

FAITH IS ACTION

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THE
MIRROR OF A

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The title 'THE MIRROR OF A MAN' is rendered in large, bold, teal-colored letters. The word 'THE' is at the top left. 'MIRROR' is the second line, and 'OF A' is smaller and positioned to the right of 'MIRROR'. 'MAN' is the largest word, spanning the bottom line. A silhouette of a man stands within the 'A' of 'MAN'. The background is a light blue gradient with faint silhouettes of a landscape, including a tree and mountains.

“As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man” (Pro. 27:19). It is stated more clearly in the NIV: *“As water reflects the face, so a man’s heart reflects the man.”* When Solomon wrote this, they didn’t have glass mirrors, but we know that if you look into a perfectly clear, still pool of water, with the sun shining down, you can see your face in that water. Likewise, when you look into a mirror, you can see your face, your complexion, your features, your countenance reflected back at you in the mirror. Just as a mirror reflects your face, the Bible says that *a man’s heart reflects the man*. Whatever is in our hearts is really who we are, and it will come forth and be reflected in our lives, in everything we do.

Proverbs 23:7 says, *“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”* Jesus said, *“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”* (Matt. 12:34). The Wiseman said, *“Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it comes the issues of life”* (Pro. 4:23). Everything that is known about you is in your heart,

and it will come out sooner or later. If you spend a little time with someone and begin to talk to him, after awhile you’ll begin to see into his heart; for his words will reveal what kind of person he is.

The book of James is very similar to Proverbs, and also provides N.T. confirmation to its truths, even though he doesn’t specifically quote the Proverbs. I think that people tend to neglect or just read over it casually but it deserves to be looked into, because it’s just as powerful as all other N.T. books, and has much wisdom that we can grow by.

The Mirror of the Word

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straight way forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he

being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:22-25).

James essentially expounded what we read in Prov. 27:19, and he likened the looking glass—the mirror to the Word of God. God’s Word is a truth-telling mirror, and he said that if you will look into the mirror of God’s Word, by hearing, reading, learning, and continue in these, you will be blessed in all your actions. In Jewish life, both in the home and in the synagogue, the Word of God was read aloud. However, you can hear the Word, but be *a forgetful hearer*, and get up and go your way, and not take heed to what you’ve heard, and not put it into practice. This person is like a man who looks into a mirror, sees his own face, but then forgets what manner of person he is, and what the Word has shown him and convicted him to do.

Let’s Check It Out!

Let’s try something as a test. (When illustrated live, people could still *hear* instructions. Please *read next paragraph* before you begin.)

I want you to **close your eyes** for a moment, *and think of a person who’s very close to you*: Your husband, wife, your children, parents, brother, sister, or a good friend. *Get a picture of that person’s face in your mind. Then open your eyes: Begin now.*

Were you able to see the image of that person clearly in your mind with your eyes closed? In the live service, most everyone raised their hands that they were able to visualize this person. **I want you to close your eyes again**, but this time I want you to *visualize*

your own face. Then **open your eyes: Begin now.**

In the live service, most everyone had a funny look on their faces, as if to say, “What?” If you are like them, you found *it’s harder to see your own face than the other person’s*. It’s very difficult to picture your own face, especially with facial expressions of joy or anger, etc., because we don’t look at ourselves all the time. We look in the mirror in the morning when we comb our hair or shave. We might visit the mirror a few times when we use the bathroom. But even so, when you look in the mirror, you don’t see yourself laughing, so you don’t know what you look like laughing. You probably haven’t looked in the mirror either when you’re blazing mad, because when you are blazing mad, you’re not studying about going to the mirror to see what you look like. So you cannot really visualize what your own face looks like when mad. You know *how you feel* when your neck is bulging and your face is hot and your eyes are popping out, but not what you look like! Neither do you know what you look like when you’re laughing a big belly laugh. You can feel the tingle on your face and the gleam in your eyes, but to visualize your own face is hard.

When you were picturing that person before, chances are, if you daydreamed for awhile, you would be able to picture them laughing, or angry, or sad in your mind’s eyes, because you have seen their face and their countenance in every situation. But when you look in the mirror at yourself, most of the time, it’s with a straight, expressionless face. You may have looked at a photograph

of yourself and thought, “*Oh*,” because you didn’t realize you look a certain way. You know it’s you, and it looks like you, but you were surprised, because you didn’t know you look quite like that. In your mind, you saw yourself in a different way. The point is, *You and I don’t really know what we look like*.

