

*FROM THE INSPIRING AUTHOR OF
HOW I GOT MILLIONAIRE MENTALITY*

DON'T LET SATAN STEAL YOUR HARVEST



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1

UNDER ATTACK

It is almost impossible to open a daily newspaper without reading accounts of hostility, confrontation and bloodshed somewhere on our globe. Yet there is a much larger battle raging that you never see emblazoned in the headlines or reported in the news.

Satan is making an all-out attack on Christians everywhere. He knows that the moment of Christ's return is near, and he is doing everything in his power to steal our harvest. His target is much more than our material possessions. The devil desires to steal

- *Our harvest of joy.*
- *Our harvest of peace.*
- *Our harvest of love.*
- *Our harvest of family.*
- *Our harvest of friends.*
- *Our harvest of health.*

When I was making \$1.47 an hour toiling on the assembly line of an aircraft plant, there wasn't much for the devil to take. Then, when I became Ohio's largest used car dealer and built the world's largest American Motors Company dealership, the stakes were much higher.

Did the Evil One attempt to destroy my business? Of course he did. But even more, he tried every trick in his book to rob my soul and my spirit. If I were to document the attacks of Satan in my life, this book would require thousands and thousands of pages.

Why does Satan steal? Because he is a thief. Jesus said, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy ..." (John 10:10). And Paul warned that we should be aware "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Defensive Action

There are millions of people who dress up for church every Sunday totally unaware that Satan is lurking in the shadows, waiting to attack.

When homes in our neighborhood are being burglarized we take defensive action. We do whatever it takes—from installing floodlights on our property, adding extra locks on our doors, purchasing a ferocious dog, even to installing an electronic security system.

Satan has been called "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). But there is hope.

There are steps we can take to avoid becoming victims of the world's greatest thief.

We have to believe the Bible when it says "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

The devil never stops in his attempt to sow seeds of doubt and unbelief. By allowing evil crops to be planted, the harvest is already his.

Why is it vital that we operate in total belief? Because, "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

And what is the source of our hope and expectation? Paul wrote: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Amazing Provisions

Our faith must be informed and educated. It's been said that knowledge is power, but many haven't studied the "Handbook" to learn the amazing provisions of the Lord. When you are grounded in the Word, the devil stands little chance of ravaging your fields or destroying your crops.

Some people argue that certain passages in Scripture are for the Jews and others are for the gentiles. There are also those who believe that anything supernatural ended with the era of the Apostles. But I can tell you from experience that God is still working miracles and has the power to protect you from the oppressor.

Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). If we know the Word, we understand

that God wants to reward and bless us.

If we are going to believe the Bible at all, then we have to accept *all* of it. And the Word tells us that God wants to give us total protection—body, soul and spirit.

Believing leads to blessings and bounty. Jehoshaphat stood before the people and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

Certain people draw Satan to them like a magnet because of fear and worry. They are filled with anxiety over sickness, pain, and turmoil. That is what the devil loves— fear!

Do you remember the story of Job? He was "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). But his words caused Satan to pounce on him. Job said, "For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me" (Job 3:25).

Someone explained fear this way: "It is having wrong thoughts about wrong thoughts."

Several years ago I heard a minister say, "We could have victory over failure if our evil inclinations were killed in the thought stage." What causes our action? It begins with a thought, then a desire, and finally is acted out. What starts in our subconscious often becomes our behavior.

The very moment you think about fear you are helping Satan complete his appalling agenda.

The devil doesn't win by having you think about yesterday, or even today. He wants to paralyze you with terror and fright about the future.

A sincere woman came up to me after a seminar in Oklahoma and said, "Bill, it's easy for you. You are stronger than I am."

I said, "No. It is not me that is strong, it is the God I serve. And do you realize that you serve the same Lord?"

Stop the Brainwashing!

A primary goal of the devil is to infect us with fearful thoughts. He wants our minds filled with weakness and distress.

How should we respond? By ignoring, denying, and minimizing his threats of destruction.

For years, I've had people tell me things like: "My dad died of a heart attack when he was forty-two. I guess I won't be around too much longer."

That is the talk of the Tempter and you need to dismiss it. Stop being brainwashed by Beelzebub. The only fear you need is a healthy respect for the awesome power of God. The early Christians were "walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). As a result, their ministry multiplied.

Some people mistakenly believe that Satan spends his time with sinners. But why should he? They are already in his evil clutches. Instead, his full time occupation is to aim his missiles at you and me.

Just because you come under the devil's wicked attack does not mean that God has forsaken you. Instead of saying, "God is angry with me," recognize the onslaught for what it really is. Satan has made you his target.

Jesus went into the wilderness and was "tempted for forty days by the devil" (Luke 4:2). Did He blame the Father for allowing such an experience? No. Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (v. 8).

How should you respond to Satan's invasion? James says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

I have met many people who constantly chase big dreams and look for greener pastures while never taking care of what God has given them.

While they are looking in a new direction the devil sneaks up from behind and destroys their land.

As the servant in the Bible was told, "You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:23).

You may wonder, "What about my financial harvest? Will the Lord protect my earthly possessions from the snare of Satan?"

As we will learn, God not only provides for spiritual blessings, but financial blessings, too. According to God's Word they are available for all believers, but many permit themselves to be robbed by Satan.

Scripture promises that the person who delights in the Lord will be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (Psalms 1:3).

The writer of Proverbs says, "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands . . . so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Proverbs 3:1,10).

From Least to Best

We were not born to live on barren land without food and shelter. We are children of the King and His royal blood flows through our veins. As believers we should settle for nothing less than God's best.

There are those who say, "I was not born on the right side of the tracks." Or, "My parents came from the old country. I was raised without much and that's the way it will always be."

That was Gideon's response when God told him to defeat the enemy. Gideon said, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). Manasseh is where the poor and underprivileged people lived.

Listen to the Lord's response: "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man" (v. 16). And that is what He is telling you. "Don't look at your shortcomings or even the size of the enemy. I am your strength and the source of your victory."

If you perceive that you are a second class Christian, that is what you will become.

Why? Because perception is stronger than reality. But you will never find a Scripture in the Word that says you are to be anything but God's best.

When you understand your Heavenly Father's expectation of tomorrow, you will begin to see what Satan is attempting to destroy.

What an inheritance we have! We are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).

The Psalmist wrote,

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most

High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence" (Psalms 91:1-3).

Although the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

For more than forty years I have resisted Satan at every turn. Often, the combat was hand to hand, even face to face. And with the authority of Christ I have cast him out of my life. As a result he has never been able to seize my spirit or steal my harvest.

In the midst of your greatest attack, there is an answer. The Lord is "a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble" (Psalms 9:9).

2

SEVEN WAYS THAT SATAN STEALS

I once asked a police captain, "Sir, why do we have so many car thefts in our city?"

"Because we make it so easy for them," replied the officer.

Thousands of automobiles are stolen each year because people leave their keys in the ignition or leave their engines running on a cold morning.

The same question could be asked of Christians. "Why does Satan steal our harvest?" Because we *allow* him to by failing to be aware of his devices.

There are seven specific ways we let Satan plunder our harvest.

1. Satan steals when we become double-minded.

When both doubt and expectation are forced to grow in the same soil, the result is a tangled garden and unproductive fruit. The Prince of Darkness never stops sowing seeds of confusion.

We need to examine closely what James said concerning the danger of being double-minded. He wrote: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:5-8).

I meet people everywhere who do not have faith that God can really accomplish what He has promised. A wonderful Christian man in Florida recently said to me, "I don't ask God for much. I usually just pray for other people. God is just too busy to take care of the things I need."

