Forewords by
John Bevere & Katherine Ruonala

Bill Johnson

The Way of Life

Experiencing the Culture of Heaven on Earth
Bill Johnson has been a friend of years ever since I made a point of seeking to know the relative substance of his ministry and mindset. Through doing what many do (i.e. question his ministry worth while criticizing it), I sought to make acquaintance with him. I wanted to know the man—to know the relative depth of his biblical grounds for ministry and personal character in conducting that ministry.

Everything I have come to know of Bill demonstrates to my view a faithful shepherd, faithfully nurturing a local flock from that base evolving into a functional congregation and providing a valid evidence and worth of his ministry.

With comfort and confidence, I believe reading his writings will contribute to the understanding and growth of believers who open to and welcome the vital functional ministry of Jesus Himself to flow into and through them.

Jack W. Hayford
Chancellor Emeritus
The King’s University
Southlake, Texas

I just received Bill Johnson’s new book, The Way of Life, from the publisher. I sat down and read the book, amazed by the wisdom related to living life not only as a husband, father, and Christian, but also as a pastor or leader in the church, as well as in the Kingdom of God. I loved the book—found it full of amazing insights from the Bible and from Bill’s experience in living out biblical principles in his various roles. The wisdom in the book makes it an appropriate gift for saint and sinner alike. The beauty and the wisdom of the way to live life presented should attract everyone to the Savior and Empowerer of our lives. This is truly a book that everyone needs to read. I found it valuable as a
guide for not only our nuclear families, but also a guide for our church families or congregations.

Randy Clark, D.Min.
Overseer of the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening
Founder of Global Awakening
Bestselling author of There is More; Power to Heal; and coauthor of Essential Guide to Healing with Bill Johnson

A lifestyle of miracles, hearing God’s voice, answered prayer, supernatural breakthrough, and fruitfulness is available—now! It’s not for some elite status of super Christians who minister from global pulpits or preach in large crusades. As you read this book, you will discover how to actually access and walk in the supernatural way of life that Jesus promised was available!

Mark Batterson
Lead Pastor of National Community Church
The New York Times bestselling author of The Circle Maker

I start each television show by saying, “Welcome to my world where it’s naturally supernatural!” Now Bill Johnson, in this signature book, teaches how you can be normal—normal based on the Bible!

Sid Roth
Host, “It’s Supernatural!”

I couldn’t even get through reading the first chapter of The Way of Life without being deeply impacted with an invitation to surrender to God in greater levels than I have ever walked in previously. This book will fill and empower every heart who desires God to be everything to them—and for those who don’t identify with that desire, you will after reading this book. I know no one who consistently models this message more than Bill Johnson. He not only communicates the message, he lives the message, he imparts the message. Thank you, Bill Johnson, for being you and for freely sharing with all of us the wisdom you have learned through your life of surrender to Christ.

Patricia King
Patricia King Ministries
In each generation leaders arise who carry a message and mandate that literally shifts the course of the particular generation. Bill Johnson is unquestionably such a leader. He has supernaturally established a church and global ministry that has become the epicenter of the modern revival movement. The constant question is, “How?” In this book, Bill answers that question with humility, honesty, and grace. He teaches you how to live a supernatural lifestyle and carry the flames of revival daily. This writing will stoke your passion for more while settling your heart deep into the Father’s love and pleasure for your life.

**Ryan LeStrange**  
Founder RLM, TRIBE, iHubs, and TRIBE Books/Media  
Author of *Hell’s Toxic Trio*

Recently I was given a detailed dream concerning the necessity of being a Values-Based Believer in the days in which we live and the days that are coming. Bill and Beni Johnson are people who live their lives from Heart Core Values. We make big and small decisions, set short and long-range goals from the compass of our heart. Bill’s values have impacted my life and are impacting an entire generation around the world. This might be the most significant book Bill Johnson has penned since *When Heaven Invades Earth*.

**James W. Goll**  
Founder of God Encounters Ministries  
GOLL Ideation LLC  
Bestselling author of *The Seer; Dream Language;* and *The Discerner*

I have known Bill Johnson for more than forty years. In that time, I never met a Christian more open to obeying Jesus. In *The Way of Life*, he sums up the message of his life. Here you will inherit the two truths that terrify satan most: that revival should be permanent, and that just having Jesus is inexpressibly wonderful.

