

Turning POINTS IN MY LIFE

A bend in the road brought financial
failure, strained relationships



By Charles Featherston

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to The Navigators for the reference to the Assurance Verses, contained in the booklet published by Navpress, titled **Beginning With Christ**, as well as the reference to the **Topical Memory System**, a scripture memory program designed and published by The Navigators.

Also I want to acknowledge the many concepts and strategies for the equipping of men and women to do the work of evangelism I have received in one fashion or another from various men whose lives have been impacted by Dawson Trotter, founder of The Navigators, Colorado Springs, Co. In particular, George Wagner Dimock, and in general, Bob Boardman, John Crawford, Jim Downing, Leroy Eims, Skip Gray, Walt Henrichsen, Bob Potter, Roy Robertson, Lorne Sanny, Rod Sargent, Bob Seifert, Doug Sparks and Jim White.

Also I want to acknowledge the daily prayers in my behalf for more than 30 years by my prayer partners: Jack Humphreys, Bob Potter, Charlie Riggs, Donald Tabb, Gene Warr, Harold Warren and Wayne Watts, as well as Elie Lam and Wes Rogers before they passed from this earth.

In a world that has gone soft-headed over celebrities, fame has replaced greatness. Men like Winston Churchill and Billy Graham have been replaced on the "Most Admired" lists by names like Charles Barkley and Clint Eastwood. Celebrities are in, fame is the name of the game and great men are getting harder to find. What is it that makes a man great?

"Great men have but few hours to be great. Like the rest of us they must dress, bathe, and eat. And, being human, they must make visits to the dentist, doctor, and barber and have conferences with their wives about domestic matters. **What makes men great is their ability to decide what is important, and then focus their attention on that.**"

You have in your hands the autobiography of a great man. Charles Featherston has decided what is important and has devoted his life to focusing on Jesus' command to make disciples. For Charles this is no part-time pursuit but a holy passion. I have had the privilege of walking in his wake for the last few years and I can testify to the quality of his character as well as the results of his ministry.

But Charlie was not always a disciple maker. He has known the painful consequences of blind ambition when he forsook his father's advice and decided to "go it alone." The following story is a reminder that God is a God of the second chance. It is also a reminder that only a disciple can make a disciple.

It is my prayer that as you read this book God would use it as a turning point in your life.

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*Turning Points In My Life

My mother and my father were both reared in pioneer preachers' homes. At the time of my birth on January 6, 1925, my father was one year into a new business venture, the success of which was upon his shoulders because his older brother, who was responsible for start-up money, was off playing polo around the world.

Five years into the venture three significant things happened which would shape the event of our family for years to come. First, the oldest son had been born with brain damage, the next oldest son, who was eight years old and the apple of his parents' eyes, died suddenly with spinal meningitis. Thirdly, the big depression of '29-'40 fell hard upon the nation in general, and north Texas in particular.

For the next dozen years (my pre-teen and early teenage years) my mother poured over the Bible in an effort to find out about the God who permitted the tragedy that put her life in a spin. And my father occupied himself almost altogether with the survival and development of an automobile finance company during the days of the nation's worst economic stress.

After reflection, I think I would have to conclude that my mother was more sad than glad. Her obsession with the Scriptures did not seem to make her more happy, nor bring her family more happiness. Her relationship with the Lord did not cause me to seek after Him or give me a desire to know Him. I suppose it caused me to push the whole issue of religion off into the distant future.

My father was busily engaged downtown until supper time. When he was home he was reading the newspaper, **The Wall Street Journal**, or the **Washington Kiplinger Letter**. It seemed to me that he never quite learned how to connect with his sons.

I loved my mother and dad, and felt that they loved me. I was happy to have their attention at any time I could earn it while competing with my four brothers for it.

All through the depression years (1930-40) my father received a salary of \$500.00 per month, which was a great deal more than most

of our neighbors or the other people we knew received. We got more presents at Christmas and ate better at Thanksgiving than most of my friends. My dad always had a late model car on the driveway, and my mother always had a full time cook and house keeper who lived in the servant's quarters at the rear of our property.

But home was not a particularly happy place for me. I spent all of the time possible working on scouting merit badges or playing pool at the downtown pool halls or attending the 10¢ movies. I resisted the challenges of the Royal Ambassadors and the Baptist Young People's Union. Generally, the church and the people at the church represented a world that simply was not attractive to me. Each summer, between the ages of 11-15, I lived on our ranch in Knox County — a 10,000 acre spread in the mesquite and cedar breaks between the plains and the cap rock in west Texas, which was owned by my father along with his brother and nephew.

When I graduated from high school I graduated from church. The drive of my life seemed to be to win the approval of my friends, so-called. I did not know how to give to my friends, and as a matter of fact, I had little to give them. So I didn't have an exciting, fulfilling youth. I reached the rank of Star in the Boy Scouts before quitting. I attained the degree of Chevalier in DeMolay (a sort of junior masonic group). I played a poor trumpet and baritone horn in the high school band. I dropped piano lessons after a few years of half-hearted effort.

At The University of Texas and in and out of the navy during two wars, as well as the first few years of my business career, I was restless and unhappy, with mediocre ability in every thing I tried. My golf game was neither very good nor very bad — good enough to play with the "turkey-pickers" but not good enough to win. I wasted many hours trying to develop a golf game from which I could gain a little recognition, mostly without success.

One of the **turning points** in my life came with my marriage to Flo Harding. She is a sweetheart, devoted to me and to my family, and loved by all of them. She was a loving, delightful companion, and a great mother of our four children. With my marriage came the necessity to provide a living for my family. I was fortunate to be able to get a sales job with a new modern memorial park-like cemetery with perpetual care and a pre-need sales program. The property was fairly easy to sell, and I made the most of it. I found that in sales I could usually exceed the production of my fellow salesmen, and I could gain the respect and support of my employer. I had found something for the first time in my life that I was good at: recruiting, training and motivating sales persons to sell a good product to people who needed it.

I worked hard, probably to the neglect of my family, and achieved some satisfactory levels in the cemetery industry, as Sales Manager for the pre-need sales department. My self image was rising . . . slowly.

After an involuntary recall to the Navy in 1952, during which time I remained on the Commandant's staff in New Orleans, I returned to my home town, and promptly entered into the general real estate business with my father and brothers in 1954. I resumed my work of recruiting, training and motivating sales persons to sell real estate property. Only this time it was homes and business properties.