"Don't speak that way," I chided him. "God is never too busy to answer your request. But you have to ask in total faith."

Nothing can halt your progress when you have a confidence and belief that does not waver. When you challenge Satan and stand on God's promises, you'll be amazed at what the Lord will do.

Why do I risk climbing farther and farther out on a limb? Because I have proven Him over and over again. I know God is my source, and He will not allow the devil to cut off the branch behind me.

Are you crystal clear as to what you are expecting from the Lord? Is it settled in your spirit? Now is the time to focus your faith like a laser beam and claim what God has promised.

2. Satan steals when we become fault-finders.

One of the great tricks of the devil is to cause us to find fault with our neighbor. He diverts our attention so that he can plunder everything in sight.

No matter how successful you become, there is always someone who will tell you, "That's not the way you should be doing it." People who have been failures will suddenly become scornful critics and fountains of dubious advice.

These are the people Jesus talked about in the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:1).

Then He asked, "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye" (vv. 2-5).

Don't fall into the trap of becoming a "speck picker."

Instead, reach up and begin to pick the fruit from the orchard of the Almighty. Your basket will soon be filled with love, joy, peace, and so much more.

3. Satan steals when we have a negative attitude.

There is no question about it. People with a perspective of pessimism are prime candidates for Lucifer's larceny. Before they realize what is happening their fields will become bare.

The story of Jonah is an unforgettable example of how God deals with someone whose attitude is not right. The Lord told him to go to Nineveh, but he boarded a ship in the opposite direction. "Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from

the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3).

God became so angry that He caused a great storm on the sea. Jonah was tossed overboard, swallowed by a great fish, and finally delivered to the banks of Nineveh to accomplish the Lord's mission.

Do you remember what happened to the Children of Israel? Moses lead millions of men, women and children from the bondage and tyranny of Pharaoh. God protected them with a cloud by day and a fire by night. But many of them were moaning, "Oh, if we could only return to Egypt!"

Their bodies were liberated, but their minds were still in slavery. There was no attitude of gratitude for what God was doing.

I meet people like that every week. They have been set free, but Satan convinces them they are still in captivity.

We need to realize that because of Calvary, we have crossed the Jordan river and have reached the Promised Land. We are feasting on the harvest of grapes and fruit. Yet there are those who are still back in the desert. Instead of claiming what God has provided, they allow Satan to afflict them with a slave mentality.

Paul tells us to "bring every thought into captivity" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

I deliberately surround myself with people who have a positive perspective of life. To me they are an army of believers that provide a special wall of protection.

Everyone wants to be "healthy, wealthy, and wise," but they fail to comprehend that the key to success is a God-given affirmative attitude. It will put food on your table, funds in your pocket and hope in your heart.

You will only find help when you look up, not down.

4. Satan steals by filling us with greed.

I remember the night a friend from our church and I visited the home of a successful businessman in Columbus. We had talked with him about the Lord many times. But I vividly recall when he looked at my friend and said, "You have been telling me all about this Jesus, but are you still the big tight-wad you used to be?"

I almost fell out of my chair. I realized that greed is not an attribute that is becoming to a Christian. It is a device the devil uses to rob us of our reputation.

A few years ago a relative passed away. She did not have any children. Her nieces and nephews wondered what would become of her estate.

She had requested that I conduct her funeral at a small rural church in Pennsylvania.

Several members of the family showed up and I can still see the expectation written on many of their faces.

After the service and burial we had arranged a little dinner for the family in the basement of the church. Knowing their curiosity, I stood up after the meal and announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, I believe it would be in order that I read the last will and testament." You could hear a pin drop.

I picked up the document and read how she wanted her estate distributed. She had written, "After all my expenses have been paid, the remainder of my estate shall be given equally to the following . . ." And she listed several Christian organizations, a nursing home and the small church where she attended.

Absolutely nothing was bequeathed to family members. Not one dime.

In retrospect, perhaps she knew that any distribution to favorite family members would have been criticized and cause ill feelings.

When greed causes us to seek riches rather than the source of all wealth, Satan rubs his hands with glee.

The Bible says, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

5. Satan steals when we fail to forgive.

A wealthy lawyer and his wife had watched me on television and extended a dinner invitation to Sally and me. During the meal they told us that their marriage was on the verge of collapse and asked if I would counsel with them.

When we later met to talk about the problems they were facing, the woman told me, "He'll never change. He even pushed me down the stairs and almost killed me."

"When did that happen?" I wanted to know. "Was it recently?"

She said, "Oh, that was 21 years ago."

"You may need marriage counseling," I told her, "but even more, you need to understand the power of forgiveness."

One of the most forceful lessons Jesus ever taught was when He said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14,15).

There are people around us who are spiritually ill and in desperate need of forgiveness.

It is vital that we demonstrate our pardon so that they may be able to understand God's grace.

Most people say, "I may forgive, but I will never forget." But the Lord wants us to treat the transgressions of others as though they never happened. We love to read the words of Christ when He said: "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24). But the key to receiving is *forgiveness* and it is found in the next verse. "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (v. 25).

His message was absolutely clear. You will never be able to hold a grudge and hold your harvest at the same time. Your arms aren't big enough. Start forgiving.

6. Satan steals when we rely on our own strength.

The moment we start to believe our own press clippings and conclude that we are all-powerful, we are asking for defeat.

King Uzziah was only sixteen years old when he became King of Judah, "and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper" (2 Chronicles 26:5). But his own strength became his downfall. When we read the entire story we find that "when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD" (v. 16).

I have seen it in business, in politics, and even in ministry. Wonderful Christians become successful and so enamored by the riches of life—exotic cars, million dollar homes, rare jewelry—that they forget the source of their life. Before they realize what happened, God has vanished from their thoughts, their vocabulary, and from their actions. Satan moves in to fill the void, and they are victims of his trap.

One day an executive from Detroit walked into my office at my automobile dealership and said, "Bill, you sure have been lucky."

"Sir," I told him. "I don't believe in luck. I believe in blessing. What you see is the result of a partnership I have with the Lord."

Scripture tells us: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). You will never, never go wrong when you start singing, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

7. Satan steals when we don't give God what belongs to Him.

When you give the Lord what He owns—the tithe—He promises to protect what is ours, the remaining ninety percent.

The Lord asked through the prophet Malachi, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8).

And here is God's promise: "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove 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'" (v. 10).

We know that a tithe is "a tenth", but I am often asked, "A tenth of what?" It is ten percent of everything you receive.

As a result of obeying His command, God protects our harvest. He says, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field" (v. 11).

Many people ask, "Why should we tithe when Malachi is in the Old Testament?"

If you read God's Word you will find that tithing is a New Testament principle, too. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). And He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23).

Paul also instructed: "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Why am I such a firm believer in tithing? Because it is scriptural, commanded, and it works.

Again and again I have seen the Lord "rebuke the devourer" because we give Him what is rightfully His.

Do you want to keep what God provides? Wake up to the tricks of Satan. Heed the warning of Peter when he

says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

I wish I could tell you that Satan has only seven ways to steal, kill and destroy. But he has thousands of methods — and is devising new ones every day.

Open your eyes. Keep alert. Turn on your spiritual security system and rejoice in God's harvest.

3

PREPARING YOUR FIELD

When you are raised on a farm you learn some basic lessons of life. It didn't take me long to discover:

1. *If you don't plant you won't reap.* It is impossible to have a harvest without placing the seeds in the ground.
2. *You reap exactly what you sow.* If you want to eat corn you have to *plant* corn.
3. *You reap more than you sow.* Just a small handful of tiny seeds can produce baskets filled with produce.