It is the same way in the spirit. James said that we are like the man who looks in the mirror and says, “*Oh, that’s me. That’s my face*,” but gets up, puts on his clothes, goes out the door, goes about the rest of his day, and doesn’t know what he really looks like. In the same way, we can look into the Word, but not really understand what we are looking at, and what we are seeing in our own hearts. That’s why he said that **we must continue to look into the mirror**. Remember, *the heart reflects the man*, and the only way we will have an accurate image of *who we are in the spirit* is if we *keep looking* into the mirror.

The only way I can know what I look like in the natural, is to look in the mirror, which I do every morning. But as the day goes on, that image fades in my mind, and I will know less and less what I look like. If I had told you to stare in the mirror at yourself for about five minutes before you closed your eyes, you probably would have been able to visualize your own face right away, because you had concentrated on the image. It’s the same way with seeing our hearts in the Word of God. We just can’t pop in church on a Sunday morning and get a little message here, and get a little sermon there, and think that will enable us to know whether or

not we are really walking in the Spirit, in obedience and truth. We can’t. We’ve got to keep looking in the mirror in order to discern our own hearts.

It’s much easier for me to say, “Brother, you have this really big fault,” or “Sister, you need to get the victory over your problem.” I can easily see what’s wrong with everybody else, **but in order to see my faults** I have to keep looking in the mirror of the Word.

James said that otherwise: “*Straightway—immediately, he goes his way and forgets what manner of person he is*.” In the Greek, the emphasis is on the fact that it is *immediate*. He at once forgets what he has seen. How many times has the Holy Ghost sent the Word of God over the pulpit, and people hear it, and then go out and immediately forget what they heard and do not apply it to themselves? There have been times when the Holy Ghost has spoken through me powerfully, and I knew God was talking to specific people, but they just got up and went out unphased, and the next report you hear, their problem is worse. Why? Because it was easy to say, “Amen” when they sat in the pew and heard the message as the Holy Ghost was pulling at their heart strings, but then they went out and immediately forgot what they heard. They didn’t put it into practice. James said that if you don’t put it into practice, *you are just a hearer*, and the danger is *you deceive yourselves*.

Fallacious Reasoning

This is why Paul said, “*Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip*”

(Heb. 2:1). I want to explain this to you as it is in the Greek, because in English it sounds like *we are letting the Word slip*. But the Greek says, “*Lest you should slip.*” **God’s Word never slips!** *It’s always right on.* GOD’S WORD ALWAYS HITS THE BULL’S EYE. When the Holy Ghost sends the message we need, He doesn’t miss. When *we don’t* take the more earnest heed to what we heard by putting it into practice, *we are the ones who slip from the position of truth*. The Greek word for *deceive* is a compound of two words: PARA (along side of) and LOGIZOMENO (to reason, reckon, and draw conclusions). To-gether they mean *to reason beside the point; therefore, to misjudge, to miscalculate, to deceive through fallacious reasoning*.

Have you ever tried to get through to somebody whose reasoning was totally beside the point, and you kept saying, “*That is beside the point*”? But they go on in a big way with their elaborate argument that doesn’t have anything to do with what you’re trying to get across to them, constantly *reasoning beside the point*. Some people have done this so long, that it’s all they know how to do. They go through their whole life that way. As soon as they are confronted with something that makes them feel the least bit uneasy or uncomfortable, they start reasoning beside the point in order to distract from the issue, and as a result, they miscalculate, misjudge, and ultimately deceive themselves. This is a habit that is very self-destructive. I don’t know about you, but I have been saved long enough, and I’ve been through enough fiery trials, *that I just want to know the truth about me!* I

didn’t like being in the crucible when I thought I would surely die, but when you get through them, God teaches you something about yourself. I don’t want to be a fallacious reasoner who always has to go in the crucible, because I just won’t apply the Word of God to wash me and “*cleanse me, from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit...*” (2 Cor. 7:1). We must realize that humans have become very adept at reasoning things to justify our mistakes and why we do certain things.

