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YOU
STILL
**TRUST
GOD?**

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CAN
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STILL
**TRUST
GOD?**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU
CHOOSE TO BELIEVE

CHARLES F.
STANLEY



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BOOKS

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INTRODUCTION

During this tumultuous era in our history, I've been struck by the anxiety and disheartenment I have seen as I've talked to friends and loved ones. It is understandable. We are facing uncertain times and significant challenges. Whether it is the pandemic, the economic decline, the social unrest, the global political maneuverings, or what have you—it seems there is more to think about than we can possibly wrap our minds around. And the truth of the matter is, we can overthink the issues that assail us until we are utterly obsessed with and confounded by them. We can't sleep. We cannot get away from them. We turn on the television, and there is more to baffle us. We are constantly praying about it all—but with fear about the problems rather than with faith that God is at work through all of it.

Pretty soon, every thought and every conversation are devoured by questions about what will happen. It is then we can become confused and overwhelmed with fear and pain to the point that we no longer trust the One who is truly in control of all things.

Perhaps you can identify with these feelings of helplessness and instability. You go to sleep imploring the Lord for help and wake up feeling unsettled, useless, and insecure. At the back of your mind may be the nagging question, *Can I really trust God through all of this?*

When things are going our way, trusting the Lord is easy. But when painful trials, unmet needs, or lost hopes assail us, the pain may cause us to ask, *Can I still trust God?* We may be tempted to question why a truly caring Father would allow sorrow and difficulty to touch His children's lives. We may even doubt whether He is *willing* to do anything about our circumstances.

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But God assured His people, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you” (Ps. 50:15). Can we truly rely upon Him to do that? Followers of Jesus Christ need to understand that He is not only able but also willing to fulfill every single promise in Scripture. Even when we cannot understand why God would allow certain situations to occur, understanding His ways always leads to understanding that He will act in a manner that brings about eternal blessings for His children. It is what you *believe* that makes it possible to ask the right questions in the face of a tragedy or great needs in your life.

So whether you have picked up this book because of the turmoil in the world, the unwise actions of others, or because of profound personal trials, please be assured that you have come to the right place. You are not alone. Your life matters to God. He cares for you. And yes, you can still trust Him.

Likewise, through the years I have discovered three essential beliefs for maintaining my faith in God that I will share with you now. Even when you lack understanding about your circumstances, these beliefs can form a solid foundation for trusting Him. Therefore, I challenge you to take a long, hard look at what you believe about Him. Your ability to receive the blessings God has for you is determined by the degree to which these wise truths are embedded in your soul.

BELIEF #1: GOD IS PERFECT IN HIS LOVE

In other words, God *always* does what is best for us. If we really believe this, we will trust Him even in our most difficult trials. Satan, who works to undermine our trust, often takes advantage of adversity by calling the Father’s motives into question. He whispers, “If the Lord really loved you, He would not have allowed this to happen”—he wants us to associate the sting of spiritual discipline with a lack of divine caring. However, the exact opposite is true. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, “Those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” So, while natural thinking says peace and happiness are tokens of God’s love, the Bible says difficulty and discipline are actually evidence of our membership in His family. The reason is clear: God cares for us so much

that He will not allow us to stay as we are. Instead, He wants to transform us into the likeness of His Son.

We can depend on God's love because of His character—it is His very nature to love (1 John 4:8). The Bible says, “In Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5); in other words, He is absolutely holy, righteous, and perfect and therefore could never mistreat one of His children. He will always do what is positive and caring in our lives. *Calvary* is positive proof of God's profound love for mankind. All of us were in dire need of forgiveness and rescue from the penalty of sin, but we could not save ourselves—our debt could be satisfied only by the payment of a perfect life (Deut. 17:1). The heavenly Father made our salvation possible by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as our substitute, which is indisputable evidence of His sacrificial, infinite love for humanity (Rom. 5:8). God's love is also revealed in the covenant expressing His intention to make us His children (Jer. 31:33). Once we trusted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, we became members of God's family. Our perfect heavenly Father is patient, loving, and kind toward us; He understands that we are children learning to live in this life.

God loves us flawlessly. Every action He performs or permits in our lives is an expression of His love, even though He allows some situations that we think could not possibly be for our good. Always remember that God is omniscient—He sees the end from the beginning and knows exactly what fruit will come from our pain and challenges. Although we may not understand His reason for allowing certain hardships, our difficulties in no way indicate He is anything but a good God and worthy of our trust.

BELIEF #2: GOD IS INFINITE IN WISDOM

The Lord never has to poll the angelic host—or anyone else—to get a consensus about the wisest action to take. In His unlimited knowledge, He always knows what is in our very best interest and acts accordingly. Regardless of what our circumstances look like, we must remember that God knows the optimal course of action in every situation and will only benefit His children.

Sometimes we look at difficulties facing us and think, *Well now, Lord, I*

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know You are infinitely wise, but I think You've forgotten something. Be assured He has not overlooked a single factor. In our limited understanding and reasoning, we simply do not see things from God's perspective. We may have all the information that is humanly possible to gather, but God is aware of *everything* influencing the situation as well as all the potential consequences for you and others. He alone comprehends the totality of every single decision. And because He is infinitely wise, He simply cannot make a mistake (Prov. 3:5–6).