God's prescription for a spiritual harvest includes the same principles of sowing and reaping. Jesus spoke on that topic when He told the story of the farmer who went out to plant his field.

As the man began to sow, said the Lord, "some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them" (Matthew 13:4).

Some of the seed fell "on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them" (vv. 5-7).

But there was good news. Jesus said that other seed "fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (v. 8).

I like the Lord's plan of multiplication. But the key to His bountiful harvest is to sow in fertile soil.

No More Excuses

People make hundreds of excuses for producing a "puny" crop. When I first became a Chevrolet dealer I saw a cartoon in the office of an executive in Cincinnati. It was a drawing of a man standing by the side of the road with an ice pick—giving himself a flat tire.

The caption said, "Some people find an excuse, others find a way."

In my automobile dealerships I have conducted hundreds of sales contests. Those who achieve great productions ignore negative circumstances and keep on selling. Those with meager sales, however, have given me hundreds of excuses.

"It's too cold!"

"It's too hot!"

"The inventory is too small. "

"We don't have cars with the right colors."

"It's too wet!"

"It's too dry!"

"We're not spending enough on advertising."

"People are 'just looking.'"

Some people would rather make excuses than make things happen. As I have often said,

"There are not enough crutches in the world to support our lame excuses."

After presenting a success seminar a man came up to me and said, "Bill, you don't understand. I work in a controlled environment. I can't really make things happen."

I said, "Oh, yes you can. You can do your job better than anyone else and people who count will take notice.

Keep excelling and you will be rewarded."

In West Palm Beach, Florida, there are twin brothers who are highly successful real estate salesmen. They are both dwarfs. Instead of saying, "We have every strike against us," they say, "We may be short, but we're not short on confidence and determination."

Winners and Losers

What is the difference between a winner and a loser? A *WINNER* always has a program. A *LOSER* always has an excuse. A *WINNER* says, "Let me help you do it." A *LOSER* says, "That's not my job." A *WINNER* sees the green near every sand trap. A *LOSER* sees two or three sand traps near every green.

A *WINNER* sees a solution for every problem. A *LOSER* sees a problem for every solution. A *WINNER* says, "It may be difficult, but it's possible."

A *LOSER* says, "It may be possible, but its difficult."

Successful people are those who never say, "That can't be done." Remember what Jesus said: "By their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:20). Fruit-bearers are the ones who understand the principle of sowing and reaping.

In preparing our field for a great harvest we need to focus on opportunities instead of problems. In my real estate seminars people have commented, "I bet you have a lot of flakes who won't pay their rent."

My response is, "Who cares if you have one or two who don't pay their rent if you are collecting dozens of rent checks every month?"

Some people find it easier to worry than to prepare for the future. I like what Winston Churchill said: "Let our advanced worrying become advanced thinking and planning."

I challenge people to exchange one day of anxiety and worry for a day of specific goal-planning, preparation and action. The results are amazing!

Recently I saw a documentary of a group of senior citizens in their 90's who were excited about the future. They were physically active and were even doing volunteer work in hospitals.

The same program presented another group in their 70's who said, "We just want to take it easy." As a result of having no specific interests in life, their mental functions were deteriorating and their bodies were falling apart.

You can turn a rocky field into fertile soil by practicing good habits of success.

A great harvest is not the result of a mighty intellect, something you inherit, or luck. It is the person who *consistently* tills the ground and never, never quits that reaps a record crop. Jesus said, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Mark 13:13).

We come to the Lord with belief and faith for salvation —not because we expect everything to be perfect from that moment on.

Our first son, Bill, Jr., was just six weeks old when he became deathly ill with a severely infected hernia. Did that cause me to shun the Lord? No. It was actually the dramatic event that caused me to turn my life over to the Lord.

Scripture does not promise that becoming a Christian will make life *easier*. But we can rest assured that it will make life *better*.

Enrich Your Soil

An essential ingredient that enriches your soil is called "attitude." It is the least expensive possession you own—but it will produce the greatest benefit.

I remember pushing a huge cart of merchandise to the checkout counter of Sam's Discount Warehouse. The clerk startled me when she said, "Oh, no. Not another big order!"

I quietly told her, "Young lady, have you thought about quitting? You ought to go home. You are hurting the company." But I was determined not to let her attitude ruin my day.

About a month later I returned to the store and looked for the cashier, but she wasn't there. This time, when my friend and I reached the checkout lane we were treated like royalty. The woman said, "This is great! You fellows just about bought out the company."

Then she said, "Is there anything else you need?"

My friend replied, "Yes, there is." And he rushed away to find another item.

The difference in attitude was remarkable.

It's the "PBFPTL" principle: People Buy From People They Like.

In marriage, in business, and in the church, you receive what you give. If you are critical, you receive criticism in return. If you are loving, you receive love.

There are, however, some actions that the Lord despises. The writer of Proverbs lists them: "These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him" (Proverbs 6:16).

1. *A proud look.*
2. *A lying tongue.*
3. *Hands that shed innocent blood.*
4. *A heart that devises wicked plans.*
5. *Feet that are swift in running to evil.*
6. *A false witness who speaks lies.*
7. *One who sows discord among brethren (vv. 17-19).*

Which person is the abomination? The one who spreads "discord."

No matter what program you institute in a church, a school, or a business organization, you will have those who try to throw water on the fire. They are part of the landscape.

What should you do when negative people badger you with their pessimism and gloom? How should you handle

those who sow seeds of strife? Take the opportunity to shower them with blessing. Accept the challenge of turning their frowns into smiles.

Your Grandfather?

Believers who are determined to make heaven their home should not be easily discouraged or offended.

I have seen people storm out of the church for the most trivial and petty reason. Their logic doesn't make sense. As one lady told another, "I don't like your grandfather so I am never coming back here!"

I could never figure out what her grandfather had to do with attending the House of the Lord.

Even though God says "I am going to bless you," a hundred times, we can receive one phone call with a negative message and we start falling apart.

Friend, this is serious business. We are in a warfare and we have to be like Paul, who said: "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Realize who you are in the Lord and stand firm on His promises.

There is no value in reminding people of their past mistakes. Take them from where they are and move forward.

Say, "I don't care what happened yesterday, let's find out what God has in store."

After Jesus told the wonderful parable of sowing and reaping, He gave this practical application. He said, "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles" (Matthew 13:21).

Then He said, "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (v. 22).

But what happens when we plant in good soil? "He who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (v.23).

Planting is an act of hope and belief. You cultivate. You water. You believe you will reap what you sow—and even *more!* You say, "My harvest is coming. I can see it through the eyes of faith."

4

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

When Jesus was asked, "What is the greatest commandment of all?" He gave a two part answer that is the only prescription for spiritual prosperity you will ever need.

First He said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

Then He added, "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (v. 39).

You can try every formula, remedy, or cure known to man, but unless your heart has been made clean by the Blood of Christ, your spiritual condition will remain hopeless.

Here is what the Lord told Nicodemus: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

What is the second key to spiritual riches? After establishing our relationship with the Lord, we are instructed to "Love your neighbor as yourself." It's a theme that permeates Scripture. We are told to "love one another" (Romans 13:8), "comfort one another" (1 Thessalonians 4:18), and "pray one for another" (James 5:16).

