

# God Through You

***'I will give you the keys.'***

(Matthew 16:19)

Peter Walker

**[www.1peter1three.weebly.com](http://www.1peter1three.weebly.com)**

To you, the reader, *'hidden with Christ in God.'*  
(Colossians 3:3)

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## 1. Introduction:

God acts differently in different situations. He did all through history. He would often do the complete opposite of what he had done before. At least it looks like this on the surface.

For example, when Uzzah touched the ark of God just to steady it because the oxen had stumbled, **'The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah... and he struck him down.'** But when David and his men **'ate the bread that was not lawful for them to eat'** (according to Jesus), God did not punish them. On the contrary, God blessed them with this bread for strength to carry on.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus spoke of forgiveness, *'seventy times seven'*. Warned us that if we do not forgive we will not be forgiven. But then he said of the person who sins against a child, ***'It would be better for them to have a millstone tied around their neck and to be drown in the depths of the sea.'***<sup>2</sup>

Again, Jesus sat and ate with tax collectors, even recruited one to be a disciple, an apostle, but then he admonishes us, in the case of a false Christian in our circles, to reject them as we would a tax collector. (Matthew 18:17)

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel 6:7; Matthew 12:4

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 18:21-35, 6; 6:15

Paul tells the church that if they get circumcised Christ means nothing to them, and they may as well **'cut it all off.'** But then Paul himself circumcises Timothy.<sup>3</sup>

There is no set way that God acts. He is living, he is relational. And God has goals – a set focus and mission - for the history of mankind. And God's eyes are on the heart of a person primarily, not their actions.

***'People look at outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'*** (1 Samuel 16:7)

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<sup>3</sup> Galatians 5:2,12; Acts 16:2

## 2. Treasure Dive

In life, in our dealings with one another, we work back from the goal.

For example, if a child breaks a window of the house, but they were trying to wash the window as a surprise for their parents, well, the broken window is excused. Unlike when I was about seven years old, told not to throw the baseball in the backyard, but I did, and broke a window. That was not excused!

We understand 'actions' based on the motive, the goal. The goal to please, to love, to be kind, well, this explains actions. This determines actions.

Paul instructed Timothy to stay in a certain town and to oppose, to confront, false teaching. Look at what he says here, and at the focal point:

***'Stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work - which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.' (1 Timothy 1:3-5)***

Timothy, with a Spirit-filled 'goal' of love and advancing God's work, had a commission to confront false teachers. Therefore, his debating with them, confrontation and strong words, were of God. He had God's goal in his sights, and God's Spirit in his heart, so his actions – even strong and confrontational – were of God. God working through Timothy.

However, in another part of this same letter Paul says: ***'Timothy, turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in doing so have departed from the faith.'*** (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

So Timothy would be faced with some 'opposing ideas' (false doctrines), and in the one case it would be the very reason he stayed in this town and he would need to hit it head on, but in the other case it would be distraction, not of God but 'godless', to be avoided.

How would Timothy know when to confront, and when to avoid confrontation? How would he know what was 'false doctrine' and what was simply 'opposing ideas'? On the surface it would be impossible to know, because a false doctrine is an opposing idea, and an opposing idea is a false doctrine.

If we can't tell the difference on the surface, then we need to get past the surface. We need to

discern, and discernment is of the spirit.

And right here, moving past the surface of things, from the seen to the unseen, is where we discover treasure! When we press in on what God has revealed, and say we need to see deeper, God is honored! Jesus called us to **'seek and find.'** (Matthew 7:7) We are told that at his right hand are eternal pleasures, and that he has defeated death.<sup>4</sup> So we dive deeper to find truth about God, about his purposes, and about God through us.

***'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls. All your waves and breakers have swept over me!'*** (Psalm 42:7)

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 16:11; 2 Timothy 1:10



### 3. God Is Spirit

***‘Jesus said, ‘The time has come to neither worship God in a particular city or a particular place. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and truth.’ (John 4:21-24)***

Everything physical was created by the Spirit. In other words, the invisible brought forth the visible. The unseen is the foundation of what is seen. We are told that God holds all of creation together ***‘by the power of his word.’*** (Hebrews 1:3)

When the Samaritan woman asked Jesus about where to worship – either in Jerusalem or on a particular holy mountain – Jesus lifted her eyes to the Spirit. He told her neither in a city, nor a church, or at a sunrise service. Jesus pointed her back to her heart, her spirit, and to the God of all creation. He lifted her eyes to the unseen.