While He completely understands every situation, He is under no obligation whatsoever to inform us of the rationale for His actions or decisions. For example, God did not make clear why He let Joseph languish unjustly in prison for thirteen years before elevating him to the position of prime minister (Gen. 39–41). Nor did He spell out why the Israelites had to live more than four centuries in Egyptian bondage before He miraculously rescued them and made them into a nation (Ex. 12:41).

Probably one of the hardest things for me is to see some of the most wonderful, godly people I know stricken with malignant cancer. No matter how much you pray and trust God, they sometimes die. The outcome looks grim, but I can't do anything about it. I feel completely helpless.

In the ministry, I see a lot of sick people. Young and old alike are stricken with diseases that weaken their bodies and disable them. I think of the war veterans I have known; some of them are in wheelchairs unable to walk or even feed themselves. It seems those with physical afflictions have the frailest bodies but the sweetest spirits. I think, *God, I've been physically blessed all my life, while others have suffered all of theirs.* There are just some things I don't understand—I never boast of understanding. I just have to say, *God, You're in control. You see the end result. If I could see the end result in that person's life, or if I could see what You're doing worldwide, then I'm sure I would agree with You. But at this point I don't know how I can do anything except trust that in Your wisdom You know what the best thing is to do.*

While we have no right to fully know God's reasons, our lack of such information is the very thing that creates our feelings of frustration, anxiety, and doubt. Consider the irony of the situation. If we in our limited human wisdom *could* comprehend God's motives and actions, that in itself would be cause to doubt Him, since His thinking would be no better than our own! But because

God's logic vastly exceeds our own (Isa. 55:8–9), we *can* trust Him—we have no legitimate cause for doubting because He is an infinite, all-wise God who knows the best action to take in our lives.

BELIEF #3: GOD IS ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN

The Lord has absolute authority over everything in creation. In other words, if even one tiny event in the universe happened outside God's power and control, we could no longer trust Him—in that case, we couldn't have certainty that He would work every situation for our best interest. But we can trust Him because He *is* sovereign and therefore has perfect, complete control over every last detail of life.

When Pilate asked Jesus, “Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” the Lord answered him, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above” (John 19:10–11). Earlier, Jesus reassured His disciples that not even a common sparrow—worth only half a penny—could fall to the ground apart from the Father's will (Matt. 10:29). In other words, whether the circumstance is large or small, God is in absolute control.

Some might ask, “Then what about terrorist attacks or pandemics? Where is God in all that?” He is still in total control, though this is a perplexing idea for the human mind to reconcile. Some people find comfort in the idea of luck, fate, and chance, because trusting God can seem difficult when tragedy strikes or our basic needs are not being met. But what happens to God's perfect love, infinite wisdom, and total sovereignty if luck, fate, and chance play a role? These words shouldn't even be in the believer's vocabulary—we would never be able to trust God if events could take place outside His control.

I always go back to Psalm 103:19: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.” I don't know why God allowed the Holocaust or a global pandemic to occur. Or why a tsunami killed more than 170,000 people in some of the poorest countries on the face of the earth. But I have come to the conclusion that there are some things I'm not going to understand on this side of eternity. Whether its purpose was to awaken the

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world to the reality of evil or to make us aware of the uncertainty of life, I do not know. I just have to trust God—in some way, in some fashion, He will turn these things to good.

We live in a wicked, vile, disease-filled world. Many circumstances are not God's perfect will, but He allows them through His permissive will, despite the pain they cause. In His omniscience, God knows what is ultimately best, including the long-term consequences of tragedies that seem heartless and inexplicable. We should not doubt God or abandon our trust when we lack understanding. Instead, we should surrender our lives to Him, accepting by faith that He is good and worthy of our full trust.

Our lives belong to our sovereign, all-knowing, loving God, and nothing can touch us except what He allows. Sometimes that includes hardship and suffering, which leave us wondering, *How can this possibly be good?* And yet many people who have gone through tremendous trials later look back and say, "I hated the difficulty while I was going through it and wondered if God had deserted me. But now, on this side of it, I can see why He allowed it." Not everyone fully understands the spiritual insight, yet it happens frequently enough that we can take comfort, realizing that God has His purposes and with perfect timing will bring blessing from our trials (Rom. 8:28).

So when you face struggles, remind yourself that God has your best interest in mind. He wants you to trust Him as your personal Savior and surrender your life to Him. There is no reason to doubt Him, because He is perfect in His love, infinite in His wisdom, and sovereign in His control of the entire universe. Why should believers ever fret, when even in the deepest, darkest valleys, there can be abiding joy and confidence? No matter what befalls you, our all-loving, all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has you in the cradle of His hand.

WHY SUCH AN EMPHASIS ON WHAT YOU BELIEVE ABOUT GOD?

Why am I placing such great importance on what you believe about God?

Because if you don't hold on to the fact that the Lord is sovereign . . .

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If you don't embrace that the Father considers you to be worthy and lovable . . .

If you don't believe God knows the best action to take in your life . . .

Then you are never going to trust Him in the ways He wants to lead you. You are never going to have faith that He will reveal His will for your life. And that means you are never going to put yourself in a position to receive all the joy and blessings He desires to pour out upon you.

It is critical that you pick up, embrace fully, and become firmly committed to the truth about God and His relationship with you. Because when you do so, it will birth within you a deeper trust in Him that will enable Him to lead you to His blessings.

