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The Indestructible Life
by Philip T. Dunn

Acknowledgments

It is possible that with the exception of my two children, David and Sarah, I will probably not make a greater contribution to the building of God's kingdom than this simple little booklet. If the message contained in this booklet of saturating one's spirit in the Word of God is applied on a daily basis, it will transform one's life and, ultimately, the world around them. A heart filled with God's Word will become a seedbed from which faith will spring forth. It is this type of faith which moves the mountains that obstruct our view of God's purpose for our life and calms the raging seas around us that would attempt to drown our destinies.

I have found this to be true personally as well as watching this work in the lives of those about me who have immersed their hearts in the Word of God. My earliest exposure to this type of life was my parents, Rev. James and Anna Dunn. They both were people of the Word. I am grateful for the foundation they laid beneath me. There was also Pastor Frank DePolo, who pastored my home church for a brief time during a critical juncture in my early teens. He was the one who introduced me to Bible Quiz competition and challenged me to memorize the scriptures. Little did I realize how that simple challenge would impact the rest of my life. When my vision began to fail decades later, it was God's Word deposited in my heart that gave me the courage to press on in the journey as the darkness moved in. Now, each time I stand to proclaim the message of God's truth, the Holy Spirit

draws from the treasure of the scriptures hidden in my heart and weaves a verbal tapestry filled with hope, direction, encouragement, instruction, and God's love to those about me.

The seed that produced a desire to put my passion for being filled to overflowing with God's Word in a booklet form was planted by Pastor Robert Barbazette who invited me to share my passion for God's Word with his church. Until this moment in my life, I simply shared my passion for God's Word and challenged those about me one on one to run this race with God's Word engraved in their hearts. I will never be able to express the depth of my love and appreciation for my wife, Suzette, who has faithfully walked this journey with me these thirty plus years. Without her by my side, I am certain that my destiny would have been cut short. Mercy is God withholding punishment we deserve, and grace is God providing blessings for us that we do not deserve. Suzette has been God's mercy and grace in my life. For this, I am extremely grateful. She usually takes the raw mass of my rambling non-punctuated run-on sentences and puts them into a readable format. At this point, Brad and Barbara Young begin to fine tune the manuscript before sending it to Matt and Lynn Thompson who create the finished work with all of the graphics. Pastor Jerome Coleman assisted me in making sure that every chapter in the Bible was included in the alternating reading schedule. This was a very tedious task, to say the least. For each of these unsung heroes, I want to thank you for your friendship and assistance with this booklet.

It is my prayer that the flame that was ignited in my heart over four decades ago will be ignited in the heart of each reader as well, and light their path with a passion for God and His Word.

Philip T. Dunn
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Chapter One

The Seedling

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water bringing forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1:1-3

The mighty giant redwood trees that cluster near the west coast in northern California tower hundreds of feet into the blue Pacific sky. Each one of these magnificent ladders to the clouds started from a single seedling. These are the world's tallest trees with heights of over 370 feet. That is equivalent to a 37 story building. Nowhere else on the planet will you find such titans of the forest. The average life span of these wooden warriors is approximately five to seven hundred years. There are some though that are upwards of 2,000 years of age. Some of these mighty mammoths were saplings as Jesus hung on the cross nearly 2,000 years ago. With some trunks having diameters of 22 feet, limbs over five feet wide, and bark up to 12 inches thick, these leafy giants are virtually indestructible. One reason for this is the enormous amount of water they contain. This is largely due to the 100 plus inches of rainfall this area receives each year and the continual coastal fog that keeps this region rich in moisture. Many trees have sap that contains resin which is very flammable, but the mighty redwoods have sap that is largely made up of water. An average redwood tree may contain over seven thousand gallons of water. The bark which can be as thick as twelve inches, contains tannin which is highly resistant to fire, insects, fungus, and diseases. There is no natural predator or insect that can kill a giant redwood. Many have endured up to

100 fires before they have succumbed with a final crash to the forest floor below. Another interesting fact about what assists these mighty trees in their multiple-century journey is somewhat surprising. You would think that a tree measuring two to three hundred feet tall would have a humongous tap root. The truth is, the giant redwood does not have a giant taproot. Actually, they have no tap root at all. Their roots are no larger in diameter than one inch and no deeper than six to twelve feet. The secret of their stability is they grow in clusters and their roots which may grow fifty to eighty feet long, intertwine with those of the surrounding redwood trees. I believe the giant redwood best describes the fruitful tree mentioned in Psalm 1:3. When folks think about an indestructible life, they create images of super heroes, titanium structures, or giant redwood trees. It makes for a nice daydream, yet it appears to be out of reach of mortal man. But, is the indestructible Christian life truly unattainable?

I believe any born again believer who is willing to follow the basic instructions found in the first three verses of Psalm chapter one, can attain the indestructible life. It is rarely about can or cannot. It is mostly about will or will not. The cost is great to become a mighty redwood Christian. Most western believers settle for simply being a weeping willow which is easily blown around by the winds of opinion or some type of pine which is full of resin and extremely flammable or easily offended. If you are content with your current walk with God, you may prefer to put this little booklet down and checkout the latest reality show. If you are looking for a way to become a powerful instrument of God's mighty miracles and power, you may want to consider another resource. The main focus of the indestructible christian life is a deep relationship with our heavenly Father. There are many who are seeking the gifts of the Spirit but they are not concerned with the fruit of the Spirit. One of the most disconcerting passages in scripture is found in Matt. 7:21-23. According to the teaching of Jesus, there will be those who operated in the gifts of the Spirit that allowed their intimacy with Christ to be replaced with a

lawless lifestyle. Jesus does not deny their claim for doing exploits in His name, but there was no record of their relationship with Him. In Ezek. 3:20 we find how this is possible. If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and begins to walk in unrepentant sin, God declares that this person's soul will be lost and his righteousness will not be remembered. Just as God will forget the sins of a repentant sinner, He will forget the righteousness of those who reject His holiness and embrace a lifestyle of sin. Even though there is a great possibility that one pursuing the indestructible life in Christ will be used by God to do great things for the Kingdom of heaven, the focus of this booklet is God's heart and not His hand. If we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will provide everything in our lives in which He has ordained for us to walk. So if there is an unquenchable desire within you to know the deepest depths and highest heights of intimacy with God, if you would know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge and to be filled with all of the fullness of God, if you would dare attain the indestructible christian life, read on.