When those two principles are in our life, we are ready to begin our spiritual journey. Regardless of our needs, we have a source of strength that is ready to help. For example, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

How do we move from rejection to rejoicing? There is a remarkable story of four lepers who were sitting at the entrance of the gate to the city of Samaria. It holds the key to finding spiritual prosperity.

The lepers, who were caught in the crossfire of a great battle between Israel and Syria, faced a dilemma.

They did not know where to turn for help.

Here are the seven phases of their journey from defeat to deliverance.

Phase One: DISCOURAGEMENT

During those days, the law excluded people with skin diseases from residing within the walls of the community. The four lepers at the gate said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die?" (2 Kings 7:3).

I have observed many people like the lepers.

For years they allow themselves to wallow in sorrow and despair. They won't listen to God's prescription until it is almost too late.

Recently I received a phone call from a distraught woman who asked, "Is this Pastor Swad?"

"How can I help you," I wanted it know.

She said, "Well, I remember when I used to attend your church. Now I am in the hospital dying. Will you come and pray for me?"

I responded to her request, but wondered, "Why do so many people wait until they face imminent danger before they call on God?"

Establishing a long-term, permanent relationship with the Lord is much like practicing preventative medicine. A daily dose of God's strength and power can lift us above gloom and uncertainty.

The lepers were deeply discouraged. That is why they wondered, "Shall we sit here until we die?"

Phase Two: DETERIORATION

The siege of the Syrians had caused a famine of indescribable proportion. The scarcity in the city of Samaria was so great that food barely fit for human consumption was selling for outrageous prices. Scripture records that "a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and (two ounces) of dove droppings for five shekels of silver" (2 Kings 6:25).

The Israelites had to disregard their own dietary regulations in order to survive. The donkey, according to Levitical law, was not to be eaten. But it seemed the people had no choice.

How far had the situation deteriorated? The Bible says that one distraught woman told the King of Israel, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my

son, and ate him" (v. 29).

The lepers at the gate had two choices, and neither of them was promising. They talked among themselves and said, "If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also" (2 Kings 7:4).

The feeble men were confused, starving, and facing certain death.

Phase Three: DESPERATION

The lepers were totally desperate when they made a do-or-die decision. They said, "Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die" (v.4).

In our ministry we have dealt with hundreds of people addicted to drugs and alcohol. I have seen them at every level on the crisis curve—from apathy to denial, from hopelessness to resignation. But it is only when a person becomes totally desperate that he or she has a chance of escape.

Unless an addict reaches bottom, he or she will never reach the top.

Their cry for help cannot come from the sympathy of the helper, but from the soul of the helpless.

The prescription is the same for someone who has turned his back on God. The backslider must recognize his dire condition before he can repent and start the journey back. The prayer must be as the Psalmist: "Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake! For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?" (Psalms 6:4,5).

The lepers knew that time was running out. This was their only chance, and they had to take it. What would happen if they surrendered to the Syrian army? Would they be killed? Or would they receive a few morsels of food? They were desperate.

Phase Four: DEMONSTRATION

Instead of waiting for death, the lepers, "rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there" (2 Kings 7:5).

God had performed a marvelous miracle.

Scripture records: "For the LORD had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses; the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, 'Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!'" (v. 6).

The army arose and fled at twilight, and "they left the camp intact; their tents, their horses, and their donkeys; and they fled for their lives" (v.7).

Think of it! The Lord made it sound as if there were hundreds of thousands of invading troops. The Syrians became fearful and hurriedly abandoned the city.

It was only when the lepers joined together and took some positive action that they were delivered. Otherwise they would have starved outside the gate.

Phase Five: DEVIATION

What happened next is a danger that millions of people have faced. As the lepers celebrated their liberation, they were lured by Satan into a nearly fatal mistake.

When they came to the outskirts of the camp, "they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it" (v.8).

The lepers were detoured by deviation. They suddenly forgot what it was like to be sitting outside the city, desperate for even one meal. Now they were collecting the bounty and not thinking about sharing.

It reminds me of people who come to Christ, feed on His Word, drink from His fountain and say, "I've had enough to last me for a few years." Then you rarely see them again.

I recall a man who worked for me who, we later learned, had been involved three years earlier in selling drugs. One day the police came to our automobile dealership and arrested him.

I was shocked because he seemed like such a wonderful person. They told him, "Your trial will be held in a few weeks."

The young man, who was released on bond, began attending our church. For the next few weeks he was the most excited member you can imagine. The congregation poured out their hearts to him and his wife. They were showered with fellowship, food and finances.

After he was convicted and sentenced to prison, his wife continued attending church. But it lasted for only about three weeks. Even after her husband was released from prison, they didn't find time for the Lord.

In wartime they call it "battlefield religion." They seek God when the bullets

are flying, but forget Him when the skies are clear.

The lepers entered the Syrian camp and took more than they deserved. They deviated from what was proper in God's sight.

Phase Six: DECLARATION

The lepers realized their mistake and repented. They said, "We are not doing what is right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household" (v.9).

They proclaimed the news to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound; only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact" (v. 10).

The gatekeepers shouted the news and it was reported within the palace.

What was the king's reaction? He thought the Syrians were attempting to trick them. He said, "They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city'" (v. 12).

There will always be people around to tell you that God does not work in the affairs of men—only chance or coincidence. But there is no substitute to declaring God's truth.

Phase Seven: DETERMINATION

Several men in the army of the Israelites were determined to see what happened to the Syrian army. "And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road was full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king" (v. 15). They proved it was a miracle of God. The Psalmist told the story of what happened when the Children of Israel lost their determination to follow the Lord. Recalling the story of Pharaoh's army that was drowned in the Red Sea, he wrote:

"The waters covered their enemies;

There was not one of them left.

Then they believed His words;

They sang His praise.

They soon forgot His works;

They did not wait for His counsel,

But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,

And tested God in the desert.

And He gave them their request,

But sent leanness into their soul"

(Psalms 106:11-15).

I know people who have received miracles from the Lord, but they lacked the determination to go on with God. Like the Children of Israel, "they forgot His works."

Years ago we used to sing a little chorus, "I am determined, I've made up my mind. I'll serve the Lord." As the Apostle Paul wrote, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

If you want your soul to prosper *greatly*, become totally committed. God says, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15,16).

By allowing the Lord to fill your prescription for spiritual prosperity, you can complete the journey from discouragement to determination.

5

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR PHYSICAL PROSPERITY

In the seminars I conduct across the country I have been asked hundreds of questions. Many of them relate to what the Bible teaches about physical health. People want to know:

- "If it is God's will for us to be healthy, why are there so many people in the hospital?"
- "Since the Lord can heal us, does it make any difference what we eat?"
- "What is the link between salvation and healing?"
- "Are there any specific foods the Bible forbids?"

I believe the Word contains a clear prescription for physical prosperity that will add years to your life.

For years I have heard people say appalling things about illness. One woman shrugged her shoulders and said, "It must be God's will for me to be sick." Another said, "My grandmother had arthritis. I guess I am going to have it, too." And a man told me, "My father had cancer. I'll probably be next."

Those are negative confessions that must be destroyed. We need to consider the Word of God, not the condition of our grandmother. If we spend our time glorifying Satan through fear, anxiety and worry, we are going to live in weakness.

I remember visiting a funeral home after a middle-aged woman had passed away. One of her friends said, "Well, God let her get sick and die. She was such a wonderful person that God took her early."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It simply wasn't scriptural. My Bible says, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up" (James 5:14,15).

A Double Blessing

One night as I was praying, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Do you depend on me for your salvation?"

"Yes, Lord. I never question it."