Throughout my school days, my days in the service, and the early days of my business career, I had somehow never quite come to the place where I knew that I could have eternal life. Instead, I had a terrifying fear of death, and a consuming sense of guilt and shame. The reason why was probably because of my shabby living and my unworthy motives. In the simplest terms, I was a member in good standing of a church, but knew that I was 'lost as a goose' and headed for hell in a fast lope. I have only recently come to know that at this time my mother and my younger brother were interceding for me before the throne of Grace, about which I was unaware at the time.

For what might be the most significant **turning point** of my life, I must take you back a few years. In order to understand just how significant, I will begin in the Jinsen Harbor, near Seoul, Korea. The year was 1946, immediately after the capitulation of Japan and the completion of our assigned task of providing close gun support for the landing of the Sixth Marine Division at Tsingtao, China. We received orders to take our ship back to the U.S.A. for de-commissioning, after which it would become a part of Gillette's steel stockpile, and eventually become one of your razorblades. After brief stopovers at the ports of Honolulu, San Diego, and the Panama Canal, we tied up at the dock on the Algiers side of the Mississippi River across from New Orleans. We would remain in a waiting zone for three months while the slow process of paper work scheduling my eventual dismissal from the Naval service took place. The married officers on board were "fit to be tied." They wanted to get home to their wives and families. They wanted to save every penny possible from their mustering out pay. The single officers couldn't wait to get to the French Quarter over on the New Orleans side of the river for liberty. I would extend my liberty from "one day on, and four days off" to permanently off by paying one of the married officers a small sum to stand my watch. I rented an apartment uptown on Saint Charles Avenue, and proceeded to spend every dime in the next three months of the money I had earned while overseas. My life during that time is not something I am proud of, but I must relate

enough of it in order for you to understand the **turning point** that followed.

A typical day would go something like this. Up near the noon hour, I would get out of bed, drive a few blocks to the New Orleans Country Club, partake of the noon buffet, which was sumptuous to say the least, go out to Number One Tee Box and get a game for 18 holes with the New Orleans men who worked half their days and golf'd the other half. My goal was to win if I could, and if I didn't win my world was in "despair." In the early part of the evening I would date one of the students at Sophie Newcomb College or Tulane University. After leaving my date at her dormitory around eleven p.m. I would head for the French Quarter, and close Pat O'Brian's Bar around daylight, after which I would drive back to my uptown apartment and "crash" until time to get up and go to the New Orleans Country Club for the noon buffet. Now this is the worldly, and wasteful way I lived and thought in those days . . . following hard after what I was calling "fun."

After my release from active duty in the Navy, I returned home and made preparations to finish my studies at The University of Texas at Austin. I only needed a few hours to get my B.B.A. degree, so the major part of my time was again spent in following the ways of "campus life." The best of my university life was finding Flo, and before I graduated Flo and I had become engaged and were married October 26, 1947.

In 1950 I became Sales Director for Crestview Memorial Park's pre-need sales department. When I received my recall to the Navy during the Korean Conflict I had achieved some fairly impressive sales records and our sales force had successfully competed with larger operations in Dallas and Houston. Probably because of our relationship with the men who owned and operated those larger properties, I was asked to make the key-note speech at the National Cemetery Association Convention in Louisville, Kentucky prior to reporting for active duty in New Orleans.

The second New Orleans duty was totally different from the first experience, because now I was a married man with two young boys. We resided on the Algiers side of the river in a quonset hut just across the street from the NRLNS Naval Station. Our life was again one of trying to keep up the "social" pace at the Officer's Club or entertaining ourselves at Grand Isle, Gulfport or Pensacola beaches, that is, if we did not have the week-end watch at the Naval Station.

I have previously related that when I graduated from High School I graduated from church. During all this time related above, **not once** do I remember ever going inside a church or a chapel with any sense of seeking to know God.

God was something I hoped to be able to deal with far off in the distant future.

Well, you can image how I was thinking when I arrived home in late 1953, faced with the necessity to determine what I was going to do in terms of making a living for my family, and achieving some measure of success in the work world. I had been forced to sell my stock in the cemetery property because I could not on Navy pay make the payments on the bank loan which I had obtained to buy the stock in the first place. I knew this for sure . . . that I would probably be in sales work of some kind, and the thought of being a Sales Director was of more interest to me than to start over as a salesman in some kind of direct sales organization.

There were two highly successful cemetery property owners who had made me similar offers while I was in Louisville, to-wit: "When you finish your tour of duty, come and see me at my expense, and see if you would be happy to have a position in my organization. We would certainly like to have you with us." One of these properties was in Washington, D.C., and the other in Orange County, California.

The only question in my mind was, "Will I go and become a Sales Director in one of these organizations, or will I join my father and brothers in the real estate business in Wichita Falls, Texas?"

As I was struggling with this question, my brother, Bob, asked me a rather surprising question, "**Have you prayed about it?**" I responded, "Why no, I haven't prayed about it. God is not interested in that sort of thing. He has given us a brain to make those decisions ourselves." Then Bob said a strange, but disturbing thing. He asked, "How would you feel if little Ricky (my 5 year old son) never did ask you for a nickel?" (In those days we had worked out a system of finances that included a "Saturday nickel" for each of the children, to spend anyway they wanted.)

I told Bob, sincerely, "Well, I probably wouldn't like that at all." He told me, "Your heavenly Father doesn't like it when you don't ask Him for anything. God loves you personally and is interested in what you do. He promised in the Bible that He desires for His children to ask, and He delights in giving them whatever they ask."

Well now, I don't mind telling you, this was something brand new for me. I had spent half a lifetime scratching and clawing for myself without His help, and I had no earthly idea that God in heaven was the least bit interested in what I obtained or how I obtained it.

I left Bob with that thought burning a hole in my heart. As I was driving home that afternoon on a partially finished freeway which was not yet opened to the public, but which was unobstructed to my travel after five p.m. on this particular Thursday, I looked up at the blue sky

with a few piled up white clouds with rounded outlines. I imagined that one of those cloud forms represented God Himself, and I said right out loud to Him, "**God, if that is the way it is, if You really do care about me and what happens to me, I want You to show it to me in the next few days, and show it to me in a way that I will not mistake it.**"

Well, I was in for a surprise. This is what happened within an hour after I arrived home. My wife had done her usual Thursday fare, which consisted of a baby sitter for our children, while she had her hair done, and enjoyed lunch and bridge with her three best girl friends until late afternoon.

