

Moving Out!!

Located in the pages of your Bible is a remarkable thread of revelation with respect to God's people and their need to be on the move. Most of us think in terms not of moving, but of being still, of staying where we are. God's Word shows something diametrically different--something that every believer needs to grasp and apply in his or her life.

by Jim Rector

Although most human beings tend to live lives that are more or less static, quickly accepting the status quo, slipping easily into a certain routine, and becoming a part of the repetitive cycle of life; it is remarkable that God and everything connected to Him is precisely the very opposite. It is simply amazing that the entire creation, from the atom to the galaxies, has one indisputable characteristic common to all its component parts--the fact that everything is in constant **MOTION!!**

Think about that for a moment. Everything in God's creation is always moving, always going somewhere, always on a journey, always leaving one place and traveling to another. Why such a similarity throughout the universe? Is there a lesson in this reality? Is God communicating something important to those with ears to hear and eyes to see?

I believe that the answer to these questions is an incontrovertible **YES!!** The creation contains and reflects the

very handiwork of Almighty God Himself. Within the form, shape, position, nature, and movement of each creation aspect, God has designed patterns in the natural world to portray potent truths and teach powerful lessons on the spiritual plane.

The fact that the universe is so incomprehensibly immense and seemingly endless is incontestable evidence that God, as Creator, is precisely the same way. The reality of scientific laws, forces, and principles clearly

demonstrates that God is a being of law, order, truth, constancy, power, and dependability. The same holds true in regard to the motion and movement of the whole creation.

Moving, in fact, is what God and His purpose in creating man is all about! Not only can this truth be perceived by learning from the natural world, the Scriptures themselves provide irrefutable proof that this is so.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTION!

Movement or motion is a characteristic of all things in the universe. If it were not for such activity, the universe would literally come apart at the seams! Movement is associated with virtually every process at every level of the creation. Concepts such as power, light, sound, energy, all depend upon motion being an integral component part of their existence. In order for atoms to play their role as the buildings block of matter, it is mandatory that they engage in constant motion. The transfer of electrons between various atoms is what forms the basis for all elements. If the atomic particles could not or did not move, it would be impossible for any atom to interact with another atom, thus there could be no molecules, and that would mean there would be no matter or life as we know it.

In the physical world, motion is absolutely necessary.

Well, guess what? It is just as essential, and indeed just as compulsory in the Spirit realm. That means that it is incumbent upon you and I, as believers, to be deeply concerned about and fully involved in the significance of movement or motion with respect to our spiritual lives.

This is no small matter. Just as we know that without movement, there can be no physical matter, in like manner, without constant motion, there can be no spirit life! In fact, getting and staying in motion is utterly indispensable for the purposes of God to be fully accomplished in our lives.

Are we therefore truly in motion in our spiritual lives? We all know that this is often not the case. When the Bible speaks of some being spiritually asleep, or if we should encounter the concept of spiritual stagnation, these are simply caused by the lack of appropriate movement in one's spiritual life.

When water doesn't move, what happens? It grows stagnant. It begins to break down. It starts to stink. It breeds disease. Flowing water, on the other hand, is far cleaner, much more able to be utilized, teeming with greater life, and infinitely more productive. In other words, stagnant water serves little or no good purpose. Water that moves, however, well that's a different story.

The same principles hold true in examining spiritual things

as well. A spiritual relationship with God also grows stagnant if it is not on the move. The more a believer becomes used to his calling, his church affiliation, his favorite doctrines, his close brethren, his comfort and security, he tends to stop growing. In other words, his forward progress is halted in its tracks. When Christians aren't moving, they will also become stagnant. And the stench of static, inert, passive, immobile, inactive, unchanging believers rises into the very nostrils of God. It makes Him want to throw up!! He even tells the church at Laodicea that their tepid, lukewarm, *I've got it made*, brand of Christianity makes Him sick to His stomach! He says that unless they repent, He will **SPUE THEM OUT OF HIS MOUTH!**

One of the most important lessons for all of God's children is that, if they indeed intend to grow up to the full stature of Jesus Christ, it is imperative that they begin thinking of their calling in terms of **MOVING OUT AND MOVING ON!!** God has always operated in this fashion, calling, pleading, urging, commanding, that His people come out from where they are to where He is.