**Mario Murillo**  
Evangelist  
Bestselling author of *Fresh Fire* and *Reaching Critical Mass*
The Way of Life by Bill Johnson, what an incredible gift! This book is a treasury of divine wisdom. It’s a banqueting table full of insight, revelation, and divine strategy on experiencing the supernatural as a natural way of life. I believe this book carries such an impartation for greater awakening to all that has been given to us in Jesus, walking in the finished work of the Cross in greater ways, and partnering with the Holy Spirit to see transformation. I believe as you feast on the treasures of revelation from the word that Bill shares, along with his personal experience with the Holy Spirit and keys to stewarding the supernatural lifestyle, you will not only encounter Jesus in a deeper way but also be positioned to partner with Him in greater ways to see radical transformation wherever He leads you. I believe the fire of His presence will ignite a greater hunger and faith within you as you read these pages to experience the supernatural as a natural way of life! Get ready for a feast that will change your life! It sure did mine!

Lana Vawser
Speaker, Prophetic Voice
Author of The Prophetic Voice of God
lanavawser.com
Sunshine Coast, Australia

Bill Johnson is a dear friend who we have walked with for close to two decades. He is one of my favorite theologians. He is constantly seeking God for deeper revelation into the Scriptures with the motivation to inspire others to know God’s character and their potential in God. In his book The Way of Life, Bill teaches us about shaping culture by partnering with Holy Spirit, knowing who we are in Christ, and walking in the supernatural. Each one of us can be the catalyst for transformation in our community, or wherever He leads. The Way of Life helps us discover who we are in Christ. We are His shining ones.

Heidi G. Baker, PhD
Cofounder and CEO of Iris Global
Best-selling author of Birthing the Miraculous

“Peace is the oxygen of Heaven…” The revelation of this one Kingdom concept alone is worth picking up and studying Bill
Johnson’s latest book, *The Way of Life*. Discovering the fullness of this way—applying the principles of this way found in these pages—will revolutionize first your mind, then your faith, next your spirit, and ultimately your entire life. Breakthrough is your portion and this book paves the way to a life of spiritual breakthrough as the gateway for every other breakthrough you’ll ever need. Bill has written many impactful books over the years, but this one may be the all-encompassing inspiration you need to walk in your highest life while you advance Christ’s agenda on the earth.

Jennifer LeClaire  
Senior Leader, Awakening House of Prayer  
Founder, Ignite prophetic network  
Bestselling author of *Mornings with the Holy Spirit* and *Dream Wild*

Bill Johnson lives life simply through his intimacy with God. When you read his *The Way of Life*, each page illuminates valuable lessons learned and noteworthy revelations received as a disciple and student of His Presence. He truly values the journey to growing in character and trust in our ever-faithful God. The impact of developing through deeper intimacy with God releases an empowering influence that supernaturally shifts the atmosphere to bring forth revival and transformation in families, communities, and connections worldwide. I believe that you will gain powerful, life-giving insights into genuinely abiding in Him personally and interactively to affect our world tremendously. Receive increase in faith and wisdom for your life experiences as you heed the rich perspective of Bill Johnson, my covenant revival brother.

Ché Ahn  
President & Founder, Harvest International Ministry  
International Chancellor, Wagner University

Bill Johnson’s *The Way of Life*’s subtitle should be *Let’s free you from any false programming and come into clarity of heart, mind, and spirit*. I feel that he takes the reader through a course in authentic Christianity. Sharing from his own experiences, he teaches us to understand what the way of life is and what the way of life is not.
There are so many profound statements to highlight, think about, meditate on, and go deep into; but when you put the whole book into perspective, this is the kind of Christianity the world needs to be introduced to. It’s so empowering and so encouraging, I found myself reading certain sections over and over, like one might do with the book of Proverbs, just to make sure it was going into me. I highly recommend this book!