I do not have space to even begin to compile a list of the ways God can bless you. They are as numerous and diverse as there are people on this earth. However, I will address five major blessings that God promises to give you in response to your trust in Him—how He meets your needs, communicates with you, frees you from fear and anxiety, leads you victoriously through adversity, and has an important plan for your life. I will also discuss how you can embrace each of these blessings fully and, in doing so, discover the extraordinary life He has purposed for you.

It all begins with trust in the all-powerful, loving God who has your very best in mind—always. Once you place your faith in Him and obey Him, nothing can hold you back from gaining the peace and power that He desires to give you. My question to you is this: Are you ready to take the first step in believing in a loving, wise, sovereign Father? Don't miss another moment that could be spent enjoying the blessings He has promised you.

THE MOST IMPORTANT BELIEF IN TRUSTING GOD

Let's begin with the most important question you will ever answer: *What do you really believe about Jesus?*

Do you believe Christ was merely a good man who gave us an example of how to live? Or do you believe that Jesus is God incarnate and that His sacrifice

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on the cross defeated sin and death, opening the way for you to know Him? This one belief about Christ makes all the difference in your life. Because it is when you receive Him as your Savior and Lord that He indwells you with His Holy Spirit and empowers you to know and truly trust Him.

So what do you really believe about Jesus? Have you ever received the salvation that He offers? Have you placed your faith in Him as the only One who can forgive your sins, provide you with a relationship with God, and give you eternal life?

It is not difficult. All you must do is tell Him that you want His life to be yours and accept His death on the cross as sufficient payment for your sins. In so doing, you agree with Him that there is nothing you can do in your own strength to redeem yourself—that it is only through faith in His name that you are saved (Rom. 10:9–11; Eph. 2:8–9).

I hope that if you've never taken this step of faith, you will. Because it is when you receive Christ as your Savior that you can exchange your old way of living for a new, victorious life. This is when you become able to embrace all He has for you. So commit your desires, hopes, and dreams to God, and you will be amazed at the way He works everything together for your good and His glory.

PART ONE

**GOD MEETS YOUR
EVERY NEED**

ONE

THE PROMISE MAKER

Do you truly believe that God is capable of meeting your needs and that He desires to meet *all* of your needs?

Some people ask, “If God is all-powerful and all-knowing, and if He loves me with an infinite and unconditional love—and therefore, He not only is capable of meeting all my needs but also desires to meet my needs—why doesn’t God just meet all my needs right now? Why do I still have needs? When the apostle Paul wrote from a prison cell, ‘My God will supply all your needs’ why do I still have a lack of supply?” (Phil. 4:19).

Others say, “I know God is capable of meeting my needs, but since I still have needs, God must not want to meet them.”

Still others question sincerely, “Why didn’t God meet all my needs the moment I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior?”

These are excellent questions, worthy of close examination.

At the outset of our discussion about these questions, let me assure you again that God is committed to meeting all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. A commitment is a pledge, a statement of a sure promise. The value of any commitment is based upon two things:

1. The *ability* of the promise maker to fulfill the promise.
2. The *integrity* of the promise maker, which might also be stated as the character to follow through on what has been said and do what has been promised.

CAN YOU STILL TRUST GOD?

God certainly qualifies as One who will stand behind His commitments on both accounts. He has all the wisdom, power, and ability necessary to fulfill His promises to us. He also has proven integrity—God has always done what He has said He would do. God is utterly faithful to His Word. He is holy and immutable; He is unchanging. His character is impeccable.

There are those who say, “Well, the Bible’s promises are fine for the people back then, but Paul was writing to the Philippians, not to me. Times are different now. Things have changed.”

Friend, all of God’s Word is for you, right now, right where you are. It all applies to you. Why is this so? Because the Author of the Bible hasn’t changed. The Scriptures are true today because the Author still stands by His Word! His commandments, statutes, and promises have not changed; they reflect our unchanging God. He is the same “yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8 ΝΚΙΥ). The only times in God’s Word in which God has not done what He said He was going to do are times when God’s promises were conditional and man’s behavior was an intervening factor.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE PROMISE?

The better we know God—the more intimate our fellowship is with Him—the more we will trust God to do what He has said He will do. And the more we know about a promise in the Bible, the more we understand our role in bringing a promise to fulfillment.

As we study the Bible, we must ask several questions anytime we come to a promise in the Scriptures:

- To whom is the promise given?
- Who is making the promise?
- What is God really saying?
- What does God desire for me to do?
- How does God desire to act on my behalf?

- What is the end goal or the purpose for the promise?
- What is God's motivation in making this promise?

The more we know about the promise, the more we understand whether it is a conditional or unconditional promise.

Two Categories of Promises

All of God's promises fall into one of two categories: unconditional or conditional. As we read, memorize, and quote God's Word, we must be very careful to discern clearly the difference between these two categories.

Unconditional promises. In an unconditional promise, God states that He will do something regardless of man's behavior. In other words, God is going to do what He desires to do with or without any input or response from mankind. Nothing will interfere with or keep God from doing what He has said He will do.

An example is the promise of Jesus to His disciples that He is going to return one day. Absolutely nothing that man does or does not do can keep Jesus from fulfilling this promise in the fullness of God's timing and according to God's plans and purposes. Christ *will* come again.

Another unconditional promise is the promise of Jesus that He would never leave or forsake His disciples. Regardless of what people do or don't do, regardless of circumstances or situations that may arise, regardless of any mediating or intervening factors, Jesus will not forsake those who have put their trust in Him. That unconditional promise stands for all disciples at all times in all places and in all situations.