As we sat down to the supper table, Flo approached me (looking very trim and pretty in a stylish summer dress), and she said to me, "Honey, I haven't appreciated you like I should during the last few weeks." (I need to say at this point that we had discussed whether I would go back into the Navy and make it a career. I would soon be up for the rank of Lt. Commander with a good salary and benefits, or go back into sales work on a commission basis with no salary. She was for the salaried career.)

She then said to me, "I was playing bridge today with Wilda Miskimmins, Dot Tillman, and Paula Smulcer. We were discussing how difficult our husbands' jobs make it to plan anything. Wilda said, "We can make plans for Saturday evening, and you can mark it down, Bill will have to take a sack of cement to an oil well for Reno Oil Company."

Dot said, "It is the same with us, if we make plans, you can rest assured that Bill will be "first out" for Schlumberger, which of course means that he cannot leave the telephone." Then Paula spoke up, "Girls, it is no different with me. Jimmy is an independent oil man, and if we have plans for an evening he is likely to be sitting on a well somewhere until daylight the next morning." And I was able to say to them, "Well, I don't know how it is for you, but as far as Charlie is concerned, he may be late for supper, but he is home in bed with me every evening." You can imagine how my thoughts went back to my conversation with God on Kell Expressway. But I did not draw any conclusions just yet.

The very next day, as I was in a place at our home where we both did a lot of reading, I was amazed to see the February 1954 **Ladies Home Journal** opened to an article by Mrs. Dale Carnegie, "How to Help Your Husband Be Successful."

I said to myself, with real conviction, "God, You really do care about the details of my life." Nevertheless I said nothing to anybody about my discovery.

However, on the following Sunday evening, while our wives were at home making a coconut cream pie, which we would later enjoy, I

was sitting in the Sunday evening church service with my brother, Bob and his friend (a home designer), sitting on either side of me. The pastor was serving the Lord's Supper to his congregation and I found myself staring into the little cup of grape juice.

Everyone else was shut out of my mind, and in my mind's eye, I saw Christ. He was on the cross. His back was to me. There was a dark cloud with thunder, and there was dust at the foot of the cross. He turned toward me and looked at me with brown eyes that loved me, and He said to me, "And what have you done for Me?" That was all that He said. His face was scratched and bleeding, like someone who had a three day growth of beard had slid across an asphalt drive and bruised himself. . . little drops of blood were issuing forth at those places on His face. I simply said to Him, "From now on, Lord, it will all be for You!" And I meant it!

Although I said nothing immediately to anyone about what I had experienced, I was almost overcome with the certain knowledge that **Truth** had walked right into the living room of my mind.

I said nothing to my wife the next morning, except, "Honey, I think we should go to Bob and George's church." I did another thing that may seem interesting to you; I went to the refrigerator and took the case of Cuban rum out, and placed it high up in one of the kitchen cabinets, so that the children could not see it.

Also, I remember another thing I said to Flo, and it was with something of a determined attitude, "Now, we are not going to become religious fanatics like Bob and George, but I do want us to go to that church."

After this **turning point** in my mind and spirit about God, Christ and the Bible, I began in dead earnestness to pursue Christ.

George Dimock presented me with a copy of the Pilgrim Addition of the Bible, and I began to read it eagerly and continuously.

Shuffle The Cards

(It's a New Game)

After his conversion, George Dimock's new life in Christ had appeared to some as reckless and somewhat irresponsible, but by the time I returned to Wichita Falls from my second tour of duty at New Orleans, he was a godly man with maturity and balance in his life and witness.

Many wonderful things happened immediately after my conversion, but I want to run on ahead, several months down the road, to a **significant turning point** in my life, so please bear with this parenthesis.

Six months or more after I committed my life to Christ, George asked me the question, "Do you bury the living or the dead?" After some reflection, I responded, "the dead of course." He followed with, "Were you dead at the age of 14 when they baptized you?" I was somewhat confused by the question and asked George to elaborate on what he had just said. He explained to me that before coming to faith in Christ, I was alive to the Adam connection, and dead to the Christ connection. In other words, I was alive to Adam, and spiritually dead to Christ (connected naturally to Adam's race, and unconnected spiritually to Christ's new race). The Scriptures tell us that we must become dead to Adam and alive to Christ to be "born again" George then summarized, "then what happened to you at age 14 was just a good dunking!"

That's all George ever said to me about baptism. But it wasn't long before I went to the front of my church following a morning worship service, and presented myself for believer's baptism, on the basis that my real conversion occurred following my baptism, rendering my childhood baptism null and void.

There are those who trust in their baptism for regeneration. I must say at this point, if baptism saves a person, then I would be a clear testimony of one who was saved and lost again.

Baptism for some is not a particularly memorable experience, but for me it was a **turning point** in my Christian life. As I went into the baptismal waters at the church where George taught my Sunday School Class, which was located in the city where I grew up and

attended high school, I was aware of men and women in the audience who had known me from childhood. There were girls from whom I may have stolen a kiss. There were guys with whom I had "shot craps" in the restroom while the high school dances were taking place. There were men in that audience with whom I had done serious gambling as well as other unapproved activities not considered so serious.

That Sunday morning the baptismal service brought Romans 10:9,10 to mind:

*"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."*

These are some of the thoughts that occurred to me: First, if my heart really believes that Christ came out from God, and that He died on the cross and was raised from the dead to pay the penalty for my sins . . . and my heart really believes that, then my mouth will confess it. If my mouth will not confess it, then that is prima-facie evidence that my heart does not really believe it.

Secondly, I am standing here waiting to be baptized as a public testimony to all these friends and former acquaintances, who may know a lot about me, that the person whose baptism they are witnessing is **a new creature**: *"Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

Thirdly, there will never again be any need for my explanation of why I did all the mean, dirty, sinful things they know about. I am "dead" to that life. I am buried with Christ, and as He is resurrected, even so, I am resurrected in Christ. A new life has begun.

