

GENTLE SHEPHERD MINISTRIES

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SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

Part 12

Glimpses Into Greatness

By Rayola Kelley

Have you ever felt like something was floating on the outskirts of your understanding that would bring some type of illumination about God? You almost felt that you could reach out and touch it, yet it remained far enough from you that it was illusive. In your desire to grasp it, you sensed you were about to see something that would prove to be precious only to discover the limitations of your fleshly existence.

When I thought about writing this article, I encountered such an experience. I felt the Lord was trying to show me something, but when I went to peer around the corner of my human limitations, my spiritual eyesight seemed to fail me. Granted, I was not looking into the abyss of darkness, but there were no shadows or outlines to bring me any real sense of what was lurking beyond my present understanding. I did not feel that the precious truth was playing hide and seek with me, but I felt that just maybe I did not know what I was looking at according to my understanding. In a way, it is like what happened to the people in *John 12:28-29*. They heard the voice of God, but reasoned it to be thunder because they did not expect to hear from heaven. Obviously, I would not know what I was looking for unless the Lord clearly unveiled it to me.

As I meditated on the prospect of just how close heaven and eternity are, but how limited we are in seeing the glory and majesty of this unseen dimension, I realized that maybe that is what the Lord wanted me to see. God's Word tells us we can only know in part and that we see through a glass darkly (*1 Corinthians 13:9 & 12*). We are not only bound to this world that often influences what we

know and experience, but we see through the veil of our flesh. *Hebrews 10:20* actually makes reference to Jesus' physical body as being a veil. Heaven and eternity exist on the other side of the very thin veil of our flesh, but nevertheless, we are separated from experiencing or knowing the reality of both. Both are contrary to the world we know, the fleshly ways we are bound to, and the fading glory attached to the reality around us.

Through the years I have become more aware that the real challenge for Christians is to find Christ in their present reality. Whether we live in the midst of abundance, drudgery, persecution, uncertainty, sorrow, and grave challenges, we must find Christ in it. This is the only way we can maintain a proper balance in our disposition, attitudes, and lifestyle, as well as come to a place of rest on the immovable Rock of heaven.

This brings me to a very important part of this article: our concept of God. Having a relationship with the living God is the only way we will see beyond the thin veil of our flesh to catch glimpses into that which is eternal. God is not only the present reality of the heavenly and eternal, but He is the essence of both. Heaven speaks of His incredible glory, while the eternal declares His very character. Without God there would be no heaven, and without God eternity would not be. Everything begins with the eternal God and will conclude with the unfolding glory of His heavenly abode.

Glimpses into the eternal were brought even more so to the limelight for me in a book called, *Knothole Glimpses Of Glory*. It is a book we had on our bookshelf for at least two decades. It was copyrighted in 1963. Its subtitle is, *Miraculous Manifesta-*

tions of Heavenly Glory From Bethlehem to the City of Gold. The author paints an interesting picture of how God has given mankind glimpses into glory. Granted, we may see them through a small knothole of our flesh, but nevertheless, such glimpses have been provided, and through the eyes of faith, we can personally see and experience them. As a man named Geike reminds us, "It is not given to earth to have more than brief glimpses of Heaven." As the Lord pointed out to Moses in *Exodus 33:20* that if he saw the fullness of His glory, he would die. However, brief glimpses have been provided, and on Judgment Day man will be without excuse for his unbelief towards God.

As the Bible states, all of creation gives us small glimpses into the world beyond us. The unfolding heavens reveal the immeasurable vastness of God. The different dimensions of creation (there are eleven known dimensions according to a Prophecy in the News article), reveal to us the endless depth of His wisdom and ways. The mountains that reach high into the sky show adoration towards our Creator, the canyons that plunge deep into the earth reveal how far He will reach to touch the depth of man's own soul, the trees remind us of the constant praise that reaches beyond the base world, the flowers His beauty, the crops His provision, the deserts His hidden treasure, and the oceans His power. Clearly, creation offers such glorious glimpses into the unseen realm. If only we would adhere to its continual examples. It is for this reason that the Bible tells us only a fool will say in his heart there is no God (*Psalms 14:1; Romans 1:20*).

