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By Victor Zarley
51,000 words

Except for the author and his immediate family, all names of other characters in this book, and places have been changed. Every story is true, however.

This book is dedicated to Moses, Joshua, and all the Children of the Israelites. They trusted God's sovereignty so much that casting lots was not just luck for them.

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Introduction

Part I

A few years ago, after my wife had passed away from cancer, I fell in love with a Christian woman, Eva, who lived in Indiana. We had met on the Internet and had decided we should get married after I sold my house in Idaho. After that, I moved to Indiana with my 6 year old daughter, Kristina, and my life, which used to be rather mundane, became somewhat chaotic as my new wife and I learned to love each other unconditionally.

Eva was a devout Christian, very into the Bible and could quote appropriate Scripture (chapter and verse) for just about any occasion. I, however, had come from a New Age (or self-sufficiency belief system) and had not read much of the Bible, but I did love Jesus Christ. I just didn't know the Word and therefore, didn't fully know enough about Him.

My wife had a job at a local label printing facility and went off to work each day. I, however, had a retirement income and stayed home, took care of the domestic jobs, and was there when my daughter came home from school. I found, after I got my jobs done, that I had time on my hands. What was I to do?

I began to pray to God on a regular basis, every day. I truly wanted to do His will, not mine. I wanted to be able to hear Him and I even prayed often, "Lord, is it possible to hear you...even in this world? I know the Bible is packed with your advice for me to hear, but if You reside in me, as the Holy Spirit, can I hear You personally?" As I prayed from the bottom of my heart, often the tears rolled down my cheeks.

One day, I was reading the Bible and I came upon some verses in 1st Chronicles about casting lots. I wondered if God could still give us information today, in that way. I had been praying about something and I took a coin out of my pocket, closed my eyes in a deep and humble prayer, and flipped the coin. I knew that, for me, heads would mean Yes, and tails, No. I felt God's Presence with me and realized, if God truly wants us to know His will, He, the inventor of the world, gravity, the hand that made the coin, my thumb, and all other aspects that make up the process of flipping a coin, then He can surely use it to convey His will to me.

Quietly, at first, I began using it to make personal decisions that I didn't have an investment in. In other words, if I didn't care which way it went, but still wanted to do God's will, I would prayerfully relinquish to Him the manipulation of my coin flip, knowing I would go with

whatever He said to me in this manner. I knew I was committing to God a trust and showing Him, by my actions, that I desired to hear Him with all my heart. In other words, even if there was nothing to the idea that we can flip a coin and know God's will, at least He would know I was sincere in wanting to know His will. Over time, I began to trust God's ability to use this method more and more. Eventually the Holy Spirit softened my heart, loosening my grip on the carnal, and encouraged me to ask about important things I DID have an investment in. What I mean by "having an investment in" is this: If something is embedded in the framework of your life that could be considered carnal in nature and you are totally unwilling to give it up, then you have an investment in it. I was beginning, at the beckoning of the Holy Spirit, to even ask about some of my investments in this world.

Much later, when I got more certain of what I was doing, I invited Eva into my confidence and she began talking to God in this way. It was always after a humble prayer and a complete relinquishment of our own will, desiring only to serve under our almighty and sovereign God, that we asked Him things in this way. I began journaling the significant answers we were getting, as well as insights into the nature of God because, if it is really Him speaking to us, as the fruit of our experiences bear out, then one can truly come to know His will (which is always verifiable in the Bible).

Part II

A Brief History of Casting Lots

With regard to my journal, which you hold in your hands now, I originally felt the need to use a pseudonym and had changed all names and places. Since then, however, I've come to realize that this book will be a blessing to many, a temptation to abuse it by some, and a source of disdain for many others. My personal "reputation" is not something worth saving. My loyalty to God, however, must never be compromised. I simply must be true to the truth. Unfortunately, there may be a stigma associated with receiving information from God by using this form of casting of the lots. Casting lots is considered to be a form of divination and, although it was standard practice for the children of Israel, it was supposedly dropped by the Church sometime after Pentecost, based on the theory that we now have the Holy Spirit to give us guidance. There are many examples throughout this book, however, in which the Holy Spirit's Voice is enhanced when we trust Him enough to use this.

Casting lots, in the minds of religious authorities, may now be associated with many Eastern religions (like Chinese Taoism and the I Ching). It is also associated with fortune telling techniques. Indeed, throughout history, people have looked everywhere except within for the answers they need. People will look to astrology (the placement of the stars and planets), they look to cartomancy (using playing cards or Tarot cards), or Palmistry (reading palms), or graphology (studying handwriting), and even podomancy (the study of the soles of one's feet) to name just a few.

Many Christians do approve the use of Bibliomancy (randomly opening the Bible or other book to see what the Lord has to say concerning the problem being faced. This is also done when Bible verses are placed in a container and are randomly drawn.) Also, many Christians still "lay a fleece" to seek God's will, as Gideon did twice in the Old Testament. As this book will illustrate by its many examples, it would be better to err on the side of trusting God, believing He can manipulate a tossed coin than to do what most practice in this age of "rationalism," which is to rely totally on our own intelligence or educated guesses. Truthfully, how can we know all the ramifications that surround the daily decisions we have to make? How can we know the hearts of the people around us (for invariably most of our decisions involve, in some way, other people)? Only God is omnipotent and omnipresent and, of course, He speaks to us through His Holy Spirit but can't God utilize the toss of a coin to clarify what the Holy Spirit may be whispering to us in our hearts? With this world's loud, noisy clanging, persistently swaying us this way and that, the still small voice of the Lord may be difficult to hear.

The association of casting of lots with all the worldly tainted methods of trying to "see the future," may have caused us to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Though many good things are said about casting of lots in the Old Testament, it is not mentioned past Acts in the New Testament, as I said before. The consensus of many theologians today, therefore, is to not give casting lots any credence, stating that since Jesus asked us to "wait upon the Holy Spirit" during Pentecost, this is what we are to do today. Some even go so far as to point to the selection of Matthias as a step out of God's will. This book will propose to those willing to hear, that God still wants to speak to us in this way today, if we do not taint this process with our own will. Total relinquishment of our will and trusting God DOES allow God to speak to us in this way (and, surprise of all surprises, the Holy Spirit frequently speaks to our hearts in conjunction with this process).

Is God real or is He just a figment of our imagination? The secular humanists and "rationalists" so prevalent in today's world, have blasphemed God Word, stating that most of the miracles of the New Testament and the mighty workings of God in the Old Testament are myths, or embellished story-telling, handed down from generation to generation, becoming more fantastic with each telling. This is even taught in some seminaries. To the rationalist, casting lots and getting a genuine guidance from God, Himself, is a ludicrous notion. But, if God is real, why should we not expect Him to help us with our immediate decisions—preventing us from stumbling through this fallen, carnal world? His hand has (in Biblical history as well as modern times) touched many people miraculously. His hand has done things physically, that we cannot understand scientifically (like when Jesus turned water into wine or fed thousands with only a few loaves and fishes). If God is truly God, and, as Isaiah says, His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, then perhaps God inspired and approved a way in which we can reverently inquire of Him today, casting the lot, as we prayerfully flip a coin, thereby getting practical answers from Him.

He knows we all struggle so desperately to separate our carnally influenced thoughts from His pure ones. He also knows that many people don't really desire to hear Him that much. He reads hearts and the deepest desires of our hearts He promises to give us. Could we have an increased desire to know His will? Do you not cry out, as I have, for some way to be able to hear Him with undeniable certainty?

God gave us Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Jesus gave those who believed access to a supernatural dose of the Holy Spirit during the Pentecost, which was needed as the foundation on which to establish His church. Throughout the Old Testament, however, God's Spirit is seen often, so Pentecost was not the first time God's Spirit has communicated with or come upon man. Let's consider Saul, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

1Sa 19:23 So he (Saul) went on to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went on he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 1Sa 19:24 He took off his royal robes and prophesied before Samuel and lay down stripped thus all that day and night. So they say, Is Saul also among the prophets? [I Sam. 10:10.] (AMP)

Was it not the Holy Spirit Elijah found in the still small voice?:

1Ki 19:11 And He said, Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake;
1Ki 19:12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire [a sound of gentle stillness and] a still, small voice. (AMP)

Surely these examples, as well as casting the lot, are not the only way God speaks to us. Both Eva and I have often found, as I've said, that He will drop a thought of clarification into our minds, in conjunction with the prayerful flipping of a coin. But God will speak to us through other people, circumstances, "coincidences," in some dreams, and many more ways. God is unlimited in His ways to reach His children. And, as the Word says, God will reach for us when we reach for Him.

Those who find God hard to believe in, have no problem believing in all sorts of externally based practices such as mentioned in the following article from Wikipedia, the Internet's free encyclopedia. (I realize that this Internet encyclopedia is not considered a scholarly source and I only utilize it now as it defines the word "divination.")

"Divination is the attempt of ascertaining information by interpretation of omens or an alleged supernatural agency. If a distinction is to be made with fortune-telling, divination has a formal or ritual and often social character, usually in a religious context; while fortune-telling is a more everyday practice for personal purposes. Divination is often dismissed by skeptics, including the scientific community, as being mere superstition. Advocates say there is plenty of anecdotal evidence for the efficacy of divination. Divination is a universal cultural phenomenon which anthropologists have observed as being present in many religions and cultures in all ages up to the present day."

Many religious authorities of today have apparently bought into the scientific opinion that *all* divination is superstitious and have discounted it. And, indeed, the Bible itself condemns the occult throughout its pages. Specifically, look at Deuteronomy 18:9-14:

Deu 18:9 When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of these nations.

Deu 18:10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer,

Deu 18:11 Or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Deu 18:12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and it is because of these abominable practices that the Lord your God is driving them out before you.

Deu 18:13 You shall be blameless [*and absolutely true*] to the Lord your God.

Deu 18:14 For these nations whom you shall dispossess listen to soothsayers and diviners. But as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so. (AMP)

Despite what was written in Deuteronomy, however, there was one form of divination that did not carry the stigma of sin that all the others did¹. It was the casting of the lot. I speculate that the reason the casting of the lot has remained such a pure and Godly experience, is because it is not used to tell the future, but solely used to give divine guidance in the present moment, as we trust in the Lord.

From the Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition:

“The throwing of lots with the Urim and Thummin (Yes and No), articles kept in the priest’s apron, was accepted as a means of discerning the divine will.”² During the vast time period associated with God's inspired writings in the Old Testament, the casting of the lot was used by priests to determine which of two goats was to be sacrificed as a sin offering and which one would be sent away as the scapegoat. In addition, it was used to divide up and distribute the Promised Land, once it was taken. It was also used to appoint people to all the various jobs that running a temple required. For instance, they cast lots to determine who would be the musicians, gatekeepers, or who would perform miscellaneous chores, and so forth.³ This kept disputes about appointments down because, with the casting of lots, there was no favoritism or nepotism possible. A Proverbs says:

**To cast lots puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders.
Proverbs 18:18. (AMP)**

Sadly, then, as today, many churches want to keep the power of God confined to the top of the church hierarchy, thereby, encouraging the masses to have to look to them for divine

¹ "Lots, though a form of divination, were never a forbidden practice in ancient Israel as were the other major forms of divination. (See Deut. 18:9-14)" International standard Bible encyclopedia. Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

² From http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/essays/casting_of_lots/casting.html. "Although the masses were forbidden by Jewish law to cast lots for divination-which was the prerogative of the priests--God's authorities on earth were allowed to use lottery devices to guide judgments. Thus the chief priest carried sacred stones inside his breastplate, through which he sensed divine intentions. The Urim and Thummim stones gave God's answer, determined when the 'Yes' or the 'No' stone was drawn out."

³ http://www.cezwright.com/books/elements.html#_TOC364291234

wisdom. Perhaps you can you imagine the Pharisee priest in his impressive and stately garb, walking through town. All eyes would be upon him, as he paraded, arrogantly before the people, the sacred stones in a pouch near his breastplate, ready to use for important decisions he and God needed to make. The people would revere the "man of God" and he loved the power he wielded. This, however, was the type of religious snobbery that Jesus came to squash. And though the vehicle through which the Godly decisions were being made may have been tainted with arrogance, the method itself was unblemished.

As with any gift given to us by God, casting lots can be misused and abused. But God even used this abuse to His glory. Didn't God allow the casting of lots for Jesus' robe (which the Roman soldiers did at the foot of the cross⁴) to be a prophetic message in Psalms to help us recognize that Jesus was the Savior, Messiah sent by God⁵?

Eventually, the common people found it much fun to gamble while casting lots and the church leaders of the day strongly condemned gambling, even excommunicating those who participated in this⁶. However, over time, the lottery games condemned were fewer and fewer until today, many churches hold bingo and other lottery games as church fund raisers. Such frivolous casting of lots bears no resemblance to casting lots to sincerely seek God's will.

Ancient Israel really enjoyed a close relationship with the Lord and did not find it odd to use the casting of the lots to determine God's will. It was accepted as a legitimate method and no one doubted for a minute that God's hand was on the casting of the lots. Here is another Proverb:

The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him]. Proverbs 16:33. (AMP)

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was thinking of choosing a wife. He consulted a friend and both of them fasted and prayed, but couldn't come to a decision. Quoting from Wesley's writing: "At length we agreed to appeal to the Searcher of Hearts. I accordingly made three lots. In one was writ, 'Marry;' in the second 'Think not of it this year.' After we prayed to God to give us a 'perfect lot', Mr. Delamotte drew the third, in which were the words, 'Think of it no more.' Instead of the agony I had reason to expect, I was enabled to say cheerfully, 'Thy will be done.' We cast lots again to know whether I ought to converse with her anymore, and the

⁴ Matthew 27:35 and John 19:24

⁵ Psalms 22:18

⁶ http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/essays/casting_of_lots.html

direction I received from God was 'Only in the presence of Mr. Delamotte.'" (Wesley 4 March 1737, cited in David 1962)⁷.

I reviewed some of the older, Wesleyan influenced literature, recently and ran across the information that a group known as the Moravians still believed in the process of casting lots to hear God's will. I found them on the Internet and wrote the following inquiry:

One of the old books I read indicated that the Moravians believe in the casting of lots (as done in the Old and New Testaments). Can you confirm? Thanks, Victor

Dr. Paul Peucker responded with this letter:

Your email to the editor of The Moravian was forwarded to me. I am the archivist for the Moravian Church (Northern Province) and I am happy to give you some information on the use of the lot by Moravians. I see that you promote the use of the lot by modern Christians, so I am sure this information is interesting to you.

The Moravians began using the lot around 1730. They believed that it was possible to consult Christ through the lot when it came to important decisions.

Other Christian groups have used the lot in a similar way. As you said, there are also biblical examples of using the lot for important decisions.

For Moravians there were different ways of using the lot. One way was having three lots: a yea, a nay and a blank lot. After posing the question, a lot was drawn. A blank lot could mean the question was not formulated the right way or it was not the right time for a decision. Another way of drawing the lot was writing the various options on pieces of paper, that were rolled up and placed in a lot holder.

Moravians also casted lots to decide if two people should marry. Unlike some opponents of the Moravians have claimed, this was not a lottery where the names of the various brides were put in a bowl and someone would draw the name of the "lucky one". When a couple wanted to get married, the lot was asked to determine if Christ agreed with this match. If the lot said no, but the couple still wanted to get married, this was possible, but they would have to leave the church.

The lot for marriages was abolished in 1818 in America and in 1819 in

⁷ http://www.jameslindlibrary.org/essays/casting_of_lots/casting.html

Europe. The Moravians did away with the lot altogether in 1889.

yours,

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Somewhere in my research I heard that the lot was abandoned when mankind reached the "Age of Rationalism". The Age of Rationalism could be defined as the age when "biblical supernaturalism" became seen as myth, while what is claimed to be science by atheistic humanists took the place of that which once was considered wise, reducing faith in God to "ignorance." But in my faith and because of my sincere prayers, I have seen amazing wonders and signs that pointed me to the truth of the existence of God (and have written about them in this book, as well as other books of mine). To me, it is irrational for a Christian to believe in rationalism as I've just defined it. The definition of rationalism must include a trust and belief in a supernatural God and His works.

As I reverently and prayerfully began using the method of flipping a coin, (or casting lots), I knew that it was NOT to be used in fortune-telling. I was only to use it to get immediate help. I will elaborate more on this later.

Divination assumes the influence of God. Faith is a prerequisite to our relation with Him as well as anything He does through us or for us. Jesus said many times, by your faith you will be made whole⁸. Let it be understood that my personal use of prayerfully flipping a coin is about trusting and knowing God's hand is on the flip. And, beforehand, it is about truly knowing God is real and desires to make His will known to us, in anyway we are willing to listen. If the method this book describes is abused, it will be because people will not grasp the importance of the following two sentences: Casting lots is never about a coin flip to talk to God. It is about talking to God from the bottom of our hearts and knowing He will use any means to communicate to all of us who are open and ready to receive His direct word upon our hearts.

⁸ Matthew 9:22 is one.

In the next part of this introduction, I will share with you some insights I have received through my use of casting lots (or prayerfully flipping the coin). Keep in mind that there is no place in the Bible where a divine authority ever asks us to stop using the process of casting lots. Indeed, I believe many leaders have made some erroneous assumptions when they say that a Christian should not utilize this method as one way of perceiving the will of God. We have assumed that when Jesus said we are to wait on the Holy Spirit during Pentecost, in Acts, that from that day on we weren't to do anything else but just sit and wait on the Holy Spirit, to rush in upon us in the same way. However, I believe, and my experience confirms, that it IS the Holy Spirit who takes charge of a prayerful casting of lots. It is He we are listening to and it is He whom we are willing to follow. But, please keep in mind, even if casting lots failed to work, doing it in the right spirit at least shows the Lord that you have a strong desire to hear Him and are willing to follow His counsel, disregarding your personal agenda. He loves it when we attempt to follow His will, even if we stumble awkwardly as we reach for Him in our childlike manner. The following chapters, however, can prove to those willing to hear that, not just casting of lots, but trust that God's hand is in the process of casting of the lots, will lead to valid and helpful advice as well as a greater understanding of God. There will be those who insist a Christian should just "hear the Holy Spirit" and not resort to such foolishness as casting the lot. I am happy for those who have such a gift as to always hear so clearly. However, some of us have a bit more difficulty with our discernment, perhaps lacking in such confidence.

Part III

Some Insight and Examples

According to an article we found on the Internet⁹, the practice of casting lots is mentioned 70 times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. Here is a quote from that article:

"Casting lots occurs most often in connection with the division of the land under Joshua (Joshua, chapters 14-21)...God allowed the Israelites to cast lots in order to determine His will for a given situation (Joshua 18:6-10; 1st Chronicles 24:5,31; 1st Chronicles 25:8-9; 1st Chronicles 26:13-14). The sailors on Jonah's ship (Jonah 1:7) also cast lots to determine who had brought God's wrath upon their ship. The 11 Apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas

⁹ <http://www.gotquestions.org/casting-lots.html>

(Acts 1:26).” Casting lots, outside of a religious setting, eventually became games people played and made wagers on. And those games, it can be surmised, have led to all the games of chance that use dice and are played on boards today.

I believe there is no limit as to the ways God can speak to us, nor any limit as to the ways He can have us be at the right place, at the right time, to meet those we need to meet for either the other person’s healing (or our own healing). God is not limited to any one way of communicating to those, who desire with all their hearts, to be communicated to by God. We must hunger and thirst after His righteousness and He will respond. It can't be stated too often that we must reach for Him and He will reach for us.

God’s will can be revealed in the process of casting lots today, just as it was revealed in the Word. But what may be missing from the description of the process, in my opinion, is the tremendously prayerful time that must have occurred before the lots were cast. It is never about lots. It is about trust. It is about a strong knowing that God can reveal His will in this way. Whatever way God’s will is summoned in a situation, it must be done with reverence and a knowing that His hand is involved. In addition, it is never done with any reverence given to the physical objects used. It isn’t the physical objects that have the answers. It is our trust in God and His willingness to give us practical information. Also, it is about releasing everything into God’s hands. It is about truly NOT knowing what His will is and being unwilling to try and second guess it or use our own thinking to try and "figure it out."

Another method that people used in the Word to obtain God's will (and many still use), was laying a fleece before the Lord. An example of this is found in Judges 6:37-40:

Jdg 6:36 And Gideon said to God, If You will deliver Israel by my hand as You have said,

Jdg 6:37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You have said.

Jdg 6:38 And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the dew out of the fleece, he wrung from it a bowlful of water.

Jdg 6:39 And Gideon said to God, Let not your anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once. Let me make trial only this once with the fleece, I pray you; let it now be dry only upon the fleece and upon all the ground let there be dew.

Jdg 6:40 And God did so that night, for it was dry on the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground. (AMP)

So, if we have hearts full of trust, we can request by prayer that something out of the ordinary be accomplished to indicate that God approves of our plan. If that something occurs, then the plans that were made could be pursued. In the case of Gideon, whose story I quoted from Judges, he actually laid a fleece twice just to make sure it wasn't some sort of quirky natural phenomenon. He wanted to make sure God was involved. Again, it is about trusting Him and He will find a way to share His will with us. God was not upset with Gideon, as he had a contrite heart in him. God loves our contrite (humble) heart and seems to go out of His way to communicate His will, when we have that type of heart.

This book deals primarily with this form of casting lots: Prayerfully flipping a coin. After a period of prayer to the Lord that His hand is in all activity and recognizing that I am submitting to His decision, no matter what it will be, I will cast lots. In my countless utilizations of this process, I am happy to report it is about total submission to His will. I simply know that I must withdraw from the process of decision making and allow Him to take over. I cannot emphasize enough that this is the main issue here, not the flipping of a coin.

For me, heads is always Yes and tails is always No. But it could be the other way around. It is about trusting and knowing that, either way, God knows what you are doing and He wants you to know what He is doing and the best way to know His will, in any case. There are times when the answer I got was not what I wanted and didn't even seem to be what God wanted (to my limited way of thinking). But, I followed it and found He, indeed, had given us that answer by the results (or fruit) that came later.

We tend to want minimal changes. Changes involve discomfort. I know that change is necessary, it is just not what my carnal or worldly mind would choose. When Eva found a page on the Internet that informed her of a motor home for sale, relatively close by, she asked me to pray about it. We lived in a pullable RV and did not even own a truck with which to pull it. I agreed to pray about this, but knew I did not want to make changes UNLESS God instigated it. I've spun my wheels in the sand much too many times, when working out my life on my own terms. I know that moves on my own are not productive. So I prayed for about an hour, mustering my faith, knowing the truth, and loving Him. Should I even ask about this? I knew I did not want to ask God about this. If, in my prayer and coin flip, I got a No, I would tell Eva we were to drop the thought of pursuing this motor home. Therefore, the first question I asked was

whether or not I needed to ask about this. After my prayer and flip, God said I should ask Him about this. This was disappointing for me. I, regretfully, had to ask directly. So I asked Him and as I prayerfully flipped a coin, my petition before Him, He told me to pursue the purchase of this motor home. As I said, I had some anxiety about this, but went ahead with an attempt to buy this motor home because I knew that God's hand was involved.

Once I prayerfully flip a coin, it is then out of my hands and fully God's responsibility. Truly, this is another reason why I started praying more and flipping a coin before the Almighty. I knew that my decisions could be wrong or tainted with my own will and could hinder my ability to hear the Holy Spirit. At least this way, I was able to relinquish the results to God, knowing that He controls the results and can eliminate any randomness to this process. After all, as I stated earlier, He approved the whole idea of casting lots. He also made the hand that invented the coin, the world, gravity, the air into which flips the coin, my thumb, the amount of pressure needed in the flip to obtain the results He wants, and much more. "Chance" does not surpass the will and power of God.

I called the number and discovered the motor home was still available. The owner invited us to come and see it and that evening we did. We took the 35 foot Winnebago for a spin and I got to drive it. The owner was selling the motor home at only what his remaining payments were. It was worth far more than that. With it came a Jeep and a tow bar. We also found out that before the present owners, this vehicle was owned by a gospel singing group. Impressed with it, the next step was to check with my bank and see if they would loan me the money to purchase this. I contacted them the next day and a decision was made. Yes, they would loan us the money. It went smoothly and quickly (that's God for you) and I am writing this portion of the book in our new motor home. We are strongly impressed that God is going to have us on the highways and byways, preaching the Gospel, singing our songs and going where He wills us to go.

I did not want to do anything that was not God's will, but knowing I trusted Him more than anything, I prayerfully flipped a coin and got His answer (it certainly was not mine). When it is His will, all goes smoothly. It was His will and it did go smoothly.

Often God will use the flip to give a deeper message, rather than a definite answer. Once when a severe storm was approaching, I had to make a decision as to whether we should stay in the RV or find a more stable shelter. I stepped aside in prayer for a while and flipped a coin. I missed the catch and it landed on the floor, tails (which meant that we were to leave the premises

and head for safety). Considering that I made an error in not catching the coin, I flipped again, and again I missed the catch and it landed on the floor, tails. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart, explaining that if I were going to "drop" the ball, and not pray through this, we should leave for better shelter. I knew we were to stay and pray, which we did. And, I'm happy to report, we were safe. In fact we experienced a miracle through that storm that makes an exciting testimony. As golf ball sized hail plummeted down, our young daughter asked us to join her in singing "Praise God" to the tune of Amazing Grace. Moments later there was not one piece of hail to be seen and no damage was done to our cars or RV.

