

Kingdom Living Today

Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World

6. God Doesn't Close One Door Without Opening Another

"I FULFILL THE DESIRES OF THOSE WHO
FEAR ME; I HEAR THEIR CRY AND
DELIVER THEM. THOSE WHO SEEK ME
FIND ME WHEN THEY SEEK ME
WITH ALL THEIR HEART."

Harry opened the door as the two couples arrived at the same time. Hugging each one in turn, he smiled broadly. "Greetings, everyone! I'm so glad we could get together at our house this time!"

Brett spoke first. "Us too! I remember that we first gathered at Jack and Dee's after we met them at the park, and then at our house last week. Now here we are at your home, Harry." He turned to the older man as they gave their jackets to Harry. "Jack, is this an intentional part of a larger plan?"

Jack grinned. "Later on I'll fill you in."

As they all got comfortably seated in the living room, Jan came in beaming. "I just can't wait for you all to hear our amazing news! Harry has something wonderful to share — something only our heavenly Father could have accomplished!"

Harry had a difficult time getting the words out. Everyone could see that his eyes were beginning to tear. "Before I tell you, I want to thank our heavenly Father for His faithfulness to me. (Romans 15:6) He sure doesn't close one door without opening another!"

By this time everyone was leaning forward eagerly. Harry went on, "I got a call yesterday from a company that does the same work as the one I left. They asked me to come in for an interview this afternoon and offered me a better position than I had in my old company. I let them know that I'd been fired, and that's when Chad, the head of engineering said, 'We *know* why you were fired. That's exactly why we called you. We want a man with *your integrity*.'" (1 Chronicles 29:17)

Brett couldn't contain himself. "Praise God! What a wonderful testimony! So tell us, did you take the job?"

Harry laughed, "You bet I did!" As joyful praise filled the room Harry continued, "But that's not all..." Lacie urged him on, "Please tell us. I've got goose bumps!"

"Right after I said I'd accept the job," Harry grinned, "they told me they wanted me to check out their European headquarters in Huddinge, Sweden." Jan burst in excitedly, "Huddinge is where my folks live. That's where we were going on vacation before Harry got fired!" Amazed "Wow!"s filled the room.

At this point Harry choked up. Finally he blurted, "I told them how we'd been planning to go to Huddinge to visit Jan's parents before I got fired. That's when our Father gave us His BIG gift!" Everyone's heart began to beat faster. "When they heard how our plans had been axed, they told me that before I visit their headquarters, they want to give me three weeks paid vacation to visit Jan's family!" (Psalms 37:4)

Now everyone's jaw was hanging open. Their "Hallelujahs" could be heard next door!

As they began to calm down Jack felt compelled that they all thank God again. "Father, we want to thank you in the name of Jesus for your loving kindness to Harry

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and Jan. Thank you for being so concerned with our well-being. And, we in turn are going to make sure everyone we knows hears about what you did for our dear friends! Amen.”(2 Corinthians 1:11)

Everyone joined together in a hearty, “Amen!!!”

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A short time later they’d gathered around the dinner table. Harry felt indebted to Jack and Dee for coming alongside to set all of them on the path to Kingdom living. “Ever since we began pursuing the truths on the Restoration Ministries website and using our Bibles to confirm and apply them, something has been happening inside of Jan and me that we can’t put a finger on.”

Almost before Harry had stopped speaking, Brett jumped in with a word picture. “Lacie and I feel the same way! If I were a computer, it’s like someone took out the old processor and put in a whole new one — a completely different operating system.”

Dee warmly responded, “We both know exactly what you mean. It took Jack and I a while to understand the change that was happening with us too back then.”

Jack smiled at his wife then picked up that thought. “Our understanding of what God was doing inside us came after we shared communion together one day, especially as we reaffirmed the stipulations of our Father’s Covenant.”

