself. Sixty-nine seven-year periods, each year with each year consisting of 360 days, gives us 173,880 days.<sup>3</sup>

Nehemiah states that the decree to rebuild the city came in the month of Nisan in Nehemiah 2:1. Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) gave this decree on March 31, 446 B.C. (the 7<sup>th</sup> of Nisan). The day Jesus Christ rode the foal of a donkey into Jerusalem, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9 and presenting Himself as the Messiah and King of Israel, occurred on April 21, 31 A.D. (the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan). From March 31, 446 B.C. to April 21, 31 A.D is exactly 173,880 days.



Amazingly, after Gabriel prophesied the moment in history that Messiah would present himself, he stated that the Messiah would be killed, "...but not for himself..." (Daniel 9:26), and that after His death, both the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed.

Luke wrote that when Jesus came near the city, He wept over it, saying, "...If you had known on

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<sup>3</sup> Sir Robert Anderson, "The Coming Prince," (New York, NY: Cosimo Inc.), Kindle Edition. Chapter 10.

this day, even you, the conditions for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will put up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground, and throw down your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation” Luke 19:42-44, NASB).

Did this happen? Yes.

In 70 A.D., the Romans destroyed both the city and the sanctuary, just as the prophet said. Why? Because “...you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”

Jesus held Israel accountable to know Daniel 9 and believe what was spoken. According to John 16:13, we even have the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth! Do we honestly think we will be held any less accountable for what has been written in the Scriptures?



## Chapter 3

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### *The Great Commission*

God has implanted a deep compassion for the lost within the hearts of men throughout the ages. The ramifications of an unsaved soul passing from this life to eternity is heartbreaking. The question is, why should you be concerned with evangelism?

Should you evangelize? Yes! Can you just live your life and let your actions speak instead of your words? No! Why? Because people are dying and going to Hell.

This fact is one we perform contortions to be able to ignore, but it should absolutely break our hearts. Hell is a real place filled with real people. What I want is for you to imagine the person you love most in this life, the person who means more to you than anything—they could be your spouse, a child, a parent, or a friend. After you read the next two quotes I want you to stop reading and imagine the people you love most enduring this suffering with as much detail as you can create in your mind.

*Thus it is in Hell; they would die, but they cannot. The wicked shall be always dying but never dead; the smoke of the furnace ascends for ever and ever. Oh! Who can endure thus to be*

*ever upon the rack? This word 'ever' breaks the heart.*<sup>4</sup>

Or consider this:

*The torment of burning like a livid coal, not for an instant or for a day, but for millions and millions of ages, at the end of which souls will realize that they are no closer to the end than when they first began, and they will never, ever be delivered from that place.*<sup>5</sup>

The thought of that person who means more to you than anyone else enduring such horror should be almost unbearable. To what lengths would you go to save them? With what intensity and vehemence would you work to keep them from walking off that cliff into an eternity apart from God? We should be taking that passion and turning it toward all those who are lost.

My fourth combat rotation, from 2011-2012, took me to Helmand Province in Afghanistan. We were twenty-seven days from coming home when my team was hit with a command-detonated daisy chain IED that killed our EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) technician. For four months, I had the

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Watson cited by Norman Pittenger, "Freed to Love: A Process Interpretation of Redemption," (Wilton, Conn: Morehouse-Barlow), 83.

<sup>5</sup> George Whitefield cited by Richard Hofstadter, "America at 1750: A Social Portrait," (New York: ACLS History E-book Project, 2004), 240.

opportunity to witness to him but never said a word. I don't know if he would have accepted Christ, but the fact is that I never shared Jesus with him. I will never have another chance.

No one is promised a day on this earth. So while we are alive, allow my story to encourage you to take every opportunity to share Christ. Once this life is over, everything is eternally set.

But here's another witness to how we are getting it wrong. Ray Comfort is an evangelist who received the following letter from an Atheist. It's convicting to see the truth in the man's accusation.