My Grandson Noah

My grandson Noah lives out of state, so I don’t see him very much. When he was about 5 or 6 yrs old, he was quite rambunctious, and whenever he came to church, he would visit me in my little room next to the sanctuary. Most of the time I would be getting ready to minister and trying to get my thoughts together, and he would want me fly paper airplanes and such. He was a very bright little boy and quite verbal, and I could carry on a conversation with him like an adult. This little room had become a catch-all for junk. Over the years, props for plays, discarded musical instruments, electronics, and all kinds of stuff ended up there, including a nice briefcase that had been in there for several years. It had a combination lock. For about a year, every time Noah came, he would go to the briefcase and ask, “*Grandma, what’s in this briefcase?*” We would go through the same thing: I would say, “*I don’t know.*” He would say, “*Well, whose is it?*” “*I don’t know.*” “*Well, what is it in here for?*” “*I don’t know, Noah.*” This went on every time, and

it was always like we never had this discussion before. He would also try his best to pick the lock, using my pens and pencils to pry it open, and would always break them. He would say, *“Grandma, Don’t you want to know what’s in here?”* Most of the time, I ignored him, because I was listening to the service or studying. This “replay” carried on over a period of months.

One night he came in, and true to form, he started: *“Grandma, Don’t you want to know what’s in here? There might be some money in there.”* *“Well,”* I said, *“It might be, but I don’t know whose it is.”* Then he goes again trying to open the lock with one of my pens. I said, *“Noah, you’re just going to break another pen. There is no way you can open that with a pen, and you know that by now. It will take somebody strong like Papa Benny. He’s going to have to get a screw driver, and maybe he can get it open. But you can’t get it open.”*

Well that wasn’t going to stop him from trying. He’s trying and trying, and finally, instead of trying to force the lock open, he pushed the pen up under the lip that overlaps the opening. He’s pushes and pushes, and it starts to give a little. Finally, the seam busted, but it still didn’t open. When he did that, I jokingly said, *“Oh my goodness, you’ve done it now! You broke it! Boy, are you in trouble now!”*

He turned around and looked at me with his big blue eyes, and I could just see the little wheels in his mind turning. He said, *“But, Grandma, it’s not my fault.”* I said, *“Noah, you’re the one who did it.”* *“But, Grandma it’s not my fault,”* he insisted. I said, *“Didn’t you*

just sit there and break it?” Then he said, *“But, Grandma, I’m not the only one to blame.”* Those were his exact words. Then I knew that there was somebody else to blame, and it was probably me, because I was the only one there. I said, *“What do you mean?”* He repeated, *“Grandma, didn’t you say you wanted to know what is in there?”* I replied, *“I said that I would like to know what’s in there, but I didn’t tell you to do that.”* He persisted: *“But you said you wanted to know what is in there.”* So his reasoning was that he was only doing what I wanted him to do; *therefore it wasn’t only his fault, but it was mine too!*

Well, that was funny and cute for five years old. I marveled at what a bright child he was. It took a very intelligent kid to maneuver all that in his mind. But the fact is, people use this same type of thinking to absolve themselves of responsibility, and they go through their whole life that way. For whatever reason, nothing is ever their fault. They are never to blame or the one with the problem. It’s always somebody else. But they are not fooling anybody but themselves.

So James said that when you look into the mirror, you see your natural face, but then you get up and go your way, and can’t remember what you saw. We have already proved how hard it is to remember what you look like. James said that it’s the same way in the spirit. But that *man who leans over and peers down into the looking glass*, who not only *hears with contemplation*, but considers *what his heart is reflecting in the Word*, and *continues therein*, shall be blessed. The Greek term means

to bend over to look into the mirror. Like the Wiseman said, “You leaned over the clear pool of water and saw the reflection of your face,” and you lean over the mirror of God’s Word to see the reflection of your heart. You linger. You contemplate: You want to see every detail, so you can go your way knowing what you heard and put it into action.

There are some things in ourselves that we can never see until we stay in the Word of God. It doesn’t matter how long you’ve been saved, even if you are a minister of the Gospel, and you’ve been saved 20, 30, or like myself, over 50 years. I got baptized in the Holy Ghost when I was seven, but I still have to stay in the Word daily. I cannot afford to think that I know it all, seen it all, been there, done it all, read it all. No! The moment I do, there are things in me that would begin to crop up that could give the enemy a foothold in my life.

The Word Is A Scalpel

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even unto the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:12-13).