So much of what God has revealed to us in His Word revolves around movement. He certainly portrays Himself in this manner, and greatly encourages those who would follow Him to do the same. Even the very concept of *following* is indicative that motion is *a* and perhaps even *the* primary factor involved. Let's take a close look at some of God's

thinking and approach to this very important subject.

FROM HERE TO THERE

Perhaps one of the most compelling pieces of evidence that we ought to consider has to do with how God dealt with ancient Israel. When Moses turned aside to see the burning bush, He was given his marching orders. God told him:

“Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And the Lord said, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt...COME now, therefore, and I will SEND you unto Pharaoh, that you may BRING FORTH my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:4-10).

Immediately upon calling Moses, God began to talk in terms of moving. First, Moses had to **COME** to God. Then God told him to **GO** to Pharaoh; and finally, he was commissioned to **LEAD** the people **OUT** of Egypt.

Clearly God had a journey in mind for His people anciently, and, in fact, that is precisely what ensued. He immediately began leading them on a long, difficult trek through the wilderness, fraught with numerous experiences, challenges, setbacks, lessons, and victories.

To further emphasize this

aspect of movement, God had Moses go before the Pharaoh and utter the following famous words unto him:

“Thus says the Lord God of Israel, LET MY PEOPLE GO” (Ex. 5:1).

This phrase became the rallying cry for the beleaguered Israelites. What does it mean? What is it saying? Obviously, it has to do with getting up and moving out! This has always been God’s method, and it hasn’t changed to this very day!

God was not intent on letting this principle go. He further emphasized its importance by requiring His people to not only journey out of Egypt, but to take the longest and most threatening route possible. When they would not trust Him to lead them into the Promised Land, He forced them to wander in the desert for forty long years. And during that period of time, what do you suppose they did? That’s right--they had to **KEEP MOVING!**

God instructed Moses to design and build a tabernacle to serve as the center of worship, a place where His very presence would reside with the people. The glory of God was actually seen by the Israelites, and every time God decided to move, the people had to strike the camp and hightail it to the next stopping point. This practice went on over and over again for nearly 40 years.

I cannot help but believe that the approach God took in

dealing with the ancient Israelites wasn’t done in order to teach a spiritual lesson and set a spiritual pattern for His people today. We all know what a premium Paul and the other apostolic writers of the New Testament placed on the example of Israel. Just a cursory reading of their work clearly indicates that they felt the lessons of Israel’s experience were, in fact, directly related to a spiritual believer.

For forty years, God had His people on the move, from camp to camp. And we must remember that this was not merely random moving or moving for moving’s sake; neither did Israel determine when they would move. It all depended upon God’s plan. When He moved, they moved. When He stopped, they stopped. Quite obviously the lesson here is not only one of moving, but of a total dependence upon God, keeping one’s eyes and ears open, keenly attuned to God and His will, sensing the motivation of His Spirit, and holding the things of the world very lightly, ready at a moment’s notice to be on one’s way!

This is precisely the state of mind that we ought to have today. This is serious stuff, and none of us can afford to take it lightly. Please consider your life at this time. Please examine yourself. Please go to God and ask Him to search your heart. You must know for a fact exactly where you stand with God. You must know for a fact whether or not your life is paralleling those of the great men and women of faith

recorded in the Scriptures. You must know for a fact if Christ is indeed living in and through you. None of us dare permit ourselves to make assumptions with respect to these issues.

GOD'S WAY IS A JOURNEY

What a true and profound statement! The more you consider the way God has operated regarding His people, the more convinced you become that traveling, being on the move or on the run, going from one place to another, taking a journey, going down a road or path, form a great motif running throughout the Bible.