He said, "Then depend on me for your healing."

Isaiah wrote, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

After reading that scripture, how can a person say, "I know it is God's will to save me, but I'm not sure if He will heal me"? Both are contained in the same verse—and both were fulfilled at the Cross.

When Jesus was ministering in Capernaum, "they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses'" (Matthew 8:16-17).

If you have faith that the Lord is going to keep you saved, then you must have faith that He is going to keep you well.

I remember the day a man stood up in my church and said, "It doesn't make any difference what you eat. If you get sick, just pray and God will fix it."

It doesn't make sense to eat food that can harm us. God has given us wisdom to help us stay healthy.

Some people are confused by the scripture that says "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them" (Mark 16:18).

That verse is not meant for us to tempt the Lord and become snake-handlers. It means that if we do such a thing *unknowingly*, He will protect us.

If you are sick, believe that God is going to heal you. There is no reason to stay on your bed of affliction. Paul wrote, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

Pigs and Sheep

Scripture has much to say about health—including the dietary laws of the Old Testament. But they were not recorded as a cultural curiosity. God promised the Children of Israel, "So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" (Exodus 23:25).

The Lord has always had the power to heal, but He also gave instructions of what we should and should not eat. The rules are worth following today. For example, the Lord instructed Moses to tell the Israelites:

- You may eat any animal "having cloven hooves and chewing the cud" (Leviticus 11:3) That includes sheep and cattle, but not horses or camels (v.4).
- You may not eat pig, because it "does not chew the cud, (it) is unclean to you" (v. 7).
- Of those found in water, you may eat whatever "has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers" (v. 9).
- Fowl you should not eat include the eagle, falcon, raven, hawk, and pelican (vv. 13-18). These dietary laws are still strictly followed by groups including the Hasidic Jews and the Seventh Day Adventists.

I have heard many people say, "I am a New Testament Christian and don't need to abide by the Old"—but they will quote hundreds of Old Testament passages they choose to live by.

A woman in New York asked me, "Bill, if I pray over the hog, don't you think it should be okay to eat?"

I responded, "God said we shouldn't eat it, and that's good enough for me." I also told her that I had raised enough pigs as a young man in eastern Ohio to know their menu. I picked up the discarded garbage from local restaurants and the waste from cheese factories. That was their diet.

A Habit of Health

If the Bible is concerned with our physical health, we should be too. Here are some specific things you can do to make healthy living a lifestyle.

- Kick the junk food habit.
- Eliminate as much fat from your diet as possible.
- Never allow a day to pass without physical exercise.
- Read everything you can on nutrition, vitamins, minerals and dietary supplements.
- Recognize the causes of unhealthy stress and eliminate them.
- Pray for deliverance from cravings or addictions.
- Exercise your mind every day.
- Have a thorough physical checkup every year.
- Avoid "crash" diets. Instead change your daily eating habits.
- Ask the Lord to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

I like to think of my body as being made up of soldiers. When the good troops outnumber the bad troops, I will stay healthy. But when the bad soldiers outnumber the good ones, I will become sick. Our job is to take good care of the soldiers and feed them the right "stuff."

We need to be concerned with everything that enters our bodies. For example, because of the chlorine and fluorides in water, we have chosen to drink bottled water for the past 25 years.

Some people ask:

"If it is God's will that we be in health, then why are the hospitals so filled?"

I believe it is because we are not using wisdom in our dietary rules. We fill our bodies with junk food, cholesterol, sugar and sodium and then wonder why our arteries are clogged and our blood pressure so dangerously high.

I feel sorry for people who say, "If it is God's will for me to get cancer, I will have it." It is not true. Instead, people who feed their bodies cancer-causing foods will be afflicted as certainly as the sky is blue.

It doesn't bother my faith to visit the doctor for an annual physical checkup. After all, we go to church to get a checkup on our faith.

Sickness is an attack of Satan, and we can fight off his onslaught by proper eating and by taking care of our bodies. The remedy for weakness can usually be found in good nutrition. That's how we can beat the devil at his own game.

Exercise should also be part of our daily program, but you do not need a strenuous workout to achieve great results. It has been proven again and again that even a simple, regular program of walking will transform your body. One study concluded that for every mile we walk, we add a minute and a half to our lives.

A Question of Joy

Physical health is not all we need to be concerned with. Statistics show that in the United States there are as many people mentally sick as there are with bodily ailments.

Millions of people will experience a nervous breakdown in their lifetime.

The Psalmist offers the solution for depression. He wrote: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God"

(Psalms 42:11).

Any medical doctor will tell you that discouragement and sorrow have a negative impact on our bodies. There is a well-documented link between physical and emotional problems.

I am convinced that when people lose their joy, they are headed for a bed of affliction. It is part of Satan's battle plan. He will whisper, "Why are you so happy?"

Don't you know that Christians are supposed to be serious?"

Scripture tells us, "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). And "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Proverbs 17:22).

If you want to be at peace with yourself and the world, heed the advice of Paul. "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Let the Lord fight your battles.

Here is a prescription that is guaranteed to eliminate pressure:

Take five Psalms in the morning and five Proverbs at night.

Before this day is over, open your Bible and digest these:

1. *Psalms 9:9* 6. *Proverbs 3:27*
2. *Psalms 31:1* 7. *Proverbs 9:10*
3. *Psalms 37:39* 8. *Proverbs 14:11*
4. *Psalms 71:20* 9. *Proverbs 17:1*
5. *Psalms 146:8* 10. *Proverbs 22:4*

God's Pharmacy

If we are going to keep our bodies healthy through good nutrition, then we need to do the same for our soul. That's why it is vital that we "read the manual." If things are not working correctly, turn to the Word.

Don't trust the foolish wisdom of the world.

The day is soon coming when we will be tested to see what kind of materials we have placed within our temples.

The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

Paul was talking about more than the health of the church. He was talking about *you*!

So many individuals seem to be looking for reasons to be disheartened. But I look for reasons to be encouraged. I believe God wants us to be strong, and *stay* strong in Him. "'For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds,' says the LORD" (Jeremiah 30:17).

Allow the Lord to give you energy and vitality. "It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect" (Psalms 18:32).

The same Lord that provides salvation wants you to prosper and be in health. The doors of God's Pharmacy are always open. Let Him fill your prescription today.

6

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

People who know my background often ask, "How did the child of an immigrant father escape the poverty of Martins Ferry, Ohio, to build a multi-million dollar automotive empire?"

My life today is light-years away from hoeing corn for a dollar a day and setting pins in a bowling alley for a few pennies a line.

On April 8, 1957, my "empire" was a muddy lot on the east side of Columbus, Ohio. I borrowed \$1,000 from the Economy Loan Company, found three used cars, spread a little gravel, hung a few light bulbs on a wire and opened for business.

The dramatic growth of Bill Swad Motors was not the result of a secret formula or a tightly-guarded recipe. Instead, the prescription is based on specific principles that have worked for me. And you can put them into practice — starting today.

Here are the *Eight Laws of Financial Prosperity* that can transform your economic future.

Law Number One: Believe That it is God's Will for You to Prosper

In the automobile business I am constantly amazed at the wide differences in the productivity of sales people. You may try to motivate fifteen equally qualified individuals, but you will never get fifteen identical results.

I've seen it over and over again. One person will make as much as \$18,000 in a single month and another—spending the same amount of time—will struggle to make \$1,000. What is the difference?

Without question, the contrast is in attitude and belief. The winners say, "I just knew that I could do it."