Chapter Two

The Journey

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13-14

On the highway of life there are many roads to follow. Most are wide and lighted with eye candy galore. Yet, among this myriad of choices, Jesus said in Matt. 7:13-14, that there was only one

road that was important. It is partly obscured and extremely difficult to navigate in the natural. There are no wide loads on this road which is actually only a foot path of narrow proportions. Much of the stuff people hold dear will not fit through the restricted opening. Most people of faith convince themselves that surely God could not have meant that this tight squeeze and narrow passage is the only way.

The sad truth is that there are many who sit in church each Sunday who bypass this singular path that alone leads to eternal life. They have opted for the new super religious highway which is paved with comfortable sermons that are conviction free, political correctness, compromising lifestyles, unholy alliances, temporal pleasures, and Christ-less focus. The signs are marked grace and there are no real penalties because Jesus paid it all. Now, they can enjoy a self-centered journey toward eternal bliss that they believe God has prepared for all who say a prayer and sign a card. Once you join the club, you can walk it out anyway that feels good to you. Even though this religious highway is separated from the mega freeway that those of the world who practice dark and disgusting wickedness and perversions travel on, those on the super religious highway fail to notice that these two highways are running parallel toward the same destination – eternal damnation. In Proverbs 14:12, the writer warns the reader to be aware that there is a way that seems right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death.

The saddest truth is there are many who have bought into the lie that there is no hell at all. These deceived souls conclude that surely a loving God would not punish fallen mankind for eternity. Those who proclaim and embrace this faulty doctrine ignore the fact that Jesus spoke more on hell than on heaven, love, faith, prayer, or pretty much any other one subject. He did this because of the gravity of avoiding this place of eternal torment. It was Jesus himself who declared that many would choose the broad and easy highway which leads to eternal damnation.

Only a few would be willing to enter the only true path to eternal life because it is difficult and narrow. Even as there is only a small region where the mighty redwoods will grow to their full potential, God has determined what it will take to be an indestructible Christian.

There are those who have tried to grow the redwood tree in different locations but these altered environments have produced shabby images that do not come close to the colossal redwoods that grow in this tiny sliver of real estate that God has ordained. Those who would desire to experience the indestructible life, must be willing to embrace the reality of Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ that liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The indestructible life requires total commitment with no compromise. Much like the individual who desires to win an Olympic gold medal, there are serious lifestyle changes that are imperative to attain this lofty goal. Even though there are those with natural abilities and gifting, in order to be an Olympic gold medalist, it will take more than weekend workouts at the local gym to acquire this prize. Those who have made it to the top have had more than just a dream of standing before the world on a pedestal with a gleaming gold medallion around their neck. It begins with a desire that evolves into a love/passion.

When my daughter, Sarah, was around eight years old, she had more energy than the swing set and trampoline in our back yard could expend. Someone recommended we enroll her in gymnastics, so we did. The instructor was very impressed with Sarah's agility and energy level. She felt, that with the right training, Sarah may have what it would take to be a strong competitor. I asked if she could be a possible Olympic contender one day. She assured me that was not out of the question. I began having visions of Sarah being the next MaryLou Retton, a young gymnast, who was the most popular gold medalist

from West Virginia. Soon, though, Sarah became bored with her new found career and after only four months took up the piano instead. This proved to be the best choice for her. If she had stayed the course though, who knows where she may have landed athletically. On the other hand, Mary Lou Retton was a young girl whose desire for gymnastics was sparked by watching the famous Romanian gymnast, Nadia Comaneci. As her desire evolved into a love/passion, Mary Lou Retton became consumed with a dream of one day, being the best. While her friends began dating, attended dances, and all of the things that adolescent girls usually do, Mary Lou Retton was spending hours each day perfecting her gymnastics skills. Her family eventually moved from Fairmont, West Virginia, to Houston, Texas, so she could be trained by Bela Karolyi, a world famous Romanian gymnastics coach. Her unbroken focus and tireless drive for excellence produced phenomenal results. Between 1983 and 1985, Mary Lou Retton won an unprecedented three American Cups along with several international competitions. In the 1984 Olympics held in Los Angeles, California, Mary Lou Retton won a gold medal in the all-around competition. She was the first female gymnast outside the Eastern Bloc nations to ever achieve this feat. She was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 1997. Other results of her gymnastic success were becoming the first female athlete to appear on a Wheaties cereal box and being chosen as female athlete for that year by Sports Illustrated.

In a recent Summer Olympic games held in Beijing, China had approximately three million spectators and 11,028 competitors out of tens of thousands of hopeful athletes who did not make the cut. Of the 11,028 successful athletes, only 302 gold medals were awarded. That is less than three percent.

As there are only a very small percentage of redwoods compared to all of the other average trees, so the ranks of indestructible Christians among western believers are very thin. It is true that

one does not have to be a redwood to be part of God's forest. Sad to say though, most western Christians are simply content to be part of the family of God and put minimal effort into their personal growth. The distractions abound and maintaining focus on the things of God requires tremendous effort. The typical weekly consumption of TV/internet by the western Christian can be measured in hours while many times their prayer and Bible study is measured in minutes. I believe one of God's highlights at the beginning of time as we know it, was His daily walks with His creation, Adam and Eve. Throughout the Old Testament, one can hear the longing of God toward His children. Many times, God compares the relationship between Himself and His people as one between a bride and groom or a husband and wife. A pinnacle of passion toward God was reached by Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, whose love for the Lord was so intense that after walking in close communion with God for 365 years, he simply was not. This was a relatively short time when compared with those around him who were living seven to eight hundred years. Hebrews 11:5 says that God translated Enoch to heaven directly. He bypassed death and the grave to be forever in the presence of the One he loved and adored so much. The Bible says that before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God.

The key element to the very attainable indestructible life is a desire that evolves into a love and passion for the manifest presence of God in one's life. Reading the Bible, praying for hours each day, and memorizing a new verse each week without a love and passion for God may produce a great religious theologian. However, it will never create the intimate relationship needed to be an indestructible Christian. On the other hand, reading, praying, and memorizing God's Word with a love/passion, will take a believer beyond the clouds in their pursuit of God. Even though our have it your way society makes the indestructible life much more difficult, it is not impossible. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "And he said to them all, If any man will come

after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” The denying of one’s self and crucifying one’s flesh daily are two main reasons why so few western believers ever achieve the indestructible life in Christ. In 1 Cor. 9:25, Paul describes the Olympian of his day who strives and achieves mastery over a particular skill as the one who is temperate in all things. Once a believer realizes the cares and consumptions of the world do not satisfy the inner longing of the soul, they will either settle for and simply be content with a nominal relationship with Christ, or they will develop an unquenchable desire that will drive them to seek the things above.