When God called Abraham, what was His approach? The very first thing He told him was to what? **GET UP AND GET OUT!** Just for the record, here is what He actually said:

“Now the Lord God had said unto Abram, GET YOU OUT of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house, unto a land that I will show you...So Abram DEPARTED” (Gen. 12:1, 4).

We really shouldn't be too surprised or shocked by this sudden disruption in Abraham's comfortable existence. God often works just like that, swooping down and plucking out some hapless human being to do His bidding. Who was Abraham? Do we think that he was chosen because he was great or good or

had somehow earned the right. Hardly! What happened to Abraham was simply the grace and sovereignty of God in perfect living color! And what was the first thing God told him to do? Once again, it was to get up and be on the move.

The Scriptures tell us that not only did God command Abraham to leave his home, He refused to tell him where he was going. In other words, Abraham was *going, not knowing!* This is a powerful lesson that God wants to teach all of His people. What happened to Abraham must be paramount in our minds as God seeks to deal with us today. Notice how the New Testament comments on the situation confronting this ancient patriarch:

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to GO OUT into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING where he was going. By faith he SOJOURNED in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God...These all (the ancient patriarchs) died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS upon the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And

truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned” (Heb. 11:8-15).

Are you catching the spirit of what we are covering here? Can you see how God's mind works? He instills in His people the notion that they are to be as **STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS** upon the earth. That clearly means we are not to sink deep roots in this physical world. It obviously is descriptive of a people who have no real home here, who are alien to the things of the world, and who are merely sojourners, moving from place to place, even as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The tents in which they lived are symbolic of the temporary and transitory nature of this life. We wouldn't dream of living the lifestyle of the ancient patriarchs. It would be too demanding, too uncomfortable, too insecure. Why the very thought of living in a tent, roaming from place to place in the desert, is repugnant to we soft believers of today. And yet God had them do this very thing, and it was primarily to establish a pattern in the physical world of greater truths in the spiritual realm.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob personify the idea of a spiritual life that is tied totally to dependence upon God, to a faith that goes before it knows, to a focus that is forward, not backward, and to a life that is never stagnant, but always on the move. There are, however, other figures in the ancient world whose lives are very relevant to believers today. The

patriarch Joseph is certain one such case in point.

While Joseph's life was not filled with the nomadic experiences of his forefathers, his story still speaks to us today. Like Abraham before him, he too was called to get up and get out--to leave where he was and go to where God desired. In this respect it is important that we ponder how God worked in this man's situation.

Joseph was a Godly man. Little or nothing negative is said about him in the Bible. While still a youth, he was given a promise by God in dreams. Little did know then in what a dramatic, unexpected, sudden, traumatic, painful, and even life-threatening manner that promise would actually be fulfilled!

We know the all too familiar story of what transpired. One day, Joseph's life was normal and routine and the next it was in dire straits. God did not have in mind that Joseph was to stay where he was. He was going to have to leave and move to where God wanted him to be. That departure was orchestrated by God in a most unpleasant way when Joseph's very brothers conspired against him. First they proposed to kill him, but later they decided to sell him into slavery.

I doubt that we can imagine how Joseph must have felt. After all, he was a Godly young man, who had been given special revelations and prophecies by God. Why was this happening

to him? What had he done to deserve such treatment? The answer is as simple as it is profound. God wanted Joseph to move out and move on! He was not content for him to continue existing in the nomadic lifestyle of his father and family. And so, something powerful, sudden, and unforeseen occurred in order to break Joseph away from where he was, even if it took a dire, frightening, painful set of circumstances to accomplish it.

We must not allow the significance of this event and the lessons involved to be lost on us today. Do not ever be shocked at what God does or permits to happen in your life. Divine intervention can often come at the most unexpected time and in the most startling and disruptive of ways, literally coming out of the blue! Since we have examples like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and the apostle Paul, all of whom were dramatically called by God, we need to take what happened to them and the manner in which it transpired under serious advisement.

