



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

“come just as you are”

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



Vol. 24 Issue 442

June 19, 2012

[www.chapel-flock.com](http://www.chapel-flock.com)

## Worship Music

### Prayer

Lord, You have never abandoned me, and You never will. When the devil tries to crush me with stress, I throw the weight of my cares upon You. I can't thank You enough for taking all those pressures off my shoulders and freeing me to walk in peace. My heart is simply overflowing with gratefulness for the strength and power You have released inside me. I know that with Your continued help, I shall be victorious, and these problems will flee. Lead me and guide me in each day, I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

[Steady My Heart-  
Kari Jobe](#)

[Here-Kari Jobe](#)

[Rise-Kari Jobe](#)

[All I Need Is You-  
Kim Walker](#)

[Let It Rain-  
Jesus Culture](#)

### Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

[“Not Knowing The Bible” Bob Coy](#)

[“No Body Cares” Bob Coy](#)

[“So What Are You Afraid Of Failure??” Bob Coy](#)

## Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

[KLOV](#)

## Bible Study Sites

[Chuck Smith  
Through The Bible](#)

[Bob Coy/Teachings](#)

[Mike MacIntosh](#)

[Jon Courson](#)

[Biblos.com](#)

[Billy Graham](#)

[Charles Stanley](#)

[David Wilkerson](#)

[Greg Laurie](#)

[Virtue for Women-  
Cathe Laurie](#)

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

[chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)

1 THEN WE turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2 And the Lord said to me, Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon. 3 So the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his people, and we smote him until not one was left to him. 4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them, sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these cities were fortified with high and haughty walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many unwalled villages. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every city—men, women, and children. 7 But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities we took for booty for ourselves. 8 So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon 9 (The Sidonians call Hermon, Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), 10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the [gigantic] Rephaim. Behold, his bedstead was of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length and four cubits its breadth, using the cubit of a man [the forearm to the end of the middle finger]. 12 When we took possession of this land, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory from Aroer, which is on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead and its cities. 13 The rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is, all the region of Argob in Bashan, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It is called the land of Rephaim [of giant stature]. 14 Jair son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called it after his own name, Havvoth-jair, so called to this day. 15 And I gave Gilead to Machir [son of Manasseh]. 16 And to the Reubenites and Gadites I gave from Gilead even to the Valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as the boundary of it, as far over as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, 17 The Arabah also, with the Jordan as its boundary, from Chinnereth as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt [Dead] Sea, under the cliffs [of the headlands] of Pishgah on the east. 18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The Lord your God has given you this land to possess it; you [Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh] shall go over [the Jordan] armed before your brethren the other Israelites, all that are able for war. 19 But your wives and your little ones and your cattle—I know that you have many cattle—shall remain in your cities which I have given you, 20 Until the Lord has given rest to your brethren as to you, and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God has given them beyond the Jordan. Then shall you return every man to the possession which I have given you. 21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Your own eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings [Sihon and Og]; so shall the Lord do to all the kingdoms into which you are going over [the Jordan]. 22 You shall not fear them, for the Lord your God shall fight for you. 23 And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, 24 O Lord God, You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth that can do according to Your works and according to Your might? 25 I pray You, [will You not just] let me go over and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain country [with Hermon] and Lebanon? 26 But the Lord was angry with me on your account and would not listen to me; and the Lord said to me, That is enough! Say no more to Me about it. 27 Get up to the top of Pishgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and behold it with your eyes, for you shall not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he shall go over before this people and he shall cause them to possess the land which you shall see. 29 So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.

#### Deuteronomy: A Treaty Between God and Israel

The book of Deuteronomy is more than simply a restatement of the Law. It is, in fact, a formal treaty between God and the people of Israel.

The discovery in 1906–07 of some 10, 000 tablets in the ancient Hittite capital Khattusa (Boghaz-koy in modern Turkey) provided examples of Hittite treaties that show that Deuteronomy has all the elements contained in Hittite treaties from the 2nd millennium b.c., largely in the same sequence, as the chart below shows.