*You're really convinced that you've got all the answers. You've really got yourself tricked into believing that you're one hundred percent right. Well, let me tell you just one thing. Do you consider yourself to be compassionate for other humans? If you're right, as you say you are, and you believe that, then how can you sleep at night? When you speak with me, you're speaking with someone you believe is walking directly into eternal damnation, into an endless onslaught of horrendous pain which your 'loving' god created, yet you stand by and do nothing.*

*If you believed one bit that thousands every day were falling into an eternal and unchangeable fate, you should be running into the streets mad with rage at their blindness.*

*That's equivalent to standing on a street corner and watching every person that passes you walk blindly directly into the path of a bus and die, yet you stand idly by and do nothing. You're just twiddling your thumbs, happy in the knowledge that one day that 'walk' signal will shine your way across the road.*

*Think about it. Imagine the horrors Hell must have in store if the Bible is true. You're just going to allow that to happen and not care about saving anyone but yourself? If you're right, then you're an uncaring, unemotional and purely selfish (expletive) that has no right to talk about love and caring.<sup>6</sup>*

The reality that people are going to Hell should kindle an unquenchable fervency in us to share Christ. What God has done for us should be an even greater driving force. We know what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection, but I fear we don't fully comprehend the cost.

First, Jesus became a man, not for His time on this earth, but for all eternity. He is still a man today. Three separate times after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His followers, but they did not recognize Him: The Emmaus Road (Luke 24), breakfast on the shore (John 21), and Mary Magdalene at the tomb (John 20). These were people who had walked with the Messiah for years, but they did not recognize Him. Why? Because He was unrecognizable.

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<sup>6</sup> *Letter from an Atheist*, <https://www.livingwaters.com>

In Isaiah 52 and 53, the prophet foretells the death of the Messiah: “Just as many were astonished at you—so was he marred in his appearance, more than any human, and his form beyond that of human semblance” (Isaiah 52:14). What this means is that Jesus was so physically destroyed, He no longer appeared human.

The prophet Isaiah also wrote, “I gave my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not turn away my face from insults and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6). This passage tells us Jesus’ beard was ripped out as part of His torture. Where once these people saw a beard, they now saw scar tissue. That is the why his followers didn’t recognize Him; and it is the face we will look into when we are joined with Him.

In Revelation 5 a man is sought. John describes the man as a lamb that “looked like he had been slaughtered” (Revelation 5:6). From Jesus’ interaction with His followers and John’s description in Revelation, we know He still bears the marks of His torture. As terrible as this is, the greatest torment our King endured on our behalf was the abandonment and wrath of the Father. That is what He endured for you, me, and everyone else who ever walked the earth.

When we look at all Jesus bore on our behalf, the vastness of His love is easily seen. I don’t want to take anything away from the Messiah. However, one thing we often miss when discussing our redemption is the love of the Father.

I remember when my wife was pregnant for the first time. The joy and the expectation were wonderful. I remember the first time I heard our child's heartbeat flood the room and saw the little body on the screen. In that instant I was overwhelmed with a love I had never experienced before. I also remember a pain that is beyond description as we were told we were going to lose our baby. As they searched for a heartbeat and heard nothing come across the speaker, we were devastated. I would have gone to any length up to giving my own life to be able to save our baby.

God in heaven watched as they tortured, mocked, spat on, destroyed, and crucified His son. Imagine the pain of the Father as He watched all this occur. The Father not only withheld intervention, but then poured His own wrath out on His Son. As a father, I cannot imagine pouring my wrath out on my daughter. It would crush me. Yet the Father did this in order to redeem us to Himself. I don't think we have the capacity to truly comprehend the depth of this love.

After all these things took place, Christ gave us the commission: "As you go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to everyone" (Mark 16:15). This is not for the gifted evangelist alone, but for the entire body. The word for *proclaim* or *preach* in the Greek means "annunciate after the manner of a herald." If we remember from even a light study of history, a herald was one who would take a message from the kings or nobles and proclaim it to the masses. That is the intensity conveyed in the

command. If you claim Christ, this is your calling as much as it is mine. As we walk through life, we are to continuously share not only the Gospel of Jesus Christ but also the cost of their rejection of His free gift. Think of everything our King did for us through a love that held nothing back but instead gave everything. Why then do we hold anything back from Him? Why do we hold Him back from a dying world?

What's going to happen when we stand before our King to give an account for our lives? Will we look at Him and say, "God, I really tried to live the life you called me to by not sinning. I went to church, I tithed, and I treated people with kindness." I think He will look at us and ask, "That's great, but how many people did you tell about me? Did you warn them about the path they are walking? What is the last command I gave you while I was with you?"