In other words, the same kind of thing can happen to us today. No one can predict with absolute specificity just to whom, when, and how it will come. But we have the distinct advantage of having in our possession the holy Scriptural record containing powerful truths with regard to how God operates. We really have no excuse to be surprised, confused, or angry if the apple cart of our lives is suddenly overturned! This sort of thing has occurred over and

over again among God's people. When it comes time for the Creator to wake us, arouse us, unstick us, and move us from where we are to where He wants us to be, don't ever be shocked by the methods that God will utilize to achieve such a purpose.

Indeed Joseph's life experience was different than that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It nevertheless still forms an important pattern to which believers today can relate. God always likes to keep His children on the move, and He is not afraid or hesitant to use whatever means necessary to finish what He started! Unlike most of the Biblical characters of old, we have the distinct blessing of knowing this truth beforehand. We have the privilege of understanding how God works. We can be forearmed, and thus be able to more perfectly perceive God's hand in our lives, be less resistant to His Potter's touch, and be more quickly ready to pack up and move out at a moment's notice.

RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE!

God has used many varied circumstances to cause His servants to be moved from where they were. In some cases, it took the form of a nomadic life, in others, a deliverance from bondage. In some instances, however, the forward movement of God's people has been accomplished by different methods. King David is just such an example.

God unstuck David, not by giving him a dream or calling him to leave his home. No, David's situation was caused by something altogether different. Instead of moving family, herds, and belongings from one camp to another, he was forced to be on the run for his life!

God had no intention of allowing David to remain a shepherd on the Judean hillsides, nor did He have in mind that David would live the life of luxury in the court of King Saul. Instead, He permitted David to become envied and hated by the king, so much so that his very life was on the line! David's experience of moving out and moving on took the form of fleeing for his very life!

David's running and hiding from the wrath of Saul was not short-lived. The king was determined to kill David and eliminate any possibility that the young upstart would be a threat to his power and dynasty. Year after year, David was on the run. Many of his psalms were written during this crucial time period. When God was ready and David was properly prepared, the circumstances suddenly changed. King Saul was slain in battle, and David found himself at the end of a long, strange journey as the newly crowned king of Israel!

Could it be that God wants to orchestrate your journey so that it culminates in your being crowned a king and priest forever? Could it be that God's methods for accomplishing this great goal may

well involve having your life threatened and being on the run? David's life paints such a picture for some believers. We know of other such examples in the Bible.

Please take note that when I refer to one's life possibly being in danger, I am not only speaking here of physical harm, but even of spiritual peril. Remember that Paul teaches us that our greatest battles are not against flesh and blood, but contending with wicked spirits in high places. The greatest and most important battlefield is the one inside every believer's mind and heart!

Being on the run, as in David's case, still follows the same pattern that God has so often employed, namely that of moving His people from where they are to where He wants them to be. Faith itself is described in such terms. If you read the inspiring accounts in Hebrews 11, you can easily determine that the great past servants of God were people of movement, action, contending, opposing, fighting, and that it was all accomplished by faith. The very same reality must come to pass in our lives today.

When we contemplate the life and the calling we have been given, we ought to always think in terms of **ACTION**, of **POWER**, of **VICTORY**, of **MOVING OUT AND MOVING ON!!** If we can catch this vision, if we can see with the eyes of our heart, if we can imagine and consider ourselves actually being in such a positive state, if we can but reckon ourselves to be the special people

whom God says we are, I tell you that there will be a stirring in the camp as never before, and that pillar of fire and that column of cloud will rise up, and our spiritual lives will take wing and soar after our God!!

How many of us can believe God for the spiritual awakening, transformation, and revolution that is so desperately needed among believers today? Who is among those called-out ones that will see the burning bush, **TURN ASIDE**, and allow nothing to stop them from pursuing their God to the ends of the earth?