Over the centuries many believers from every station of life have inquired into the indestructible life in Christ. It does not require enormous wealth, great intellect or extreme physical strength. It begins with a desire and evolves into a love/passion that will not be deterred by the requirement of total dedication and complete surrender of one’s life and all that it entails. The few along the way who have stayed the course, have walked in the presence of God, and have experienced an intimacy that far outweighed the price they paid to know Him. This is not a hundred yard dash but a marathon that will last a lifetime. We are instructed in Hebrews 12 to run with patience the race that is set before us. As the young redwood daily inches toward the stars, the runner after the heart of God draws closer to the indestructible life with every step they take, every prayer they pray, and every moment they spend pursuing the manifest presence of God. It is costly but rewarding beyond compare.

As the mighty wooden ships that sailed the uncharted seas of years gone by remind us of the courage of the sailors that manned them, so must we decide what path we will take. Whether to remain in the harbor where there is a measure of safety and security or head out to sea on a great adventure with Christ as your captain. The reality is that one who sets sail toward the great unknown may never return to the security of the

harbor. Long ago Jesus challenged His disciples to go into all the world, He never said anything about coming back.

There is a place of intimacy in Christ well beyond the harbor lights that only the brave unwavering seekers of God have ever found. It has been said that there is safety in the harbor but ships were made for the open sea. What will you choose to do with the vessel of your life that God has entrusted to you?

Chapter Three

Set Apart

“Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Before any medical procedure takes place, certain preparations must be performed.

This is not just at major medical centers in huge metropolises, but even at a little quickie “urgent care” place (also known as a “doc-in-a-box”). Making sure the area where the procedure is being performed and the medical utensils are in a sterile condition is very critical. With the introduction of new strains of super bugs like MRSA and KPC, just washing your hands and wiping them off on your pants is no longer acceptable.

I remember as a kid when I went to the dentist and he would stick his bare fingers into my mouth to feel around for the gum I had hidden behind my back molars. He was a very talkative fellow and it seemed normal to watch his expressions as he worked on my teeth. Now, when I go to the dentist, I hardly even see the face of the people working on me. With all of the goggles, masks, head covering, gloves, and virus resistant gowns, I sometimes feel like I am at a hazardous chemical spill. Throughout the years, much research has been performed

trying to determine the best way to reduce the spread of infection. It is not uncommon these days to see sanitation gel dispensers located throughout the halls and antibacterial soap in the restrooms of most hospitals and other medical facilities. Years ago, my brother Richard was a missionary for nearly a decade in Africa. He would tell me of the high mortality rate in the local hospitals and clinics due to the lack of a sterile environment. As the missionaries were able to educate some of the local medical personnel, they helped them to see there was a direct connection between increasing the cleanliness of a hospital and the successful recovery of the patients. Being concerned with physical cleanliness is part of the journey to a productive life. The indestructible Christian life is also dependent on purity of spirit, soul, and body. Even as unchecked infection in one's body can be fatal, attitude, character, and lifestyle flaws, can wreak havoc in the life of a believer. Not only will it stunt one's growth in God but if left unchallenged, it can destroy the heart of faith.

There have been times when large trees with full growth have been blown over revealing the hollow trunk where the once healthy heart had been. Due to disease, the heart of the tree that once gave vibrant life and strength is eroded leaving a cavern within the massive tree. This creates vulnerability to the storms of life that will surely come. In the town I grew up in, there was such a tree as this. It towered nearly eighty feet over one of the busiest intersections in our town. Its huge leafy branches spread out in every direction providing much needed shade from the hot rays of the summer sun. How many times would my childhood pals and I sit under that huge urban umbrella on a hot summer day drinking pop from the convenience store across the street. From every outward appearance, it looked like the healthiest tree in town. Three of us could hardly touch fingertips as we embraced its huge trunk. I still remember the day, years later, when I drove to that familiar intersection and saw this once invincible guardian of the corner laying prostrate across the very intersection it had

watched over for decades. I could not believe this green mountain of leaves lying before me was the tree that I was sure would have never fallen in any storm. Yet as I walked over to investigate this calamity, I found to my surprise, the trunk was completely hollow. This became a life lesson for me. I later learned that a tree can draw up enough nourishment from the outer bands to sustain the foliage but without a heart, it would eventually succumb to the winds of some future storm.

In recent years, there have been several popular Christian leaders who have crashed and burned. Their churches were thriving, or their TV programs were being viewed around the world, yet they suddenly toppled to the ground exposing the hollowness of their lives. These colossal casualties usually send shock waves throughout the body of Christ. All of these public failures have given the world motivation to mock the message of Jesus, as the prominent proclaimers of faith fell. Upon closer inspection though, it is revealed that these seeming towers of truth had lost their heart for God long ago and were simply playing a part they once practiced out of a love for Christ. Even a seeker of God on a local level can be blown over by the storms of life if they do not maintain a pure heart toward God on a daily basis. The disease that afflicted and eliminated the heart of the tree in my town did not happen overnight. It slowly ate away at the heart for years until there was nothing left. The failures that occur in a believer's life, in most cases, begin with an unacceptable thought which if allowed to grow becomes a negative action producing an impure habit ending in a destructive lifestyle. It may take years to do the damage but if not corrected, the tragic end is inevitable.

The first verse in Psalm one reveals the downward spiral of those who ignore the Biblical warnings against close fellowship with the dark side. When one walks in the council of the ungodly, they are allowing themselves to be influenced by the relative principles of the world. The Bible warns us in Colossians 2:8-9, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the

tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Since so many western Christians spend so little time reading/ studying the Word of God, there is a greater opportunity for non-biblical flexible religious philosophies to be developed and digested into one’s lifestyle. As the influence of the secular principles begins to take root in one’s thought life, they begin to feel more comfortable standing in the way of the sinner. Things that once brought conviction now actually create pleasurable entertainment. In the end, those who once walked with God and longed for His presence in their lives, find themselves sitting among those who scorn/mock God and ridicule the paths of righteousness because their diseased hearts have lost the love for God and the passion for a Christ-like lifestyle.