Paul writes, ***‘So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.’*** (2 Corinthians 4:18)

As people, created and physical, we obsess about what we can see and touch. Our eyes drop to the earth beneath our feet. We lock onto the created rather than the Creator. Jesus –

**‘God with us’**<sup>5</sup> – over and over lifted our eyes, our hearts, back to the unseen, to the Spirit of God, the eternal.

God who is Spirit, made us in his image. He breathed his Spirit into us. He put eternity into the hearts of people. He called us *‘gods’*. We are spirit beings. We move in and through earth, but not as earthly beings. Jesus touches our eyes, heals our blindness. He says, **‘He who has eyes, let him see!’**<sup>6</sup> There is a Spirit world that is truer than the physical world, and Jesus invites us back into that eternal place.

**‘Jesus said, ‘The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life!’** (John 6:63)

When a religious leader came to Jesus and asked him about truth, about his identity, Jesus said: **‘No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’** (John 3:3) Jesus constantly called us back to our spiritual origins, back to a state of true understanding: **‘Unless you change and become like a child, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.’** (Matthew 18:3) Jesus said new wine would have to be poured into new wine skin, or it would not hold, it would be wasted. (Mark 2:22)

To see and know and understand who Jesus is,

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 3:11; John 10:34; Matthew 13:9

who God is, we need to *unlearn* everything that we learned through the tree of knowledge.

***'If you eat from the tree of knowledge, you will surely die.'*** (Genesis 2:17)

Throughout history God did things and said things, but always to point our spirits back to his Spirit, our hearts back to his heart. As fallen people, however, we take the words of God, the actions of God, and we make idols out of them. We take his *'spiritual law'* and make it *'legalistic law'*. We take his bronze sign and make it a bronze idol.<sup>7</sup> We did this throughout the Old Testament, and now we do this with the New Testament. We killed the prophets of old and after burying them, we revere them. And we crucified Jesus, and after rejecting him in our personal lives, we wear his cross around our necks. God calls this hypocrisy. God warns of eternal judgment for just naming him, but not living him: ***'I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me!''*** (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus implores us to dive deeper and come back to his Spirit revelation. God is Spirit, and the truest you, the truest me, is spirit. And God's real mission, his ultimate reality, is spiritual. Let's talk about that...

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<sup>7</sup> Romans 7:14; Galatians 3:1-6; 5:1; Numbers 21:8-9; 2 Kings 18:4

#### 4. God to You

***‘Jesus said, ‘The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.’ (Luke 17:20-21)***

God is king. He is king of all creation, of the universe. His ultimate goal is to fully restore his kingdom in heaven and on earth. Ponder this for a moment. God is even now working towards a new heaven, a new earth, and a final end to all evil. This is where history is going. This is what God is doing.

Now, God created people with the ability to choose or reject him. True, living and loving relationship must be chosen, cannot be forced or determined.

However, all people choose to reject God. Everyone. This is called sin. We can see it in our actions, thoughts, desires, every day.

***‘All have sinned and fall short of God.’***  
(Romans 3:23)

Our sin, our rebellion against God, brought death into the world, and separated us from God.

***‘Your sin has separated  
you from your God;***

***your sin has hidden his face from you,  
so that he will not hear.  
For your hands are stained with blood,  
your fingers with guilt.  
Your lips have spoken falsely,  
and your tongue mutters wicked things.'***  
(Isaiah 59:2-3)

We cannot forget how spiritual life is. God is Spirit, and he created you and me in his image. Blood flows through our veins, and our spirit flows in our blood. When our blood stops flowing, our spirits depart. They are tied together, blood and spirit. And our sin, our choices against God's law and Spirit, is a matter of blood and spirit, life and death.

This is why for thousands of years people sacrificed a lamb to pay for their sin. Something had to die, so that the sinner could live. Sin brought death into the world, and the cost of sin is death.

***'Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.'*** (Hebrews 9:22)

This is why the story of Jesus is so powerful, and such good news! Jesus, God in the flesh,<sup>8</sup> was called ***'The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'*** (John 1:29) Jesus was the ultimate, the final, the only true sacrifice for sin. Only God himself could pay the price of sin, in

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<sup>8</sup> John 1:1,14

such a way as to reverse the curse. Only God could pay for death, and in doing so defeat death.