The question is can we personally see God's glory today? We must have the eyes of faith to see God's glory in His Word, but it takes humility to see personal glimpses into the glory of the unseen. Humility only comes when one has a sense of God's greatness and holiness in lieu of his or her smallness.

To see glimpses into glory one must be prepared to feel totally undone



by the majesty of an eternal God. Every glimpse will reinforce one's smallness in light of God's greatness. As so eloquently put by A. W. Tozer, the problem today is that people have made God too small. In summation, they have brought Him down to their level so they can become familiar with Him according to their understanding. In fact, so much of how Jesus is being presented is according to the world's idea of what constitutes greatness. However, we do not have to puff Jesus up to some status to magnify His Name; rather, we have to simply believe what the Word says about Him. In other words, He stands great because He is great. As humans, we must not bring Him down to our level in order to exalt Him to some type of greatness that we can abide or agree with. Rather, we must strive to raise our thoughts or ideas of Him to that which has already been established by His Word. As the Bible states, His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (*Isaiah 55:8-9*).

I say all of this because the world is greatly influencing Christians' ideas of greatness. The world's concept is to look for great men. It even provides certain arenas in which this so-called "greatness" can be exalted. The reason for this is because it is the actual idea of great men that make the world appear great. For example, consider how athletes make a particular sport or event desirable and great to the masses. People pay to see the athlete they admire most, or the team that has earned their loyalty. It is the idea of greatness that makes the things and activities of the world attractive and great to the onlooker. The world rewards such greatness with titles and trophies, but without displays of greatness there would be no real attraction to entangle people into a false idea of what constitutes genuine accomplishments of importance. Without the greatness or distinction of people in certain arenas, the world would have no contrast or means to offer the masses any form of prominence that could be found and admired by them.

The world's idea of greatness is based either on sentimental hogwash or on an image that has no real

substance behind it. The world must constantly puff up the idea of greatness because there is nothing that simply stands great.

Sadly, this is what some Christians are doing with God. They are trying to develop an arena in which God can be made to look great. They sentimentally lift Him up on some worldly altar that makes Him unique and then they strive to encourage others to see Him as being great. Once again, God is great. He does not need an arena or an altar. He does not need to be lifted up for He already has been lifted up on a wooden altar for all to see. He does not need a title, He is the Title of all that constitutes holiness, goodness, and justice. He does not have to prove Himself worthy of recognition for He is already worthy. He does not have to prove His intentions, for He stands as the loving proof of all that is dear, honorable, and worthy of consideration.

This brings us to the next problem. It has to do with worship and service. If we believe God to be small, our worship of Him will be small and our service anemic. A. W. Tozer points out that we worship God according to our concept of Him. Our concept of God will determine our attitude towards Him, our approach, and the seriousness of our commitment, affecting the integrity of service.

The question is how do each of us approach God? How we approach God comes down to our concept and practice of religion. For example, religion that is fleshly is paganism; man-centered is humanism; metaphysical is New Age; pursuing hidden knowledge is occultism, and operating according to Spirit and truth is Christianity. Except for the last response, every other religious practice will demote, humanize, spiritualize, and redefine God, while giving way to fleshly appetites, deifying man, emphasizing spiritual experiences, and exalting occult knowledge as being elite and supreme.

In next month's article I will deal with the different approaches to religion, but I want to once again come back to the knothole glimpses of glory. I was present when a message from God stated to the church that if God's people did not come higher in Him, they would be consumed by the darkness coming upon the face of the world. Clearly, the message was seri-

ous and heart wrenching.

The Lord has given everything to us that pertains to life and godliness. We do not have to be consumed by the darkness of the age regardless of how thick and challenging it may prove to be. However, we cannot receive the great things of heaven unless we become humbled by the reality of how small and base we are in the matters of eternity. We must become sober and vigilant about the times we live in, as well as keenly aware of our vulnerable state without the abiding intervention of God upon our lives. We must learn what it means to walk in light of the glory of the next world instead of the temporary glory of the present one. We must not settle for simply peering around the various religious corners in the hope of seeing something that will make us feel good about our religious status; rather, we must strive to look for those small knotholes so that we can peer into His glory, knowing that we will be changed from glory to glory until we awake in His glorious likeness (*Psalms 17:15; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18*).