Conditional promises. In a conditional promise, God's actions are based in part on man's responses to God's commands. What man does, therefore, influences God's fulfillment of a promise.

Too often, people take some of God's *conditional* promises as being *unconditional*. That is a very dangerous error to make, and it can lead to frustration, disappointment, disillusionment, and even doubt about the goodness of God. How so? Well, if a person regards a promise of God as being unconditional

when it is actually a conditional promise, he may very well fail to meet the conditions associated with the promise because he isn't looking for any conditions. He assumes that God is going to do everything and he is required to do nothing. In his failure to meet the conditions, of course, he negates the promise. Not realizing this, however, he begins to wonder why God is taking so long to meet his need. He begins to doubt whether God really meant what He said. Soon he doubts whether God cares or whether God is truly to be trusted on any matter.

Consider a situation in which a father says to his son, "I will buy you a new car when you finish college." The son is very excited—so excited that he fails to hear the full meaning of his father's statement. The boy goes to college for two years and decides that he has had enough of college. He gets a job and starts wondering when Dad is going to provide the new car he promised. The fact is, the boy did not finish college in the sense of completing a college degree. He just finished college from the standpoint that he stopped attending classes! The promise was a conditional one, and the error occurred because the son defined the conditions in a way the father had not defined them.

Too many people make this same mistake when it comes to our heavenly Father. They decide when the conditions are met rather than trust God with that determination. The results are failure and disappointment. We must be very careful in reading God's promises to determine precisely what the conditions of a conditional promise may be.

Look again at Philippians 4:19: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (NKJV).

Ask yourself, Is this a conditional promise of God, or is this an unconditional promise? This passage happens to be a conditional promise. How is it conditional?

First, Paul said, "My God." If a person cannot say, "My God"—in other words, if a personal relationship has not been established with Jesus as Savior—then this promise is not in effect.

Second, Paul said that needs will be met "by Christ Jesus." If a person looks to any other person or source to meet his needs, the promise is not in effect.

This promise is based upon a relationship between Christ Jesus and those who follow Him. We might call this a family promise. It is in effect only for

the family of God. It is not a promise for the unbeliever or the person who does not trust Jesus as Lord of his life.

Note that I did not say that this promise is limited to a particular church, denomination, or group of believers within the body of Christ. God has only one family—people who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and seek to follow Jesus as Lord.

What about the Christian who doesn't have all his needs met?

The first place you need to look when a need is not being met is not at God or at His Son, Christ Jesus, but at yourself. You err greatly when you ask, Why hasn't God lived up to His promise? You are wise to ask instead, What am I doing that is keeping God from fulfilling this promise in my life?

You may respond, "Well, I'm not doing anything to keep this promise from being fulfilled! If you knew my circumstances or my situation. . . ." Let me assure you that no circumstance or situation is going to keep God from acting on your behalf. Nothing is too great or too powerful to stand in the way if God chooses to act. The real question remains, What are you doing in the midst of your circumstances or situation?

Do you already have a preconceived idea about how God should act to meet your needs or whom God may use to meet your needs?

I have encountered a number of people who have said to me, "Well, if he would just do such and such and she would agree to do so-and-so, then my need would be met." Or they have said, "Well, I did such and such and therefore God must do this and that."

Those who make such statements are not trusting God to be their Need Meeter. Rather, they are asking God to exert His power on behalf of their wishes and commands. We are called by God to trust Him, and Him alone, to meet our needs and to be our total source of supply. Furthermore, God requires that we obey Him as a part of our trusting Him. We have the situation completely backward any time we start expecting God to trust us to know what is right and to obey our commands so that He might prove His love for us.

Our position is one of standing before God, declaring, "I trust You completely to meet my needs in Your timing and according to Your methods."

CAN YOU STILL TRUST GOD?

Anyone who takes the stance before almighty God, “You must do things *my way*,” is presumptuous and foolish.

GOD’S MOTIVATIONS FOR MEETING OUR NEEDS

What’s in it for God?

Why does God give to us?

What are His motivations for meeting our needs?

Motivated by Love

God’s foremost motivation for meeting all your needs is this: He loves you. Yes, He loves you, loves you, loves you, loves you. I would repeat it a thousand times and more if I could. There is no bottom to His divine heart.

Why, then, must we do certain things in conditional promises? Why doesn’t God just pour out to us all that we need?

Because ultimately God is about building a loving relationship with us.

Obedience to His conditions is part of having a loving relationship with God. Obedience is evidence that we are trusting God to be the source of our lives. He wants to be the One on whom we depend for provision, the One to whom we look for wise counsel, the One on whom we rely for protection.

Obedience in fulfilling God’s conditions is also related to our growth and development as Christian believers. We’ve all heard the old song that says, “I know that you know that I know that you know . . .” That’s what happens when we obey. We know we are obeying, and our obedience creates in us a greater strength to ask for what we desire and to act more quickly when God directs us.

Conformity to Christ

Often we come to a promise in the Word of God and we know it is true in our minds, but we have difficulty believing it to be true in our hearts, and especially we have difficulty believing that the promise is true for us. One of the reasons we find it difficult to claim God’s promises as true in our personal lives is that we do not fully understand what God is seeking to do in our lives.

