

Responding to God's Initiation

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

A very sad but relevant story is told in 1 Samuel 3:1-3. It says that the word of the Lord was precious—very rare—in those days; “there was no open vision.” Eli, a priest in the temple where the ark of God was, had begun to lose his eyesight. As a result, the lamp that was to remain burning near the ark went out, and he never knew it. Soon after, the ark—which represented the presence of God—was taken from Israel (1 Samuel 4:11).

The Bible says that without a vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18). Like Eli, many have become dull to God’s initiations. But when we have a vision of the Lord, as Isaiah did (Isaiah 6), the things that were distractions will become dim, while the things of God will become very clear.

When God speaks, we need to be quickened by the Holy Spirit with a hunger and thirst for Him. But once we are quickened, we must re-

spond by appropriating truth in our lives. This booklet will reveal the importance of Christians realizing how sacred, how relevant, how imperative it is to hear God speak and to tremble at His words.

Chapter One

THE ETERNAL PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S INFLUENCE

“For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things hath been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word” (Isaiah 66:2).

“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed” (Isaiah 66:5).

The only people who will receive the eternal meaning of the Word of God are those who tremble when they hear it. The Hebrew word is *chared*, This doesn't refer to physical trembling but to a supernatural influence through an eternal opportunity that will never come again. Whenever God's Word is spoken, that is an opportunity to prepare us for an event in time so

we can be blessed for eternity.

Problems exist because we do not seriously receive the initiations of God with trembling. Remember, this is not physical shaking. We are talking about coming under the influence of the presence of the Holy Spirit of God who made us, who imparted life to us, and who will determine when to take this life from us.

According to Isaiah 57:15, those who have a contrite and humble spirit are quickened by God, the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity. And in Isaiah 66:2 and 5, the Lord is near those who are broken and have a contrite spirit and who tremble at His Word.

In Ezekiel 44:15-18, the priests went into the Holy of Holies with special clothing. When they came out, they took off those clothes. This doesn't mean that these priests lived double lives, but that they had to take their spirituality into the practicality of life.

Be in Awe of His Presence

“Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice” (Ezra 9:4).

Some people do not tremble at the Word of God. The supernatural power of God is designed to prepare us for certain events and situations that will be recorded forever in eternity. To tremble at the Word of God leads to redeeming the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). It is to realize that the time is short (1 Corinthians 7:29) so that we live in great respect for God and His Word.

When a person is a sincere listener but does not tremble in his spirit, then the Word preached is not planted in his human spirit. Trembling includes being awestruck in the presence of God, highly esteeming that which is holy.

Paul was being mocked by some in the Corinthian church because his speech was “contemptible” (2 Corinthians 10:10). In 1 Corinthians 2:3, he said, “I was with you in weakness.” The original text describes that he came as one who was insignificant, “in fear, and in much trembling.” In other words, “I was awestruck by something I needed to do that was holy, while in the presence of carnal people,” he explained. “I highly esteem the appointment because I was awestruck at God’s presence in time, to prepare us for something eternal.”

Any time a Christian does not receive the

Word of God in meekness by mixing faith with what he hears, the Word was not rooted. Therefore, it added to him no eternal value in the temporal system of life. This is true even if the person is just attentive but does not mix faith with what he hears.

Glorify God at All Times

Ephesians 6:5 speaks of employees and employers. The employee should work with his employer with respect and honor. We work in the presence of God as ones who tremble. We go to work to glorify Jesus Christ. On the way to work, we may meet the Master. So we go to work to honor our employer as we honor God and our family.

When people choose sides and decide to leave a local assembly because of something they don't like, they do so because they never trembled at the Word of God as it was taught (Ezra 10:3). They never allowed themselves to come under the supernatural influence of the living Word, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. By it, the human spirit has a capacity to experience the divine presence and essence of God in the human soul and body.

I want you to see the joy of living in the

reality of resurrection and having the Word of God so established that you are awestruck by the presence of Jesus Christ. This transforms both the speaker and the hearer. God is aware of everything that goes on in the earth (Psalm 94), and He is ready to help us.