The greatest source of belief is a deep-rooted faith that it is God's Will for you to prosper. As John wrote, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2).

Many people don't believe that God has anything to do with their money, but He has *everything* to do with it. The Bible tells us: "But you shall remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that gives you the power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Jesus said these oft-quoted words: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Since one out of every six verses in the Gospels concerns money, it is a matter of great spiritual concern. Yes, there are things that can be "added" to our life without money, but He wants us to be financially successful. Have you ever tried shopping for eggs and bacon without money?

Have you tried paying your utility bills with a note that says, "I'm enclosing faith, hope, and love"?

I still meet people who somehow believe that those who live in poverty are more "spiritual." But if you have read the Bible you know that it is not money, but the *love* of it that is at the heart of the problem.

I believe that it is more than God's desire for you to prosper. *It is His will.*

Law Number Two: Make God Your Partner in Life

Years ago, when I started my business, I declared that "God is my Senior Partner." I stood on the Word that says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

When you make that kind of decision something marvelous happens. You begin to discover that you are not operating your business alone. You will begin to manage your time as He would want you to. You become serious about your goals and objectives. You will become diligent and productive. And since you represent the King of Kings there is no other choice but to operate with absolute ethics and spiritual integrity.

When you learn who you are in Christ, you will realize that the Lord is not your critic, but your colleague. And you are His spokesman.

Jesus established the foundation for our partnership when He said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

The next few verses explain why He made such a profound statement. Jesus asked, "What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?" Then He added, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (vv. 9,11).

Those words are the basis of the alliance He wants to have with you.

I feel sorry for people who believe that they are the center of the universe. Their countenance says, "I am allpowerful and I control my own destiny."

Unfortunately, that kind of thinking leads not only to spiritual bankruptcy, but also financial.

Is God your source? Have you made a total surrender of your time, talent, and treasure to the Lord? Only then can you expect to receive His wisdom, His power and His strength.

Law Number Three: Find a Life's Work That You Feel Good About

A man once told me, "Bill, I've got a lousy job."

I said, "Go ahead and thank God for that lousy job. It is putting food on your table and a roof over your head." Then I added, "Tell the Lord to help you find a *better* position— something you would really love to do."

It was not long until my friend found work that was a delight instead of a drudgery. Better yet, his income tripled.

Have you met someone who thought "w-o-r-k" was a filthy four letter word? I have. The Bible says, "A fool is so upset by a little work that he has no strength for the simplest matter" (Ecclesiastes 10:15).

The moment I entered the automotive business I knew I had found exactly what I should be doing. It has never seemed like work. I have often thought, "Am I really getting paid for this?"

If your present employment is not your dream for life, start where you are and move forward.

No matter what God places before you, "do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Every morning we need to thank the Lord that He has given us the physical strength, the mental capacity, and the skills to be productive. When we apply those ingredients to a labor of love, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

Law Number Four: Have Faith That God Will Do What He Said He Will Do

As a pilot, I know what it is like to be in clouds so thick that you can't see the end of the aircraft's wings. When that happens you have only one choice. You have to put total confidence in the accuracy of your instruments and the instructions from an air traffic controller.

We need this same relationship with the Lord. In both the Old and New Testaments God says, "I am going to bless my people." I firmly believe His blessing includes that He wants you to have enough money to pay for your groceries, your utilities and your rent. Without providing for the basics of life, there certainly would not be much of a blessing.

Scripture declares that "The LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly" (Psalms 84:11).

If we don't demonstrate a walk that is "upright", how can we expect our path to be smooth?

We need to exercise the same faith found in Scripture. We serve a God "who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Romans 4:17). That is real faith.

Will the Lord keep His promise? Absolutely. "Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass" (Psalms 37:5).

The Psalmist added:

"I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread" (v. 25).

Law Number Five: Never Be Afraid of Launching New Ventures

A friend once called and said, "Bill, I'm really good at making pizza and my husband and I are thinking about going into business for ourselves." She was excited about a franchise someone wanted to sell them that required \$15,000 plus four percent of the gross sales.

I said, "There is only one problem. The seller of the franchise needs you. You don't need him. If you know how to make pizza, do it yourself." I even told the couple that a friend of mine who had a successful pizza business would train them at no cost.

They chose not to follow my advice.

Four months later, I received a frantic call from the couple. "Bill, we've got a problem. The man we bought the franchise from is cheating us. He is not holding up his end of the bargain, and we have stopped paying him."

Their dispute resulted in a lawsuit and the couple lost.

We should never be timid about launching new ventures—especially if we have done our homework and

listened to the best advice.

On the shore of Lake Gennesaret, Jesus said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets and you will catch a lot of fish" (Luke 5:4).

Simon responded, "Master, we have toiled all night and have caught nothing" (v.5). But they listened to the Lord's advice and caught so many fish it almost broke the nets and sank the boats. (vv. 6,7).

By following the Master's advice, they experienced success beyond anything they could imagine.

Once you decide to move forward, focus like a laser beam on the opportunity you have.

"He who deals with a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes one rich" (Proverbs 10:4).

Law Number Six: Follow the Business Principles Taught in Scripture

You don't have to enroll in the Harvard School of Business to learn the laws of success. God's Word contains the essential requirements you need for a fruitful and productive life.

There are hundreds of verses in Scripture that give us the keys to personal achievement. For example, Paul said that you should "aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing" (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12).

For years I have told people, "The harder I work, the more blessed I get." But long ago Solomon said, "Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men" (Proverbs 22:29).

Instead of rushing to the bookstore for the latest selfhelp bestseller, start reading God's Word. In just six verses (Romans 12:9-14), Paul gives this sage advice:

- Abhor what is evil.
- Cling to what is good.
- Be kindly affectionate to one another.
- Give preference to one another.
- Be not lagging in diligence.
- Be fervent in spirit.
- Rejoice in hope.
- Be patient in tribulation.
- Be given to hospitality.
- Bless those who persecute you.

God's principles work. We need to put them into practice.

Law Number Seven: Be a Giver, Not a Taker

A man was asked, "Do you know the Golden Rule?" He laughed and replied, "Sure, I do. The man with the gold makes the rules!"

But that's not the way it works. The Lord said, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

I have heard people complain, "But I don't have anything to give."

That is not true. We *all* have something to present to the Lord. I know a man living in humble circumstances who spends hours every day in intercessory prayer. A woman in our church spent months taking care of a friend who was on her deathbed.

What happens when we are generous? The Lord gave this promise: "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

In an age of instant gratification we want our rewards "now." We lack patience, even when the Word says, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

While much of our harvest is reserved for eternity, Jesus promised that we would also reap on earth. He taught that those who give up everything to follow Him would "receive a hundredfold, and inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29). And the hundredfold increase would come "now in this time" (Mark 10:30).

The Lord's timetable is not always ours, but He knows exactly what we need and precisely when we need it.

We serve a *giving* God and He expects the same of us.

Law Number Eight: Honor God With Your Substance

Years ago, R. G. LeTourneau, founder of the world's largest earth moving equipment company, learned from his

minister that he was supposed to give ten percent to the Lord. It was not long until his business became so prosperous that he began giving twenty percent. Finally, LeTourneau said, "Why don't I let God give me ten percent and I'll give Him ninety."

That is what he did the rest of his life, and he remained an extremely wealthy man until the day he died.

Others who gave the Lord a great percentage of their increase include Mr. Cromwell, founder of Quaker Oats, Mr. Colgate, founder of the Colgate-Palmolive, and Mr. Proctor of Proctor and Gamble. They learned what it means to "Honor the Lord with thy substance."