***‘Christ defeated death and brought life and immortality to light.’*** (2 Timothy 1:10)

Jesus died for sin, like a lamb on an altar, but then rose again from the grave. He paid the penalty, defeated the curse. He rose again from the grave, because ***‘Death could not hold him.’*** (Acts 2:24)

So now the ultimate goal of God, having defeated death and sin, is to save the souls of all he has created. He comes back to people, those he created and loved but who rejected him, and offers them forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Jesus said:

***‘I am the door, and anyone who comes through me will be saved. They will go in and out and find new life.’*** (John 10:9)

Jesus is the door to God’s kingdom, now and forevermore.

Jesus is not a metaphor, but God’s actual salvation. We don’t go to something he taught or stood for, but we go to him personally. We look him in the eye, we believe, we receive, we follow. This by faith. This by your spirit.

***'God's will is that people believe in Jesus and have eternal life.'*** (John 6:40)

You are God's goal.

## 5. God Through You

When we turn our back on our sin, and follow Jesus, something amazing happens: God pours his Holy Spirit into us.

***‘When you believed, you were marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who guarantees our inheritance.’***

(Ephesians 1:13-14)

God’s Spirit joins with your spirit. His wind that once blew to you, now blows through you. Jesus said you are *‘salt’* and *‘light’* in the world – making a real difference in the *‘preservation’* and *‘safety’* of people.<sup>9</sup>

We have opportunity in Jesus, to partner in the very purpose and power of God. His Spirit is now in our spirit. We can change the world. We can change the workplace. We can change hearts, homes, minds, cultures, atmospheres.

***‘Jesus said: ‘I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’***

(Matthew 16:19)

And here again:

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 5:14-16



***‘Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” (John 20:21-23)***

These are powerful charges! We are called to be the hands and feet of Christ, speaking mercy over people in faith, speaking judgment over people in faith. There are people that need to be set free (loosed), and there are people that need to be bound (caught and brought to justice). We can pray and speak and believe and change the course of things!

You can stretch out your hands over a situation – literally or metaphorically – and speak in Jesus’ name a change, a provision, a block, a release. And what is your goal? Christ as king. His Spirit as the spirit of the air. Advance of his presence and rule.

*‘Dear Jesus, please come into this place by your Spirit.’*

As soldiers of God’s army, we want to advance his influence and reign in any way we can. Although God’s ultimate goal is the soul of a person, to pass them through the door of Jesus Christ, there are many steps and strategies at work before that victory. We see this through the history of how God worked in the past, and we see it in the way Jesus spoke and acted towards

people. Often Jesus would just bless, feed or even heal a person, before speaking of his identity and his gospel. There were even times Jesus instructed his disciples to bless people, but not reveal who he was. (Matthew 16:20)

So the strategy of God through you will be specific. It is not a cookie-cutter shape. One size does not fit all. We are an army with many different roles. Yes, the end goal is the soul, and the power before us and behind us the gospel. But day-to-day, we must all listen to the Spirit as he guides us. We are different parts of the same body, gifted differently, all working towards the common goal of Christ as king in the hearts of all, in the minds of all, and throughout the earth.

***'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.'***

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

I will conclude this short book on a very practical note. If you want to be more in line with God working through you by his Spirit on a day-to-day basis, you need to know God well. How does God work? How did he work in the past, in the Old Testament? How did Jesus work, how did he speak, how did he rest?

As we become more familiar with who God is, and how he worked throughout the ages, we will see patterns, we will see precedents. We will then need to rely on the Spirit for discernment in the present moment, as to which way to go, how to build.

You remember Timothy had to discern between what was 'false doctrine' to contend for, and what were 'opposing ideas' to be avoided. We, too, must know the histories of God, of Christ, and his teachings, so we can consider things: *Does this feel like 'false doctrine' and is there a prompting in me by God's Spirit to contend this, to stand in the gap? Or is this godless chatter, and I need to avoid this, drop the call, block the caller?*

We are told by James, the brother of Jesus, to whisper and ask for wisdom when we need it.<sup>10</sup> So here we see that there is always a need not only for head knowledge (stories and teachings of the Bible), but also a humble spirit that needs to ask for prompting, leading. Jesus said it would be this way, that the Holy Spirit would remind us of things in the Bible, but also **'teach us new things'**. (John 14:26) We need both. We need to be in the Word and note how God acted here, how he acted there, and then ask Jesus to show us how to act now. This is God through you.

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<sup>10</sup> James 1:5

And remember, there will be a time to speak about Jesus, and there will be a time to just minister his Spirit through your actions. Be open to either. Be ready for both. God through us is purpose. And his kingdom is the only one that will not be shaken. (Hebrews 12:28)

***'Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father.'***  
(Colossians 3:17)

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