# Strategies
# For
# Spiritual Harvest

AMES International School of Ministry

**HARVESTIME INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE**

This course is part of the **Harvestime International Institute**, a program designed to equip believers for effective spiritual harvest.

The basic theme of the training is to teach what Jesus taught, that which took men who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc., and changed them into reproductive Christians who reached their world with the Gospel in a demonstration of power.

This manual is a single course in one of several modules of curriculum which moves believers from visualizing through deputizing, multiplying, organizing, and mobilizing to achieve the goal of evangelizing.

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# HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

## MANUAL FORMAT

Each lesson consists of:

**Objectives**: These are the goals you should achieve by studying the chapter. Read them before starting the lesson.

**Key Verse**: This verse emphasizes the main concept of the chapter. Memorize it.

**Chapter Content**: Study each section. Use your Bible to look up any references not printed in the manual.

**Self-Test**: Take this test after you finish studying the chapter. Try to answer the questions without using your Bible or this manual. When you have concluded the Self-Test, check your answers in the answer section provided at the end of the book.

**For Further Study**: This section will help you continue your study of the Word of God, improve your study skills, and apply what you have learned to your life and ministry.

**Final Examination:** If you are enrolled in this course for credit, you received a final examination along with this course. Upon conclusion of this course, you should complete this examination and return it for grading as instructed.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS NEEDED

You will need a King James version of the Bible.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP STUDY

## FIRST MEETING

**Opening**: Open with prayer and introductions. Get acquainted and register the students.

**Establish Group Procedures**: Determine who will lead the meetings, the time, place, and dates for the sessions.

**Praise And Worship**: Invite the presence of the Holy Spirit into your training session.

**Distribute Manuals To Students**: Introduce the manual title, format, and course objectives provided in the first few pages of the manual.

**Make The First Assignment**: Students will read the chapters assigned and take the Self-Tests prior to the next meeting. The number of chapters you cover per meeting will depend on chapter length, content, and the abilities of your group.

## SECOND AND FOLLOWING MEETINGS

**Opening**: Pray. Welcome and register any new students and give them a manual. Take attendance. Have a time of praise and worship.

**Review**: Present a brief summary of what you studied at the last meeting.

**Lesson**: Discuss each section of the chapter using the **HEADINGS IN CAPITAL BOLD FACED LETTERS** as a teaching outline. Ask students for questions or comments on what they have studied. Apply the lesson to the lives and ministries of your students.

**Self-Test**: Review the Self-Tests students have completed. (Note: If you do not want the students to have access to the answers to the Self-Tests, you may remove the answer pages from the back of each manual.)

**For Further Study**: You may do these projects on a group or individual basis.

**Final Examination**: If your group is enrolled in this course for credit, you received a final examination with this course. Reproduce a copy for each student and administer the exam upon conclusion of this course.

**Module:** Visualizing
**Course:** Strategies For Spiritual Harvest

# INTRODUCTION

The Bible states in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

All over the world there are born-again believers who are perishing.

No...they are not perishing in sin. They have accepted salvation through Jesus Christ. They attend church services, read the Bible, and may even be leaders in the church.

But they are dying spiritually. Their lives as believers are routine. There is no spiritual excitement. They have no goal or purpose. They have no vision.

The vision of which we speak is not what is visibly seen in a trance. It is not natural vision. It is a spiritual vision.

-If you feel empty spiritually...

-If you long to be used of God, but do not understand your part in His plan...

-If you feel there is something more to Christianity than the routine into which your life has fallen...

The vision is your answer!

God is taking spiritually dead men and women and making them spiritually alive. The vision is providing new meaning and direction for living. It is uniting the Body of Christ, the true Church, in common purpose. That vision is the subject of this course, "Strategies for Spiritual Harvest." The course will lead you through four steps to achieve the vision:

-**Visualization:** In which the vision will be identified.

-**Conceptualization:** In which you will learn the concept of purpose behind the vision.

-**Objectification:** In which you will learn objectives for fulfilling the vision.

-**Expectation:** In which your expectations will be fulfilled as you become part of the vision.

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

- Explain the vision of the harvest as a spiritual parallel of a natural example.
- Use effective strategies for spiritual harvest in your life and ministry.
- Identify factors that prevent spiritual harvest.
- See the world as God sees it.
- Reap in revelation harvest.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE BIRTH OF A VISION

**OBJECTIVES**:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Define "spiritual vision."
- Explain the birth process of spiritual vision.
- Compare spiritual birth of a vision to the natural birth process.

**KEY VERSE**:

**Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18)**

### INTRODUCTION

The Bible states in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The vision to which this verse refers is spiritual vision.

Spiritual vision provides direction. It provides challenge and structure for life. Without it, people become spiritually dead. Developing spiritual vision is the process of recognizing the purpose for which you have been brought into the Kingdom of God. In this chapter, this development is called the "Birth of a Vision."

### WHY SPIRITUAL VISION?

Why is spiritual vision necessary? Why do people perish without it?

The answer is found in one of many Biblical examples of spiritual vision. Read the story of the Prophet Elisha and his servant, Gehazi in II Kings 6:15-17.

God's people, Israel, were surrounded by the enemy nation of Syria. There were many soldiers, horses, and chariots of war. When Elisha's servant, Gehazi, saw the great force of the enemy he was afraid. He cried out to Elisha, "What shall we do?" Elisha told him:

> **Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. (II Kings 6:16)**

Then Elisha prayed that God would open Gehazi's eyes and allow him to see in the spirit world. The request was granted, and Gehazi saw the spiritual forces of God surrounding Israel.

In this example, God actually let Gehazi see the spiritual vision with his natural eyes. But the important point is that without spiritual vision the people of God cannot see beyond the natural circumstances of life.

Like Gehazi, they are defeated by the powers of the enemy which they see at work in the natural world around them. Their vision is focused on their problems and their life becomes a cycle of crying out, "What shall we do?" Without spiritual vision, they cannot see and understand the divine plan of God.

## DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL EYESIGHT

Before you are born again you are blinded by sin. Through salvation by the blood of Jesus your basic blindness is healed. Then God wants to develop your spiritual vision.

This process is a spiritual parallel of an actual incident in the ministry of Jesus:

> **And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him.**
>
> **And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought.**
>
> **And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.**
>
> **After that He put His hands again upon his eyes and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. (Mark 8:22-25)**

This miracle was an actual physical healing performed by Jesus during His earthly ministry.

Why didn't the first touch of Jesus heal the man completely? Didn't Jesus have all power? Wasn't He the Son of the living God? Jesus was providing a natural example of a spiritual truth. Jesus wants to touch you spiritually just as He did in this natural healing. First He wants to clear up the basic blindness of sin in your life. Then He wants to develop your spiritual vision.

## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL VISION?

Spiritual vision involves seeing beyond the natural world into the spiritual world. It is understanding the divine purpose of God and recognizing your part in His plan.

Believers who are spiritually "perishing" are in one of the following categories:

-They do not have spiritual vision.

-They have received a spiritual vision but have been disobedient to it.

-They have a vision, but do not know how to fulfill it. They have tried and failed or perhaps have never tried at all.

Spiritual vision provides a clear image of what God wants you to do and then directs every step of your Christian life towards achieving that goal.

## THE VISION OF PAUL

The Apostle Paul had spiritual vision. He said:

**I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. (Acts 26:19)**

The heavenly [spiritual] vision became the compelling force in Paul's life. He recognized that having a vision is not enough. Action must be taken to achieve the vision.

A vision can remain "visionary." This means it never becomes a reality because you never act on it. When God gives a vision He also provides spiritual and practical strategies for fulfilling it.

When God gave Paul a spiritual vision, He gave him specific things to do to fulfill the vision.

**...Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which though hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;**

**Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.**

**To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:16-18)**

God gave Paul spiritual vision for the purpose of making him a minister and witness.

His ministry was to be to a special group of people, the Gentiles. The term Gentiles refers to everyone who is not a Jew, so it really means all the other nations of the world.

God gave Paul objectives [a plan] to achieve the vision. Paul was to:

-Open their spiritual eyes from darkness to light.
-Turn them from the power of Satan to God.
-Lead them to forgiveness of sins.
-Reveal their spiritual inheritance made possible by faith.

## THE BIRTH OF A VISION

God wants to give you a spiritual vision just as He did Paul. God also wants to reveal the purposes and objectives which will enable you to fulfill the vision.

As you experience the "birth of a vision" you will become a participator instead of a mere spectator in God's divine plan.

The natural birth process which brings a human baby into the world is similar to the process of the birth of a vision in the spirit world. You will experience the following stages as you give birth to spiritual vision.

**CONCEPTION:**

"Conception" means to create. A spiritual vision is created in your spirit by God.

When God gave Paul spiritual vision He identified the source. He said, "I am Jesus" (Acts 26:15). God conceived Paul's vision.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

When you first receive a spiritual vision, it is in "embryo" form. An embryo is a basic cell of life. Just like the development of the human embryo, God develops your spiritual vision as you grow in Him.

The basic cell of life in the human baby is the embryo, from it all the basic human features are developed. If you try to change the embryo, deformity or death can occur to the child.

God conceives the basic spiritual vision within you. The vision must remain the embryo from which all features develop. If you try to change the vision, it will be deformed from the perfect plan of God, or it may be aborted.

When the vision explained in this course is conceived by God in your spirit it must always remain the same although you may fulfill it in different ways.

The vision will grow and develop as you mature spiritually. Its features will not be the same as yesterday, last week, or last month. But you must never forget the basic vision which is the divine purpose for which you are called.

This development of a vision will be a stretching experience as it is in the natural world within the body of a mother. If the vision does not develop within you it will die.

Just as a mother carries her child within her body, when you receive this vision it is with you constantly. It becomes a vital, living part of you. It draws from your own life source as well as from the divine source which conceived it.

While the baby is developing, a pregnant mother will deny herself of certain things. As your spiritual vision develops, you may have to do this also. You may have to deny yourself of your own plans and ambitions. You may have to lay aside worldly treasures. You will have to sacrifice time to fast and pray.

**TRAVAIL:**

Ecclesiastes 5:3 states:

**For a dream cometh through the multitude of business. (Ecclesiastes 5:3)**

The meaning of the word "multitude" is great. "Business", according to one Hebrew meaning, is travail [difficulty]. So a dream or vision comes through "great travail."

In natural birth there are facts about travail that parallel the spiritual travail which births a vision. Natural travail is a time of intense, concentrated effort to birth the child. This time of travail is also called "labor."

As in the delivery of a child, a spiritual vision is birthed by intense mental, physical, and spiritual concentration. As you study this course, concentrate on what God wants to birth in your spirit.

In the natural world during labor [travail], the one giving birth must let the natural forces take control. Physically forcing the child into the birth canal before it opens can kill the child.

The same is true in the spirit world. Let God take control of your life. If you try to birth the vision in your own strength it will abort the plan of God.

Everything within you may cry out to push and bring the spiritual vision forth with natural abilities. But by self-effort you can destroy the vision. Peter cried out to Christ, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," when he realized what Christ was calling him to do (Luke 5:8). He knew the vision was too great for him to fulfill by his natural strength and abilities.

As a mother in travail hides herself from public gaze, so those in travail spiritually must be alone with God.

**THE TIME OF TRANSITION**:

In the natural birth process there is a time during labor known as the time of "transition." It is the most difficult time of travail right before the birth canal is open to permit the birth of the child.

This parallels the birth of a vision in the spirit world. When God births in you a spiritual vision you will experience a time of transition.

Transition means change. As God gives you this spiritual vision it is going to require change in your life. It will call for new commitment and dedication.

You may experience pressure in every area of your life. Everything within you may cry out for relief from the spiritual birth pangs of what God is bringing forth.

This is the point where many fail to receive the vision. Time and time again God has brought His people to the time of transition to birth His vision within them.

But because the transition was too difficult many have turned back. They could not take the pressure of this most difficult time.

It required changes in their thought patterns and lifestyle which they were not willing to make. They could not abandon self-effort and tradition. They could not set aside their own ambitions and desires to embrace the plan of God. This is what happened to the nation of Israel:

> **Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord.**
>
> **We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. (Isaiah 26:17-18)**

Travail brings sorrow but it leads to the birth which brings joy:

> **A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. (John 16:21)**

We are told in Isaiah 53:11 that God witnessed the travail of Jesus Christ and was satisfied. A vision was fulfilled that day on Calvary...a vision that had been promised since the fall of man into sin (Genesis 3:15). Through travail, the vision of redemption from sin became a reality.

Travail is a painful experience, but it is only through travail that the vision can be birthed:

**...for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.**
**(Isaiah 66:8-9)**

**THE BIRTH:**

The development of a spiritual vision has an expected end, just as a human embryo. That end is birth. Prematurity of birth and delay of birth can result in death, both in the natural birth process and in the birth of spiritual vision.

After birth in the natural world the child continues to grow and develop. After the birth of this spiritual vision it will continue to grow and develop. It will have new features and form, but they all must develop from that basic cell of spiritual life which is the vision.

## THE VISION OF ABRAHAM

Abraham tried to bring forth his God-given vision through self-effort by the birth of Ishmael. He knew God wanted to make him a great nation and he thought an heir could not come through his wife, Sarah.

So he did something about it and Ishmael was born. But whose power was behind Ishmael, that of Abraham or that of God? Was the fulfillment of the vision through Ishmael man-made or God-made?

You can bring an Ishmael on the scene through your own efforts. Ishmael represents your plans and methods of trying to do God's will through natural abilities. But the heavenly vision, represented by Isaac, must be birthed by God.

Who is the source of spiritual vision?

When asked, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?", Jesus responded, "This is the work of God", indicating that He, Himself, was the source (John 6:28-29).

God did not want Abraham to be the source of the heavenly vision any more than He wants us to bring forth man-made or organizationally-made visions. God is the source of spiritual vision. The vision which you will receive in this course is His plan. It is not a plan of man, a denomination, or an organization.

Scripture has no record of God speaking again to Abraham for thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael. Not until it was humanly impossible for Abraham to have a child did God again stir the vision within him. By then, self-effort had died.

Then came the birth of a vision, for in the perfect timing of God Isaac was miraculously born.

But with the birth of God's plan [Isaac], Ishmael [self-effort] must be cast out.

It is time for your Isaac [God's plan] to be birthed in your spirit. In order for this to happen, Ishmael must be cast out.

It is a painful experience to cast out self-effort, your plans, ambitions, tradition, and organizational programs.

But God is saying to you as He did to Abraham, "Grieve not for Ishmael [self-effort], for in Isaac shall your seed be called." In Isaac the source of the vision was God.

**ARE YOU READY?**

Birth requires change. In the natural world, the child must leave the security of the womb.

When you were born again you had to leave the old life of sin. You had to let Jesus change your thought and action patterns.

To give birth to spiritual vision also requires change. It requires courage to step from the known into the unknown.

Are you ready to receive that spiritual vision? Are you willing to experience spiritual travail in order to birth something new and vital in your Christian life? If you are not willing you had better stop your study here, for once you glimpse the vision shared in these pages your life will never again be the same.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

2. Define spiritual vision.

_____

3. Look at the names in List One, then read List Two. Choose the number of the sentence which relates to the person in List One in the blank provided in front of his name. The first one is done as an example for you to follow.

| List One | List Two |
|---|---|
| __2__Paul | 1. Tried to bring forth the vision through Ishmael. |
| _____Gehazi | 2. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." |
| _____Abraham | 3. "What shall we do?" |
| _____God | 4. "Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth?" |
| _____Jesus | 5. "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." |
| _____Peter | 6. God witnessed His travail and was satisfied. |

4. Read the sentences in List Two. Put the number of the sentence which best defines the word in List One in the blank provided in front of the word.

| List One | List Two |
|---|---|
| _____Conception | 1. The time during which the vision grows within you spiritually. |
| _____Development | 2. Right before the birth. The most difficult time when you must cease natural self-effort and let God bring forth the vision. |
| _____Travail | 3. The start of the vision in your spirit as it is planted by God. |
| _____Transition | 4. A time of spiritual birth pangs, intense physical, mental and spiritual labor. |

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Expand your knowledge of the process of travail, by studying the following Scriptures:

   John 16:21: It brings sorrow, but it leads to the birth which brings joy.
   I Thessalonians 2:9: It is labor, both in the natural and spiritual worlds.
   Galatians 4:19: It results in Christ being formed in you.
   Romans 8:22-25: It brings hope.
   Isaiah 66:7-9: It is God's desire that spiritual travail results in birth [spiritual reproduction].