I cannot honestly list **turning points** in my life without listing the disciples, the disciple-makers, and the makers of disciple-makers whom God has so graciously permitted to be a vital part of my life. Let me give you a flashback to 1953 (the year I have already referred to when we returned to Wichita Falls from New Orleans). Although when my brother, Bob, has visited us in New Orleans, probably in the year 1952, he was the same old Bob I used to know . . . now I found him soundly converted to Christianity. He had gone broke in the home-building and development business and had called his friend, George Dimock in Colorado. He said, "George, I feel like I want to get so far back into the church that I can never be lost again!" The voice of George came back over the telephone, "Bob, if you'll just substitute the name Christ for Church you'll have it made." And Bob committed his life to the Lordship of Christ and began to study the Scriptures seriously and to share his faith with anyone who would listen.

As I returned home he and Goerge leveled their "guns" on me, and began to witness to me about the saving grace of God, and to tell me that I needed to be saved. I told them I was just as good a Christian as they were, and I didn't need to button-hole every person I could catch up with and evangelize them. They just kept on loving me, and kept on coming! In those days I saw a fellowship of the saints (believers) and a joy for living that I had never experienced before. George in particular seemed to have a quality of life that caught my attention. Now, Bob, to me seemed to have an overdose of a good thing. We would argue a lot, and all the while he would get some good punches into me. But George seemed to bump into me regularly. He was a good listener, open and vulnerable, and his life set a sharp pace as a practicing Christian. I found myself making time to listen and ask questions of George. His loving care and commitment eventually led me into the Bible he read with such insight.

Then came the experiences and the illuminations of early 1954 which I have already described earlier, with the many steps and battles, after which I committed all of myself that I could to all of Christ that I understood. George had let the Spirit lead, bonding me to Christ, without my even knowing the discipling process was underway. For the first time in my life **I had a real purpose for living**. I knew that I was accepted in the Beloved, but now my driving purpose was to win His approval and His "well done." Something in my mental and physical makeup would not allow me to pursue a mediocre Christian life.

Churchmanship was not enough for me, but I wanted to know all there was to know about Discipleship. God had provided one of the best sources in His Kingdom — an equipped man whose life would be fulfilled through helping another to become a successful and fruitful Christian disciple.

Early in my Christian life a layman named Elie Lam told my wife and me that if we would get the Word of God into the lives of our children that God would be faithful to see that it did not return unto Him void, but would accomplish His purpose. Each of our children completed the Bible Memory Association's five year Youth Plan, which contained over one hundred carefully selected Scripture versus.

Wayne Watts helped us to understand the true meaning of loving and giving.

Charlie Riggs modeled for me the disciplined life.

Donald Tabb revealed to me that a Christian did not have to be a sissy.

Gene Warr's vision for ministry kept me charging . . . going and going and going.

Jack Humphreys' example of business and family integrity guided many of our decisions concerning debt and discipline.

Bob Potter's example of turning his back on his supermarket in Oklahoma City to go full blast into the Lord's work as a Navigator stimulated us when the going got tough. We will refer later again to his statement worth repeating, "I would rather give to my boys the certain knowledge that they can trust God than to give them a college education."

Harold Warren's consistency in spite of serious set-backs gave us strength.

George had given me a little packet containing five key verses from the Scriptures, and had admonished me to memorize them — "write them upon the table of your heart" is how he put it. I thanked him and took the packet, and read the verses very carefully, and then deposited them in the top drawer of my dresser.

One day George was buying my lunch at the Country Club, and he asked me, "How are you coming with the five verses I gave you?" I said, "fine, just fine. Those are very good verses." He said, "Give me the first one." I said, "Oh, I don't have them with me." Then George explained what he meant by Scripture memory. "Write the vital verses on the table of your heart, so that the Holy Spirit can use them in offensive and defensive warfare. He said those particular verses are called "the assurance verses." They are, one through five, as follows:

Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:11,12
Assurance of Answered Prayer	John 16:24
Assurance of Victory	1 Corinthians 10:13
Assurance of Forgiveness	1 John 1:9
Assurance of Guidance	Proverbs 3:5,6

He predicted that if I would write these verses on the table of my heart in such a manner that I would always have them handy, they would become "handles" to promises that I will surely need in the days to come. He said the key to getting these verses memorized was REVIEW. He suggested "yard by yard" it is hard, but "inch by inch" is a cinch. He assured me that if I would carry those verse cards with me at all times, and use the "wasted moments" to learn them and to review them, the assignment would not prove as difficult as it might seem.

Several weeks later, again at lunch, George asked me if I was making progress with those verses. I told him something that, I knew, did not satisfy him, but frankly I was not of a disposition to

undertake such an elementary task as that. Of course, I did not tell him that I did not want to undertake the task.

Then again, at a later time, I asked George a serious question, "George, why doesn't God use me like He uses you?" George leveled those gray eyes at me which always said, "I really care for you." Then the words came from him that became a **turning point** in my life and ministry. He challenged me.

"Charlie, if you'd get usable, He'll wear you out!"

From that day and that hour I had those five verses directly, continually and meaningfully with me at all times, and it wasn't too long, by just using the 'wasted moments,' such as waiting for the banker to see me, waiting for the children at school, or driving time that I got those five verses deeply and indelibly written on the table of my heart. They are there today, ready for instant recall.

Of course, I no longer dodged George, or failed to answer his telephone calls. I was anxious to be with him because I was obedient to his injunction, and I knew that he would approve and encourage me.

I looked him up and found that he was delighted to see that I had finally accomplished an assignment which he had given me months before.

Then he promptly gave me the Topical Memory System containing sixty carefully selected verses designed to equip a disciple for offensive and defensive warfare. I would memorize these verses over the next year, and the Word of God in my heart changed me. The Holy Spirit will take the Word of God as it is, and apply it to your heart as you are, and change you — precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little.

A little bit of structure and a little bit of accountability. Most of us need both in order to be the best that we **can** be. I thank God that George did not give up on me, but continued to encourage me until I acquired those valuable "milk of the Word" verses. They, and the ones following have been a vital contribution to my peace, my assurance, and my ability to evangelize and minister to others, as well as to walk victoriously with Christ.

One of the most encouraging **turning points** in my Christian experience came early on, when after I had known Christ and walked with Christ for only a few years, God directed me to the home of Paul Wade and allowed me to present the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to him in a very testy environment. I will always remember how, after presenting the Gospel as best I knew how, Paul stood at his bedroom window looking out, and said to me, "I could never live up to it; and you've got enough hypocrites up at that church now!"

