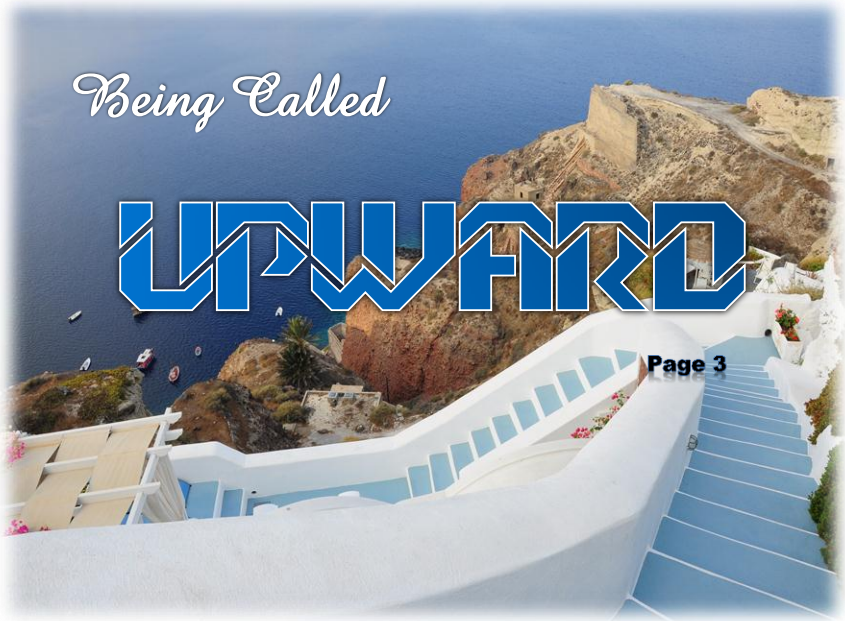


MORE Faith & Faith

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Audrey's Faith Tidbit

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Hi Partners and Friends

We are excited about all the good that the Lord is doing for each of us. Thank you for sharing your testimonies with us - of healing, promotion, protection and victory in your marriages. Hallelujah, the Lord is Good.

A number of you have asked about being able to sow financially into our ministry online and we have good news - we have PayPal available on our website (www.jlmin.org) so you can now give online.

We want to thank you for your love and pray the goodness of God on you and your families during this spring time.

We love you & God Bless
Jeff & Audrey



Proclaiming the Word of Faith unto Soteria - Rom. 10:8-13

Being called UPWARD

Spring is so full of life, and it seems like the outdoors is calling us to come out and enjoy the sun, flowers, grass, trees, and the water - but, there is something else that is calling us. The apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says in Philippians 3:14 in the Amplified Bible: *"I press on toward the goal to win the [supreme and heavenly] prize to which God in Christ Jesus is calling us upward."* We are being called by God to move upward, grow up, increase, and mature, so we can obtain the prize - which is a supreme and heavenly one. It doesn't just last for a week, or a month, or until the next season starts, the Bible calls it an incorruptible prize. For Olympic athletes to make it to that level they are not striving for second place or just to make it - they are pressing toward the Gold. There is no room at the top for those who will settle for average or even above average. First place is reserved for the one who hungers the most for it, and pays the price to get there.

Besides sports, the Bible also refers to soldiers. We have now entered into the time of the war cycle, and soldiers are not chosen because they have nothing to do and are available, but because they have passed the boot camp and are the best choice to defend our nation. In 2 Timothy 2:3-4 we read: *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."* A good soldier is one who endures hardness. Hardness is something that is against you, something that keeps life from being perfect. In the middle east the blowing sand is a hardness that needs to be endured. Blowing sand gets into the weapons and can cause them to misfire, so in order to stay alive and do their job, a soldier's gun must be taken apart and cleaned and put back together a number of times in a day. No complaining, this is the way it is. The beds they sleep on are not as comfortable as the ones they have at home (along with their spouse beside them), but for our freedom and their country, they endure it. As a good soldier of Jesus Christ we are to endure hardness also. When the Lord asks us to stay up a little longer or get up a little earlier to pray, or read the Word, or to worship Him, our flesh will want to complain - but, as a good soldier we tell our flesh to "shut up," and we obey God. Honoring the Lord with our tithes, and giving offerings when finances are tight, is another way of enduring hardness as a good soldier. When our body does not feel very good, we are to hold fast to our confession and trust in God: that we are healed by the stripes of

Jesus. We are to love others even when they are not loving to us - this is enduring hardness as a good soldier. As we do this, we are responding correctly to the heavenly calling. The Holy Spirit also said that we are not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life. This does not mean that we are to refuse the opportunity for extra education at work in order to gain a promotion, or to quit our job or school and go live in the mountains and not shave saying, "I am to separate myself and not be entangled with this life." I am sure our soldiers are not crying because they missed a sale at JC Penny, or The Bay, or Canadian Tire, or the latest deal at Domino's Pizza. They have other things on their minds at the moment, other things that are more important, and they must remain focused.