As this article comes to a close, I realize that the people of faith in *Hebrews 11* peered through the knotholes of glory. In a sense, they were being consumed by it. As a result, they were more interested in obtaining a better resurrection than the riches and prestige of the present world. They were ready to be misunderstood, despised, and persecuted. They were willing because they knew they were preparing for the next world, while being consumed by the promising reality that in the final stages the world would not be worthy to even witness the fruits and result of their walk of faith.

In the end, may that be said of you and of me. †

QUOTABLE

"A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats." - C.H. Spurgeon

"We had better have truth without peace, than peace without truth." - Thomas Watson

WATCH FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE ~

Different approaches to religion~
Discerning religious spirits and more~

THE GARDEN

By Jeannette Haley

Scenic views are important. At least they are to me. Since I spend so much time in the kitchen, I am grateful that the view from the kitchen window is one that I never tire of. It may not be facing the Priest River as do the living room windows, but it nicely frames a backdrop of tall evergreen and tamarack trees, an expanse of green lawn, and our flower-lined, fenced back area that includes two very large bull pine trees. Indiscreetly tucked in between our chain link fence line and the neighbor's grass lies a fenced garden space.

Even though this modest garden is on the neighbor's property, it appears to fit intimately into the entire scene. Perhaps this is because wandering grape vines from our grape arbor, which is situated outside the fenced areas, have unashamedly invited themselves into the neighbor's property. There they have joined in a merry marriage with grape vines from a smaller arbor inside the garden. It's as if they are proclaiming that no matter which side of the fence they are planted on, nothing can hinder them from climbing up, over and beyond any obstacle in order to proclaim that they are one, and life itself is beautiful.

Once I learned that the property next door, with its unpretentious garden, belonged to our neighbor's father, who had given it to her, I began to wonder about this man who had poured so much of his heart and labor into it. It is obvious that his daughter and her family try to care for it as best as they can, even though they do not live here full-time. However, as with our two acres of trees and broad expanses of lawns, the upkeep is not minor. Thus, the garden is beginning to show neglect as weeds, grass and overgrown raspberry bushes compete for supremacy.

In her kindness last year, the daughter invited us to come over and harvest the rhubarb. There are two lovely rhubarb plants that are holding their own against the persistent wild grass. Finding myself inside the garden, I once again began to notice the loving care and personal touches the former owner had made. I thought of

his hands fashioning the small grape arbor inside the garden, and how he had planned out where to place the rhubarb plants. He had built a low board enclosure for strawberries, and also had built a sturdy fence row for his raspberries to climb on. The two broad rows of carefully placed iris, standing proud and tall with their bright flowers give evidence of the gardener's love for contrast and color. It almost seems as if they are trying to maintain their special status in the enclosed garden by letting the world know that regardless of the unkempt turf around them, they remain dedicated to being faithful to the original vision.

Since we were invited last year to use the garden area if we wanted to plant vegetables, this spring I couldn't resist the urge to take her up on it, at least to some extent. Our growing season here is a mere 90 days, so planning a wide variety of produce is out of my range of experience, and physical ability to handle. However, when I ran across tomato plants for sale that came from tomatoes that grow well in this area, I took the plunge and brought some home. Now I had baby tomato plants to keep alive until the weather warmed up. Well, the weather hasn't been too kind to little tomato plants this spring, or any other kind of sun-loving green and growing thing for that matter, so on Memorial Day into the garden they went in spite of cooler than normal temps and an abundance of rain.

Whenever I unlatch the garden gate and step inside, a feeling comes over me that is hard to describe. The awareness that the soft soil under my feet is not mine surrounds me as I silently work at removing weeds, and pruning stray branches. Thoughts of the man who established the garden always begin to trickle into my mind. In this hushed place, surrounded by towering trees pointing skyward to heaven, I can't help but wonder if he knew the Lord. It seems to me that the people who are close to the earth, who work the land, planting, tending, and reaping, are somehow more keenly aware of man's utter dependency upon their Creator, and the miracle of it all.