When Paul prayed the sinner's prayer, and came to faith in Christ at my hand, and afterward became, with my encouragement, an obedient Christian in action, with balance and power in his life — and began to set the pace for others and to reproduce himself in the lives of others — this was the greatest encouragement I have ever received in this life. By these events God was showing me that what I had to share with others was real and that it works.

The disciplines that George Dimock established in my life were shared faithfully with Paul Wade. I helped him to learn how to have a daily devotional time with Christ and His Word. I helped him to begin a lifetime habit of Scripture Memory. I helped him to share his testimony. I helped him to learn how to witness to others, and how to follow them up and help them to grow. I remember when I obtained for him a hard back copy of the Pilgrim addition to the King James Bible (Wayne Watts kept a box full of them in his office for just such occasions). He wore that Bible out in a few months. I remember spending half a week's paycheck in purchasing for him a New Scofield Reference Bible bound in beautiful Morocco leather. I know Paul will be "my joy, and my crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming, for he is truly my glory and my joy."

Then, very practically speaking, I know that I would have given up on many individuals since if God had not given me such a successful follow-up experience with Paul Wade. I thank my God upon every remembrance of him.

Bankruptcy or Blessing

"I waited patiently for God to help me; then He listened and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out from the bog and the mire, and set my feet on a hard, firm path and steadied me as I walked along.

He has given me a new song to sing, of praises to our God.

Now many will hear of the glorious things He did for me, and stand in awe before the Lord, and put their trust in Him.

Many blessings are given to those who trust the Lord, and have no confidence in the flesh.

O Lord my God, many and many a time You have done great miracles for us, and we are ever in Your thoughts. Who else can do such glorious things? No one else can be compared with You. There isn't time to tell of all Your wonderful deeds."

— Psalm 40:1-5 (Living Bible)

No, there isn't time to tell **all**, but in the space I have I want to tell **some** of the things God has done for me and my family.

At the age of 29 I committed all of myself I could to all of Christ I understood. I had the benefit over the next several years of earnest **discipleship** training by the godly man who helped me to know Christ and to go on in Christ.

In 1960 I was very much involved in Christian activities, and I had prospered as all real estate men should have prospered in those post war years of the 50's.

But then, through a combination of greed and sin, bad judgment and sin, pride and sin, I went broke! Flatter than a flitter!

(It is worth remembering; a gracious and loving God does sometimes permit a Christian to fail, especially when his ways do not please the Lord.)

After liquidation of every saleable property, the mountain of unpaid debts still remaining seemed unsurmountable.

I struggled along for several years without any progress in reducing the debt. Wichita Falls had plunged into a severe recession.

From 1954 to 1959-60 I had built homes, bought and sold equities, developed land and commercial real estate sites like the boom would never end in Wichita Falls, Texas. And then the bubble burst!

Sheppard Air Force Base reduced its permanent personnel from 21,000 to 12,000 almost overnight.

The big North Texas Oil Field moved into secondary recovery.

The bloom had withered.

Humble, Texaco, Shell, Gulf and other oil companies, as well as oil field specialty and supply businesses began to move their offices and personnel out of Wichita Falls.

1,500 homes were vacant — a large portion of my total resources was tied up in second lien notes on properties now vacant — and I was unable to sell or rent them, with mortgage payments coming due monthly. The total value of the properties began to drop below the balance owed on the first mortgages, and my equity investments were going down the drain. I was broke in the strictest meaning of the term.

In 1966 the mountain of unpaid debts remained enormous.

In my thinking I had two alternatives:

1. Blow my brains out! or
2. Look for another city where I could feed my family and stay afloat.

While looking for the way, I had the good fortune of negotiating a long term lease for a 140,000 square foot Class A J.C. Penney store. My leasing commissions would ultimately pay off the gigantic debt we had amassed in Wichita Falls. My father's real estate office could oversee the closing, and distribute the proceeds of my real estate leasing commissions (which would come to me over a period of 20 years) . . . he would distribute the proceeds to my creditors. We agreed to the plan. Now I could bail out of this depressed city.

In July, 1966 I was headed for Phoenix to take the examination for the Real Estate Broker's License and to try to make a comeback in Arizona's expanding market.

As a result of his telephone call the night before, I met Don Tabb of the Billy Graham Team at Love Field in Dallas . . . as he was passing through from Minneapolis to San Antonio. Don worked under Charlie Riggs (head of counselor training and follow up for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) and was due at a conference in San Antonio with the Southwest Regional Director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Film Ministry. Now a strange thing happened! Suddenly all the airlines but Braniff staged a major strike and no planes were leaving Love Field flying west — only north and south. The Phoenix flight was canceled.

Don said to me, "You can't do anything today but drive back to Wichita Falls or come fly with me to San Antonio." I flew with him to San Antonio.

As we sat in his San Antonio office, Mr. Charles Tatum related to us story after story of how thousands were filling the big theatres across America to see Billy Graham's feature-length dramatic motion picture, **The Restless Ones**, and hundreds were responding to the invitation to come forward and receive Christ — most of them asking sincere questions about the Bible, God, and Christ — but there were no counsellors to give them answers from the Word of God. The result was much confusion at the theatres.

He related how 2,500 people in San Antonio had filled the huge Majestic Theatre on Saturday night, and 1/3 of the audience had come forward at the conclusion of the film story to inquire about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ . . . but only a handful of trained Counsellors was present to help them make purposeful decisions.

Other theatres across the nation were producing the same picture of confusion. The need of the hour was Counsellors, trained counsellors who were skilled in giving answers from the Word of God. My heart was moved!

God gave me a desire to be involved in training men to be Counsellors, and to be a part of this exciting evangelistic thrust into the heart of America's secular world.

After returning home (the very next morning), God spoke to me from His Word. (At that time it was my plan to read and meditate on a chapter of Isaiah each morning in my Quiet Time. That was the particular morning for chapter 41.)

The last two verses stood out to me like neon lights:

*"For I beheld, and there was no man among them,
and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them,
could answer a word.*

*Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing;
their molten images are wind and confusion."*

— Isaiah 41:28,29

I told my family immediately what God's Word had seemed to say to me.

Flo panicked! I had no peace without the support of my wife, who had already suffered much from my financial errors. I asked God to give my family peace.

On the next morning Flo woke up with perfect peace.

We had a family conference regarding my employment with Billy Graham.

We discussed the college situation for my two oldest sons (Rick and Randy), who were counting on my financial help. We considered the National Defense Student Loan, the Federal Grant to families earning

under \$9,000.00 per year, the work-study program, all ways to help them earn their own way through college.