It has been said one should never put a question mark where God puts a period. Regardless of how the world spins the acceptance of lifestyles that run contrary to the teaching of Christ, if Jesus says it is right, do it. If Christ says it is wrong, do not do it. A good rule of thumb simply states, if in doubt, don’t. Our goal should never be to see how close to sin one can get and still make it to heaven. Simply obtaining a passing grade will never suffice for those in pursuit of the indestructible life. The quest for excellence drives the hungry heart toward knowing the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. The goal of attaining the indestructible life in Christ requires running after Jesus with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength each day. For those who would attain the indestructible life, there are no holidays from holiness or vacations from virtue. In Proverbs 4:23, we are instructed to guard our hearts with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life. Even as God designed our physical bodies with a protective rib cage to secure our physical hearts from injury, we are challenged to keep our spiritual hearts from the impurities of the worlds influences, activities, and lifestyles

that run contrary to God's purposes and plans for our lives based on His holy Word.

The Bible declares in Psalms 119:11, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Those who would attain the indestructible life in Christ must spend time in the Word on a daily basis. The Bible instructs and informs the seeker of God to embrace that which is profitable and to avoid that which is destructive. Since virtually every sin begins with a thought, it is important to apply 2 Corinthians 10:5 to one's life "24/7". By casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, the believer is effectively securing the gateway to the heart. It is the negligence of this one very important principle that exposes the pursuer of truth to destructive deceptions and impure thoughts.

The best example of complete security for a massive group of people is found in air travel. There is probably not a more security-conscious place that regular every day common folk encounter than the airport. In all of the years I have traveled by the different modes of transportation, flying is the most frustrating to me. The long lines at the security check points can go on for what seems like miles. Where is the bypass? There is none. Every single person planning to fly must pass through the security zone. You may be late for your flight or you may be some popular celebrity, it does not matter, you must pass through the security area first and be cleared. Many people have missed their flights because they miscalculated the time needed to get through security. In the many years I have traveled, I cannot recall a time when I have actually seen some one hauled off who had been trying to conceal a weapon for ill intent. It would be easy to feel all of this security is just overkill. The truth is that it only takes one person with evil in their heart out of possibly millions of travelers to bring a plane load of passengers down to their fiery doom. This is why the high tech scanners at the security check

points in most airports are designed to expose dangers that are hidden from the naked eye.

In Galatians 5:16 the Bible reminds us that if we will walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. By allowing all of our thoughts to pass before the Holy Spirit, we can rest assured that any dangerous thought will be exposed and set off the alarms. Just one unchecked thought has the potential to change one's life forever. Consider the cost that King David paid by allowing the lustful thought toward Bathsheba to germinate in his mind. The life time of pain, anguish, and calamity that he and his family suffered for the next 20 years could have been avoided had he turned his eyes away and cast down those lustful thoughts when the alarm of conviction began to sound. If he could have foreseen the future, I am sure he would have immediately packed his duffel bag and headed out to the battle where he should have been in the first place. It is true that God forgave him for the sins that resulted from allowing this evil thought to pass through unchecked, but the consequences of his negligence lasted a lifetime. This lapse in one who was known as "a man after God's own heart" impacted me as a young man preparing for the ministry. I was warned early on to beware of Satan's three greatest weapons against ministers, "the gold, the girls, and the glory". In the thirty plus years that I have been in full time ministry, I have found this advice to be accurate. I have also observed that these tools of destruction are not limited to those in ministry only. They can be used as universal weapons to mortally wound any undiscerning believer.

I believe that many times we forget that we are in a war zone on planet earth. Since there are no bullets whizzing by or tanks rumbling through the streets, we forget that our real battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. This is why the indestructible Christian understands the importance of the spiritual armor that God has provided for us

spoken of in Ephesians 6:13-17. The indestructible Christian realizes he is set apart and is a soldier of the cross. He is not a tourist checking out the interesting sights on planet earth and collecting souvenirs on his way to heaven. The Bible is clear about this mandate in 2 Timothy 2:3-4 where we are admonished to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It also points out that he that wars, entangles not himself with the affairs of this life that he may please Him who hath called him to be a soldier.

Fraternizing with the enemies of God is a dangerous activity. James 4:4 warns us that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Those who become friends with the world may eventually become the enemies of God. Even though close friendship with those who reject Christ is forbidden, Jesus never sent His disciples out alone. He established the buddy system among His disciples early on when He sent them out two by two. This is why we must consider another critical component required to rise to the heights of the indestructible Christian life. We find this by observing the source of stability of the mighty redwoods. Even as these sturdy immovable monarchs of the forest grow in clusters and intertwine their roots systems together, the indestructible life in Christ requires direct connection with other believers. We are reminded in Ecclesiastics 4:9-10 that two are better than one for they have good reward for their labor. An added benefit is, if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow but woe to him that is alone when he falls, for he has no one to lift him up. It is good to have a wide circle of Christian friends. However, it is extremely important to have an accountability partner among these fellow lovers of Christ. Not just someone that likes us, but someone that will give us an honest opinion of our character. Proverbs 27:17 tells us that as iron sharpens iron, so a man will sharpen the countenance of his friend. A true friend will help us see the areas of our life that may be rough or jagged and assist us in filing them down to a more Christ-like texture. Even though there may be many who will point out the flaws in our lives, a true friend will

walk it out with us and help us with the needed adjustments for the journey according to Proverbs 17:17 which states, a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity. In a lifetime, you may only have one or two of this kind of friend. Consider yourself wealthy if this be the case. To acquire the indestructible life in Christ, you must have at least one true Christian friend who will walk it out with you. Having said this, it must be pointed out that our Christian friends will most likely include both genders. This is a good thing and this will give us a more balanced perspective of life's great adventure. But, one's closest accountability friend should be of the same gender to avoid possible challenges in the future. The lone exception would be one's spouse who can be a great assistance through the journey. As we ponder the importance of this very critical principle, we must never forget that, even the Lone Ranger had Tonto.