Let me take some stress off. The best part about evangelism is that the pressure isn't on us to convert people. We are not required, nor should we try, to force a conversion. Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept everything growing. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is significant, but God, who keeps everything growing, is the one who matters." (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). Our job is to sow seed and water. That is all!





## Chapter 4

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### *How Much Should We Pursue the Scriptures?*

In any environment, we need food for the energy to carry out our tasks. In the military, we have the MRE (Meal, Ready to Eat). The purpose of this meal is to pump calories into a soldier so that he has the energy to fight. In the same way, Scripture is spiritual food. Paul refers to the milk and the meat of the word in his letters. When responding to the devil's temptations, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3 by saying we are not sustained by food alone, but that we are "...to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." Do we go to get a handout from a person for our natural food once a week? Of course not! Then why do we submit ourselves to the idea that our spiritual food must also be handed out to us only once a week?

We should be studying, meditating, and memorizing Scripture; not just giving God five minutes by doing a quick devo every once in a while and calling it good. We need to spend time learning what God has spoken to us. I love what my buddy Dave said: "Before, I just read the Bible because that's something you're supposed to do. But it finally made sense and I was eager to read when I realized that it's God's half of a conversation."

The prophet Jeremiah wrote, "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became a joy

to me and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, LORD God of armies” (Jeremiah 15:16 NASB). The word for *eat* in the Hebrew means “to eat or devour.” As Jeremiah feasted on God’s word, it was a joy, a gladness, an exultation, and a rejoicing of the inner man (or soul). It can be the same for us.

Being in God’s word is vital to the believer in order to produce fruit. Through David, the Holy Spirit wrote, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3 KJV).

This is an incredible promise, but it is conditional. The blessed man not only lives righteously but also delights—in and meditates on—the Scriptures. Further, in v. 3 we see what happens when we carry out v. 2; that there is blessing.

Just as is stated in Psalm 1, the Lord makes a similar promise to Joshua: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will achieve success” (Joshua 1:8 NASB).

Both day and night, they were to meditate on God’s word in order to follow and carry out what was written. Then their way would be prosperous.

In ancient Israel, the king was required to write out his own copy of the Law. Moses wrote, “When he occupies his royal throne, he must make a copy of this Law for himself from a scroll used by the Levitical priests. It is to remain with him the rest of his life so he may learn to fear the LORD his God and observe all the words of this Law and these statutes, in order to fulfill them. He is not to exalt himself over his relatives, nor turn aside from the commandment—neither to the right nor to the left—so that he and his sons may reign long in Israel.”(Deuteronomy 17:18-20).

Every day the king would read the Law to learn to fear the Lord. Reading it helped to keep the king from pride because God’s law sheds light on our sin (see Romans 7). It’s hard to become prideful when we realize how much we fail. Continually reading the Law also kept the king from turning away from God’s commandments.

Just as this applied to the king of ancient Israel, it applies to us. If we are in the Messiah, we are Kings and Priests (see Revelation 1:6 and 5:10). We need to meditate on the Scriptures every day in order not to turn away. This is because of how Jesus described the path we walk in this world: “For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14 NASB).

Imagine walking through the woods on a dark night. The path is small and hard to see. We would use a light source to illuminate our way so that we could stay on the path. In the same way, the world

we live in is dark, and there are many opportunities to get off course. God gave us the light source to ensure we are able to stay on the path. The Psalmist wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105 NASB). For this reason, it’s mission-critical to keep the light before us.

We not only want to keep a light before us but also want to maintain the light within us. Memorizing Scripture aids in this process. David hid God's word in his heart so that he would not sin against the Lord (Ps 119:11). And God promises that He will provide an escape when temptations arise: “No temptation has overtaken you except something common to mankind; and God is faithful, so He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13 NASB).

What’s the way of escape? How do we resist the devil and cause him to flee? Psalm 119:11 is our guide. Jesus also gave us an example of this in action during His temptation by responding with Scripture to everything Satan offered (Matthew 4:1-11).

An important point must be made here. Part of Satan’s strategy when tempting Jesus was to use the Scriptures. He had taken pieces of Scripture and applied them out of context, apart from the rest of God’s word. Although such application could sound logical, this kind of application is not only incorrect but sin, especially when judged against the *whole* counsel of God. Satan’s strategy is no different today.