Shawn Bolz
www.bolzministries.com
Author of *Translating God, God Secrets,*
and *Keys to Heaven’s Economy*
Host of *Exploring the Prophetic* Podcast

This book contains extensive revelation that equips the reader with potent tools to living a supernatural lifestyle. I want to personally endorse and recommend this book by Bill Johnson. The insight and revelation in this book will change your perspective on life and how you live it.

The supernatural realm is a way of Kingdom living. Supernatural living breaks limitations and barriers of our mind. Prepare yourself as you read this book to be challenged and stretched.

I pray that as you read this book that God will give you understanding in all things. Step into this realm and live the supernatural lifestyle that God desires for you to live. Don’t be afraid of this realm. Embrace it and rejoice in its benefits.

John Eckhardt
Bestselling author of *Prayers That Rout Demons*
The Way of Life
DESTINY IMAGE BOOKS BY BILL JOHNSON

Encountering the Goodness of God
God Is Good
Friendship with God
Hosting the Presence
Hosting the Presence Every Day
When Heaven Invades Earth
The Supernatural Power of the Transformed Mind
Strengthen Yourself in the Lord
Releasing the Spirit of Prophecy
Dreaming with God
Here Comes Heaven
Release the Power of Jesus
The Supernatural Ways of Royalty
Spiritual Java
A Life of Miracles
Center of the Universe
Dream Journal
I dedicate this book to my city, its region, and the people who live here. Redding means salvation in Dutch. And it has the Sacramento River flowing through the middle of town, which of course refers to *the river of sacrament*. Our cry is that the faithful men and women who serve our city with purity, power, and vision would represent Jesus well, and bring about the transformation that most brings Him glory. Redding, and the surrounding region, is better off today because of your love and devotion. And whether you serve in business, politics, education, medicine, media, as a stay at home mom, pastoring a church, or some other beautiful role of service, the effect of your life is priceless. I have no doubt that a Reformation has begun. Let our cry be the same as the Moravians, “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!”
Many thanks go to Pam Spinosi, who once again helped me to put the final product together. Your editing and counsel was a lifesaver.

Thanks also to Dann Farrelly, who examines my material with a keen eye, helping me to communicate my heart with much greater clarity. Thanks as well for permission to use a piece from *Kingdom Culture*.

Much thanks goes to Michael Van Tinteren and Abigail McKoy for your tireless service in helping me with all things, but especially in this case—completing my writing assignments.

I also want to thank Larry Sparks of Destiny Image Publishing for the excellence and encouragement he brings to my life and writing.

Special thanks also go to Dale Harrison, a dear friend and partner in ministry. He came to my office several years ago and stated something to the effect of, “You don’t realize how different things are here at Bethel. You need to write about it.” I couldn’t shake his words, until finally *The Way of Life* was written.
For me to prepare my heart means that I come to Him in adoration first. I don’t come with a need for a message. I come in adoration out of desire to be with Him. And I would rather have nothing to say and be current in my fellowship with Him than to have lots to say and be trying to find Him. That’s the main thing for me—I make sure that I am current…that my relationship is fresh. It’s about feeling His pleasure, which is the awareness of His heart.
# CONTENTS

Foreword by John Bevere .................. 1
Foreword by Katherine Ruonala ........... 3
Introduction ............................... 5

**CHAPTER ONE**
The Greatest Commission ............... 7

**CHAPTER TWO**
Measuring Heaven ....................... 19

**CHAPTER THREE**
Our Culture or Kingdom Culture? ....... 29

**CHAPTER FOUR**
Cornerstones of Thought ............... 37

**CHAPTER FIVE**
Approaching Life ........................ 51

**CHAPTER SIX**
All Kingdoms Become His Kingdom .... 61

**CHAPTER SEVEN**
Peace Is the Oxygen of Heaven ......... 71

**CHAPTER EIGHT**
Erasing Lines ............................ 81

**CHAPTER NINE**
Jesus, Unafraid of the Secular .......... 93

**CHAPTER TEN**
The Power of Assumptions .............. 101

**CHAPTER ELEVEN**
Friends Build with Eternity in Mind .... 111

**CHAPTER TWELVE**
A “Permissional” Culture ............... 119

**CHAPTER THIRTEEN**
Unique Expressions of Worship ....... 129

**CHAPTER FOURTEEN**
Generosity of Heart ..................... 141

**CHAPTER FIFTEEN**
Kingdom of Abundance ................. 151

**CHAPTER SIXTEEN**
Personal Fulfillment and the Cross .... 163

Addendum ................................. 175

**CHAPTER SEVENTEEN**
Impromptu Interview .................... 177

**CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**
The Values That Define Us ............. 191
I have the privilege of calling Pastor Bill Johnson my friend. Our times together are always rich, due to his intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, deep knowledge of the Word of God, and—most outstanding—his genuine humility.