Chapter Four

Delight

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” Psalm 42:1

My family has always had an affinity toward good food. My mother came from a large Italian family of fourteen that loved to cook and my dad just loved to eat. I can remember the many feasts that were served out of my grandmother's kitchen. There were Italian dishes which had names I could not pronounce but the taste made up for the language barrier. Holidays at my home in the early years were always filled with family, food, and fellowship. Like my grandmother who rarely sat down for a meal, my mom would go back and forth from the kitchen bringing more food and looking for an empty spot on someone's plate to fill. There was always plenty of laughter and conversation in those days. You could tell that those who had gathered really

wanted to be there. Now as I watch my grandson, Graham, finish all of his food, eat the rest of his brother Parker's food, and then come over to Poppy as I eat and say with a smile, "bite!!", I realize another generation of connoisseurs has begun. The word "delight", according to Webster's dictionary, is defined in several ways, such as, a high degree of gratification, great pleasure, extreme satisfaction, and intense joy.

The Psalmist reveals the second part of what an indestructible Christian life contains in Psalm 1:2. After pointing out the hindrances to the indestructible life in verse one, he proceeds to describe the attitude of those who will soar above the clouds in their walk with God. Instead of finding their main pleasure in the ways of the world, the indestructible Christian delights in the law of the Lord and in His law, he meditates day and night. The fact that less than five percent of the typical western Christian read their Bibles four or more days a week reveals why so few attain the indestructible Christian life. The Psalmist, in verse two, is not talking about dutifully reading your Bible each day like finishing one's chores but he is talking about something that brings much joy and anticipation to one's heart; much like a passion and love for knowing God more intimately by reading His personal love letters to mankind, take a moment and reflect on the things you really enjoy. I am not talking about the basic pleasures in life but what are the activities, people, and places to go that increase your heart rate and bring a smile to your face just by thinking about them. It could be as extreme as whitewater rafting on the Gauley River, BASE jumping off the New River Gorge Bridge in West Virginia, or as laid back as cruising the California Pacific coast line on U.S. Route 101. For others it may be a group of gals who take an annual road trip to some cluster of outlet malls or a bunch of guys who gather each year for the ultimate tailgate party at the Super Bowl. Everyone is a unique creation of God with customized desires and talents that are the seeds that grow into those high point delights we develop. In the natural, not everyone gets to experience that special opportunity.

Many settle for much less like the ladies who discuss their dream of one day shopping at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, Minnesota, while walking the aisles of Wal-Mart.

Is it really possible to have such a love and passion for God that His written Word can stir true delight? If a willingness to seek after more of God is allowed to run wide open, I believe a delight in God's Word can surpass all other desires. I know guys who live for hunting season. All year long they practice with their bows, black powder guns and deer rifles for those six or seven weeks in late Fall when they can roam the woods looking for "Bambi's family". These same guys work regular jobs and live pretty normal lives but if you are around them for a little while, hunting/fishing bleeds through their conversation somewhere. At their homes, you will find hunting magazines lying around and the remote will probably have the hunting and fishing channel programmed into the favorites. Sometimes, there will be an assortment of furry or finned trophies mounted on the walls or nestled on a book shelf somewhere around the house. At any given time, day or night, regardless of what may be going on at the moment, if someone mentions the hunting or fishing subject, suddenly a smile will come across their face and they are back in the woods or at the lake again. A multitude of outdoor scenes flash across their mind as they find delight in the passion of their life. Of course this does not reflect most hunting enthusiasts. There are many who simply enjoy hunting as a pastime and usually do not give it much thought until the seasons began to change and their particular hunting/fishing interest opportunity arrives. Yet, out of this massive pack of pastime hunters and anglers, arise those few diehard passionate outdoorsmen who live for the moment – those who can leave the day to day routine and head for the woods, rivers, or lakes. They all started pretty much the same way. A friend or relative took them on their first hunting/fishing trip. For some, one or two trips are all it took to let them know hunting/fishing is not their thing. Yet for others, each time they go, their passion increases. It passes the

normal level of pastime hobbies and ends up rising somewhere above the top of the scale to the extreme passion delight. When I think of the indestructible Christian mentioned in verse two of Psalm one, it is obvious this is not a pastime weekend warrior of the Word. His delight, the thing that makes him smile and stirs passion in his heart, is meditating on God's Word throughout the day. How can this be possible? First of all, you have to reduce distractions. Two of the greatest distractions for the average western Christian are TV and the internet. Each person has to figure out what is consuming the bulk of their time and determine if they are willing to make the needed adjustments but for most folks, it is these two items.

Now the path we are discussing becomes very narrow. For many, this will be where this booklet moves from possibility to fiction. Anyone can simply read books of the deeper life in Christ, but it is taking the information and turning it into application which greatly reduces the runners in this race after more of Jesus. There is a point in the journey toward a deeper love for God though when the pedaling becomes easier. If you have ever ridden a tandem bicycle, you can comprehend this thought somewhat. I have driven my parent's tandem bike around by myself at times. It is much harder than a single bike, plus, it really looks strange to see the back pedals rotating with no one on the seat. It was never intended to be a solo journey. I remember as a kid when I would ride with dad. Since the second rider can only hold on and pedal, dad had all of the really important responsibility of navigating the path and applying the brakes at the proper time. Sometimes I would lift up my feet and let dad do all of the pedaling. I was just enjoying the wind in my hair, the sights, the sounds, and the fellowship with my father.

Meditating on God's Word was never meant to be a solo activity or difficult chore either. The real delight begins when you realize it is an opportunity to ride through God's Word on a daily basis with

someone who loves you more than life. Jesus told His weary followers in Matt. 11:28-30 to come unto Him and He would give them rest. He admonished them to take His yoke upon them and learn of Him for He is meek and lowly of heart and they would find rest for their souls. He finishes with a promise that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. When knowing God more intimately rises to the top spot of your daily desires, the stress and the struggles of the daily grind begin to melt away. Even as I simply allowed my dad to steer the bike in the direction he felt would be best, our rest comes as we simply trust our Heavenly Father to lead us in the way that He decides we should go. During the difficult challenges of life that will surely come, we can rest in our Heavenly Father's keeping power as Jesus did on that stormy night in the Sea of Galilee when everyone had lost hope except Him. This type of peace is a byproduct of the indestructible life. It requires you to move back to the second seat and let God decide the journey for your life. This can be very expensive in the natural. If indeed an individual decides that the desire for the indestructible life is greater than the cost, then the journey will continue.

Chapter Five

The Challenge

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:1-2

I was the youngest of three boys. My older brothers were very academic and focused growing up. They were both in “Who’s Who” in high school and college.