I know nothing about the person who loved this place long before we ever saw it. All I know is that in some special and small way, his work repre-

sents a legacy of the man. I am sure there is much, much more about him that only his family knows, but the fact remains that there is a testimony in the garden, and surrounding land, of a life lived by a man whose tenderness, loving care and joy of living remains for others to see if they would only take the time to look, and consider.

My desire to make the garden as perfect as possible is hindered by, not only the uncooperative weather, but by physical limitations. In addition, I am not willing to disturb Mr. and Mrs. Robin who have chosen the privacy and safety of this little spot of ground to build a nest in the grape arbor. And, even though it's not up to me to tackle the challenge of caring for more than the one row of tomatoes and peppers, it gives me a real sense of joy and satisfaction to be able to quietly "go the extra mile" for our neighbors.

What lessons are there that we can learn from the legacy of the garden? I think that the first thing we must ask ourselves is, *What kind of a lasting legacy will remain after I am gone? What will I be remembered for most? Will my legacy resemble the stench of a garbage dump, filled with broken and ruined bits and pieces of a life lived in vain? Will pride, rebellion and sin stand as an ugly and mute reminder of a wasted life? Or, will my life resemble the garden—a life that planted seeds of life (the Word of God), and worked to produce fruit for the benefit of others—a life that sought to commune with the Lord in the secret place of His glory and holiness? Can we confidently rest assured that our legacy will be a life that, while not perfect in every way, was nevertheless "a living sacrifice," a life lived for the glory of God, and not for our own glory and praise of man?*

Gardens are special places in the Bible. In *Genesis 2:8, 9*, we read of the first Gardener, "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Man's first home was the Garden of Eden, or the Garden of the Lord, pre-

pared for him by the hand of God. It was not a mansion on a hilltop, or a cabin in the mountains, or a penthouse apartment in a crowded city. Everything he had need of was in this special garden. The Garden of the Lord was perfect in every way. It holds a unique legacy for this is where the sin of one man (See *Romans 5*) brought death to all men, but also where the first promise of the Savior was given to woman (*Genesis 3:15*). Indeed, this garden's legacy is that of *separation*. It was here that God made a separation out of Adam's side to create the first woman. It was in this garden that God stipulated that a man should separate from his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife. Adam's decision to take of the forbidden fruit instead of stepping in to save his wife (and himself), caused an instant separation from God, which is death. Thus, animals were separated from their lives as well in order to provide clothing for Adam and Eve. As a result of Eve's transgression because she was deceived, and Adam's sin because of his rebellion, both were separated forever from the Garden of God.

The legacy of another garden, the Garden of Gethsemane is *suffering*. *"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* *Luke 22:44*. Oswald Chambers, concerning Christ's agony in this garden, wrote: "We can never fathom the agony in Gethsemane, but at least we need not misunderstand it. It is the agony of God and Man in one, face to face with sin. We know nothing about Gethsemane in personal experience. Gethsemane and Calvary stand for something unique; they are the gateway into Life for us...."

"It was not the death on the cross that Jesus feared in Gethsemane; He stated most emphatically that He came on purpose to die. In Gethsemane He feared lest He might not get through as Son of Man. He would get through as Son of God -- Satan could not touch Him there; but Satan's onslaught was that he would get through as an isolated Figure only; and that would mean that he could be no Savior...."

"The agony in Gethsemane is the agony of the Son of God in fulfilling His destiny as the Saviour of the world.

The veil is drawn aside to reveal all it cost Him to make it possible for us to become sons of God. His agony is the basis of the simplicity of our salvation. The Cross of Christ is a triumph for the son of Man. It was not only a sign that Our Lord had triumphed, but that He had triumphed to save the human race. Every human being can get through into the presence of God now because of what the Son of Man went through."