We received negative counsel from those closest to us. How could we think that this could possibly be God's will — to enter into a ministry, on the road, at \$500.00 per month salary, at a time when our two oldest boys needed our help to get through college?

Flo and I recalled the words of our dear friends, Bob and Evon Potter, who had told us in Oklahoma City the following:

"I would rather give to my sons the certain knowledge that they can trust God, than to give them a college education."

Our two oldest boys themselves settled it: Rick said, "It was no accident that Don Tabb was at the airport headed for San Antonio. Dad, you are the best man in the world for that job, and God obviously intervened, and clearly closed the door to the Phoenix move, by that airplane strike. Dad, this is God's will for your life. Your only responsibility is to walk through the door He has opened."

Randy came to the breakfast table the next morning announcing, "I just had a thought! We're not poor for nothing. We are poor for something!"

I trusted God to provide the needs of those who would suffer loss because of my obedience to God's will, and on July 15, 1966 I departed for Dallas to begin 7 years employment with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Film Ministry.

Later in that same year God gave us additional confirmation from my oldest son, Rick, who had gone to Abilene to be a part of the summer work force on the Hardin-Simmons University campus to paint dormitory rooms at \$1.25 per hour in order to earn money for his first semester supplies. Then, just one week before the semester began, a check for a high school graduation gift came in the mail addressed to Rick. The check was marked "for education" and was from my former roommate at The University of Texas, Bob Gibson, whom I had not seen for a number of years.

That check from Bob Gibson, along with the Federal Grant, the National Defense Student Loan, and the work-study plan, would cover all the balance of his needs for his first two years at college.

God was faithful, through His servant, Bob Gibson, to provide a similar check to Randy and to David when they faced their first year in college.

Over the next several years, in 60 cities and 29 college and university campuses in the eastern half of our state, we were engaged in preparation of counselors and film showings. The blessings of the Lord were upon the Billy Graham Evangelistic Film Ministry during those years.

Tyler was chosen for relocating my family, as I criss-crossed the area.

Satan proved his faithfulness. Three years after the J.C. Penney Company signed the Letter of Intent, the shopping center developer went broke, and the J.C.P. lease fell through; and we realized that we were still in debt, with no hope of reconciliation with our creditors — and up to our ears in ministry.

I met at Dallas Love Field with five of my prayer partners to seek their counsel. They advised us not to turn back into the treacherous business world. It would be next to impossible to make enough money to be able to cover family and business expenses, pay income taxes to the government, and have anything left over to apply on past debts. And furthermore my creditors had not forced us into bankruptcy (in fact our five largest creditors had made no contact with us in over five years).

So! We pressed on! We continued to pay what little we could on our debts from our limited salary, but any reduction in the enormous debt was negligible.

God blessed the ministry three more years, but the debts remained a heavy burden on our hearts.

The Scriptures tell us in Proverbs 28:13 *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* The Living Bible puts it this way, *"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful, but if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance."*

The agony of the man in debt ebbs and flows. Space will not permit me to share all such experiences, but I want to recall one. I was lying flat on the floor in my study, on my face before the Lord with the Living Bible opened to James 4:7-10. The Word of God was speaking to me . . .

*"So give yourselves humbly to God.
Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
And when you draw close to God, God will draw
close to you.
Wash your hands, you sinners, and let your hearts
be filled with God alone to make them pure and
true to Him.
Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done.
"Let there be sorrow and sincere grief.
Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom
instead of joy.
Then, when you realize your worthlessness before
the Lord,
He will lift you up, and encourage and help you."*

I could identify with David when he said in Psalm 32:1-6:

"What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven!

What joys when sins are covered!

What relief for those who have confessed their sins, and God has cleared their record.

There was a time when I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was.

But my dishonesty made me miserable, and filled my days with frustration.

All day and night Your hand was heavy on me.

My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted my sins to You, and stopped trying to hide them.

I said to myself, "I will confess them to the Lord," and You forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Now I say that each believer should confess his sins to God when he is aware of them, while there is time to be forgiven.

Judgment will not touch him if he does."

Peter also reminds us that a good conscience is essential before our witness can be effective:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear;

Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation (conduct) in Christ."

— I Peter 3:15,16

Somewhere along the line this question began to concern me:

Is your objective to get decisions or to get disciples?

A traveling evangelist can get decisions in a far country or as he moves about, here and there, but one gets disciples in the place where he abides, and as he makes disciples, they see his feet of clay.

A discipling ministry requires a clear conscience (a blameless life — not a faultless life, but a blameless life — there is a difference). You will recall the story about the little girl who loved her mother very much. Her mother worked hard all day, and on this very, very cold day the little girl's desire was to have her mother's house shoes warm for her when she got home. Upon returning home the mother opened the oven and found her house shoes burned to a crisp with only the charred

remains left. Do you suppose that mother punished her little girl? Faultless, no! But blameless, yes!

A discipling ministry requires a blameless life!

I identify with the Psalmist who in Psalm 101:2 said, *"I will try to walk a blameless path, but how I need Your help, especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should."*

During the years 1967-1972 the Lord permitted me to partner in the Gospel with a score of men in East Texas, out of which evolved "Shamgar" with its primary founder and Director, Doug Snider, and "MARK IV" with me and many others, including:

Jerry Burgess	Charles Fries	John Morris
Paul Campbell	Steve Harms	Joe Mooberry
Paul Cook	Lowell Hoyt	Clyde Powell
Glenn Cotten	Gary Lauter	John Prestridge
Lowell Dailey	Tom Maden	Danny Robertson
Bill Fisher	John McAuley	Bob Seifert
Don Wheeler		Ken Wheeler

In the fall of 1972 a handsome brown eyed young man arrived in Tyler from California where he had been teaching Air Force officers to speak Chinese. My pastor asked me to be young Van Graham's "pace-setter" (sharing discipleship principles, while helping him to meet practical needs, such as a place to work and live, etc., as well as to share my ministry with him). I asked my pastor if he thought this kind of ministry was my special gift. He answered, "positively."

It was then, at our breakfast table with Pastor John Morris and my wife, that I shared with them the burden I had received from Matthew 5:23,24 on that very morning during my Quiet Time.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

The application led my family and me into a five year adventure. Our watchword became "R & R" (restitution and responsibility). Our commitment became the repayment of those debts we had turned our back on when we left Wichita Falls, and a new attitude toward the responsible management of money. The following day we resigned from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Film Ministry.