Oh, brethren, it is time for a revival among God's true people. It is time for us to rise up out of the stupor of this world and its things, its stuff, its conventions, its requirements, its constraints, its deception, its temptation, its filth and degradation, its ease and comfort. It is a time for sacrifice, a sacrifice of the self! It is a time for letting go of this flesh, and of reaching out to take hold of God and the good things He has provided. It is a time for each of us to seriously consider his or her spiritual life before God and turn from any ungodliness.

I challenge all of us this day to make a new beginning--to re-consider our calling and our status with God and His Son--to drop every assumption and let go of every wrong motive--to turn from every sin and every shortcoming--to embrace our Savior and put Him on like a garment--to go before the throne of God and refuse to leave until our

questions are answered, until every cloud of doubt and confusion is removed, indeed until we are imbued with power from on high!

Let us be convicted that we have the right and the freedom to expect God to not only be on our side, but to provide every conceivable thing that we will ever need to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. The great acts of faith recorded in the Word--those of Abraham, Moses, and Elijah--they are no longer to be placed on some pedestal as though God worked through them only. No, you and I can walk side-by-side with them. Our lives, so seemingly powerless now, will begin to parallel the lives of Joseph, Job, David, and Paul.

Have you not sensed in the depths of your spirit that a substantive dynamic has been missing from the spiritual life of God's people today? Haven't you known for a long time that our lives, our experiences, our commitment, our sacrifice, our empowerment, pales when compared to the record of Scripture? Don't you want more than what you have right now?

Well, folks, let's do something about it! Let's start by being candid, coming clean, putting all the cards on the table. We will never get out of the starting gate until we truly come to see how mediocre our spiritual lives really are. In saying this, I do not mean to cast aspersions on anyone in particular. I include myself in the group as well. But I know for a fact that most believers

today live relatively easy, tamed, subdued, unempowered, slow-moving, routine spiritual lives. So many are locked into the mindset that if they are not joined to some man, some charismatic leader, some highly organized religious system, then they can't really please God. This is true, in spite of the fact that fully 95% of what passes for Christian works is manmade, and the efforts almost always human generated, human orientated, and human controlled. If that is not so in your personal case, then obviously none of this applies. But for those of us who can see the vast disparity between what and who we read about in the Bible and our own common daily ritual, I believe that there is great hope! Indeed, coming to terms with our genuine level of spirituality is absolutely paramount.

The second thing we need to consider is what kind of **DESIRE** do we really have for God. By this I do not mean to question anyone's personal faith. What I am getting at is just how much of God Himself do we actually want in our lives? Just how far are we willing to go, and perhaps just as important--how far are we willing for God to go in our lives? How close do we truly want Him to get to us? How long before His closeness to us would be perceived as interference?

How much do we really want to be like God? Not in the distant future, not in the Kingdom, but right here, right now? You may think that to be a foolish question, but I assure it is not. It

would be shocking for many to discover that a great segment of God's people really do not desire to be like Him. What? How could that be? Well, the answer is pretty simple. Deep in our hearts, we all know that we are just a little afraid to go all the way with God. It sounds too daring, too dangerous, too uncertain, too demanding. As long as we can position ourselves in such a way that we cannot easily be challenged, we feel comfortable and secure. That is one reason why church organizations are so popular. They provide the place of safety. They keep people away from confronting God on their own. They keep them distracted, they preach to them smooth things, they put restraints on them and punish those who get out of line. Virtually every typical organized church program has something in it that restricts the individual from spreading his or her spiritual wings and flying in the very power and into the very presence of Almighty God!

You and I must determine to find out just how much genuine desire we have for God Himself, for His presence in our lives, for His correction and chastisement, for His challenge that can take one to the limit and beyond! We must come to terms with this issue, otherwise we will fall back into the rut of what we call merely *playing church*! Paul describes it as *having a form of Godliness, but denying the **POWER** thereof!*

Another important aspect falls on the heels of desire, and that is *just how well do we really **KNOW GOD***? What I do not

mean is *how well do we know ABOUT GOD?* Even though these two questions sound almost the same, the most decidedly are not! Granted, one of the most glaring errors made by many believers is that they so often assume that their **KNOWLEDGE** of God somehow is the equivalent of actually **KNOWING** God. This is absolutely not the case, and we all need to really understand this fact. Even the best of Biblical knowledge can, if permitted, lead a believer into what is probably one of the worst sins of all--that of allowing something to become a substitute for God Himself!