Chapter Two

LAMPS IN A DARK WORLD

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light” (Matthew 17:1-2).

In this scene with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, the Greek word for “shine” is *lampo*, and the word for “light” is *phos*. The Holy Spirit did not say that it is was simply light that came from the garment that overwhelmed the exterior of Christ’s body before Peter, James, John, Elijah, and Moses. Light is good—it can show us where to walk in the middle of the night. But God used two words that describe a lamp and its brightness, because in Proverb 20:27, our human spirit is a lamp for the light of God.

A lamp is something that you put on a stand

for all to see. You put it up high. This speaks of the divine heart of regeneration, the human spirit of God-consciousness. The Word is talking about something up high that shines everywhere in the world (Matthew 5:14-16).

The Holy Spirit communicated to Matthew and said, "Don't write that it was just light that covered Jesus' body. I always desire to teach specific truth, and I want people to understand that I am talking about their human spirit being a lamp that shines out into the world, not just down onto the floor."

Having the Word and the Holy Spirit within, every child of God has the privilege to be a lamp. We can be heavenly, brilliant, dynamic eternal lights that shine in Satan's world.

The Power of the Pulpit

When I speak a message on valleys, some people may think immediately, "I know the valley messages." There are valleys that each of us will experience through life, and we will reveal whether or not we received the message by faith. If not, the message had only temporary value to us. We heard it, we even were stirred up by it, but the Word was never engrafted in our soul through the power of the Holy Spirit, so we

were not changed.

God initiates to us, and He is looking for responders. When a pastor preaches the Word of God, we need to receive it as the Word of God (1 Samuel 8:7). The words are Jesus Christ's (Luke 10:16), and the pastor is communicating in Christ's stead. His mouth is God's mouth, his heart is God's heart, and his thoughts should be God's thoughts. What he presents is Jesus Christ in the holiness of the moment, and the listener should be awestruck by what he hears.

My attitude should be, "What is God giving me at this moment? What will He say to prepare me for facing demonic armies, sickness, death, and unexpected problems in relationships and the details of life? What is God going to say today?" Awestruck, I rest under supernatural influence from God's Word with supernatural faith, which brings a supernatural response that produces a supernatural lifestyle.

The Word Brings Life

This is the process of initiation and response. For example, God initiated the Creation over a period of seven days. For six days He created things, nature then responded, and on the seventh day He rested. He initiated the fish of the

sea, and they came alive. He initiated the birds of the air, and they responded. He initiated with His Word, which holds the universe together (Hebrews 1:3). The universe declared, “We respond.” All of these things responded—not to science, but to God.

He holds everything together by His Word (Hebrews 1:3). When the Word—Jesus Christ—comes back, there will be destruction at the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19). He will destroy His enemies simply by speaking the Word. He created the universe by the Word, and He will destroy His enemies by the Word we are receiving today.

In the Garden, God came and said, “Where art thou?” to Eve, who responded in fear and did not answer. Adam hid because he was afraid. Before the Fall, they had Bible doctrine classes every evening. Adam and Eve didn’t show up that day. They did not respond to God. Later they responded, letting God restore them by covering them with clothing made of skins for which animals had been slain.

In bringing offerings, Abel responded with the blood of a lamb, but Cain brought vegetables from the earth, which had been cursed by God according to Genesis 3:17. Abraham, after he

had failed in Genesis 12:7, built an altar. He responded with rebound.

Whether in trials or heartaches, God loves when He initiates that we respond with trembling, being awestruck without letting subjectivity overwhelm objective revelation. A person who refuses to be part of a local assembly neglects an opportunity to develop faith, which only comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Chapter Three

CLEANSED AND SENT

When Isaiah 6 was written, Isaiah had failed as a preacher. He was very patriotic and loyal to His king, who had been a decent ruler for nearly fifty years. Then the king burned incense in the temple, which only the priest was to do. As a result, he came down with leprosy and died. When the king died, the prophet Isaiah, who had lost his fervency for God because of his love for the king, finally could see the Finished Work. Patriotism is good, but Isaiah wasn't a sound prophet. He wasn't carnal, but he just wasn't godly enough to be spiritual.