Bill, Beni, and their team are accomplishing great exploits in changing people’s lives—locally, nationally, and internationally. With his passion to know and please God, it is no surprise that Bethel Church has been effective and fruitful. This influence is marked by strong teaching and preaching accompanied by mighty signs and wonders—the result of cultivating a way of life that truly brings Heaven to earth.

Imagine if the church took this mandate seriously as Bill and his Bethel team have done? We will truly experience the greater works Jesus foretold we would walk in. We owe the world an encounter with God! This will not happen by remaining complacent, sitting around waiting for Jesus to return. The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. It is time to wake up, believe, and get to work.

I am very grateful Pastor Bill wrote this book. The words on these pages have the potential to ignite revival—not only in you, but the whole world. The Way of Life will awaken an insatiable
desire within you to lay hold of Heaven’s realities so that you can truly bring Heaven to earth.

—John Bevere
Minister and Cofounder of Messenger International
Bestselling author of *Good or God?; Killing Kryptonite; Driven by Eternity;* and *Drawing Near*
I remember when I first read Bill Johnson’s book, *When Heaven Invades Earth*. I was so nourished by what I was reading that it took me three months to finish. Each paragraph was alive with revelation. It was revelation from a true apostolic teacher, backed up by testimonies, which stirred a fire in my soul, and there was a provocation on every page to pray and think deeply about what was being said. Reading through *The Way of Life* has been a similar experience for me as the Holy Spirit has prompted me numerous times throughout my reading to stop and respond to the wisdom that was being offered, and to consider how it needed to be applied in my life.

The invitation into applied wisdom is the gift we have been given in *The Way of Life*. As Bill so beautifully writes, wisdom that is not applied merely puffs us up, and so Bill has generously opened his heart and life to us to show us how he practically applies wisdom in his own life. For those who have ears to hear, this book is a precious treasure that gives us the privilege of sitting at a father’s feet and hearing rich wisdom gained through a life of experience.

Over the years I have had the joy of ministering with quite a number of the leaders from Bethel Church, and one of the most wonderful things I have noticed is the way they all carry such a strong and consistent culture of open-hearted and genuine love and celebration.
of others. Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35 NKJV). From the senior leadership of the church to the Bethel School of Ministry teams that are sent out worldwide, Bethel’s core values are visibly demonstrated. *The Way of Life* brings insight into how Bill, a thought leader for a new generation of revivalists, and the team at Bethel have built this beautiful culture that is impacting the world.

In all our ways, God promises that if we acknowledge Him, He will make our paths straight (Proverbs 3:6), and the Holy Spirit wants to bring to our remembrance the words of Jesus. So my prayer for you as you enjoy reading this wonderful treasure is that you would be provoked as I have been to pray, “Holy Spirit, please help me to walk in applied wisdom today. Truly, Lord, show us Your paths and teach us *The Way of Life.*”

—Katherine Ruonala
Senior Leader, Glory City Church, Brisbane, Australia
Founder and Facilitator of the Australian Prophetic Council, Senior Leader of the Glory City Network, and host of Katherine Ruonala TV
Author of the bestselling books *Living in the Miraculous: How God’s Love Is Expressed through the Supernatural; Wilderness to Wonders: Embracing the Power of Process; and Life with the Holy Spirit: Enjoying Intimacy with the Spirit of God*
My first international ministry trips, which began in 1986, were with a dear friend of mine, Dale Harrison. We have had such great times together, bringing the message of the Kingdom of God to several nations. A few years ago, Dale came to visit. We talked and caught up a bit on what was happening in our families and ministry life. Then he said something that stuck with me. He told me that I didn’t realize how different the culture was at Bethel, but I needed to, and I needed to write about it in a book. I already had enough writing goals and assignments. I really didn’t want to add to what was in my heart to write. But the main reason for my resistance to the idea was I didn’t want to write about us. At all. Ever. But in all honesty, I couldn’t shake it. I called him several weeks later and asked him to repeat his idea to me, as I felt life on what he said. He did, and I began to ponder the uniqueness of our world and took notes on what might be helpful to the broader body of Christ. The Way of Life is the result.