I have prayed and flipped coins for editing purposes as well. I truly want to write what God wills me to write. I have found that if I write just what I want to write, the writing process is very difficult for me. I find I am straining and struggling and I have much editing to do to finally "get it right." When God inspires me to write, the words flow just like water from an open spigot. I still have to edit, but only to extract the areas where my will crept in. Just recently I completed a chapter in another book of mine and I felt His Holy Spirit flow over me as I typed the last word. Tears came to my eyes in gratitude to Him that He chooses me to share the relevancy of His word. But, I prayed and asked Him if He was happy with this work. The coin flip revealed His answer was No.

I went through the manuscript, line by line, asking here and there, and kept getting that those areas were not the problem. Finally I came to an area I had completely forgotten about where my "carnal man" had obviously crept into the manuscript, spouting off my ideas. I asked if this was the area and when I prayed and flipped the coin, I got a Yes. Extracting that, He honored me with His own satisfaction as I prayed and flipped the coin one last time.

I've added a few rules to this for me. In the early phases of praying and coin flipping, I sometimes had a personal goal in mind—something that was a high priority to me. At that time, I would pray and flip a coin but, could not accept that God did not want me to do the thing I was praying about. My "carnal man" took the initiative and I would ask God EVERYDAY until He said Yes. In this particular case, after a few days of praying and flipping a coin, God said Yes. But, in retrospect, I believe God was exasperated with me and merely said Yes to get me off His back. It was a kind of, "Okay, okay, go ahead and do what YOU will!" So, I do not pray and flip a coin before the most almighty God over and over again, in order to get the answer I want. Because it isn't my answer I want, but God's. To be so self-willed and rebellious makes a

mockery of the process. We must pray sincerely and let God be God for us, when we flip the coin, or cast the lots.

Once, when I needed to make a decision concerning an offer from a pastor friend regarding connection with our ministry, I was very unsure of the answer I got because I didn't feel I was properly prayed up. I asked again a few days later by praying and flipping a coin and got the same answer as before. THEN I was committed to the answer and found joy in doing what the Lord advised. The results of that were also joyous, even though it was not seemingly a pleasant thing to do. Many months later, I saw the reason why God had asked me to do this. God is perfectly willing to share what we need to do at any given time. I can't say this too often (well, I guess I could but...) it is about trusting Him, not about flipping coins.

There will be those who may think I am only sharing the stories where the coin flip landed properly. For the time period this casting lot diary was kept, I have related every story, whether the results of that story were "good" or "bad." Also, I realize that it may seem like I am, apparently, proposing that others flip coins before God in order to hear God. Please understand that it is not about working with any physical objects to try to hear God. It is not really about laying a fleece before Him or casting lots. It is Him we must adore, it is Him we must follow, not some particular arrangement of physical objects. When your heart's desire is to hear the Lord, He will work out a way in which this is possible for you. This way is working for us and it may be helpful for you, as well. Please pray about a way to hear God's will in your life and, above all, please desire to do God's will. He will provide a way, just as He did for me.

Once, during a heated argument with my wife, I brought God into it and said, hastily, without thinking, "Let's see what God says about this!" and I quickly flipped a coin. God answered on my side of the argument, but He was very disturbed with what I had done and I lost the ability to communicate with Him (by this process of flipping a coin) for a while. When I'd flip a coin, I just knew, by revelation of the Holy Spirit, that God's hand was not on it. The results, for a while, were very erratic and I could tell it was just "luck" with regard to which way the coin landed. When He eventually restored my communication, I felt like leaping into the air, and praising Him, and I vowed never to put God in that kind of situation again. We must never put God on the spot. He would never purposely want to side one way or the other in an argument (unless you both should agree that you want God to make the decision). He must be the only

resolution we would want. Again, never use this method to flex one's carnal muscles or you will find yourself on your own for a while. This is a blatant abuse of the process.

Let me emphasize, if two or more people are in agreement that they will abide by the results of the coin toss laid before God in prayer, that is a different story. Wherever two or more are gathered in Christ's name, He is there—and a coin tossed before God in this manner is very sacred and effective.

I have felt that I've had to be very secretive about this method because of the pure absurdity of the idea that people might think I'm advocating that one can talk to God by flipping a coin. That would be a gross over-simplification of what is going on. Casting the lot or laying a fleece before God is intended to be a valid way of reverently seeking God ascertainable will on a matter. It isn't meant to be the sole way of communicating with God or hearing the Holy Spirit. It isn't meant to replace listening for that still, small voice of the spirit of God. We talk to God in prayer and He may choose to use any means to communicate with us He desires. He has no limitations in how He can communicate with us, but first, with deep and regular prayer times, we must get to know Him. With complete submission to His will, a flipping of the coin or laying of a fleece will work—just like drawing lots worked for the Bible heroes I talked about, previously.

If, for some reason, you do not believe that God exists and is a very real and viable source of wisdom for you, you should not try this. A laying down of a fleece or flipping a coin can never prove anything. God must be taken on faith and He must be allowed to prove He is real. Once a relationship is established with Him and there is no doubt He is real, we can enjoy utilizing this tool and humbly allow Him an additional way to communicate with us.

Another important note: We should try to phrase the question in such a way that we are not imposing our will. Leave room for God to make a statement. Sometimes if the question is phrased in too restrictive a manner, either way, our will, not God's, is being done. We may choose to ask Him, "Is this the way you want me to phrase the question? Or, as I often say to Him, 'Do you even want me to ask this?'"

We do not need to lay fleece before God or flip a coin. We do not need anything but what God already gave us from the cross. His gift of salvation which He gave us from the cross provides everything we need. Nothing more is needed now that our eternal salvation is assured. However, God wants us to mature in Him and be helpful as we walk this earth, as, through our

God dwelling in us as Jesus Christ's Holy Spirit, all men are drawn to Him. We should want to know and do His explicit will at all times. Works should accompany genuine faith.

We know all through the Bible that God works in mysterious ways. I am not saying anything new with regard to how God works. This same God spoke through a donkey once. He wants to speak to us and be involved in every aspect of our lives. We are worth much more to Him than a donkey. We must not try to limit the way He can speak to us. God has proven many times over to us that He will use this method of praying and casting the lot before Him, to communicate with us. But, again, it is not about the physical objects used, it is the trust we have that He can provide His answer in this way—or in any way He chooses. We have found that He often uses both a prayerful flip of the coin and then a clarification dropped into our hearts, by His Holy Spirit to explain His answer.

The bottom line is our desire that God's will be done, and not our own. If this method of prayerfully flipping a coin before God seems too absurd (even though there is a Biblical precedence) consider this instead: God wants His will to be acknowledged and followed as we walk this earth. Have we considered that He DOES have a will? Have we considered that He wants only the best for us and would keep us from the futile pain of a downward spiral? When we follow God's will, we may still have pain, but we will be in an upward spiral and there will be a gradual cessation of it. Have we been asking Him in prayer to really reveal to us, His will in all things? If we know that God has a will and that He wants us to know it, then we must hunger to know His will. We must ask Him how His will can be known. He doesn't want His will to be unavailable to us. How can we do His will, if we can't know it? We must tell Him that we want nothing more than to know His will and to follow it. We must hunger for this. God will find a way to speak with us, because part of His will is that we would know it along with Him (and follow it).

It is Biblical that when we reach for Him, He will reach for us. He will not ignore His children who hunger to do His will. Remember, this whole carnal world was started when Adam and Eve exhibited self-will and chose to rebel against God, leaving all of us, their descendants, in the lurch. God sent His Son to restore right-standing and communication with Him, and now that Jesus has been made Lord and Savior of our lives, He eagerly wants to share His will with us. We can't bow to the world's ways AND allow Jesus to be Lord and Savior at the same time. (We can't follow mammon and God).

How is God communicating His will with you? To what extent do you “guess” or hope you are hearing His Spirit and doing God’s will? Have you had a prayer of relinquishment in which your will is completely given up, so that there is room for God’s will in your life? In the next section, I will share my journal which I began keeping, once I saw the viability of praying and asking God for His help in this way. In addition, I will share some insights into the nature of God, which naturally come to anyone who is successful in casting lots. By the fruit of the experience, you will be able to determine whether it is successful or not. Please enjoy these true stories. Bear in mind as you read, casting the lot is not to replace all other ways of hearing God's Spirit. Often, it is merely a confirmation of what the Spirit is already saying. One time when, over a somewhat trivial matter, I told Eva we should ask God about it. She nodded. We prayed and followed His guidance. Then, in a complete surprise to me, a sudden feeling of gratefulness rushed through my whole body, from head to toe and tears of joy streamed down my face. I told Eva that God was sharing with me, right then, how grateful He was that we are so willing to hear His will, in both the trivial and major decisions we have to make. I was amazed and grateful that God shared that with us!

I want you to enjoy this book first and be in awe at how often God spoke to Eva and me by His Holy Spirit in conjunction with the tossing of a coin. There was one incident, however, which took place during this time period when I was keeping a casting lots journal that has turned out to apparently be a major blunder on our part in following this course of decision making. I would be dishonest to leave it out so it is included as chapter 33 (My Time Share Experience). Of course, I will explain what I feel happened to the best of my knowledge and explain why I still feel the casting of the lot can be a wonderful way to show God we trust Him and allow Him to give us supernaturally, practical information for our day to day activities.

The Angel's Shove

This was to be a day loaded with our willingness to follow God's will. The night before, our furnace had quit working. The weather had turned bitterly cold so something needed to be done early the next day. My getting the laundry done (my normal Thursday task) and afternoon singing at a nursing home would have to be put on the back burner.

We prayed about what to do that morning, asking God if Eva should go into work at all because she felt she'd be needed to help with the furnace crisis. God said she should go. Then she asked if God wanted her to go in early (she thought, so she can get out early and beat a forecasted snow storm on the way). The answer was yes, she should go in early.

I got the motor home ready to drive into town, to see if I could get the furnace fixed. I was only comfortable going to either Rick's Service Center in Corydon or Customer First RV in another nearby city (because I'd been to both of these places). Understand, I'm directionally challenged which means I don't drive intuitively, like some, but with trepidation and a fear of becoming lost. This is not unfounded because I do get lost, often. I prefer to avoid confronting this aspect of my life. I do not deliberately put myself at risk of the agonizing situation of being completely lost, defeated by the complexity of the highway system on this planet (especially when I'm driving a 35 foot motor home). I prayed and asked God if I should go to Customer First RV. The toss of the coin revealed a No. To me, that meant I should go to Rick's Service Center (MY only other choice).

I drove there and parked. Rick said, "Sorry, Victor, but the man who works on RVs is on vacation for two weeks." Oops. I called Customer First RV to see if they could help this desperate man (even though God said No). They could not because they just didn't have enough help, but the man told me to call a large RV dealer in the city. He said it's only 14 miles from them. He also said they told him they didn't have enough work. I dreaded making that call because, though I've been there many times, the place is so darned hard for me to find.

When I called, initially he couldn't help me, but when I told him we lived in the motor home, he reorganized his priorities and invited me to come in. His directions were fabulous and, as I drove, I got a sense that I could actually get there in that 35 foot rig.

When I arrived successfully, the dealer was able to put two men on my problem and before long, a new motor was ordered for my furnace and installed. I was there only a few hours. But, with the storm moving in, I needed Eva's help to get Kristina from school as she was going to be let out at noon. Because Eva went in early, she was able to take off, get Kristina, bring her to the RV dealership I'd driven to, and get back to work to finish the day with a full 8 hours.

With the furnace working fine, because of its new motor, Eva came to the dealership after work to lead me home in the blizzard. We crept home as the sun set and the snow storm raged. I was able to follow her car through the maze of streets, not needing to worry about my lack of a sense of directions.

Once we got back to Corydon, we only had about 10 miles to go to our pad. We stopped and ate, then got some important supplies at Walmart. I was ready to be home, but Eva didn't think the motor home would be able to travel across the yard to the pad. She was certain I would get stuck because it was such a slushy, wet snow. She wanted to remain in the Walmart lot for the night. Crossing the field on the big front yard was the only way we could park in the space correctly, so we could hook back up to our utilities. I felt it would be okay to do this if I just swung the motor home around, I'd have a one shot chance to come in for a landing, so to speak. I didn't think I'd make it if I had to back up on that slushy yard.

Eva was adamant that we shouldn't try this. I asked her if we could ask God and she nodded, bowing her head. We prayed there in the parking lot, casting the lots before Him, as I flipped the coin. God said it would be okay to park at home. Eva agreed, but said, "Maybe God wants you to meet the driver of the tow truck, who would come out to help move the motor home when it got stuck...and help him find Jesus." As we were driving home, though, she called on the cell to apologize, after having prayed, and wanted me to know she did not wish to try to manipulate me, when I had gone to God for His answer. I, meanwhile, found myself concerned about what was about to happen and prayed all the way home that this would all be to the glory of God and that through Christ, all things are possible. I felt reassured.

She was waiting in the driveway when I pulled the motor home onto the snow covered grass and began maneuvering it around to my parking space. Suddenly, I felt the motor home begin to be stuck, as it slowed down. I found myself praying, "No, Lord" then, instantly, I felt a definite shove on the back of the motor home, giving me just the needed boost to allow me to swing into my space. Eva, in her car, saw the motor home falter and prayed "Please, God, he's

put so much faith in believing that you do answer Him, in this method of seeking Your immediate will!” She watched in amazement as something seemed to shove the RV right into place. God truly answered our prayers and came through, giving us another story to tell regarding trusting God and doing what He says, as we utilized the prayerful flipping of the coin before Him.

Nature of God: In the morning, God told Eva to go to work early. Eva thought it was so she could come home early. God said, Yes, go to work early, but I will need to use you during the day to pick up Kristina from school. God’s ways are not our ways. When I asked God about where I should go, I could not climb out of my box of restrictions. In my mind, it had to be either Rick’s or Customer First RV. God, through the encouragement of the man at Customer First RV, was able to move me confidently out of my restrictive mentality, so that I could go where I needed to go to get the problem fixed. God can move us out of our restrictive beliefs in appearances and self-judgment, when we rely on Him.

Later, when Eva and I were driving our vehicles home, God worked our hearts over. He made me more aware that I must pray, knowing God was going to get us successfully into our space and that God would get the glory, not Victor. God worked Eva’s heart to help her relinquish her fear and have more faith that God would work this out and to not try and sway her husband from trusting God. In the end, with angels surrounding us and giving us a necessary shove, we were parked and hooked up to our life’s essentials.

But, the only REAL life essential is God (and our trust in Him).

How Much Should We Give?

Recently Eva and I had the opportunity to sing some of our songs at a festival type gathering. One group we heard, spoke after their set and exhibited God's humility and generosity by offering their CDs at no cost, or whatever we could afford. This is what we have been led by God to do also—but we also want to support a group that has God's generous attitude.

The dilemma we faced is that we wanted to pay for the CDs but as we were suffering some financially, how much should we give? This group had five CDs from which we had to choose. Eva wanted to be generous; I wanted to be somewhat cautious. I decided to do as God wanted, but I had to find out what that was. Knowing most people would not understand that I prayerfully flip a coin, as a way to find out God's will, I looked for a secluded place. Seeing a door that led to another room, I slipped quietly into it and prayed that God's hand be in a coin toss. I asked how much we should give. \$10? (tails – No), \$20 (tails – No), \$30 (tails – No). I was getting upset with all the “No's” I was getting. In frustration, I asked, “Anything? Anything at all?” and for the first time got heads (Yes). This was not making any sense to me. Any amount was a sacrifice for us. Money was tight as we were supporting Eva's son as he attended college.

I walked out of the room, somewhat distraught and I told Eva that I got “No's” on every toss except “Anything?” She and I both went into that little room and she said, “Why don't you ask if it is supposed to be higher?” I did. “No.”

“Eva,” I said, not really knowing what to say, “sometimes I know that I get in the way, like I'm not prayed up or something. You take over. What do you want to give?”

She looked at me and said, “How about \$20?”

“Okay,” I responded as we walked back out. I was frustrated at what apparently was my failure to receive any sort of answer that made sense to me.

I walked over to the table and chose two CDs of the five there as I thought for \$20, two of them would be a fair deal. The lady selling/giving the CDs took the two I chose and carefully picked up one of each of the ones I hadn't chosen and added them to my pile. She said, lovingly and sincerely, that as fellow musicians, we ought to have all their CDs. Instantly, it was as if a light went off in my head. God WAS making sense with His answer to me. His answer was, “Don't ask me specifically. Give anything, anything at all. Any amount will be fine.”

Nature of God: I'd like to show you what happened with this particular incident. I wanted to ask God how much we should give. When I asked Him specifically, He said "No" many times. When I asked, "Should I give anything?" He said, "Yes." I was confused because I didn't know that He did not want me to ask SPECIFICALLY. He only wanted me to ask generally. "Yes," He said, "give anything you wish. You will be supplied with CDs."

God has a mind. He has a will, also. Isaiah says that His mind is higher than our mind and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. God gave me an answer that was outside what I expected to receive and, consequently, I was unable to understand the answer. Eventually, I got it and was appreciative that I could have given anything. But, in this age of rationalization, people do not give God any credence. They do not think He is valid. Consequently, many miss the wonderful opportunity to get to know our Creator.

I am more in awe of God everyday. I truly find Him the most fascinating Creator and Father. I am nudged, prodded, encouraged, outright enthralled and excited to know Him more and more. Those who go through life, not even knowing if there is a God, are missing the privilege and joy of meeting their truest and best Friend. This Friend is not found by cloudy thinking, caused by buying into the world's appearances. He is found by faith. He is found when we start thinking, "God, I know You are there, show me Your will. Use any means to do it. I want to know it. And I will heed it. I do not want to rely on my will any longer."

Do the tears roll down your face, too, as you cry out to the Lord for this? As your heart hungers, God answers, unfailingly. How will He answer your hunger for Him and your deep desire to do His will?

Discipline

Eva and I have occasionally had heavy discussions about how to handle our then ten year old daughter, Kristina's attitude. Biblically based, Eva believed that a child sometimes needs the "rod", a spanking, to give the child a little physical reminder that this is something he or she doesn't want to do again. I, coming out of "self-sufficiency" religions, preferred to take a more lenient, forgiving approach. It can be overdone either way. Spanking can become a way for the adult to vent his/her anger. Then it becomes violent, explosive, and very deeply from the flesh, with no love given. On the other hand, we also err if the child, given over to devilish behavior, is merely given a smile, a friendly pat on the back, and told calmly and serenely that he or she must walk in love. Then our heads are in the clouds, and the child may not recognize the seriousness of the situation. When I have parented this way, I recognize often that I am in denial that anything is wrong. This passivity in child discipline frustrates my wife.

At one particular discussion, I was sitting in my prayer chair outside as the afternoon sun shared its weakening late summer rays. Eva and I were in conflict as to how to handle a particular situation. I was close to tears and at my wit's end regarding what to do. "Why don't we ask God?" I said.

Eva said, "Okay." My desire was to find out once and for all if we were to spank Kristina when she misbehaved or not. It was a major question and one that had strained our marriage more than once. First, however, I felt inclined to ask, "May we ask about this?" The answer was, "No." I felt, at first, betrayed. Then, suddenly, in a shower of wisdom to my heart, God, through His Holy Spirit, said, "Check with me each time. I do not want you to handle all situations in the same manner." As the wisdom poured through me from God, I shared it with Eva and we both began to cry, happily, with God's answer to us.

When we asked Him about spanking Kristina for this particular situation, He said No. A very short time later, Kristina came to us, submitted by the Holy Spirit, and repentant. Our daughter has learned through this, to be grateful when God says, "No" to the spanking and when He says, "Yes" she accepts that she deserves the spanking and acknowledges that she has had plenty of grace from God in the past. It has actually helped her to love God in a personal way and submit to discipline better.

Nature of God: When I asked Him if we could ask, He said, “No.” We felt as if He was dropping the ball, here, but, He’s God. We knew He cared. Then, the wisdom of the Lord came through my heart as He told us gently to always come to Him with each situation. He did not want us to try to make Him give us some sort of “easy blanket answer” that would apply to all situations. What wonderful wisdom God gives us, when we relinquish our hold on things and really let Him know we trust Him and want to know His will! This particular time, God was going to bring submission to Kristina internally and it would not be necessary for us to spank her. But, we understood, that didn't mean we wouldn't have to spank her another time.

I believe too often, we live this life totally oblivious to the fact that God is real and that God has ways for us to do things, or handle things. If we believe that God is not a real and viable help, this will be the way we live our lives, constantly struggling with our decisions and judgments, never knowing which way is the right way to go—or even whether or not we should go. Life can be better than this, folks.

We must want to get past the sense that what the world shows us, is all there is. This is simply not true. How can I help you understand? Actually, only the Holy Spirit can reveal to you that this world is NOT all there is. How can I help you see? Actually, only the Holy Spirit can help you know that, beyond the deeply held belief that we walk alone in this world, lies a doorway to the Kingdom of God, within. Just on the other side of these dark and obstructing beliefs, there is a Door Handle, Jesus Christ. If you pull for Him, He’ll pull for you. He’ll bring you through. There is nothing the world can show us that can keep God’s children trapped in the dark beliefs the world can’t see beyond. This isn’t a fantasy, this isn’t “ostrich hiding his head in the sand” stuff. This is real. Step on out! Then step in. Meet your Father, in heaven and discover His will in everything.

Singing in the Prison

We love our monthly sojourn to the state prison where our church puts on a service for the guys incarcerated there. On a Saturday afternoon, we hop into the church van for the 25 minute drive to the prison. We generally choose a couple of songs to sing but always find that the Holy Spirit coordinates everyone's contribution, so that the men always get a cohesive and dynamic service.

This particular Saturday, I was asking God for direction as to which songs to sing. I did this discreetly while at the prison. I truly knew God's Hand was in the prayerful coin toss, but every time I asked about a song, I got "No." Confused, I sat down next to Eva and whispered, "I'm not getting any direction today."

We had no way of knowing that, in a completely spontaneous and unexpected turn of events, the pastor of our church would choose to forego the normal procedure and have us all pray for one another the entire time. For the first time in the two years I'd been going, I did not sing any songs that day. Afterwards, Eva and I rejoiced that God included us in His plans by letting us know that no songs would be sung this time.

Nature of God: Again, God's answer made no sense at the time. I was asking Him for guidance in choosing the songs (assuming there would be songs). He told me, by His "No" that He didn't want me to sing any songs that night. It is only in retrospect that these deep prayerful questions, and the answers received from God, made any sense. Until they did make sense, there was an uncertainty, a pall of discouragement, even. But we really wanted to know God's will. God does not leave His children dissatisfied when they hunger to know His will. Do you believe that?

Do you believe that God CAN and wants to tell us His will? Do you want to know His will so that you can follow it, instead of your own measly one? In a cry from the heart, knock and keep on knocking, ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking and God will show you a way to follow His will. Remember who hid from whom in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve hid from God. We still hide from Him today. How? We hide from Him by thinking that only our own will makes any sense and that we need to do all things by our own ingenuity and craftiness or common sense deductions. This is sleep, folks. This is living in an unawakened state. Know that you can know your God. Strive to know Him. Strive to know His will.

The type of heart needed to know God's will is a contrite heart. Our hearts must be expectant, open and completely trusting Him. He will speak to a heart that is hardened, uncooperative, and set in its way, if He needs to, as He did to Balaam¹⁰. After all, He's God. But to be conscious of communing with Him always, we must be fully cooperative, humble and dependent on Him. Don't let God speak to you only when He must. Allow Him to speak to you always. If there is something He must get through to you, He'll do it. Perhaps you've had what appears as an audible warning from God when impending danger loomed. Or had a mysterious hand push you out of the way of an onrushing vehicle that you didn't see. This is God. Perhaps you've noticed an amazing coincidence as God set you up with strangers and you see those strangers again and again. This is God, making it possible for you to get together and lift each other up, glorifying Him. It doesn't always happen that we would see God's Hand in what we would label "chance." But it is God's Hand, nevertheless. He does His best work by what we would call "chance." If God is almighty, then "chance" really doesn't even exist.

¹⁰ The story of the fortune teller, Balaam, begins at Numbers 22:4.

The Dropped Coin

I was taking a Bible study that involved homework in which we wrote out answers to provocative questions. These questions could simply be answered by reading the corresponding Bible verses and copying them and/or saying them in our own words. While answering one of the questions, I was drawn to the men in white who showed up in the first chapter of Acts just as Jesus ascended into heaven. These men asked why everyone was looking up for Jesus. They then pointed out that He would return in exactly the same way He left.

I asked myself, “How did He leave?”

“He ascended,” I answered myself.

In continuing the discussion I was having with myself, I asked, “How does a person return by ascending?”

The answer came in a flash. If we live in Him and He lives in us, then He can “ascend” up through us, through our stomachs, through our hearts, through our minds as He is allowed a dwelling place in each of us to a greater and greater degree. How exciting! I wanted to share this with the class. I could feel my blood pumping and I was anxious to share this.

Deep in the recess of my heart, though, God observed that I had a desire to glorify Victor, not Him. In retrospect, I know this to be the case. I would share some new and profound knowledge, given to me by God, and I would be thought of as special. “What fun,” I thought, not realizing how much God wants me to glorify Him, only.

At the class that night, I got my notes ready, and waited to have my turn to share my wonderful insight. I had already started prayerfully flipping a coin before God to get God’s will and felt a reluctant pull to ask Him if I should share this information. I was determined that I **was** going to share this stuff. So why ask?