We must understand that God's primary purpose in our lives is not to meet our needs but to conform us into the likeness of His Son. Many people make God out to be some kind of a Santa Claus, always ready and willing to give them precisely what they crave at any particular moment. They see God as the wish fulfiller, the One who turns all our dreams into reality, the ultimate fairy godfather, the One who makes all things just the way we desire for them to be. While it is true that God is our Father and our Provider, and while it is equally true that God desires only the best for us for all eternity, God is not present in our lives to do things our way. He is present in our lives so that we might desire and choose to do things His way.

God does not exist for our pleasure. We exist for His pleasure.

God does not exist to make all our personal human and often shortsighted dreams come true. We exist so that we might have a part in His plan and purpose for the ages.

We do not make God and then tell Him what to do for us. God made us, and He is the One who orders and directs our lives.

When we approach the promises of God, we must always keep in mind that God's ultimate purpose in our lives is to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. God desires for us the same relationship He had with Jesus—a close intimacy so that we do only what the Father directs us to do and all that we do is for His glory. Jesus was 100 percent obedient to the will of God the Father in all things. He relied exclusively upon God the Father for direction, wisdom, sustenance, provision, and power. Jesus drew His identity solely from God the Father—everything about the character of Jesus was identical to the character of God the Father.

Like Jesus. That is what the Father has in mind for you and for me. He is creating in us the character of Christ. He is molding us to be obedient to His plan for us and for an intimate loving relationship with Him.

God meets our needs always in the context of making us more like Jesus.

A Fresh and Daily Relationship

An important Hebrew name for God is El Shaddai—the all-powerful, all-sufficient God who protects and provides. El Shaddai was a living presence

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to the Israelites, the God who guided them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, the God who gave them manna every morning, the God who provided water from solid rock, the God who protected them from Pharaoh's armies, the God who met with Moses face-to-face. El Shaddai was the Provider—their only Provider.

The Israelites knew from their experiences in the wilderness that El Shaddai provided their daily needs. Jesus spoke of this also when He taught His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

The prophet Jeremiah wrote,

This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.
"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I hope in Him!"

(LAM. 3:21–24 NKJV)

The One who meets our needs is fresh and new in His supply every day. He doesn't give us stale leftovers. His supply is precisely what we need in the moment we need it. Everything He gives us is fresh, new, alive, vibrant, powerful.

We cannot awaken on any given morning and be without God's mercies and His compassions. Regardless of what we have done or said the day before, God is with us in a fresh new relationship every morning.

Every night before we go to sleep, we need to confess our sins to God and receive His forgiveness. We need to do this not so that God will awaken the next morning full of love, forgiveness, and mercy toward us, but so that *we* will awaken the next morning able to receive the fullness of the love, forgiveness, and mercy He extends to us. God never drags around our unconfessed sins,

but we do. The burden of guilt is something we carry. It is vital that we set down the burden of those sins so we can take up the blessings that God has prepared for us.

You can trust God to meet your needs with a provision that is fresh and good. It will be exciting and life-giving, satisfying, and sufficient.

An Extension of His Glory

I once overheard a child offer this as an excuse for his behavior: “I just couldn’t help myself.” To a certain extent, God meets our needs and desires to give us good gifts because it is His very nature to do so. He cannot fail to give. He cannot fail to love.

God’s good gifts flow from His goodness. God’s very nature of goodness motivates Him to give good gifts and to give them and give them and give them. There is no end to either God’s desire to give good gifts to His children or His ability to give good gifts. And therefore, we can never fully exhaust the storehouse of good gifts that are laid up for us.

I once took an informal poll and asked people at random to tell me the first word that came to their minds to describe the nature of God. Many people responded with these words: *holy, righteous, just, absolute, eternal*. A few people said *loving* or *forgiving*. But it was only after asking dozens of people this question that someone responded with *good*.

Most people don’t seem to think of God as being good to them. They tend to think of God as being demanding, exacting, and unrelenting. They see Him as prosecutor, judge, and jury. They see Him as distant, remote, and unfeeling—the Creator, the Higher Power, the Almighty. While God certainly bears all these titles and attributes, He also bears the attributes of faithful, merciful, forgiving, loving, kind, gentle, nurturing, providing, protecting, and good.

We have a lot more ability at times to imagine other people—from close family members to total strangers—doing something good for us than we have the ability to imagine that God might truly pour out an overwhelming blessing on our lives.

A provision always for good. All that God has for us is good. His supply is

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not only ample, but it is of the highest and finest quality. Jeremiah knew this great truth about God:

The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul who seeks Him.
It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.

(LAM. 3:25–26 NKJV)

God sees the whole of our lives, beginning to ending and on into eternity. He knows what is the best for us not only now but tomorrow and next month and next year and twenty years from now. His gifts to us are always good for us.

A good parent does not give a child a gift that will make the child unhappy. Neither does he give the child everything the child thinks will make him happy. A parent gives what he believes is best for the child, in the right amounts, at the right times.

When I was a boy, there were lots of foods that I didn't particularly like. I ate them anyway. I ate them because my mother cooked them for me and she insisted that I eat them. I ate them because I was hungry and what was put before me was all that was available for me to eat. But that still didn't mean that I enjoyed the taste of all the foods that were put on my plate.

An amazing thing happened somewhere along the way to adulthood. I started liking some of the foods that I didn't like as a child. Some of the things to which I would have liked to have said "no, thank you" as a child are things I find myself ordering from menus.