It is in this garden that suffering of heart and soul descended upon the disciples. After the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, each one entered into his own personal crucible. Again, Oswald Chambers says it best: "Watch with Me"—with no private point of view of your own at all, but watch entirely with Me. In the early stages we do not watch with Jesus, we watch for Him. We do not watch with Him through the revelation of the Bible; in the circumstances of our lives. Our Lord is trying to introduce us to identification with Himself in a particular Gethsemane, and we will not go; we say—"No, Lord, I cannot see the meaning of this, it is bitter." How can we possibly watch with Someone Who is inscrutable? How are we going to understand Jesus sufficiently to watch with Him in His Gethsemane, when we do not know even what His suffering is for? We do not know how to watch with Him; we are only used to the idea of Jesus watching with us."

"The disciples loved Jesus Christ to the limit of their natural capacity, but they did not understand what He was after. In the Garden of Gethsemane they slept for their own sorrow, and at the end of three years of the closest intimacy they 'all forsook Him and fled.'"

"[After Pentecost] they were all filled with the Holy Ghost—the same 'they,' but something wonderful has happened in between, viz., Our Lord's Death and Resurrection and Ascension, and the disciples have been invaded by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord had said—"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," and this meant that they learned to watch with Him all the rest of their lives."

Finally, there is that special garden, which, like the Garden of Eden, holds a legacy of both death

(separation) and life (eternal). *John 19: 41, 42* says, "*Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*" We know that this must have been a beautiful garden, for it was tended by a gardener who was, no doubt, hired to care for it. (See *John 20:15*). While the Garden of Eden began with new life, and ended in separation and death, this final garden's legacy began with the horrors of the crucifixion of the Son of God, but ends with the promise of new and eternal life through His resurrection in power and glory.

Our lives, and the legacy we leave behind, can be likened to these three gardens. We come into this world; we are separated from God by sin until we repent (turn about face); believe (in our hearts) who Jesus is (God incarnate); and, receive what He did for us on the cross, and through His resurrection. Suffering is also a part of our journey through this world, and suffering for our faith in being identified with Christ as our Lord (master) can be a legacy that greatly impacts others. Finally, there is the garden of death, however it may come to us, if Jesus tarries; however, because He lives, we who are His also have the hope and blessed assurance of resurrection and eternal life.

The question is, what are you sowing into the garden of your life? Remember, you will reap what you sow, both in this world and the next. The legacy you leave behind will either bring joy, and the hope of reunion in heaven to the lives of those who know and love you, or sorrow and heartache. It all depends on how you daily sow into your life's garden. †

GARDEN OF LOVE

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? That we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies." - SS 6:1-3

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Q: *I am confused by the various interpretations of Scripture that come from different camps of beliefs and schools of religious thought. How can I know which one is right?*

A: One of the reasons you can hear various interpretations of Scriptural truths is because people are at different places in their lives. It is important to remember that each of us have our own particular course we must walk and our own cross to bear. Depending on their challenges and point of spiritual growth, each person is having their own personal experiences in their relationship with God. In such cases, experiences may be applicable or they may be something to put on the shelf for future reference. However, the truth of a matter must always be properly received and applied, because spiritual truths are not only applicable, but living.

It is vital that you discern where you are and what will best benefit your personal growth at the present. Keep in mind, the real teacher is the Holy Spirit. You must also remember that it is not the vessel that must be properly tested, but the message to see if it is in line with the intent and complete counsel of the Word of God. You also must discern the preacher/teacher's approach towards the Word of God. There are various approaches that will lead to different results. You must discern the extent of the type of striving you need to make in your spiritual growth. To determine the goal of your spiritual progress will determine how you will approach the Word. Following are some of the ways that people approach God's Word.

Out of duty: Some people approach God's Word as a duty. Duty points to discipline, however, reading and studying the Bible is not a matter of discipline alone, but a necessity that ensures spiritual growth and maintenance. Granted, we need to discipline ourselves to establish healthy attitudes and habits towards the Word, but we must do so because we understand that we live by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. His

Words are our milk to grow on, our bread that establishes us, our meat that brings us to maturity, and water that washes, cleanses, and revives. People who approach God's Word as simply a duty often become bored, resentful, or rigid about it.