The best way to say that the Word of God is *quick and powerful*, is “*alive and active*.” The English *quick* in the KJV means “*living*.” Jesus will come for the “*quick (living) and the dead*”

(2 Tim. 4:1). The Word of God is *powerful*, and the Greek ENEREGO is where we get our English word *energy* or *energize*. It means the Word of God *gives life to and produces results*. So God’s Word *is alive* and it *gives life!*

It is sharper than any two-edged sword. I like to think of it in modern terms as a surgeon’s scalpel, which is so sharp and precise, that a skilled surgeon can make the tiniest cut so as not to harm surrounding tissues. In micro-surgery, surgeons look through microscopes to operate, because what they are doing is so small and delicate, as in brain surgery. Every little movement must be calculated, because there is so much risk, and the repercussions of doing something wrong can be devastating, if not fatal. The Word is precise like this. It is able to *pierce through*, which means it can penetrate deeply to the core of your being, to your *soul and spirit*, and it can actually *divide—differentiate between them*. This is very powerful, because there are not many places in the Scriptures where we see a determination between soul and spirit. Most of the time they are put together and called our *inner man*. But the Word is precise and penetrates so far down, like a surgeon’s scalpel divides the bone from the marrow, it divides the soul from the spirit.

We need our bones to ambulate in the world. We couldn’t get around if we didn’t have a skeleton, but it’s the marrow inside the bone that gives us life. It produces our blood cells and the cells for our immune system. When a person gets sick in his bone marrow, he is not long for this world. Often

the only treatment is to take the bone marrow out of a healthy person, such as a sibling that matches well, and infuse it into the sick person. God's Word can divide the soul and spirit, and reveal any hidden disease, because *"there is nothing hidden from him with whom we have to do."* The Greek actually says, *"unto whom we have to give an account."* But all things are *laid open*—all things are *naked*, everything in our hearts is revealed by the scalpel of God's Word. Don't think this is a bad thing: It's a good thing! I want God's Word to see everything in me. I don't want to gloss over things in my heart that are detrimental to my spiritual growth. I don't want to overlook faults that have the potential to cause me to offend.

Truthfully, I don't like it when God's Word is getting on my case any more than you do. But I know that if I will let the Word examine my heart, I won't get up and go my way and casually brush off what it revealed. If I meditate on what the Word has exposed, submit myself to it, and begin to walk in it, it's not going to be long before God promotes me. Peter said, *"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time"* (1 Pet. 5:6). It feels good when God exalts you, after you have submitted your heart to God's examination and circumcision.

God is not against exaltation, and I want to be careful about this, because we live in a time when there is so much emphasis on man's pride: "Honor me" and "Promote me." God is not against our being exalted, but *He* is the exalter; not you exalt yourself, nor

that men exalt you, because this means nothing to God. When God exalts you, He knows you are ready and you will reflect all honor on Him.

I believe when Christians live their lives mostly out of their souls, and not their spirits, they make many mistakes and poor choices. The soul is impetuous, impulsive, capricious, and driven by emotions, so the barometer of how things are, is measured by how they feel. The soul tends to *react*, which leads to *presumption*. For instance, you could tell a person something negative about someone else, and get him so stirred up at that person, that he is ready to go sock it to him. He hasn't checked out the story. He doesn't know the other side of the argument, how much of it is true, whether you exaggerated: Did you put your own twist on it? Or change the meaning of what the other said by your tone of voice? Some are so quick to react out of their emotions, they create false scenarios, and that's why they are always in trouble. Often they say: "He pushed my buttons." That's because they are always living out of their souls, instead of their spirits.

Spirit to Living Spirit

Now let's digress a moment: Before you got saved, when you were a sinner, your spirit was dead. Paul said in Eph. 2:1: *"And you hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins."* He said in Col. 1:2: *"And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."* As far as God was concerned, you had no fellowship with Him. You

were separated from God. Your spirit was dead; therefore, you lived out of your soul and emotions. You had no communication with God through the Holy Spirit or His Word. Let's say one day you got the bright idea to read the Bible, but you couldn't understand it, so you closed it up, and that was the end of that. It made absolutely no sense to you, because you were spiritually dead. It would be like me giving you a book in Chinese and telling you to read it and then tell me what it says. It is the spirit that receives the things of God, not the natural man:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:12-14).