That same thing happens to us as we grow in our relationship with Christ and become more conformed to His nature. Some things that we didn't like when we were in an unforgiven, sinful state become things that we dearly love. Some things that we weren't all that fond of when we were babes in Christ become things that are pleasurable to us as we mature in our faith and in our love relationship with God.

The opposite situation is also true. There were things that I craved and enjoyed as a child that I no longer like. I look back on some foods that I liked

as a child and a teenager, and I think, *Why did I ever think that tasted good?* In like manner, there are things that people do when they are in sin that seem good to them at that state of their lives, but that become things they wouldn't dream of doing once they know Christ or are more mature in Christ.

Our minds are renewed when we come to Christ, and a big part of that renewal is a change in the things that we define as good, desirable, pleasurable, rewarding, and satisfying. Our definition of what is good changes as we come to Christ and grow into His likeness. However, God always sees what is absolutely good for us—things that are good for us now, good for us in every area of our lives, good for those around us, and good for us through all eternity. He gives us only the things that are truly beneficial for our growth as His children and that are beneficial for the advancement of His kingdom on this earth.

The question to ask yourself if you have an unmet need today is this: Is this thing that I need something that God defines as good for my life?

Proactive and creative in His giving. A woman once told me that one of the best Christmas presents she ever received was a stereo record player that her parents bought for her when she was eleven years old. She said, "It had never dawned on me to ask for a stereo. I'm not sure I even knew that stereo units like the one I received had been manufactured. I certainly would not have asked for such an expensive present. But my parents in their generosity gave me a stereo, and it was a gift that gave me countless hours of pleasure during my teen years. My parents continued to monitor the records that I bought. Their gift of a stereo wasn't without certain limitations about how loud or how late at night I could play it. Even so, the gift was an overwhelming one to me. It was a gift they knew I would enjoy even though I didn't know how much I would enjoy it until months had passed."

This is the way God gives to us. He gives us what He knows will bring us great pleasure and joy, even though we in our finite wisdom and understanding may not know fully what we need or desire.

God does not wait for others to initiate the provision for our innermost needs. He assumes a proactive position in meeting our needs. God may use other people in the process, but He creates, orchestrates, and engineers the solution that satisfies.

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Do you believe even for a second that God is surprised by the need you are experiencing? Do you believe that your sudden lack in a certain area of your life is either a mystery or a surprise to God? To the contrary—God knows you far better than you will ever know yourself. He knew about this need in your life today long before you were ever conceived in your mother's womb. Not only did God know about that need, but He knew His provision for meeting that need. Just as your need is no surprise and no mystery to Him, neither is the provision for solving your problem or meeting your need hidden from His understanding or ability.

God will not keep anything from you that you need to know.

God will not withhold anything from you that is rightfully yours as His child.

God will not hide any aspect of His character from you.

God will not deny you any promise that He makes in His Word.

God will not shut you away from any blessing that is for your eternal benefit or that is required for the fulfillment of your purpose on this earth.

And best of all, God has already prepared for you all that you will need for every day of the rest of your life.

T W O

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Do you believe there is a need that might be outside God's ability to meet it?

In your heart of hearts, do you believe God is going to supply only 80 percent of your needs, or perhaps 90 percent, or even 99 percent?

Not so! When Paul wrote, "My God shall supply *all* your need," he meant precisely that. All. Not a percentage of. Not a fraction of. All.

I have heard people say on a number of occasions, "Oh, yes, I have a need in my life. But God has been so good to me. . . ." What is such a person saying? In essence he is saying that he believes he has used up all of his allotted portion of blessings. His current need lies just beyond God's storeroom of supply. His current need pushes him into the category of being selfish or greedy, and therefore, he expects God to turn down his desire for yet another blessing.

Friend, God has more for you. He still has blessings that you have not received. Malachi painted a wonderful word picture about this:

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it."

(MAL. 3:10 NKJV)

We are not to think we are asking for too much from God. Malachi pointed us toward the knowledge that God has more for us than we are capable of receiving. An abundance of God's provision for us lies beyond what we have even thought to request.

Not long ago I heard about a man who said, "I cannot contain it all." This man as a child had dreamed of owning a house with a big yard so that he could buy a riding lawn mower to mow it. He loved to be outside as a boy, and he thought the idea of mowing a lawn with a riding lawn mower would be about the best thing a person could do on a Saturday afternoon.

He had been a churchgoer all his life, and even as a child, he gave his tithes and offerings to God. Over the years, he never wavered from that obedience to the Lord. He was wise in his spending and wise in all his business practices. Decade by decade, his fortune grew, and along with it, the amount of his tithes and offerings. He thanked God for all things. And by the time he was sixty years old, he lived on an estate in which he had more than an acre of lawn. Sure enough he had a riding lawn mower. And not only did he have this estate, but he also owned houses in two other areas of the country. In each place he had two automobiles, one for himself and one for his wife. And in each place, he had a riding lawn mower. Finally at age seventy-five, he said to God, "There's too much for me to contain. I don't need three riding lawn mowers, six cars, three houses, and a boat to maintain. This blessing You have poured out for me from heaven—well, Lord, I just don't have room to receive it all!"

Most of us don't have the problem that man had. But then again, most of us don't have the simple trust in God that he had all his life. He had no doubt that God would meet his needs, and that God would meet them with an overflowing abundance. He believed that God had the ability to do or accomplish anything. And in believing that he was a beloved son of God, he had no trouble receiving the blessings that God showered upon him from above.