As much as I know how, I have avoided making this book about Bethel without robbing you, the reader, of the insights and experiences that have shaped our world.

For years, I have called Bethel “The Great Experiment.” It really is, which means we succeed and fail. With that comes the privilege of learning what works and what doesn’t. And that approach to life and ministry is an ongoing process, which implies we have not arrived to
an elite status at all. We face that painful reality on a regular basis. And yet there is something happening here that I have ached for for so many years. I’ve learned it can be taught and imparted.

We have had breakthroughs that were once only dreams. We’ve also had levels of impact that were never even in our dreams. We have had extreme favor, and we’ve had tremendous opposition. Both of these realities were new to us. All of that is to say we are in process.

This book is my best attempt to speak of His great work of grace in us in a way that inspires unto hope, stirs up great faith, and releases an impartation for transformation. I offer this with the hope of seeing the full impact of the Gospel of the Kingdom on earth—in my lifetime. And if not mine, then in my children’s lifetime.

I pray that from reading this, you will experience a breakthrough that will mark the rest of your life.

The passion of my heart is to represent God well, in all things. I long for His goodness, beauty, power, and dominion to be realized by everyone I know. The kingdoms of this world are becoming the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ. I hope that what is presented in this book will at least in part inspire a hunger for what might be possible in our lifetime—“on earth as it is in heaven.”
When the dream of God becomes the most important part of our lives, a culture is formed that enhances our purpose for being. This is what brings us into our greatest possible delight.

The dream of God is to be discovered and embraced until it becomes our dream. And at least in part, that dream is that Heaven would come to earth. Sound impractical or impossible? Not to Him. It’s in His heart, and it is well within His ability to complete, even through the finite efforts of those yielded to His purposes. It is our privilege to join in this endeavor by co-laboring with Him and watch Him add His wisdom and power to our prayers that we follow with simple obedience.

**Assigned by God**

The Bible frequently speaks of the responsibilities given to those who follow Jesus. But there is one assignment given that is so large, so all
encompassing, that every other commission aligns its purpose to the fulfillment of that one. Perhaps we could call the other assignments *sub-points to one major point.* Each commission is vital and important because it serves the greater purpose. And the fulfillment is the realization of God’s dream through the cooperation of those made in His image.

Our assignment as believers is a mandated focus that is to influence our relational journey with God. This becomes most evident in the discovery that our commission is to pray. And that prayer has a specific focus that is to become a vital part of our fellowship with God. Simply put, in the context of drawing near to our Father in worship and interaction, we are to lift up our voices, declaring, “*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt. 6:10 NIV).

The assignments to evangelize, to work miracles, to care for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the like are all practical expressions of this one major task—God’s will fully manifest here, with Heaven as its source, model, and inspiration.

This task is not possible if we only discover the principles of God and follow them. Heaven itself thrives on the presence of God. Our commission is only possible with the increase of the overwhelming atmosphere of the glory of God that increases as we pray our assignment with faith. Those prayers must be followed with the risks necessary to display His will on earth. If there is any confusion on what that will looks like, look at how Jesus displayed the heart of His Father in His interaction with people in need, namely by eradicating disease, torment, and sin. Jesus Christ is perfect theology. And it is our privilege to illustrate the same reality that Jesus carried. Jesus declared it so when He said, “*As the Father sent me, I send you*” (John 20:21 MSG).

The reality of His world is so great that its effects must be anticipated in a way that can be measured. Our perception of unseen realities is powerfully influenced when we experience His presence.
For this reason, He says, “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). What and how we see will always be influenced by what we experience.