When we were born again, our spirit was made alive, and now we are in contact with God through the Holy Spirit, and the Bible is not a closed book anymore. We read the Word of God, and it fills us with life and joy, because the spirit that was dead is alive and in communication with God, so we can *compare spiritual things with spiritual things*. This is why when you talk with someone who is not saved and try to give him some deep spiritual analogy, you go over his head, and can scare him off, because he is not a spiritual

person. We saw this when Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born again. Nicodemus said: *"How can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb?"* He was a teacher of the Law, but spiritually there was nobody home. Jesus said, "If you can't understand this much and you are supposed to be a teacher, how can I tell you the things of the Kingdom of God? *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (Jn. 3:6). The things of the Spirit were foolish to him.

After you were saved, your spirit began to hunger and thirst for the things of the Spirit, and you couldn't get enough. You were in church every time the doors were open: Bible class, prayer meeting, fellowship meeting—whatever it was, you were starving, and your spirit was wanting to catch up for all those years you were dead in sin. That is why Paul said, *"Redeem the time,"* (Eph. 5:16). He meant *"Buy back the time."* All the time you lost in sin, all the years that you were dead spiritually and didn't know anything about God. Now that we are saved, we can redeem those times. But the problem is, because we lived so many years out of our soul, we learned to just go with our emotions. Wherever they led us, we went. We were up and down, in, out, and all around. The barometer of how we felt was determined emotionally. Unfortunately, many Christians continue to live out of their souls.

This means if you were raised around a lot of negativity, then your tendency is going to be to fall into a negative attitude. You are prone to

be critical and find fault with things, because that is the way you lived for so many years. Once you are born again, you have to make a conscious effort to discipline yourself **not to let your soul be the boss**. The soul is bossy, and it knows how to manipulate to get its way. We can see it in a child who has learned how to manipulate his parents, because he knows all he has to do is cry or fall out on the floor, or kick the wall until the parents say, “Wait a minute, you’re not getting by with this behavior anymore. This is just a little brat-spat, and we are not going to have it.” God is not going to let you and me get away with bratty behavior either.

When people live out of their souls, they learn to calibrate everything by the experiences they have had. You may have had bad experiences, and you can’t help the way you were raised or the things that happened to you if you were abused and misused, hurt and wounded as a child, or perhaps as an adult you married somebody who mistreated you, and you went through more bad stuff. You may have a lot of wounds and hurts, and I understand this, but you cannot let them continue to determine the way you’re going to be, and to live your life out of your broken soul and wounded emotions, *because you will never grow spiritually*.

Soul Vs Spirit

Neither can we live by what our culture tells us, because in today’s world everything is about “me.” They tell you, “*If it feels good, do it. You deserve it. You owe it to yourself.*” Many Christians go through life making very major decisions without seeking God

first. They get a feeling, an emotional high, a temporary euphoria, and they go for it, and then they say, “*The Lord showed me.*” It was not the Lord—it was their emotions. *Everything that is emotional is not God*. I know we are Pentecostal, and we jump, shout, run, and holler, and that is wonderful, but just because it’s emotional doesn’t mean it’s God. Sometimes it’s just your soulish emotions that you have never brought under the Word of God. Even though you are born again, you are not feeding your spirit on the Word, so your spirit is the weaker of the two. *Your soul is louder*, so he’s the one you follow. But when you stay in the Word continually, although you still hear your soul saying the same things, *it sounds different to you*, because your *spirit man* is countering, “*That’s not of God: That’s the flesh; that’s the carnal mind. That sounds like the junk they talk on TV; that sounds like the message the world’s putting out.*” From deep within you, the Spirit of God will bring Scripture to you to make you look into the mirror of His Word. Then you will say, “*Stop! This is not of God.* This is not *the Holy Ghost*,” because now you are influenced by *your spirit*. Instead of reacting out of your emotions and your soul, you’re living out of your spirit. *Your spirit is in ascendancy and your soul is in descendency*.

Does it mean you will never get angry again? No! You won’t become a zombie. The Bible says, “*Be angry and sin not*” (Eph. 4:27). When you’re angry, you don’t just haul off and let somebody have it, or get into arguments and debates and shouting matches. If you do, you’re not being led of the

Spirit, because the Spirit would handle that situation differently.

When you live out of your soul, you make impulsive decisions, even hasty decisions, and the Bible says that *a hasty spirit is not of God*. When somebody wants to do something hastily, right off the bat, there's a check in my spirit. Please understand: When it's God, He can and may move swiftly, but that's His call—not ours. I know the Scriptures says, *"I'll work a quick work in a short time,"* but this is talking about God's Kingdom. This does not mean to do something without God's direction and timing.