Still, I wanted to prayerfully flip a coin before God so I pulled a quarter out of my pocket and asked if I should share. Though well tossed, I missed the catch and watched the coin roll under the chair in front of me. (By the way, at this time, I always counted it even if it fell to the floor.) I picked up the quarter which had landed tails (No) and slipped it into my pocket, totally discouraged by His answer.

When my turn rolled around, I shared the insight, just as I had promised myself I would. I ignored God speaking to me through the coin toss. As I spoke, the Bible teacher conducting the

class felt guided to lay a gentle hand of discouragement on me, beckoning me to think in accordance with traditional views of this passage. I, not desiring to create a scene, but to remain teachable, quietly humbled down. I knew God was right with what He had said. This was not the time, nor the place to present this information.

I still think Christ wants to ascend through us, but I also believe He will physically return in the traditional understanding as well. Later I wrote about it in another book I was writing, and it may be helpful to the Body of Christ some there, but this particular time, I was being totally rebellious, as I trudged on, doing my own will at this Bible study.

It was no accident that I dropped the coin. God was saying that He would say No but that I would drop the ball, so to speak, and do what I willed, not what He willed.

Nature of God: I remember specifically feeling “high,” as if I were on some sort of drug, when God gave me that inspiration, which I so much wanted to share with the class. I say, now, that I don’t care for that feeling. It seems to involve the flesh. It was as if God kind of gave me a little insight, but I made a drug out of it so I could “get high” and then “keep high” by telling the class. I would not let God get a word in edgewise. When I asked for His guidance, as to whether to share this insight, my mind was already made up. I was going to do it. There was no way I wasn’t going to share this!

God wanted me to come down off my “high horse” and join Him on the firm foundation of His love, His joy, and all His fruit of the spirit. It wasn’t about my “highness” or any feelings I might be having. It is never about that. It is always about His will, not mine.

I learned, that time, that the prayerfully flipping of a coin often presents more information than one might think. Dropping the coin, I was informed by the Holy Spirit, in this case, meant that I would insist on doing things my way, despite the answer God gave me. He cared for me enough to let me know His entire agenda, with regard to my heart. He does not want me to have an anxious, drug-like high with Him. He wants me to follow, calmly, joyfully and with complete confidence, His will. My reward comes from Him when I do that. It should not have to come from man (or the class, in this case).

Now, if He wants me to be still instead of clanging like a noisy gong, I am quite content to do that. I try to have no investments in my own will. I try to only be interested in following His.

Our Investments

I had some work I needed done on the motor home. It included an oil change, fixing a headlight, a plumbing problem and determining why my generator wouldn't start. I am one of those people who gets lost very easily, as I stated in an earlier chapter. Many of the places where one could go to have the RV serviced are located at the end of very complex highway travel, unfit for people like me. I hoped there was someone locally I could go to for the work.

This story is about the first time someone recommended Rick's Service Center to me. His place was a very easy place for me to travel to. I was elated. I called him and was very impressed with his confidence that he could help me. In addition, he told me he charged \$70 an hour, not the usual \$99 an hour which other major repair centers charge.

I made an appointment for 9:00 AM Monday morning. He thought it might take two days to get my motor home in shape. I knew that would be no problem, since we still had our old pullable RV which we were trying to sell, and we could stay in it while the other one was being repaired.

Of course I wanted to go to God on this. Trust me when I say this was a very difficult thing to do, because things seemed to be working out well on their own. However, I have seen the appearances of everything going very well, turn sour and become disappointing in the end. I want always to do God's will, not mine. He never fails, where I routinely do. I knew I needed to prayerfully flip a coin, before God, and get permission (even though I had already made the appointment and even though I had been so relieved to not have to travel the complex highway system to get to the other service centers).

The first thing I did was release all to God and ask Him if I even needed to bother asking Him. This meant that if God says, No (tails) I could confidently just continue doing what I was already doing. I flipped and He said Yes (heads) that I must ask Him.

My heart was filled with trepidation because it was so easy finding Rick's Service Center and going to another service center was so hard for me. Because I had already invested so much of MY research, it was especially difficult to let go of it and get God's direction. In my mind, I carefully reviewed all the times I had thought my way was the perfect answer and it turned out

completely wrong—even painful. It is easy to remember how our plans (even though they appear to be going completely right) can turn into something sad.

Still, the idea of casting lots by prayerfully flipping a coin only to get a No, haunted me. Why? Because I had invested so much into the answer I wanted. I got butterflies in my stomach at the idea of turning it over to God. I imagined getting a No on Rick's Service Center and the hassle of having to drive the motor home through the maze of streets to another service center. It was terrifying.

I closed my eyes and flipped the quarter onto the RV floor, my eyes tearing up, as I told God that I only wanted to trust Him and not go my own way. I opened my eyes and looked at God's answer. Heads (Yes, go to Rick's). Tears of joy flowed from my eyes as I thanked God for giving me the BEST answer, not based on my own will, but His only.

I confidently drove the RV to Rick's Service Center where I received the most courteous service, as well as very reasonable pricing. I vowed to not invest so much of my will in the future, but to rely only on God's will, early on. Of course, God could very well have steered me to Rick's in the first place, but I'm not able to recognize God's will, as opposed to mine, all the time. Once I had prayerfully flipped a coin before Him, I was confident at last.

Eva, too, had to make a decision with regard to her carpal tunnel problem. She had already made the plans, had the surgical appointment, scheduled time off from work—everything was in place to have it done. Then, rather belatedly, she wanted God's approval. She, too, felt a hunger to do God's will and not her own with regard to this—even though so much was already in place. She could not imagine having surgery without God's approval. She, too, imagined what it would be like if God said No. Going back to work without the surgery, trying to explain it all to everyone, canceling the surgery and dealing with the problems associated with that. But Eva felt strongly she wanted God's approval. We were visiting a local park when Eva felt she wanted to do God's will in this. Feeling nervous for her, I asked God if it was even necessary to ask. I flipped the coin, hoping, for her sake, that it was not necessary to ask and things could continue as we had planned. God said, through the coin toss, "Yes, please ask Me." When we have invested so much time and energy into OUR plans, I felt God wanted us to REALLY know it was Him we wanted to follow so He made it very definite by having us ask Him directly. I handed Eva a quarter so she could ask and prayerfully flip the coin before God herself.

She, too, remembered how often our decisions and plans are inadvertently incorrect. She took the quarter and asked God, “Is it Your will that I have this surgery?”

Her eyes, too, teared up as she released the coin, allowing it to rest in the grass. Heads. God had given permission to have the surgery. Joyous tears flowed from her eyes also.

The surgery went smoothly. A friend of ours called me while she was still coming out of the surgery and he prayed for her, stating in the prayer, that she have NO pain. I was grateful for the prayer, but did not think that was possible (forgetting momentarily that with God all things are possible). The anesthetist had given Eva a block in her wrist that was supposed to last 4 to 5 hours. It lasted 18 hours and when the numbness ended, the pain from the surgery had already subsided. She had no pain from the surgery!

Nature of God: I say once again, that God is real! This world is designed to make God unreal. It is designed to deny God. It is designed to make Him irrelevant. We must consciously deny the world’s denial and recognize His reality, even as the world claims Him unreal. Part of our unconscious worldly attachment (even though we claim to be Christians) is recognized, when we make our own plans and do not consider that God has any for us. This is called making an “investment.” We make investments by carving our own way in this world. God cares enough for us to want to show us what is right and what will glorify Him with regard to each thing we do (even the tiny things). By our siding with the world and denying that God has an opinion, we open ourselves up to Satan and his chaotic, unfulfilling ways. There is no riding the fence. We’re either for God or for Satan.

I would like to NEVER invest in my own plans again (though I probably will). I would like to go, ever relying in God, prayerfully flipping a coin before Him and trying to see my way through His ever insightful and wonderful vision. Is it possible in this world? I see that it is. I don’t want to have to mentally backtrack and wonder, did I make the right decision? Then have a tension build-up as I check with God even as the ball is rolling. No, Lord, I pray, help me, even in this world, know, REALLY KNOW, what You would have me do, not after I have made my plans, but before I make them.

Go to Prison or a Friend's Dinner Party?

October of this particular year had five Saturdays in it. The fourth Saturday has always been the day I go with our church to a prison nearby to sing. Incredibly, October 22nd was the fourth Saturday and not realizing that, I had scheduled a dinner party at some friends' house.

This was a couple we thoroughly enjoyed spending time with and we had some new songs we had written that we wanted to share with them. As the day of the dinner party drew closer, I suddenly realized there was a conflict with the prison ministry with which I was involved. I truly LOVE the prison ministry, but I really wanted to go to my friend's party. What to do?

Go to God, of course. I prayerfully flipped a coin before Him, and asked God if I should go to the prison ministry. He said Yes, to my disappointment. I called to cancel with my friends, but he suggested we come over after the prison ministry (even though it would be very late).

Next, I had to choose which song or songs to sing. I had just written one that was very long (six minutes) but also very powerful. It was a forgiveness song. I wanted to do that one, but of course, what I want to do doesn't count. Did God want me to do that one? My wife felt it was too long, plus it was completely out of my usual "pretty tune" mode of songwriting. In fact, it was more a Christian rock song and, perhaps a little too dark for most audiences. Would it be appropriate for prison?

Saturday morning I asked if I could do that song and received my okay from God.

Saturday afternoon I boarded the van (with five other people) and we drove the 25 minutes to the prison. I sat next to a gentleman, who I hadn't seen for many months.

I asked him, "Aren't you the one that plays the drums?"

"Yes," he answered.

"They are electronic drums, aren't they? Did you bring them?"

"I sure did."

"Say, I've got a new song I'm planning to sing tonight that could use drums. Can you help?"

"Sure," he replied. "Let's go over it when we get to the prison chapel."

I thought to myself how wonderful God sets up things. He gave me a drummer!

Once we arrived we saw how things were definitely going to be different that night. They hadn't called the pastor, but we found that this particular day the Muslims were using the chapel for Ramadan, a day of fasting and spiritual celebration, and the chapel wouldn't be available for another hour and a half.

We all decided to go to a local restaurant to kill some time.

Coming back, the pastor told us we'd have to cut our services short tonight. Nevertheless, I setup the microphone and borrowed the pickup so I could attach it to my guitar. In addition, the drummer and I worked a little on the song. One of the things our ministry team is constantly awed by, is how God orchestrates the service at the prison. Even though no one discusses it with anyone else, God prepares a special, unified service, through each of us. It is uncanny how it always comes together so perfectly.

Going into this "abbreviated" service, deep down, I knew that God would do what He always did so well. As the service progressed, I saw that the men were getting charged with the Holy Spirit, with each new speaker from our group. An older lady spent some time sharing some Reader's Digest jokes but, beyond the jokes, the Holy Spirit was washing over her and the rest of us as well. She spoke a little longer than she usually did.

The next speaker happened to be an alumnus of this particular prison. He laughingly says, "Class of '94." He spoke his usual amount of time. I looked at the clock on the wall and saw there was only about 20 minutes of time left for the service. Would I get to sing the song?

The pastor suddenly began speaking about the cross and as he did, I began to realize that it was likely my six minute song was not going to be sung tonight. For a second, my mind began to drift into self pity as well as embrace the question, "Why did God want me to come to the service tonight?"

Then, just as quickly, I knew that I DID NOT want to go there. God knew what He was doing, when He set this service up. I began to get into the inspired words of the pastor, as he spoke of the salvation our Lord gives to us NOW, as well as for eternity with the blood He shed for us from the cross. I found myself shouting, "Amen" periodically, with the rest of the men there. The older lady who was the first speaker was sitting next to me and she leaned over to me and whispered, "Are you going to be singing your song?"

I whispered back, "I don't see how. It is an abbreviated service and the song is six minutes long." Nevertheless, I had the peace of the Lord in my heart at that time.

The pastor wrapped up his message and asked the usual question always asked at the end of the service (just before the men are released to go back to their dormitories). “Are any of you men scheduled to be released before we come back next month?” Three hands went up. “Would you men step forward and let us pray for you?”

I got up with two others from our group and laid hands on one of the men as the pastor prayed for them. When finished, I sat down and waited for the pastor to let the men go.

Suddenly, there was some chatter outside the chapel and someone stepped in and said, “You have ten more minutes.” This had never happened before. I watched in awe as people began turning toward me and I heard, “How about a song from Victor?” The pastor introduced me and the drummer and I made our way to the platform.

As I began singing the long, six-minute song, I found it very hard to believe that I was even up there singing it. I watched the drummer getting into the rhythm I had established for this song, and once again, I was caught up in how awesome our God is. I had totally let the song go, knowing that there simply was no time to sing it. I had totally turned the service over to God. I had run from the pity party that Satan was setting up for me and now, to the glory of God, was sharing an ultimately uplifting and rather deep song about forgiveness.

About five men came up after the song and thanked me, telling me how blessed they were with my material. God, indeed, had me in His plans with the service that night. The prayerful coin toss I had, concerning both where I was supposed to go and which song I was supposed to sing, had each been answered with exact precision. Only God knew how the evening was to end—but, boy, did I have a story to share when I dropped in, rather late, to my friend’s dinner party!

Nature of God: Even after all these examples in which, by my prayerful coin toss before God, I have seen His wisdom shine forth in my life, I am still in awe as I watch God work. I did not want to go to prison this month because a close friend was having a dinner party. God said I must go. I wanted to sing the long song and God said I could. But all through the abbreviated service, it did not look as if I would be able to. It was unprecedented when someone stepped in to give us ten more minutes and I was allowed to sing that song. Do you see how God was working in this? Is God working this much in your life?

I can truthfully say that God wants to work in your life as much as He is working in mine. It is WE who are trying to hide from God, not God who is trying to hide from us. It is our

rebellious and “know-it-all” attitudes that flush out God’s magnificent insight so that we can have our trivial one. When will we ALL take Jesus as our Lord and Savior and wake up from this dream that we travel alone in this world and that divine help is not available to us? When?

The Letter

I was writing a letter regarding something in my life that seemed unjust. I wanted to “follow the rules” set up by our Lord and Savior in the Bible and not judge. The letter was written from the heart and explained the facts, as I understood them. At the end of the letter, I began to exaggerate some ideas, cleverly I thought.

I prayed and asked the Lord in all sincerity if I should print out and send the letter. I got a “No.” I removed the obvious error (the “clever” part) and asked again. Again, I got a “No.” Perplexed, I went to my prayer chair, tears forming in my eyes and a strong sense that I wanted to know why I was not getting permission to print out and send the letter. I remember closing my eyes and having a blank mind, free from my own ramblings. Then I remember saying to God, “It’s mighty quiet in here.” I said that because it seemed as if only I was in the chamber of my mind. God was silent.

Just then, in a flash, I was given the portion of the letter that needed to be extracted. I had forgotten that I had mildly threatened legal action, or rather, insinuated that possibility to the recipients of this letter and God would have none of that. In fact, if anyone else were going through what I was going through, it would have been entirely acceptable to make the threat. Nevertheless, God was clear. Do not go there. It’s an attempt to manipulate and control rather than leaving it in His capable hands.

I was in awe. God had revealed a part of the letter that I had forgotten and asked me to remove it. In utter joy, I got up from my prayer chair, and removed the offending portion from the letter. Was it ready now?

God said Yes.

Nature of God: I have mentioned before that God has used the coin flip many times in the editing process for my writing. I especially enjoyed God's Holy Spirit tugging in His Word in my heart, with the flip of the coin. We want to remember that He is not limited in His ability to communicate to us. The more we think we know, however, the more we cannot hear Him.

Over a period of time, in which my trust in this matter has increased because I have witnessed God actually using this tool for me, I have been able to rely on His answer. Consequently, when the flip gave me tails (No), my heart ached to know why. I reached into my

heart to God in a mighty way, sincerely wanting to know what was wrong. God, then, in a mini-revelation, revealed the part of the letter that needed to be removed. I had not, at that moment, remembered I had written that part.

With tears of joy and gratitude, I removed the offending part of the letter, and this time, upon asking if the letter was ready, flipped the coin and got God's approval. I want to urge all who read this, to understand that I am not someone who uniquely has a direct line to God. That would be insane to think that way. I am, perhaps more than some, hungering and thirsting for His knowledge and His wisdom in all things. I don't just flip a coin every chance I get. I realize the importance of completely removing any sense of investment that I might make, in the results, and thoroughly give the situation to God for His resolution, not mine. In this story, necessarily vague as it is, I enjoyed God's interface with the flipping coin, in which He gave me, at my prayerful request from my heart, the actual text that needed to be edited out of the letter. Praise God that He cares about every big thing in our lives—and the little things, too.

The Greatest Plumber of All

We have PVC pipe coming up from the main water line. That line is buried many feet below. A green protective cylinder keeps the dirt from covering the handle for the faucet that we connect the hose to. That hose feeds water to our motor home. A few weeks earlier we had noticed a leak coming from our PVC piping and had spent most of the day (with the help of our neighbor) repairing that leak. This involved shutting off the water at the meter (which is many yards from us), digging a big hole to reveal the tubing, taking off the green cylinder, and removing the previously cemented tubing, and re-cementing it.

We thought we had done it properly. But one day after some rain, we noticed water entirely filled the inner part of the green protective cylinder. Was it just the rain filling it or was there something more ominous occurring? I honestly didn't know. I talked to my neighbor about it and he said if there was a leak going on, you would notice it at the water meter. I am not very bright when it comes to looking at things mechanical so I went out there and removed the round cement cover and stared at the numbers on the meter. None were moving, so I assumed the water was only rain that had somehow gotten into the green protective cylinder. At the meter, I prayed that God's hand would be on this flip as I asked God, "Is there anything to be concerned about?" I was not pleased with the answer. Yes. Much later, my neighbor showed me I was looking at the wrong area on the meter. I should have been looking at a small, triangular "hand" that spins, either fast or slow, depending upon the amount of water that is being used. If no water is being used, any spinning would indicate a leak. He showed me that there, indeed, was a leak going on.

Meanwhile, we had to prepare the motor home for a short trip into town to fill the propane tanks so I let the water problem go. I really did not want to dig a big hole again. When we got back, I told my wife I wanted to pray for about 20 minutes and check with God again. Sometimes (when the answer is not what I had hoped for) I consider the fact that I was not "prayed up". I believed it was necessary to truly release things into God's hand BEFORE the coin was flipped. Interestingly, though, in the recent past—as well as this time—God had "come through" accurately even though I wasn't as "prayed up" as I thought I should have been.

During my prayer time, I got an idea that I thought came from God. It included a way to test whether or not there was a leak in one of our PVC pipes or if the leak was in the water line, far below the ground. After my time with the Lord, I asked God, "Should I spend time on my

idea?” The answer was “No.” I let my theoretical thinking go. “Should I dig the hole and check for leaking?” The answer was “Yes.” God’s answer was right, of course, and He helped me save a lot of time by getting us focused on the problem area.

I found my wife and we began digging so we could expose the PVC piping so we could find the leak. I didn’t want to turn off the water at the meter yet because I wanted us to first find the leak, then we’d shut off the water. As I was trying to maneuver the green protective cylinder off, however, the PVC came apart and water began bubbling up quite rapidly, gushing out the cylinder. We ran to the car and drove quickly to the meter. The little triangular hand was going so fast, it looked like a spinning propeller. We quickly shut off the water.

Later, we discovered that the cut-off at the meter itself was faulty in that, even though it was turned off, water still flowed, filling our pipes very slowly. This made it difficult to fix the pipes because the water didn’t allow for proper setting of the cement. But, as it says in Romans 8:28, all things work together for good to those who love Christ Jesus. We were able to discover, because water still came through the pipes, that the pipe had broken exactly where the leak was occurring. How did we know this? When we continually siphoned water from the pipe, we saw, to our delight, that the ground around the piping dried up.

We used a wet/dry cement and, continually siphoning off the water, carefully put the fittings back together again.

Nature of God: God told us exactly what we needed to do for this plumbing problem. I didn’t want to believe that we had to dig a hole again, but prayerfully flipping the coin before God (twice) revealed that we had to. In this case, as in other cases, being “prayed up” did not seem to be necessary as the answer I had received earlier, remained correct, when I prayed later.

I believe that God’s hand was also involved when I broke the pipe. It broke at a place where our neighbor, weeks earlier, had sealed it using only “dry” sealant and it hadn’t sealed correctly. He, however, had been unable to get the pipes apart when he had discovered the problem, so he just let it go, thinking it had sealed fine. God used my hand to break them apart easily, so they could be sealed correctly.

When I got the idea, during my prayer that I should run a test to determine where the leak was, God told me to ignore that idea. As it turned out, it would have wasted precious time. In this case, the idea I got, even though I was in prayer, turned out to be just a normal, personal idea and not an idea that came from God. One of the most difficult things for us to do is to sort out what

ideas are from God, what ideas are from us and what ideas are from Satan unless it can be directly confirmed through Scripture. (Know any Scriptures about how to do plumbing work?) My conclusion, based on that occurrence, is that even in prayer we may not always receive divine inspiration. I don't believe Satan can run interference with our sincere prayers to the Lord, however, our own thoughts can still creep in, leading us up the wrong trail or wasting precious time. I still have a hunger to know, to truly discern, God's thoughts over my own. When God used the coin flip to let me know that my idea should be ignored, I was reminded, once again, of Isaiah's statement that God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts higher than our thoughts. I enjoyed letting my ideas go. I had increased faith in God when it turned out to be the right thing to do.

Out of God's Favor

Recently, while visiting the library, I came upon some books by a leading proponent of the positive thinking philosophy. I decided I needed a dose of positive thinking and checked out some of his books. I began reading one, when I got home, and I enjoyed the stories of people changing their thinking and getting positive results.

He quoted the scriptures throughout the book. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13. Matthew 17:20 says that if you have faith that is like a grain of mustard seed, you can tell a mountain to move and it will. And we must not forget what Jesus said in Mark 9:23: If you can believe, all things are possible. Remember also that in Matthew 8:25-26 Jesus rebuked the disciples for having too little faith as they were terrified of a storm that bounced their boat ominously about. He then rebuked the winds, which immediately became calm. There is no doubt that Jesus had the power of God in Him. He even said that we shall do these things, and even greater things we shall do¹¹.

There is no doubt that Jesus wants us to be aware that, as children of God, we have access to tremendous power—and if we read His words carefully in the Bible, we will not make the mistake that so many who are caught up in the power of positive thinking, make. I will be back to tie up this loose end in few minutes. First let me share with you how God dealt with me, as I began to immerse myself in the positive thinking ideas of this Christian, who spoke so highly of thinking positive.

As I read the many examples of people who became more positive and had wonderful results because of that, I began to feel an old fatigue creeping back into my soul. I can only say this in retrospect because, in addition to that feeling, my wife was feeling some alarm as I shared portions of the book with her. Later, we had a discussion and she and I both agreed that we should ask God about whether He wants us to read this literature.

I had been reading these books solidly for about three days, not even taking time to pray as I had done before. That evening, as we sat on our bed, I prayerfully flipped the coin before the Lord, asking, "Do you **not** want me to read this man's books?" I got a No, but I had to do some mental gymnastics, because I had asked so awkwardly. No meant Yes, it was okay to read the

¹¹ John 14:12

books. Eva, confused at the way I asked the question, asked if she was to read the books. Her answer, as she prayerfully flipped the coin was No. I began to ponder this whole situation.

“Dear,” I said, “I’m going to ask God if He means that it is okay for me to read them, but it isn’t okay for you to read them.” This coin toss before the Lord was No. That meant that it wasn't okay for me to read them, but it was okay for her to read them.

The conclusion I came to was humbling to me. I saw, at that moment, that I was out of favor with God's Holy Spirit. After having spent three days reading this positive thinking material, and not praying in my usual solitary manner, communing with my Savior, that final answer I got showed me complete gibberish. I couldn't make heads or tails out of it, so to speak.

I looked at my wife and said, “Thank you for being so sensitive to the Holy Spirit and recognizing that I was taking an errant path by immersing myself in these books.” Tears came into her eyes, tears of joy, perhaps tears of relief, for her previous husband, who had taken his own life four years earlier, had spent his last days reading all kinds of books that were off-base, spiritually; with emphasis more on mind-power (or self-sufficiency) and less on complete sufficiency in God. She did not want to see me getting into those types of books. And, I could tell, neither did God.

Nature of God: The casting of the lot (or the prayerful flipping of the coin) before God didn't work for me at this time. I felt God's Holy Spirit tell me that we can easily get out of God's favor by immersing ourselves in our mind power ONLY. Notice I didn't say we don't have mental powers. We do. But God wants us, by our free will, to use these powers in entire submission to Him. He does not want us to turn the powers on and off at our will and for our selfish desires. He wants these powers turned on for HIM all the time, as we pray without ceasing, utilizing these powers to trust Him, love Him and submit to Him as we learn to hear Him.

God said, in the Word, that we are not to worry or be fearful¹². This means we are to keep the faith at all times. We are to know that God will take care of us. We, therefore, have permission to jerk our minds out of the clutches of the devil, who would bring us down and make us feel hopeless. It is a sin to believe Satan's lies. It is not in our best interests to wallow in stinking thinking. That sad cesspool needs to be climbed out of, the moment we become aware

¹² Luke 12:29

we are in it. It is Biblically legal to do so, otherwise Paul would not have asked us to take charge of our thoughts¹³ and be released from Satan's fearful hold.