2. Think about this statement:

   "A vision without a task is visionary.
   A task without a vision is drudgery.
   A task with a vision is what makes a missionary."

3. Wicked men give birth to evil plans:

   **He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. (Psalms 7:14, The Living Bible)**

4. To be "barren" in the natural world means you are unable to have children. Have you been "barren" spiritually?

   Women of the Bible who had been barren for many years gave birth to great children after God touched them...

   -Sarah birthed Isaac
   -Rachel birthed Joseph
   -Manoah birthed Samson
   -Hannah birthed Samuel
   -Ruth birthed Obed
   -Elizabeth birthed John

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE VISION

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of a "natural parallel of a spiritual truth."
- Identify the natural example of the harvest as a spiritual parallel of the vision God wants to birth in your spirit.
- Explain steps which lead to receiving the vision.

**KEY VERSE:**

> **Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)**

### INTRODUCTION

The last chapter described the process of developing spiritual vision. This chapter identifies the vision Jesus wants to birth in your spirit and explains how to receive it.

The vision is the same with which He challenged His disciples over 2,000 years ago. In order to understand the meaning of the vision it is necessary to identify one of the basic principles of God's Word. This principle concerns natural parallels of spiritual truths.

This chapter defines this principle and applies it to the vision God wants to conceive in you.

### NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

The written record of God's Word, the Bible, focuses on the subjects of people, promises, prophecies, and principles.

Much of the Bible is a record of people, how God dealt with them and their response to Him. There are also major portions of the Bible which record prophecies of future events and there are many promises given to God's people.

The Bible also contains important principles which you must identify in order to understand what God is saying to you through His Word. One of these great principles is that of natural parallels

of spiritual truths. The word "parallel" means to be similar to something. When we speak of a "natural parallel of a spiritual truth" it means God uses a natural example to explain or represent a spiritual truth.

The parables of Jesus were natural examples of spiritual truths. In one parable He used the natural example of a woman placing a small bit of leaven in a lump of bread. The spread of the leaven throughout the bread illustrated the growth of the Kingdom of God in the world.

This is just one of many examples of parables in which He used a natural example to illustrate a spiritual truth.

This principle of natural and spiritual parallels is explained in I Corinthians:

> **...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**
>
> **And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.**
>
> **Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (I Corinthians 15:44-46)**

This is a great example of a natural parallel of a spiritual truth. The first man created by God was the natural man. His name was Adam. Jesus, who is referred to as the last Adam, was a spiritual man.

Adam was a natural example of the spiritual truth God was to reveal through Jesus Christ. By the natural man came sin and death. By the spiritual man came salvation and life.

That which is natural is something you can observe with your senses. You can see, hear, or touch it. That which is spiritual can only be observed with spiritual senses.

Natural examples can be recognized with physical senses but spiritual parallels can only be recognized through the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding this principle of natural parallels of spiritual truths increases your understanding of God's Word.

## THE HARVEST

The vision with which Jesus challenged His disciples and which He desires to birth in your spirit was revealed by a natural parallel of a spiritual truth.

Jesus said to His disciples:

**Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)**

Jesus was not speaking of the natural harvest in the fields that stretched before them at the time He spoke these words. He was speaking of a spiritual harvest.

He used the example of the natural harvest to give His followers a vision that would provide meaning and spiritual direction for their lives.

## WHAT DID IT MEAN?

What did this natural example of the harvest mean in the spiritual realm?

Read John 4:3-35. Jesus was passing through Samaria on the way to Judaea. When He rested near a well His disciples went in search of food. While they were gone a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well and Jesus shared the Gospel with her.

When His disciples returned with the food, Jesus said to them:

**I have meat to eat that ye know not of...My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:32,34)**

The most important thing to Jesus, more urgent than natural food and the necessities of life, was to do God's will and finish His work.

It was at this point in the conversation that Jesus used the example of the natural harvest. He used it to illustrate what He had just told His disciples: The most important thing in life is doing God's will and His work.

## GOD'S WILL AND HIS WORK

What is God's will? What is His work? It is revealed in the vision of the harvest.

Jesus told His disciples to lift up their eyes and look at the natural fields of grain ready to harvest. He used these fields as an example of the spiritual fields of multitudes of men and women around the world who are ready to be harvested for the Kingdom of God.

The Samaritan woman with whom He had just talked was an example of this great spiritual harvest. She was ready to receive the Gospel and accepted it with great joy. Through "harvesting" this one woman, an entire city came to know Jesus:

**And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified...**

**And said unto the woman, now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. (John 4:39,42)**

## THE VISION TODAY

While standing in the middle of visible natural harvest fields that day, the disciples experienced the birth of a spiritual vision.

It is the same vision Jesus wants to birth in your spirit. He wants to give you a vision of the spiritual harvest fields of the world which are ready to be reaped for His Kingdom. When you recognize the reality of that vision and understand your responsibility in fulfilling it, your life will never again be the same.

Jesus clearly stated:

**The field is the world... (Matthew 13:38)**

Africa, Asia, Australia, North America, South America, Europe, the Islands of the sea...the harvest fields of the world are ripe with multitudes who have yet to hear the good news of the Kingdom of God.

The vision has not changed. It is the same as it was when Jesus birthed it in the lives of His disciples. The will of God is the same because the work of God is not finished.

There are untold millions yet untold. The vision is still the harvest fields of the world.

## WHY THE HARVEST?

Why did Jesus use the example of the harvest to illustrate the spiritual vision He wanted to give His followers? There are many other natural parallels He could have used. Why did He choose the harvest?

The harvest was an example to which His disciples could easily relate. The history of God's people, Israel, dated back to Adam who was first to till the ground. Agriculture continued developing to the time of Moses when it became the basis of the economy.

At the time of Christ's ministry the economic cycle of Israel centered on agriculture. Harvesting was a continuous activity throughout the year. Flax and barley harvesting occurred in April-May, the wheat harvest about six weeks later in June-July. Apples, figs, almonds, and the first grapes were gathered in June. Olives, dates, and summer figs were harvested in August and September,

pomegranates and pistachio nuts in October. Olives in northern Galilee and winter figs were gathered in November.

Not only did the economy center on the harvest, it was also at the heart of the religious system of Israel. The three main religious feasts God established for His people related to the harvest. The Passover came in the season of the barley harvest (Exodus 23:16). Seven weeks later, at the time of the wheat harvest, was the feast of Pentecost (Exodus 34:22). The feast of Tabernacles was observed the seventh month which was the period of the fruit harvest (Exodus 34:22).

Since the entire calendar, economy, and religious system revolved around the harvest the disciples could easily understand this example.

But even more important, there were certain guidelines for sowing and reaping which affected the natural harvest. These natural laws also applied to spiritual harvesting. The disciples of Jesus could easily apply these principles to spiritual harvesting because of their familiarity with them in the natural world. Applying these natural principles spiritually would bring forth an abundant spiritual harvest. We will study these principles later in this course.

Most important, the disciples recognized the urgency represented by the example of the natural harvest. When a crop was ripe it must be harvested immediately or it would ruin. It was a matter of reap or rot.

If the harvest was great and there were not enough workers available to reap it, the crop would be lost. Of the spiritual parallel to this natural problem Jesus said:

> **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. (Matthew 9:37)**

## RECEIVING THE VISION

When Jesus spoke to His followers about the vision of the harvest He outlined five steps to enable them to receive the vision:

> **(1) SAY NOT YE (2) THERE ARE YET FOUR MONTHS then cometh harvest? (3) BEHOLD, I SAY UNTO YOU, (4) LIFT UP YOUR EYES, and (5) LOOK ON THE FIELDS; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)**

### STEP ONE: "Say not ye..."

Many believers spend their entire lives talking about the harvest. They are like a labor crew trying to gather a harvest while sitting in a barn. They go to the barn [church] each Sunday morning and study bigger and better methods of agriculture [spiritual harvest]. They sharpen their harvesting sickles and then go home.

They come back that night to study better methods of agriculture, sharpen their sickles, and go home again. They are back for a midweek meeting to learn bigger and better methods, sharpen their sickles, and return home. They do this week after week until the weeks turn into months and months into years, yet nobody ever goes out into the fields to gather the harvest.

When Jesus said, "Say not ye" He meant that talking about spiritual harvest was not enough. You must become involved in the actual harvesting process. That does not mean everyone is to leave their jobs, seek financial support from the church, and travel to other nations as preachers of the Gospel. But each believer is to be involved in some way in the harvest. For some, it will be the fields that are right outside the doors of their home and church. It will be the harvest in their school, on their job, and in their local community or village. For others, the harvest will be a foreign field. The point is that each believer is to be participating in and not just talking about the harvest.

**STEP TWO: "Yet four months."..**

In order to become part of this harvest time vision you cannot delay it. You cannot wait until some future time to become involved. Souls are dying in sin now. For many, tomorrow will be too late:

> **Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.**
>
> **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:13-14)**

**STEP THREE: "I say unto you..."**

God's ways are different from those of man:

> **For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.**
>
> **For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)**

Men talk about spiritual harvest. They delay it. But what God says is different than what man says. He says...

**STEP FOUR: "Lift up your eyes..."**

The eyes of the disciples were distracted. They were not focused on the vision of the spiritual harvest fields.

In order to receive this spiritual vision you must take personal action. You must lift up your spiritual eyes from the natural distractions of life. You must lift them from your personal problems, from discouragement, from business and worldly concerns.

You must lift your eyes from the circumstances of life to...

**STEP FIVE: "Look on the harvest."..**

Turning your eyes from distractions to the harvest field is not enough. You must really look at the harvest. You must see the world through the eyes of God.

Many do not have spiritual vision because they have not really looked. They have not recognized their personal responsibility to the harvest fields. They have not considered the conditions of the harvest fields of our world today.

**TO RECEIVE THE VISION...**

-You must not just talk about it.

-You cannot delay it.

-You must listen to what God says, the challenge He presents when He cries, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8).

-You must lift your eyes from the distractions of the world to the harvest field.

-You must look at the fields of the world through the eyes of God.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

2. What is meant by a "natural parallel of a spiritual truth"?

_____

3. The natural example Jesus used to give His disciples a spiritual vision was the example of the_____.

4. In the example of the harvest the field is the _____.

5. List three reasons why Jesus chose the natural example of the harvest to give His followers a spiritual vision.

_____

_____

_____

6. List five steps given in John 4:35 which enable you to receive spiritual vision.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter emphasized personal involvement in the vision of the harvest.

Read the story known as the parable of the "Good Samaritan" in Luke 10:25-35. This parable illustrates attitudes of involvement with human need. It is an example of the various attitudes of believers towards the vision of the spiritual harvest fields of the world.

Notice the attitudes of the thief, the priest, the Levite, the innkeeper, and the Samaritan in the parable. Also observe the attitude of the lawyer who originally asked the question which resulted in Jesus telling the parable.

| **Character** | **Attitude** |
|---|---|
| The Lawyer | Saw a question for discussion. |
| The Thief | Saw a person to exploit. |
| The Priest and Levite | Viewed the need as a problem to avoid and ignore. |
| The Inn-keeper | Saw a customer to be served for pay; had an attitude of "What can I get out of it?" |
| The Samaritan | Saw a person dying, a harvest perishing, and responded to the need with personal involvement. |

# CHAPTER THREE

## HIS EYES BEHOLD THE NATIONS

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Explain what it means to see the world through the eyes of God.
- Understand the present condition of the spiritual harvest fields of the world.
- Make a personal commitment to join the team of international harvesters being raised up by God throughout the world.

**KEY VERSE:**

**His eyes behold the nations. (Psalms 66:7)**

### INTRODUCTION

The last chapter stressed the importance of lifting your spiritual eyes and looking on the harvest fields of the world.

The disciples did not have the same vision which Jesus had. This is why He urged them to lift their eyes and look in order to see the great need as He saw it.

You must see the world as God sees it. This is essential if you are to develop proper spiritual vision.

This chapter focuses on the harvest fields of the world. The Bible states of God that "His eyes behold the nations." What does God see when He views the harvest fields of the world?

### RUSTY SICKLES, EMPTY FIELDS

God views the world as a harvest field:

**The field is the world... (Matthew 13:38)**

The cry comes to the ears of God from the people of the world:

**The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. (Jeremiah 8:20)**

The spiritual harvest fields of the world resemble the natural fields over which the prophet Joel cried:

> **Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers; for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. (Joel 1:11)**

When God's eyes behold the nations of the world, He sees a spiritual harvest perishing because of the lack of harvesters. Jesus never said there would be a lack of sowers of the Gospel. He said there would be a lack of laborers to reap the spiritual harvest:

> **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. (Matthew 9:37)**

Presently, North America has 94% of the world's ministers serving 6% of the population. This means only 6% of the ministers are trying to reach 94% of the population in the remainder of the world.

There are approximately three billion people representing over 16,000 culturally distinct people groups yet to be reached with the Gospel. There are over 2,000 languages for which there is no translation of God's Word.

For every 10,000 villages in India, 9,950 have no Christian witness. In Japan the total Christian population is estimated at only one percent.

In Latin America there are at least five million people in jungle lowlands who have not been reached with the Gospel. There are 750 million Muslims with only approximately 500 Protestant missionaries ministering among them.

The need in other nations of Africa, Asia, South America, and the Middle East is similar to these examples.

This is what God sees as He views the nations of the world.

## THE GAP

The Bible states:

> **For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 2:5)**

The need for a mediator indicates there is a gap between two parties who cannot accept each other.

When God looks at the world, He sees multitudes of people standing in a spiritual gap. The reason for the gap between God and man is sin.

Jesus Christ is the mediator between sinful man and a righteous God. Neither can accept the other without the mediator. Jesus made it possible for man to be redeemed from sin and accepted by a righteous God.

Multitudes still wait for the message of the mediator who can bridge the gap between them and God. The Great Commission Jesus gave was for His followers to enter the gap. He spoke of going to Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

They were to start where they were and evangelize Jerusalem. Reaching Judaea and Samaria would require cross-cultural evangelism. Samaria differed theologically and culturally from Jerusalem. The far regions of the earth represented an even greater challenge. But each region represented the gap.

At first Christ's disciples were hesitant to bridge the gap between Jew and Gentile due to cultural and theological differences. Until persecution came, they did little to extend the Gospel to regions outside of Jerusalem (Acts 8:4).

If you are to fulfill the Great Commission and reap the harvest you must get out of cultural, theological, and denominational ruts. You may even have to leave your geographical location. You must enter the gap to share the good news of the mediator between God and man.

## ANOTHER GAP

In addition to the gap of sin between man and God there is another great spiritual gap. This is the gap between the challenge of Jesus to reach the world with the Gospel and the failure of His people to fulfill that challenge.

Until you receive a vision of the spiritual harvest fields you will never fully understand your role in the Kingdom of God. It is the cause which gives purpose and direction to Christian life. The vision of spiritual harvest should be central to your life. For many it is only a minor concern.

We tend to talk about the things we love. We talk about our husband or wife, friends, sports, and hobbies. We also talk of things that concern us such as politics, finances, and business. But how often do we speak of lost souls? How much concern do we give each day to the multitudes still waiting in the gap, the harvest perishing in the fields?

Paul speaks of using the most routine activities such as eating and drinking for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). Every activity of your life can be centered on the vision of spiritual harvest. When this happens it gives new challenge, purpose, and direction to your life as a believer. Every day becomes an exciting quest to see how you can be part of fulfilling the vision.

When you recognize your personal responsibility to the multitudes in the gap and the vision of the harvest bursts into your spirit, you become part of a special network. This network is a group of believers from many nations who have joined together to see the world through the eyes of God and fulfill His plan to spread the Gospel.

In recent times, this movement has been referred to as "World Christians." They are believers who at the end of each day can confidently say:

> "I know this day my life has counted strategically for Christ's global cause, especially for those currently beyond the reach of the Gospel."

This is the challenge of spiritual harvest. This is seeing the world through the eyes of God.

## OPEN DOORS

Men view some nations as closed to the Gospel. When a nation is referred to as "closed" to the Gospel message it usually means the government will not accept Christian missionaries and seeks to stop the spread of the Gospel within its borders.

But there are no limits recognized by God. He sees no "closed" countries. It is true that some nations are closed to the traditional missionary because the government will not grant visas to those who want to enter the nation and preach the Gospel message.

But when the "front door" closes to a nation, so to speak, there is always a "back door." Teams of manual laborers are entering closed nations to build schools, clinics, and agricultural projects. While there, they share the Gospel message.