The Blink Generation

Recently I received an article by David Wilkerson, founder of *Teen Challenge* and pastor of a church in Time's Square, New York. He addresses how many Christians make irrational decisions out of their souls. It is called "Giving God Full Control," and says:

"We're now living in a time referred to as '*The Blink Generation*.' People are making major decisions in the *blink of an eye*. A best selling book has been written on this concept, titled *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. The theory is to trust your instincts. Blink-of-the-eye decisions prove to be the best. Think about all the hurry-up language you hear everyday: *'This is the offer of the century! You can make a bundle overnight, but you have to act right now! You only have a small short window of opportunity. Get on the bandwagon right now. Come on, move now!'* "

Wilkerson says, "The problem is,

such thinking has begun to infect the Church and is affecting the decisions made by *Blink Christians*, and even by *Blink Ministers*. Just a few years ago, the watchword among Christians was, *'Did you pray about this matter? Have you sought the Lord concerning it? Are your brothers and sisters in Christ surrounding you in prayer? Have you received Godly counsel?'* But in the past year, how many important decisions have you made that you have honestly took the time to bring the matter to God, and prayed sincerely? Or how many of those decisions did you make in the blink of an eye? The reason why God wants full control of our decision-making is to save us from disasters, which is actually where most of our blink-decisions end up!"

If you are young and on the threshold of your life, and have many options, and could go many different ways, do you want to know how to make the wisest, best choices? Saturate yourself with the *Proverbs*. If you want to know how to make good business deals, how to look for a job or get a promotion on the job you have, or start any endeavor, even buying a house, there is much sound wisdom to be found there. Once you get into the Word and continue therein, the Lord will show you *where you are weak*, and *where you are strong*. That's good, because when you are strong in an area, God can use you in that area, and you will have boldness and faith for that. But if you know that you are weak in an area, don't just ignore it and hope it will go away. It's not going to go away. It will only get worse. But when you look to the Lord, He will teach you, lead and guide you.

People start out on a venture, and instead of seeking God and being surrounded by prayer, and letting Him confirm His Word, they say, “*I’m going to start out doing this, and if it’s not God’s will, then He can stop me.*” There is nothing in Scripture to validate this unwise behavior. Often people who do this act like they’ve got great faith: “*I’m going to start a church, or start a business, and if it’s not God, He can stop me.*” God is not obligated to stop you, because He didn’t tell you to start it in the first place. He may just let you go, so you can learn a lesson, and hopefully, not do it again. That is **not** faith. *That is presumption.* When you presume something, and you turn out to be wrong, you may have to pay for it. But when you seek God, He will direct your steps (Prov. 3:5-6).

This is why husband and wife need to be in agreement. No Christian couple should make a big decision that they aren’t in agreement about. One shouldn’t just say, “This is the way it is, and I’m going to do it, like it or lump it,” because it will cause the marriage to suffer. Rather, come into agreement and seek God, and say, “Let’s get the mind of the Lord on this.” You might say, “I’m going to go and pray my way, and you go and pray your way,” but be sincere about it, because if you get down and just say a bunch of stuff, *but you have already made up your mind what you’re going to do*, there is no direction from the Lord in this. But when you say, “We’re going to seek the

Lord and see what God tells us,” when you come together, it will usually work out that you both have the same witness or the same misgivings. This lets you know the Spirit of God is leading and directing you.

When we look into the mirror of the Word, we should see the fruit of the Spirit. It is easy to see whether or not they are evident in our lives: Nine things we need to check out (Gal. 5:22-23). If you are weak in some area, the Holy Ghost needs to work on you. He may do it through pulpit preaching and teaching, but you still have to do your own Bible reading. I’m sorry, but you cannot let somebody else read the Bible for you. You may say, “*But, I don’t like to read.*” Well, is that your spirit talking? No, it’s not. *The spirit man loves to read the Word!* When you say, “*I don’t like to read,*” *that’s your flesh!* That’s *your soul*, and you must tap into *your spirit*. Everyone must get into the Word for himself in order to see himself in the mirror. Start out easy: There are 31 chapters in the book of *Proverbs*, and you can read one a day for a month. By the end of that month, you will be a changed person. You will find yourself going back with a highlighter.

James called it, “*The perfect law of liberty.*” It is the only thing that can expose and liberate our souls from emotional bondage. David said, “*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*” (Ps. 19:7).