On the other hand, I was a typical last born. I made it to page 57 of “What’s that?” Of course being a last born does not mean you will not have a great future; it simply means for the most part, you have to work a little harder. This is a subject people will debate for as long as first born refuse to take their youngest siblings seriously and last born desperately struggle to find their identity. This is what I have found over the years as I have talked with last born who were not in denial. Many of their stories have been similar. Of course, there are famous last born throughout history. The Bible has its list of outstanding last born who made it to the top and saved the day. There was Moses, Gideon, and King David. We must never forget that John the beloved, a New Testament last born, had the privilege of taking care of Mary, the mother of Jesus, after the crucifixion of Christ. There may be some first born out there that will debate who took care of whom but nonetheless it was a great honor for John. Plus, some extra motherly advice never hurts, especially if you happen to be a last born.

My particular journey had an added challenge because I also battled ADD. The best way for me to describe ADD is for you to think about the last time you went to the electronic section of one of the big box retail stores. There is usually a wall of TVs all set to the same channel. This represents the way regular folks process information. Now imagine someone changing all of the channels to different programs. This is, in some degree, what many ADD folks have to deal with. To say the least, focus was not my strong point growing up. I did not like to read because I could not keep my mind focused on the story. My GPA in any given class was directly related to my proximity to the window to the outside. The farther I was away from the window, the higher my grade potential would be. As a matter of fact, besides the Dick, Jane, and see Spot run series, I only remember reading two paperback books from first to sixth grade. This also affected my Bible consumption which was very sparse in those days. Up until that point in my life, I learned most of what I knew about God from

the preaching on Sundays at church and the revivals I attended that my father held. I wanted to learn more about Jesus but every time I would try to read the scripture, my mind would wander. At this point in my young life, I became desperate. Each night before I drifted off to sleep, I would ask God to help me read the Bible. Each morning I would open my Bible and try again. As I opened the scripture, I would utter a simple prayer, "Help me to learn more about You today I pray." I cannot remember how many days, weeks, or months passed but one day, the Word of God came alive to me for the first time.

This love affair with the Word of God that started over forty years ago, continues to this very day. Since the devil does not want people in general and Christians in particular to read God's Word, there will be many obstacles along this journey. I encourage people who struggle with reading their Bibles to ask God everyday to help them develop a passion for His Word. This may not occur overnight, but I believe God will hear and answer that prayer for you as He did for me so many years ago. There needs to be a "no plan B" mentality in order for victory to take place in this area. The devil will fight our personal Bible study and devotion time more than just about anything else we will attempt. The devil knows that our personal growth in Christ and our effectiveness to impact lost humanity for God is directly related to this pursuit. This explains why less than one out of ten Western believers read their Bibles four or more times each week.

In order to attain the indestructible life in Christ, a desire for God's Word and devotion must be developed and practiced on a regular basis. Not just the checking off of a box but a desire to know God more intimately. Even as Hershey's® chocolate bars with almonds and peanut M&Ms® will greatly diminish your appetite for a healthy dinner, all of the good and bad fluff we consume on the TV and the internet will ultimately reduce our passion for God and His Word. It is at this point in the journey

toward the indestructible life in Christ that we must begin to seriously evaluate the content of the stuff we are watching and consuming on a daily basis.

The first question we need to ask is, “Would this be something we would feel comfortable watching, playing, or absorbing with Jesus sitting beside us?” We must remember the admonition from 1 Peter 1:16, “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” Now, if you have to struggle to come up with a definite “yes” to this question, there is a chance that these inputs in your life should be discontinued.

Another area to consider is our personal relationships. By allowing people with questionable character to have a high degree of influence in our lives, we risk the probability that our quest for the indestructible life will be short circuited. A good prayer at this point of the journey is found in Psalm 139:23-24, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” As you pray these words, The Holy Spirit is probably highlighting some of the unacceptable areas of your life even now. Here, the inner debate begins. I cannot help but remember the most famous New Testament seeker of the indestructible life. He was a very successful businessman, described as a “rich young ruler”, who had followed the law to the “T”. When he listened to the teaching of Christ, he knew that Jesus had the missing piece for his quest for eternal life. This was not your typical Pharisee who was concerned with all of the outward honor and fame, this young ruler had a sincere desire to spend eternity with God. The scripture even makes reference to the fact that Jesus loved him because he knew that he was a pursuer of truth. As a matter of fact, no other person recorded in the gospels greeted Jesus with more honor and respect than this young man. Jesus had been called master, rabbi, teacher, Lord, and even son of David but no one had ever used the adjective, good, before their salutation.

The response that Jesus gave reveals the reason why. Since only God was good, no one else deserved that honor. Yet, this young ruler did not recant his declaration because he realized Jesus was more than just another teacher or rabbi. He had to have sensed that Jesus was the promised one, Emmanuel, God with us. The heart passion to know God was strong in this young man. He was a prime candidate for induction into the indestructible life discipleship training. He had spent his entire life pursuing a closer walk with God and now he only had one question to answer.

When the Holy Spirit challenges us about areas in our lives that are unacceptable, what will our answer be? As Jesus gazed into the heart of this young follower of God, He saw something that had to be dealt with. Though the young man loved God greatly, there was one love that exceeded that love. Either through inheritance or good business dealings, this young ruler had amassed a huge amount of wealth. Like Abraham of old who was challenged to give up Isaac, he was asked to give it all away and follow Jesus. Had the young ruler willingly offered all of his wealth to the poor that he may attain the indestructible life, God may have allowed him to keep it and use it for the ministry along the way. Who knows what the outcome would have been had this young man followed Abraham's lead and had willingly laid everything at Jesus feet. Unfortunately his answer was "no". He sadly turned and walked away from Jesus and his calling. Even though his wealth did not seem to presently deter his love for God, Jesus knew two passions of this magnitude could not grow together.

In Matt. 6:24 Jesus clearly points out that no man can serve two masters. For he will either ultimately love the one and hate the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other - you cannot serve God and mammon. That seemingly innocent show, game, recreation/hobby, or relationship may not be an issue today, but God sees down the road what it will become in your

life. Your response to the Holy Spirit's prodding about a particular matter will indeed determine whether or not you attain the indestructible life in Christ. The Holy Spirit does not force us to release the questionable things in our life. His voice simply grows fainter as we continue to debate the validity of the object in question. Then, one day, there is silence. It is much like talking to someone on a CB radio while driving along the highway. If the other person you are following chooses to turn off the highway and take another road, you are faced with a choice. You can continue on the road you are on and lose their signal or if you desire to stay connected, you will have to follow where they lead. Since God sent the Holy Spirit to lead us in the way we should go, it makes good sense to stay on the same road on which He is traveling. Otherwise, one day we will find ourselves all alone in the silence of disobedience on this journey of life not sure which way to go. If you are willing to be led by the Holy Spirit, the next chapter will present to you the opportunity to soar beyond the clouds on your pursuit of the indestructible life in Christ.