Our Lord has acknowledged that whatsoever we believe in, will come true for us¹⁴. In Luke, God asks us to knock and keep on knocking and the door will open, ask and keep on asking and you will be answered, seek and keep on seeking and you will find¹⁵. Let's take note, here, that we must be focused in our prayers, but it is so easy to be caught up in the technique, rather than petitioning to and relying on our awesome mighty God, from the very depths of our soul. There could, unfortunately, come a time when our mental stance is more dependent on doing this process correctly, than it is in doing this in submission to, and with a deep, deep love and reverence for, our almighty God. If we don't have the submission to, and the deep, deep love and reverence for our almighty God, we have stopped just short of our purpose here in this world, which is to draw all men to Christ, by our example. If we carefully plan our lives and order our steps as we see things, we will not be of much service to God—because, truthfully, we can't see much from here.

Do you see how easy it is to just be positive, but lack the deep reverence for, and the trust in, God? Do you see how it is possible to ask God for help as we do things OUR way? If God had His way, we might not be doing much of what we're doing at all. It is wonderful that God will help us out of our jams—but why don't we knock and keep on knocking until His plan is revealed to us, so that we can avoid the confusion and problems that come from following our own will in the first place?

We MUST love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, mind and strength. It is very important that we not take some of Jesus' words without acknowledging all that He said. We have God's power. But how should it be used? Do not skip this next profound statement from Jesus. This statement from Jesus clarifies what we are to do with our "powerful" minds (and what so many in the New Age religions--or "prosperity" minded Christian religions--fail to do): Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these other things will be added unto you. Do not forget, also, that we are to spend time alone in prayer to God and He promises He will reward us openly—but if we spend time praying in such a way that we will receive man's compliments, we'll already have our reward (in those compliments from man).

¹³ 2nd Corinthians 10:4-5

¹⁴ Mark 9:23

¹⁵ Luke 11:9

What does that mean, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God...”? This is where we close our eyes, and rush into the arms of our God. This is where we humbly bow down before Him, sometimes even shedding tears, as we glimpse how wonderful our God is. This is when we ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking, seek and keep on seeking...for what? God’s will! This is what we are to use our God-given, tremendous mental prowess for. All other uses are trivial and even meaningless, because we don’t know very much at all, so how can we know what to even ask for? As we trip, get up, then stumble along life’s highway, we may be tempted to be determined to continually rise up from the ashes of our past, which continually go up in flames—but wait, how do we submit our lives completely to God, forever doing only His will, completely backing off from doing our own will?

Seek ye first the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is within and it consists of the fruit of the spirit, love being the greatest of all the fruit, peace, joy and even tenacity, or faithfulness. Knock and keep on knocking until the love, peace, and joy comes forth, blessing all those around you. This isn’t happening for you? Do not give up, but fight on until you see the hand of the Holy Spirit. Reach for Him with all your heart and let Him guide you through your life. Do you see how important a contrite heart is, in this process?

Now, in this carnal world, we reside in the Twilight Zone. Rod Serling could easily come into our living rooms (and, sadly, he often does), but let’s invite Jesus instead, and ask and keep on asking, for the love, peace and joy that is supposed to spring from each of us. What is stopping it? Be willing to look and be willing to be healed on the deepest level by our Lord and Savior, Jesus. God does not want us to use the gifts He gave us, in so limited a way, as we often do. If we seek Him and thirst for Him with all of our hearts, we will then begin to be aware of a huge treasure chest of gifts that will never rust or deteriorate in any way. Where our hearts are, there, too, is our treasure¹⁶. Do you treasure Him as much as I do? I pray that you do.

¹⁶ Matthew 6:21

The Interruptions of God

Eva wanted to prepare a dinner for her son and his fiancée. They were very busy taking measurements of the local actors set to play in Dickens's Christmas Carol. They were commissioned to make all the costumes and a dinner break appealed to them. However, Eva's mother-in-law (from her former marriage to her deceased husband) had passed away and we had just returned from the visitation in a city 35 miles away. Eva had felt she hadn't stayed long enough and wanted to return for a while in the evening, but she also wanted to make supper for her son and future daughter-in-law.

She prayed and asked God whether she should go back to the funeral parlor and she asked whether she should go ahead and make the supper for the kids. The prayerful coin tosses before the Lord revealed a Yes to both. So she busied herself making the supper before heading back to the funeral home.

Meanwhile, I had taken Kristina to the Library and suddenly I felt I wanted to head home and go with Eva back to the funeral parlor. As I was driving home, I called her. She was already on the way, but agreed to meet me in a small crossroads between where she was and where I was. I passed the street that led to our RV and drove a few miles, then parked my car at our prearranged spot near an intersection. Kristina and I got out of my car and into hers, then we continued driving back to the city. However, right when we got to Corydon, just before we would have gotten onto the freeway, her son called our cell phone to ask if dinner was ready. She had thought that they weren't going to be ready for dinner until much later (hence the dinner she was preparing at home). It turns out they had a short break before they had to return to their tailoring task. It was determined, they did not have enough time to come the ten miles all the way out to our RV, but could only eat dinner out, in town, right then.

We changed our plans and had a wonderful dinner with her son and his betrothed.

Nature of God: Eva was concerned with how God had worked out His plan for the evening. God had asked her, through the prayerful coin toss, to prepare dinner then go back to the funeral. I saw the whole thing differently. I saw God working through the "interruptions" organizing the evening through rather than with our plans. Eva, meanwhile, in being willing to do God's will was able to follow His guidance as she attempted to do what she had planned. God orchestrated the evening perfectly. Time was bought in the preparation of the dinner (which, by

the way, turned out perfectly as it continued to cook and we ate it the next day. The pre-cooked meal came in handy after the funeral). God had Kristina and I join up with Eva, which cost a little more time, since she had to turn around and meet us. This put us in a perfect position to be EXACTLY in the right place (just before we would be getting onto the freeway to the city) and at the right time to receive the call from Eva's son, where we would detour into God's REAL plan and have dinner with him in town during their short break. In other words, as we headed toward the goals He, Himself, had approved, He knew all along that His other plans would take precedence, but everything would align into the perfect timing required.

His ways are not our ways and when we ask questions and get setup for what we think He wants us to do, we need to keep in mind that He may be using our willingness to follow His plans for His purposes in which He says Yes to something in order for us to be at a certain place, at a certain time so He can interrupt it with His REAL plan. Isn't this fascinating? God is not lying to us when He says Yes, we are to do one thing—but, in actuality, He is setting us up to do something else. He is using His incredible creativity, our willingness to hear Him, and His all-knowing capabilities to fulfill His perfect plan for our day.

The Pain in the Propane

At the time I first journaled this instance of casting the lot, I couldn't see it as a successful guidance from God. Nevertheless, I wrote it down, feeling strongly that all accounts should be given, whether good or bad.

It was close to winter and the ground was muddy and soft. My motor home was sitting safely on a pod of pebbles, pretty much out in a field (but we do have electricity, water and sewer). We were almost out of propane, which keeps our home warm, provides heat for our water (showers, baths, washing the dog), and fuel for our cooking. The propane container cannot be detached. I prayed and flipped a coin before God about whether I should attempt to go get propane (which involves taking the motor home into Corydon and filling the tank up). I got a "Yes." "Which way should I drive out?" was my next question. God revealed, through a coin toss, that I should back out, then pull forward, and travel across the grass to the drive.

I said one last prayer before I put the thing in gear, and I backed up...and got stuck! My face flushed red and I felt abandoned by God, betrayed even. I had to call Good Sam emergency service and eventually someone came who winched me back onto my space. Why did God say it was okay for me to go get propane? One of the service people who came to pull the motor home back onto the space, felt confident I could drive forward and get into town. He said the ground was solid enough. Why didn't God tell me that, if it was true? What good came out of me having to be pulled back onto my space, propaneless? (Of course, I don't know that I wouldn't have gotten just as stuck, had I pulled forward, but I was in a pitiful frame of mind.)

The failure to get propane brought up disappointment in Eva and me. However, I decided to continue to trust God and go to Him with this series of events and feelings. I laid it all before Him and humbly knew He is awesome and mighty and with Him, all is possible—including getting our propane!

I made some calls and found out that there is a device called a "Stay-Awhile" that enables people to use portable propane tanks when they are parked at a facility for an extended time. It is commonly installed by the consumer. It costs \$50.00 and I had Eva pick one up on her way home. Together my neighbor and I installed it. God DID come through with the inspiration to pursue whether something like this existed that could be easily installed. I went to the propane

suppliers yesterday and refilled my propane tanks, plus borrowed another tank, so that I would have plenty for both the pullable RV and our motor home.

The Nature of God: Later, while in prayer I recalled that I asked God if I should get propane for my motor home. The answer was, of course, yes (because I was nearly out). But He never said I should take the motor home into Corydon. The rest of His answer probably would have been, “But don’t take the motor home out or you’ll get stuck in the mud. I will inspire you to find a way.” I actually should never have asked the 2nd question which was, “Do I drive the motor home out by going forward or do I back out?” The actual answer was “neither.” He did not want me to drive the motor home. “Neither” was not a choice I had given with my heads or tails, so God was unable to communicate the truth to me through this method—even though my faith in Him was high. Do we ever restrict God’s answer because we “know” so much? It’s a good question and deserves a prayerful and honest response. We should never blame God, who finds Himself constantly attempting only the highest and best communications with His fallen children, only to find we thwart His answers by our preoccupation with the world, or, due to our own stubbornness in which we insist that WE have the truth and are the way and the life as well. It is very easy to blame the Messenger when things go wrong—but God is never wrong and for all of us who love Him and trust Him, He will get His will through to us and His answer will be received. The Moravians' method of drawing lots was to have, in addition to the Yes and No lots, a blank one. If the blank lot was drawn, it meant that the question was phrased wrong, or there was more to it, or the timing was not right to ask the question. When I ask God, by coin toss, if it is okay to ask Him about something, this allows Him to answer with a No. When we ask if it is okay to ask a question, we are giving more leeway to the Lord and adding the equivalent of a blank lot into the coin tossing procedure. This may help alleviate communication failures like the one I had in this lot casting sequence.

I must continue to remember that God’s ways are not my ways and His thoughts are higher than mine. I’ve recorded many stories in this book of how communication falters between God and myself, when I assume that the train of thought, in which I am going, is correct. It may not be in line with what God is trying to tell me at all. There are limitations to prayerfully tossing a coin before God. I have found that a majority of the time, when a simple answer is needed, it works wonderfully. But, under more complex situations, a simple yes or no may not suffice. It is then I must lay the problem before Him and, hopefully, “hear” the answer in my heart by the

Holy Spirit. A coin toss can confirm whether I have tainted the answer received with my own ideas (which are not like God's), or whether I have, indeed, heard God.

Eva's Work Situation

For ten years Eva worked in a situation where she felt subjected to gross injustice among a host of other offenses. She tried to put her faith to practice but often failed, getting caught up in the outrage of things that went on there. She battled depression as she faced each new workweek.

Consequently, she has been looking for employment elsewhere. Preferably close to home as there is much wear and tear on the car when you have to travel nearly two hours a day. She had dropped off her resume to many local businesses, but there had been no response—except Walmart. They wanted to speak with her. They had a position, working nights that would give her the peace she hoped to find. She would be stocking shelves and working under minimal supervision. She would be alone to simply do her job without constant aggression from fellow office workers. The pay, however, would be about half of what she was earning. Someone from the Walmart personnel department called Eva and interviewed her briefly on the phone, but a more extensive interview was needed before the night job would be hers. Considering all the grief Eva had gone through, we thought God was opening a door to another place of employment.

I was on the phone with Eva, as she was telling me she had made an appointment with the Walmart people. I don't remember who decided to check with God (through the prayerful coin toss), but I remember prayerfully asking God if Eva should take this job or even have the interview. I truthfully wanted to see Eva's unhappiness at work come to an end and I did not like the results of the coin toss. It was No, do not have the interview, do not take the job at Walmart. I apologized to Eva on the phone. I told her, that though I felt prayerful about it, I was not happy with the answer I got.

Eva has had many good experiences with this method of talking to God and, though disappointed, she accepted the results. I urged her to also lay a fleece or cast a lot before the Lord so that I would not be held responsible for the results of this prayer.

A few days later, Eva, in the privacy of her vehicle, had some prayer-time and asked God if she was to have the interview. Her prayerful coin toss revealed No. She asked, further, was she to permanently forget about this job or perhaps later, apply again. Then God said, through the prayerful coin toss, that she was to permanently forget about this job.

Nature of God: God wants us to have victory where we are, not go running from place to place, trying to find victory. Over time, at her work, a large management sweep, eliminated all her bosses who were condoning some of the oppression she was under. Eva continued to strive to do God's will by loving the people she worked with—even though they do not return her love in any recognizable way. At last, she was given permission to come into work early, thereby avoiding the heavy commuter traffic both in the morning and afternoon. It was easier on her car and easier on her temperament, to not have to fight traffic for almost two hours every day. Things relaxed more at work. Eva has felt, in general, that God wanted her to have some victory at the current job, rather than start all over in a brand new job. As we review the results of God's work, through the two separate coin tosses we prayerfully had, we can truthfully say, God was actively working through them by the fruit He has revealed. In addition, Eva would have had to work at ½ the pay she was getting—but, by staying on, she actually got another raise.

I am continually amazed at how God seems to work through this method of communication. I am also continually amazed at how I, invariably, am rigid in my thinking—and unable to perceive my own best interests. More often than not, God says "Go" and I say, "Stop." In this case, however, God said "Stop" when we wanted to "Go." The point, though, is that His ways are always different (higher) from our ways, as Isaiah said.

Additional thought: What God wants us to do, we want to do. Sometimes, though, I may play a little game in which I check twice with God instead of once. I do this by asking Him first, "Is this really necessary to ask about?" I know God will always say, Yes, it is necessary to ask, when He wants something to be done. My natural man's ploy to try to make it come out my way, will not work because, really, I want it to be God's will I follow, not mine. Sometimes God says it is not necessary to ask Him. When this happens, it means it is okay to go ahead with my plans. However, He is able to see through my little game, my reticence to give up something I want to do, and He knows I will quickly come around and gladly embrace what He wants us to do.

Intellectual's Choice Radio

Up front, I want to say that Educational Public Radio is a good, but worldly-focused national radio organization. In fact, I have been somewhat addicted to it. It is fun to listen to their unique commentary, interesting stories, and even their off-the-wall speculative, religious offerings. However, listening to them can be like reading any frivolously exciting book that crosses one's path. There has to be discretion exercised in order to find the time for God in our lives; to pray to Him, as well as do His will.

I had many bookmarks on various informative programs available on the Internet from this radio station. I loved to click on these shows and listen to them. I never tired of exploring the archives, looking for interesting treasures to listen to. I did not spend an exorbitant amount of time on this, but sometimes it could take a hefty bite out of an hour.

In addition to having bookmarks on my computer that could take me to NPR's worldly treasures, I had buttons set on my car radio. When I was traveling, I felt I had time to kill, time to listen to the interesting activities going on all over the world and being filtered through and reported by so many interesting minds.

The past few weeks, however, I noticed that the little bit of spiritual information I attempted to glean was way off-base, scripturally. I noticed, especially, how I felt a little more a sense of how listening to NPR, even only as much as I did, was not the most prudent use of my time.

At the laundry, while I was doing the clothes, I felt a question come into my heart that did not come from me. It was, "Victor, do you want to ask Me if it is okay for you to spend your time listening to NPR?" I eagerly responded, "Yes, I do." I knew, even as I took out the coin with which I was going to get God's opinion (and follow it), that I could be saying goodbye to NPR for good. Although I was a little nervous about the potential change in my routine that could come if I had to stop this entertainment, I truly did not feel remorse about it.

I prayed to the Lord, knowing that His hand was involved in this flip of the coin and asked, "God, do you want me to stop listening to NPR?" It was heads, which meant "Yes." I smiled, knowingly and rested in His answer. I changed the button on my car radio and when I got home, I erased all my NPR bookmarks. I am trying to fill the time and space with things of a more spiritual nature. There is no reason I can't totally focus on God and less on man and his

world. The world will get along fine without my focus, but I may not get along very well with only the world's knowledge and "wisdom." I'd much rather spend time knowing God, in both prayer and scripturally sound wisdom in books and sermons available on the Net. I am happy about the change.

Nature of God: I am so happy that God, Himself, asked me if I'd like to ask Him about my listening to EPR. It was not my idea. It slipped in between my own thoughts and I knew it was God. Yes, Lord, I said, I want to know what Your will is regarding this. The flip of the coin, properly acknowledging God's all-knowing and all-powerful hand in the flip, revealed that His will was that I cease listening to EPR. EPR is a good station, for its purposes, but its purposes are no longer my purposes, and God can use my time in better ways. I am grateful to be purposefully shifting away from the temptation to go to any of the radio buttons or Internet bookmarks that lead to the mammon.

God cares about each of us individually. Had God asked this question of me a week earlier, I might have been reluctant to "give up" one of my favorite radio stations. But He had been preparing me for this time—and when He finally did ask me to ask Him, I was fully prepared to follow through and delete the station from my radio, my computer and my heart and mind. Lord, I pray, help me use my time (which is really Your time) in the best possible way.

A Perfect Restaurant

Eva and I had just finished signing some papers in the big city on a Friday morning and Eva said her blood sugar was crashing and we'd better find someplace to eat. We were cruising down a busy city street on which were plenty of choice restaurants. We needed to select one, right away. I asked Eva about Mexican, but she said it needed to be mild as her stomach was bothering her a little.

On the spur of the moment, we decided to check with God. I felt a strong determination to WANT to do God's will, surge through my spirit and my eyes brimmed a little as I told Eva (who was driving) that God wants to tell us what to do at all times—we simply need to desire to hear His will. I further told Eva that I loved submitting to God's will and that it was just good practice to ask Him, prayerfully using the coin, and follow through on what could be, very likely, His will. If trusting Him and tossing a coin wasn't His will, we at least knew, by more and more experiences, that He was capable of utilizing this method and, if He wanted to, He could actually get a word to us this way. It was then, not with a sense of NEED, that we began praying and tossing a coin to determine where to eat, but with a strong general desire to follow God's will, that motivated us.

I mentioned a few places I saw along the way, and asked God in each case. Tails No. Eva was getting a little weaker and needed to get something into her system. We pulled into a place called Picadilly's, which was a cafeteria. I asked and got a No. We pulled out and kept on looking. Eva said she'd need God's help, physically, to make it, but wondered if we should ask if He wanted us to go toward home and we'd eat in Corydon. I got another No. I asked about a submarine sandwich place I saw across the street. Another No. We began to see how the odds were so unlikely to continue producing flips that were tails.

Finally, I saw a place called Mo's Southwestern and got heads (a Yes). Eva said she didn't know if she could eat at a Mexican style restaurant with the spicy food. I saw another restaurant across the street and decided to ask about that one, also, to see if maybe we'd get another Yes and be able to make a choice. I got another No. We parked and went in, knowing God had a reason for us to eat there (or, at the very least, to go in).

Eva said, upon surveying the scrumptious large burritos that we could choose from, "Victor, this is the type of restaurant you love. God must love you best!" (She often says this—

half jokingly, half wistfully when God chooses in my favor). We ordered the same thing from the menu (one of those burritos). As we sat down at a cozy little table outside, and began to eat, Eva noticed that there were very minimal spices in the food. Her burrito, as well as mine, was the perfect meal for both of us. We would never have chosen that restaurant because, from the outside appearances, it most certainly would have presented food that was too spicy for Eva.

Although it wasn't earthshaking, our Lord and Savior had chosen the perfect restaurant as we completely submitted to Him in prayer, knowing that His hand was in the coin flip and that there was no luck involved. He had a restaurant He wanted us to try—and by casting the lot, He was able to lead us to it.

Nature of God: We believe that God wants us to turn to Him and ask Him things, while totally trusting that He can provide an answer. I like to practice turning to Him in as many things as possible. If we can build up our trust in Him in the small things, perhaps we'll eventually trust Him in the large things as well. Last week I asked God something that may have been rather trivial, but I asked, knowing that whatever answer He gave me, I would follow through. Eva was with me when I prayed my prayer of submission and tossed the coin. We got the answer, I don't remember what it was, nor do I remember what the occasion was, but after getting our answer, I felt a wondrous feeling pour over me, which I knew was gratefulness from the Holy Spirit. He was saying, "Victor, I thank you for turning to me as often as you do." I related this feeling to Eva and consider it a further validation to this method of communication with God. This would not be the only time I was to feel God's gratefulness, that we consult Him on so many things. It also contributes to harmony in our marriage. When we let God decide, it avoids bitter arguments as we both submit to His will. We might contend with each other when we disagree, but when God settles it, we both accept it peacefully. In order for this to work, however, as I stated in the introduction, both parties must have faith that God's hand is in the coin toss.

A New Song

My wife and I had just written a new song and were rather excited to share it with people. I had brought my guitar to her son's large, outdoor wedding and discreetly checked with the Lord as to whether I should share the song with this person, or that one. I always got a No.

As the wedding wended down, and people packed up their belongings, I was leaning against my car, watching people go by. A heavy set, Jamaican lady came over to me and we began talking of the many blessings we were experiencing in our lives. We discussed which church we went to and our families. Then Eva came over and joined our conversation. Suddenly, I thought, I'd like to share the music with her. I pulled a coin out of my pocket, praying all the while, that I wanted only to do God's will. I turned away from people and discreetly flipped the coin. Lord, could we play some music for this lady? Yes!

I asked Eva to sing with me after I told her I'd gotten permission to do that. Unexpectedly, the lady went and got her husband and a friend. Various people stopped to listen, some even sitting down for a while. Among them was a friend of Eva's son whom Eva had been hoping to witness to. The joy of the Lord pervaded and we sang around 5 songs (including some anointed old standards). It was not an imposition for us to sing. No one resented it. It was a blessing. It was not to OUR glory, but for His. By asking the Lord if we could sing for this person, or that one, we were showing Him that we didn't want to force anyone to listen to our talent and glorify us. We wanted Him to choose so that glory might be given to Him AND, at the same time, joy might prevail in our hearts as we sang the songs He'd inspired us to write. Moments later, one of the young people who had just been playing in a rock and roll band the previous hour, came up to me and said he overheard our singing and wanted to compliment us.

"You have a voice like the folksingers from many years ago," he said, smiling.

"I AM a voice of the folksingers from many years ago," I laughed.

"Also, you and your wife sing well together."

"Thank you," I beamed.

What Do I Read?

While visiting Eva's mom, and other assorted relatives who were spending the weekend in town, I wandered over to the couch and saw the Sunday paper sprawled out on a coffee table beside it. I sat down, ready to indulge. I read a few headlines of various sections then thought I'd like to read the newsmagazine and comics that come with the paper. But I wanted to ask God if I should.

Why, you might ask, would I want to ask God if I should read some portions of the newspaper? Because, if for no other reason, I know that God can figure out how best to use my time. I know I am a miserable failure at that. I prayed that God's hand would be on this and flipped twice. Once to ask if I could read the newsmagazine and once to ask if I could read the funnies. It was No each time.

I laid down on the couch, in prayer. I did not choose to rebel against those answers, but conformed to them, and simply knew in my heart that God had a better use of my time. Praising Him, I dozed for a minute or two. Then, I thought I'd like to read SOMETHING. How about the Bible? I knew they had some extra Bibles downstairs in the basement. Of course, I knew that God would want me to read the Bible, but, with relatives relaxing and talking with each other around the house, He might not want me to read it right then as that could be construed as escaping from relating with them (and loving them, or even misunderstood as showing off piety). I prayed and flipped. Yes, I could read the Bible.

I went downstairs and got one and brought it back up. Just then, Eva's mom came up to me and we began talking about her and her husband raising the five girls. I praised God with every minute that passed as we talked of some of her fondest memories and lessons learned, as well as the various Bible studies she'd been involved in.

It occurred to me that if I were in charge of my leisure time, reading whatever I wanted to, that possibly that precious conversation with Eva's mom might not have happened. I want to lay down all my time, which really isn't mine, but His. He can do so much more with me if I relinquish it.

Nature of God: I believe God wants us to relate with His children (potential as well as saved). I never did get a chance to actually read His word at that time, but Eva's mom and I had a wonderful time in the Lord. God may very well choose to have people be with each other,

hoping we would choose to share the fruit of the spirit, His love, His joy, His peace, one with the other. We will have plenty of time to study His word—especially if we aren't reading the comics or newsmagazines that lay open before us, on the millions of coffee tables around the world. Just because they print it, it doesn't mean we have to read it.

Wait on the Lord

It is so easy to rush into things. We think we know what we are supposed to do and we use our legs to run to where it is, our arms to hold it, our hands to grasp it, our mind to think of it, but truthfully, we don't really know if it is God's will that we be there to do that. This world is where we live out personal lives, lives that seem to be outside God's jurisdiction. It seems that often He doesn't give a hoot what we are doing and we give very little credence to what He is doing. This world is where we do our own thing and shout a prayer once in a while, when things go terribly wrong.

Such is not the world I want to live in. I want my world to be governed by the Lord. I want to submit my will to Him and be able to hear Him and follow His guidance. I've learned over the years that I don't know much of anything, on my own, and I'm not too proud to admit that.

I was sitting in my lawn chair at the park, thinking of these things. It seems God has given us a seed of a ministry (not about casting lots, by the way) and the tendency would be for me to force it to grow, somehow. I thought perhaps I should go out and pound on doors to say to people, "I've got a message from God. Come hear it." Maybe I should start a church, advertise it. Maybe we should make a CD with an example of Eva and me talking and singing so that we could send them to churches and be invited to speak and sing at them.