The two younger couples leaned forward intently as Jack went on. “Think about what you’re committing to each time you renew your Covenant in Jesus through communion!(1 Corinthians 10:16) There’s no doubt that your commitment to love and serve Him as Lord of your life is going to change you over time.”(Hebrews 9:14,15)

Dee added, “Do you remember the truths from that *Gospel of the Covenant* article? It so agrees with what God’s Word intends for our lives as His beloved servants.(2 Chronicles 6:14) Our salvation pilgrimage both begins *and continues* as we stay repentant before our Father... as we love Him through our obedient response to His Spirit and His Word... as we trust in the shed blood of Jesus and His resurrection on our behalf... as we press on with determination to follow Jesus as our Lord... and as we forgive those who hurt us. As we renew our covenant in Jesus, we’re going to be strengthened to *keep* being transformed by His Spirit in us!”(2 Corinthians 3:18)

As the other couples nodded thoughtfully Jack proclaimed, “Over time, all of these elements of our walk in Christ grow in intensity! This is the ongoing sanctification part of our pilgrimage to our salvation. The Spirit is growing us to become more like Jesus because we’ve stopped listening to our sin nature-controlled soul.(Romans 8:7-9) Instead, we’re looking to the Spirit of Christ to speak through our spirit so we can be wholly available to serve Him.”(Romans 12:2)

Dee added, “Those ‘stipulations’ of living in Jesus are like arrows pointing the way to Christ’s likeness as His Spirit works in and through us.”(Romans 8:13,14,29) As the others took into their spirit what she was saying, their faces lit up in agreement.

Confirming what Jack and Dee had just shared, Brett spoke up. “That’s exactly what’s going on! I noticed the change that the Spirit was working in me because before I had to make any decision, I used to have to weigh all the pros and cons — especially what was in it *for me*. Now, all I want to know is what the Lord’s will is and do it.”(1 John 2:15-17)

Lacie added, “I’ve experienced such a sense of protection to know that Brett’s heart is set on hearing God and following through! That’s encouraged me to keep growing in trust, too, as I yield to His Spirit day by day!”

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Harry nodded at the eager young couple. "The old Harry would've been plagued by bitterness and depression if he'd gotten fired. I chuckle to think that just a few days before I got fired, Jan and I had gone through the *Demolishing Strongholds* workbook we downloaded from the Restoration Ministries website. We identified and demolished every demonic stronghold that had been hindering our love for God, for each other, and for everyone else. I was even able to love my boss when he fired me, and pray for him!"(Luke 6:27)

Brett vowed, "Lacie and I won't let the sun go down tomorrow without us going through that workbook ourselves." She smiled in affirmation.

Harry paused for a moment as he remembered something. "There's an old poem at the end of *Demolishing Strongholds* which the author was given by his pastor during a difficult time in his own life. I memorized a part that's helped me see my Father's hand in everything that's been taking place. It may sound a little dated, but its truth is sure timeless:

*'One step thou seest — then go forward boldly, One step is far enough for faith to see;
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee, For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.*

*Stand not in fear, thine adversaries counting, Dare every peril, save to disobey;
Thou shalt march on, all obstacles surmounting, For I, the Strong, will open up the way.*

Jack put his hand on the younger man's shoulder. "That's right, Harry! The Spirit of Christ will only give any of us 'one step of faith' to take. It's a step that can't be analyzed, only obeyed before the next step can be given."

Dee put a question to the two wives. "Have you noticed any changes in your marriage, in how you respond to each other?"

The two women grinned at her. "For sure!" Seeing the joy in his wife, Harry gleamed. "Now it's as if Jesus were inside me loving Jan! The old Harry who evaluated Jan *by what she did for me* has gone. The love I now have for her has power in it because I'm loving her through the Spirit the way Jesus would have me do."(Ephesians 5:25) Everyone smiled.

"That's the transformation that's taking place in me too," noted Brett. "Jesus is helping each of us to love the way He does... to trust our Father as He does... to live determined about doing the Father's will as He is... and to forgive everyone as He did."

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Sometime later they were all back in the living room having dessert. Brett said, "Jack, you said at the door that you'd explain something to us later."