Joshua 24 also follows the treaty format.

Introduction of Speaker : Identifies the author and his right to proclaim the treaty : Deut. 1: 1–5: Joshua 24: vv. 1–2

Historical Prologue: Survey of past relationship between parties: Deut. 1: 6–3: 29: Joshua 24: vv. 2–13

Stipulations: Listing of obligations: Deut. chaps. 4–26: Joshua 24: vv. 14–25

Statement Concerning Document: Storage and instructions for public reading: Deut. 27: 2–3: Joshua 24: v. 26

Witnesses: Usually identifies the gods who are called on to witness the oath: Deut. chaps. 31–32: Joshua v. 20

Curses and Blessings: How the deity will respond to adherence or violation of the treaty: Deut. chap. 28: Joshua v. 20

(Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; Zondervan; 2000; Bible History and Commentaries; page 176)

## Chapter 3

In chapter three:

So we turned, and went by the way of Bashan: unto Og the king of Bashan who came out against us, with all of his people. And the LORD said unto me, Don't fear him: for I will deliver him, and all of his people, and his land, into your hands; and thou shalt do unto him as you did unto Sihon the king of Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all of his people. And we took all of his city, there was not a city of them that was not taken, some sixty cities. [Now he points out,] All of these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; and besides that we took a lot of unwalled cities (Deu 3:1-5).

In other words, they had conquered sixty walled cities from Bashan. Now you're gonna go in and you got the reports and you remember the report that struck fear in the hearts was that there are high-walled cities and giants. And that was just the thing that struck terror and fear into their hearts that destroyed their faith, caused them to turn away. So now Moses is pointing out, "Look, it is nothing with God. You don't have to worry about the walled cities. You don't have to worry about the giants. If God be for us, who can be against us?"

And God has promised to go before you and to drive out your enemies, and thus, these things that caused terror and fear in your hearts that destroyed your faith do not need to stop you now, go in. And he's seeking to build up their faith in God. Venture out, let God have an opportunity to work. And so he's careful to point out that they'd already conquered walled cities in the areas of the giants.

And so in verse eleven,

For only Og the king of Bashan remained of the remnants of giants (Deu 3:11);

Og himself was a giant. He had a bed that was thirteen feet long (king-sized bed) and some six feet wide. He was a big guy, needed a big bed. He was the last of the giants in that area. And God delivered him into your hands. And you possessed his land, and it was given to the Reubenites and unto the Gadites. And then the other area northward was given unto Manasseh; clear on up to Mount Hermon, that whole area of the Golan was conquered.

And so, he declares unto them, verse twenty-one,

Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done unto these two kings: and so shall the LORD do unto the kingdoms where you are passing (Deu 3:21).

You've seen what God can do and so he is going to do in these kings where you're gonna be coming. Don't be afraid, don't stop, don't quit now.

Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God shall fight for you. And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? And I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land which is beyond Jordan, and the goodly mountains, and Lebanon (Deu 3:22-25).

Oh Moses, though he was a hundred and twenty years old he was ready for it. "Lord, come on. Please let me go in. I've seen, Lord, you beginning to wipe out the enemies. Oh this is exciting, Lord. I love this. And Lord I'd just love to see that land. I'd like to see the mountains of Lebanon. I'd like to see this land that you promised. Lord, won't you let me go in?" And Moses here is praying, asking God to allow him to go in.

Now, when they had come in the wilderness and were needing water, they had said to Moses, "Give us water to drink. We're perishing." Moses went in before the Lord and said, "Lord, these people are ready to kill me, they want water." And God said, "Go out and speak to the rock and water will come forth". The first time God said "smite the rock and water will come out." The second time God said "speak to the rock". But Moses was angry with the people and he went out from before the Lord and he said, "Must I smite this rock again to give you water?" And he took his rod and he smote the rock and water came out. But God said, "Moses, come here son. Moses, you blew it. You did not properly represent me before those people.