Whenever I get into a mode of self-promotion, a fatigue falls over me. I get weary even thinking about this type of thing. Nevertheless, I wanted to know whether God wanted me to jump into our ministry with both feet and self-promote all we wanted to.

I closed my eyes and prayed fervently, "What would you have us do, Lord?" Then I framed a question, as I slowly turned the quarter over and over in my hands. "Lord, do you want us to wait on You totally?"

I felt the Holy Spirit surge through my body as I submitted totally to God's will through this toss. The quarter flew up into the air, flipping over and over, and came down, catching my index finger and bouncing off it, landing on the thin arm rest of my lawn chair right next to my bottle of water, heads (Yes). I looked at the quarter, heads up, next to my water and the thought came to me, "Yes, wait on the Lord that you might have the water that Jesus promised the Samaritan lady at the well, the water that, if we drink it, we will never thirst again."

I loved that thought and attributed it to the Holy Spirit. In this phase of my life, however, I had recently established a rule that if I drop the coin, I pick it up and toss again. So, since this was dropped, I tossed again, asking if what I was thinking was God's will. Yes.

Nature of God: I love this illustration. I loved the coin tipping off my finger, landing, heads, next to my water on a thin arm rest, not bouncing off. I love God being totally in charge, setting up everything, bringing people we need into our lives, moving people we no longer should associate with, out of our lives. I loved the idea that God will bring all the people He wants to hear His message that He's given through me, when He is good and ready and my heart is pure. I loved that His answer was, "Wait on the Lord." There is no need for me to be anxious about things. In God's good time, He will bring the people we need to help us and everything will come to its fruition.

The Importance of Prayer

The topic of insurance is very controversial. What are the chances that some disaster will happen to us? Are we children of a most high God or not? Does our prayer life contribute to our safety? Can a regular faith-filled prayer time improve our odds against having bad things happen to us?

Obviously, our faith is going to be in something. Jesus urged us to have faith in Him and not to worry about tomorrow. He also said that if we try to save our lives, we will lose them but if we lose our lives for His sake, we will find eternal life. We can, in this world, have faith that if we pool our money together, when something goes wrong, we can pay ourselves money to help remedy the problem. Since faith stems from our hearts, then our heart's position in this world will be reflected by where we think our insurance lies. Is our faith in the world and its statistics which indicate what our chances are that we'll be a victim of bad fortune or is it in God and His miraculous and supernatural ways?

The world believes it is foolish to trust God radically. What do you believe?

One day, a few months ago, Eva asked me to pray and ask God if it was time for her to quit her job (especially since things were going so well and she didn't feel she'd be running from anything). That morning, prayerfully, I asked. It was Yes, Eva was to quit. Not too long after that prayerful toss, Eva gave notice and worked the final two weeks. Now, Eva was no longer a member of the "working" force. Consequently, shortly, we would not have insurance for our family. (At that time, I received a retirement income and did not have insurance). One day, we asked God (after prayers, by the usual method) whether we should get some kind of major medical insurance. The answer, to our surprise, was Yes.

Eva was offered "Cobra" which would have allowed her to keep her present insurance. However, it was over \$1000 a month. Absolutely prohibitive for us on our current income. The next day I began looking at options available to us and found the cheapest to be around \$250 - \$300 a month. Although cheaper than Cobra, still it amounted to quite a chunk of our monthly funds.

That morning, after I had researched and received this information, we lounged on top of our bed, praying to the Lord, asking why we couldn't be taken care of by His mighty hand, now

that we were working totally for Him. "Why can't we be protected by You, Lord?" These were questions from the deepest part of our hearts.

Eva was upset with God. I was, too.

Selfishly, I asked God if the insurance could be just for Eva and Kristina. I say selfishly, because if God said Yes, I knew I might be exempt from some medical disaster—the occurrence of which is inferred when God says, "Get insurance." God said No. This meant I was not exempt from medical problems. Eva said, "Well, I guess I'll have to get a new job." I thought, "Or I will."

Eva asked me to check with God later, after some prayer time, to see if one of us needed to get a job.

That afternoon, sitting serenely on one of our lawn chairs in a nearby park, I had some prayer time and asked if I needed to get a job. The answer was a surprising Yes. Okay, I thought. I asked further, should it be part time? No. I thought that meant it should be full time, but I asked anyway. Should it be full time? No. Now I was confused and told the Lord, "How can I get a job, but it not be part time or full time?" I, then, realized I was thinking from my human perspective. I was thinking traditionally. I was thinking, both in full or part time work, about the kind of work where you go to a structure where business is conducted and help them conduct that business. Suddenly, into my thoughts came this question, posed by the Holy Spirit. "What do you do?"

I didn't have to think long. "I'm a prayer warrior," I said aloud. Is this the type of job I should have? Yes. "Lord," I asked, "Are you saying that if I treat my prayer warrior time as an actual job, make sure I go to work each day, that we will be taken care of and will not have to purchase insurance?" Yes. I praised God in my heart right then.

Eva had gone home to get our daughter from the school bus and she arrived with her, just as I was wrapping up my questioning. Next, I wanted to know how much time I should spend in prayer. Two hours. No. Three hours. Yes.

My hours are flexible. I can begin early in the morning. I can break the hours up throughout the day—but I cannot miss a day of work. Before I told Eva how many hours I was to pray a day, she already had the number three in her mind. Eva told me to ask if I could have the weekends off, say, only an hour. Answer: No. So, seven days a week, three hours a day, I am to pray—as if this is a regular job.

I am actually calling this, "Making my insurance payment." It means that much to me. My prayers are more about pressing in than praying for something. (At least that was the case for my first day of work.) I also know that I am not to be listening to music or reading anything (except my Bible for brief periods of time to get fodder to pray.)

I am resting assured in the Lord, that He will take care of us. I know it.

I have begun. My first day I went to work from 4:00 AM until 7:00 AM. I'll have my Bible. No other reading, no music, just prayer. My Bible will only be for words to pray from. No leisurely reading or study, prayer only.

God made it clear that disaster, requiring the need for insurance is on the way to us if I don't take this seriously. I have.

Nature of God: I thought the complexity of the "conversation with God" was really wonderful. Isaiah says, as I've quoted many times in this book, God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts higher than our thoughts. I love it when God speaks and, initially, I don't understand something THEN, in a burst of light, suddenly it all falls together and makes sense. I loved it when God said, in the above incident, that I needed to get a job—but it was not to be full time or part time (because I was thinking of a job in the secular realm). Then, through my heart, He asked, "What is it that you do." And the answer was, "I pray. I'm a prayer warrior." Is that what you want me to do? Yes. Also, by Him utilizing our conversation about insurance and, quite literally "making" us give it serious thought, I KNEW the gravity of the situation and I knew that I'd be "going to work everyday for three hours." I call it "Making my insurance payment" when I talk with my family. In an amazing example of divine wisdom, I would not have been motivated to pray 3 hours a day unless God had coupled our insurance conversation with His request that I pray.

Additional note: The Lord had me pray for three hours a day for a little over a week. Then I started to get a message from Him in my heart to ask again. The amount of time required went down to 2 hours a day. I want to say that, having prayed 3 hours a day for a little over a week, 2 hours a day seemed like a piece of cake. I have been on this schedule for many months. I have never been absent from work, except one day when the Lord gave me a day off as I was on a mercy mission for Him. Oh, and one other day, my wife checked with the Lord and, for that day, she took one hour of my prayer time.

After many months of faithfully praying 2 hours a day, the Lord put it upon my heart to ask Eva if she'd be willing to take one hour of prayer a day (if her schedule permitted it—she was home schooling our daughter--otherwise, I'd do it). She said the Lord had been putting it upon her heart to do that and was prepared to commit to it. She has been praying 1 hour a day for over a year, and feels it is a very important part of her daily schedule now. I now pray 1 hour a day—unless, for some reason, she is unable to pray.

Please feel free to join me on a program of prayer for 1 hour a day. This is about half the length of one of Hollywood's movies, which we can sit and watch, as if in a kind of trance, and not really be concerned about the time that passes. One hour can pass, practically unnoticed in front of the television, in the evening. However, there is nothing on this earth that can take the place of our prayer-time. It is a dynamic time and we can sense a movement of God's Spirit underneath that we know will lead to incredible, life-changing events as well as give us a deep peace as our trust in Him increases and we become more aware of His love for us.

A New Guitar!

We were at our favorite local park which overlooks a major river, practicing our songs, when a man with a flyer came by. He handed it to my wife, who was just getting ready to back the car out of the parking space to get us some food. The flyer (and the man) told us there was a revival being held under a tent they had just set up in another part of the park and invited us to come. Meanwhile, I meandered over and told the man we were Christian singers. Could we sing at it?

He was quick to respond. "Sure," he said. "Come tonight! We'll work you in." So that evening I gathered up my old guitar and we went over there. My guitar, by the way, had been giving me some problems. Most particularly, one of the strings was fairly dead at times, even after putting new ones on. I'd been praying about this problem, even asking for a new guitar.

We sang three songs at the revival and were received very well. It is always fun to sing our songs to people who have not heard our songs before and this rally was a wonderful opportunity for us. After the revival that night, I talked with David, the pastor putting this on, and he asked me if we wanted to sing again sometime, throughout this two-week long event. I said we'd be glad to sing again. He pulled out a schedule and I noticed he had no special music Tuesday, the next day, so the little gears in my brain began to work, as I pondered how I could pull it off. Tuesday is the day we sing at two assisted living centers. I would have to cancel them in order to sing at the revival. It would be for a nice 20 or 30 minute set, too, which would be exciting.

Another pastor, Pastor Jane, gave us a clear message. Be sure to pray about this, before thinking of dropping a commitment we already had. I took coin in hand and stepped aside to give it over to the Lord and ask His guidance about whether we should cancel our routine assisted living center singing for this unique opportunity. The answer was No, we were to sing, as usual at the two assisted living centers. A twinge of disappointment came over me. But, we always submit to the Lord's will and I knew His hand was upon that coin and my flip.

The next day we went to the two assisted living centers. At the first place, we asked the group to join us in prayer for my guitar as it was showing the effects of its age. One lady got up to leave the group, but I didn't think too much about that. Moments later she came back with her

relatively new guitar (with hard shell case) and said the Lord had asked her to give this to me. I was shocked, speechless. It needed new strings, but was in wonderful shape. Later I heard her tell another resident that as she was sitting there, the Lord was telling her to give her guitar to me. Although she loved her guitar, her arthritis and palsy made it impossible to play it anymore. She knew that I would use it to bless many people. The new strings I put on it later, made it sound rich and beautiful. I will make good use of it both in the writing of inspired songs as well as in sharing them with all the people God leads us to.

Nature of God: I had no idea what God was planning to have happen at the first assisted living center we were to sing at the next day. When Pastor David said that the next day's special music was still needed, I felt sure we were to be the ones to do the job. I LOVED the fact that the Lord had that as a test to see if I was going to follow my own will and cancel the assisted living centers for the next day. This would have been my "natural man's" response. I was thinking that singing at this revival would have been for the Lord PLUS I could satisfy my natural man's desire to sing for a new crowd. God had a dear pastor friend, Jane, warn us, however, to pray before committing to do this.

Despite all logic, we were told No when I asked if we could change our plans and sing for the revival (which apparently needed us the next day). We made the right decision to pray about it and ask God about it. He rewarded me with a nice answer to my prayers—a new guitar. In addition, I found out God DID send someone else to provide the special music the next day, and we were given several opportunities to play throughout the revival.

Our Good Friends

Last year, during the summer months, we used to go over to Henderson Creek, a nice local state park, where we could stay, parked in our RV. Eventually we made friends with George and Esther, managers of the campground, and we began holding the Sunday church services, singing our songs and doing some preaching. We felt a tremendous friendship growing with George and Esther.

This year they decided not to return to manage the park and we missed them. Although we'd occasionally receive an email from them (from where they resided in Tennessee), that was not the same as being able to see them every week.

One summer day, Eva felt like disconnecting the RV and going to a local park for a few days. Where to go? We could choose from two lakes or go to Henderson Creek. We asked God, in the usual manner, praying that His hand be solely involved as to where we go. We asked if we were to go to either of the two lakes, our first choice, and got a No. Henderson Creek, Yes. We had wanted to go to a campground new to us, one of the lakes, but when the Lord chose Henderson Creek, we bowed our heads in thanks, knowing He was taking us there for a reason. Then we asked if we could take a friend for Kristina. Yes. Who should it be? Crystal? No. Mary? Yes.

This was a Thursday and we were planning to spend Thursday, Friday and Saturday, returning home Sunday. Mary, it turned out, wasn't available this weekend. Why would God choose someone who wasn't available, we wondered. There are times when I question my sanity at talking with God in so informal a manner as this. Am I actually getting intelligent answers from our Creator, using a coin? When things don't appear to make sense to my carnal mind, I become aware that my only other alternative is to do things from data that comes from my own limited perception. But it doesn't take long for me to realize, once again, that my way is fraught with disappointment because my flesh man taints my thinking and I am unable to see the whole picture. I believe God can see the whole picture, I believe He wants to share that portion of it that would be invaluable to making current decisions. I believe God can communicate with His children who are willing to radically trust Him. I believe His children underestimate how much God loves them, and how much of an awesome, supernatural Being God is.

I went to sing at a nursing home (which I did every week on Thursday afternoon), and Eva and Kristina stayed to get the motor home ready to travel. When I came back, Eva was getting ready to run over to Henderson Creek to reserve our space for the weekend and asked if I wanted to go along. I said, "Sure," and hopped into her car.

When we got to Henderson Creek, I told the man at the front gate that we were friends with the previous managers, George and Esther.

He pointed toward an RV and said, "They're right there."

Thinking I hadn't heard properly, I said, "What?"

He said, "George and Esther are sitting right over there." Meanwhile, Eva realized they were there and got out of the car to greet them. It was like seeing dear friends we'd known all our lives. Now we knew why the Lord chose Henderson Creek. It turned out they were only going to be there one night and had thought about us, wanting to see us but did not know how to get in touch with us. We made our reservations for the weekend and headed back to finish getting the RV ready for the short drive.

Meanwhile, since Mary wasn't available to come along as a companion for Kristina, we asked God who else we could take. Jennie? Yes. But it turned out Jennie wasn't available either. We knew Crystal was available, but God always put someone else in our minds to ask about, and saying No when we asked about Crystal. After getting the motor home ready to travel, we ran into a new snag. I tried to start it and found our battery was too low to turn over the engine. Upon examining it, we saw that there was much corrosion on it and we'd probably need a new battery. I called a friend who told me he'd come first thing in the morning to help us make a determination on the battery (can it be recharged or do we need to buy another one).

Now that we had a plan and a mechanic to help us implement it, we hopped back in the car and went back to visit our friends at Henderson Creek, and had a wonderful evening, sharing music and our constant testimony of God's faithfulness, as well as listening to their testimonies.

The next morning the mechanic came and found that the battery still had life in it. He cleaned off the corrosion and gave us a jump which started the vehicle right up. Now that we saw our original plans to take the motor home to Henderson Creek on Thursday had been thwarted, causing us to stay right where we were, we saw the wisdom of not taking a friend of Kristina's for Thursday night, as we were grounded and merely going to visit friends at the park. Now we decided to ask God if we could take Kristina's friend, Crystal, the only one we knew was home.

God said Yes. And we found out more. This was definitely a timing issue with regard to Crystal being able to come with us.

It turns out it was her birthday that day (Friday) but her mom had accidentally forgotten it and had to work. Our invitation to take her along and celebrate it at Henderson Creek, was gratefully accepted by Crystal, who never would have dreamed of going with us earlier, as she was anticipating her birthday celebration with her mom. God utilized the acceptance of the other kids (who couldn't go) as a means to stall for time, so that we would ask Crystal just when she found out her family had accidentally neglected preparing anything for her birthday. God knew our battery wouldn't work and that Crystal would be able to come along on Friday. He also knew that she would not have agreed to come with us on Thursday.

Nature of God: God can use people who can't come with us in order to stall for time so that the person that is supposed to come with us, can. What are the chances that the other two children would NOT be available so that the one who was home could go with us on the proper day? In addition, if we had just asked about Crystal, and God had said No, we would not continually badger God by asking about her again and again. God knows we have a rule that we do not ask Him over and over again about the same thing. By putting it in our minds to ask about the other girls (that couldn't go), He put Crystal on hold so that time could pass and He could put it once again on our hearts to ask about her at the right time. I know this is not earthshaking, but when things like this happen all the time, you've got to take notice and appreciate that God's wisdom will beat our meager and limited knowledge every time.

The Hollywood Church

We routinely spend some free time with Mark and Deborah at their house. My wife and Mark enjoyed severe weather patterns and, during the severe weather months, when we were at their house, those two would often be out on the back deck, staring excitedly into the distance, where an impressive thunderstorm was actively sending lightning bolts every which way. They'd be talking about other storms they had witnessed. Deborah was fearful of the storms and would be urging everyone to come down to the basement. One day, Eva asked Mark if he and Deborah would like to see some videos of great tornados caught on video-tape over the years. "That would be exciting," Mark said. Deborah looked skeptical.

The next time Eva was at her mom's house, she borrowed the videos her dad had purchased a few years before his death. We set up a time to see them with our friends. Then, when the time arrived, we were at their house, gathered around the TV, ready to watch. There were three videos (over 4 hours of footage) so we got out the popcorn and began to witness the impressive and destructive power of nature. The first video was more educational, showing how they form and clips of tornados out in the fields doing minimal damage. The second video was much worse. There was no doubt those tornados were scary things as they hung down from clouds, snaking across the landscape, wreaking havoc in fields, on barns and farmhouses, in cities, suburbs and trailer parks. The devastation was sad. One lady was very distraught as she came onto our screen, looking directly into the camera lens, she said, still in shock, "He died. The man in that trailer over there...died!" The narrator's voice-over on this video came on and stated, "He died a horrible and violent death..." As the evening wore on, and the tornados got bigger, our spirits began to sag some. Deborah had taken some medication for allergies and suddenly felt dizzy and tired, needing to go to bed. Crystal, the friend of Kristina's whose birthday we had celebrated a few stories back, was with us. She came up to Eva and began to open up to her about a drawing she was doing. She is normally a very quiet and shy girl, but Eva, caught up in the tornado footage, asked her to be quiet, as she was watching this show. Then I suddenly got very sleepy and couldn't keep my eyes open. I went into another room and stretched out on a couch. Despite all those indicators that something was wrong, we made plans that the next day, we would watch some more of this horrible footage.

In my prayer time the next morning, I began to feel anxious. Suddenly in my heart, I heard, "Would you like to ask Me whether you should watch tornados tonight?" I opened my eyes in surprise and asked aloud, softly, as I slowly turned the quarter in my hands, over and over to assure randomness, "Lord, do You want us to watch tornados tonight?" I flipped the coin. No. Okay, I thought. "Lord, do you want me to tell the others?" Yes. I called and told Mark why I wanted to cancel the funnel cloud party. Then, in my spirit I got clarification that seemed to come on its own, separate from my own thoughts.

"All of life is filled with sermons. What is being preached to you in these videos? They teach you of the finality of death and the power of random destruction. And where is My power, the power of the One who calms the storms? Is this a true message from God's Word for His dear and precious children? Should these videos be your focus?"

Nature of God: I felt the truth of this as, later on during the day, I talked to Eva. I thought of Hollywood and the amazing amount of impure preaching that is going on through the medium of the motion picture and television industry. The news media also focuses on the negative, and continually rehashes the same carnal observations over and over. And we, the congregation, kneel and pray at the foot of its idolatrous altar, begging that these disasters and broken lives and embittered spirits, not be the truth, but convinced, even as we close our eyes to pray, that these shattered lives with their disastrous consequences are the only truth there is. Their stories are being preached to us from the great Hollywood Bible of scripts in which carnality is not only a fact, but it is taken for granted that this is all our meager lives are: arenas for disaster.

Follow the Lord as we know Him, from the Word, and as we know Him in our hearts. He does not tear you apart with sad scripts that say life has no meaning. Nor does He try to fill the emptiness you feel inside with yet more emptiness and hopelessness. He offers the only answer that really fulfills our needs. Himself. He does not live in this world's carnality but, outside it. We, too, must prayerfully focus on Him that we, too, might overcome the world in the only way possible, through Jesus Christ. As we hunger to know Him and hear Him, and only Him, He will answer our questions to Him and even put the questions He wants us to ask into our hearts so that, if we desire, we might prayerfully flip the coin and physically see the truth He wants us to know!

Now You Can Pray

I'm so grateful for the Lord and His gentle ways. As I stated earlier, I learned that I don't want to badger the Lord with daily (or even hourly) requests for something that I want. There is a difference between a peaceful petitioning for something and a frantic obsession for something. I don't want to ask and ask and ask, frantically displaying my strong will to have things my way. I know Jesus said to ask and keep on asking, but I don't think He implied that we desperately seek to have our own will fulfilled.

I want my prayers to be put into my heart by the Holy Spirit, as, in this journal, I've written of situations in which He often does that. However, one day, in my prayer time, I felt a joy in my spirit and suddenly wanted to ask the Lord if I could pray for some things. I smiled, asking, "Lord, is it okay for me to pray for studio time so we could lay down some tracks of our songs?" Yes. "Lord, is it okay for me to pray for a venue for our non-fiction and fiction writing, and that it be a blessing to the Body of Christ?" Yes. I was smiling joyously as I went on. "Lord, is it okay for me to pray for a Christian sponsor, someone who is being blessed by the inspired writing and our Christian songs, and who wants to help get the word out about them?" Yes. "Lord, can I write a prayer that includes all these requests and invite Eva to join me in the prayer?" Yes.

I was feeling God's joy flowing through my heart. Four Yeses in a row! God was giving me the go ahead to pray for the desires of my heart. I believe He is beginning to open doors for us and was humbly grateful that He okayed our praying for these things.

That day, we went to a lake, having some down time. There, I told Eva about the prayer breakthrough I'd had that morning. She felt reticent about praying for specific things, however, and really wanted a prayer in which God's will was to be done instead. I nodded, knowing that was what I wanted, also. But I also felt I'd been given permission to petition for these things.

Meanwhile, I'd been having some recording problems at home and thought I'd call up our pastor (who was well versed in the program we used), and ask him some questions. The problem we were running into, during our home recording of the songs, after spending hours trying to get some good demos made, was that no matter what we tried, we could not get the microphone to work well enough. The cuts we laid down digitally, were dismally weak. When we played what we had recorded, and turned the volume all the way up, we could barely hear them. And we'd

worked practically all night laying down many tracks. It had turned out to be such a waste of time. I wondered if the pastor knew of a way we could turn up the volume and get a louder version of the songs on the computer. I thought for sure we'd need to get some sort of an amplifier and a better mike, equipment we couldn't afford to buy. I called the pastor. But it was Saturday night. I got his answering machine. He must be out or studying for his sermon he'd be giving the next day.

Eva wanted to lay a fleece before the Lord regarding praying specifically about these desires of our heart. She did not feel comfortable, this time, praying and flipping a coin.

"Okay," I said. "What would your fleece be?"

"Victor, let's ask the Lord to make it so we can record our songs and that we will be able to hear them without needing to buy any special equipment." That sounded good to me. She bowed her head and laid her fleece before the Lord.

Right after this prayer, I called the pastor again because I was going to leave a message on his machine asking him to get back with me on this question. This time, though, his son answered and, when I asked for his dad, he said he'd get him.

"Pastor Charles..." I told him of our problem. "No," he said, to my surprise. "You don't need an amplifier. Right click on the speaker in the lower right hand side of your monitor and you'll see some additional choices. One of them says Microphone booster. Maybe that's your answer."

"I'll give it try when we get home. Thank you!"

At home, I right clicked on the speaker icon, and checked the box on Microphone booster. When we recorded a song for a test, and played it back, we whooped joyfully as we listened to a nice, loud recording. The fleece that Eva had laid was answered within minutes and found to be true when we got home that night. Praise God! Now, not only did we have our microphone loud enough to record songs, but Eva was satisfied that the fleece she laid before the Lord meant she could pray the prayer of petition for the specific desires of our heart. Praise God, again.

Nature of God: I'd called the pastor, but only got his answering machine. After Eva laid a fleece, God made the pastor available to me and, incredibly, he had the answer we needed. God is very willing to answer our questions, whether by the laying of a fleece or by a prayerful flip of the coin. Our questions, however, must be about the present. He does not want us to worry about

the future or even try to determine what it is. As I stated in the introduction to this book, a divination is when objects (they can be anything from the stars and planets to the soles of our feet) are used to try and determine the future. Since God wants us dependent only upon Him, He discourages our probes into the future. Daily we must desire only Him as we go to Him in a deep and meaningful way.

All divinations, except the laying of the fleece and casting lots, are repulsive to God. He desires His children in the present moment—with Him.

Dancing in the Spirit

Eva had been hearing, and ignoring, a call from the Holy Spirit to ask which church we should go to the next day. She had been up all night working on a project for our daughter and, on this particular Sunday, wanted to play hooky from church. Surely, she thought, God will understand. But the morning, too, was pregnant with the beckoning from God's Spirit to check, first, about whether to go to church, or not, and then, if necessary, which church to go to. We were currently living a long drive away from our home church, so we often attended local fellowships that were closer to home. We love ALL Bible based Christian churches.

After a prayer of relinquishment, "Oh, Father, I thank You that You're hand is upon this coin flip. We ask You, Father God, should we go to church today-despite the fatigue Eva feels?" The coin was tossed. Yes. "We have to go, dear," I said, apologetically to Eva.