Other believers are entering nations as teachers, medical workers, and literacy instructors. Modern communication devices are beaming the Gospel message beyond closed borders. Teams of international intercessors are penetrating the entire world through prayer.

Within "closed" nations local believers are assuming responsibility for the spread of the Gospel in their own countries through underground evangelistic networks. So called "closed countries" cannot be used to ignore your responsibility. The harvest cannot be stopped by governments. Your enemies are not political leaders.

Your concern is with the principalities and powers behind these things which are opposing God's worldwide purpose:

> **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)**

Catch the vision of an unlimited world. Look at the harvest fields. Weep over the cities as Jesus did. See the world through the eyes of God. His vision is global and His purpose is eternal from the foundations of the world.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

2. What is the estimated number of people in the world who are yet to be reached with the Gospel?_____

3. Approximately how many language groups still do not have the Bible translated in their language?_____

4. What does it mean to "see the world through the eyes of God"?

_____

5. What is the cause of the gap between man and God which requires the mediator, Jesus Christ?_____

6. Write T in front of each statement that is TRUE. Write F in front of each statement that is FALSE.

a._____Closed countries can not be reached with the Gospel message.

b._____The main enemies we are fighting in the spread of the Gospel are the governments controlling the nations.

c._____Jesus said there would be a lack of harvesters in the spiritual harvest fields of the world.

7. What does it mean to be a World Christian?

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read about Isaiah's vision recorded in Isaiah 6:1-9.

**It was an**...

-Upward vision [height]: He saw the Lord.

-Inward vision [depth]: He saw himself and his own spiritual condition.

-Outward vision [breadth]: He saw the world.

**It was also a vision of**...

-Holiness: Of the Lord.

-Hellishness: "I am undone" [unclean].

-Hopelessness: "Who will go for us?"

**Note these key words**...

Woe: A word of confession (verse 5).

Lo: A word of cleansing (verse 7).

Go: A word of commission (verse 9).

**PART TWO: CONCEPTUALIZATION**
**Understanding The Concept Of Purpose Behind The Vision**

# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE WORLD IN THE WORD

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Explain the plan of God for the nations of the world as purposed from the beginning of time.
- Trace this vision as it is revealed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

**KEY VERSES:**

> **Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:**
>
> **That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)**

### INTRODUCTION

Part One of this course presented the first step in "Strategies for Spiritual Harvest." It dealt with "Visualization" in which the vision was identified. These chapters progressed through birth of a vision, identifying the vision, and seeing the world through the eyes of God.

This chapter deals with "Conceptualization", the second step in "Strategies for Spiritual Harvest." It presents the concept of purpose behind the vision of the harvest. It is the unifying theme of the world in God's Word that reveals His global purpose.

### GOD'S PURPOSE

From the beginning of time God had a divine purpose on which He based His relation with and His promises and prophecies to mankind.

God has revealed His purpose to believers:

**Making known to us the mystery (secret) of His will (His plan, of His purpose). And it is this: In accordance with His good pleasure (His merciful intention) which He had previously purposed and set forth in Him,**

**He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and had them up and consummate them in Christ, both things in Heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:9-10, The Amplified Bible)**

God's divine purpose from the beginning of time has been to unify all of heaven and earth in Jesus Christ. His vision is global in nature and...

**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9)**

God's purpose is salvation for the world. Because it is His purpose, it must become our purpose. We must make His global cause a priority.

There are many needs in the world including hunger, poverty, sickness, and social injustice. Traditional missions have been involved in all of these areas, and rightly so, for the Bible teaches such concern.

But the vision of the harvest fields, of reaping men and women for the Kingdom of God, must remain a priority. The other needs are met once communities of responsible believers are established.

Missions involves all levels of human need but spiritual harvesting, the winning of lost men and women to Jesus Christ, must be to us as it is to God: The priority purpose.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT**

God's purpose can be traced from Genesis to Revelation. His Word is a history of how He dealt with individuals and nations to fulfill His purpose.

The Great Commission was first given when God said to Adam and Eve...

**Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it... (Genesis 1:28)**

Adam and Eve were to populate the earth with descendants who were as they were: Created in the image of God, living souls in fellowship with a living God. Physically they were to produce children. Spiritually they were to produce believers.

Later God established an everlasting covenant with Abraham. This covenant was global in nature for He said to Abraham:

> **And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.**
> **(Genesis 22:18)**
>
> **...and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**
> **(Genesis 28:14)**

From Abraham came the nation of Israel. God used Israel as a witness to surrounding nations. The nations of the earth were blessed as God revealed Himself to them through Israel.

During the time of the plagues in Egypt God told Pharaoh that the judgments were sent to show him that God was above all others:

> **For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. (Exodus 9:14)**

When Israel faced the challenge of the flooded Jordan River, God dried up the waters so that the people of the earth might recognize His hand:

> **That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever. (Joshua 4:24)**

When David met Goliath on the battlefield he said God would give him the victory so the entire earth might know there was a God:

> **This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee,**
>
> **and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.**
> **(I Samuel 17:46)**

After the Kingdom of Israel was established, Solomon caught the vision of the global purpose of God he expressed the desire that...

> **...all the people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel. (I Kings 8:43)**

David issued a call to the harvest fields of the nations of the world when he cried:

**Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people.**

**Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth... (Psalms 96:3,10)**

Two of the Old Testament prophets, Daniel and Jonah, ministered cross-culturally. This means they took the Gospel message to nations other than their own.

Daniel was a witness to God while serving as an official in Babylon. Jonah was a missionary to Ninevah.

Isaiah declared that Israel was God's witness among the nations:

**Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: Who among them can declare this and shew us former things?...**

**Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.**

**I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.**

**I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed...therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. (Isaiah 43:9-12)**

The entire record of the Old Testament is a history of God using Israel as a witness to the nations of the world.

The Old Testament reflects God's divine purpose as He dealt with individuals and nations to bring them to the knowledge of the true and living God.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Old Testament prepared the way for the fulfillment of God's purpose in the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament records the ministry of Jesus as He fulfilled God's will and purpose. When Jesus challenged His disciples with the vision of the harvest He said:

**My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work. (John 4:34)**

The entire life of Jesus was dedicated to harvesting men and women for God. It was the purpose of His life to reach the fields of the world:

**And He said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent. (Luke 4:43)**

When Jesus went back to Heaven, He left us with the Great Commission which is the mandate behind the vision of spiritual harvest. It is recorded in five different places in the New Testament:

**And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth.**

**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**

**Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**
**(Matthew 28:18-20)**

**And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.**

**He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

**And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;**

**They shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**
**(Mark 16:15-18)**

**Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.**

**And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.**

**And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.**
**(Luke 24:45-49)**

**...As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (John 20:21)**

**But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)**

As believers, it is our responsibility to fulfill God's purpose as we are now His witness to the nations of the world.

The book of Acts records the birth and early life of the Church. The central theme is summarized in the phrase "ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8). The pattern of this expanding witness can be traced throughout the book of Acts:

Witness to the Jews: Acts 1:1-8:3
Witness to both Jews and Gentiles: Acts 8:4-12:25
Witness to Gentiles: Acts 13:1-28:31

The early church was born in a great demonstration of power as recorded in Acts 2. God began the process of creating a new body of people, the Church, through which His witness would flow to the nations of the world:

> **And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;**
>
> **To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.**
> **(Ephesians 3:9-10)**

God's purpose is that by the Church His plan of redemption through Jesus will be made known throughout the world.

The Epistles in the New Testament explain the position, order, privileges, and duties of members of the Church. A well-ordered Church capable of not only articulation [teaching] but of demonstration [showing] of the power of God was to provide the labor force in the harvest fields of the world.

In Revelation 1-3, John recorded the lifestyle of seven local churches at the end of the first century. Through this record we view the condition of the Church two generations after Pentecost.

Some of the churches had forgotten their purpose. Some were cold spiritually and had no power. But regardless of the condition of the church reflected in these chapters, the divine purpose of God had not changed:

> **Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.**
> **(Revelation 3:20)**

To any man....from any nation, tribe, and tongue...God desires to reveal Himself. From the beginning of time, God's purpose has not changed.*

---

* Harvestime International Institute offers a course entitled *"Developing a Biblical World View"* which further details God's purpose for the nations of the world as revealed in His Word.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Write T in front of each statement that is TRUE. Write F in front of each statement that is FALSE.

a._____God has not revealed His divine purpose to man.

b._____God's purpose is to unify all things in Jesus Christ.

c._____In the Old Testament record, God used Israel as a witness to the nations of the world.

d._____In the New Testament the Church is the body of people through which God desires to extend the Gospel to the world.

3. What is the divine purpose of God? Give at least one Scripture reference to support your answer.

_____

_____

_____Reference:_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Study Revelation chapters 1-3 which are God's message to seven churches in Asia.

   Make a list of the qualities in these churches which God commends. How would these qualities aid the churches in their extension of the Gospel?

   Make a list of the problems in the churches which God identifies. How would these problems prevent the church from fulfilling its purpose as a witness to the nations of the world?

2. Continue your study of the world in the Word. During the next year read the entire Bible with the global cause of God in mind.

   Identify all of the verses which concern God's dealings with the nations of the world. Use a special colored pen or pencil to underline these verses in your Bible.

   Some words to watch for which will help you identify the verses are listed below:

   -Earth
   - -World
   - -Nation or nations
   - -Gentiles (which means every nation other than Israel)
   - -Heathen

**PART THREE: OBJECTIFICATION**
**Objectives For Fulfilling The Vision**

# CHAPTER FIVE

## RUSTY SICKLES, EMPTY FIELDS

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify things which prevent harvest in the natural world.
- Apply these natural principles to spiritual harvest.

**KEY VERSES:**

> **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**
>
> **For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7-8)**

### INTRODUCTION

Part One of this course introduced the vision of the harvest. Part Two identified the purpose behind the vision. This section, Part Three, deals with "Objectification." It presents the plan which leads to "Expectation", the fulfillment of the vision.

This chapter examines reasons for poor spiritual harvest. It is just as important to know how NOT to do something as it is to know how to do it.

Thomas Edison, a famous inventor in the United States, conducted 1,500 experiments which failed before he perfected the light bulb. When asked about these experiments he said they were important because "I learned 1,500 ways not to do it." He did not have to waste future time and effort in unproductive methods.

You do not have to experiment with spiritual harvest. God has identified the reasons for poor harvest in His Word. It is important you understand these so you do not waste spiritual effort. That is the subject of this lesson.

The next two chapters concern "Strategies For Harvest", principles which result in effective spiritual harvest. Chapter Eight, "Reaping For Results", identifies the methods and tools for spiritual harvest.

## THE "IF-BUT" PRINCIPLE

There is an important principle in God's Word called the "If-But" principle. God has given many promises to His people and most of them are based on the "If-But" principle. Deuteronomy 28 is one example of this principle. God promises:

> **And it shall come to pass, IF thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. (Deuteronomy 28:1)**

The chapter lists the blessings God's people will experience IF they will serve Him. Among those blessings are promises of abundant harvest in the natural world:

> **...and blessed shalt thou be in the field...**
>
> **Blessed...shall be the fruit of thy ground... (Deuteronomy 28:3-4)**

But verse 15 warns:

> **BUT it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and his statues which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. (Deuteronomy 28:15)**

Among the curses for turning from the ways of the Lord is poor harvest in the natural world:

> **Cursed shalt thou be in the field...cursed shall be the fruit of thy land.**
>
> **Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in...Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes, for the worms shall eat them.**
>
> **Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit...**
>
> **All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. (Deuteronomy 28:16,18,38-42)**

This chapter in Deuteronomy illustrates the "If-But" principle. God's promises are conditional upon our response.

## NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL PARALLELS

The Bible reveals principles which will result in abundant harvest in the natural world. It also warns of ruined crops and poor harvest if these principles are not followed.

These principles apply to actual sowing and reaping in the natural world but they are also parallels of great spiritual truths.

Understanding these principles will result in a harvest in terms of reaching the world with the Gospel. But applying these principles in every area of life will also result in the blessing of God financially, materially, physically, and emotionally.

## SATAN'S INTEREST IN THE HARVEST

Satan has an interest in spiritual harvest. Jesus said to Peter:

> **Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you like wheat.**
> **(Luke 22:31)**

Satan wants to sift all that is good from your life so that only waste remains. He does not want you to reap a spiritual harvest.

To help you identify strategies Satan has designed to sift the harvest from your life, God warned of things which prevent spiritual harvest.

In order to apply strategies for effective harvest it is first necessary to eliminate things that prevent harvest in your life.

You must deal with these negative factors. It is like preparing the ground for planting in the natural world. The ground must be broken up and the rocks and thistles removed before it is ready to receive the seed.

## REASONS FOR POOR HARVEST

These are reasons for poor spiritual harvests:

### DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD:

The passage from Deuteronomy 28 previously discussed illustrates one reason for poor spiritual harvest: Disobedience to God's Word. God promised abundant harvest IF His people would observe His commandments. BUT if they would not, then the harvest would perish.

In Isaiah chapter five God speaks of Israel as a vineyard. Through disobedience to His Word (verses 13 and 20) they became unfruitful. When you disobey God's Word it results in spiritual famine:

> **Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord:**
>
> **And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. (Amos 8:11-12)**

**FORGETTING GOD:**

Another reason for poor harvest is forgetting God by not acknowledging His rightful place in your life:

> **Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants and shalt set it with strange slips:**
>
> **In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. (Isaiah 17:10-11)**

It is not enough to know about God, you must know God. You must accept His plan of salvation, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.

If you do not rightfully acknowledge God you can work night and day and yet not bring forth spiritual harvest. Israel was an example of a people who forgot God:

> **They soon forgat His works; they waited not for His counsel.**
>
> **They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt. (Psalms 106:13,21)**

Because of this, Israel suffered both in the natural and spiritual harvests.

As many who forget God, Israel did not recognize the reason they were experiencing poor harvests:

> **And they shall eat up thine harvest...they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees...And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the Lord**

**our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours. (Jeremiah 5:17-19)**

Amos clearly described the reason for poor harvest in chapters 4 and 5 of his writing:

**And also I have witholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city...and the piece whereupon it rained not withered...**

**I have smitten you with blasting and mildew; when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. (Amos 4:7,9)**

In addition to identifying the problem Amos gives the solution:

**Seek ye Me, and ye shall live... (Amos 5:4)**

**IMPROPER SOWING:**

God warned His people:

**Thou shalt now sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. (Deuteronomy 22:9)**

**...Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:**

**In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. (Isaiah 17:10-11)**

In these verses God speaks of "mingled seed" and "strange" slips [small plants or seedlings]. He said they would appear to be growing but in the time of harvest would be cursed.

The New Testament calls the "seed" the Word of God. What you sow in your life affects spiritual harvest. If you sow His Word you will have abundant harvest.

If you consider the traditions of man, organization, or denominations more important than or equal to the Word of God, then you are mingling seed. Many denominations look like healthy spiritual plants. They have large congregations and beautiful buildings in which to conduct their meetings. But they have mingled God's Word with their own traditions or revelations. Their

spiritual harvest is cursed. This is how cults begin. They "mingle" the seed of the Word with their own ideas. In the end the harvest is a sorrow.

The Word of God is the incorruptible seed which brings forth the harvest of the new birth in the lives of men and women:

> **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (I Peter 1:23)**

**UNCONCERN:**

Proverbs speaks of a son who sleeps during harvest:

> **...but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. (Proverbs 10:5)**

The harvest is a very busy time. It is the most important time, for if the harvest is not gathered rapidly it will rot in the fields.

In the natural world in Bible times every member of a family assisted in the fields during harvest. A son who spent his time sleeping during this period was a shame to his family.

We are in the most crucial time of spiritual harvest as we near the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet many of the children of God are sleeping. They have not joined the Body of Christ in the harvest fields. Their sickles are rusty and the fields are empty.

Proverbs speaks of the results of such unconcern:

> **I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;**
>
> **And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.**
>
> **Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.**
>
> **Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:**
>
> **So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man. (Proverbs 24:30-34)**

Unconcern results in spiritual unfruitfulness.

Jeremiah speaks of leaders destroying the harvest because of their unconcern:

> **Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion underfoot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness...the whole land is made desolate because no man layeth it to heart. (Jeremiah 12:10-11)**

Unconcerned leaders result in unconcerned followers. The vision of the harvest must be communicated by our spiritual leaders or the fields will lie desolate because "no man layeth it to heart."