After King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus high and lifted up on the throne with His train filling the temple. Everything was filled with glory. He also saw the six-winged angels—seraphim—with wings that covered their bodies and their faces. These seraphim had taken Lucifer's position after he rebelled. These four angels

now did what Satan once did alone as a cherubim. The six wings have nothing to do with flying. Just as the stripes on a soldier's uniform signify rank in the army, wings signify angelic rank.

The foundation of the temple was shaking, and the cloud of incense filled it. Isaiah didn't know what was happening, but he was finally getting a look at Jesus Christ in the Finished Work. Overwhelmed, he saw what was the will of God executed speedily by angelic creatures of high rank. He saw that their faces were hidden; they did not reveal themselves. They were glorifying Christ without making a show of themselves. They had a relationship with a commitment to God in their perfect creation.

Under tremendous conviction, Isaiah had to say, "Woe is me! for I am undone. I haven't been awestricken by the Word of God. I have never come under a supernatural influence. I have unclean lips, and I am just as bad as everyone else" (see Isaiah 6:5).

He had just finished that great confession when one of the seraphim took a coal from off the altar with the tongs. The coal speaks of God's fiery essence of cleansing. The coal purged his lips, and the tongs speak of living in obedi-

ence, the means of manifesting God's cleansing.

Free to Follow God

The Holy Spirit then declared just at that moment: "Isaiah, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Just like that! God said, "I don't desire to put you on probation, Isaiah. I just want you to respond to Me. I am not asking for you to perform works. I am asking for a response to what I have done."

Immediately, the gentle-hearted question came, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The Trinity is so gentle, so creatively hospitable in approaching people.

"Who will go for us?"

Isaiah said, "Here am I—send me."

Then he was told of the difficulty he was going to face. "Everyone is going to leave town when you start preaching fervently. And, only ten percent will come back. But go."

Initiation and response.

Two disciples were with John the Baptist when John saw Jesus (John 1:36). "Behold the Lamb of God!" John said. "I don't want you to follow me any more. Follow Jesus. Follow the Lamb."

Andrew received the Gospel and took it to

Simon Peter—initiation and response (John 1:40-42). Jesus said to the disciples, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (see Mark 1:16-17). Friend, these men were not strong men. They were not godly at this point, but they followed Jesus. Do you understand? They were not mature; they were not noble, mighty, or virtuous. They simply followed Jesus.

This is what it means to respond. It doesn't mean that we won't fall. In fact, in the process of wanting to be like Christ, we may fall seven times in the same area in the same day. It has happened to all of us. But we don't keep doing it. We decrease wrong behavior until it is all gone (Proverbs 24:16).

What I want you to see is that God does not stop initiating to weak people. He just wants us to keep responding to His initiations. The Word of God says, “Out of weakness [they] were made strong” (Hebrews 11:34). The most beautiful thing is that we keep responding to God's initiation. That's all.

Defining the Profane

Esau was a profane person, according to Hebrews 12:16. He did not respond to God. He repented with tears, but not toward God. It was

sorrow because he got caught, but he did not want God. So by his own choice, he forfeited his right for salvation by grace through faith.

“Profane” is *chalal* in the Hebrew. Profane means to make common what is holy—taking lightly the eternal Word of God, living indiscreetly in the midst of a local assembly.

A man or a woman may marry a partner who is profane (Leviticus 21:7). This means the spouse is familiar with God, always taking the holy and making it common and preferring to talk about other things. You may have friends who are like this. Be careful not to have relationships with profane people.

“I am ministering to them,” you say. In fact, you may just like being around them. Yes, it is possible to minister, and a few really do. But these worldly relationships certainly do not represent fellowship (Ephesians 5:11). Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Not many in the profane crowd will accept a ministry of God.