Now Moses was God's representative and God wasn't angry with them but Moses was. And Moses, as God's representative, represented God as being angry with them and he did not properly represent God before the people. And God said, "Moses, that's a serious error and because you have not properly represented me before the people, you cannot go in to the land". God wanted to impress upon the minds of these people the importance of obedience, the importance of our being proper representatives of Him. For you are God's representative in the world today. Jesus said, "Ye are my witnesses". You are to be representing Jesus before the world. Now, the question is: Are we representing him properly? What concepts are people getting of Jesus as they look at us? As we are God's representative in the world today, what concepts are people getting of God? Do they really know that God cares? Do they really know that God is love? How do I represent God? Very important that we properly represent God. And God is stressing and seeking to stress the importance that we recognize that we are His representatives and that we represent Him faithfully and truthfully be Moses failed. He represented God as being angry. God wasn't angry. And so God said, "Moses because you failed to represent me before the people you cannot go into the land". Now Moses has seen some of the enemies conquered. He sees them beginning to take the land; adrenaline is flowing, this is exciting. "Oh Lord, please I'd love to go in and see the mountains of Lebanon. I'd like to see And the Lord said to Moses, those valleys and the rivers and all that are there. Lord, I'd love to see the land. Let me go in, Lord. I want to see you, you know, smite the enemies there. I wanna see the people."

Let it suffice thee; don't speak to me any more of this matter (Deu 3:26).

Moses, don't talk to me about it. Can't go.

Now here's the case where God did not answer Moses' prayer in the affirmative. He answered the prayer, he said no. And God always answers prayers; sometimes the answers are yes, sometimes the answers are no. But this is the case where Moses' request was not granted by God, in order that God might teach the nation the importance of obedience.

And in the years to come, as the Jewish mothers would hold their babies upon their laps and tell them the glorious stories of how God used a man by the name of Moses, who as a child was protected by God and taken out of the bulrushes by the princes of the land of Egypt, when it was ordered that all of the children should die. And how he grew up in the Pharaoh's court and how he made his decision to align himself with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And how God brought through him the plagues upon the Egyptians and spoiled the Egyptians and how he led the people out of Egypt and out of their bondage. And how the Red Sea was parted by the rod that he lifted and how God brought the water out of the rock. And then their voices would hush. And with whispered tones they would say that Moses was not allowed by God to fulfill the dream of his life and to go into the land because he failed to properly represent God. He disobeyed God at the waters of strife, Meribah .

And it became a lesson deeply embedded upon the minds of the nation of the importance of obedience unto God; and thus, for the sake of a nation, God withheld the desire of a man. God said, "Look, don't talk to me about this again. The answer has been given".

But charge Joshua, encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor (Deu 3:28-29).

So God said to Moses you can't go in but I will let you go up to the top of Mount Pisgah, and there you can look over the land. From Pisgah just take a look at the land that I promised. And then you charge Joshua and encourage Joshua and strengthen him because he will lead the people in. (Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