**SELF-EFFORT:**

You cannot bring forth spiritual harvest by self-effort. Observe the results of self-effort in the following verse:

> **In the day shalt THOU make THY plant to grow, and in the morning shalt THOU make THY seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. (Isaiah 17:11)**

Chapter One stated that the vision God desires to give cannot be brought forth by self-effort. The only way it will come is by eliminating things which prevent spiritual harvest and applying God-given strategies for harvest.

Hosea spoke of poor harvest resulting from self-effort. Israel had trusted in their own way and their mighty men (Hosea 10:13). As long as you depend on your ways, methods, or your "mighty men" you will fail to see spiritual harvest. You must do God's work in God's way.

**CURSED REPRODUCTIVE PROCESS:**

One of the results of the fall of man into sin was that God cursed the reproductive process of the natural world. Women bring forth children in sorrow. The ground brings forth thorns and thistles and it takes much work to make it produce fruit (Genesis 3:16-19). These curses on the reproductive system were the result of sin.

In the spiritual world when you are living in sin there is a curse on the spiritual reproductive process of your life. It is only by salvation from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ that the curse will be lifted. You cannot claim the blessings of spiritual harvest as long as you are living under the curse of sin.

**REGARDING CIRCUMSTANCES:**

The circumstances of life can prevent spiritual harvest:

**The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. (Proverbs 20:4)**

**He that observeth the wind shall not sow: and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. (Ecclesiastes 11:4)**

In the natural world if the farmer waited for perfect conditions he would never sow or reap. Regardless of the wind, the clouds, or the cold, the farmer works his field.

In the spiritual world if you wait for perfect circumstances to enter the harvest fields you will never go. The circumstances of life...your problems, your financial situation, your lack of education...must all be ignored.

**UNDIRECTED EFFORT:**

You can spend all your life busily doing good works and never do the work of God. This is undirected spiritual effort:

**For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up. (Hosea 8:7)**

There are many good works and worthy causes in life. People will misuse your talents and abilities for these causes if you permit them to do so.

But in order to bring forth a spiritual harvest good works are not enough. Jesus said:

**My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34)**

The key to spiritual harvest is not busily doing good works but it is doing the work of God. Your spiritual effort must be directed towards His divine purpose or it will be like seed sown in the wind which is carried away and gives no yield.

**PESTS AND DISEASE:**

In the natural world there are pests and diseases which attack plants and destroy the harvest. Pests are things which attack the plants from the outside such as bugs, grasshoppers, weeds. Disease attacks plants from the inside, destroying the root and growth systems.

Believers also face pests and disease in the spirit world. Satan attacks from without through circumstances of life and from within through the mind which affects the will and emotions.

Farmers find it necessary to prune their fruit vines. They cut off the growth that has come from

within the vine which saps its life. They do this to make the vine more fruitful.

This is also necessary in the life of believers. There are things that come from within that prevent us from being fruitful (Mark 7:15). God prunes these things to increase our fruitfulness. John chapter 15 tells of this process.

The real problem with spiritual pests and disease is actually not the circumstances or the thought processes in the mind. The problem is with the spiritual powers behind these:

> **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)**

In the natural world, plants are sometimes treated with chemicals to kill the pests and cure the diseases. In the spiritual world, the armor of God protects the spiritual harvest of your life:

> **Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**
>
> **Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;**
>
> **And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**
>
> **Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**
>
> **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)**

**IMPROPER HARVESTING:**

Improper harvesting ruins the crop:

> **Does he who plows for sowing plow continually? Does he continue to plow and harrow his ground after it is smooth?**
>
> **When he has leveled its surface, does he not cast broad the seed of dill or fennel, and scatter cummin [a seasoning], and put the wheat in rows, and barley in its intended place, and spelt [an inferior kind of wheat] as the border?**

**And he trains each of them correctly, for his God instructs him correctly and teaches him.**

**For the dill is not threshed with a sharp threshing instrument, nor is a cart wheel rolled over the cummin; but the dill is beat off with a staff and the cummin with a rod by hand.**

**Does one crush bread grain? No, he does not grind it continuously, but when he has driven his cart wheel and his horses over it, he scatters it-tossing it up to the wind-without having crushed it. (Isaiah 28:24-28, The Amplified Bible)**

There are proper methods for preparing the ground and for planting the seed in the natural world. There are also various methods for harvesting depending on the crop. Fitches and cummin come out of the husk easily, so only a staff and rod is used. Bread corn requires more force so a threshing instrument must be used.

When you are harvesting the lives of men and women for the Kingdom of God, some will come easily to knowledge of the Lord. Others will take more effort to harvest.

Improper harvesting ruins the crop. Too much force bruises the tender plants. Too little effort fails to bring forth other crops. The same God who gives wisdom for reaping the natural harvest will provide wisdom to harvest spiritual crops.

**UNCULTIVATED GROUND:**

If the ground is not properly prepared, the harvest will be poor. Read the parable of the sower in Mark 4:12-20, Matthew 13:1-23, and Luke 8:4-15. In these parables the Word of God is compared to seed in the natural world. The Word is sown in the hearts of men and women.

The thing that varies in these accounts is not the sower, the seed, or the method. The thing that affected the harvest was the condition of the soil. Some of the ground is not cultivated but is full of spiritual stones and weeds such as the cares of the world, riches, and lusts of other worldly things. The harvest from this uncultivated spiritual ground is poor.

But some of the seed is sown on good ground which represents hearts spiritually prepared to receive it. The result is abundant harvest:

**And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. (Mark 4:20)**

The seed of the Word sown on fertile soil brings forth the greatest harvest.

Some people are receptive to the Gospel while others are resistant. If you are not experiencing harvest, uncultivated soil may be the problem. It must be properly prepared. The prophet Hosea commands:

> **Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you.**
>
> **Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men. (Hosea 10:12-13)**

Uncultivated ground in the spiritual world represents unrighteous ground. Hosea tells God's people they have reaped iniquity because they have plowed wickedness into the spiritual ground of their lives. The wickedness sown which results in a harvest of iniquity includes:

**Discord:**

> **...A wicked man...soweth discord. (Proverbs 6:12,14)**

**Iniquity:**

> **He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity... (Proverbs 22:8)**
>
> **Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. (Job 4:8)**

**Strife:**

> **A froward man soweth strife... (Proverbs 16:28)**

**Flesh:**

> **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**
>
> **For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting... (Galatians 6:7-8)**
>
> **Now the works of the flesh are...these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,**

**Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,**

**Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. (Galatians 5:19-21)**

To assure proper spiritual harvest, you must break up the spiritual ground of your life and remove these hindrances. As Hosea recommended, we must "seek the Lord until He comes and rain righteousness" upon us.

**UNRIGHTEOUS FOUNDATIONS:**

When there was a poor harvest in the natural world, the prophet Haggai told God's people to examine their ways:

**Ye have sown much, and bring in little...Consider your ways...Ye looked for much and lo, it came to little. (Haggai 1:6,7,9)**

God's people had sown much seed but the harvest was little. Haggai told them they must rebuild both in the natural and spiritual worlds in order to have a good harvest.

Why was rebuilding necessary?

In the natural world, Israel had delayed building God's house and emphasized building their own homes. They had put their own concerns ahead of God's command.

In the spiritual world, the foundation of their lives was wrong. They had been sowing and reaping in the spirit world with unholy hands:

**...So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, says the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there on the altar is unclean because they who offer it are themselves unclean. (Haggai 2:14, The Amplified Bible)**

A right work or sacrifice offered by unholy hands is not acceptable. The foundation was wrong. God said to Israel:

**Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me? (Jeremiah 2:21)**

Because of this improper spiritual foundation God cursed the harvest:

**I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands. (Haggai 2:17)**

The Living Bible states that the result of unrighteousness was that "everything you did went wrong."

Haggai told God's people that the foundation of the Lord's temple must be relayed. He said if they would rebuild in both the natural and spiritual worlds God would bless them:

> **But now note this: From today...and from this day onward, I will bless you. Notice, I am giving you this promise now before you have even begun to build the Temple structure, and before you have harvested the grain, and before the grapes and figs and pomegranates and olives have produced their next crops: From this day, I will bless you. (Haggai 2:18-19, The Living Bible)**

From the day that Israel began to rebuild the temple in the natural world and the foundation of righteousness in the spirit world God started to bless them. The result was abundant harvest in both worlds.

If you will rebuild the foundations of your life on righteousness, from this day God will begin to bless you. You will reap abundantly in every area of life.

Harvestime International Institute offers a course entitled "Foundations of Faith", dealing with the importance of proper spiritual foundations in the Christian life.

The subject is so great that it cannot be covered here but it is important to note some basic principles because they affect the spiritual harvesting process. The proper foundation which brings abundant harvest is:

**Built On A Rock Which Is Immovable:**

> **He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. (Luke 6:48)**

**That Rock Is Jesus Christ:**

> **There is no other rock; I know not any. (Isaiah 44:8)**

**The Foundation Is Based On Righteousness:**

> **The uncompromisingly righteous has an everlasting foundation. (Proverbs 10:25, The Amplified Bible)**

**It Is A Good Foundation:**

> **Laying in store for themselves a good foundation...(I Timothy 6:19)**

**It Is Eternal:**

> **Laying in store for themselves a good foundation for the future [eternal] so they may grasp that which is life indeed. (I Timothy 6:19, The Living Bible)**

**It Is Based On God's Word:**

> **God's Word stands firm like a rock [foundation]; nothing can shake it. (II Timothy 2:19)**

**The Foundation Stands On Two Principles:**

> **But the firm foundation laid by God stands sure and unshaken, bearing this seal and inscription: The Lord knows those who are His and let everyone who names himself by the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it. (I Timothy 2:19) The Amplified Bible**

The two principles upon which the foundation stands are:

1. Redeemed men: ⇨ The Lord knows those who are His.

2. Living redeemed lives: ⇨ Let everyone who names himself by the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.

This is the proper foundation for spiritual harvest.

**FEW LABORERS:**

If there are few laborers in the harvest field, the yield will be poor. The harvest will rot before it can be reaped. Jesus said:

> **...The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest. (Luke 10:2)**

## THE RESULTS

Things that prevent harvest have tragic results in the spirit world:

> **The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.**
>
> **Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.**
>
> **The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered. (Joel 1:10-12)**

In the natural world, poor harvest results in sadness...

> **And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting... (Isaiah 16:10)**

In the spiritual world poor harvest also results in a loss of joy and gladness:

> **Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? (Joel 1:16)**

If we wonder why there is no joy in our lives, if we question why singing and the victory shout have vanished from our churches... it is the result of poor spiritual harvest.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

We have identified the factors which prevent spiritual harvest. We have discovered the reasons for lack of spiritual joy and victory.

What can you do to reverse the cycle of poor spiritual yields and bring abundant harvest in your life?

When the natural harvest was poor in Israel, Joel told God's people to:

> **Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:**
>
> **And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your**

**God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness... (Joel 2:12-13)**

You must turn to God in repentance for disobedience to His Word and unconcern over spiritual harvest. You must ask Him to remove the spiritual pests and diseases which have prevented fruitfulness. You must repent of self-effort and ask Him to direct your efforts to the fulfillment of His purpose for the nations of the world. You must break up the uncultivated ground and rebuild the foundation of your life on righteousness.

Joel advised the spiritual leaders to repent and call a fast:

**Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar...Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord. (Joel 1:13-14)**

If you are a Christian leader and your church has not been reaping spiritual harvest take the following steps:

-Call an assembly of your elders and your membership.
-Come together before God in fasting and repentance.
-Ask God to give you a vision of abundant spiritual harvest.
-Then unite in purpose to fulfill that vision.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.

_____

_____

_____

2. Write T in front of the statements which are TRUE. Write F in front of the statements which are FALSE.

a._____Deuteronomy 28 is an example of the "If/But" principle of God's promises.

b._____Satan has no interest in spiritual harvest.

c._____Self-effort is important in reaping spiritual harvest.

d._____You should carefully observe the circumstances before you sow spiritually.

e._____Doing good works is not enough to bring forth spiritual harvest.

f._____Your problem is not really with bad circumstances but with the spiritual powers behind these circumstances.

g._____A right work offered with unholy hands is not acceptable.

3. What are some of the wicked things we sow which bring a spiritual harvest of iniquity:

_____ _____

_____ _____

4. What are the two principles of the foundation based on Jesus Christ?

_____living_____

5. Give one reference showing the results of poor spiritual harvest.

_____

6. Give one reference showing what you can do to reverse the trend of poor spiritual harvest.

_____

7. List the things which prevent harvest that were discussed in this chapter.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

Study the following references to identify other reasons for poor spiritual harvest:

**OLD TESTAMENT**

Leviticus 19:19
Deuteronomy 22:9; 28
Job 4:8
Psalms 105
Proverbs 6:12,14,19; 10:5; 16:28; 20:4; 22:8; 24:30
Ecclesiastes 11:4
Song of Solomon 2:15
Isaiah 16:10; 17:10-11; 28:24-28; 32:9-20
Jeremiah 2; 5:17-19; 8:13-14; 12:10-11
Hosea 8:7; 10:12-13
Joel l
Amos 4,5
Micah 6
Haggai l

**NEW TESTAMENT**

Matthew 13:1-23
Mark 4:2-20
Luke 8:4-15; 10:2; 22:31
II Corinthians 9:6
Galatians 6:7-8
James 5:4

# CHAPTER SIX

## STRATEGIES FOR SPIRITUAL HARVEST

## PART I

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Use Biblical strategies which yield abundant spiritual harvest.

**KEY VERSES:**

> **They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.**
>
> **He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalms 126:5-6)**

### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter identified things that prevent spiritual harvest. This and the following chapter details strategies which assure abundant spiritual harvest.

Strategies are principles, methods, and plans to follow in order to reach a certain goal. They are revealed in God's Word as natural principles which are parallels of spiritual truths.

### STRATEGIES OF HARVEST

Here are the strategies of harvest:

**EACH PLANT IS CAPABLE OF REPRODUCTION:**

In the natural world when God created the earth He made each plant capable of reproducing itself:

> **And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, WHOSE SEED IS IN ITSELF, upon the earth; and it was so. (Genesis 1:11)**

Just as each plant in the natural world is capable of reproduction, each believer has the ability to reproduce spiritually. Within YOU dwells the potential to be spiritually reproductive. Great

knowledge of spiritual things is not necessary in order to become part of the cycle of spiritual harvest. Jesus told a parable which illustrates this truth:

> **And He said, So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground.**
>
> **...and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.**
>
> **But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4:26,27,29)**

It is not necessary to understand the theology behind the growth and development of the seed of God's Word in human hearts. It is not required that you have understanding of deep theological truths.

What **is** necessary is that you become a participant in the cycle of spiritual harvest.

**SOWING IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO REAP:**

In the natural world, you must sow seed in order to reap a crop. In the spiritual world you must also sow in order to reap. God provides the spiritual resources for sowing:

> **And God, who provides seed for the sower and bread for eating will also provide and multiply your resources for sowing...**
> **(II Corinthians 9:10, The Amplified Bible)**

God multiplies your spiritual talents and abilities to make you reproductive.

God multiplies your financial resources so you can invest in His work. He does not multiply your finances for you to accumulate great fortunes. The purpose is that you can reinvest the blessings in His Kingdom.

**YOU DO NOT HARVEST IN THE SAME SEASON YOU SOW:**

In the beginning God established a seasonal principle in the natural world:

> **While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest...shall not cease.**
> **(Genesis 8:22)**

Sowing is necessary in order to have a harvest. But the harvest does not come in the same season as the sowing. Some who receive the vision of spiritual harvest become discouraged because they do not understand this principle.

There is a time of sowing but then you must wait for the seed of the Word to germinate in the hearts of men and women. There is a time to patiently cultivate. You do not harvest in the same season in which you sow.

Psalms l speaks of this process in the life of believers:

> **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season... (Psalms 1:3)**

If there are fruitful seasons of life this means there are also periods which appear unfruitful. These are periods of preparing the ground, sowing, and cultivating. But these seasons of "unfruitfulness" are necessary to bring the harvest.

This makes the principle of timing an important key to harvest. You must wait patiently during the time of growth and development. But you must also recognize when it is harvest time and act promptly before the crop perishes:

> **But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4:29)**

In summary, there is...

> **A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. (Ecclesiastes 3:2)**

**YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW:**

Seed reproduces after its own kind in the natural world. If you plant apple seeds you will harvest apples. The same is true in the spirit world:

> **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6:7)**

Sowing to the flesh brings a corrupt harvest while sowing in righteousness results in a good harvest.