Profane people make God’s house unholy because of poor listening habits. They treat God’s people in an unholy way. The Law was given because some people are profane (1 Timothy 1:9). Profane people are familiar, treating the

things of God as normal and common, without a sense of awe, without placing themselves under the supernatural influence of God.

But God is waiting to bless us with eternal understanding, wisdom, guidance, and direction so that we can reflect the very essence and nature of our Creator, Redeemer, and Lord. And the Holy Spirit wants us to discern between the holy and the profane. Consider that for a moment.

Limiting the Holy One

Paroxuno is an interesting Greek word. It means to restrict the manifestation of the presence of God by limiting Deity in a person. This word is found in the Septuagint in Psalm 78:41: "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and *limited* the Holy One of Israel." And in Isaiah 63:10: "But they rebelled, and *vexed* his Holy Spirit." Our negative volition will restrict God from blessing, guiding, and revealing Himself to us in time, which is to prepare us for an eternal dividend.

Proskuneo is a great word. It means that they who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in doctrine (see John 4:23, 24). That means we come face to face with Him as He invisibly

breathes with His Spirit into our spirit. His eternal Spirit comes through the breath of His Word. God breathes in me the same life that created the universe. He breathes into me eternal power, eternal understanding, and eternal wisdom. This comes in when I worship Him in spirit and in doctrine (John 6:63).

Is it any wonder that the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a critic of the intentions and motives of the heart? (Hebrews 4:12.)

To worship God in spirit is to receive His Word with trembling. When we receive the Word through concentration, discipline, and being Spirit-taught, the breath of life is imparted through the Living Word. Then, we internalize truth through the supernatural ability He imparts. That way, we can retain the Word apart from memorization.

We thank God for praise and worship in their outward forms. But something much higher must take place before the other is profitable. We are to praise Him as we have been taught by His Word (Colossians 2:7).

Chapter Four

PLANTED BY THE RIVER TO RESPOND

Song of Solomon 4:12 makes reference to a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed, and a spring shut up. What this means is that God plants His seed in our little garden. It is enclosed because we are awestruck at the fact that we are saved and redeemed. We are overwhelmed because we don't deserve this salvation. Our garden is enclosed by God. This is what eternal security is. This is what forgiveness without the imputation of sin is, even though we will be chastened if we continue to sin (Hebrews 12:11).

The Father never sees our sin; the Son never sees our sin. The Father sees us as hid with Christ in God. We are a part of Him (Ephesians 5:30). The only One who sees our sin is the Holy Spirit, and that is only so He can convict us of it and bring about restoration of our fellowship with the Father and the Son. Please understand

that when God disciplines us, it is done in love to bring peace and fruit to our lives (Hebrews 12:9-11).

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

“But his delight is in the law [doctrine] of the LORD; and in his law [doctrine] doth he meditate day and night.

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

The river represents the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-38). What delights the blessed man but the Word of God, the Law, the doctrine of the Lord. Where is this doctrine planted? By the river. “The flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Whatever this man does shall prosper, meaning there will be blessings in time recorded in eternity. His leaf shall not wither—his energy, his strength, shall not fade. He will bring forth fruit in due season, his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he does will prosper—and in that order.

The Weak Arm of the Flesh

“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

“For he shall be like the [shrub] in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

“For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

Even in drought, the leaf by the river stays green. In other words, this type of Christian is filled with mercy, energy, and power. God is saying that when we are planted by Him, we will be awestruck as we listen to His Word.

God's Plan for Children

Proverbs 30:11 speaks of a generation that curses their fathers and mocks their mothers. Teenagers who curse at their parents or show blatant disrespect toward them are spelling a

destiny of doom for themselves. If you have ever done that, please go to your mother or father and repent.

God wants children to be planted in Him, not just wandering around. He wants them to be awestruck in the presence of Jesus Christ and to have God breathe His amazing grace, mercy, love, and power into them. He wants to give them convictions, joy, peace, happiness, and confidence that comes only from Him.