(The decision made that day to go back and attempt to pay those debts was not a result of my integrity, but a direct result of six years of intercessory prayer by my wife. She revealed to me that for six years she had gone over my head directly to God requesting that He turn me back to a sense of responsibility to my creditors.)

The action Flo and I took together that day in 1972 was approved by my 3 sons and daughter and had the blessing of my pastor. In a letter to our inner-circle friends dated August 9, 1972 we announced that we were entering a "new sacred work." When is a work sacred? When God is at the core and thrust of it. For a time, at least, God was shifting the emphasis of my work from disciples to dollars.

I can't share all the struggles during the next five year period of our lives, but I want to share one excerpt from my Daily Journal dated 10/19/74:

"Once again the desire to give must be stemmed, because I have not completed restitution, and I do not have anything of my own to give. All that I have belongs to my creditors, and I must break free and be restored to **the joy of giving**. In the meantime may God keep my feet to the fire."

I thank God for every wind of adversity which lifted us up to the level required to get over the next mountain peak problem just ahead.

And I am eternally grateful for the many ways God ministered to us through it all — and the side benefits that accrued to my family because of it. Truly God's Word is precious which says, "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed in us.*" And referring directly to "*the sufferings of this present time,*" Paul goes on to promise the believer in Romans 8:28:

"For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

There were many **turning points**, but the one that stands out clearest to me at this time occurred in March, 1975.

God was obviously withholding blessing. Our major project was The French Quarter shopping center at Loop 323 and South Broadway in Tyler, and its permanent financing had fallen through on two occasions, and the pre-leasing was not moving along at its expected pace because of the shadows of doubt that were cast by the failure of the permanent financing commitment from a viable lender.

I thought there might be "sin in the camp." You will remember the Old Testament account after Israel's victory over Jerico, and their defeat by the little city of Ai — that Joshua looked for "sin in the camp," and discovered Akin had taken the valuables . . . and after purging the camp of Akin and his family Israel again had victory in warfare.

I thought there might be sin in my family that was causing God to withhold His blessing. I asked my wife and children to examine their

lives, and confess any known sin. My own conscience was pricked regarding the tithe.

While we were in debt one of my prayer partners had advised me that 100% of the money which came to me belonged to my creditors. It was not my prerogative to give 10% to the Lord's work. All of it belonged to my creditors as long as I was in debt. He suggested that for me to tithe of my income would be comparable to the one who, with a wrong motive, purchases a stained glass window in the church.

The logic made sense to me, and I had followed that logic having ceased to give anything to the church.

Now, here we were at a 'cross roads' in life. Because of one failure after another I was ready to acknowledge that we were doing something wrong. While I had asked my family to search their lives and see if they might have unconfessed sin, a feeling of guilt came over me in regard to my treatment of the monies which I had earned.

Was my interpretation of the scriptures accurate regarding the tithe? How could I know the truth? How could I be certain I was being obedient to God's Word? I embarked on a study regarding the tithe utilizing my concordance, Webster's Dictionary, Roget's Thesaurus and everything at hand. The first truth I uncovered was in Leviticus 27:30 which implied the tithe is the Lord's. I asked myself the question, "Does 10% of my income belong to my creditors or does it belong to the Lord?" The second truth I discovered was in Malachi 3:10 where God seemed to be inviting me to prove (or test) Him. My Thesaurus put the issue to rest as far as I was concerned. It listed the verbs of the word 'prove' as follows: "demonstrate, prove, establish, make good; show, evidence, verify, etc., settle the question."

That's what I was looking for! We began to tithe immediately, and for the avowed purpose of testing the Lord. We were convinced that we had been doing something wrong, and that the only way we might know what was the right thing to do . . . was to test the Lord. From that day and that hour, in a most miraculous way, explainable only in terms of God, the good hand of our God has been on our business, our family, and our ministry. The whole text of Malachi 3:6-12 is recorded:

"For I am the Lord, I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Even from the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.

Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me.

But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee?

In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts,

If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not corrupt the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of Hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

The spade work of 1972, 1973 and 1974 began to bear fruit. In rapid order the following real estate deals fell into place:

The French Quarter Shopping Center was 97% pre-leased by July 18, 1976 and construction began immediately with interim financing approved by Northwest Mutual Life Insurance Company.

The French Quarter Grand Opening took place on November 2, 1976 with Pat Boone and Miss America cutting the ribbon for Mr. Cecil Lasater, the owner of the property. I thank my God upon every remembrance of Cecil and Louise Lasater who gave me the privilege of "Leasing Agent" of their fine property at the intersection of two major thoroughfares in Tyler, Texas.

A TG&Y store in Tyler.

A SAFEWAY store in Jacksonville.

Sherwood Forest Apartments in Tyler.

Embarcadero Apartments in Tyler.

Vista Largo Apartments in Longview.

Timbercreek Swim & Tennis Club in Tyler.

The Latter Day Saints church site in Tyler.

1717 Shiloh Road Apartments in Tyler.

Shiloh Road Church of Christ site in Tyler.

Tiffany Place Apartments in Tyler.

Woodgate Office Park in Tyler.

Tyler Motor Inn.

Alamo Plaza Motel in Tyler.

Wilson's Department Store site in Tyler.

Taco Bell on the Loop in Tyler.

Jim Dandy Fried Chicken on the Loop in Tyler.

Sale of West Erwin Shopping Center in Tyler.

Through these years my wife met regularly with Travis Stewart, the godly manager of The Tyler Retail Merchants, who was guiding her in paying off the small accounts that were against our name. My good brother, J.B. Featherston, had agreed to be Trustee for me — primarily to stand between me and the creditors who never ceased to hound my trail and dog my path . . . diverting me from my task. It is little wonder that some people never get their debts paid in full. Their creditors simply keep them occupied with the problem. J.B. had done an excellent job for me of calling, writing, and answering calls and letters and threats on my behalf. With the help of these two good brothers and my faithful wife, every account listed against my name at Retail Merchants in Wichita Falls and Tyler had been paid in full by December 31, 1975.

On September 15, 1977 the resources were available to pay in cash our last five creditors whose balances were the largest, and represented a substantial portion of the whole debt. We still had not heard from any of them in five years. Each had filed for judgment against me.