Our protection against such tactics is to remember two truths. First, “on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter shall be confirmed” (2 Corinthians 13:1 NASB), which removes any justification for one-verse theology. Second, Paul gave a prophetic warning in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: “For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” (NASB).

Paul also encouraged Timothy to study and accurately handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). We must accurately handle God’s word, steer clear of *eisegesis* (reading our ideas into the text), but to instead *exegete* (a process of study in which all ideas originate from the text) as we learn. Our guard against error and temptation is the totality of God’s word, and for this reason we must act like Bereans (Acts 17.11).

Paul wrote, “All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB). We are to use the Scriptures to teach, for reproof.

Reproof is a process by which something is proven or tested. Everything should be tested with the Scriptures: teachings, actions, attitudes—literally everything. Correction is an event that restores

something or someone to an upright or correct state. “Training in righteousness” means simply that Scripture is our guide on how we should live. The end state of what the Apostle Paul is talking about here is for the believer to come to maturity, bearing abundant fruit for the purposes of God. And this is a picture of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

Jesus said, “If you continue in my word, you are really my disciples. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31). It is not uncommon to hear someone say, “Know the truth; it will set you free.” Unfortunately, what is often ignored in this passage is the requirement to continue in His word in order to know the truth. The Greek for *continue* means “to remain or abide.” We are to remain and abide in the word.

Many of us in the church seek to hear God speaking. Sometimes in seeking to hear God, we aren’t absorbed enough in the reading of the Scriptures because we have forgotten that God has already spoken to us through His word. Let this be a challenge—a call—for us to devour the word of God as if our lives depend on it.

## Chapter 5

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### *Worship*

David's heart of worship was so intense that he danced with all his might before the Lord, then basically told his wife, "You haven't seen anything yet" (2 Samuel 6:16-23). For this and many other reasons, David is called a man after God's own heart.

In the same way that Scripture should be a daily part of our lives, so too should worship. Worship is vital to the believer's relationship with the Lord. I can attest that it completely changed my prayer life and brought me into a deeper relationship with my King.

What is true worship? Is there a difference, as I stated before, between praising the Lord and worshipping the Lord? Yes. We talk about worship, and we exhort others to worship and sing worship music, yet sometimes don't step in ourselves; we don't allow Him to cleanse our hearts and change our lives.

Why did Christ come? Why was He conceived? Why was He born? Why was He crucified? Why did He rise again? Why is He now at the right hand of the Father? He did all these things so that He might make worshipers from rebels, that He might restore

us again to the place of worship we knew when we were first created.”<sup>7</sup>

Worship is not praise but an act of total surrender to the Lord. The question must follow: If total surrender is the cost, how many of us know how—or even really desire—to worship?

Each person of the Trinity is involved in the process of worship. To be spiritually cleansed requires reconciliation to God through Christ (Romans 5:9-11) and salvation (Romans 10:9-10). If a believer has sinned, purification comes by confessing sin to the Lord (1 John 1:9). Only after the believer is fully purified can they enter a place of worship. God can only be worshiped in spirit (John 4:23-24) and by the Spirit the believer worships (Philippians 3:3). This requires the indwelling of the Holy Spirit sent from the Father (John 14:16).

Nancy Missler describes worship as “a uniting or a becoming one of two separate spirits. Worship means binding ourselves or joining ourselves to the object of our love. God is a Spirit, and only that which is spirit can abide in His presence.”<sup>8</sup> The Father is not only the supplier of the Spirit, but the object of our worship.

Paul made the point that the believer is the same as Solomon's temple, that we house God's presence (1 Corinthians 3:16). The Psalmist said that it requires clean hands and heart to stand in the holy

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<sup>7</sup> A.W. Tozer, *The Very Best of Tozer*, retrieved from <https://www.servantsofthemessiah.org>.

<sup>8</sup> Nancy Missler, “Private Worship: The Key to Joy,” (Coeur d’Alene, ID, The King’s Highway Ministries, 2002), 22.



place (Psalm 24:2-4). God is the same today as He was during the days of Solomon (Hebrews 13:8) and is consistent (James 1:17). Therefore, while the ceremony and ritual of the law is now fulfilled in Christ, (Matthew 5:17), the requirements of worship are still the same today.