**One Step At A Time: Chuck Smith;** Years ago a close friend operated a delivery business to grocery stores. During his rounds he met the wife of a man who owned a small market. They began to kid around with one another and, before long, they were meeting regularly to drink coffee and to talk. They soon fancied themselves in love, left their families, and moved in together. That's when this man's wife, also a dear friend, called us and asked if we would pray for him. Meanwhile, the minister of the church where our friends had been attending paid a visit to the man. The pastor told him that he had a vision of a black hearse and if the man didn't leave this woman and go back to his wife, they were going to carry him out of that room feetfirst. This heavy-handed approach only made the man more angry and entrenched him in his immoral decision. His wife then called me and asked if I would talk to him. I agreed to go and found my friend living in a shabby garage apartment on the bad side of town. When I saw his filthy little home, I was struck by how much he had lost. His wife and daughters were beautiful people. His home was in a wonderful area. This man had sold his soul for a crust of bread. As he came to the door, a look of shame covered his face. He was very polite and invited me to come in and sit down. As I looked around at my friend's new life I thought, Oh, God! How could he give up so much for so little? My heart was breaking because I loved this man. The sight of what he had fallen into tore me apart. I found myself unable to conceal my feelings, and much to my embarrassment I began to weep. I was overcome with grief, and when his lover emerged from the kitchen all I could do was sob. I finally got so embarrassed I said, "I'm very sorry. I know I came over to see you, but I just can't talk right now." I got up, left, and went home feeling like a fool. Here my good friend's wife wanted me to visit him and make an appeal for reconciliation, and all I could do was sit there and cry. The next morning I received a phone call with news that left me in shock. My friend had returned to his wife and family just hours after my visit. What did God use to achieve this miraculous healing of a fractured relationship? Not a holier-than-thou attitude, to be certain. His Spirit had created in me a spirit of meekness and brokenness that led to a joyful reconciliation. I thought I had blundered terribly - but I discovered that whenever we choose to walk in the Spirit, God delights to work powerfully in stunning and unexpected ways. Walking in the Spirit is an amazingly practical proposition. It doesn't mean that we float through life with a halo over our head and an angelic smile on our face. We can be spiritually minded and still relate to people about earthly things. Some believers react so strongly against the pervasive worldliness of our culture that they lose the ability to communicate with their friends, relatives, and neighbors. Walking in the Spirit doesn't take us out of reality; it allows us to function in reality with optimum effectiveness.

**Relationship First;** Somebody once said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." How true that is in the spiritual realm! While walking in the Spirit is an incredibly practical proposition, we must bear in mind that it's not the place we begin. Relationship always precedes behavior. A great example of this principle is found in the book of Ephesians. The first three chapters all deal with relationship. Only then does the fourth chapter begin, "Therefore... walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The relationship comes first because it provides the foundation for everything that follows. If we try to walk without first establishing the proper relationship, we won't make it. Walking requires that we first acquire balance. This is true even in the physical realm. Before children take their first steps, they must learn how to keep their balance while sitting. Next they master the art of standing. Then they learn to wobble a little. And only after that do they develop the ability to walk. In the book of Ephesians, Paul tells us that by understanding what it means to be seated with Christ we will begin to experience the power of God, which in turn will allow us to walk in a manner pleasing to Him. There is a definite progression here. First we must have a balanced relationship with God; then we can learn to walk. At one time all of us lived after our flesh, obeying the desires of our flesh and our minds, and were alienated from God. But then God's grace transformed our lives and we began to enjoy delightful fellowship with the Lord. We continue to enjoy that deep fellowship as we allow God's Spirit to exercise control over our lives.

**Walking Our Talk;** There are many who claim to have a relationship with God, who throw around all the right Christian buzzwords and catchphrases, but who simply aren't walking with God in any practical way. It is crucial that we learn to "walk our talk." Our lives must be consistent with the calling, the blessings, and the profession we make concerning our new relationship with God. Our mind is the