**YOU MUST SOW REGARDLESS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES:**

Those who regard circumstances will never become part of the vision of the harvest. Their circumstances will defeat them just as a farmer who neglects his field because of the cold, wind, and clouds:

> **He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. (Ecclesiastes 11:4)**

An important strategy of spiritual harvest is that of sowing regardless of the circumstances of life:

> **Happy and fortunate are you who cast your seed upon all waters when the river overflows its banks; for the seed will sink into the mud and when of the waters subside will spring up; you will find it after many days in an abundant harvest... (Isaiah 32:20, The Amplified Bible)**

You must sow beside all waters which means in all circumstances of life. Even when the rivers of difficult circumstances overflow the banks of your life, you must continue sowing. God has promised it will bring abundant harvest.

**YOU HARVEST IN PROPORTION TO THE AMOUNT SOWN:**

> **Remember this: He who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously and that blessing may come to someone, will also reap generously and with blessings.**
> **(II Corinthians 9:6, The Amplified Bible)**

This principle applies in every area of your spiritual life. If you give grudgingly of your time, talents, and finances to the work of God, then your harvest will be small. If you sow generously, you will reap abundantly. There are different levels of productivity in spiritual harvest described in John 15. You can bring forth:

| | |
|---|---|
| -Fruit: | John 15:2 |
| -More fruit: | John 15:2 |
| -Much fruit: | John 15:4 |
| -Permanent fruit: | John 15:16 |

God's desire is that you bring forth much fruit and that it is permanent.

Peter identified some qualities you should develop in your life in order to be fruitful:

> **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;**
>
> **And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;**
>
> **And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.**

**For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-8)**

Peter warns that if these qualities are not developed you will lack spiritual vision:

**But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (II Peter 1:9)**

**YOU CAN SOW WHERE YOU DO NOT REAP and REAP WHERE YOU DO NOT SOW:**

When Israel entered the promised land God said they would eat of vineyards which they had not planted. They would reap a harvest which they had not sown.

The same is true in the spirit world. You can reap the harvest others have sown:

**And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.**

**I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. (John 4:37-38)**

For centuries believers have sown their lives in the harvest fields of the world. As we near the return of the Lord their sowing is bringing a great harvest in the nations of the world. You enter into their labors when you reap where you have not sown.

But you may also be part of the sowing process and never reap the harvest.

Paul speaks of this:

**I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.**

**So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.**

**Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.**

**For we are labourers together with God... (I Corinthians 3:6-9)**

**YOU WILL REAP THE HARVEST IF YOU ARE FAITHFUL:**

**Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)**

**Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. (James 5:7)**

If you are faithful God has promised you will reap the harvest. Do not become weary in the task He has given you to do.

**IN ORDER TO REPRODUCE, THE SEED MUST DIE:**

A seed looks dead. There are no green leaves, no tender shoots or branches. In order to grow it must be buried.

This is a natural parallel of a great spiritual truth. Spiritual life depends on sacrificial death:

**Every time you plant seed, you sow something that does not come to life (germinating, springing up and growing) unless it dies first.**
**(I Corinthians 15:36, The Amplified Bible)**

In order to bring forth life it was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross. His ministry seemed to be in vain because it ended in death.

But it was His sowing time. What an abundant harvest has resulted from His death from that one kernel of wheat which fell into the ground. Through His death millions have found life.

Spiritual life requires sacrificial death. It requires death to sin. It requires death to worldly desires and pleasures.

Jim Elliott, martyred for the cause of Christ in an attempt to reach the Auca Indians of Ecuador with the Gospel, wrote in his diary: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

In natural life, the ultimate contradiction is death because death brings eternal life to the believer. The only real death is when you do not have anything worth dying for. Be sure the thing you are living for is worth dying for.

At times there will be no visible evidence of harvest. It may appear you are losing your life for a vision which is dying.

But you must remember:

**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.**
**(John 12:24)**

Jesus did not die in vain. Through His death came life. Through his death, salvation came to the Auca Indians as others stepped forward to take his place and reach them with the Gospel.

The seed is not dead. Within it is the life force of God. But in order to bring forth life it must die. Hosea speaks of the results of investing your life in this manner:

> **And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. (Hosea 2:23)**

This verse summarizes the purpose of applying the strategies of spiritual harvest. You labor so God can say to those who were not His people "Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Define "strategies."

_____

3. List nine strategies for spiritual harvest discussed in this chapter.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

## PARABLES OF THE VINEYARD

There are several parables in the Bible which concern the vineyard and reveal additional information about spiritual harvest. The parable of the sower (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8) is covered elsewhere in this course. Other parables of the vineyard are listed below for further study.

**BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT: Amos 8:1-2**

What natural example did God show Amos?_____

What was the meaning of this example?_____

What was the great famine which God sent as judgment on Israel because they would not

obey His Word? (verses 11-12)_____

**GOD'S VINEYARD: Isaiah 5:1-7**

This parable refers to the nation of Israel. God had planted Israel in the spirit world to be reproductive and bless the nations of the world. But Israel had not been fruitful. What was the result of the spiritual harvest in Israel? (verse 4)

_____

What was the judgment on the vineyard? (verses 5-6)

_____

What are the contrasts in verse 7? God looked for _____

but found_____.

He looked for _____but found_____(of unrighteousness).

What were the reasons Israel was in this spiritual condition? (verses 13,20)

_____

**GOD'S VINEYARD: Matthew 21:28-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16**

This New Testament parable also concerns God's vineyard. It is a record of how God sent His prophets to Israel and they rejected them. Finally He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, and He too was rejected.

What was the response of the husbandmen (Israel) to the servants God sent?

_____

What was their response to the Son?_____

What was the judgment God sent?_____
(The others to whom He would give it were the Gentiles).

**THE FIG TREE: Luke 13:6-9**

When the owner of the vineyard came to gather fruit from the fig tree, what did he find?

_____

What did he want to do?_____

What was the response of the keeper of the vineyard?_____

The fig tree represents Israel. What do you think this parable means?

_____

**WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD: Matthew 20:1-16**

What was the pay of the workers hired early in the day?_____

What was the pay of the workers hired late in the day?_____

What was the problem which arose between the workers?

_____

What is the principle which Jesus illustrated with this parable? (verse 16)

_____

**THE TWO SONS: Matthew 21:28-31**

When the father asked his sons to work in the vineyard:

How did the first son answer him?_____

What did the first son actually do?_____

How did the second son answer him?_____

What did the second son actually do?_____

What was the principle Jesus taught through this parable?_____

_____

**THE HARVEST: Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:2; John 4:34-38, 12:24**

On several occasions Jesus used the natural example of the harvest to illustrate spiritual truths. What is the greatest need in the harvest field?

_____

What is one thing we can do about this need (Matthew 9:38)?

_____

What is the principle of harvest Jesus taught in John 12:24?

_____

What truth do you learn about sowers and reapers in John 4:36-38?

_____

**THE TARES: Matthew 13:24-30**

What kind of seed was sown in the field?_____

What happened while the workers slept?_____

What was the solution to the problem of the tares which had been sown? (verse 30)

_____

Why did the owner decide on this solution? (verse 29)

_____

Is it our responsibility to separate tares from wheat?_____

**THE MUSTARD SEED: Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:31-32; Luke 13:18-19**

The mustard seed is the_____of all seeds.

What type of plant is it when it is grown?_____

What spiritual truth was Jesus illustrating with the story of the mustard seed?

_____

In Matthew 17:20 Jesus used the mustard seed as an example of faith. What are the effects of a small amount of faith?

_____

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## STRATEGIES FOR SPIRITUAL HARVEST

## PART II

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Explain spiritual parallels of the natural principles of plant development.
- Apply these parallels as strategies for spiritual harvest.

**KEY VERSE:**

> **For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.**
> **(Isaiah 61:11)**

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter continues the study of strategies for spiritual harvest. It concerns a final principle of harvest: Seeds develop in response to certain external conditions.

In the natural world there are certain conditions required for growth and development of seeds. These natural conditions are parallels of spiritual factors necessary for development of the seed of the Word of God in order for it to bring a spiritual harvest.

### CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

**LIFE:**

Growth is impossible without life. There must be life in the seed, or it will not grow. Jesus was the visible revelation of the Word of God, the Seed, and in Him was life:

> **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)**

**For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. (John 5:26)**

Jesus came to plant this seed of life in you to make you reproductive:

**I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)**

His life is in you. When you plant the seed of His Word, you know that...

**For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:**

**So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)**

**PROPER SOIL:**

You have learned in this course, that uncultivated ground prevents abundant harvest. Proper soil is necessary for a good harvest:

**And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. (Mark 4:20)**

When you harvest in the spirit world you must concentrate your efforts on good ground. You must prepare the ground and sow the seed of the Word properly. Both are necessary if harvest is to come (Hosea 10:12; Jeremiah 4:3).

According to the parable of the sower (Mark 4:3-20), if there is no harvest then the variable is the ground. This is an important principle of harvest. Unresponsive ground should not be neglected. Someone should sow, cultivate, and recognize when it is time to call in harvesters (Luke 13:6-9). But this is not the place to concentrate the spiritual forces. Jesus never said there would be a lack of sowers but a lack of harvesters. The spiritual labor forces should be concentrated where the ground is responsive and yielding a harvest.

Timing is of great importance in harvest. Harvesters are not needed when the seed has just been sown or when the crop is still green. But there is that brief, strategic moment in which the harvest of the good soil is ripe. It is then that many harvesters are needed. If all the laborers are busy with unresponsive spiritual fields and there are no harvesters available, then the opportunity is lost forever.

**WATER:**

Water is necessary if a seed is to germinate and produce in the natural world. God promised:

> **For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. (Isaiah 44:3)**

This pouring out is an anointing of the Holy Spirit of which water is a symbol:

> **I will pour out of my Spirit upon your seed. (Isaiah 44:10, The Amplified Bible)**
>
> **He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)**

The water of the Holy Spirit causes the seed of the Word of God to take root in the hearts of men and women who are dead in sin:

> **For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.**
>
> **Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;**
>
> **Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. (Job 14:7-9)**

**LIGHT:**

It is response to light that stimulates plant growth in the natural world. It is the light of God that results in development of the spiritual harvest:

> **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)**
>
> **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)**

The light of God brings spiritual life.

**AIR:**

An important substance called carbon dioxide is drawn in by the natural plant from the air which surrounds it. Air is necessary for plants to grow. In the Bible the Holy Spirit is compared to air or a wind:

**The wind breathes where it will and thou canst hear the sound of it: But knowest nothing of the way it came or the way it goes. So it is when a man is born of the breath of the spirit. (John 3:8, Knox Translation)**

The Holy Spirit breathes life into the seed of the Word which results in spiritual growth.

**SPACE:**

In the parable of the sower, competition for space caused some plants to die:

**He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful. (Matthew 13:22)**

The competition of the things of the world can choke the seed of the Word of God and prevent spiritual fruitfulness.

**ROOT SYSTEM:**

Roots are necessary to anchor and supply nutrients to the plant. Psalms l tells how to develop the root system in your spiritual life:

**Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.**

**But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**

**And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth**

**forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalms 1:1-3)**

**REST:**

The plant rests during a period called "dormancy." Dormancy is a period of rest for the plant. Dormancy usually occurs right before a period of very rapid growth. The plant looks like it is dead. But it is not dead. The seed of life is still alive within.

When you plant the seed of the Word of God in the lives of men and women there is often a period of dormancy during which you can see no growth. You may think you have failed in your mission. But the seed has not died.

Just as in the natural world, spiritual dormancy precedes the period of rapid growth and development of spiritual harvest. Wait patiently for the harvest:

> **Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.**
> **(James 5:7)**

**ATTACHED TO THE VINE:**

In order to bear fruit in the natural world a branch must be attached to the main plant. If the branch is broken off from the main life-giving vine or trunk it will not bear fruit.

Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. In order to bear spiritual fruit, you must maintain your relationship to Him:

> **I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.**
>
> **Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**
>
> **Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**
>
> **Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (John 15:1-4)**

**PRUNING:**

Pruning is necessary in the natural world if a plant is to remain reproductive and bear fruit. When a farmer prunes a plant he cuts off the unproductive branches in order to make the plant produce more fruit. He removes everything which would hinder the growth of the plant.

Pruning is also necessary in the spiritual world. Spiritual pruning is correction by God. The Bible also calls it chastisement. When God prunes, He removes from your life everything which would hinder your spiritual growth. This process is necessary if you are to bear spiritual fruit:

> **Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.**
> **(John 15:2)**

Sometimes you do not reap the benefits of pruning because you blame Satan when God is actually the one bringing circumstances into your life to correct [prune] you. The purpose of God's correction is given in Hosea 6:1:

**Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. (Hosea 6:1)**

The chastisement of pruning results in a return to God. Only by returning to Him will you become spiritually reproductive.

**CLIMATE:**

Climate is important to plants in the natural world. Sometimes plants are kept in buildings called "hot houses" at specific temperatures in order for them to grow. They are protected from the real world outside. If you take a "hot house" plant and move it outside, it will soon die because it has lived only in a controlled environment. It cannot withstand the environment of the real world.

Spiritually speaking, we do not want "hot house" Christians who look good in controlled settings but are unable to reproduce when they come in contact with the real world. The seed of God's Word sown in your own life and the lives of those to whom you minister should produce growth despite the most difficult of spiritual climates.

## SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the strategies for spiritual harvest. A review of the principles reveal the following spiritual parallels of natural truths:

-Each plant is capable of reproduction.
-Sowing is necessary in order to reap.
-You do not harvest in the same season you sow.
-You must sow regardless of the circumstances.
-You harvest in proportion to the amount sown.
-You can sow where you do not reap and reap where you do not sow.
-You will reap the harvest if you are faithful.
-In order to reproduce, the seed must die.
-Seeds develop in response to certain external conditions.

Understanding and applying these strategies will result in abundant spiritual harvest. The next chapter will show you how to reap that harvest.

## SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

_____

2. What was the final principle of harvest taught in this chapter?

_____

3. List the ten natural conditions for growth discussed in this chapter and applied to spiritual harvest:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

In the last two chapters spiritual parallels of natural principles of sowing and reaping have been analyzed. Jesus presented a similar study in the parable of the sower. Compare the three accounts of this parable in Matthew 13:3-9; Mark 4:3-20; and Luke 8:5-15.

1. What was the spiritual parallel of the natural seed which was sown?

   (Luke 8:11)_____

2. The different types of soil represent the responsiveness of people to the Word of God. Complete the following chart which describes the types of soil and the results of sowing the seed:

| Type Of Soil | Results From The Seed Sown In This Soil |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

3. What happens when someone hears the Word and does not understand it?

   (Matthew 13:19)_____

4. What causes the seed in stony places to die?

   (Matthew 13:20-21; Luke 8:6,13)_____

5. What are the things which are compared to thorns which choke out the Word?

   (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:18-19; Luke 8:14)_____

6. What happens when the Word is choked out by the thorns? (Matthew 13:22).

   He becomes_____.

7. Does the parable indicate there are different results when the seed in good ground is harvested? (Matthew 13:23)_____What are the results?_____

8. What happened to the seed which fell by the wayside?

(Mark 4:4; Luke 8:5)_____

What is the spiritual parallel of this? (Mark 4:15) _____comes immediately and takes away the Word which was sown.

9. What are the characteristics of people's hearts who are like the good ground? (Luke 8:15) . They have an_____ and _____ heart.

10. What three responses are made by people who are like good ground? (Luke 8:15)

11. These various responses to the Word of God do not apply only to accepting the Gospel message. They apply to any truth of the Word which God plants in our lives.

The vision of the harvest has been planted in your life. Has it been planted in good spiritual ground? What will be the results of it?

Has it fallen by the wayside? If so, the vision has been snatched away by Satan because you have not made it a priority purpose of your life.

Has it fallen on stony ground? You may have received the vision of the harvest with joy but it has not really taken root in your heart. When hard times come you will fall away from the vision. Has it been planted among thorns? Are you too concerned with cares, riches, pleasures, and lust of this life? Are these temporal things more important than the vision? If so, you will never bring forth a harvest. Has the revelation of the harvest fallen on good ground? Have you received and will you keep the vision? If so, you will bring forth fruit and become spiritually reproductive.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## REAPING BY REVELATION

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Explain God's methodology of multiplication.
- Identify the spiritual tool which enables reaping by revelation.
- Go beyond blessing to experience spiritual power.