Solomon's temple is unique in that it housed the presence of God (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). It was also the only temple which held the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat. The mercy seat was a requirement for the presence of the Lord to manifest His glory. In heaven, God dwells between the cherubim (Isaiah 37:16), and it was between the cherubim, over the ark of the covenant, where God promised Moses that He would meet His people.

The people could praise the Lord at any time, but a specific process had to take place for them to be able to worship. The people would enter the outer court singing and praising the Lord. The priests then entered the inner court to wash their hands and feet (Exodus 30:18-19). Next, the priests sacrificed an animal on the brazen altar in order to remove the sin of the people.<sup>9</sup> After the sacrifice, the priests immersed themselves in the molten sea, took coals from the brazen altar into the holy place, changed clothes, took incense, and dashed it over the golden incense altar. As they came near the altar, the priests removed their shoes, bowed down, and worshiped the Lord.

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<sup>9</sup> J. Orr, *The Brazen Altar and Court of the Tabernacle*, retrieved from <https://www.biblehub.com>

What does this look like for us today? Just as in ancient Israel there was a proper order, today we must follow this example in the spirit to enter God's presence and worship Him. Worship is "not an external ritual, but a bowing down and surrendering of ourselves internally."<sup>10</sup>

We are to enter His courts with praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 100:4) like the priests in the outer court. We praise Him by reading the Psalms. Praise Him for who He is and what He has done. Thank Him for salvation, for His love, for His mercies, for His continual grace, and for forgiveness.

After the praise, the priests entered the inner court and carried out their ritual cleansing. In like manner, before we can enter the holy place, we too must recognize and confess our sin. We cannot walk into His presence with unconfessed sin. We must ask the Lord to reveal sin, confess and repent, forgive anyone we have not forgiven, and surrender the things the Lord has shown us. Once sin and self are put off from us, we can then be received into God's presence.

*At this moment our spirits are united. As we have put on His nature so we can now boldly go before the throne in the Holy Place (Hebrews 10:19-22). Imagine carrying the coals of a surrendered life from the brazen altar into the Holy Place and incense altar where God has promised to meet with us (Exodus 25:22). Now*

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<sup>10</sup> Nancy Missler, "Private Worship: The Key to Joy," (Coeur d'Alene, ID, The King's Highway Ministries, 2002), 37.

*we can truly worship him with clean hands and heart. This is when we bow down, offering our love, adoration, and surrendered life.<sup>11</sup>*

In this moment, allow the Lord to lead. Don't ask for anything; simply adore Him and make Him your focus.

Imagine the change we would see in the body if we were to take hold of what true worship is and put it into practice collectively. What would church look like if an entire congregation came already prepared to worship? Even more importantly, what would your life and relationship with the Lord look like?

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 110-111.



## Chapter 6

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### *Kill the Man Inside*

“I no longer live, but the Messiah lives in me, and the life that I am now living in this body I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Everything in this book ultimately involves sanctification. Sanctification is the process of becoming holy and Christlike. It involves dying to self and allowing Christ to take over, to live through us. This bleeds into every area of life, from our relationship with the Lord to our relationships with others.

Paul called us to sanctification when he wrote: “I therefore urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercies, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to God, for this is the reasonable way for you to worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but continuously be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may be able to determine what God’s will is—what is proper, pleasing, and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2).

We have an active role in offering every part of our lives to the Lord for His use. We are commanded not be conformed to this world but transformed (Rom 12:2). Dying to ourselves is a requirement.

Let me give you a warning: If you’re going to pursue Jesus, die to yourself, and be all that He desires, it will cost you. Jesus gave this warning when He stated the requirements of discipleship to His

followers: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who are watching it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This person began to build, and was not able to finish!’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to face the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Otherwise, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and requests terms of peace. So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:26-33 NASB).

Jesus is not telling us to hate these people. That would be a contradiction. Here’s what He’s saying: our love for Him should be so great that everything else in comparison looks like hate.

He’s also not calling us to give up everything we own. The Greek word for *give up* means “to withdraw from, renounce, and forsake.” Jesus is saying we must relinquish any hold that material possessions have over our lives. We need to count the cost because discipleship will cost us—often in ways we could never imagine.

In December of 2013, I asked the Lord for an opportunity to minister to individuals and families

with cancer. What I didn't know was, at the same time, my wife was praying that she would be used by God in some way, and that He would give her new testimonies of His awesomeness. At 4:30 a.m. on January 15, 2014, my wife Kelsey, exhausted, walked herself down to the emergency room after working all night. Four hours later, she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia.