Jack paused to look at each face. "Since we left the religious system sixteen years ago, Dee and I have come to realize that extending the Kingdom relies primarily on using the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gives to each follower of Jesus."

Jan broke in, "I've seen the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians and Romans but figured they weren't important since no one in our Christian experience made much of them. *Are they important? Should we know what ours are?*"

Jack was delighted with her questions, for he could see she was eager for everything our Lord wanted for her. "As much as you need oxygen to live, the gifts of the Spirit are that essential if we're to fulfill our part in our Lord's Kingdom. For example, the Spirit has empowered me as an evangelist. He has worked within me a burning desire to see others embrace the Covenant our Father offers.^(1 Corinthians 9:16) As people embrace the stipulations of His Covenant and receive the Holy Spirit through the new birth, I come

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alongside them to help them grow in their trust.^(1 Corinthians 3:5) And I remain alongside them until I can pass on the responsibility to a man who will shepherd them.”

Dee spoke up with a smile, “My gifts are faith and exhortation. With the empowerment of faith I look forward to impossible circumstances because they bring testimonies to our Father’s faithfulness! There’s an old saying I like very much: ‘A condition for a miracle is difficulty; the condition for a great miracle is impossibility.’ I believe that my Father enjoys showing us His awesome power!”^(Luke 1:37)

Jack hadn’t lost sight of Brett’s question. “In the past sixteen years since we began to apply the Hebraic foundations, I’ve been used by God to start eleven home fellowships throughout this county. Each of them has multiplied, and now there are over forty all actively serving our Lord Jesus in extending His Kingdom.”

Excitement filled Harry’s heart. “Just like you’re doing with us! You used the *Gospel of the Covenant* so that we might become our Father’s children and receive the Holy Spirit. And, it’s His Spirit Who’s been changing us. But now we need His gifting so we can build up and edify each other in Him.”^(1 Corinthians 12:7)

“Exactly,” Jack responded. “And we’ll help you with that. But to answer Brett’s question: Dee and I like to meet in everyone’s home to get insight into the spiritual condition of their marriage and family. We have those we’re discipling into our home to role model the Christlike relationship He’s formed in us.”

Dee nodded in agreement as Jack went on. “For a time I’m like a shepherd with a flock. And, since each person and family is different than the others, I need to know them personally^(Proverbs 27:23). What better place than in their home? If you haven’t seen it yet on the Restoration Ministries website, the *home* is the basic building block for spiritual development.”^(Genesis 18:19; Ephesians 6:1-4)

Jan was beaming. “Jack, I’m thrilled to know how God has used you and Dee together. I can see how your gifts cooperate! To know there are others who are like-minded in serving Jesus makes me feel like I’m wrapped in a warm blanket on a cold day.”

“If it works out with you two guys,” said Jack, “I’d like to meet with you each week so we can talk about how you can grow in spiritual leadership in your homes.” Both men nodded approval. “How about meeting me at the Coffee Shop this Friday at 5AM. I’d like to spend two hours with you, and this will give you enough time to get to work. Besides, by meeting on Friday, you can catch up on your sleep over the weekend and you won’t be robbing your wives of time with you.”

Realizing that the evening was drawing to a close, Dee added one last joyful note. “Do you remember that young couple with the baby we met in the park three weeks ago? They’re Nate and Jessica. They called us and we met with them yesterday. Neither one is a follower of Jesus, so Jack and I are going to meet with them privately until they are. Then we’ll bring them into our fellowship family as a brother and sister in Jesus”^(Mark 3:33-35)

Lacie asked, “I have one last question. Is there any way we can get to know our spiritual gifts sooner than later?”

Jack smiled. “At the Restoration Ministries website is a booklet entitled *God’s Instruments for War*. I recommend you all put it at the top of your reading list. I’d truly love to see us all relying on the Spirit’s power as soon as possible. And I’d like nothing more than to know each of you in the Spirit as He sees you.”^(1 Corinthians 12:11-27)