We cannot allow ourselves to live in theory only. We do this whenever we embrace a routine of prayer without expecting an impact on the here and now. It is not wrong to look for evidence that our prayers are answered. If we become accustomed to praying prayers that aren’t answered, we tend to settle for living in the realm of theory. Many resort to pretending they are being effective in their prayer assignment, looking only to eternity to measure success. Heaven/eternity is far greater than our wildest dream. But because of that greatness, we tend to hide our unbelief there, without any expectation for breakthrough here in the present. Whenever we do this, we rob ourselves of the personal strength and joy that was intended to be our possession as the result of answers to prayer. Answered prayer is God’s design. We suffer in the long run when we expect our prayer assignment to be fulfilled in Heaven only.

**THE ORIGINAL COMMISSION**

I love to study the commissions of God in the Scriptures. They all add something to the overall theme of the divine purpose for mankind. But it is the original commission that has really left a mark on my thinking and therefore on my approach to all the others.

> God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28).

**Be fruitful:** lead a productive life where the fruitfulness of our labors helps to contribute to the overall wellbeing of what God has made.

**Multiply:** have children, who have children, who have children, all living under the beauty of His rule, illustrating the wonder of a perfect Father.
**Fill the earth:** spread throughout the world, bringing the influence of His Lordship through your lifestyle and service.

**Subdue it:** this implies there was already darkness and chaos outside of the Garden of Eden. *Subdue* is a military term that means to conquer. This was to be done by Adam and Eve, and their descendants, until the boundaries of the Garden of Eden covered the whole planet, placing it under the influence of God’s perfect rule through His delegated ones.

In the Disciples’ Prayer we find that God still longs for His world to influence and shape this one. Combining the “*on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt. 6:10) with “go into all the world” (see Matt. 28:19), we see that His heart has not changed regarding our assignment. In many ways, when Jesus was resurrected He brought the keys of authority that man abandoned when we obeyed the serpent rather than God. When Jesus announced that all authority was now His, He was basically saying, “Now let’s get back to plan A!"

### The Overlap

There are several commissions given to the 12 disciples during the time Jesus walked the earth. Toward the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, they were commanded to “*heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons*” (Matt. 10:8). And after Jesus was raised from the dead, they were told:

> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age** (Matthew 28:19-20).

We could go on, but these two will work to illustrate my point. In spite of the uniqueness of their personalities, gifts, and calls, they were all given the same commission. To me that implies that the
same assignment can be done differently, yet still be pleasing to the Lord. And while there are those who insist that certain parts of God’s assignment for the 12 disciples are no longer valid, i.e. spiritual gifts, it is clear that Jesus intended for these responsibilities to continue throughout the age of the Church. He told the disciples to teach their converts to do all that Jesus taught them. That must include healing the sick as well as the other assignments given in Matthew 10 and Luke 9. It is not hard to see that Jesus intended for each generation of believers to embrace the responsibility to teach the following generation to do all that Jesus taught them to do. Changing that assignment and standard was never to take place. But it did.

LIKE CUTTING WOOD

A number of years ago, I heard a pastor talk about a building project he once had to build a new sanctuary. He had such excitement for the new project, as this was to be a fulfillment of a vision for his growing church. We know that buildings are not the church; people are. Yet they can be wonderful tools that we use to facilitate the work of the ministry that ultimately impacts cities and nations.

He told us of how much he wanted to help in the actual building although he had no building skills. The contractor could see his excitement for the new project but also knew that he had no training in the skills needed for the job.

The pastor was persistent in asking if there was any work he could do. His enthusiasm over their building project finally persuaded the contractor to find something for him to do. While I admit I forgot the actual number, it was something like the following: He told the pastor that he needed 100 two-by-fours cut to eight feet in length for the next morning. This would be a great help as they would be able to get to work immediately upon arriving at the building site. The pastor was excited that he got to be involved in his own church project. So after everyone else left for the night, the pastor stayed and cut
the lumber. He took the first piece of wood, measured eight feet with his tape measure, and marked it. He then carefully cut it to eight feet, exactly. Instead of using the tape to measure and cut the second piece of wood, he used the previously cut board, as he thought that would be much more efficient. He laid it on top of the uncut board, carefully drew a line where that board needed to be cut, and sawed off the part that was too long. He then took that newly cut board and placed it on top of the next piece that needed to be cut. He used this method of measuring throughout his assignment to cut 100 boards.