In answering this upward call, we need to realize that the choice is ours. Nobody can make us grow up - that is our responsibility. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10 and Luke 14, that if we love our parents and family and children more than Him, we are not fit to be His disciples. You may be thinking to yourself, "I don't think I can love these any less." Remember, we are being called upward, and Jesus did not say to love them less (it really won't hurt for you to love them even more), but to love Him more than them. So, regarding the affairs of this life, we are not to allow them to take more of our attention than we give to our God. TV, sports, family, church, work, hobbies and other things we spend our time on, are fine in themselves, as long as we keep Jesus as our number one priority. Also, in being called upward we are encouraged in Hebrews 12:1: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."* Some things may not be sin, but they are weighing or slowing and keeping us down from this upward journey. We are told to lay them aside - so that we can answer the upward call and obtain the prize. 2 Tim. 2:5 says: *"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."* We will receive the prize, trophy or medal if we go for the gold and do it according to the rules. The Word of God is our rule book, and as we are willing AND obedient, we shall eat or partake of the good of the land - meaning that we will continue to increase in the abundant life and enjoy the best of the best. Paul again states in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: *"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* We enter this race by birth on the

earth, and we are then told to run so that we may obtain or lay hold of the prize. The Holy Spirit lets us know that those who run this race are to be temperate, or self-controlled in all things. Athletes that are pressing toward the gold will control what they eat and drink, how much sleep they get, and what they do. I had a friend whose goal was to play in the NHL, and when our youth group would go on a skiing trip, he would not come with us. He did not want to jeopardize his hockey career by breaking a leg or an arm. He was temperate - even though he would have had fun, and skiing is not bad - he was pressing toward a goal. This is like enduring hardness as a good soldier. We need to believe the Word of God and allow it to govern or control our lives, because we are pressing toward an incorruptible prize. We are not running or fighting without an aim or goal or an enemy. We have a real enemy, and we are answering the call upward to obtain a real prize. Paul goes on to say that he keeps his body under control: disciplines it, subdues it and handles it strictly by bringing it into subjection to himself. "Himself" is the man on the inside, the spirit man - we are a spirit, we have a soul (which is made up of our mind, will, and emotions), and we live in a body. He said that he did this, so that after he had ministered to others he might not be a castaway, become unfit and disqualified. How temperate and enduring of hardness we are, directly affects how fit and qualified we are - and how productive we are in touching others' lives for Jesus.

In Genesis 12:1-4, God appeared to Abram and told him to leave his home and family, and He would take him to a land of his own. Abram received a call and responded correctly, by obeying and going; but, in Exodus 2:11-12 Moses was sensing a call and decided to step out in it without the leading of God. He responded incorrectly, and got into trouble for it. Years later, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and sent him back to Egypt to deliver His people. This time he obeyed God, and because he responded correctly, God was able to demonstrate Himself magnificently and free His people.

Let's look at Luke chapter 4, starting in verse 1: *"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."* Jesus had an experience with God, and according to verse 14, the Bible says that He returned from the Jordan to Galilee. Going from the Jordan to Galilee is uphill, so Jesus was ascending or moving upward, and the Holy Spirit lead Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus said "it is written," "it is written" and "it is said" and passed the test. Verse 14 goes on to say: *"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."* The word Galilee in the greek, can also be translated "circle." Now let's put all this together. Jesus had an experience with God, and in order to ascend

to the next level or be promoted, He had to pass the test. Having passed the test, He had gone full circle - but as on a circular staircase, He had also gone up a level. Having passed the tests, He returned in the power of the Spirit. As we are answering the call upward, we too, will have to pass the test in order to grow and mature and be promoted. The Word of God is the answer, and our being obedient to the Word in hard areas and times of temptation, will cause us to move upward. If we fail the test, we need to apologize to God and put it under the blood - and start moving to the next level again and do the Word, and pass. Therefore, ascending full circle is the result of passing the tests, or we could say, responding correctly.

This higher life has higher standards and higher thoughts. We are required to let go of the lower life in order to gain the higher life. Ephesians 4:13 in the Amplified Bible reads: "... *that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood - the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection - the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, and the completeness found in Him.*" The standard for this higher life is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection. We will never arrive, but we shall always be "Being called upward." The higher thoughts are the thoughts of God, and the higher ways are the ways of God (Isaiah 55:7-11) - and He has made them available to us through His Word.

As we close, let's look at Colossians chapter 3:1-3: "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" There is one thing above all other things that we are to seek, and it is above, it is not here on the earth. Matthew 6:33 states we are to seek first the King, the advancement of His kingdom, and His way of doing and being right. We are to set our "affections", or as my cross reference states, "mind" on things above. This brings us back to where we started: what has captured our attention or affections? There are many things vying for our attention, and many things deserve our attention, but there is one thing that is most important and that must be kept before our eyes (spiritually and physically). We are dead - dead to the flesh, and it's lusts and desires and affections - so these should not occupy our attention. Our life is hid in Christ the Anointed One and His anointing. This is the upward call. So, let's choose to walk, grow and increase in the "abundant, beyond measure, superior in quality" life that Jesus has given us, by answering His call and by pressing toward the goal to win the supreme and heavenly prize to which we are being called upward.

Audrey's Faith Tidbit

1st John 4:9 NKJV *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him*

Do you know you are valuable to God? He is your Creator and He cares very much about His creation. He cares so much that instead of scrapping the earth and all that is in it He sent us a Saviour to buy it all back from the devil. God did not walk away and say "it's useless" when Adam and Eve sinned and brought the curse into the earth. He chose to outsmart the devil and get His own back. We belong to God by virtue of being His created. However we must still choose to be one of His children by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. That is the only way to legally access all that God is and has done for us. All that God has done was done through Jesus over two thousand years ago. Jesus paid an amazing price to redeem mankind from the clutches of the devil. He paid the price to redeem us all from the curse.

God loves us all very much and nothing we do or don't do can change that. He did what He did for us because of who He is not who we are or are not. God wants you to know how much He loves you. He has provided for everything you need – spirit, soul and body – you name it and He did it for you. He wants you to live - live life to the fullest. What does life to the fullest look like to you? Believe in it, receive it. Let the world see how good God is and how much He has done for us. Take what He did, claim it for yourself and you will see your life change all for the Glory of God.