battleground where we decide whether to live after the Spirit or after our fleshly desires. The question is, How do we manage this? How do we avoid being carried away by the allure of the world? Paul had an answer in Galatians 5:16: "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (emphasis added). The Greek word translated "walk" in this passage is a term used to describe the dominant characteristic of a person's life. If someone were to have a reputation as a real miser, he would be known as a person who "walked" in greed. If a person characteristically was concerned and helpful, he would be known as someone who "walked" in kindness. To walk in the Spirit means that we allow the Holy Spirit to exercise control over our lives. Every day we are presented with the option of living after the Spirit or after our own fleshly desires. Our mind is the battleground where we will decide which will have dominion. It is helpful to remember that God has designed the human mind to work much as a computer does. A computer can only produce that which has been programmed into it. In like manner, our minds are being programmed daily. If our input comes from the flesh, our lives will be characterized by the flesh. If we begin to program our minds with the things of the Spirit, our lives will begin to reflect the priorities of the Spirit. How easy it is to fall into the trap of making a bold profession of a vital spiritual life when our number-one priority is seeking to please the flesh! Certainly the power that our fallen nature can hold over us is one of the biggest problems we face in life. How can we be free from the seemingly unconquerable bondage to the flesh? The simple yet profound answer is this: Don't fight the flesh, strengthen the Spirit! Don't fight against the darkness; turn on the light. To do this, we must first recognize that we have both a spiritual and a fleshly side to our nature. If we are to walk in the Spirit, we must feed the spiritual man. We all know what it means to feed the physical side of our nature. If I miss feeding my body, it is not subtle about reminding me of its needs. Someone once told me that after three days of fasting, the hunger goes away. I have found the opposite to be true. Three days into a fast, my mind is busy dreaming of the most luscious concoctions imaginable. This is simply my body's emphatic way of reminding me that its needs must be tended to. And so we feed our bodies. We exercise and take vitamins so that we might grow strong physically. Becoming strong in spirit requires a similar regimen. We must regularly consume the bread of life, the Word of God.

**Taking in the Word;** How ironic it is that our consumption of the Word is often the last thing we get around to. "Of course, I need to spend time in God's Word," we say, "but I just don't seem to have time right now." In essence, we are fasting in the Spirit. Our spiritual side often gets fed irregularly, spasmodically, and in an unbalanced way. We neglect a regular, systematic study of the Word for a "let's flip open the Bible and see what catches our eye" approach. Often we have no consistent practice of Bible study or personal growth. We end up dutifully feeding the areas of our flesh but neglecting the needs of the spirit. As a result, the spiritual man becomes weak and the flesh begins to dominate. If I want my spiritual man to be strong, it only stands to reason that I must sow to my spirit. I can't be sowing to the flesh and hope that I'm somehow going to produce a spiritual crop. In order to walk in the Spirit, I must begin to feed the spirit. That means I must make it a point to get more and more into the Word of God. Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (job 23:12, NKJV). It is important to see God's Word as the essential that it is. Jesus claimed that His words were spirit and life, so a regular, systematic time in God's Word is essential if we are to walk in the Spirit.

**Communing with God;** A high priority on prayer is another essential for experiencing the joys of walking in the Spirit. As we thrill to the excitement of communing with God, we find ourselves being strengthened in spirit. We become more and more conscious of the presence of God in all that we do and in every circumstance we encounter. To walk in the Spirit simply means that we deliberately make God our constant companion. Being aware of God's presence opens our understanding to a more full and developed worldview. I am convinced that one of our greatest needs is to become more and more aware of God's presence at all times. When Paul spoke to the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Athens as recounted in Acts 17, he declared that "in [God] we live, and move, and have our being" (verse 28). Our lives can be remarkably transformed when we come to realize that God is with us continually. Losing sight of that fact can open the door to spiritual disaster. The farther God is removed from our consciousness, the more we are strongly drawn to the things that feed and please our fallen nature. When we stumble and fall we may point to many external factors to explain our behavior, but the root of our problem is a failure to keep God's presence in mind. The instruction to walk in the Spirit simply means that we are to deliberately make God our constant traveling companion as we move through the day. When we walk in the Spirit, living in constant awareness of the presence of God, we no longer need others to nag and preach at us about living up to Christian standards. Our lives will be revolutionized as we keep the nearness and love of God in the front of our minds.