I’m sure you can see the problem. By using the previously cut board as the measure, the next board is marked and cut about one-eighth inch longer than the previous one. This process wouldn’t have been so bad had he only had two or three boards to cut. But when that method is used for 100 boards, you end up with the ones at the end of the pile over nine feet long.

For 2,000 years, we’ve been comparing ourselves to the previous generation, noticing only slight differences. These “one-eighth-inch changes” seem rather harmless in the moment. But in the end, we end up with something that looks little like the example Jesus gave us in the beginning. And to protect our unbelief concerning our assignment—the great commission to disciple nations, displaying the greater works—many have found the need to create watered-down doctrines that dismantle the example and commandments that Jesus gave us.

It’s crazy, but these people take it a step further by vilifying those who give themselves to rediscover the full intention of the commission that Jesus gave us all. It still amazes me to see how many fall for this deception. Instead of comparing ourselves with ourselves, we should have been using the original standard found in the life of Jesus so that the measure of God’s goodness revealed in Christ, demonstrated in purity and power, would have remained the same through the past 2,000 years. Perhaps then we can see why He intended for us to do “greater works” than He did! (See John 14:12.) We would be building
upon His example for centuries with fresh courage and great faith to see what might be possible in our lifetimes. Jesus only had three and a half years to discover what the Father would do through Him. We can learn this renewed standard by following His lead through the Holy Spirit and then building upon it to be able to complete the assignment given.

Our heavenly Father is truly bringing us back to the original measurement that He might be revealed more accurately as the Father who loves well.

**CELEBRATING DIVERSITY**

Every follower of Jesus is unique. Our gifts, personalities, backgrounds, and cultures all work to create a beautiful mosaic called the Church, the Body of Christ. It is interesting to note that unity is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. In fact, it is called, “the unity of the Spirit” in Ephesians 4:3. It’s His. We are called to “preserve” this unity, not create it. It already exists wherever He has influence. And if it’s not present, we’ve left His influence out of the equation. Second, it is of upmost importance to recognize that His kind of unity requires diversity. This is where individuals are valued for, and in spite of, their uniqueness. There is beauty in contrast.

This concept of unity through diversity is in opposition to the spirit of the day. There is strong political effort to erase the distinction of nations and people groups. Some call it globalization. Efforts have increased yet again to say there’s no difference between humanity and animals. The absence of a creator/designer removes the possibility of a design, which exalts the opinions of the ignorant to divine status. That same spirit is now working to erase the distinction between male and female. This effort of the enemy of our souls is to blur what God designed and has called good. God’s design is distinct and truly beautiful.
It is correct to say that individuality has merit, as God has no grandchildren. Each one must come before Him as an individual. But it is also true that there is a sameness that is equally important. We are all summoned by the Father to become like Jesus. It’s the same call.

How wonderful that the life of Jesus, so perfect and complete, is able to flow through different personalities, giving unique flavors to what others are able to taste and see. The four Gospels illustrate this point quite well. The perspectives, values, callings of each writer are seen as they illustrate what it is to follow Jesus and become like Him. For example, Luke the physician shows a compassion and care that isn’t as pronounced in Mark. The efficiency and economy of Mark’s Gospel illustrates the most bang for your buck in this life as a disciple. As such, it is often referred to as the businessman’s Gospel. You don’t find that valuable trait in Luke. Similar things could be said of each of the four Gospels, not to mention the great diversity in the writers of the epistles. God seems to love and celebrate this theme.

Each of the writers in the New Testament reveals his individuality in what he wrote. Their personalities are visible without contaminating or distorting their revelation of Jesus. I find this to be so encouraging. I tend to become the weakest in faith when I compare myself to those whose gifts are so much different from mine, excelling in ways that I’ll never be able to touch. Comparison is dangerous, and, in fact, it’s deadly.

The call of God for each believer is equally diverse. The gifts and responsibilities are vast—so vast, in fact, that it will take the entire Church working together to accomplish the assignment given to us to re-present Jesus unto the discipling of nations.
PRAYER IS ASSIGNMENT ONE

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, we are to pray for His will to be done here just like in Heaven. That prayer assignment wasn’t for eternity. It is for now.