The man ardently sought out every bit of wisdom that God might send his way as he conducted his various business affairs. He asked God to help him in every relationship he had—not only in his relationships with his wife and children, but in his relationships with employees and even those who serviced his riding lawn mower. He asked God to help him grow in his spiritual life and

in his ability to be an effective minister to others. God had given him numerous opportunities to share his business expertise with others in one-to-one counseling and in providing business wisdom to his church and various community groups. The man truly believed that God would meet *all* his needs—not some, but *all*—and that God would meet his needs in a way that was overflowing in generosity and abundance.

Do you believe about God what this man believed about God? Do you know God and trust Him as this man did? Are you truly trusting God to meet all your needs—not some, not just a high percentage, but all—even to the point that you no longer can contain all of the blessing that God pours out on you?

GOD'S STOREHOUSE OF SUPPLY

God does not meet our needs according to our resources—the talents we have, the gifts we offer, the numbers we have associated with our bank accounts or investment portfolios. No. God meets our needs according to His resources.

And what are God's resources?

My! You cannot begin to count all of God's resources. The oceans and seas are His. The continents are His. The atmosphere and all of outer space are His. All that is under the continents and all that is locked away as potential for life-giving blessing in plants and animals—*His!* We cannot begin to calculate all of God's resources that are available for His use on this earth, and we haven't even begun to count the unseen resources of heaven. His resources are immeasurable, indestructible, and inexhaustible.

God's bank account has no limitations. His storehouse of supply is beyond our imaginations in size, scope, and magnificence.

How rich is God? What does God possess? The psalmist recorded this about God's wealth:

I am God, your God. . . .
 For every beast of the forest is Mine,
 The cattle on a thousand hills.

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I know every bird of the mountains,
And everything that moves in the field is Mine.

(PSALM 50:7, 10–11)

In Haggai 2:8, the Lord declared, “The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine.”

ALL THINGS ARE GOVERNED BY GOD

Everything that is in existence is owned by God, governed by God, and available to God at any given moment. He is in absolute control over anything that we might call a resource, be it animal, mineral, plant, or atmospheric in nature. He has created all and sustains all. At any given second, God could wipe out everything we know as being real, including our lives, because His power over His creation is all-encompassing.

As Christians, you and I are living in union with the Sovereign Power of the universe.

Not only is God in total and absolute authority over all *things* in the universe, but also over every *process* of the universe. The laws by which nature operates are God’s laws. He made them, He can alter them, and He can change them if He so desires. All the scientific laws that we associate with healing, growth, development, and fruitfulness are His laws.

Furthermore, all things that exist but are unseen—in other words, the spiritual realm—are governed by God and are subject to His command. All of the rules or laws that pertain to good relationships, good marriages, good psychological and emotional health, a sense of well-being, effective communication, leadership, a righteous community of people, a godly attitude, development of a good character, and many other laws related to our inner being and our relationships with others are God’s laws. He established them, and He continues to rule over them.

We often think of the natural world as being subject to the laws of nature, but when it comes to human nature, many people factor out God’s sovereignty. God is the Author of the laws that govern human nature just as

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He is the Author of the laws that govern the natural environment in which we live.

Friend, there isn't a resource or a process, seen or unseen, known or unknown, that is outside God's domain and God's governance. You are in union with Christ Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit simultaneously and continually. You are in union with God in His fullness, and that includes the fullness of His authority and power over all things.

Surely at this point Philippians 4:19 becomes really exciting! "My God shall supply all your need *according to His riches in glory*" (NKJV). We are privileged by God and given the right by God to tap into His riches in glory—riches that are far beyond anything that we can fully understand or comprehend. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20 NKJV). In other words, you can't begin to ask God for all that He desires to give you. You can't imagine all that He has for you. I have a pretty good imagination and a pretty good boldness in asking things of God. What an awesome statement about God's supply house to think that we can't even imagine all that is contained in God's riches and that we don't have enough time on this earth to tap into all that God has made available to us!

One of the words that most toddlers learn quickly and use to great advantage is *more*. Give a young child a sip of a milkshake or a spoonful of good-tasting pudding and that child is likely to respond, "More." Even if the child doesn't say the word, the look in his eyes is one of eager anticipation, *More!* As little children before our heavenly Father, we are like toddlers desiring more of God's goodness and more of God's riches in our lives. And just as a loving parent does not give a child just one taste of an ice-cream cone and then deny the child a second taste, neither does our loving heavenly Father give us just a taste of His goodness and then deny all future requests for His blessings.

GOD IS OUR NEED MEETER

We must recognize three significant truths about God's provision and His storehouse of unlimited supply. The first of these is that God, and God alone,

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is the One who provides. He is the One who holds the keys to the storehouse of unlimited supply. He is both the originator and the giver of the supply.

Paul wrote very specifically that God will supply all our need “according to His riches in glory” (Phil. 4:19). *His* supply, *His* storehouse, *His* riches, *His* possessions.

How many people in the world today believe that all of their needs can be met by a government agency or by a special program of some kind? Let me assure you, no government or special program can ever meet all of a person’s needs, and certainly not the most fundamental and basic of all needs: spiritual and emotional needs. No amount of government aid can ever instill self-worth. In fact, government aid too often becomes a detriment to self-worth.