Long ago I learned that tithing is not a debt we owe, but a seed we sow. The tithe is not ours, but God's.

When we tithe we are simply presenting what is already His. "Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase" (Proverbs 3:9).

The principle of honoring God with your substance began in Genesis—and it was a fixed law that was never to end. "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

We have all heard the frightening stories of stock market crashes and banks that have failed. But when you invest in God's economy, the assets are secure. They are reserved for you, and deposited in your name.

For many people, investing in God's Kingdom is difficult. They find it hard to release something in their hand unless the results are visible. One phrase has helped me understand giving to the Lord:

Give what you cannot keep to gain what you cannot lose.

I believe these eight laws of spiritual prosperity are part of a final revelation being given to the church. We have received the message of salvation, healing, and the Holy Spirit. Now the Lord is giving us the message that we are to prosper in Him.

Financial success is only one part of God's blessing. Prosperity includes our body, our mind, and our soul.

The Lord wants us to experience a balanced life of giving and receiving, of salvation and forgiveness, of health and abundance.

YOU CAN RECEIVE GOD'S BEST

One of my great heros in the Bible is Nehemiah.

For more than 160 years Jerusalem was surrounded by the unsightly ruins of a wall that had been destroyed by the Babylonians. Then God gave Nehemiah, a "cupbearer" in the service of the king, a vision to totally restore the wall.

Nehemiah was embarrassed at the rubble around the City of David. He told his friends, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach" (Nehemiah 2:17).

What was his desire for the city? A wall that would bring Glory and honor to the Lord.

When Nehemiah walked on the scene, he had no credentials as a contractor and few construction materials. But he was totally motivated and had a specific plan for rebuilding. The account is an inspiration to anyone who seeks to achieve God's best.

In your search, here are seven specific steps that can help.

One: INQUIRE of God's Ways

Before taking any steps to rebuild the wall, Nehemiah fasted and prayed for God's guidance. He said, "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant" (Nehemiah 1:6).

Since man is "unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8), there is only one direction for us to turn. The prophet Hosea asked, "Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9).

The Lord grieved for the Children of Israel who "go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways" (Psalms 95:10).

What does the Lord have in store for you? Does He want you to live on a pile of rubble? Is it God's will for you to be despondent or nervous? No. Those are not His ways at all.

It is much better to "Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness on you" (Hosea 10:12).

Two: ASPIRE to God's Blessings

Nehemiah brought his bold petition to the Lord. He said, "O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day" (Nehemiah 1:11).

Nehemiah had a great aspiration to see God restore His blessing on Jerusalem—but he was totally dependent on the Lord. He also had faith to visualize the completed project.

Can you see God's blessing through the eyes of faith? If you are going to win your neighbor to Christ, picture yourself doing it. Try visualizing, "What will I say to him?" "How will he respond?"

The Lord knows your thoughts. As He told Solomon, "Know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever" (1 Chronicles 28:9).

On a recent morning a man told me, "This is sure a lousy day."

I responded, "No. This is the day God has given us. All of His resources are ours." And I added,

"The Lord has given us air to breathe, and if He takes it away, we are dead."

It's true! We can live without food for 40 days. We can live without water 14 days. We can only live without air for less than three minutes. But we cannot live without hope.

Is the Lord your source? Do you aspire to receive His favor? "He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Psalms 24:5).

Three: ADMIRE God's Supply

When the enemies of Israel heard about Nehemiah's rebuilding project, "They laughed us to scorn and despised us" (Nehemiah 2:19). But they answered: "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants

will arise and build" (v.20).

Nehemiah could never have accomplished the giant task alone. The Lord was the total source of his supply.

We serve the same God who fed the Children of Israel with manna from heaven and with water from a rock, who sent ravens to feed Elijah, who fed five thousand with a few loaves and fishes.

I can't begin to recount the times that I have faced an impossible situation. There were days the pantry was bare and we wondered where our next meal would come from. There were those Thursday nights when I fell to my knees and prayed, "Lord, you know I have a payroll to meet tomorrow and there isn't enough money in the account."

If I looked to Bill Swad for the answer, I would have failed miserably.

But I claimed the Word that said, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

The Lord has never failed me. Never.

Four: DESIRE God's Best

Nehemiah's heart was heavy because God's anointed city was in disrepair. He learned that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were "in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire" (Nehemiah 1:3).

It was certainly not the perfection the Lord wanted for His children.

Before I became a Christian my life was headed for total disaster. Day after day I would drink more than a fifth of whiskey and I was running fast and loose with the wrong crowd.

Then I experienced a dramatic turn-around. From the moment Jesus became the Lord of my life, I began to desire His best. I wish I could tell you that I have achieved perfection, but that is not the case. One thing, however, is certain. The closer I get to the Lord, the more I become like Him.

Someday I will stand before Him and understand what He meant when He said, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

What is the source of excellence? We know that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Paul's prayer was that the Lord would "make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ" (Hebrews 13:21).

From the moment of salvation, His best should be our lifestyle. We have been reborn into royalty and have acquired His nature. The Word tells us, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

Five: REQUIRE God's Assistance

When you follow God's plan, you can expect the enemies to arrive. They certainly came to Nehemiah.

Every day that the wall was being rebuilt, the critics were there. "When Sanballat (Nehemiah's chief political opponent) heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews" (Nehemiah 4:1).

But the builder prayed for the Lord's assistance. "Hear,

O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity!" (v4).

The Almighty did not create us and redeem us so that we could slumber and sleep. We are here to help build the kingdom—and He is ready to assist. Paul wrote, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

We serve a God who is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5,6).

I don't simply desire the Lord's help, I *require* it!

Six: PERSPIRE to Attain God's Resources

What was the secret ingredient that allowed the wall to be rebuilt? The people were not afraid to give every ounce of energy to the task. "So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6).

Even when they were under attack, they never stopped their labor.

"Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon" (v. 17).

To fulfill the Great Commission, Jesus said, "Go!"— and that means action. Invite someone over to your house to lead them to Jesus. Go out of your way to bring someone to the house of the Lord. God's kingdom, including your local church, is built through people who are committed to work.

It is also true in business. I did not build an automotive empire by treating the enterprise as a nine-to-five job. In the word of Winston Churchill, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

When you face a "wall" in your life, don't settle for anything less than victory.

When the enemy attacks, respond like Nehemiah's workers—they fought off trouble, but never stopped building.

Booker T. Washington said, "I have learned that success is not to be measured so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles one has reached while trying to succeed."

You will experience a great turning point in life when you see yourself as being productive. But planning your strategy is only half the battle. It also takes energy to reap the reward. "He who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame" (Proverbs 10:5).

Hang in there! Just when we feel ready to quit, God may feel ready to bless. He wants us to finish the wall.

Seven: ACQUIRE God's Provision

What a celebration when the Lord's work was completed! Every stone had been reclaimed. The magnificent boundary was a testimony of vision, sacrifice, labor, and perseverance.

I wish I could have been with Nehemiah and his amazing band of workers when the wall of Jerusalem was finished. At the dedication they rejoiced "with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps" (Nehemiah 12:27).

"Come on, everybody. Get up on the wall!" shouted Nehemiah. He "brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs" (v. 31). The Bible records that they sang "loudly" (v. 42). Their elation was so great that "the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off" (v⁴³).

Think of it! The wall was rebuilt in only fifty-two days. Even the enemies of the project recognized that "this work was done by our God" (Nehemiah 6:16).