Chapter Six

The Path

“But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

I remember from my earliest days how much I enjoyed riding in a car. It may be because, when my mom was eight months pregnant with me, my dad decided to drive from Charleston, West Virginia to Dallas, Texas pretty much non-stop in order to hold a revival. The doctor had encouraged my dad that since my mom was so far along in the pregnancy, he did not recommend the trip at all but if dad would take regular stops and give my mom some time to walk around a little bit, it should not

cause any real complications. I suppose what we say and what people hear always has the potential to be very different. The doctor probably expected my dad to stop every hour or so and give my mom a ten minute break. Unfortunately, my dad's interpretation of "regular" stops was each time he needed to get gas, and then mom would get a break. With a 27 gallon fuel tank back in the day, I am sure the stops were less frequent than the doctor probably anticipated. So, my earliest pre-birth memories are the road sounds of the highway, hence my love for cars and road trips. This is why driver's education was the class I looked forward to for so many years. That class would officially introduce me to the art of legally operating an automobile. I mention official and legal because, sad to say, my passion to drive was greater than my feeble attempts to restrain myself. But that is another story for another day. I always thought that upon entering the class, we would get keys to the driver's education car and take a spin. This, of course, was not the case. The first month of class we spent indoors learning every sign and symbol of the highway along with all of the "do's" and "don'ts" of driving. We also learned all of the most important parts of the automobile like the brake, gas pedal, rear view mirror, and blinker switch. There was also every D.O.H. horror film of the worst crashes in automobile history that we had to watch. If I remember correctly, there were several girls who dropped out of the class due to the death and mayhem these films portrayed. Thankfully, they were in black and white which made the bloody scenes look like chocolate syrup. Yet, these scenes of death and destruction did not deter me. Like Paul the Apostle of old when facing death said, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself that I may obtain my driver's license..." (that is from the "Philip T. Dunn" translation). I have logged many miles since those days and there were actually things I learned in driver's education that I recall to this very day such as, beware of the error of assumption. The key factors of the driver's education class are not only to inform the student of all the proper principles of safe driving and

the basic functions of an automobile, but to take the information and make it a practical application in one's life by actually driving a car safely. Now that we have pointed out many of the positives and negatives of the journey, we must begin to apply the practical principles that will assist us on our quest toward the indestructible life in Christ. Just like the choices one makes concerning which mode of transportation to take to a particular city, every Christian must choose how they will navigate the journey of this life toward heaven. Those who choose to live out their Christian life without taking time for Bible study and prayer will be like the man who chooses to walk to the distant city. He may make it on foot but with all of the exposure to the elements, the journey will be much more difficult, if he arrives at all. The man who chooses to read his Bible and pray each day is like the man who drives a four cylinder vehicle to the distant city; it is pretty certain they will eventually get there. Now the man who reads his Bible, prays, and uses the Word Box (described later) on a daily basis is like the man driving to the distant city in a turbocharged four cylinder. This individual will arrive much quicker. Finally, the man who chooses to read their Bible, pray, use the Word Box, and put scripture to memory will be like the man who flies to the distant city. Not only will he arrive in record time but he will be able to avoid many of the traffic jams that tend to hinder our forward progress along the journey of life. The process to attaining the indestructible life is broken up into three phases. The height and strength you attain will be determined by how many phases you incorporate into your daily life.

PHASE ONE: Bible Reading

If you currently have a systematic method of Bible reading, you may or may not choose to follow the daily two-chapter reading that has been designed to walk one through the entire Bible. This over all process has a threefold purpose. First, read small portions of the Old and New Testament along with a corresponding Psalm or Proverb. On each Monday, the reader is

encouraged to read 1 Cor. 13 as well, so the week can begin with a renewed focus on what Jesus said would be the key sign of discipleship in Christ, love for one another. This Bible reading process is not designed to get through the Bible in one year or as quick as possible. The main purpose for this particular method is to give the reader maximum opportunity to absorb God's Word. The Old Testament readings include a reading of the Psalms each day. This is partly for the refreshing of the reader when they encounter long journeys through the "begats" and other tedious areas where most folks simply drop out. The Old Testament is filled with the greatness of God and His splendor. There are an abundance of faith-building stories in the Old Testament that so many believers rarely encounter because they avoid this part of the Bible. These inspiring adventures in history past can give the reader a greater confidence in God's ability to conquer current giants, move present mountains, and provide needed provision today. Since God is the same yesterday, today and forever, we can expect the God of yesterday's mighty deliverance to assist us today. It is important that the reader does not skip around the less inspiring sections. There are golden nuggets hidden in many of these areas. Just like 1 Chronicles 4:9 where we find in the midst of all of the "begats", the inspiring story of Jabez who was born into a painful situation but pressed into God for a blessing that he received. By the time the reader completes the two chapter a day process through the Bible, they will have read through the Old Testament once, the Book of Psalms four times, the New Testament three-plus times, and Proverbs twenty-four times. This is designed to give the seeker of God maximum exposure to the truths in the Bible.

PHASE TWO: The Word Box

The second point of this process is the Word Box. Since the goal is to develop the indestructible life in Christ, simply reading the Bible will not be sufficient by itself. The second phase of this process involves reflecting on key verses each day. Included in

the next chapter are 24 plus key references that will assist the reader on this part of the journey. The goal is to allow the Holy Spirit to highlight particular verses to the reader. Each time a scripture jumps out to the reader's spirit, they are encouraged to write this verse or verses on an index card and include them with the other key verses on which to meditate every day.