Our God assignment reveals our reason for being alive. It is found in what is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer. (That is not a good title for it, as in it is the confession of sin. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, had no sin. So I’ll refer to it as the Disciples’ Prayer.) The prayer goes like this:

Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen]
(Matthew 6:9-13).

Breaking it down in the following way will help to reveal the nature of our assignment.

Cultural Identity

“Our Father who is in heaven.” Calling Him our Father is an affirmation of our identity as a family of sons and daughters and His place in our lives as the Almighty One.

Worship

“Father…Hallowed be Your name.” Father is a holy and revered name of God. This is the key revelation Jesus brought to earth.
The Commissioned Prayer

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”
This is our co-laboring assignment to reveal His heart to the nations.

Specific Application of the Commissioned Prayer

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Answers to these requests are specific manifestations of the overall mandated prayer—“on earth as it is in heaven.” The fulfillment of each is a practical manifestation of the answer.

Worship

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”
This prayer is an apostolic prayer. Apostle is a term used by both Greek and Roman armies to describe the leader of an entourage with the assignment to bring the culture of the conquering country to the one newly conquered. The purpose for this is fascinating. It was so that their ruler would feel as at home there as he did in his home country. Thus, we have, “as it is in heaven.”

Our prayer assignment reveals God’s overall commission and purpose for our lives. Through prayer, “on earth as it is in heaven” is to become an increasing reality. The Disciples’ Prayer is an apostolic prayer in that it results in both miracles and transformation.

It’s important to remember that He would never give us a prayer to pray that He didn’t intend to answer. He’s not a cruel taskmaster, giving us ritual and routine just to keep us busy. He is a Father. The creator God, the source of all design, is giving us direction and commands that are consistent with His divine strategy and purposes. He is the master builder, building for His intended outcome. And we get to play a part.

Because of the monumental size of the answer to this prayer, the temptation is to think this prayer is to prepare us for going to Heaven, or perhaps for the millennium. Historically, the Church tends to take
the greatest promises of Scripture and put them off into a period of
time for which we have no responsibility. Jesus commanded His fol-
lowers to do things that they might have impact now. His assignment
to His followers was always to bring transformation to their imme-
diate surroundings. In this prayer, we see the passion of the Father
revealed as He invites us into interaction, which is a co-laboring part-
nership. It is here that we see the outcome as the invasion of His
world into ours.

Three things need to be noted about this greatest of all commis-
sions that we might be fully prepared for what God intends to do.
The first is that God wants His world, Heaven, to have overriding
influence on this one. In a practical sense, we must discover what
that looks like. The second is that the process for this breakthrough
is prayer. Prayer followed by action is exponentially powerful. What
are the actions that should follow this kind of prayer? They are the
specific commands listed in the other commissions—heal the sick,
evangelize the world, disciple nations, etc. The act of prayer sets the
stage for victory much like walking around the walls of Jericho set
the stage for the walls to fall. Their collapse made it possible for Israel
to go into the city and destroy their enemy. Prayer removes the obsta-
cle (the wall) to our victory so that our actions help facilitate the
fulfillment of what was prayed for (the Kingdom to come). In the
assignment to pray, we have an invitation to come into His presence
with confidence and co-labor with Him to see His purposes realized
and established on the earth.

Third, we are to pray His heart, His dream. The Bible is filled
with such insights into what His dream looks like. One of the expres-
sions of this dream is to see the earth filled with His glory. Picture
this, and never let it go—*the earth filled with the manifested presence
of Jesus!*

Is this an impossible dream? Yes, if it’s attempted in the strength
and wisdom of man. But it’s God’s heart, revealed in Scripture. This
is God’s dream. So how is this going to happen? He will bring it to
pass as we co-laborer with Christ. We have the privilege of establishing a culture that attracts Heaven. In my pursuit of “on earth as it is in heaven,” I’ve embraced certain values that have become part of the culture in both our personal and church life. The aspects of the culture we are experiencing in this move of God will be addressed in each chapter of this book.