Nehemiah began as a servant. But by obeying the Lord he became not only a builder, but eventually the governor over the entire kingdom.

What is the condition of the walls that surround your life? Are they fractured and broken? Have they been reduced to a pile of rubble? Don't despair. God will give you the courage and determination to acquire everything necessary to rebuild something magnificent—in a much shorter time than you can imagine.

Start building!

8

THE WORLD'S GREATEST HARVEST

According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, last year America produced over two billion bushels of wheat, more than seven billion bushels of corn, and over three billion pounds of peanuts. But the record-setting yields produced on our 300 million acres of crops are insignificant compared with the harvest that is on the horizon.

The sound of a trumpet will signal the greatest gathering the world has ever known. Our natural eye may see Christians being bulldozed and pushed aside by the enemies of the Cross. But through the eye of faith we can see Christ coming in the clouds for the final harvest.

The great preacher Dwight L. Moody said, "I never preach a sermon without thinking that possibly the Lord may come before I preach another." And Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the famed British clergyman said, "I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for Him."

Denying the Power

How do we know that the return of Christ is imminent?

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

God has shed His grace on America, yet millions have shunned His message. We can only wonder how long will He tolerate the sin of this generation.

In Galilee, Jesus denounced the cities in which most of His miracles had been performed, because they refused to repent. The Lord said, "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you" (Matthew 11:23,24).

God's covenants are not written in the sand, but chiseled in stone. They are consistent and never meant to be broken.

Some people like to call themselves Republicans or Democrats, but I want to be known as a Believer—one who makes choices based on God's principles.

I believe we are living in the time that Jesus spoke of when saints and sinners—"the wheat and the tares"—will exist side by side. But the moment of separation is at hand. The Lord said, "Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'" (Matthew 13:30).

In these final days, Christians are becoming an endangered species. As a result, I see the church closing ranks as never before. A minister recently told me, "We can no longer afford to fight each other over doctrines, beliefs, or styles of worship.

The world is our enemy, not the church."

The pro-homosexual, pro-abortion crowd that is determined to destroy the church is not targeting only Catholics, Lutherans or Charismatics; they are after *all* Christians. We have no choice but to be united against their attacks.

When Noah took the animals into the ark he probably instructed each pair: "Please don't hurt each other. Remember, there are only two of you."

We have no other choice but to join hands and hearts. That is why connecting to a fellowship of believers is vital. Anyone who has lived on a farm knows that when harvest time comes *everybody* has to lend his strength and energy.

Stir It Up!

When you receive your prescription from the Lord, read the label carefully. And don't be surprised to find some special instructions. For example, you may read: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as

you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23-25).

How can we expect to prosper spiritually if we refuse to have fellowship with the children of the Lord?

I remember the day I talked with a family who had stopped attending church. I was shocked when they told me, "God has blessed our business so much that we have to work on Sunday."

Those people had a problem they did not recognize.

Some people say, "I am a good person. I see no need to go to church." They delude themselves into believing that they can serve the Lord without attending the House of God.

Another couple told me: "We live too far away from our church."

I said, "That's no problem. Find a fellowship closer to your home and start attending there."

We were not born to live alone. God instituted the church to bring His family together.

When we fail to attend the House of the Lord, God's blessings may pass over us.

One of my associates said, "People pray for a response from their Heavenly Father. But the Lord says, 'Where are you? You are not in the place I instructed you to be.'"

How tragic it is when God sends a messenger with an answer and can't find the person with the question. Next Sunday I may have a special word from the Lord for a particular person. But what happens if they are on the golf course or at the beach? They won't receive the answer.

The church is where we build eternal relationships—with the Lord and with His people. Instead of just planting corn or potatoes, plant your life into the life of someone else.

A very successful businessman recently came to me and said, "Bill, you have a young man working for you whose rent is due on Monday." Then he said with great sincerity, "Give him this money"—it was several hundred dollars. "He has a wife and two kids and I know he is extremely worried about his finances."

The money was not a loan, and the businessman wanted to remain anonymous. I told him, "Sir, get ready to receive a great blessing."

It is impossible to fathom the size of the harvest when we seed into the lives of others.

High Weeds

"Bill, Why have you continued to minister to people in Ohio for so many years?" I have often been asked.

"The answer is simple," I tell them. "It is my *call*!"

There is nothing that can compare with being in the "bull's eye" of God's will.

I recall the time in 1965 when we made plans to open our church in Columbus. The weeds outside the building were as high as the roof. But we cut the weeds and established a center to meet the needs of hurting people. Immediately, we began to teach God's principles of seedtime and harvest.

When the Lord shows you the field you are to plow and harvest, develop it to the best of your ability. The great coach Vince Lombardi said, "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence—regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

Excellence is doing something right, whether it is programming a computer, teaching a piano lesson, or getting to a Bible study on time.

Christ instructed us to "work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Martin Luther said, "If Christ were coming again tomorrow, I would plant a tree today."

Everywhere I turn I meet people who destroy what the Lord is trying to produce. For example, some people are so busy being jealous of people with talent that they have never developed their own gifts and abilities.

The question we need to ask constantly is, "What am I doing with the gifts and abilities God has given me?"

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matthew 13:32).

"It Is Finished!"

From the moment you were born, the seeds of greatness were planted within you. But if you fail to cultivate the soil, water your crops and pull out the weeds, there will never be a harvest.

There is no need to fear the attempts of the devil to ravage your crops.

Jesus defeated him at the Cross and said, "It is finished!"

At that moment, Christ "neutralized" the power of Satan through the power of His blood. As a child of the King,

the devil may torment you, but he cannot conquer you.

On the authority of God's Word I can declare that Satan is under the dominion of every born again believer. We are joint-heirs with Christ, who has "put all things under his feet" (Ephesians 1:22). "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

I love what the Psalmist wrote:

"No evil shall befall you,

Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling"

(Psalms 91:10).

The Evil One may attempt to steal your harvest, but he will fail. "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9). Satan will be destroyed, "by the blood of the Lamb" (v. 11).

The next time Satan attempts to invade your territory, stand firmly on the promises of God. He is ready to pour out forgiveness, healing, redemption and renewal.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul,

And forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities,

Who heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from destruction,

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and
tender mercies,

Who satisfies your mouth with good things,

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's"

(Psalms 103:2-5).

What the Lord is planning is greater than anything we can imagine. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

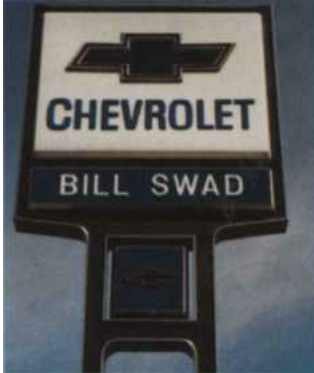
Are you ready for the world's greatest harvest? As a child of the King you will share in everything He has planned—now and for Eternity.

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Satan is making an all-out attack to steal your harvest of joy, peace, love, family, friends, health and possessions. On these pages you'll learn:

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- How to prepare your field.
- The steps from defeat to deliverance.
- Your prescription for spiritual, physical and financial prosperity.
- What God's Word says about health.
- The laws of never-ending abundance.
- How to receive God's best.



Bill Swad, Sr.

is founder and president of Bill Swad Chevrolet, Columbus, Ohio, Omega Life Insurance Company, Scottsdale, Arizona, and Hamilton Acceptance Corporation. He is founder and senior pastor of Christian Center, Columbus, Ohio, and speaks at conferences and seminars worldwide. His numerous awards included an honorary doctorate from Oral Roberts University.