

Significant Lives — Chapter #1

By Jim Golden — Significant Lives!

June 21, 1995 was my 23rd spiritual birthday, unless you count the trip down the aisle in 1957, when a "turn-or-burn" Baptist preacher scared me to the altar. July 2nd was my natural birthday. You notice I left out the particulars concerning this event. Let's just say I am closer to 50 than 60. In the last number of years something has begun to happen to me that I never thought possible. I have become concerned about the over-all productivity of my life. Personally believing that the return of our Lord is imminent and looking at the "big-picture" of my life's accomplishments, I had begun to become discouraged. Did I say discouraged? It was probably more like depressed.

I thought by this time a man should be approaching the end of a career and planning for his retirement. I however have just begun a new home business as a Christian Internet Provider. I have not done this because of boredom with all my previous successes, but because, as a species we have a need to eat. My nickname is the *dancing bear*, and some have assured me that if I were to limit my physical activity I could possibly survive for a year without solid food. My wife and four children, however, are another story. They have become accustomed to their daily bread.

While food and eating is a favorite subject with me I want to get back to a *greater need* that seems to beat within the breast of the western male and female of our species. I am, of course, referring to the need to be, or at least feel, productive. I believe it stems from a God-given need for significance. We all want to know that our lives have counted for something, are significant! As westernized Christians we have translated the fulfillment of this need for significance into activity. Activity and productivity become synonymous in the mind of the western Christian. Even if we are not in "full-time" ministry most of us believe, that we are all God's ministers (ambassadors). While this is true, I want to suggest that how we should walk this out has been filtered through the gossamer web of 20th century western interpretation.

This last year I ministered as the Spirit was poured out on the church I attend. During this time I saw thousands become so weak they could no longer stand (commonly referred to as "slain" in the Spirit). God healed one blind man when I anointed his eyelids with oil, and a crippled woman stood and walked around the sanctuary holding my hand. Yet, because we have a tendency to focus on the activity of the Spirit, as my mother use to say, we cannot see **the tree** for the forest. Associating the activity of the God's Spirit with significance or productivity, we seldom realize this significant activity is the result of who He is. *All activity becomes memory and memories are poor substitutes for a growing and ongoing relationship with God's Spirit.*

Who else can heal the blind but God? Who else can make the cripple to walk and the deaf to hear? If your answer is other than, "no one but God," you're on shaky ground. It is a simple thing for God to do these things because he is light and in him there is no darkness at all. I am an electrician by trade so I know that when you walk into a dark room and flip on the switch, if you have electricity and a good light bulb, the darkness is going to disappear. It should follow that when *God*

comes on the scene, as his child, if you have faith and need, darkness is going to disappear.

When someone is healed it isn't so much God doing something as it is God being something. He is a creator and by virtue of being a creator whenever he is present something is created. I am not speaking of God's universal presence but his manifested presence, which is open and available to all of his children. In fact, his *manifested presence* is what salvation is all about. All who have entered into Jesus' *salvation* will eventually see the veil that separated us from him torn in two from the top to the bottom. This veil, while representative of the veil that protected the priests from the manifested glory of God in the temple, not only exist in the temple of our hearts, but is no less effective in shielding us from God's life-giving glory. When Jesus died at Calvary this veil was torn in two down in the temple in the city. When God sends the Spirit of his son into our hearts he begins a negotiation process with each of us to tear our veil in two. This can be a frightening idea. It struck terror into the hearts of many high priests. A rope was tied around their ankle in order to extricate the dead body of a high priest whose sacrifice was found unacceptable by God. We may be assured that if Jesus is our sacrifice God will find him absolutely acceptable.

This morning as I was reading John 14 I began to realize once again, that the place Jesus was going to prepare for us in his Father's house wasn't a little shack in the corner of glory-land. It wasn't going to be entered as the result of some future advent. Our translation into heaven, or Christ's physical return to earth wouldn't bring us into this place, but his Father keeping his promise, and pouring out the Holy Spirit would alone bring about the fulfillment. As Jesus spoke to Philip and the others it was easy to see his concern for his children. He can end our lives as spiritual orphans when we realize that the Spirit comes to *be* with us. Through His fathering and nurturing He brings about a wonderful metamorphosis in each one of His children. He redefines significance in our lives. We begin to realize that anyone who is in this type of intimate relationship with the Almighty, is significant. Not only do we have God's ear but we have his life.

Before God is ever God through you-you are significant. Before his presence in you ever gives sight to the blind or leads someone to the threshold of the Kingdom-you are significant. You are significant because the blood and salvation of Jesus Christ has made you a species of being that has never before lived on planet earth-until Jesus did what he did. The secret to his doing was his being. The secret to our doing isn't any different. If we want a life marked by the "presence" of God we must allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into heaven-beings. We must allow him to take us into *the place* Jesus has prepared for us in his Father's house. Until he has our full attention and devotion we will continue to struggle with the doing. Until we realize that he has come for deep and intimate transforming union with us, our life's definition of significance will continue to be defined as doing instead of being.

As this century comes to a close the world is looking for a people who wield the power of the age to come. These people know they are born from above and have found their significance in who they are rather than what they do. These people dwell in the secret place Jesus prepared for them and will once again turn the world upside down or, better stated, right side up. The miraculous activity that will spring forth from them will not be able to be contained, denied or kept secret. The life-giving presence of their heavenly Father will simply be what he is in them. Wherever they go they will truly be the children of the most high God. Let us all begin to cry out for the friendship of the Holy Spirit and not just His activity over

begin to cry out for the friendship of the Holy Spirit and not just His activity-our lives will truly become significantly productive!