**KEY VERSE:**

> **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)**

### INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to know strategies for spiritual harvest. You must also understand the method and tool for harvesting. The method is the way you use the strategies you have learned. You must do God's work His way. His way is that of divine revelation and results in spiritual reproduction.

> **And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left.**
>
> **Then shall He give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous... (Isaiah 30:21,23)**

This is reaping by revelation from God rather than by man's methods.

### STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERY

Believers are "stewards of the mysteries of God." A steward is one in charge of something on behalf of another. A mystery is something not known by others. God has given us a commission to...

> **...make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**

**To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.**

**According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3:9-11)**

God has revealed to the church the mystery of salvation through Jesus Christ. By the church He is making known this mystery to the universe:

**Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself;**

**That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)**

The church is the instrument through which the mysteries of God are revealed to sinful humanity. Our mission is one of "reaping by revelation."

## A SEED SHALL SERVE HIM

The natural cycle of harvest is based on the principle of multiplication. The seed is sown and produces a harvest. Within the fruit of that harvest are the seeds of further reproduction:

**And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.**
**(Genesis 1:12)**

These seeds can multiply and bring forth another harvest. The cycle is unending. In this natural cycle is a great spiritual truth. It is one of the reasons Jesus used the harvest to illustrate the vision of reaching the world with the Gospel.

Just as each grain or fruit harvested has the capacity for reproduction in the natural world, so it is in the spiritual world.

Jesus was referred to as a seed:

**All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.**
**A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.**
**(Psalms 22:27,30)**

When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of all mankind, the seed of His life was planted. What a rich harvest it has yielded as multitudes have been saved from sin to salvation and from death

to life. Each born-again believer is like a seed in the natural world. Within each one is life and the capacity to reproduce. This is true both in the natural and spiritual worlds.

## THE WORLD WAS REACHED

It was a great vision with which Jesus challenged His followers. The harvest fields of the world spread before them. They had no modern technology such as printing presses, radios, televisions, and computers to enable their task. They had no rapid transportation such as buses, cars, trains, or airplanes. Yet the Bible records that in a short time they literally turned the world upside down for Jesus Christ:

> **And when they found them not, they drew ...certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. (Acts 17:6)**

The vision was accomplished by men who understood God's method of multiplication and knew how to harvest spiritually.

All over the world there are ripened spiritual harvest fields but souls are perishing despite modern technology. The reason is that many have not understood the method and tool for reaping in revelation harvest.

## THE METHOD

Modern churches have tried many methods to spread the Gospel and increase church membership. They have used contests, prizes, and special programs to attract a crowd. They have used many man-made plans in trying to accomplish spiritual work. Spiritual work is done by spiritual methods. God would not leave His followers with such a great vision to fulfill without providing a method to make it become reality.

The method can be seen in the natural parallel of the fruit of the harvest which has the ability to reproduce. It is summarized in II Timothy 2:2:

> **And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (II Timothy 2:2)**

The world was not reached by just the eleven disciples of Jesus Christ. Every believer was a reproducing Christian. The world today will never be reached by only the professional ministers and missionaries. There are not enough of them. Ninety-nine percent of the church is composed of laymen. This is the labor force that must be motivated if we are to reach three billion souls for Jesus Christ.

The Bible records that great persecution came against the early church in Jerusalem and...

> **...they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles...**
>
> **Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word. (Acts 8:1,4)**

The apostles, who were the church leaders and full time ministers, remained in Jerusalem. It was the scattered believers who went everywhere preaching the Word. Each believer was reproducing other believers and discipling them in the Kingdom of God. Those scattered were fishermen, tentmakers, and seamstresses by occupation, but their main concern was the spread of the Gospel message.

When Saul was persecuting the early church it is recorded that he not only entered the temples but also into "every house" to arrest believers (Acts 8:3). This was because every home was a center of spiritual harvest. With every believer reproducing and every home a center of evangelism, closing the church doors would not stop the spread of the Gospel.

Just as every believer in the early church was reproductive, every home had a special mission. For example, the following events occurred in the homes of believers:

- Acts 2:1,46: Pentecost came in the upper room of a house. After Pentecost the believers met daily in homes.

-Acts 9:11,17: Ananias went to the house of Judas and ministered to Paul. This resulted in the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

-Acts 10-11: While praying in a home Peter received a revelation which resulted in the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

-Acts 12:12, 16:15, 21-24, 40: Prayer meetings of believers were held in the home of Mary, Lydia, Jarius.

-Acts 20:20: Paul not only taught publicly but also in homes.

-Acts 21:8-14: Prophetic revelation was given to Paul in the house of Philip.

-Acts 28:30-31: Paul preached and taught in a rented house.

-Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:15,19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2: References are made to the churches in the homes of Priscilla and Aquilla, Stephanas, Nymphas, and Archippus.

Every home was a center of spiritual reproduction. Every believer was reproducing.

Your home is not to be a center of defensive spiritual warfare where you constantly must be protecting from the attack of the enemy. It is to be a stronghold of offensive spiritual warfare advancing the Gospel message and claiming enemy territory for God.

## TEACH ONE TO REACH ONE

The method is simple: Each believer reproducing other believers, teaching faithful men who are able to teach others. Just as in the natural example of the fruit of the harvest, the cycle is unending. But the results of this plan make it easy to understand how the early church "turned the world upside down" with the Gospel message.

Look at the chart on the following page. This chart uses the period of a year as the average time necessary to reach a person with the Gospel and train him to be a reproductive Christian. In reality, the process could take more or less time depending on the people involved.

But using one year as an average time, if a believer would reach just one person and disciple them each year and have them pledge to disciple one person each year thereafter, the world could easily be reached with the Gospel message. The chart shows that during the first year the Christian is discipling one person. At the end of that year, there are now two faithful people (the believer and the person he has discipled).

During the next year, each of them reach one person. At the end of the second year, there is a total of four people, each of whom will reach one person the following year. Look at the top of the chart and observe the results of this process if it is followed over a period of years.

If you are a member of a local church, take the total membership of your church and multiply it by 131,072. Your answer is the number of people your church could harvest in the next 17 years if each member was reproducing.

| | DISCIPLER(S) | DISCIPLE(S) | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| YEAR 17 | 65,536 | 65,536 | = | 131,072 |
| YEAR 16 | 32,768 | 32,768 | = | 65,536 |
| YEAR 15 | 16,384 | 16,384 | = | 32,768 |
| YEAR 14 | 8,192 | 8,192 | = | 16,384 |
| YEAR 13 | 4,096 | 4,096 | = | 8,192 |
| YEAR 12 | 2,048 | 2,048 | = | 4,096 |
| YEAR 11 | 1,024 | 1,024 | = | 2,048 |
| YEAR 10 | 512 | 512 | = | 1,024 |
| YEAR 9 | 256 | 256 | = | 512 |
| YEAR 8 | 128 | 128 | = | 256 |
| YEAR 7 | 64 | 64 | = | 128 |
| YEAR 6 | 32 | 32 | = | 64 |
| YEAR 5 | 16 | 16 | = | 32 |
| YEAR 4 | 8 | 8 | = | 16 |
| YEAR 3 | 4 | 4 | = | 8 |
| YEAR 2 | 2 | 2 | = | 4 |
| YEAR 1 | 1 | 1 | = | 2 |

God has always used men and women to fulfill His will. God's method for harvesting requires men. Man searches for better methods, but God seeks for better men. The world takes able men who are talented and tries to give them character. God says to take men of character, faithful men, and He will develop them into able men.

> **As a steward of the mysteries of God, all that is required is that you are faithful:**
>
> **Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.**
>
> **Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**
> **(I Corinthians 4:1-2)**

It is not required that you are educated or talented. It is only required that you are faithful.

Faithful men and women committing the Gospel to other faithful men and women who are able to teach others...this is God's revelation for reaping the harvest.

## THE TOOL

In the natural world there are not only strategies for harvest and methods of using these strategies, there are also tools for harvest. The tools may vary from a simple sickle to complex machinery.

God has also provided a tool for spiritual harvest. Jesus said:

> **...All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.**
>
> **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...**
>
> **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)**

There are four important references to the word "all" in this passage. Believers are commissioned to:

-Teach ALL nations
-ALL things

These two duties are our responsibility. They are a summary of the vision of the harvest.

God's responsibility is to:

-Provide ALL power to enable our task.
-To be with us alway (ALL the way).

Jesus told His disciples:

> **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)**

The power of the Holy Ghost was the tool which Jesus gave His followers to fulfill the responsibility of the vision of the harvest. To be effective, the method of multiplication must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Many experience blessings of the Holy Spirit. They feel the anointing, they rejoice, and they speak in other tongues. But the true evidence of the Holy Spirit is not just blessing or speaking in unknown tongues. The true evidence of the Holy Spirit is power. This power is not political power or physical power. It is spiritual power.

You must not be satisfied to experience only the blessings of the Holy Spirit. You must go beyond blessings into the revelation of God's power.

## DIRECTED POWER

Undirected power is dangerous. The same mighty flow of a waterfall which can provide water and energy can destroy an entire community if it is not channeled properly.

The power with which Jesus endued His followers was directed power to enable them to be witnesses to the world. It was the tool they were to use to fulfill the vision.

God is the source of this power:

> **God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth to God. (Psalms 62:11)**

Believers are commanded to receive this power:

> **Tarry ye until ye be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)**

The word "endued" means to be clothed with power. God wants to cover you spiritually with His power to enable you to be witnesses to the world.

## THE PURPOSE OF POWER

The power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to make you an effective witness because it is the Word of power:

His power will take the words you speak and make them effective:

> **...His word was with power...And they were all amazed and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. (Luke 4:32,36)**

His power confirms the Word:

> **And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following. (Mark 16:20)**

God confirms His Word with signs following. You cannot wait for miraculous signs before you begin sharing the Word of God. You must start sharing His Word and then He will work with you confirming the words you have spoken.

Think of the impact on the spread of the Gospel if every believer witnessing and every minister preaching had the demonstration of powerful signs confirming the Word as it goes forth! Here is what this power does:

**IT BRINGS HEALING:**

His power will be present with you to heal:

> **And the power of the Lord was present to heal them. (Luke 5:17)**

**IT BRINGS DELIVERANCE:**

As you enter the harvest fields of the world the power of God will bring deliverance to suffering humanity:

> **When He called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. (Matthew 10:1)**

**IT PROVIDES PROTECTION:**

God's power protects as you labor for Him:

> **Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions... (Luke 10:19)**

**IT VERIFIES THE GOSPEL:**

To "verify" means to prove something. The power of the Holy Spirit proves the reality of God's Word:

> **And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased. (John 6:2)**

It was the powerful miracles of Jesus which brought people to Him.

Men and women will not be drawn to the Gospel through organization, denomination, or a great speaker. They will come because of demonstration of the power of a living God.

**IT DIRECTS PEOPLE TO GOD:**

Paul wrote:

> **And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:**
>
> **That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:4,5)**

Paul had a good education and could have spoken with the wisdom of man. Instead, he ministered in the power of God and the demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

His reason? That the faith of the people should not be based on the wisdom of men but on the power of God.

## ALL POWER

Jesus said:

> **Behold, I give you power...over ALL the power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19)**

All power was given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18). Through the Holy Spirit He has delegated that power to believers. As you enter the harvest field your method is multiplication. Your tool is power.

## POSSESSING THE POWER

In every promise of God there are two parts: The promise and possessing the promise.

Jesus promised all power. Your responsibility is to accept possession of that power. To do this you must:

**RECOGNIZE IT IS FOR TODAY:**

In John 11 when Jesus came to raise Lazarus from the dead, Martha met Him and said:

> **Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (John 11:21)**

Jesus told her:

> **Thy brother shall rise again. (John 11:23)**

Martha said to him:

> **I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection in the last day. (John 11:24)**

Jesus answered with a statement which contains a powerful principle:

> **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (John 11:25)**

Martha believed her brother would have been healed in the past if Jesus had come in time. She also believed her brother could be raised in the future resurrection.

But when Jesus used the words "I Am" to answer Martha He was revealing an important truth. There is no such thing as a past or future day of miracles. In every age there is power to meet the needs of the people. In every age, God is (I Am) sufficient to meet the need. "Martha, today is the day of miracles. I am (present tense) the resurrection and the life."

There are some who say the day of miracles is past. They do not accept the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible warns of those...

> **Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (II Timothy 3:5)**

The Amplified Bible translates it that they have a form of godliness but are "strangers to the power of it."

They are like the fig tree which Jesus cursed. They have the outward appearance of godliness but there is no fruitfulness. Just as the fig tree did not have the flow of sap to produce fruit, they have no flow of the power of God and are not spiritually productive.

**UNDERSTAND THE SOURCE:**

The source of the power is God:

> **I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.**
>
> **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:5,7)**

You are the branch. Jesus is the vine. The life comes from the vine. The branches just bear the fruit. You do not produce the fruit, you just bear it.

Jesus is the one who works the works. When Jesus was questioned, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He did not give them a course on divine healing or show them how to perform a miracle. He answered:

> **This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. (John 6:29)**

He was the work of God. He was the source of the power, the miracles, and the healings.

The power is not in man or anything man possesses. The fulfillment of the promise of power is in God Himself and His Word.

Jesus is the vine which provides the support. We are the people of the branch. From the vine flows the power which will fulfill the vision.

**ACCEPT THE AUTHORITY:**

When you are given the responsibility to do something you must also have the authority to do it.

Jesus gave believers the responsibility of the harvest and the authority to carry out this responsibility, but you must personally accept this authority. Jesus said "all power" [authority] was given to Him. He delegated that power [authority] to you. You must accept it and use it properly to extend the Gospel.

Believers must also acknowledge this power in their churches. In a parable given by Jesus He said:

> **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.**
>
> **Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:21,23)**

God's plan for the church is that it be the center for demonstration of His power. In many cases it has become the recreation center, the sewing circle, or the social center.

If we do not have the power of God flowing in our churches, then the poor, the blind, and those lost in sin will exit through our doors unchanged. They will leave in the same condition in which they came.

The church is composed of individuals. If the church is to experience the flow of the power of God, then its members must experience that power individually.

## PETER: BEFORE AND AFTER

The power of God is the tool that will change you from being an ineffective reaper to one who knows how to reap in revelation harvest. Consider the example of the Apostle Peter.

We find a sleeping Peter in the greatest hour of the ministry of Jesus Christ (Mark 14:32-34). We find a cowardly Peter denying He even knew Jesus (Matthew 26). We see a man who turned his back on the call to harvest and to be a fisher of men. He went back to his own selfish pursuits (John 21).

But then suddenly there bursts on the Biblical record a new Peter. The first time this man boldly speaks the Gospel message, 3,000 are saved. The next time he preaches, 5,000 are added to the church. What happened to change this running, fleeing, cursing man into a powerful leader of the early church?

Peter received an experience of power. It was a power that enabled him to say to a crippled man:

> **...Look on us...In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. (Acts 3:4,6-7)**

You do not tell suffering humanity to "look on us" unless you know you have something to meet their need. You do not take a crippled man by the hand and lift him to his feet unless you know you have a power greater than your own. Peter had nothing in himself but he had the power of God flowing through him. God's power puts cripples on their feet, it doesn't just help them exist in a crippled condition.

The experience of power transforms fishermen like Peter into fishers of men.

## THE EXPANDING CIRCLE

Jesus outlined the pattern of the ever expanding circle resulting from the powerful witness of the Gospel:

> **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)**

The strategies for harvest were revealed in His Word:

-The method was multiplication.

-The tool was the power of the Holy Spirit.

-The power was directed. It was given to enable the disciples to become witnesses.

-The target of the power was the nations of the world, an ever expanding circle...Jerusalem, then Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

Starting where they were, using the method of multiplication and the tool of power, the Gospel would be extended to the ends of the earth.

## POSSESSING THE PROMISE

The promise is claimed often by believers:

> **...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**
> **(Matthew 28:20)**

But remember, in each promise of God there is a condition for possessing that promise. This promise was made to a special group of believers. It was made to those who would fulfill the vision of the harvest:

> **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**
>
> **Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**
> **(Matthew 28:19-20)**

To those who are willing to see the vision...To those who are willing to go forth with a powerful witness to the nations of the world...To them He has promised...I am with you all the way...

## SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

_____

2. What Scripture reference reveals God's method of multiplication?

_____

3. What is the tool of harvest?

_____

4. List three steps for possessing the promise of power.

_____

_____

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

God's method of multiplication given in II Timothy 2:2 was to be applied first in Jerusalem and then spread throughout the world. You must first begin to reap the harvest right where you are and then God will expand your vision and ministry. The following suggestions will assist you in "Reaping By Revelation" in your "Jerusalem."