A simple index card box, like one used for recipes, will work fine. Along with the 24-plus references I included, I would recommend that the reader would also write down, from the translation they understand best, every verse they currently have already marked in their Bible that has inspired them in times past. There may be two or three scriptures that may complete a particular thought. These can be written on a single card if so desired. Each day after the two chapters have been read, the reader is encouraged to take the first five cards from the front of the Word Box and begin to meditate upon them. As the reader reflects on each card, they should ask the Holy Spirit to engrave these words in their hearts. Then place these five cards in the back of the Word Box and each new day choose five new cards to meditate on from the front of the Word Box. As the pursuer of God consistently meditates on these inspiring scriptures, the very character and nature of Christ will begin to develop in their lives. Simply by reviewing these verses on a regular basis, the reader will find the Word of God impacting their daily choices and directing their steps. This is very important to becoming like the tree mentioned in Psalm 1:3. As the reader avoids the darkness mentioned in vs. one and begins to develop a delight for God's Word mentioned in vs. two, the indestructible life in Christ is the inevitable result if pursued with a pure heart.

PHASE THREE: Scripture Memorization

As we look at the third phase of this process, it is probably one of the most important and least pursued. For many Christians, there have been times when scripture memorization has taken place for a special event or for some current study. After the time that

the verse was needed has past, it usually fades from the memory. If the pursuer of God is faithful to consistently review the five cards a day, these verses will begin to lock into their memory. The final phase of this challenge will equip the pursuer of the indestructible life in Christ to respond to the frontal attacks of the enemy of our soul like Jesus did in the wilderness temptations: "It is written..." The scripture has been compared to a sword. Memorizing the Word of God along with a passion for Christ is like becoming an expert marksman in the army of God. There are few things more frustrating than needing a verse of hope, encouragement, provision, protection, or faith and not being able to remember what it says or where it is found. At this point of the journey, developing a systematic way to retain memorized scripture is very critical. The systematic review of the inspiring scriptures from the Word Box each day will greatly aid the pursuer of God to attain this third and very important phase of the journey. These verses in the Word Box are the seeds that will one day become scriptures that are locked into one's heart. I recommend a minimal goal of eventually putting one verse to memory each month. It may take a month or so to review the verses in the Word Box to find which verse with which to start. When the verse has been selected, place that particular card in the Bible where the current reading is taking place. After reading the two chapters and reflecting on the five cards from the Word Box, take some time to practice saying this memory verse out loud each day. Quote the reference then quote the verse two times followed by quoting the reference again. This will be the method used to review the memory verses once they are placed in categories. The way these verses are maintained is by developing several categories in which to place each memorized verse. The following is a sample list of categories like God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Faith, Tongue, Attitude, Man's Actions, Persecution, Deliverance, Life Styles, Sin, Word, Love, Promises, etc. Each person must determine what categories to use and where the verses best fit for them. For example, Romans 10:17

declares that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. This verse would fit in either the “Word” or “Faith” category. At this point, once the category has been chosen, have a sheet of paper or other electronic process to place these references in their categories. It is important to mark the cards in the Word Box with the category the reader feels most appropriate. Eventually, the pursuer of the deeper life in Christ will have a time with God each day that will include Bible reading, Word Box reflections, and memory verse review. What I have found helpful as the number of memory verses increases, is to review one category each day. At this writing, I have nearly five hundred verses deposited in my heart. If I do one of my fourteen categories each day, I will have reviewed all of my verses every two weeks. The sad truth is that most Christians only know less than twenty verses and references by heart. The more verses one puts to memory, the greater opportunity one has to become a victorious indestructible Christian. There is power in the Word of God in the heart of a pursuer of the Christ life. Every verse placed in one’s heart and mind will better equip the believer to walk in victory and assist others in their journey of this life.

Word Box starter verses: Please feel free to choose to use the NKJV provided or another translation of their preference.

Revelation 4:11

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

James 1:19-20

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Psalms 19:14

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Philippians 3:13-14

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Matthew 12:34

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Matthew 5:44

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Luke 14:11

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Psalms 119:105

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Chapter Seven

Day One

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

In life, there is a first step, a first word, a first taste, and an exhaustive list of firsts that people will encounter along the journey. Over forty years ago, I memorized my first verse. It was John 1:1. As a matter of fact, it is the first verse I taught my two grandsons as well. Every journey or season begins with a first day. There is an old Chinese proverb that states the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. The journey to becoming an indestructible Christian begins with setting aside your personal goals and ambitions and then praying that God will lead you on the path He has planned for you to walk. You will have to make adjustments in your daily life in order to attain this goal. The initial goal is to get to a place where you spend at least as much time in the Word and prayer as you do with TV and the internet. I know this sounds like an impossibility but as a former “news-aholic” who spent three to four hours a day absorbing as much local, national, and international news as possible, I know it is true. One day the Lord challenged me to turn off the news and begin reading the New Testament. After one week of no news and all Word, I finished the whole New Testament.

Over the next year, I read through the New Testament over forty times. When I completed that year, the Lord challenged me to begin reading the entire Bible. Now I am reading through the entire Bible every month plus. I am seeing things in the Word I have never seen before. My appetite and delight for God’s Word continues to increase. Now my news and general TV consumption is measured in minutes while my Bible/prayer time is measured in hours.

The more time you spend focusing on God and His Word with a heart passion, your desires will begin to change. The delight we spoke of earlier will begin to spring forth. Like the sprouts that eventually become the mighty invincible redwood trees, your desire for a closer walk with God and a deeper knowledge of His Word will ultimately over shadow the temporal desires that currently control your time and direct your passions. If you choose to stay on the path God has set before you no matter what, the day will come when you will have intimacy with God that will allow you to overcome the rains, the winds, the floods, and the droughts of life that leave most folks with shriveled fruit and leafless branches. On that day, your TV and internet consumption will be measured in minutes and your Bible reading and prayer time will be measured in hours. This is the true sign of an indestructible Christian.

The following Bible reading schedule is broken up into seven day periods or weekly readings that alternate from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

The weeks are numbered but the individual days are not marked so an individual can start at any time during the year, month, or week. The goal is to stay consistent with one's daily reading. I realize there may be times where the reading will be missed. The lack of dates on the current schedule is meant to reduce the stress of trying to catch up. It is better to just pick up where the reading stopped than to try and make up a lot of chapters and miss the message from God's Word to the reader. If possible, determine to keep current with the Word Box. This is not meant to replace the Bible reading but it will give the reader a boost for any given day. Before each of us is a great adventure based on a three phase principle.

There are heights and depths in Christ that many dream about. Yet, only those who are willing to reach for the stars will ever attain this extreme intimacy in Christ. If you are willing to enter this race, then lace up your shoes, set your eyes on the prize and start running. Today, the journey begins.