As far as the law was concerned our credit was clear. But as far as those five accounts were concerned our name was not clear.

Good credit? Yes! Good conscience? No!

That cash was so very hard to give up. I had visualized many optional plans for the use of the cash, including investments, etc. The choice was difficult. I had visualized the problem half solved at one time in this manner. I would take all that cash from the sales commissions earned in that current year, and I would wisely invest it. Then I could make payments to those five major creditors and spread the time required to repay them over a number of years — thus extending the power and testimony of our good name over several years. Doesn't that sound good?

As I was trying to choose the right thing to do, God made the decision for me. On September 22 I read from Proverbs 22 verse one which nearly jumped off the page at me. Its paraphrased version said to me, *"If you must choose, take a good name rather than all that cash; for to be held in loving esteem is better than great riches."* (At this time I was reading a Proverb a day in my Quiet Time.)

With my check book in hand, and without waiting to eat breakfast, I hit the highway for Wichita Falls, where I found three of the five creditors and gave them checks for the amounts due. Interestingly enough each of them found a cabinet, opened it, and pulled out a file showing the exact amount I owed them to the penny.

Then I drove to Sherman and paid number four, which left one solitary creditor between me and a clear conscience.

On October 1, 1977 I finally located him and drove back to Wichita Falls, handing Harold Shappell a check for \$4,311.34. With that

payment, by God's grace and His wonderful provision, we were able to complete restitution and gain a clear conscience with God and man. The scriptures tell us:

"Rich men are conceited, but their real poverty is evident to the poor.

When the godly are successful, everyone is glad."
— Proverbs 28:11,12 (Living)

"First go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

— Matthew 5:24b (KJV)

On October 23, 1977, in the evening service of my home church, I shared the testimony you have read from my modest pen, and when I finished, in the presence of friends who had prayed for us, Flo and I and our four children knelt at the front of the church and presented our spiritual gifts to God. It was a glorious evening, and "everyone was glad."

"It isn't sacrifices and offerings which
You really want from Your people.
Burnt animals bring no special joy to Your heart.
But You have accepted the offer of my lifelong
service.

Then I said, "See, I have come, just as all the
prophets foretold.

And I delight to do Your will, my God,
for Your law is written upon my heart!"

A P P E N D I X

God's word is still blessing my life in the nineties. Recently, as I was returning to Tyler from Jackson, Mississippi on Interstate 20 I utilized the time by memorizing a portion of Scripture which has, it seems to me, been a truthful description of my life and ministry as a layman, so-called. Although it was written approximately 1900 years ago by Paul in defense of his ministry, it is applicable to me today, especially as paraphrased by the Living Bible.

"It is this God who has made you and me into faithful Christians and commissioned us to preach the Good News.

He has put His brand upon us — His mark of ownership — and given us His Holy Spirit in our hearts as guarantee that we belong to Him, and as the first installment of all that He is going to give us.

But thanks be to God! For through what Christ has done, He has triumphed over us so that now wherever we go He uses us to tell others about the Lord and to spread the Gospel like a sweet perfume.

As far as God is concerned there is a sweet, wholesome fragrance in our lives. It is of course the fragrance of Christ within us, an aroma to both the saved and the unsaved all around us.

To those who are not being saved, we seem a fearful smell of death and doom, while to those who know Christ we are a life-giving perfume. But who is adequate for such a task as this?

Only those who, like ourselves, are men of integrity, sent by God, speaking with Christ's power, with God's eye upon us. We are not like those hucksters — and there are many of them — whose idea in getting out the Gospel is to make a good living out of it.

We dare to say these good things about ourselves only because of our great trust in God through Christ, that He will help us to be true to what we say, and not because we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves. Our only power and success comes from God.

It is God Himself, in His mercy, who has given us this wonderful work of telling His Good News to others, and so we never give up.

We do not try to trick people into believing — we are not interested in fooling anyone. We never try to get anyone to believe that the Bible teaches what it doesn't. All such shameful methods we forgo. We

stand in the presence of God as we speak and so we tell the truth, as all who know us will agree.

We don't go around preaching about ourselves, but about Christ Jesus as Lord. All we say about ourselves is that we are your servants because of what Jesus has done for us. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that it is the brightness of His glory that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

But this precious treasure — this light and power that now shine within us — is held in a perishable container, that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own.

So our aim is to please Him always in everything we do, whether we are here in this body or away from this body and with Him in heaven. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged and have our lives laid bare — before Him. Each of us will receive whatever he deserves for the eternal or temporal things he has done in his earthly body.

It is because of this solemn fear of the Lord, which is ever present in our minds, that we work so hard to win others. God knows our hearts, that they are pure in this matter, and I hope that, deep within, you really know it too.

When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!

All these new things are from God who brought us back to Himself through what Christ Jesus did. And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into His favor and be reconciled to Him.

For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then, in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!

We try to live in such a way that no one will ever be offended or kept back from finding the Lord by the way we act; so that no one can find fault with us and blame it on the Lord.

We have been truthful, with God's power helping us in all we do. All of the godly man's arsenal — weapons of defense, and weapons of attack — have been ours.

We stand true to the Lord whether others honor us or despise us. Whether they criticize us or commend us. We are honest, but some call us liars.

The world ignores us, but we are known to God; we live close to death, but here we are, still very much alive.

Our hearts ache, but at the same time we have the joy of the Lord. We are poor, but we give rich spiritual gifts to others. We own nothing, and yet we enjoy everything."

(From portions of 2 Corinthians 1-6)

"I can never stop thanking God for all the wonderful gifts He has given me, now that I am Christ's: He has enriched my whole life. He has helped me speak out for Him and has given me a full understanding of the truth; what they told me Christ could do for me has happened! Now I have every grace and blessing; every spiritual gift and power for doing His will are mine during this time of waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And He guarantees right up to the end that I will be counted free from all sin and guilt on that day when He returns.

God will surely do this for me, for He always does just what He says, and He is the one who invited me into this wonderful friendship with His Son, even Christ our Lord."

(1 Corinthians 1:4-9 Living Bible)

Friends have urged me to record the turning points in my life as an encouragement. If you have been encouraged, would you please record the turning points in your life, and pass them on?

— Charles Featherston
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An Autobiography Of A Christian Disciple



*"O magnify the Lord with me, and
let us exalt His name together."*

— Psalm 34:3

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