As an informational book: There are those who approach the Bible to get the facts. Granted, the Bible is full of facts, but facts alone are like pieces of a puzzle. If you do not connect the different pieces of facts with Spirit and truth, you will never see the full picture. You might prove to be literal about what you know, but there will be no real depth or life to it. People who get stuck in the literal rut of the Bible can become bigoted and dogmatic about what they do know and closed to liberating truths that do not fit into their biased understanding.

A doctrinal discourse: The Bible talks about the pure milk of doctrine. Correct doctrine must be established to ensure a correct foundation, but as *Hebrews 5:11-6:2* states that we must graduate from the milk of doctrine and go on to perfection by developing the necessary teeth to chew the meat of the Word (righteousness). The Bible is not simply about doctrine, but about establishing the life of Christ in us. This means being established in our Christian walk according to the righteous disposition, attitude, examples, and instructions of Christ. This is the way in which the very life of Christ is worked in, through, and out of us. The problem with staying at the doctrinal plateau is that people have a tendency to become self-righteous.

A matter of principles: Principles are based on the law we subject ourselves to. There is the law of sin and death and the law of Spirit and life in Christ Jesus. The principles we walk in will reveal what law we are under. For instance, if you are under the law of sin and death you will be walking according to the principles of iniquity. If you are under the law of the Spirit, you will be walking according to the principles of godliness. The principle we are walking according to will manifest itself in two ways, the fruits that come forth in our lives and the spiritual growth (Spirit) or consequences (fleshly) that follow us. Subsequently, the principles of godliness are to lead us to greater revelations of Christ. It is as we walk

according to revelations that are unveiled to us by the Spirit that the truths of Christ will become our presiding reality. If people fail to walk out principles to receive greater revelations of Christ, such principles can become causes that are unfairly used to judge and compare self with others.

Approach to believe: The only way we can effectively approach the Bible to get the most out of it is to believe it is true (*Romans 10:17*). As we approach it to believe, the Spirit will lead us to all truth, making the revelation of Christ our reality.

Through the years I have approached the Bible from all of these premises. God has used each one to teach me, but as I look back it was where I was in my spiritual growth. Each premise can prove to prepare us to be established at the next place of spiritual development. You must discern where you are and proceed to the next level of growth, while avoiding the pitfalls that can plague each stage of spiritual advancement.

If you would like to know more about this subject, my book, *My Words are Spirit and Life*, in my first volume, will give a greater explanation about these approaches and what it means to properly handle the Word of God. †

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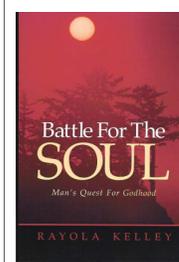
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Battle For The Soul, by Rayola Kelley, is simple in truth but profound in insightful principles and revelations. Along with its workbook, *Battle For The Soul* masterfully lays out the steps people must follow to understand the spiritual struggles and battles that incur in the soul.—



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LETTERS & EMAILS

"I just want to let you guys know that you are VERY much appreciated! I think about you every day and miss you all! When I am sitting in Sunday school, I always try and remember things that you [Jeannette] and Rayola say about what they are teaching or what we have studied. You have brought me sooo far and sometimes I feel like I've lost good information and knowledge from you since my church seems like it doesn't go into depth on studies like Rayola always did. But I keep my trust in God everyday to help me pull through. I love all of you!" - Idaho Teen

"Your ministry seems to have always been helping in small communities in struggling churches. God sees all your hard work and only in heaven will we fully see the lives touched in a profound way by the ladies of GSM!" - WA

"I'm so thankful to have you all as friends—you always seem to be there right when I need your ministry." - OR

"Want to remind you all how thankful I've been getting to know you and be in your life. I so enjoy being a Christian. The hope that continues to build and grow. Thank you for your time and love." - WA

"Just a note to say I received your wonderful newsletter. You gals sure know how to tell it right on!!" - BC