After a month of unsuccessful treatment at the University of North Carolina, we were sent to the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center for additional treatment, which included a stem cell transplant. During this time we were able to minister to, witness to, and pray with others who were also fighting cancer.

We saw miracles occur with Kelsey and other people.

God answered our prayers to be used by Him, but not in a way we ever could have expected.

The whole process from Kelsey's diagnosis to her coming home was about eight months. The next three years would be the most difficult of our lives. Kelsey's recovery process was extremely difficult. We frankly didn't know if she was going to survive. Working through the emotional and spiritual consequences of what had happened was often beyond the limit of what we could handle.

We asked to be used by God, and He honored our prayers, but it has cost us. We wanted a large family, but we can no longer have kids naturally. For two years, Kelsey wasn't allowed direct exposure to the sun; even today she must be careful. But what an honor to be used by God! To be counted worthy to

endure something like this has allowed us to be a light to those going through their own battles with cancer.

When we ask God to use us or tell Him we want to draw closer, He will begin to remove things from our lives that come between us and Him. Many times the things removed are those we are most comfortable with. God removes them because comfort can breed both stagnation and apathy.

A good soldier knows that, in combat, the fastest way to get someone hurt or killed is to sink into complacency. It's painful when the Lord prunes and cuts away so that we can grow stronger in Him. Looking back, Kelsey and I now recognize that God was pruning us for His purposes. And we haven't seen the end of His wisdom in allowing these events to happen in our lives.

If you eagerly seek the Lord, He will work in you. When the process becomes painful, and it will, I would not only encourage but also plead with you not to draw back. Dive headlong toward the Lord, even if (especially if) you're to the point where you feel God has abandoned you. This is where faith matters most. It's easy to say that we have faith on the peaks where the views are clear and we see the big picture. The valleys are where we are tested and grown. A friend of mine once said, "The mountain tops are great for views and recovery, but the valleys are where the fruit is grown." You must believe God is a good Father; He only wants the best for you and desires to see you walk out His calling to the full.



One of the best practices we can undertake in order to die to ourselves is fasting and prayer. This is a vital subject which significantly aids the believer in his walk with the Lord but is sorely neglected within the church. A true fast is not giving up television or chocolate but depriving the body of food. I know many believers who have struggled for years with breaking addictions to pornography, anger, or whatever other shameful practice you might be able to name. If they engaged the disciplines of fasting and praying, they might be amazed at how quickly they turn to overcomers. Why? Because when we deprive the body of food, our body turns its attention to the fact that it needs sustenance. Everything takes a back seat because the body is trying to survive.

Fasting wasn't only for the early church. It's for the church today. Jesus was clear that He expects the believer to fast when He stated, "...the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Matthew 9:15; see also Luke 5:34-35, Mark 2:19-20). We fast so that we may die to ourselves. Fasting strengthens the spiritual man by weakening the physical man. Prolonged fasts can be incredible, and I would challenge you to fast and pray for at least a week at some point if you've never done so (your health permitting, of course). It's amazing what fasting can do for your walk with Jesus. There are many faith-based resources available through your favorite search engine regarding how to fast properly.

I will share a word of caution about the end of a fast. Satan didn't come to tempt Jesus at the

beginning or middle of His forty-day fast but at the end, when He was most vulnerable. Satan is an opportunist. He will attempt to nullify everything that has been accomplished during a time of fasting and prayer. Be prepared for the attacks that may come as you engage total surrender to Christ.

## Chapter 7

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### *Our Reward*

We've covered some extremely heavy topics but haven't really looked at what there is to gain or lose yet. What lies ahead for us as believers? How many Christians know that we will all be judged? These are serious questions. The outcome of everything we have discussed, as well as how we decide to answer these challenges, is eternal.

In multiple letters, Paul wrote about the judgment believers will endure: "But as for you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God...So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. (Romans 14:10; 12 NASB).

Then there's this: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive compensation for his deeds done through the body, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10 NASB).

What we notice in these passages and others like them is that our actions and our fruit are being judged, not our salvation. Paul described the judgment we as believers will undergo in detail: "According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation,

and another is building on it. But each person must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work. If anyone's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet only so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:10-15 NASB).