More than just going to church, children need to be of the Lord's planting (Psalm 144:12). This speaks of an entire lifestyle established in the Lord Jesus Christ, including thoughts, words, parental training, habits. They need a hatred for the world system along with an ability to mark and avoid anything contrary to being planted in the Lord (see Romans 16:17), because those things are enemies of the Cross (Philippians 3:17, 18). It is also the parents' responsibility to lead through the Word and their lifestyle.

Eternal Calls from the Eternal God

When God initiates, He seeks a response. Malachi 2 speaks of Israel dealing treacherously with God. They made Him weary by not responding to His initiations.

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

God initiated, but they did not respond.

God wants believers who won't be so busy on their jobs that they only come to church when they feel like it. Nothing could separate me from being with God's people. And in hearing God's Word, I am responding to an eternal call from an eternal Person because of an eternal truth that is burning in my bones (Jeremiah 20:9). God is initiating, I must respond.

In Russia, a woman who had been in and out of mental institutions for more than five years received a copy of our booklet, *Just Let God Love You* (Grace Publications, 1996). She got to the last page, and the light of the love of God broke through and made her a lamp for Him. She was made completely whole. Today, a pastor does a Bible study in her home, and nearly thirty people are coming out. What happened? She began to tremble at the Word of God. She came under the supernatural influence of the manifestation of the Word that created the universe and still holds it all together. It is this Word

that takes care of situations, details, people, circumstances, health, and finances. It is a living Word with the living God manifesting the presence of His grace.

God wants a moment-by-moment relationship with us. Develop your own vertical with God and stop being influenced by supernatural darkness. The providential plan of God is perfect. The Christian life is sacred, serious, and solemn, but it should be filled with the joy of God. Christianity is overwhelmingly relevant to every thought, to every single thing that goes in and comes out of us.

Obedience and the Atmosphere of Faith

If I deny the truth, I lose my practical provision for a solution from God. Obedience is what reveals my convictions and my true belief system. Procrastination to obedience gives Satan a playhouse in my soul. The fruit of my life will reveal who I am occupied with in my life. Only God can love supernaturally, and only a man filled with God will be supernatural in his love.

A man filled with grace will always have reverence and a healthy fear of God in His holiness because he is so grateful for His presence. He will not live in condemnation, but he will re-

spond to God's initiations of love and recovery if necessary.

If you are one who has fallen, respond to God, repent, get back up, and redeem the time. Go on as His little child receiving what He gives you to be just like Him. Every child of God who is obedient to God's Word can bring an atmosphere of faith for God to work miracles. Obedience to His Word produces an atmosphere of faith that pleases God (Hebrews 11:6) and releases His power through us.

A Spirit-filled child of God in grace can never be too holy for this earth. We will only be as holy as we reveal Christ for the earth. A Christian *can* be too religious, but he can never be too holy, because to be holy means to be whole, like God. Christianity is Christ in a man and woman, conforming that man and woman to be just like Him in their foreordained purpose and in their character through the grace of God.

CONCLUSION

God is always initiating, and oh, how He desires a response! Not a reaction, but a response. Not fear and condemnation, but a response. God will take the weakest person, and all that person has to do is keep on responding to God. God will keep initiating grace and truth, rebound and recovery, peace and forgiveness. He keeps on initiating, and He is calling to us, "Respond."

This is the most serious time in history. There is such a sense of urgency. The message God is giving us is that we must understand what it means to tremble at His Word.

Whenever we attend a church service, we need to be in awe of the presence of God. When the music and worship begins, be in awe. Watch God plant the Word and make you a garden by grace. Then He will come and partake of the fruit produced in you by the Holy Spirit (Song of Solomon 6:11).

Tremble ye at God's Word. Be aware of His

supernatural presence for this moment, which you will never have again. Receive what He has for you for this moment. It will help you in time as it prepares you for eternity—a blessing to you forever.