"Yes, we do," she agreed.

"Which church does He want us to go to?" I wondered aloud. I prayed, "How about the one that's 45 minutes from here? That one, Lord?" No. Prayerfully, I continued, "How about the anointed woman preacher just a few minutes from here?" Yes!

Once there, the Holy Spirit fell heavily upon Eva as she danced joyfully to the praise and worship music. The lesson was about trusting God for all of our tomorrows. We thought of our song which we'd written that had those sentiments exactly. After the service, I wanted to get in line and ask the wonderful lady pastor if we could set up our guitar and sing out in the parking lot to the people as they filed out to go to their cars. I found a corner, took out a coin and asked God, by the usual method of prayerfully tossing a coin, and He said, "No". A few minutes later, I got a fresh attitude and asked God if I could just tell the pastor that we had a new song that we'd like for her to hear—after she was finished greeting people. God said, "Yes."

When I got up to her, and explained the situation, she invited us to come back for the evening service and sing a couple of songs. "We'd be more than happy to," I explained.

That evening, we heard a message from this anointed pastor that we really needed to hear about forgiveness. We sang three songs and I was invited up to close the service with prayer, which I humbly accepted. The pastor asked us to wait a minute before we headed out. She

handed us a check for \$100.00 saying that the Lord had moved upon her to give us this much needed check.

This was all because Eva heard a beckoning in her heart to ask the Holy Spirit, through the prayerful coin toss, if we should go to church. Then, which one. Since we have taken to using this method, it has not made a mockery of our prayer life—it has increased our ability to discern which voice we are listening to—ours or the Holy Spirit's. The Holy Spirit often says to us, "Would you like to ask me about..." fill in the blank here.

In this typical example, the fruit of the prayerful tosses, was a morning and evening church service with plenty of the Holy Spirit coming down from the heavens on us, a chance to play and sing for the evening service, and an unexpected check for \$100. Was it the Holy Spirit speaking to us through the coin toss as to whether we should go and where we should go? There is no doubt about it.

Home Schooling

Our daughter, Kristina, wasn't failing school, but the school appeared to be failing her. Often children are forced to fit the mold formulated by a tired teacher who would like to teach, but instead is forced to discipline the children into proper behavioral patterns instead. We found that Kristina was unable to grasp the teacher's lessons, perhaps because she had only so much time to get the point(s) across. Then, because the homework was based on concepts that needed to be understood, when Kristina had time during the school day to work on it, she didn't understand what to do. Then she'd bring tons of homework home for us to tackle with her. Sometimes we struggled with this way into the evening and even late into the night.

One day we asked the Holy Spirit, through the usual method, if we should home school Kristina. He said Yes. We discovered that our academy, which we had formed three years ago when I had first moved to Indiana, and had attempted home schooling with Kristina, was still active. Eva, now no longer in the workforce, could devote her time to working with Kristina, one on one, with patience that I never could seem to muster. Eva was excited to prepare for Kristina's new educational procedures in which school was out at 2:00 and there would be no homework. I would even get to teach her spiritual enrichment class and music (which I did feel I have patience with).

Eva spent some time getting her lesson planning book created and obtaining the books and workbooks needed for the classroom we would be setting up in our home. We prayed about when we should remove Kristina from the school. We asked God if that should be done in two weeks. Yes. So Eva wrote an official letter notifying the principal that Kristina would be removed in two weeks so that we could home school Kristina. I delivered it the next morning.

That evening was our singing time at the assisted living center. We poured our hearts and souls out to those wonderful saints (as we did every week), singing the old anointed favorite hymns they've come to love all their lives. When we got home, we discovered that Kristina still had MUCH homework to do even though we had started on it just after school. I looked at the clock. It was 9:25 PM. If we were lucky, we'd be done with all the writing assignments by 11:00 or 11:30 PM. Then Kristina accidentally cut herself under one of her fingernails and couldn't write. I took the writing assignments and began to write for her, explaining in a note to the teacher why I was writing. Kristina was very tired, as well. She couldn't really remember much

of the Native American legend of how the porcupine got its quills. I went ahead and wrote the answers as I thought she would (if she could). It wasn't really honest but what could I do? Kristina offered to read what I had written so she could tell her teacher that she dictated it to me. This was getting way out of hand.

The last question on the worksheet was the straw that broke the camel's back. "Please write a story," the teacher said, "on how the goldfish became gold. Use whole sentences and watch your punctuation." This was a major writing assignment! We just couldn't do it. Eva and I began to have a heated discussion and Kristina felt broken and defeated. We all did, actually.

We decided we needed to withdraw Kristina from school the next day. Why, then, did the Lord approve a letter that "officially" gave her departing date as in two weeks? We did not understand God's answer. He knew we would be perplexed and defeated by the homework that night. The next morning our discussion continued, as we made plans for Kristina to attend school one last time and have breakfast there with her friends and say goodbye to them.

Sitting on our bed, Eva asked the Lord if she could write a note letting the teacher know that many children might be disillusioned with learning, if they are continually buried in tons of homework. Learning would cease to be fun. Lord, she asked, may I tell her this? No, He said.

We got Kristina off in the school bus (for the last time) and shortly I began to get ready to pick Kristina up after her farewell breakfast with the other kids in her class. I asked the Lord if I could tell the principal what was going on with Kristina's teacher and why we were removing her so soon, after we had said it would be two weeks. He said No. (I submitted to His decision, as Eva had hers, though we didn't know why He was unwilling for us to tell the facts, as we understood them, and help this teacher, in some small way, understand the damage she was doing.) At the school I told the principal that we'd discovered all our ducks were in order to begin our home schooling NOW. I told her that I'd made a call to the superintendent of the school system and there was no need to wait. She kindly said, "Please feel free to bring Kristina back anytime. We will miss her."

Why, oh, why did the Lord have us write a formal letter in which we gave a two week notice before we would remove Kristina from the school, when we would actually be removing her the next day?

Truthfully, I don't know. The reason we rely on God in this way is because we don't know anything. I have no choice, if I were honest with myself, because this world presents too

many choices and, even though it may appear obvious which choice should be made, God's choice for us may not be one of the options we even think about. We are so used to having to take care of ourselves, we don't really give much credence to God and His ability to come out of our dream of Him being unavailable to us, even as He wraps His loving arms around us and gives us wisdom not of this world, when we pray.

No, I don't really know why He set us up with such a test in which we had to come face to face with our apparent failure to keep to Kristina's proposed departure in two weeks. But remember when Eva asked the Lord if she could tell the teacher why we felt she was failing Kristina? And remember that I, too, was going to tell the principal a little of why we were pulling Kristina out earlier than expected? When each of us asked the Lord if we should pass judgment, God said No both times. We both submitted to His message through the prayerful coin flips and did not come down on the teacher, who was probably doing the best she could under conditions not favorable for her.

Nature of God: I remain ignorant to the reason God has us do things. But I do know He wants us to trust Him—and I know He wants us to stop being critical of each other and pray for others instead. In fact, my heart leapt for joy when it occurred to me that if we hadn't had been boxed into a corner and felt the need to defend ourselves and share our motivations for taking Kristina out early, we would never have been tempted to lay a judgment in order to save face. In that temptation, though, we asked the Lord if He felt we were justified in laying the cards on the table and condemning the actions of this teacher. He said No. As Jesus went to the cross for each of us, dying for our sins, so, too, must we each pick up our crosses and pray for one another instead of criticizing (or judging) one another. There is no other justice we should wish on other people other than they come to know the salvation given to each of us from the cross.

By our willingness to swallow our pride and not give the teacher a piece of our mind, I believe we passed OUR tests.

Crushed Laptop, Crushed Dreams

Someone had placed Eva's laptop computer on the floor behind the driver's seat of her car and when I moved the seat back to accommodate my larger body, I accidentally crushed the laptop, jamming it under the seat. We didn't know that I had damaged the LCD screen until Eva took it out to do some work a few days later and saw what looked like tiny cracks in the screen and two or three huge black dots obscuring the desktop.

It wasn't just the laptop that was crushed, but her dreams and her hopes. Our financial picture, at this time, was grim and there was no way we could afford to get the laptop repaired. Eva had, just recently, spent some time playing solitaire on the laptop instead of doing some intense praying she had felt the need to do. She wondered if God were punishing her for that act. Much of Eva's creativity was on that device and it was easy to see it as a rejection by God, who is sovereign, for allowing this to happen.

Before this happened, and during the time it was undiscovered, Eva had received some Christmas and belated birthday money amounting to \$110.00. She assumed that it was her money to do with as she pleased—and what she pleased to do with it, was buy a digital camera. Our previous one had bit the dust and was beyond repair. Eva wanted the camera so that relatives in California could see pictures of Kristina. Eva also knew I had a knack at taking good pictures and, quite unselfishly, she had always wanted me to have a nice camera.

The morning after Christmas, as we casually rested in bed, I overstepped my bounds and took it upon myself to ask the Lord (through the usual way) if it was okay for Eva to buy a camera. The answer I got (which brought me back to my senses) was No. Eva was taken aback by this and I was a little embarrassed that I had even asked—because it wasn't my place to do so. The next thing I did was ask the Lord if I could completely back out of the situation I had put myself in. That is, make what I did (the question and the coin toss) null and void. By the usual method, He said I could do that. Relieved, I pointed out to Eva that I was out of line to ask the question I did. She was free to do as she wanted to with her money.

Later, of her own volition, she chose to ask God: "Isn't my Christmas and birthday money mine to do with as I please?" God said No. We both felt a stirring of the Holy Spirit on this point, that in reality, none of us "owns" anything. All truly belongs to Him and it is our desire that everything be used for His purposes. So, now, Eva asked if she could get a camera and got Yes.

That evening we looked at digital cameras, but in my spirit I was not feeling excited about it and didn't even feel like committing to one in our price range.

The next evening we made the horrible discovery regarding Eva's laptop. Now Eva understood that, though she COULD get a camera, the money may be needed for something else. She then asked, "Do You mean that I can choose between getting the laptop repaired and a camera?" Yes.

The morning after that, I made a call to a National electronic's chain and discovered that repair of the LCD screen would run anywhere from \$500 to \$1000 (way beyond what we could afford). I had hoped that, since the main computer was not damaged, that the LCD screen for it would not cost all that much. My hopes were dashed. I called a local computer repair service gentleman I trusted and he said he did not feel qualified in working with laptops, but he gave me the name of a retired friend who is very proficient in laptops and very reasonable in his pricing.

I called him and gave him the model number. He said he'd check around and get back to me on this. In the conversation, though, he revealed that these screens might cost over \$300 and \$70 for labor. Still way out of our financial ability.

Eva began to think creatively about this and pondered whether a regular monitor could be used with a laptop. I called the repair man and he said that was quite feasible. Monitors only cost around \$20. I asked him about those really thin, light monitors and he said he had a few used ones and he'd be glad to sell us one at \$80. This was within the limits of her Christmas money.

Meanwhile, Eva had logged onto the Internet at home and, checking E-bay, found that someone was selling an LCD laptop computer screen that was EXACTLY her model. It was in pristine condition. It had been on the auction block for seven days and the auction was coming to a close. Bidding was at \$100. I wasn't home, on an errand, but when Eva related this to me, I called our repair man back to see if she was on the right track and how much he'd charge to install it. He said that was a very good deal and he'd only charge \$30 to attach that monitor and take the ruined one off.

Bidding was coming to a close in two hours. Though we had our regular Wednesday night prayer group, she asked whether she should stay home and bid on this. God said Yes. Before I left for the prayer group, we asked what the limit should be on bidding. I felt in my heart, \$150. Eva wanted so much for it to be \$175 or \$200, but the Lord said \$150 was to be the highest we were to bid. I assured her we'd go to plan B (the thin monitor) if she failed to win the

bid. Nevertheless, I could feel some disappointment at that limit imposed by God. (Eva, later, asked God again if He would reconsider and, again, He said No.)

Toward the end of the class, Eva and Kristina came marching in, Eva wearing a triumphant grin. Though we didn't have DSL, only dial-up, she had placed her \$150 limit in the last 6 seconds of bidding. The one she was bidding against had only gone \$10 higher, which gave Eva the win. She realized that God was NOT rejecting her creative works after all since He enabled her to get a new monitor for her laptop, so quickly and reasonably priced. She also said a prayer for the other bidder, that God place a computer monitor in his hands as easily as He placed one in hers. She got it for \$112.50. Shipping was \$15. Installing it was \$30. Eva has gotten her laptop, restored and like new, thanks to the Lord (and her Christmas money).

Nature of God: God doesn't want us to ask Him questions for someone else unless that person is in full agreement with the process and is willing to take God's sovereign answer and run with it. I should never have taken the initiative and asked that question regarding Eva's Christmas/birthday money from her mother. I am very grateful that God allowed me to withdraw the question (especially since the answer was not a pleasant one).

Often I find that my faith is lacking. God says, via the coin toss, that something is so...but I, lacking faith, have doubts and concerns about it. Invariably, it turns out, by the fruit of the experience, that God was correct all along and my doubts were unfounded. God's bidding limit of \$150 MORE than covered what was going to be necessary to win it. We didn't need to worry that it wouldn't be enough...but we did.

Another miracle manifesting from this story was that, though the repairman checked E-bay for a computer screen for Eva's laptop, and entered his query in exactly the same way, he never found the one Eva found. Had he found it, he most certainly would have added a profit margin onto it before selling it to us. This would have raised it, straining our finances even more. But, though it had been on the market for seven days, he missed it and God showed it to Eva AT EXACTLY THE RIGHT TIME (at the end of a seven-day bidding). Incredible! When the trust is in place, question after question raised to God via this method, is answered logically, leading to obviously fruitful results.

Computer difficulties

For the past few weeks I've been working on using the music site's tools and moving some huge music files up to a site where people can listen to our songs. Since I only have a dial-up modem, it can take an incredible amount of time for these files to be uploaded. I drum my fingers, scratch my nose, turn away then suddenly turn back to the monitor in hopes that a time warp will have occurred and...but I jest. Suffice it to say, it is very frustrating to wait.

Then a new wrinkle in the fabric of my file moving occurred. After trying to upload a huge file, at the very end of the process, suddenly there would be a note: "Your file failed to upload. Please try again." It can make one very upset—make one want to pray that God would lift the burden.

I discovered that there was another way to get the file over to this music site. If I were to upload my big files onto my website (by my FTP—file transfer protocol), I would then be able to quickly move them to the music site by a method they call "slurping." It just takes a few minutes because the file is moved from server to server, which makes the transfer very fast.

There was a snag, though. I sometimes had technical trouble with my FTP. It sometimes worked, but lately it would fail to get my files uploaded to my site. Now, since I was going to be uploading the big music files up to my website, I really needed my FTP to work. But, as I said, it wouldn't connect to their system. I called the people hosting my website to ask why my FTP wasn't connecting to them. I called many times, but they could find no reason why it wasn't connecting. After about the 3rd call, I finally understood why they couldn't help me. Since they could easily get onto my site, they didn't have an error that they could then fix. Since they couldn't duplicate my error, it had to be something that was happening on my computer, not their system.

I needed God to help me, here. I was in computer geek hell. My computer was saying that **they** were refusing to allow connection to their site, but they were saying the problem was in my computer. I pray frequently. I decided to take this problem into prayer with me and let God take the burden from me. It was too frustrating for me. I had tried downloading a couple of different FTP programs—and finally I found one that worked—for a while, then it quit on me. I kept praying, kept giving it over to the Lord. I did not want to be flung into the depths of mental anguish by this machine.

I decided to peacefully give up. It simply was not worth my time to keep trying to work on it. On Saturday morning, though, I got an idea to maybe try a service that is available on the Internet where they will fix your computer by remotely accessing it. It was \$90.00 for an hour. I wondered if I should do that. I prayed, "God, I do not know what to do here. I know that your hand is on this coin flip. I will do Your will, God. Do you want me to use this service?" No, He said. Okay.

I had an errand to run in town so I hopped in my car to go do it. On the way back from this errand, the idea popped into my head to visit a small computer shop in Brandenburg. Do You want me to do that, Lord? I prayerfully flipped a coin. Yes.

I drove straight past my RV and headed into Brandenburg, parked in front and walked in. There was one other man in front of me and he motioned me to go ahead of him. Before I started, the man behind the counter said that this man who had motioned me to go ahead, was also a computer expert. I told them both my sad story.

The man behind the counter was the owner of the shop and he gave me some simple advice. He said I should run a ChkDisk program. I hadn't done that in a long time and I knew that it should probably be done. I asked him if I should run it in DOS because that was the only way I knew how to do it. He said, "No. You need to run it within the Windows program or it won't fix the problem." He then told me how to get to the right screen so that this could be done.

I went home and ran the Chkdisk program, which took about an hour. My file transfer program is working perfectly now. My anguish was given to God. My answer came from God as well. He said, through the coin toss, that I shouldn't buy that computer repair service on-line. Later, He dropped into my heart, through His Holy Spirit, that I should go visit the man in Brandenburg. I confirmed it by prayerfully tossing a coin and getting a Yes. Despite appearances that the company who hosts my website was at fault, it turned out to be my problem after all.

I had joy in my heart when the program began to work. I do not believe I was all that excited in my file transfer program's revival. I was more excited to see that my God is a loving and caring God who has all the answers I need, right now!

Nature of God: I was slowly being burdened by this computer problem. When I had first gotten into computers, many years ago, they used to bring me to the point of depression. My heart would literally sink to the floor when things went awry. Now, many years later, I didn't want that feeling of despair. I knew my God would help me and give me everything I really

needed. What if I didn't really need to get those large music files up on that site? Why should I fight what God has planned? Why are my plans so important? No, I'm not going to battle God's will any longer. I want God's will, not mine. And what God wills DOES happen, so why should I worry?

God inspired me to be at peace, knowing He was in charge. Then He inspired me NOT to buy that computer service. Shortly thereafter He gave me the name of a person He wanted me to talk to. Once there, I discovered I had two people who could help me. I then received the guidance I needed to get the glitches out of my computer, for it was MY computer that had the problems, not the company that hosts my website. And these computer experts did not charge me anything for their advice.

We have an awesome, awesome God!

Mowing the Lawn

Such a mess! We had neglected Eva's house, since her son had gotten married and moved out. It was a house that still had a lot of his things scattered throughout. He was a young man of many projects and activities. Housekeeping hadn't been a priority. He wasn't lazy, just always over-extended.

I had volunteered to mow the yard. What I didn't know was that the grass in the backyard was up to my waist. We found a gasoline push mower that had potential (there were three of them there, but two of them were not functional at all). We eventually got one to run after switching out one of the spark plugs from another mower. That evening, as I pushed the mower into the jungle of grass, my back got plenty of exercise. I had to lower the handle, which raised the mower, and come down on this tall grass, in an effort to chomp away at it.

The hot September afternoon took its toll on me and, having only tackled a small portion of this jungle, I turned off the mower, knowing I'd be back to finish the job the next day. In addition, having finally gotten it started, I assumed it would start easily the next day. I was wrong.

It was mid-afternoon when we arrived to continue working on the house. Eva was going to work on the inside, while I planned on whacking down the jungle growth in the backyard. First, however, she was going to help me start the mower. She pushed the rubber primer button on the gas tank three times per mower instructions so that gasoline would flow into the parts of the engine it was supposed to. I pulled the starter cord about fifteen times, then five more times. It didn't sound even close to turning over. Eva got some carburetor spray to assist in the starting of the mower and sprayed liberally. I pulled that cord another 15 to 20 times. Nothing. Neither of us could understand this because it ran very well just yesterday.

I checked the gas. There was still half a tank. Then I checked the oil. I put some in but it wasn't dry either. We were both frustrated. When frustration hits me, I go to God. It is at this time I need God's powerful supernatural intervention.

Eva was overwhelmed with the work the old house needed, as well as roof leak issues. I noticed a spirit of despair begin to come over her and suggested we remember Joshua's overcoming by having his army walk around the walled city of Jericho seven times. I suggested we walk around the house seven times. She agreed, adding that we should praise God as we

walked the seventh time around. As we prayed to our Almighty God each time we walked around, we began to notice a lifting of our burden. The seventh time around was filled with praise to God and I felt the tears well up as I praised Him.

We sat down on the edge of the wooden porch to gather our thoughts about what to do. Wanting only to do God's will, I took a coin out of my pocket as Eva phrased the question: "Lord, God, we want to do Your will. Do you want us to attempt to start the mower again?" I flipped the coin. Heads (yes).

We got up and slowly walked down to the back yard where the mower sat waiting for us. I voiced my opinion that even if the mower didn't start, I wanted to acknowledge God's hand in this whole thing. As we walked down, I also considered that if we had inadvertently flooded it, by this time it would have started when I pulled the cord. I pulled the cord again many times with no results. She sprayed her carburetor spray, but to no avail. I muttered, "I accept that." I knew in my heart that, no matter what, I was going to do the will of my Almighty God. I just didn't know what that was.

Continuing our prayers and, with coin in hand, we began to ask some very pointed questions: What do you want us to do, Lord? Shall we take it and try to get it fixed? No, a prayerful coin toss revealed. Shall we buy a used mower? No. (Financially, we could not afford one.) Should we buy a new mower. No (Thank you, God, we could not afford a new one, either.) Do you have an alternative for us to do? Yes. I wondered, aloud, "What could the alternative be?"

Just then, Eva felt an urge that she attributes to the Holy Spirit. She suddenly felt God's power surge through her as the thought went through her mind, "It just worked last night. It should work! I refuse to accept that this mower won't start!" She moved over to the lawnmower as I pulled the cord. It sputtered. I pulled again. It started.

We praised God. I thought about what had just happened as I slowly mowed down that high grass and felt God's peace, as well as a certain excitement. God had spoken to us once again, through our sincere and prayerful coin toss. He had said No to all the questions we had asked about repair and replacement of that mower. He had said Yes to an alternative. We determined later that the "alternative" was this: "Go ahead and do what I told you to do when you were on the front porch after your Joshua/Jericho walk: Go ahead and start the mower. I will give you your faith."

Nature of God: He was with us throughout this ordeal. God used this mower incident to reveal the power of faith, a gift He had given to Eva and myself. Without faith, we cannot do God's will. Jesus said, often, "Oh ye of little faith" when He confronted someone who felt they could not do something, or heal someone. When Eva felt God's spirit surge through her, God's spirit gave her a thought: That mower should start! That was when it did start. All other times were only leading up to this one, faith-filled time.

About 1/3 of the way through, I ran out of gas. Eva had gone into town to get some so I had it when the fuel ran out. I put some in and it started right up. That evening, I got the entire jungle in the back of the house mowed down and then took the mower to the front of the house, where I finished the job. Thank you, Lord.

It wasn't a parting of the Red Sea, it wasn't a raising from the dead, nor was it water turned into wine. It was simply the starting of a lawnmower that didn't appear to want to start. But, with our sincere prayers, and the movement of God's spirit through us, God showed us that He cares for each little (and big) thing that happens to us.

To End Disputes

Now that we were home schooling, our weekdays were quite different for us. Where before we used to get Kristina off to catch the school bus so we could get started on our writing projects, now we scurried to get a few things done before the school day began and we prepared to spend the day with Kristina, working with her to instill both the academics she needed, mixed sufficiently with instruction from God's word and the truth of Christ indwelling in our hearts.

What had been a persistent and gnawing problem in our marriage made itself apparent one morning during school. Kristina was frequently angry with her mother (the teacher) and I was slipping back into a kind of New Age attitude in which I want to kind of offer an incomplete nurturing, a nurturing devoid of discipline. In addition, I was guilty of standing up for Kristina's behavior, rather than showing a unity with Mom and standing up firmly for her. I was aware something was going wrong, I was not aware of all that I was doing. I felt Mom's sense of oppression and called for a meeting with her, separate from Kristina. This is not the easiest thing to do when we live in (and hold school in) our 35 foot RV.

We closed the door to our bedroom in the back, which actually consists of opening the bathroom door, and then we stretched out on the bed. The first thing I asked the teacher was, "Do you want me to leave for a while, so you can be free from my interruptions?"

"Victor, if you want to avoid standing up for me, go ahead and leave for a while. I feel like shutting down school for the day the way she is mouthing so much negativity."

"I don't want to leave, I want to do what God wants me to do. I understand that you want me to completely back you and not try to defend her negative behavior. Is that right?"

"Yes, that is right," she said, looking at me with tear-filled eyes.

"Do you mind if we ask God if I should back off from my 'New Age' attitude of non-discipline?"

"No, go ahead," she said.

I rephrased the statement into a question prayerfully this way: "Dear God, do you want me to let go of my attitude which defends Kristina's behavior, and seems to argue with Mom?" I flipped the coin. It landed on the bed tails, (No), then quickly flipped over to heads (Yes).

I submitted to that aloud. "Darling, God wants me to stop defending Kristina and fully back you..."

She broke down in joyful tears and hugged me. I, too, had eyes that filled with joyous tears. Within, I prayed that the Lord would help me fully back Mom at all times as she worked with Kristina's education and behavior.

Without having a conference with Kristina, class resumed. The new attitude of Mom and Dad (teacher and principal), was already in the classroom and, interestingly, no disciplinary action was required for Kristina. She remarkably, became compliant and teachable on her own, after our meeting in which we called on God for instruction as to what I needed to do.