The quicker we come to the understanding that only God in Christ is the Need Meeter, the sooner we will release other people from the tremendous burden we try to place upon them to meet our needs and to provide for us all of the emotional support and love that ultimately God alone can provide. I cannot convey to you how important this is to our developing healthy and joyful relationships with other people. As long as we look to others to satisfy the deep inner longings that we sometimes cannot even fully define or describe, we will remain in a needy state. God alone is capable of meeting our deepest inner needs.

God may use certain people to meet your needs, but you must never look to those people or require them to meet your needs. To do so is to set yourself up to be devastated when those people fail you either through a willful act or through a lack of ability. No person, or persons, can be or should ever be counted upon to be your source of hope, joy, peace, contentment, creativity, or emotional security. God alone is your source for the meeting of these needs!

GOD MEETS OUR NEEDS BY CHRIST JESUS

God has a method and a means for making available to us the riches of His unlimited storehouse. His means of availability is Christ Jesus. This is the second truth we must learn.

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Many people, including a good percentage of those who sit in churches every Sunday, do not know the position they have in Christ; therefore, they do not understand the privileges that are theirs in Christ. Many people live their entire lives without knowing the fullness of the provision that God has for them.

Many companies today issue identification passes to their employees. These passes give them entrance into the company and, in some cases, restrict or allow access to various departments or physical locations within the company. Our “pass” into all areas of God’s storehouse is Christ Jesus. Paul wrote to the Philippians that God supplies our needs “by Christ Jesus.”

Jesus brought us to the Father and mediates for us before His throne, saying, “This one believes in Me.” Because of what Jesus has done for us and what Jesus declares about us, we are forgiven and cleansed of all our sin. Jesus gives us access to God the Father.

Jesus brings us again and again to the Father and says, “This is the need in Our beloved one’s life. This is what We must meet.”

“By Christ Jesus” we are in relationship with the Father. And thus, by Christ Jesus we are in a position to receive all that the Father has for us in the way of our inheritance as His children.

Jesus knows my name and my address. He knows precisely where to deliver God’s “riches in glory.”

We have the position in Christ to receive God’s ample supply. Christ has an ample supply to give. And we have the privilege of receiving His supply.

THE PRIVILEGE OF INSTANT ACCESS

Furthermore, we have instant access to God’s provision. There is no time in our lives when we are cut off from God, and therefore, there is no time when we are cut off from His supply.

You can be on a gurney being rolled into a surgical suite.

You can be standing at your kitchen sink washing dishes.

You can be sitting at your desk shuffling papers.

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You can be out on the golf course just about to make a putt.

You can be driving in your car on a freeway.

One of the greatest privileges of your life is that you have instant access to God. You do not need to complete a certain protocol, accomplish a list of prerequisites, or be in a certain place, holding your hands in a specific way or reciting a particular statement. You can get in touch with God instantly, directly, and personally at any time of day or night, in any situation or circumstance, either verbally or silently.

Let me paint a picture for you. Suppose that a person sees a brochure about a cruise to Alaska, and he decides he wants to go on a trip like that. He makes his reservation, saves his money, and buys his tickets. He packs his bags, and finally the day comes when he boards the ship. He goes to the first sitting of the first dinner meal and takes a look at the long, sumptuous buffet table. Then he sits down, opens a little sack, and pulls out a few crackers and a jar of peanut butter.

Someone asks him at that point what he's doing, and he replies, "I'm having dinner." This person obviously doesn't know that all his meals on the ship are covered by the price of his ticket.

When you came to Christ, *all* the provisions and abundance of Christ Jesus were made available to you. You don't have to remain in a needy state. Christ has what you need in sufficient supply, and it is available for you to access right now.

A FULL PROVISION FOR EVERY NEED

The good news for us is that these are not only needs in our lives, but because they are needs that God has created within us from birth, they are also needs for which God has created a full provision. God never sets up a situation or creates a circumstance without also building in the full provision, expression, or potential for success in that situation or circumstance. This is the third significant truth about God's provision.

God creates needs so that we might trust Him to provide for the needs, and in the process, we might grow in our relationship with Him and strengthen our

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ability to be and do what He has created us to be and do. Stated another way, any lack in our lives is an opportunity for us to grow in our relationship with God, and an opportunity for us to grow in our abilities and in our faith so that we can be even more effective servants of God and witnesses to God's love and grace.

For God to give His people needs and then fail to provide for the needs would be punitive and hateful. God certainly is neither! It is out of God's great love and mercy that He has built a God-shaped vacuum into our lives and then offered to freely, generously, and abundantly fill that void with His love, presence, and power. Friend, there isn't a single verse in all the Bible that describes God as uncaring, unfeeling, stingy, or tight.

YOUR SUPPLY BOX IS FULL

In Ephesians 1:3 Paul declared, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." I want you to notice that this statement is in the past tense. Paul did not say that God is *going* to bless us with spiritual blessings once we are in heaven, or even once we fulfill certain duties, roles, or commands. Paul wrote that Jesus Christ already *has* made all these blessings available to us. They are blessings that are already laid up in God's storehouse for us to claim.

God does not have to go out and work to refill your supply box. Your supply box is already full to overflowing. Everything you are ever going to need to fulfill God's plan and purpose for your life has already been placed in your supply box, and it has been there since the moment of your conception. God has already deposited to your account all that you will ever need to withdraw.

In other words, you cannot have a need that is too great for God to meet. You cannot have a need that takes God by surprise. You cannot have a need that is beyond the supply that has already been provided by your heavenly Father and made available to you by Christ Jesus!