Earlier in this chapter, Paul described those that sow and water as nothing. However, each receives a reward based on what they allowed the Holy Spirit to do through them. Imagine a heaped portion unique to every believer. Each portion consists of those things we've done either for the King or for ourselves, and every believer's heap will be subjected to the fire of the judgment of God. How much of what you have in your individual heap is going to burn? Whatever doesn't is your inheritance.

Some will have an amazing inheritance, and others will lose everything they thought they had. As my mom has sometimes said, "You made it through the fire, but you've got smoke on your clothes."

I fear many Christians will be disappointed in eternity because we've always been taught that we are all equal, that we'll all reign as heirs with Christ. But that's not what the text says. Paul is clear: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are

God's children. Now if we are children, we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with the Messiah—if, in fact, we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8:16-17). The word *if* makes it clear that there is a condition in this passage. Sharing in Christ's sufferings can mean persecution, trials, and more. There are endless possibilities.

A Christian brother in Africa comes to mind when I think about the judgment that believers will endure. I heard him speak about His father's Christian orphanage in Africa. Once the children are of age, they must leave the orphanage. Many simply move to the nearby city and live their lives in incredibly poor circumstances. This brother has moved from his father's orphanage to a one bedroom apartment in the city to help take care of the kids who have outgrown this orphanage. He lives there with his wife, their children, and eight previous orphans who have since married and have children of their own.

How are we going to stand before our King and answer for the fact that we have spent hundreds of thousands—in some cases millions—of dollars on buildings, light shows, sound systems, and more so that we can meet for what we have come to understand to be church, but that we didn't help our brothers or sisters in these situations? Have we forgotten Matthew 25:40? “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for

Me”)(NASB). Francis Chan made a powerful point when he said:

*We had this huge building project, you know, some multi-multi-multi-million dollar building project, this little village we were going to build. I just looked and I went, I can't do that. I don't think that's how Jesus would have done it. I think He would have said, "Just meet me at the park," you know, and I said, "Why don't we just plant a bunch of grass, and we'll meet outside." And people were like, "Well, what if it rains?" I'm like, "We'll probably get wet." But we are in southern California; come on! And I go, "Man, haven't you ever heard of the Green Bay Packers? People will sit in a storm for four hours and pay money to do it! They'll do that, and we won't sit in southern California weather? For an hour and a half? To worship God?"<sup>12</sup>*

Don't get me wrong: the issue isn't that we have buildings, lights, and sound systems. The issue is that our brothers and sisters in need and under persecution around the world are too often forgotten and ignored. Ultimately the facility we meet in doesn't matter—only that we come together in the name of our King.

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<sup>12</sup> Francis Chan, *If Jesus were the Pastor of Your Church You Probably Wouldn't Go There*, retrieved from [https://youtu.be/havd\\_rvxoem](https://youtu.be/havd_rvxoem).

## Chapter 8

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### *A Final Plea*

The fact of the matter is we are all subject to the ultimate statistic: ten out of ten of us are going to die. Are you justified or saved by belief in Christ (see John 3:15-16, 18; Acts 16:31; Romans 1:16, 5:1-2)? That's great! But what have you done with it? On the day the Lord comes again (or He calls us home), there are no more chances. Everything is eternally set.

I now ask the questions this whole book has led to: Is Jesus really all you want? Have you counted the cost? If not, why? And if not now, when?

I want to close with one of the most powerful professions of faith I have ever read. Attributed to a martyred African pastor, these words were found after his death:

*I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power; my die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams,*

*tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals. I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and labor by power. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide is reliable, and my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I won't flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me. My banner will be clear.*



## About the Author

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Paul Bock is a retired Green Beret with multiple combat rotations to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. He served as cadre in Special Forces Assessment and Selection. This allowed him to conduct evangelistic mission work with local Muslim populations, partner forces, and American soldiers alike. He holds an M.A. in Biblical Studies.

Because of his background, Paul's drive is to see Christians and the church collectively fulfill the twin mission statements given by Christ before His ascension: "...as you go, disciple people in all nations..." (Matthew 28.19), and "...as you go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to everyone" (Mark 16.15).

Follow Paul's podcast called Warriors Rising on Apple Podcasts or Spotify and find him on TikTok @tiktoktheologic. He can be reached via Email: Paul@thewarriorsrising.com