When one gets to the point (and it is arrived at slowly, over a period of time, circumstance, and experience) that he prizes his knowledge so highly that he begins to equate it with actually knowing God, that believer is already in big trouble! Recall, if you will, that one of the hardest problems the apostle Paul had to confront was the sin of allowing someone or something other than Christ to be paramount in one's spiritual life. He faced it all the time. Much of his commentary on the Law comes from this backdrop. Many of the Jewish believers were insistent that the Gentile converts adopt certain Jewish practices in order to be saved. Paul, though himself a strict Pharisee, immediately recognized the error in this sort of thinking. He saw through to the heart of this false teaching. He realized that many of the Jews were placing greater emphasis on matters other than the one that really counted, namely Jesus Christ! The Law, whether one

wishes to discuss the 10 Commandments, the various statutes, the sacrificial system, or any of the amended regulations and traditions, cannot and will not, by its own power, save anyone. Paul perceived clearly that some had fallen into the snare of putting something or someone ahead of Christ's centrality in a believer's life. Of course, in responding to this problem, it is a given that Paul in no way denigrated, weakened, or dispensed with the Law of God. In fact, unless believers come to understand Paul's position and his unique commentary with respect to the Law, their law-keeping will never come from a right motivation. People who cannot grasp what Paul really meant in his many discourses on the Law will either assume that he did away with the commandments, or that he taught that salvation comes by keeping them or that in doing so you somehow earn *brownie points* with God. I digress, however.

The point in all of this is simply do you really know God, or do you primarily just know about God? I urge you to spend some time thinking about the difference in these two subjects. To know God can be favorable compared to knowing some other human being. There are many kinds or levels of relationship among people on the earth. There is a general connection of all people on the basis that we all are of the same race and occupy space on the same planet. There is a closer relationship with certain world figures who, even though one may not have ever met them, their prominence has drawn one closer

to them. Then there is the relationship with extended family members, neighbors, co-workers, husbands, wives, children. And finally, there is that special bond with one's best friend--the one you never have to fear, or doubt their love and concern for you; the one who is always there, who consoles you, strengthens you, encourages you, blesses you; the one with whom you feel completely comfortable and at ease with; the one in whom you can openly confide your deepest feelings; the one who will not judge or condemn you, but is always looking for ways to help and support you.

This sort of friend is very special, and one of the truest things about such a relationship is that both parties really have come to **KNOW** each other. People like this are the kind that almost read each other's mind, one often finishing the sentence of the other. Friends like this have become very familiar with one another, and enjoy the most pleasant, unfettered, unrestricted, spontaneous, and beautiful of relationships. Those who have such a friend are truly blessed.

Well, brethren, precisely the same thing pertains to our relationship with God. He proclaims Himself to be our Friend. Christ told the disciples that He called them friends. Abraham, it is said, was the friend of God. Could it be that this is why God expresses the strongest possible desire for His children, His friends, to truly **KNOW** Him? I think that the answer is

unmistakable! I believe that the apostle perhaps said it best when he wrote:

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the KNOWLEDGE of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ...that I may KNOW Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead...And this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and REACHING FORTH unto those things which are before, I PRESS toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded” (Phil. 3:7-8, 10-11, 13-15).

It is so evident that Paul was a man utterly dedicated not to organizing some big, fancy religious organization, or attempting to wield power over other believers, or even very concerned about the things of this human life, but rather was absolutely determined to do one great thing, and that was to **KNOW ALMIGHTY GOD AND HIS SON!!** Everything else was plainly secondary.

Time after time in his writings, we can discern the goal and motivation of this resolute

man of God. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul states:

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers...till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST...And speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:11-16).