**Turning Irritation into Joy;** The way we think about even the most mundane things changes radically when we allow the Holy Spirit to rule our lives. Our outward circumstances may remain the same, but our attitude undergoes such a total transformation that we find joy even in things that used to irritate us. We all have things to do that we find detestable. We go through a classic approach - avoidance conflict, knowing that while we hate to do these things, failing to do them will only worsen our situation. I despise taking out the trash. Yet I know that if I don't do it, there will soon be a foul odor stinking up the porch. Therefore I bite the bullet and do the job. I would much rather be enjoying a bowl of chocolate-chip ice cream, but if I neglect my duty, soon the stench of decaying garbage will mix with the flavor of chocolate chips, and suddenly my desire for ice cream melts away. Even in something as ordinary as this household chore, I have a choice. I can grumble about how much I hate hauling garbage, or I can seize the time it takes to do this job and commune with God. I can worship Him by whistling a tune of thanksgiving and love as I walk to the curb. As I draw near to God, I find myself thinking less about trash and more about His grace. I can sail through even the most distasteful task and not be perturbed by it if I set my mind on the things of the Spirit. Consider waiting as another example. There are few things more aggravating than a red traffic light when you're in a hurry, knowing that you'll have to wait through a whole sequence of signals before you can get moving again. But rather than getting tense, I have made it a practice to keep my Bible on the seat beside me. When I come to a red light and know I have some time, I'll start to read a portion of Scripture. The next thing I know the guy behind me is honking his horn. Time passes so quickly when I feed on the Word! Walking in the Spirit becomes an exciting experience as we learn what it means to be in deep fellowship with God. We become more and more attuned to the things of God - from His presence within our hearts to the marvelous works of His creation.

**Who's in the Lead?** ....Walking assumes movement. When we walk, we move from one place to another. We start out in one location and end up someplace else. Our destination depends upon the direction we take. In a similar way, walking in the Spirit moves us from one spiritual place to another. We move from one level of maturity to the next as we listen to the Spirit and walk in the direction He instructs us to move - yet this is where we sometimes run into trouble. When a thought or an inclination comes to our conscience, how can we discern whether the notion is from God? The Scriptures tell us that God writes His law on the fleshly tablets of our hearts (see Jeremiah 31:33; II Corinthians 3:3). God will plant an idea within my spirit, and my spirit will communicate it to my intellect. This is

usually perceived as an idea, a thought, or as a sudden moment of inspiration. God will give us a desire as a means of communicating His will for our lives. Unfortunately, I also have desires that come from my own fallen nature. My flesh has a way of injecting very strong thoughts and inclinations into my mind. At times it is difficult to discern whether a notion has come from God or from my flesh. Some time ago I was faced with this dilemma as I was driving to a speaking engagement in Ventura, California. It was a spectacular day and the thought crossed my mind to take a detour off the more direct route and enjoy the beauty of the Pacific Coast Highway. Watching the surf and feeling the cool sea breeze is such a treat that I suspected the desire was of my own flesh, but I decided to indulge myself anyway. As circumstances worked out, I realized that God had planned for me to take the Coast Highway. As I neared Malibu, I saw two hitchhikers standing by the road and I felt a strong inclination to pull over and give them a ride. As our trip north progressed, I had the opportunity to share Christ with this twosome. The pair stayed in Ventura and the following night attended the church where I was speaking. That evening they made a public confession of faith in Christ and have since become strongly established in that local fellowship. After the whole experience unfolded, I was able to look back and think, Wow! That was beautiful. God directed me. The desire I had in my heart to take the Coast Highway had come from Him. Still, it is often difficult to determine when the Lord is speaking to our hearts. We often mistakenly think that God can lead us only in mystical or dramatic ways. Surely if God speaks to me, we think, the place is going to shake, the lights will go dim, and my hair is going to stand on end. God has never spoken to me in that way. When God speaks to me, He speaks to my spirit, which in turn communicates the message to my consciousness in such a natural way that it is tough to immediately discern whether it is truly God's voice. I wish I could provide a formula or a simple, three-point test to identify God's voice, but if such a procedure exists, I haven't discovered it. I struggle in distinguishing the voice of the Spirit from that of my flesh, just as you do. I wish I could recommend some foolproof way of being certain we are hearing from God, but unfortunately, that is beyond my ability. And yet, God hasn't left us in a confusing fog. He has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within our hearts not only to guide us in particular circumstances but also to lead us into an understanding of the revealed truth of His Word. He will never lead us contrary to anything He has already declared in the Scriptures.