"So what's up with our churches? It's not only on news anymore...but local: A gal at _____ church said the young pastor that leads there gave a talk on sex at the Sunday service recently...not sparing any words using genital parts terminology...and an assistant 'pastor' at _____ church told the congregation a few months ago, if you're not giving and you're not in a community group, then maybe you should leave...I mean we'd like you to stay, but what's the point? That was a confirmation for me. What is all this coming to? I miss church, even though having daily quiet time and scriptures." - WA

"How the devil can pervert the scripture. That is why the body needs to stay more connected so we can correct wandering brothers and sisters. Except by the grace of God go I. None of us are exempt from deception. Lord we need a Heaven-sent

revival, not man made. Blessings and keep praying for this area, we are being bombarded with error. Keep the true faith, Blessings..." - WA

"God is still speaking. You bet He is. He's saying, *Get right you bunch of reprobates. I'm coming back, and you're not gonna believe what is waiting for you!* Seriously this [gay iniquity] makes me want to puke. I can only guess how sick it makes the Lord. Oh!! You know what this reminds me of?? That scripture written when Moses was on the mountain getting the 10 Commandments... 'and the people rose up to play.' If I'm not mistaken, that one phrase embodies every sin, and debauchery known to man. Drunkenness, fornication, adultery, (it would necessarily include homosexuality) Absolutely gut-sickening." - AR

"...very dangerous days we live in. So much garbage coming in the church and [pastors don't] know what to look for. I have found that the World has come into the church around here SO STRONG, that people won't hear you when you try to warn. They look at you like you have two heads. And other's don't want to know. It's a sad thing for sure." - OH

"Thanks for the newsletter. It was excellent as always! I really enjoyed Rayola's article and how genuine faith involves the Amen Factor—"If it originates from God we can declare with confidence, 'so be it for it is right'." And then the Believe Factor—"If it is right before the LORD we can walk in confidence towards the fruition of it." I loved your story on The Red Door and your description of the special little door you had when you were a little kid and how you related it to the narrow way and how few find it. Only those who have seen the depth of their sin and depravity in light of God's holiness can know their great need for redemption, cleansing and salvation. You painted a sobering picture that if we don't go the narrow way and sup with him, the door could be shut and never be opened again by the Lord. Of course, Rayola's Q & A is always good. We must have genuine faith in Christ in order to overcome the world, submit to the will of God to overcome the flesh and follow Jesus in humility and resist the devil to overcome Satan. I know you don't need a little synopsis every month, but you put a lot of work in the newsletter

and so want you to know what impact you both have. It helps to write as well to solidify what I learn." - ID

"Glad you found a good church. I only know of three in the Minneapolis area and each one is way too far from me to travel - up to 50 miles from here. I tried "the one" that was touted to be "the best" where "everyone was going to" from their previous churches. It was so AWFUL TERRIBLE AND EVEN I WOULD SAY APOSTATE that I had trouble sitting through the whole thing -- so seeker friendly that people had to put down the coffee cups and donuts to take the little plastic communion cup when it was passed around. No cross, of course, pastor in jeans and a shirt outside his jeans, and a loud, nerve-wrecking band. The message wasn't even good. The whole thing - well if that's the best this area has to offer, I'd rather stay home." - MN

QUOTE FROM A LETTER

"It costs to know God. We ask Him to bring us higher and He has to go deeper in us with a spade and shovel. We want to reach the mountain peak, but often we must first experience the canyon of uncertainty. We want to do great things for God, but He must do deep things in us. We want to feel good about our Christian life, but we must first realize how far away from the mark we are before we can taste the real goodness of God to know the beauty of life. We must be broken before we can know fullness, humbled before we can experience His glory, and low before we can know the heights of God's majesty.

"The Christian life is the most challenging life one can ever live, but it is the most fulfilling. It will shake everything so we can know what is trustworthy. It will enlarge us to embrace greatness. It will challenge us so that character can be forged in us. It will cause us to stumble in personal defeat before we can know what victory is like. It runs contrary to everything we understand. The answer never lies before us; rather, it lies at the end of the difficult journey. Meanwhile, we must walk in faith towards who God is and not according to what we understand." - By Rayola Kelley, written to a young man in prison.