What an awesome God we have. He CAN speak to us in this way of prayerfully flipping a coin. He wants us to use this whenever we have dissension growing within us. He wants both parties to agree that God can (and does) speak to us in this way. He knows that when two parties agree that they will abide by God's ruling, and they prayerfully seek God's ruling, that many arguments will cease and much more harmony will ensue. See Proverbs 18:18:

**To cast lots puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders.
(AMP)**

The Lost Weekend

Friday evening we received an invitation to come to a local church where a Messianic Jew was speaking on David. We could either go Saturday evening or Sunday morning. We asked God, in the usual way by prayerfully flipping a coin, if He wanted us to go. The answer was Yes. Both Saturday evening and Sunday morning breezed by as we were recording some of our songs on our computer at home. We ignored God's leading. We didn't go to church.

I really can't tell you why we did this. I have no excuses. During that same weekend, we asked God in the usual way, prayerfully flipping a coin, if we were to go to a friend's wedding in a large city nearby. God's answer was Yes. Go! We thought of many reasons why we didn't want to go. Lots of traffic was expected in that area due to a special activity (other than the wedding) that was taking place nearby. It would be frustrating. Eva had a sore toe that required she wear old shoes which she had cut open (which are not fashionably correct). Also, we really didn't have appropriate clothes.

After weighing all of the negatives, we didn't go. Why, then, did we ask God about it? Good question. Sunday afternoon, we asked God something (in the usual way) and got gibberish (meaning that in two or more coin flips, the answers were not gelling, not making sense). Gibberish, when it is related to prayerfully flipping a coin, happens for numerous reasons. One reason is that God wants us to wait on Him rather than proceed at that time. But another very important reason is if we are being rebellious and disobedient. That was our case. We were sure of it. We truly felt He had turned His face away from us. And we knew we deserved it. We felt ashamed.

At first, I thought I was innocent, merely allowing Eva to have her way in not going to these events. But then I realized I was deluding myself. I had encouraged her to ignore God. I was Adam, playing Eve, tempting her to stay home and work on the songs. She was Eve, playing Adam, biting into my delicious, rebellious fruit.

For the next four days, we knew God loved us (as He always will) but we had abused our willingness to trust Him radically (via this prayerful coin toss method) and we felt His absence. We did not even feel comfortable tossing a coin prayerfully during this

time. We truly missed our God, who does care for us and even wants to be involved in our entire decision making.

We discussed this and began to list the reasons we loved prayerfully flipping coins to get God's answer: We each missed the joy that comes into our hearts when God allows us to eat out or go see a particular movie. We also missed Him saying No, when we really needed Him to say that. We missed the wonderful conversations we had had with Him that occurred in multiple prayerful coin tosses (in which His wonderful logic was displayed) and then, when we followed His direction, we appreciated the results, which bore fruit that could only come from God. We really missed all of that. Every morning, I knew that God allowed me one coin toss to see if we could communicate with God in this way again. Every morning, it was No. This went on for three mornings.

On the third evening, after my prayer time in which tears of contrition and remorse slid down my cheeks, I told Eva that I felt He was going to allow us to use this method again the next day. Indeed, on Thursday morning when I asked the Lord if we could resume using this method full time, it was Yes. We had learned our lesson (hopefully, so it stuck). We began asking questions of our Lord and Savior again, in this method, and, indeed, although He never left us, His face was turned toward us again as we resumed this method fully.

This story illustrates that we are not to take our conversations with God (in this manner) for granted. We are not to ask and not heed what He tells us. He does not give us His direction lightly. We have been praying to meet the right person who might sponsor us in getting our music professionally recorded. What if He had planned that we meet someone at that wedding? Or at that church service? Indeed, God does set up situations in which we meet people, as illustrated in the next story.

Meeting at McDonalds

One of our songs was being used by my cousin, Kermit Zarley, who had written a book entitled, Third Day Bible Code. He had asked us to write a song for his book (which he had invited us to read before publication) and God inspired us with "On the Third Day."

Kermit wanted to include this song in his publicity, actually inviting some of the media to listen to a copy of the song, which he was going to include with the book as part of a press release. He had even paid a musical genius friend of mine to add harmonies and other instruments to our semi-professional, crude home recording of the song. Dean Kaelin, out of Salt Lake City, UT, did a marvelous job.

When it comes to the computer (specifically, the process of putting a file onto a CD), I find my little know-how was helpful to Kermit, because he had no know-how at all. In that I had demonstrated my "expertise" by telling him, one time, that you had to actually go into the program before you could put a recording of a song onto a CD, he looked up to me as someone who had much to offer him, in the way of working a computer, anyway. He laughed when I told him over the phone one evening that I didn't even want to know how he had been attempting to get a song onto a CD.

Anyway, that is how I got the job of communicating with Disk Faktory in California and making sure the 100 CDs (each with only the one song on it) that Kermit was ordering, be done properly. Disk Faktory reps told us that the song was not properly recorded, that there was too much clipping and distortion, and that the song needed to be turned down a little. In addition, it needed to be turned into a WAV file. Although Dean said he would help, he must have been out of town because I was getting no response from my emails or phone calls. So one morning, using Adobe Audition which is a professional song editing program I had purchased, I pulled that song up and miraculously turned it down so that it didn't clip (or go over the lines indicating distortion). I also discovered how to turn it into a WAV file and discovered, when I burned it onto a disk, that it was still a WAV file, to my amazement. Then I drove to the post office with the plan that I would send it overnight to Disk Faktory. My family was hungry so I was also going to go to McDonalds and pick up some breakfast for us.

After driving to the post office, and parking, I got this strong urge to ask God if I was to mail this disk. It seemed like the right thing to do, so I was reticent about checking with the Lord, but I took out a coin and prayerfully asked. The answer was No, don't send it. I asked another way, since I had left a message for Dean that we needed this mastering done on the song, I wondered if he had done it already, and had sent it? "What if I put a note, 'In case Dean's remake doesn't get to you right away.?' " After prayerfully flipping a coin, God said No, don't send a note along either. Not understanding, but willing to follow God's will, I shoved the disk into the glove compartment, drove out of the parking lot to McDonalds.

I went in to order breakfast for the family. Before it was my turn to order, someone tapped me on the shoulder. It was Hank with the Christian Motorcycle Club. He is a wonderful, down to earth, preacher and someone whom we respect and admire. We laughed with each other and asked how our families were doing, shared some of our projects, and generally praised God together for a short time. It was a meeting that only God could have set up.

As I was walking out of McDonalds with my breakfast bag, I heard the Lord tell me (through my heart) to ask Him again about mailing that disk. I prayerfully flipped a coin. God said Yes. And I asked if I should put a note in there about Dean's disk possibly coming. God said No.

After breakfast with the family at home, I drove back to town and mailed the disk. God had had His way and had set my priorities that morning.

Nature of God: The coin did not have a side that said, please go to McDonald's first. I have someone I want you to touch bases with. Then you can come back and mail this disk. He could only use the limited way I had of talking with Him. He put in my heart to ask Him about mailing the disk and when I did, He said No. I didn't know it was a temporary No, but, confused, I followed His guidance and went to McDonalds for the meeting He had set up for me. THEN, praise the Lord, He had me go back to mail the disk. As it turned out, due to other commitments, Dean had not prepared a re-make of the disk and the one I sent was exactly what was needed for the project in order to make deadline with regard to Kermit's publicity campaign.

God is able. He is able to use the limited way we have of communicating with Him to actually get what He deems important, done. God is able, He is true, He is real, He is aware of where we should be at any given time. Walk this earth with joy on your face, always anticipating the wonders of God. He will tell you as much as you allow Him to. Learn to hear Him.

Additional Note: Hank called a few weeks later (because of our McDonald's meeting) and invited us to a special get together of many of the Christian motorcycle club members. We went and had an anointed time with them, singing songs that uplifted their souls and fellowshiping with them to the glory of our Heavenly Father. It reaffirmed the divinity of a Holy Spirit inspired coin flip. It showed, also, that God loves to speak to our hearts and then challenge us with the coin flip so that we can truly understand it was He to whom we were listening.

Another Angel Shove and a Nudge from the Holy Spirit

Last week we asked the Lord if we could make plans to go to the Messianic Temple in a large city, nearby. We wanted to go on their Sabbath day, Saturday. We knew Kristina would be camping with her step-brother, Nathan, and his wife so it looked like the perfect set up. God said No. We were perplexed about that, but accepted His answer.

Friday afternoon, we had decided to go to Blue Creek on a church camp-out while Kristina went camping. We were asked to bring my guitar and sing some of our original numbers. We'd been there one other time and Blue Creek was great once you got there. There was a large tree limb that hung out over the creek and someone had tied a rope on the end of it so we could hold onto that rope and swing out over the creek and let go. What fun!. But, getting there was quite a bumpy and treacherous journey over dirt paths with huge ruts. It took some talent to drive in-between the ruts. It would have been better to have a 4-wheel drive.

We initially only wanted to stay the evening and return home, but we had brought the tents just in case. As it turned out, we sang joyfully into the night, blessing the cicadas and crickets and frogs back with our inspirations. Since we did not want to try and negotiate the treacherous dirt roads out of the camp at night, we hunkered down until morning. I arose early to tackle some of my prayer-time. I noticed some thunder in the distance and had felt a few drops of rain now and then.

We were planning to have breakfast with the only other family there but I began to feel a stirring in my spirit to get a move on. It looked like it could rain. Eva took the outer and inner tents down and packed them into the car. I checked with the Lord about whether we should go or stay for a while, and, despite my hunger for the breakfast they were going to fix, got a Go from the Holy Spirit. In addition, I felt inspired to move a little faster on the packing up process. We had a quick prayer together and we headed off through the light rain, hoping to get over those ruts before they became mud and impossible to maneuver.

While still on the most treacherous part of the now muddy road, the rain began to beat heavily on our car roof. Obviously, the road became very slippery and very difficult to

maneuver. Eva, who was driving, was feeling greater and greater concern, wondering whether we would be able to make it to the paved road.

We came to a Y in the road. We knew that either road would get us out of the precarious situation, but which one would be best? Eva asked me to ask God. I found a coin, trusted in Him with all my heart, and asked Him which we were to go. By a prayerful coin flip, he had us go to the right.

Here, if it was possible, the road got worse. We were sliding more than we were going forward. One rut caused our tires to slip so badly, our rear was rapidly heading off the road to the left. I prayed aloud, "We need another angel shove." At that instant, Eva's foot was not on the accelerator, but we both felt a supernatural push which, not only stopped the rear from going all the way off the road, possibly getting totally stuck, but the shove gave us the momentum to get out of this last, deep rut. Though there was a little more rough riding to do, we were basically home free after that Godly shove.

Once we were out onto the main paved road, we could relax. Eva was concerned for Kristina's safety out there, camping with her brother and his wife. "What if a storm like this one came up?" she wondered. Even though it was a two and a half hour drive out to the campsite, Eva wondered if we should go. I was looking forward to listening to music with Eva at home or, otherwise, taking it easy. But we asked the Lord—and surprisingly, He said to get out to the campsite. Did we need to bring Kristina home? Yes. Did we need to go now (with no breakfast, no shower, no teeth brushing?). Yes.

Eva looked sorrowfully at me. "I need to tell you something," she said, in a voice that reminded me somehow of Jonah, trying to avoid Nineveh. "Kristina was really looking forward to this camping trip with her brother and I.." she stopped and sighed, "I just couldn't bring myself to ask God if she should go. I knew it would really be disappointing if the Lord said, No. So, though the Lord put it through my heart many times to ask Him, I never did. Victor, I couldn't sleep much last night, worrying about what I did by not checking with the Lord. Have I possibly jeopardized Kristina's safety by my refusal to check with Him? I think that is why He is asking us to get over there. I am really sorry I didn't check with God."

I comforted her, "It will be okay," I said.

We pulled into a convenience store parking lot. We were both hungry and grungy, not having had a shower since yesterday. Once Eva confessed what had been eating at her all this

time, and apologized to the Lord for not checking with Him, we asked if we still needed to go to the campsite and bring Kristina home. Through a prayerful flip of the coin we got Yes. We asked God if we could go into Corydon and stop at her son's vacant house to shower and freshen up first as well as grab a quick bite to eat. Yes.

So after cleaning up and a nice breakfast, we drove the 2 ½ hours to the campsite and found, when we'd gotten there, that a distraught Kristina had been ravaged by chiggers in the previous night and was very anxious to go home. In addition, her son's boat sank in the lake while we were there and Eva chose to dive in to help him and his friends drag the canoe to shore. That night, Kristina, in her cozy bed in the RV, and medication on the bites, Mom and Dad by her side, praying for her, tears rolled down her cheeks in joy at the recognition that God loved her—and He even talked to Mom and Dad and had them drive all that way up there to bring her home.

Nature of God: We check with the Lord as often as we can think about it. Often, as with Eva, the Holy Spirit urges us to ask. Although one might think that casting lots (or flipping a coin) would make us less dependent on God and more dependent on "luck," that is not the case. Every time we prayerfully flip a coin, we are praying that we be totally dependent on God, not ourselves. When we do this, He frequently speaks to our souls, clarifying things that confirm a correct answer from the prayerful coin flip. We have found, incredibly, that we are more tuned to God's Voice in this world, than we were before we discovered (or should I say re-discovered) this prayerful flipping of the coin. It is a re-discovery because I first learned about it in God's Word.

Eva had plenty of remorse about not checking with the Lord about this camping trip. God repeatedly told her, through her heart, to please check with Him about this camping trip for Kristina. Though Kristina might have been disappointed in not going, should the Lord have said No, in retrospect, would she have preferred not to go if she had known that chiggers were going to attack her so viciously? Also, had Eva prayed and gotten God's permission to send Kristina, might there have been an extra shield of protection around Kristina, that night? Would they have camped in a slightly different area, avoiding the nest of chiggers that they may have set the tent up on? These are questions worthy of consideration. We HAVE seen supernatural help provided when we asked God and He said Yes through this method. Indeed, often with that reverent flip, almost coming as a package with it, comes God's grace and mercy (and sometimes a little divine

help to get us out of the situation.) One tremendous benefit we receive from checking with God is a great peace in our hearts because we fully trust in His answers to us.

And, of course, we now knew the reason we got a No on going to the Messianic Temple that Saturday afternoon. God was going to have us on a rescue mission, bringing our itchy daughter home early from her camping trip.

My Time Share Experience

As promised in the introduction of this book, I want to share the one incident in which utilizing the tossing of the coin has led to an apparent negative situation in our lives. It involved the purchase of a time-share. Let me relate this story from the beginning as well as state that God is still working with us on this. Regretfully, I still own the time-share in question.

Our financial situation had been, from the beginning of our marriage five years ago, until now, a time of relying heavily on credit. Even though it seemed some of this couldn't be helped as we supported two homes, one for us and one for Eva's son who was going to college, I was still guilty of a certain prideful, self-sufficiency which manifested as living beyond my means. I had enough of a good credit history to merit many credit cards and earned enough monthly to be able to meet the minimum required payments. I always felt that God would rescue us financially—and knew that it would probably be at the last minute.

One day, on the Internet, I received an invitation to visit a place in Orlando, Florida, to go on a tour of a time-share property and just for doing this, I would receive two tickets to Disneyworld as well as two nights in a nice hotel. It seemed like a good deal to me. I knew we could go to this sales presentation and not buy a time-share. We had just sold some property, paying off some credit card debt, and had a fresh slate to work with on one of our credit cards so we packed up our silver Toyota Camry and off we went. I had even checked with God beforehand, about whether we should go on this trip and got a Yes.

Once there, we checked in and the next day we went to the presentation. I knew that God would supply our needs and that we did not need to get a time-share. I explained this to Eva but at one point she asked me if I had asked God about buying a time-share. I hadn't. I excused myself and went to the restroom where I did ask God if we should get a time-share and, surprise of all surprises, got a Yes.

Meanwhile, Eva was telling the sales person that we were not going to get one, but when I came back, I knew we were going to do this. I took Eva aside and told her what God had said and a wonderful joyous feeling came over her which she felt was a confirmation of God's love for her and a promise that He was going to financially bless us. That day, we purchased a time-share for \$8000. This was with money we did not have. It was a time-share in which we were

allowed to use the property for one week every other year, but with it came bargain prices and unlimited stays at resorts. During the closing, the finance lady told us her husband, a pastor used his privileges to bless members of his church. We envisioned holding seminars and inviting small groups to come to the nice property (in whatever city we were camped) and enjoy the teachings that God had given us to share. What a wonderful environment this could be, we dreamed!

Though time-shares seem to be a cash cow for some people I've talked with, for us it was a disaster. I had taken on an incredible additional debt of \$8000. God did not see fit to bless us with an actual ministry yet, so we had no occasion to hold these wonderful teaching seminars we envisioned. When I saw that this time-share was not going to be much value to us, I tried to sell it, but a friend in the business told me I'd be lucky if I got pennies on the dollar for it.

First of all, let me say that this experience has been a challenge to Eva's faith. Not so much that she never uses this method anymore in hearing God and communicating with Him, but it has caused her to seriously question whether the material in this book ought to even be released to the public. She feels some who trust God and utilize this method might somehow get burned and, consequently, lose their faith in God. Or, conversely, some people might abuse this process and worship the coin flip, becoming dependent upon it rather than becoming completely dependent on God. It might seriously harm a "babe in Christ" (a new Christian) who may decide, after an experience similar to ours, to take up secular humanism and worship "rationalism" rather than even consider that we live in a supernaturally created universe and are supernatural creations ourselves, whom God loved so much that He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for.

I remember, though, as I review this whole situation in my mind, that it is biblical that God sends His precious children into precarious situations to expose ungodliness, sinful ways, and evil situations. God may, through the flip of a coin, choose to send us into Nineveh, where we are to cry out, "Repent!" Or we may, ourselves, be inclined to call out, "We repent!" We could choose to save our lives and not go anywhere or do anything, but the Lord does say that we are not to try to save our lives or we will lose them. We must not be fearful of taking risks for the Lord and, in this sincere desire, we may do what initially appears to be stupid things that we truly think are the right things to do. But, I ask you, if our heart sincerely wants to follow God's leading, how can this, ultimately, harm us? The Bible constantly asks us to trust God and the

church leaders piously urge us to trust God—BUT not THIS much, they say as they shake their heads and point fingers at lot casters. Trust Him with all your hearts but don't be foolish and flip a coin to get His will on a matter. I'm sorry, but that is limiting God's Word and limiting God, Himself.

The true Christian must desire to take the light into the darkness. Our lights (God's light in us), will shine amazingly well in our protected and well defended environment, but the test is, will it shine when we visit the dark corners of the world where the light is truly needed? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not saved *before* they were thrown into the fiery furnace—but *after*. Daniel was not delivered from the lion's den *before* he was to be made a midnight snack, but *after* the fact. It was the witness of these four faith-filled men that turned pagan heads toward the Lord and still encourages us today as we read the Word. Not all the Christian stories have happy endings like those stories found in the book of Daniel. There will be many Christians meeting verbal attacks and even death and their bodies will be strewn along this understandably rarely trodden path toward complete trust in our almighty God. Nevertheless, we must walk boldly in faith. We must never lose sight of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And, if we make mistakes, we will just have to trust in God that much more so that He can rectify our errors. In any case, living a life of radical trust in God is most certainly NOT living a mundane existence in which we try to keep things stable, using all of our creative energy to stay out of trouble. If we keep our focus on the Lord, trusting Him in all things, we will grow closer to Him, even as our lives appear to disintegrate before us. It is the mundane life that must die. We can't show the world the power of the Lord while we are sitting in our armchair, channel surfing. Yes, the mundane life must die! And it will! But be sure to grab the Hand of the Lord so that you are led properly into His greater life and His greater way.

Sure, I want to be comfortable just like everyone else on this planet, but true Christianity is not defined as a religion of comfort on this earth. Trials and tribulations do happen, especially to Christians. If everything is hunky dory and your life is filled with prosperity and your church preaches total happiness and joy and teaches that you can get everything you desire, run as fast as you can from that church and find a church that preaches the truth. More often than not, we need things that, to our limited way of thinking, would be undesirable (even painful).

Most definitely I have whimpered about that coin flip in the restroom a few years ago to the Lord. And most certainly I have been disappointed to see my wife lose heart. Nevertheless, I

can't help but look at this amazing journal of casting lots and see all of the stories of the sequences of flipping coins in which a sincere inquiry was made of God, and I am amazed at how nearly every one of them, eventually, made sense and drew me closer to God. This one, however, seems to be a longer operation.

Nature of God: Over the past few days, I've been pondering my time-share purchase and God's hand on that coin flip. This morning, supernaturally (by randomly opening the book to the very page), I was led to Judges 20:18-28. Reading that, I saw that the Israelites, using the lot, were given permission to fight some battles in which they LOST. It was the third battle that God gave them victory. Thanks to the audio Bible commentary of Jon Courson, regarding this passage, I truly feel this part of God's Word deals with my situation. I will paraphrase Judges 20:18-28 now.

A civil war is raging between the eleven other tribes of the Israelites and the Benjamites. The Benjamites do not want to give up the ruthless murderers who had raped a man's concubine, killing her. The other tribes say that the murderers must be executed. Casting the lot, (as is indicated in Judges 20:9), it was determined that the tribe of Judah would be the first to engage the Benjamites. The first two battles were disasters for the prideful and confident Israelites—despite the fact that by consulting the lot, God had told them to go ahead into battle. God had, then, actually directed them into losing battles but, God knew the Israelites' hearts. They were prideful and not relying solely on Him. Before the third day (and third battle) however, a change took place in the hearts of the Israelites. They became humble, weeping and fasting, as well as offering up burnt offerings and being ministered to by an actual ancestor of Aaron, brother of Moses. They totally submitted to God and this time, when they cast the lot, God told them, (in my opinion, through both the lot and the Holy Spirit), that He was going to give the Benjamites into the hands of the Israelites. And, indeed, that is what happened through some very clever maneuvering of the troops.

At the time I cast the lot in that restroom in Florida, I was no where near any repentance for all the credit cards I was living on. It would take a few more years before I humbly came to the Lord with a desire to be free from credit card debt. I strongly believe that, just as the Israelites were prideful as they got permission from God to fight the Benjamites the first two times (losing badly), I was given permission to buy the timeshare though it would lead to tribulation. God knows our hearts. On the other side of that tribulation and pain, lies a more pure

heart willing to submit to God and a freedom that is far better than anything a credit card could purchase. God purchased my ultimate freedom from sin through His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross and it was not done by credit card. It was a direct deposit that, humbly, I can bank on! This is what I humbly bank on, now, as I pray daily for God to continue delivering me from my reliance on credit cards. I know the truth, that I am free. I am just waiting for my life to catch up with what I know now. I am sorry that my wife had to take some heat for my sin of relying on credit instead of God. The Bible shares numerous stories of sinning men whose entire families were slain with them (see Daniel 7:24, 2nd Chronicles 21:14, and Numbers 16:27-32 for a few of them). I truly regret my straying from the path.

Eva's Note: The jury is still out of me on the time share. It has worked for our good in that Victor is careful to not rely on credit. I agree, I should have never asked Victor to ask God on something that is a "no-brainer". We should question a cast of the lot when it conflicts with God's word. God's word says not to borrow or lend. I still wish God would have said, "No." I was so sure He would, I was already telling the salesman we were not going to buy. I was shocked when Victor said we should buy it and all I could think was, God is going to bless us and we will hold seminars and retreats at these resorts. So I have struggled with my faith in the lot casting method of seeking God, because I refused to believe God is a trickster who would play with my emotions and trust. I also ponder that since we've learned our hard lesson, it seems God would allow the time share to sell for us. We reduced it, drastically so I wait upon the Lord for the conclusion of this story. Hopefully, it will restore my faith completely in this method of seeking His will. It may have just been a camel, foolish, worldly stumble on our part, due to evil desires for luxury in our hearts. If that is so, then I am glad that God chose to afflict us for our purification and His glory.

God First

For approximately six months I had been on my insurance program of two hours of prayer a day. That story is told in this book in the chapter, "The Importance of Prayer." Living in a 35 foot RV does create logistic problems that require cooperation among us all. My best time for fulfilling my insurance time with the Lord is the morning. I generally get up at 5:30 AM and get dressed, wash my face, and brush my teeth (which helps me wake up), then I go out to the living room and awaken my 12 year old daughter and she and our dog go back to lay down in the bed with Mom to finish up their morning rest.

Although I had been hearing subtle messages that I must make my prayer-time with the Lord my first priority, lately I had been turning on the computer and doing some writing before prayer-time. Today I was going to be called on the carpet and, hopefully, permanently reminded just how important it was to put God first.

It was the Lord's Day, Sunday. I got up, dressed, washed, brushed my teeth, then went out to get my daughter up for her brief move to our bed in the back. The dog went, too, as usual. I turned on the computer. Turned to some writing I had been doing and began to edit it. The time flew. It was nearly 7:00 AM. "Wow," I thought, "it is going to be tough to try and get the two hours in before the family gets up." But, I sat on the couch and began my prayer time. About 45 minutes into the prayer time, I decided I might like to break it up and finish the prayer-time later in the day. I asked God in my usual way and He said No. Okay, I submitted. I asked Him if I could ask Him periodically if it would be okay to break up the prayer-time. He said Yes.

I prayed some more. I was getting a little fidgety, though, because I could hear stirring in the back. I had been told before that, though I am completely supported by the family for my prayer times, they really don't like to be trapped in the back of the RV for excessive periods of time. "Please, God," I prayed, "allow me to finish this special time with you later." No, He said. It was 8:45 AM.