**Understanding the Word;** It is interesting to see how some people who have yet to receive the Lord end up incredibly discouraged when they attempt to read the Bible. They see the tremendous influence the Scriptures have had on the lives of millions and its impact on western civilization, and they want to understand what it has to say. Invariably, these people become bogged down and exasperated and the meaning of the Bible eludes them. This should not surprise us, because the Bible itself tells us that the natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (see I Corinthians 2:14). On the other hand, the spiritual man understands all things, though he is not understood by others. Because we have become rightly related to God through Christ, His Holy Spirit can now unfold truth to our hearts. The Word of God becomes alive and understandable to us. This continuing revelatory ministry of the Spirit is vital. It is amazing how often I can read through a chapter of Scripture and get nothing out of it. I find myself coming to the end of the chapter and saying to myself, "Now, what was it that I just read?" At this point, I will often stop and pray, "Lord, surely this chapter has something to say to me. Please open my understanding and allow Your Spirit to minister to me from Your Word." Then, as I reread the chapter, I am amazed at the truth that breaks forth on my heart. During our Sunday-morning services at Calvary we usually have a responsive reading from the Psalms. By our third service, I end up seeing things in the Scripture text that hadn't occurred to me in our first hour. One of the verses will begin to minister to me in a very special and powerful way. This experience of being led into all truth is a vivid part of what it means to walk in the Spirit.

**Press On!;** Between the flesh, this fallen world system, and Satan himself, we face real hindrances to spiritual growth. But the counsel of Scripture is to press on for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus (see Philippians 3:14). Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the [narrow] gate" (Luke 13:24). The Greek word translated "strive" is agonizomai, from which we get our English word agonize. Make no mistake; it isn't easy or natural to walk in the Spirit. It takes genuine effort, devotion, and moment-by-moment concentration. It can't be overemphasized that this is a choice each of us must make daily. When we choose to walk in the Spirit, the practical results can be breathtakingly beautiful. We will enjoy a wonderful depth and consistency in our fellowship with God. As the apostle John observed, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). What's especially exciting about fellowship with God is that the more we experience it, the more we desire it. The more we are personally touched by the peace and fulfillment of intimate communion with the Father, the harder it is to live without it. When we find ourselves out of fellowship, an inner emptiness calls us back to prayer and the Word. As we walk in the Spirit, we begin to enjoy the tremendous benefits of a close relationship with God. We feel a conscious sense of joy welling up within our hearts. We can whistle while we face the aggravating responsibilities of life because even in the midst of a dirty job, our joy is in the Lord. There is a sense of peace, a depth of understanding, a patience, a kindness, a gentleness that comes from walking in the Spirit. There is a strength and power to cope with the persistent desires of the flesh. We suddenly are able to see the big picture and find the wisdom to deal with our fallen nature in a realistic and rational way. As Paul summed it up, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). How could we fail to be drawn with all our hearts to the glorious new life which God freely offers to us in His grace? A life strengthened by the Spirit with joy, love, and peace flowing through us - is exactly what we passionately desire. But in order to experience this blessing, we must choose to walk in the Spirit. We must come to God and ask Him to plant a greater desire for prayer, for time in the Word, and for fellowship with Jesus in our hearts. We must pray for the grace to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is then that we will know tremendous victory over even our most besetting sins, and it is then that the Spirit of God is able to use us in the most extraordinary ways. Even when all we can do is blubber.

("Why Grace Changes Everything"; Chuck Smith; Chapter 5: "One Step At A Time")

(AMP Bible; The Everyday Life Bible; Joyce Meyers; Scripture; Commentaries; Past Pastor Sermons; Dictionary; 2006; pg 274-276)  
(Word 9 Bible Software; 2010; Concordance, Dictionary, Scripture, Sermons of Saints past, Devos; Sparkling Gems From The Greek)