Getting to know God, getting to know Christ, is far more than merely knowing or learning facts about them. Getting to know them involves developing a truly **PERSONAL** relationship, apart from any other connection one may have in his or her life. It means getting **REAL** with God and with the calling He has given us. It means that once we have mastered the basics of the faith, we are expected to **MOVE ON**, not with men or the things of men, but with God!

Religious institutions, church leaders, and ministers of every stripe cannot be allowed to take the preeminent place in our spiritual lives. No one else on earth can do for us what only God can do. The systems of men are everywhere to be found. They are

a dime a dozen. They permeate every facet and every level of human society. Those systems are called by a powerful term in God's Word. They are known as **BABYLON!!**

Any church leader or minister who does not operate on the basis of preparing the flock under his care to grow up and become spiritual adults, to listen for and respond to God's voice in their personal lives, to get up and move on from where he or she is to where God, not men, want them to be, is not serving the members of God's family in any beneficial way. And it is incumbent upon every single one of us to determine the veracity of those who seem to be in authority, and never to permit them or anything else to come between us and our God. Church leaders ought to be equipping the saints to take wing and soar in the service of God, not attempting by almost any means possible to corral them, control them, and fleece them! They ought to be offering the greatest of encouragement to believers, building them up and showing them clearly that they are an empowered people, whose horizons are ever unfolding, whose boundaries are ever limitless, and whose victory over sin, over Satan, over death itself, has already been won!!

The prophet Daniel once stated something that everyone of us today ought to seriously consider in regard to the subject at hand. In the midst one of the most strategic *end-time* prophecies in the Bible, He wrote the following

words. In discussing the final world ruler who would come on the scene in the years just prior to the Messiah's Second Coming, he said:

“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that makes desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the PEOPLE THAT DO KNOW THEIR GOD, shall be STRONG, and do EXPLOITS; and they that understand among the people shall INSTRUCT MANY (Dan. 11:31-33).

Brethren, I will not pretend to know precisely when this event will actually transpire in God's scheme of things. It may well be that we are nearing that time. Many believe that this is so. The point is, though, that the description of these latter-day believers provides us some insight into the kind of servants God is looking for. And the bottom line is irrefutably clear that He wants people who **KNOW HIM!**

The way we get to know someone is not just by reading about them in a book or a magazine. True, such endeavors are not at all wrong, and are certainly not devoid of good. It is just that such sources only go so far. The magazine article that is written about some person or event can never convey the fullness of the subject involved. I have a 3-volume set of books on the life of

Andrew Jackson. The information is excellent; the achievements of his life fascinating; the stories of his exploits dynamic. In fact, if I were to really get engrossed in the books, it would almost seem as though old Andy was right there in the room with me!

The fact is, however, that I could read those volumes over and over again, but the books can and will never be a substitute for the man himself. I may feel that by having read the biography I know more about Andrew Jackson than ever before, but even I am smart enough to realize that I actually do not know the man!

The very same thing is true with respect to God's Word. Now I beg you to please not misunderstand or misinterpret what I am about to say. As important as the Scriptures are, and as much as they can teach, God still strongly indicates that even they are not a substitute for Him. He wants to develop a personal relationship with each believer that is based not just on printed words, but on a radical transformation of the heart that He has been allowed to achieve in a person's life. While the Bible is perhaps the greatest teaching tool with respect to spiritual knowledge, just reading or learning or memorizing what is there does not bring understanding and wisdom. Those powers come from above through the Holy Spirit that is at work in our minds and hearts. What I am simply saying is that we all need to be careful that our love for the knowledge about God and His Son not become an end in itself, not become a matter

of pride on our part, not become a substitute for the indwelling presence and power of Christ Himself. In fact, the knowledge obtained from the Scriptures ought to prepare us and lead us to the true conclusion of Christ in us, the hope of glory! Just make sure that your priorities are in the right order, and remember that simply learning facts about God is not and never will be the same thing as truly **KNOWING HIM!**

WALKING WITH GOD

How many times have you read or heard that familiar phrase of *walking with God*? Did you ever stop and think that the very act of walking obviously indicates motion and movement? Even so simple a turn of words speaks volumes on the issue of moving out and moving on with God.