I prayed on, but was very restless. It was 8:55 AM and we were going to church very shortly. The family needed to be able to get up. I had five minutes to go. Please, God, may I finish this last five minutes later? No, He said. I got up and went to the back where my wife was waiting for me to finish, and told her God wouldn't let me stop this morning. She became infused with the Holy Spirit (but I didn't recognize Him at this time) and let me have it verbally for not

getting my prayer-time done first, before I wrote or did other things on the computer. I was indignant. Here I am, praying for my family, and I get treated like this? My feelings were hurt. And so were hers because of my attitude.

I went back to my couch and finished my five minutes with the Lord (though I certainly couldn't give Him my all considering the circumstances). Finally I was done! We ate, got ready for church and drove to God's house. Sitting in the pew, I began to be ministered to by God. The meaning of the morning was revealed to me. It was all a setup.

Nature of God: It is more than just important that God be first. It is absolutely imperative! I had not had that point driven home before. My wife had tried to tell me subtly that it would be a good idea to pray first, then write. I had tried that for a short while, but then had lapsed back into my old habit patterns. I wouldn't forget it this time. Usually God allowed me the opportunity to split my prayer-time but this morning was different. I had deliberately made Him my second choice and had spent a lot of time on my writing project. He would have none of that.

He allowed me to ask Him as often as I wanted to if I could break up the prayer-time. But no matter how many times I asked, He always said No. (It remains uncanny to me how God can control the flipping of a coin and make it come out the way He wants it to every time). He was making a point, though, and He was going to throw me into the fire today to help me remember. He made me pray all the way up until my 9:00 AM stopping time and had me confront my wife, who, listening to God's Holy Spirit, correctly and righteously came down on my decision to write first this morning. I was emotionally bruised, but at church, reviewed my morning choice to put God second. It was time for me to get my priorities straight, I realized. I explained to Eva, after the church service, what God had done (through her), and saw a grateful look in her eyes. I apologized for not taking her absolutely correct counsel very well. She forgave me and, to my relief, God has forgiven me as well.

Please take God's advice to me. Remember, God is first. Our own will must not be our priority. I believe this to be so important, that I am making this the last story I tell in this book. We are a stiff-necked people. We frequently don't get it, when God tells us what to do. Before you read my concluding chapters of this book, remember and apply this truth:

Always put God first!

Eva's Healing

A quote from Eva: "I have had a wonderful healing recently at our small group meeting. I have been suffering with deterioration in the top six vertebrae in my neck. The doctor told me two years ago that I would eventually need surgery. He said my MRI was the biggest mess he'd ever seen and wondered what was holding my neck up. He couldn't believe my neck didn't hurt me, but suspected the trouble with the carpal tunnel could have been related to the neck vertebrae which were disintegrating. He said I would need to have them fused together, a very risky procedure that if it went wrong could paralyze me or at best, I would never be able to turn my head from side to side. Since the surgery in my hands fixed the carpal tunnel problem and my neck didn't really hurt much, I had put it all out of my mind. Now I have no insurance, so surgery of that kind would ruin us. When my neck recently began to hurt me severely, Victor and I went into prayer. The pain got worse and then the tingling returned to my hands and the pain in my arms was back. Also I was getting something like violent electrical shocks in my neck and spine. The Lord put it on Victor's heart to ask a man to pray for me who had prayed for a woman in our group when she had broken her back. This man, though, had moved to Washington state last year. We contacted him by phone and he very humbly agreed to pray over the phone while Victor and our friends laid hands on me. I felt an icy hot sensation on my neck and then it felt like the bones were regenerating. I felt support in the back of my neck that I had not felt in a very long time. Now I am pain free and there are no more shocks or tingling. I feel like a new person."

Additional info: God had the people who prayed for Eva's healing return home from a shopping trip and they didn't know why, but obeyed. Once they were home, we called. Also (and this never happens), while we were at our friends' house, a friend of Kristina's called, inviting her to go shopping with her as they were in town. Moments later, Kristina, who might have been a distraction to this healing, was with her friend as they had come to pick her up. Then the healing process began to roll. We surrounded Eva, laid hands on her back and neck and, while talking with this gentleman over the phone, we watched and felt God's mighty work on Eva's neck.

How does this have anything to do with casting lots? Before proceeding with calling this man, I prayerfully flipped a coin to ask if we were to do this and got a yes. If God was planning a

mighty demonstration of His healing power, would He have had that coin flip No? I don't think so.

Praise God!

Hunger for God

God never failed us during the times when the Bible was being supernaturally inspired, years ago, and He does not fail us now. His power, His authority, His pervasive wisdom never ceases.

Do this. Hunger for Him. Desire His will to prevail over your own meager one. Do not limit God in any way and allow Him to show you that He, as your personal Savior, is very much a part of your life. He does not desire to speak to you, only through a prayerful coin toss. He is not limited in any way in speaking to you. As a present reality for you, He may use something that happens to you, as a personal parable in your life, but it will always show you that His Word, the Bible, is true. When He does use the Bible to speak to you, however, He will give you His answers to your deepest needs through both obscure and common Bible verses you have read. This is an important reason why it is advisable to spend time reading the Word. He will use it to speak to your heart at other times. Remember, God DOES desire to speak with you and my prayer is that you will hunger to hear Him and will be able to discern His kind and good and gentle voice through His Holy Spirit, dwelling here, now in us.

Be ravenous for Him and have a deep desire to hear Him and, allow Him to be your High Priest, dwelling within you now. As the High Priest of long ago carried the black and white stones around his neck (Urim and Thummin) , so the Lord could be directly asked about important, national decisions that needed to be made, so, too, can we consult our High Priest who now dwells within us as our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. And though, these modern times, we do not carry those old stones in a bag from which we would draw, we do walk, often with a certain jingle of change in our pockets or purses. Let God be with you every minute of every day and allow Him to speak to you as you prayerfully toss a coin, trusting in God as you do.

Is He your personal God, as He is mine? He, therefore, can and will speak with you, personally. Your deepest hungers, just like mine, will be answered. How? That's between you and almighty God. What an amazing and awesome God we have! He loves and cares for us individually (as well as He loves the whole Body) and will answer our deepest prayers—in His way and in His time.

James 1:5 If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [*Who gives*] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him.

James 1:6 Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind.
(AMP)

"Lead Us Not Into Temptation"

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus asks us to pray to God, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." But in James 1:13, James says that God tempts no one. Here is that full Bible quote:

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation, because having been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

James 1:13 Let no one being tempted say, I am tempted from God. For God is not tempted by evils, and He tempts no one.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted by his lusts, being drawn away and seduced by them.

James 1:15 Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. And sin, when it is fully formed, brings forth death.

James 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brothers.

Jas 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. (MKJV)

Remember, the disciples asked Jesus HOW to pray, not what to pray. He said to pray like this, then He gave us His prayer. Most of the prayer is made up of statements that could, with enough faith be "the truth" that Jesus said we must know (in order to be set free). So, stating to God to "lead us not into to temptation" is actually a statement letting US know that God never does lead us into temptation. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors is not asking God to do that, because that is His nature already. The Lord's prayer is guidance from God as to how our prayers should be formed. Our prayers should inform our minds of the truth that will set us free as we truly KNOW it, believe it, and live it. In other words, Jesus answered the disciples' question of how to pray by telling us to know the truths of God's nature (He leads us not into temptation, He delivers us from evil, He provides our daily bread, His name is to be hallowed, etc.)

Jesus said we must not judge by appearances and, as we all know, it doesn't look like some of the statements in the Lord's Prayer are true (like give us this day our daily bread) when it is obvious that many people are starving in this world. However, I believe God wants us to dwell in the heavenly realm while we reside in this earthly one. Be in the world, but do not partake of its fruit which, by appearances, is laden with death. By our dwelling in the heavenly realm

(which is done as we know the truth), we will bring God's Kingdom and will down to earth (as it already is in heaven).

Therefore, I believe James has stated an absolute truth that God does not tempt us toward evil--and that Jesus was not praying a prayer of supplication, expecting God to answer it, but was telling us (as He did so often), to pray our prayers in such a way that we KNOW the truth (despite appearances). Of course, the more we KNOW the truth, the more our faith will increase.

The reason I feel we need to look at temptation in this book is because sometimes, when we are casting lots, God may very well use the opportunity to test us, and it may cause us considerable pain and drive us to our knees, as He did with me and the time-share situation. One other incident I wrote up in this book also seemed to be God testing us. I'm speaking of the time Eva and I were upset with God because He said we needed to get insurance, despite how costly it was. Eva and I thought that God could easily cover us since He is a great and mighty God. That afternoon I was praying in the park and trying to find out which of us needed to look for work. God said it was me who needed to work. Shortly thereafter, He revealed that extensive prayer was to be my job—then I'd be covered with His insurance. Had God not tested us by telling us we had to get insurance, I never would have taken His desire that we pray, seriously. This is very important. My nature is such that, sometimes, as in this case, I have to be told the honest and blunt truth that unless I get a new habit pattern of prayer established, I'm going to be needing all the medical and accident insurance that is available. This method of communication does work as motivation (at least for me, it did). Though it has been a few years since that special time in which prayer was made so important in my heart, I am still faithfully praying every day. It is now an hour a day but, as you recall from my journal entry in this book, initially He had me pray for 3 hours a day. I passed God's test by taking His prayer request seriously. And He has been true to His personal revelation. There have been no serious medical conditions or accidents with me or my family since I have committed to prayer. Sometimes, we must remember, it is painful to us to have our carnal attachments stripped from us. Nevertheless, this would be the true and maturing Christian's desire. Because we are desiring to do God's will and are willing to be informed of it, by the casting of the lot, we will, more than likely, be entering into more fire, more burning of the dross, more dying to self, in short, more pain. Objectively, you must step back from your life and welcome these things because you do want a pure heart, not only to

inspire the people God puts around you in your life, but because, in Hebrews God tells us all that no one will see God unless they are holy.

In the Old Testament, God sent prophets to warn the children of God that they were neglecting His precepts and laws and worshipping idols and they had better change their ways or face terrible consequences. Did they always change their ways? Often, they didn't. So the consequences came. The following verse out of Exodus mentions a test similar to mine. Look at Exodus 15:26 which I italicized:

Exo 15:23 *And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, because it *was* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.*

Exo 15:24 *And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*

Exo 15:25 *And he cried to Jehovah. And Jehovah showed him a tree. And when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a decree and a law for them, and there He tested them.*

Exo 15:26 *And he said, If you will carefully listen to the voice of Jehovah your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His Laws, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah who heals you. (MKJV)*

Can we trust God to keep us under His protection? I believe we can, but we must strive to know Him, listen to Him, and keep His commandments. He will test us and we will have an opportunity to see how seriously we take His command that we pray and keep His laws. We invariably will find all sorts of other things to do when our prayer time opens up. Step back and take an honest look at your prayer life. Are you actually praying as often as you could? Bible reading time is NOT prayer time. Following are more Bible verses on testing, which I italicized:

Gen 22:1 *And it happened after these things that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me.*

Gen 22:2 *And He said, Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you. (MKJV)*

This was a test that God gave to Abraham that foretold exactly what God, Himself, was going to do in the New Testament with His only Son, Jesus. He was going to sacrifice Him for our sins. We, too, may be asked to sacrifice something we love. Are we willing to give our all for God? Perhaps we need to have pure hearts that love God and are willing to do His will before we prayerfully toss a coin. The IDEA that we are willing to do God's will, I know, is attractive to God and I know He blesses that attitude. Those who do not believe in God will find this book

completely foolish. Those who are willing to be fools for Christ may enjoy experimenting with casting lots and they will see God's hand at work in their lives, just as I did (and still do). But there are many people who claim to trust God, but do not embrace Him as a supernatural being. Or, if they do recognize Him as supernatural, they do not feel His supernaturalness leaks into their actual lives. My recommendation is that we do not embrace God cautiously from our own limited sight, but embrace Him with all of our hearts, souls and minds as the Scripture commands. Then His supernaturalness will be revealed, erasing all doubt. His supernatural nature will be seen as valid and demonstrated to each of His children personally.

Exo 16:4 Then Jehovah said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain amount every day, *that I may test them*, whether they will walk in My Law or not. (MKJV)

Exo 20:20 And Moses said to the people, Do not fear, for God has come *to test you*, and so that His fear may be before your faces, so that you may not sin. (MKJV)

Deu 13:1 If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder,

Deu 13:2 and the sign or the wonder which he foretold to you occurs, saying, Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them,

Deu 13:3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. *For Jehovah your God is testing you* to know whether you love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (MKJV)

With our gift of free will, God must always test us so that we can see how much we trust in Him and whether or not we are leaning toward the Evil One. I believe God already knows our hearts, but desires that we know them and pray for strength to walk righteously. Do we honestly know ourselves?

Jdg 2:20 And the anger of Jehovah glowed against Israel. And He said, Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not listened to My voice,

Jdg 2:21 I also from now on will not expel any from before them of the nations that Joshua left when he died;

Jdg 2:22 *so that by them I may test Israel*, whether they are keeping the way of Jehovah, to go in it, as their fathers kept it, or not.

Jdg 2:23 And Jehovah left those nations, without driving them out quickly. And He did not deliver them into the hand of Joshua. (MKJV)

Psa 66:10 For You have proved us, O God; *You have tested us*, as silver is refined.

Psa 66:11 You have brought us into the net; You have laid affliction on our loins.

Psa 66:12 You have allowed men to ride at our head; we have gone through fire and through water, but You have brought us out to plenty. (MKJV)

Joh 6:5 Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and saw a great crowd come to Him. He said to Philip, Where shall we buy loaves so that these may eat?

Joh 6:6 *And He said this to test him*, for He Himself knew what He would do. (MKJV)

Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the Word of My patience, *I also will keep you from the hour of temptation* which will come upon all the habitable world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. (MKJV)

In the book of Job God does not actually do the testing, but He does give permission to Satan to test Job. And God set the rules Satan was to follow. In addition, this inspired book of Job indicates that there may be an amazing amount of judgment we have toward people who may be going through trials and in our desire to help, we may erroneously think they are guilty of breaking some of God's laws when, in fact, they may be innocent of that. Are we capable of providing love and support without judgment? Is not all of life in this carnal world a test for us, as we awaken to the fact that we need to stop judging and start praying for people's healing?

In any case, in this world, testing happens. I believe that coin toss in the restroom in Orlando, FL was instrumental, in an apparently negative way, in releasing me from my faith in credit cards. Testing will happen in your life and you may scratch your head in confusion as you walk through the fire, wondering why this is happening. I believe the only way Romans 8:28 is true is if we have a radical trust in God—otherwise the fires of this life will most certainly drive us away from our faith in Him. A form of radical trust is prayerfully casting lots, knowing His hand is in the process. If, by casting lots, you are more frequently thrown into fiery trials, I believe this would be cause to rejoice because on the other side of our trials, there is God's deep and everlasting peace.

This world is run by Satan and he has goals he would like to accomplish. He would like us to:

1. Trust in our own self-sufficiency.

2. Blame all our troubles on external causes and be totally unwilling to examine our own hearts.
3. Ignore any opportunities to witness God's supernatural work in our lives which comes by trusting God.
4. Spend all our time immersed in his world, analyzing it, manipulating it, focusing on it, because time spent with him keeps us from spending time with God.

God has an agenda for us, also. He would like us to:

1. Trust Him in everything.
2. Pray often, knowing the truth which is found in His word, the Bible.
3. Be aware of and be expecting God's supernatural activity in our lives.
4. Be aware of the condition of our hearts. They have been tainted with the carnality of this world and are in need of a thorough cleansing. This is done only through our faith in the undying love of Christ Jesus, who died for us on the cross and was resurrected three days later.

Do's and Don'ts Regarding Casting Lots

Do not make any particular coin special to you. It is never about the coin. It is only about God and our deep desire to do His will, not our own. God knows the various weights of the coins of different denominations, your thumb strength, and diameter of all His coins. He also knows whether you are in a car or standing still or flying in a plane. Any coin and any time will do. Likewise, do not worship the process of casting lots. It is always God we worship and how He chooses to respond to our questions is totally up to Him.

Do set the rules clearly in your mind before praying and asking that the Lord's hand be upon this toss. For example, should you drop the coin, is that going to count or are you going to pick it up and flip again? Are you going to flip it over onto the back of your other hand or are you going to catch it in your open palm? God reads your heart and goes from there, so just be aware of what you are going to do and what "counts" as a correct flip. By the way, this isn't to let God know anything. He already knows. It only lets you know what counts as a correct flip and what doesn't.

Do not restrict God's ability to help you by limiting Him in your questions. As your desire to hear His will increases (over time), He will be able to speak to your heart, clarifying His answer. Sometimes you may want to ask, "Is this question okay to ask?" And if it isn't, ask it another way. Or don't ask it at all.

Do not confuse casting of lots, which has God's approval throughout the Word (as a method of getting His present answer), with fortune telling of any kind. (Review Deuteronomy 18:9-14). Don't use it like an "eight ball."

Do not ask about whether you should have done something in another way. This is not about dwelling in the past, either. Just now, as I was writing this, I asked Him in my usual way if, indeed, we could bring up the past and ask questions using the casting of the lot, so that we might learn from our mistakes. No. I'm inspired to say, "Don't worry about lessons you may have missed from the past. You can trust that God will deliver those lessons again in digestible amounts. Your only responsibility is to bring God into your present and allow Him full access to your life. He will not leave you comfortless!"

Do not be afraid to have a close relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. Do not feel unworthy because through Jesus, you are worthy now. He sees His Son in you and smiles. Once (or more times), I flipped the coin prayerfully, but forgot the question. I could almost hear God laughing as He refreshed my memory. He loves us with the love of our "Daddy" and He enjoys His children. Do not be so stoic and formal with Him. Let your hair down and speak with Him as you would your dearest friend, for He is that. Yesterday I asked Him if we could go to a certain restaurant nearby (that we truly enjoy) and the flipped coin slipped under a fold in a blanket on the couch. I lifted the fold and was shown heads (Yes). I felt as if He wanted me to unwrap the gift so His Yes could be given to me joyfully, in that way.

Do use this method to ask Him if you need to say anything to anyone with regard to correcting them. God is probably already working with this person's heart and He may need you to back off and pray daily for him instead. The best correction any of us can have is the one given within us by the Holy Spirit. Following God's Golden Rule, since this is the type of correction we desire, allow God to correct others in this way as much as possible.

Do recognize what gibberish could mean. Gibberish is when we prayerfully toss a coin and through a series of questions, discover that the answers are illogical or contradictory to us. Take it before Him in prayer and from the depths of your heart, ask for clarification. The following are ideas as to what lot casting that does not make logical sense may mean:

- Yes means go ahead with it. No means don't go ahead with it. There is no coin side that says, "Wait on Me." I have found that when two questions are asked in which the answers from the Lord contradict one another, it is best to "Wait on the Lord" for clarification. His time frame may not coincide with ours. It's a good practice to let your first question be, "May I ask this or shall I wait upon You?" In addition, I have a few good illustrations in this book of when God was telling me great stuff, but my mind could not comprehend what He was saying. Later, I did understand and was grateful.
- It could also mean that the Lord has temporarily turned His face away from us due to the way we've treated someone, or due to our arrogance (our lack of a

contrite or humble spirit). In this case, repent to the Lord, literally or figuratively falling, face down before Him. Actively pray to retrieve your humble spirit and the Lord will leap back to your side. God is disgusted with our arrogance.

- No matter what the cause of the gibberish, never fear, He will bring understanding and, as we do our part to stay humble and love His other children, treating them as we treat ourselves, as promised, He will never leave us.

Epilogue

Part 1

One of the chief criticisms that this book may incur might be that with the practice of casting lots for answers from the Lord, we are reducing God to a formula. Book sellers might hawk from their stores, "Buy this book. Talk to God by flipping a coin. He will speak with you, answering your every question! Just toss a coin and receive your direct revelation! Hurry, hurry, hurry—" As I stated earlier, this book is not about casting lots to find God's will—it is about desiring to communicate with God, it is about loving Him, and being totally willing to submit to Him—THEN He will, most likely, respond to your pertinent questions and circumstances via the casting of the lot.

Just as God refused to stay in a tomb (He was out in three days) He also refuses to be limited to a formula of any kind. Do not limit God by only casting lots, nor by NOT casting them. Remember, God is spelled A-W-E-S-O-M-E.

1st Samuel 4:3-11 makes some worthwhile points regarding the practice of the casting of the lot. I will paraphrase the story of one of Israel's early battles with the Philistines found in 1st Samuel 4:3-11:

The Philistines were an arch-enemy of Israel, often at war with them during this time period. Eli, the high priest, had two sons that were deplorable in their duty to revere the Ark of the Covenant as well as very greedy with the meat of the sacrifices the people were making at the temple. During one battle, Israel lost and 4000 of their soldiers died. The elders met and decided to bring in the Ark of the Covenant so that "it" could save them. The key word here is "it." God is not an "it." They were trying to use the Ark of the Covenant as a lucky charm. Their attitude was way off base. They should never have removed it from the Holy of Holies and brought it to their battlefield. They took a holy symbol and reduced it to a mascot.

Though the Philistines were terrified when they found out that the Israel God was brought into the battle, they fought bravely anyway—and won! Israel lost 30,000 men that day, plus the Ark of the Covenant was taken and the two sons of Eli were killed as well. Obviously, the Ark was NOT a lucky charm at all. The Ark was symbolic of our most high and revered God. It was not God. The sacred act of casting lots is NOT about lucky charms. We mustn't try to bypass the

love and reverence we have for God when utilizing this method of communication. We must be humble when we deal directly with Our Heavenly Father. It could be likened to dealing with bare wires in an electric socket—for our safety, first we must "plug into" the high esteem we have for God, and the reverence we have for Him. Otherwise we may get the shock of our lives!

There is an attitude of reverence that must go with the use of this sacred practice of casting lots. It will not be effective unless there is prayer to the Lord, and perhaps even fasting before the lot is cast. I sincerely believe many people won't get this wonderful point, and they will flip coins as they ask poorly thought out questions, with an attitude almost mocking, lacking in reverence to God. The results of this kind of lot casting will be unreliable and possibly even harmful. My prayer is, just as the Lord developed my trust in Him and tempered my technique making sure I always had a contrite and humble spirit, He will do the same for you.

Part 2.

Eva retrieved many addresses of Assembly of God churches from the Internet in order to send them a flyer about a book she had just had published. She decided to use the casting of the lot to determine which addresses she would send the flyer to. Over time, this got to be a huge project and she actually lost her place on the list, forgetting that she had already asked the Lord whether or not to send a flyer to a particular batch of nine addresses. Later she found the earlier list with the results of her coin toss. Of the nine addresses she had cast lots about, two of them were No and seven of them were Yes. She had inadvertently asked a second time on those nine addresses and had the earlier results in front of her. She wondered if she should even check to see if the results were the same—or different this second time. She was troubled because she didn't want to have an attitude of doubt or of wanting to check God against Himself.

She decided to go ahead and check the two lists and compare what God had said earlier. Surprise of all surprises! In this particular case, God had said Yes to the same addresses He had said Yes to earlier, and No to the same addresses he had said No to earlier. We were amazed and wondered what the chances of that happening were. Eva's sister and brother-in-law were mathematical geniuses, so I emailed them and here are the results of that correspondence. Though we cannot say that there were any particularly positive results from the flyers that were

sent to those addresses, we did enjoy a rather nice gift in this statistic, provided by Eva's sister and brother-in-law.

Victor Zarley wrote:

- > **Dear Sue and Roger,**
- > **I didn't know how hard the following question might be. I believe it**
- > **could be answered on a computer but have no idea what program.**
- >
- > **Here is the question regarding the odds of something occurring:**
- > **I had 9 specific addresses. Tossing a coin for each one, I got heads**
- > **for 7 of them and tails for 2 of them.**
- >
- > **Later, I tossed again on these same specific addresses and got heads for**
- > **the same 7 and tails for the same 2.**
- >
- > **This is not a general "9 tosses, 2 heads, 7 tails" question but a**
- > **specific "9 tosses: SAME heads for all the previous addresses that were**
- > **heads and same tails for the previous ones that were tails". I believe**
- > **the odds are pretty high against that happening.**
- >
- > **Is this easily obtainable?**
- >
- > **Love, Victor**

The Answer:

Actually the odds are $1 / (2^9)$ or 1 over 2 to the 9th power or 0.001953125 for getting any specific combination of heads and tails for 9 flips.

The total number of possible combinations of heads / tails for n coin flips is 2^n .

$$1 \text{ flip} = 2^1 = 2$$

$$2 \text{ flips} = 2^2 = 4$$

$$3 \text{ flips} = 2^3 = 8$$

.

.

.

$$9 \text{ flips} = 2^9 = 512$$

The odds of any getting any 1 of the combinations are 1 over the total number of combinations.

If you want the odds of getting the same 9 flips twice in a row, that's the same as getting a specific 18 flips in a row. It doesn't matter to the odds that the first 9 flips are the same as the last 9 flips.

So $1 / (2 ^ 18) = 0.000003814697265625$ or

1 out of 262,144.

God CAN manipulate any physical object in this universe to get His will known for His children. I'm not sure if someone could figure out the odds and determine whether chance was involved in all of the prayerful coin flips in this book. What would the outcome of these stories be if the coin tosses had only been working the 50/50 law of averages? How would these stories have turned out if all the Yeses had been Nos and all the Nos had been Yeses?

I would like to begin to accumulate your stories of casting the lot before God. Please send them to my attention and we will publish the best stories on this site.