1. Study the book of Joshua. Look for the principles God gave Joshua to enable Israel to possess the land of Palestine. Can you apply some of these principles to possess your own community for God?

2. Set objectives to reach your community with the Gospel. Objectives are a statement of your goals or plans. What will you do? By when? Choose objectives that will enable you to reach people currently beyond the reach of the Gospel. This was the priority of Paul in Romans 15:20-21. Some objectives you might consider:

   -Visit each home in your area and share the Gospel message personally with your neighbors.

   -Set new financial goals for giving to local and international evangelistic efforts.

   -Consider a ministry to a minority group in your area which is not being reached with the Gospel.

   -Start a specialized ministry in a rest home, prison, or hospital. Consider a ministry with drug addicts, to the poor, the alcoholic, or unwed mothers. Minister to special groups such as the women, men, children, couples, families, or the military.

3. Extend your ministry from your "Jerusalem" to the nations of the world. Begin to penetrate the world through prayer:

   -Obtain a world map and pray over the nations of the world. Claim the heathen for your inheritance and thank God for making you a blessing to the nations.

   -If you have a daily newspaper available, pray over the headlines which reflect problems in the various nations. Pray for government leaders, missionaries, ministers, and fellow believers.

**PART FOUR: EXPECTATION**
**You Become Part Of The Vision**

# CHAPTER NINE

## BREAKING THE YOKE

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify the three-fold yoke of bondage.
- Describe the three-fold yoke of God.
- List the steps that bridge the gap between the yoke of bondage and the yoke of God.
- Identify spiritual results of breaking of the yoke of bondage.

**KEY VERSES:**

> **Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**
>
> **Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**
>
> **For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)**

### INTRODUCTION

This course has covered:

| | |
|---|---|
| Visualization: | Identifying the vision. |
| Conceptualization: | Understanding the concept of purpose behind the vision. |
| Objectification: | Objectives for fulfilling the vision. |

This final section of the course concerns Expectation in which you become part of the fulfillment of the vision.

God's desire is to bring you to an expected end:

> **For I know the thoughts I think toward you saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (Jeremiah 29:11)**

That expected end is fulfillment of the vision, finishing the work of God:

> **My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34)**

Whenever you enter into something new, it always requires leaving the old. Birth requires leaving the security of the womb.

God is asking you to take a new step of faith:

> **But the Lord says, Do not cling to events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do. It is happening already - you can see it now. (Isaiah 43:18, The Living Bible)**

You may have been bound by doctrine which claims the power of God is no longer for today. You may have thought the extension of the Gospel to the world was the responsibility of ministers or missionaries. You may have been bound by tradition or denominations which prevented you from joining hands with the rest of the Body of Christ in the harvest fields of the Lord.

But God has given you a new vision. You are becoming part of a new network of spiritual laborers bound together by unity of purpose.

## A NEW NETWORK

The Bible records two separate incidents involving the use of a net in the natural world which illustrate a great spiritual truth.

The first event occurred at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry and is recorded in Luke 5. The disciples had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Jesus told them:

> **Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught. (Luke 5:4)**

Peter said:

> **Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. (Luke 5:5)**

When they let down the net they caught so many fish that it broke and they had to call their partners in another boat to come help them. The catch was so great that it filled both boats and they began to sink. Peter was amazed at this but Jesus told him:

> **Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. (Luke 5:10)**

The catch Peter was experiencing in the natural world was nothing compared to the great harvest he would reap in the spirit world as he became a fisher of men.

A similar incident is recorded at the end of Christ's ministry in John 21. The disciples had fished all night and caught nothing. At Christ's command they cast in the net and, once again, it was filled with fish. But this time was different than the first. The net did **not** break:

> **Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. (John 21:11)**

These two events actually happened in the natural world, but they were parallels of a great spiritual truth. The first time the net broke but the second time it did not. What made the difference?

The first net was an example of the efforts of man. Peter was a fisherman by trade. He knew the natural methods and the tradition of fishermen. Through the broken net Jesus showed him that the efforts of man could not fulfill the vision and work of God.

When Peter realized the great work to which God was calling him he cried out:

> **Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. (Luke 5:8)**

Peter would become a fisher of men. The old network could not accommodate the great spiritual harvest. Peter would have to abandon the traditions of man. He must cross the line of separation between Jew and Gentile. The old network must be broken and he must become part of a new network.

Jesus did not come to destroy the old, but to fulfill it through the new. He did not destroy the law, but added new meaning to it. He did not abolish the blood sacrifice for sin, but fulfilled it through the shedding of His own blood for the remission of sin.

Jesus warned about putting new wine into old wineskins. The old wineskins would not be able to hold the new wine just as the net could not hold the fish. The challenge of the Great Commission cannot be accomplished with anything less than a new net in the spirit world.

Between the first and the second fishing trips, a new network had been created. These natural fishing incidents were parallels of what had happened in the spirit world.

This new spiritual network can accommodate the vision which Jesus gave. But to enter it, one must step from the old into the new. The old yoke must be broken. The old net must be destroyed in order for the new net to hold.

## THE YOKE

Yokes were used all over the ancient world to unite animals together to labor in the harvest fields. They are still used for this purpose in many nations today.

Jesus spoke of the yoke when He said:

> **Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**
>
> **Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**
>
> **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)**

The vision He has given is of the harvest field. Today that field represents three billion people who have never received the Gospel message...And He tells us this challenge is "easy" and "light"?

That is exactly what He is saying. But the old network, the old yoke, cannot accommodate the vision. You cannot fulfill it in yourself. You cannot do it through the efforts of man. You must become part of the new network and be yoked together with Him.

## THE YOKE OF BONDAGE

We are all under a yoke of some type. You are either under the yoke of bondage or you are under the yoke of God.

The yoke of bondage is three-fold. You can be in bondage to either sin, self, or man.

### THE YOKE OF SIN:

> **I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt [sin] that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. (Leviticus 26:13)**

The yoke of Egypt means the yoke of sin. You must have the yoke of sin broken in your lives if you are to come under the yoke with Jesus.

### THE YOKE OF SELF:

The yoke of bondage can be a bondage to self:

**For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. (Romans 7:15)**

Selfishness and pride are examples of the yoke of self.

**THE YOKE OF MAN:**

The yoke of man is bondage put on you by others:

**For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matthew 23:4)**

The yoke of man can include the bondage of guilt, tradition, denomination, or impossible standards of behavior imposed by others.

The three-fold yoke of bondage of sin, self, and man speaks of imposed labor, heaviness, and restlessness.

## THE THREE-FOLD YOKE OF GOD

The yoke of God speaks of a united labor instead of imposed labor. It speaks of lightness instead of heaviness. It is a yoke of rest instead of restlessness.

The three-fold yoke of God is easy, light and restful:

**Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

**For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)**

## THREE STEPS TO BRIDGE THE GAP

Jesus provided three steps to bridge the gap between the yoke of bondage and the yoke of God. It is the way out of the old into the new:

**Come:** You must willingly come to Him. This destroys the yoke of sin.

**Take:** You must take His yoke. In doing so, the yoke of man is destroyed.

**Learn:** By learning of Him you destroy the yoke of self.

The yoke of God is not simply imparted by Him. It is shared by Him.

## BREAKING THE YOKE

It is God's desire that every yoke of sin, self, and man in your life be broken. It is necessary if you are to fulfill the vision.

In one Old Testament record, Israel was surrounded by the enemy army of the Assyrians. God spoke to Israel and declared:

> **The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:**
>
> **That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: Then shall His yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. (Isaiah 14:24-25)**

God wanted to break the yoke from off the neck of Israel. But His purpose extended beyond Israel to the nations of the world:

> **This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: And this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. (Isaiah 14:26)**

What was God's purpose? His purpose was that the yoke of bondage be broken from the nations of the world.

A few chapters later it is recorded that:

> **The angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses. (Isaiah 37:36)**

God wants every yoke in your life to become as a dead corpse. He wants to destroy it in order to bring you under the yoke with Him.

## HOW WILL IT BE BROKEN?

> **...and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. (Isaiah 10:27)**

-It will not be destroyed by deep teaching. It will not be destroyed by psychology or education.
-It will not be destroyed through counseling or through an organization or denomination.
-It will be destroyed by the anointing of the Holy Spirit which is the power of God.

But God's purpose for breaking the yoke extends beyond your life to the nations of the world. He wants to break the yoke of bondage in your life to enable you to fulfill the vision of breaking the yoke from the nations of the world:

> **This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: And this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.**
>
> **For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isaiah 14:26-27)**

## RESULTS OF BREAKING THE YOKE

God said:

> **Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free and that ye break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6)**

Then He listed the results of breaking the yoke:

> **Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say Here I am...**
>
> **Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day;**
>
> **And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.**
>
> **And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.**
> **(Isaiah 58:9-12)**

The results of the breaking of the yoke of bondage are:

> -You will know the voice of God. We will call, and the Lord will answer, "Here I am." (Verse 9)
>
> -You will be successful in the fulfillment of your vision. Your light will rise in obscurity which speaks of success. (Verse 10)
>
> -The Lord will guide you continually. (Verse 11)

-He will be your provision. (Verse 11)

-You will be reproductive. (Verses 11-12)

-You will be like a watered garden which is fruitful. You will be reproductive and those you produce in the spirit world will be reproductive. They will rise up to rebuild the old structures on the right foundation.

God promised Israel in the natural world:

> **And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke... (Ezekiel 34:27)**

The same is true in the spirit world. The breaking of the yoke results in spiritual productivity.

The old network is inadequate, broken, and empty. It cannot accommodate the abundant harvest. The old yokes of tradition, denomination, self-effort, and unconcern must be broken. New foundations, new yokes, a new network are necessary to enter the gap between sinful man and a righteous God. The vision will only be fulfilled by men and women who have experienced the anointing which breaks the yoke.

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verses from memory.

_____

_____

2. What are the three yokes of bondage?

_____ _____ _____

3. List three words that describe the yoke of God.

_____ _____ _____

4. What are the three steps you must take to bridge the gap between the yoke of bondage and the yoke of God?

_____

_____

_____

5. List five results of breaking the yoke recorded in Isaiah 58.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

What are some of the yokes of bondage which have prevented you from doing the work of God?

_____Sin

_____Denomination

_____Fear

_____Lack of natural talents and abilities

_____Guilt

_____Self-effort

_____Other:_____

Read this passage: Isaiah 14:24-27

Claim this promise: Isaiah 10:27

Pray this prayer:

Lord, I thank you for the vision of the harvest field which you have birthed in my spirit.

I ask you to break every yoke of bondage in my life. In the name of Jesus, break the yokes of_____, _____,_____and_____(name the yokes which are in your life).

Yoke me together with Jesus. Create a new network in my life that will bring forth abundant harvest.

I thank you now for the anointing which has broken every yoke of bondage.

In Jesus Name,

Amen

# CHAPTER TEN

## BLESSING THE NATIONS

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify spiritual qualities of Abraham which enabled him to bless the nations.
- Recognize you are an heir to the promises of Abraham.
- Understand your responsibility as an heir to bless the nations of the world.

**KEY VERSE:**

> **And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)**

### INTRODUCTION

Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of many nations. Through him all the nations of the earth were to be blessed:

> **And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:18)**

The New Testament reveals that all believers are heirs to the promises God gave Abraham. To be an "heir" means you have inherited from him:

> **Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.**
>
> **And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.**
>
> **So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:7-9)**

You are an heir because you have become the seed of Abraham through Jesus Christ:

> **And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promises. (Galatians 3:29)**

As seed of Abraham you are an heir of the promise of salvation. But as an heir you are also under commission to bless the nations of the world with the good news of the Gospel.

You are told to claim your inheritance:

> **Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. (Psalms 2:8)**

Through Abraham the nations of the world were to be blessed. Through Jesus the nations are your inheritance also.

## SPIRITUAL QUALITIES

The following are spiritual qualities Abraham had which enabled him to be a blessing to the nations and how these qualities relate to the vision of the harvest:

### HE WAS FULLY PERSUADED:

Abraham believed the vision God had shown him. He was fully persuaded that through him God would bless the nations of the world:

> **And being fully persuaded, that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. (Romans 4:21)**

For the vision of the harvest to become a reality, you must be fully persuaded. God has promised abundant harvest. He has provided the strategies and the methodologies. You are called as a laborer to bless the nations of the world.

### HE INVESTED IN SPIRITUAL THINGS:

Abraham invested his whole life in that which was not visible in the natural world.

God had given Abraham the promise of a beautiful land, yet he himself never set foot in this country:

> **And He gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on: Yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. (Acts 7:5)**

A land was promised which Abraham had not seen. It was promised to a son he did not have. Yet Abraham did not doubt God. He invested his life in the plan of God in order for the promise of God to be fulfilled in future generations.

The vision of the harvest is eternal in nature. You will spend your whole life invested in that which is not visible. But the results are eternal. Generations to come will be blessed because you fulfill the vision.

**HE WAS OBEDIENT TO THE CALL:**

When Abraham was called by God to go out to a place which he would later receive for an inheritance, he obeyed:

> **By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. (Hebrews 11:8)**

It is not enough to be called to the vision of the harvest. You must respond in obedience to that calling.

> **And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:18)**

**HE WAS WILLING TO STAND ALONE:**

God speaks of Abraham:

> **Look unto Abraham you father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. (Isaiah 51:2)**

Abraham was called alone. He had to leave his homeland and his family in answer to that call.

When you are called by God unto salvation it is an individual matter. Each person must respond personally to that call. The call to the harvest field is similar. Like Abraham, you are called alone. You must make the decision. Responding to the vision may involve leaving home and family. Certainly it will involve stepping out from among unconcerned believers who have not yet caught the vision.

**HE HAD SPIRITUAL VISION:**

Abraham had a spiritual vision:

> **For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:10)**

His vision was based on spiritual things. His vision was of a city whose builder was God. It caused

him to stay in a strange land, dwelling in tents, separated from his home and family. The vision changed his life.

The vision of the harvest has changed your life. You will never again be the same. You cannot be content with the temporal things of life. You seek an eternal cause.

**HE KNEW GOD INTIMATELY:**

Abraham was called, "the friend of God":

> **And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. (James 2:23)**

It will require an intimate personal relationship with God in order for you to fulfill the vision. You must learn His ways and be able to hear His voice. You must become the friend of God.

**HE WAS FULL OF HOPE:**

Paul speaks of Abraham:

> **Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. (Romans 4:18)**

Although he had no son, Abraham received a promise to be the father of many nations. In the natural it looked hopeless. But in the face of hopelessness Abraham believed in hope.

No matter what your circumstances, no matter how hopeless your situation, know that God has called you to the vision of the harvest and it will be fulfilled.

Face hopelessness with assurance that "what He has promised, He is able also to perform" (Romans 4:21).

**HE HAD STRONG FAITH:**

> **He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. (Romans 4:20)**

Abraham had such faith that he praised God for the fulfillment of the vision even before it happened. He was completely sure God was able to do anything He promised (Romans 4:20).

The greatness of the vision to which God has called you is overwhelming...Three billion people yet without the Gospel message. These are the heathen. They are your inheritance. Through you

they are to be blessed.

But do not stagger at the promise of God. Do not look to the greatness of the task before you, but look to the greatness of God. God has promised abundant spiritual harvest. Be like Abraham who...

> **...believed God even though such as promise just couldn't come to pass. (Romans 4:18, The Living Bible)**

**HE WAS RIGHTEOUS:**

Because Abraham believed God:

> **...it was imputed to him for righteousness. (Romans 4:22)**

As you learned previously in this course, the foundation of your labor in the harvest must be righteousness.

**HE WAS HUMBLE:**

Paul states that Abraham gave glory to God (Romans 4:20).

Abraham knew the fulfillment of the vision would come only through God. He alone must receive the glory.

God has given you a great vision in the harvest fields of the nations of the world. But the fulfillment can only come through Him. You cannot receive glory for the vision or for results of the harvest. The glory must go to God for a vision fulfilled.

**HE WAS PEACEFUL:**

In Genesis 13 the servants of Lot and Abraham had several disagreements over water rights. Abraham arrived at a peaceful solution to the problems.

The message at the birth of Jesus delivered by the angels was one of peace. The Gospel you take to the nations is a message of peace for it is only through God that true peace will come.