What I wish to convey in this message is a vision. Sometimes I am criticized for not always telling people the 1-2-3 formula for putting something into practice in their lives. I am sorry if this bothers some, but the fact is that I do not feel I am in such a position. I believe that the crux of the matter must revolve around each believer coming into the presence of God, into their own personal relationship with God, into the gifts and power of God, and into the will and direction of God for their lives. I cannot achieve these goals. The best that I can do is share a vision that God may see fit to use in striking a responsive chord in a believer's

heart. The rest is up to that person and God. This is the biggest downfall facing most Christians today--they have not wanted to really wrestle with God, they have not, in many cases, even felt that they could wrestle with God; and so they have stopped short of the goal and have accepted a substitute--namely some other man or group of men. So I do not apologize for sometimes speaking in terms of a vision or concept. I believe that if God's people can indeed catch the greater vision, the deeper insight, the bigger picture, the unvarnished truth of their proper identity in Christ, that this is what sets the stage for God to step in and really begin to transform and empower the individual believer.

It is said of the ancient pre-Flood patriarch, Enoch, that he **WALKED WITH GOD!** You know, that's a pretty impressive statement to have following one's name in the Scriptures. The prophet Micah once wrote:

“He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to WALK humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

Paul spoke of believers *walking by faith*. Jeremiah was told that, instead of complaining, he should be *running with horses!* And Isaiah wrote that God's people should *run* and not faint, and *mount up with eagles' wings and soar!* I could go on, but the picture is clear. God puts this entire calling in the context of

MOVEMENT AND MOTION!

He does not like it when His people sink their roots deeply in the things of this present world. He is greatly angered when believers of the truth are slowed down or completely shut down in their forward progress by the interference of men. And ultimately He will not tolerate the condition of complacency, fear, indifference, and sloth of His people who simply will not allow Him to pull them out of the mire that holds them captive and move them out from where they!

It is pity, indeed a shame, that, when faced with the most exhilarating, challenging, meaningful, opportunity of a lifetime--to walk side-by-side with the Creator of the universe--so many of God's people are willing to settle for less than His best, are so easily led off into following mere men, are so stagnant, withdrawn, and lukewarm in their approach to living fully for God.

These issues are very important for all of us. The choices we make in the coming weeks and months will be crucial. Now is the time for as many of those whose eyes and ears have been opened to start seriously considering just who and where they are with God. We who are free no longer have the seeming luxury of putting the difficult things on the back burner. We are going to have to come to grips with the very thing that we stayed in the churches of men for so long in order to avoid--going **ONE-ON-ONE WITH GOD!!**

Indeed, we are going to have to do that thing that we hate the most--being **UPROOTED** by God from where we are, and then **MOVING OUT AND MOVING ON**--in many cases not even knowing where we are going!!

I urge all of us to start thinking of our spiritual calling in terms of movement and motion. Spiritual stagnation takes a while to set in, but once it takes hold, it doesn't let go easily. Almighty God, however, has foreseen this problem, and has provided *the* perfect solution--Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Notice that I did not say Christ walking on the water, or teaching from a boat, or even hanging on a cross! I said what Paul said--**CHRIST IN YOU**, the hope of glory! He is the answer, not just for those who are lost in the world, but for us as members of His Body. Our sins have been atoned for and forgiven. Our brains have been greatly increased with knowledge. Now is the time when the full work of Christ must be accomplished in and through us.

Therefore, let us go to God and begin the process of really drawing close to Him and genuinely getting to know Him as our Father and our Friend. Please think on these things, and may they ring in your heart a distinctive sound that will send you running into the awaiting arms of your God, and propel you down the road that He has prepared for you in His service.