**HE WAS PROMPT TO DO GOD'S WILL:**

When God spoke to Abraham that the sign of the covenant between him and God was to be circumcision, the Bible records that the same day God spoke, Abraham had all the men in his family circumcised (Genesis 17).

Sometime later God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and he and his wife, Sarah, had a son. After the birth of Isaac, God gave Abraham a difficult test. He told him to sacrifice his son (Genesis 22).

In Isaac was the future of the promise of God. He was the heir through whom Abraham's descendants were to come. Isaac was to bring forth the nation of Israel through which the world was to be blessed. Yet God asked Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice.

The Bible records in Genesis 22:3 that after Abraham received this message from God, "he rose up early" in the morning to obey the instructions. Even when God's will was difficult, Abraham did not delay. When God spoke he acted immediately. Because of his obedience, God provided another sacrifice and Isaac's life was spared.

Labor in the harvest field will not always be easy but when God speaks you must act. When you step forward in obedience God will always move in your behalf.

It is interesting to note that Abraham never referred to God's instructions regarding Isaac as a sacrifice. He called it worship. The highest form of worship is to look beyond Isaac, that which we love, to God.

God has given you a vision and it has changed your life. But never can the vision become more important than God. Your first responsibility is relationship to Him.

God tested Abraham to see if it was Isaac who occupied his highest devotion or God. It must always be God who occupies your devotion. The vision can never replace the Giver of the vision.

**HE WAS MOBILE FOR GOD:**

Abraham lived a simple life which enabled complete mobility for God. He could move quickly at God's command (Genesis 12).

**HE NEVER LOOKED BACK:**

Abraham did not desire the old life left behind, but looked to the new things God would do:

> **But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)**

**HE WALKED IN REVELATION KNOWLEDGE:**

Abraham acted upon revelation from God instead of human reasoning:

**And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do. (Genesis 18:17)**

**HE DID NOT LOOK TO HIS NATURAL ABILITIES:**

God's promise to the nations sprang from one as "good as dead." In the natural, Abraham had no ability to fulfill God's plan:

**Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. (Hebrews 11:12)**

**HE SOUGHT GOD:**

Genesis 12 records how Abraham built an altar and called on the name of the Lord.

**HE ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS:**

Read the story of Abraham and Lot in Genesis 14. If you are to be a "world Christian", then you must assume responsibility for those in need in the world around you.

**HE WAS GENEROUS:**

Abraham paid tithes of all he had:

**And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. (Genesis 14:20)**

**HE WAS WILLING TO DWELL IN A STRANGE LAND:**

**By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. (Hebrews 11:9)**

He was willing to respect the culture of others. For example, he bowed before the people of the land as was the custom:

**And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. (Genesis 23:12)**

**HE REPRODUCED MEN OF LIKE DEDICATION:**

This is seen in the life of his servant, Eleazar (Genesis 24).

**HE GAVE THE GLORY TO GOD:**

> **And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.**
>
> **And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,**
>
> **That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:**
>
> **Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion. (Genesis 14:21-24)**

Always remember, the glory must always go to God.

## THE VISION FULFILLED

Abraham, a man with a spiritual vision...He was a man through whom the nations of the world were to be blessed. And the vision was fulfilled:

> **Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars by the sky in multitude, innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. (Hebrews 11:12)**

When the vision was given to Abraham, his past had been unproductive and his present was unproductive. But he did not accept the deadness of his own body and of Sarah's womb.

Perhaps your past has been spiritually unproductive and your present is unfruitful. But now you have received a vision of the harvest.

As Abraham, look with the eyes of faith into the future knowing that "He who has promised is able also to perform it."

# SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

2. Give two references which show believers are the heirs of Abraham:
and_____

3. We are heirs to the promise of_____.

4. We are heirs to the responsibility of _____

5. List the spiritual qualities of Abraham which enabled him to fulfill the vision of blessing the nations of the world.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Below is a summary of the spiritual qualities of Abraham which resulted in his blessing the nations of the world. If you are to fulfill the vision of blessing the nations, you must develop similar spiritual qualities in your life. Review each spiritual quality. Describe the extent to which the quality is evident in your own spiritual life:

**Quality** **To what extent is this quality evident in my own life?**

Fully persuaded

_____

Investing in spiritual things

_____

Obedient

_____

Willing to stand alone

_____

Spiritual vision

_____

Know God intimately

_____

Hope

_____

Faith

_____

Righteous

_____

Humble

_____

| Quality | To what extent is this quality evident in my own life? |
| --- | --- |
| Peaceful | |
| Prompt to do God's will | |
| Mobile for God | |
| Never look back | |
| Walk in revelation knowledge | |
| Do not look to natural abilities | |
| Seek God | |
| Assume responsibility for others | |
| Generous | |
| Reproduce men of like dedication | |
| Give glory to God | |
| Willing to dwell in a strange land | |

2. On the basis of this analysis, what action can you take in the following areas to develop the spiritual qualities which you are lacking?

My daily Bible study:

My daily prayer life:

My home and family:

My church:

My plans for the future:

My involvement with the vision of the harvest:

My finances:

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE VISION BECOMES REALITY

**OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Identify the type of individuals God calls as harvesters.
- Claim God's promise of abundant spiritual harvest.
- Make the vision a reality in your life.

**KEY VERSE:**

> **And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)**

### INTRODUCTION

When you started this course you began an experience which would lead from vision to reality.

From the birth of the vision of the harvest you have seen the world through the eyes of God and understand His purpose for the nations of the world. You have learned of things which prevent harvest and the strategies, methods, and tools for effective harvest. You have broken the yokes of bondage and tradition and received a new experience of God's power.

In this final chapter the vision becomes reality as you become part of its fulfillment.

### WHO DOES GOD USE?

Who does God use to fulfill the vision of the harvest? What type of man or woman does He call to extend the Gospel to the nations of the world?

Read Mark chapter 16 in your Bible. This chapter contains the answer to these questions. In this chapter we find the women who were followers of Jesus going to the tomb to anoint His dead body. When they arrived at the tomb they found...

> **...a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted.**

**And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted; Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified; He is risen: He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him. (Mark 16:5-6)**

The women went to share the good news with the disciples. Even though Jesus had appeared in visible form to Mary Magdalene, the disciples would not believe He had been resurrected (Mark 16:11). Later Jesus appeared to two of the disciples as they were walking in the country. When they told the others, they did not believe them (Mark 16:12-13).

Finally Jesus appeared to the disciples and...

**Upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. (Mark 16:14)**

Right after He spoke to them of their unbelief Jesus said:

**Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)**

Surely He must have made a mistake! These were the people who had gone to anoint a dead body instead of celebrating His resurrection. These were the people who slept during His greatest hour of crisis, denied Him, and hid in fear.

Jesus spent three years preparing these men for His death and resurrection, yet they deserted Him in the hour of crisis and refused to believe eye witness reports of His resurrection. One minute Jesus is correcting them because of their unbelief. The next, He is challenging them with the vision of the spiritual harvest fields in the nations of the world.

How could He possibly leave the future of the Gospel in the hands of these disciples?

Because He was not looking at them as they were. He was not looking at their past performance or their present condition. He was seeing them as they would become when endued by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is not looking at your past, your failures, your doubts, or unbelief. He is looking at what He knows you can become through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## THE MEN GOD USES

Let us look at the men God used down through history to fulfill His purposes.

**JACOB:**

God had to choose between Jacob, a man who desired the birthright so much he would cheat for it, and Esau, who so lightly regarded it that he would forfeit it for a bowl of soup. Yet he used Jacob to bring forth the nation of Israel.

**ABRAHAM:**

Abraham was to be the father of many nations. When he received this revelation from God, he fell on his face and laughed in unbelief (Genesis 17:1-3). Later, this great man of faith lied to the enemy and claimed Sara was his sister because he feared for his life. In spite of this, Abraham was called the "friend of God" and became the father of many nations.

**MOSES:**

His disobedience kept him from the Promised Land, yet he liberated two million people from bondage in Egypt and led them through the wilderness according to the plan of God.

**DAVID:**

He took another man's wife and murdered the man to cover his sin, yet he was called "a man after God's own heart" and God gave Him the kingdom.

**GIDEON:**

Gideon was harvesting wheat in hiding for fear of the enemy when God called Him to be the deliverer of Israel (Judges 6).

## ORDINARY PEOPLE

God uses ordinary people to fulfill His will. When Jesus performed His first miracle of turning water into wine, He asked ordinary men to fill ordinary water pots. When He multiplied bread and fish He gave it to ordinary men who then fed the multitude. When Jesus was about to perform what was perhaps the greatest miracle in His ministry, that of raising Lazarus from the dead, He depended on men to move the stone from the entrance of the grave. Didn't the same God who raised Lazarus have the power to remove the stone from the entrance?

Yes, but God has always used men to fulfill His plan. His methods are men. God calls ordinary men and makes them extraordinary. He moves men and women from spectators to participators in His plan.

-All you ordinary people who thought you couldn't be used of God...
-You ordinary people who thought you couldn't be part of a miracle...
-All who have denied and failed Him...

God is not looking at your past or present performance. He is not seeing you as you view yourself. He is looking at you as you will become as you accept the challenge to go to the harvest fields of the world. He is seeing you as you will be when endued with the power of the Holy Spirit.

God is not depending on your faith, education, talents, or your level of spirituality. He is not depending on anything that you are. He is depending on what He knows you can become if you will surrender your life totally to His will and purposes.

The world of the early church was not reached through great preaching. It was reached by men and women who were as human as we are but they turned their eyes from their own failures and caught the vision of the harvest. They realized that when they were weak in the natural, they were strong spiritually. God promised:

> **...My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (II Corinthians 12:9)**

## AN ABUNDANT HARVEST

To those who catch the vision and fulfill the work and will of God, there are promises of abundant harvest:

> **For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew... (Zechariah 8:12)**

He will turn the wilderness into fertile fields:

> **He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may...sow the fields and plant the vineyards which may yield fruits of increase. (Psalms 107:35-37)**

God will even bring harvest to the least fruitful places:

> **There shall be an abundance of grain in the soil on top of the mountains... [the least fruitful place in the land]. (Psalms 72:16)**

Age is no barrier to His plan:

> **They shall still bring forth fruit in old age... (Psalms 92:14)**

You may go forth weeping in travail to birth this vision, but...

**They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.**

**He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalms 126:5-6)**

You cannot comprehend the abundance of this end-time harvest:

**Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you. (Haggai 2:19)**

God speaks of a harvest so great that it is continuous:

**Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed. (Amos 9:13)**

You will not even finish threshing out the harvest until the next harvest is upon you.

This is why the need for laborers is so urgent. The plowman is overtaking the reaper. The vision of the harvest is before you.

-Claim the promise of abundant harvest.
-Claim the heathen for your inheritance.
-The fields of the world are before you. Lift up your eyes and look.

## THE FINAL HARVEST

There will come that day of final harvest when God commands His angels:

**The time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. (Revelation 14:15)**

From all over this world the procession will come.

From Africa, Australia, Asia, North and South America, Europe, and the Islands of the Sea... Harvesters streaming into the throne room of God.

Men and women who have made the vision a reality...Those who lived with the vision as central to their reason for being...Those who died embracing its promises.

And they bring with them the sheaves from the harvest of the earth:

**After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;**

**And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb...and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God.**

**Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.**
**(Revelation 7:9-12)**

## SELF-TEST

1. Write the Key Verse from memory.

_____

_____

2. List three Bible references which promise abundant harvest.

_____

3. Name five men discussed in this chapter whom God used despite their failures.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____

4. What verse tells of the final harvesting of the earth done by the angels of God?

_____

(Answers to tests are provided at the conclusion of the final chapter in this manual.)

# ANSWERS TO SELF-TESTS

**CHAPTER ONE:**

1. Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18)

2. Spiritual vision involves seeing beyond the natural world into the spiritual world. It is understanding the divine purpose of God and recognizing your part in His plan. It is a clear image of what God wants you to achieve which directs each step of your Christian life towards that goal.

3. 2,3,1,4,6,5

4. 3,1,4,2

**CHAPTER TWO:**

1. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (John 4:35)

2. When we speak of a natural parallel of a spiritual truth it means God uses a natural example to explain or represent a spiritual truth.

3. The example was the harvest.

4. The field is the world. Matthew 13:38.

5. You may have listed any of the following reasons. The harvest was an example to which His disciples could easily relate because:

   -The economy of Israel was based on agriculture.
   -The religious festivals revolved around the harvest.
   -Harvesting was a continuous activity throughout the year.
   -There were natural principles for sowing and reaping which applied to spiritual harvesting.
   -The disciples recognized the urgency represented by the example of the natural harvest.

6. John 4:35:
   Say not ye: Do not just talk about the harvest.
   Yet four months: Do not delay it.
   I say unto you: Listen to what Jesus says.

Lift up your eyes: Turn them from distractions.
Look on the fields: See the world through the eyes of God.

**CHAPTER THREE:**

1. His eyes behold the nations. (Psalms 66:7)

2. Approximately three billion people.

3. About 2,000 languages.

4. To see the world as a spiritual harvest field in need of laborers.

5. Sin.

6. a.F b.F c.T

7. A World Christian is one who makes each day of his life count for Christ's global cause, especially for those currently beyond the reach of the Gospel.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**

1. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself;

   That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

2. a.F b.T c.T d.T

3. Your answer should include one of the following points and at least one of the references:

   God's purpose from the beginning of time has been to unify all of heaven and earth in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

   He is not willing that any should perish, but that all men of every nation should repent and come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. (II Peter 3:9)

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

1. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Galatians 6:7-8)

2. a.T b.F c.F d.F e.T f.T g.T

3. Discord, Iniquity, Strife, Flesh.

4. Redeemed men living redeemed lives.

5. Isaiah 16:10 or Joel 1:10-12,16

6. Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-13

7. Review the subheadings of this chapter:

| | |
|---|---|
| Disobedience to God's Word. | Regarding circumstances. |
| Forgetting God. | Undirected effort. |
| Improper sowing. | Pests and disease. |
| Unconcern. | Improper harvesting. |
| Self-effort. | Uncultivated ground. |
| Cursed reproductive processes. | Unrighteous foundations. |
| | Few laborers. |

**CHAPTER SIX:**

1. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalms 126:5-6)

2. Strategies are principles, methods, or plans to follow in order to reach a certain goal.

3. If you missed any of these strategies, review the subheadings of the entire chapter.

-Each plant is capable of reproduction.
-Sowing is necessary in order to reap.
-You do not harvest in the same season you sow.
-You reap what you sow.
-You must sow regardless of the circumstances.
-You harvest in proportion to the amount sown.
-You can sow where you do not reap and reap where you do not sow.
-You will reap the harvest if you are faithful.
-In order to reproduce, the seed must die.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:**

1. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. (Isaiah 61:11)

2. Seeds develop in response to certain external conditions.

3. If you missed any of these conditions for growth, review the subheadings of the entire chapter: Life; Proper soil; Water; Light; Air; Space; Root system; Rest; Attached to the vine; Pruning; Climate

**CHAPTER EIGHT:**

1. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

2. II Timothy 2:2

3. Power.

4. Recognize it is for today; Understand the source; Accept the authority personally and in your church.

**CHAPTER NINE:**

1. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

2. Sin, self, man.

3. Easy, light, restful.

4. Come unto Him, take His yoke on you, learn of Him.

5. You will know the voice of God; You will be successful in the fulfillment of your vision; The Lord will guide you continually; He will be your provision; You will be reproductive.

**CHAPTER TEN:**

1. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

2. Galatians 3:10 and Galatians 3:29.

3. Salvation.

4. Blessing the nations of the world.

5.

| | |
|---|---|
| Fully persuaded | Full of hope |
| Invested in spiritual things | Strong in faith |
| Obedient to the call | Righteous |
| Willing to stand alone | Humble |
| Man of vision | Man of peace |
| Knew God intimately | Prompt to do God's will |
| Mobile for God | Never looked back |
| Walked in revelation knowledge | Sought God |
| Assumed responsibility for others | Generous |
| Reproduced men of dedication | Gave glory to God |
| Did not look to his natural abilities | |
| Willing to dwell in a strange land | |

**CHAPTER ELEVEN:**

1. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)

2. You could have used any of the following references: Psalms 72:16; Psalms 92:4; Psalms 107:33-37; Psalms 126:5-6; Amos 9:13; Haggai 2:19; Zechariah 8:12

3. Jacob, Abraham, Moses, David, Gideon.

4. Revelation 14:15