

C H A P T E R O N E

Gather the riches of God's promises. Nobody can take away from you those texts from the Bible which you have learned by heart.⁷

Since my encounter with Jesus at the age of eleven, He has spoken to me again and again—through His Word. I've heard His still, small voice through prayer, and I've applied the four principles that define God's very DNA in my life. This is what Jesus did; He was Radically Obedient, He forgave, He humbled himself to the Father's will, and He lived a life of Radical Generosity.

Those four traits are in His DNA—the same DNA as the Father. When you magnify the image of God, you are manifesting the DNA of God in your own life. Then, and only then, can you live in the Favor of God and activate the Word of God.

What is DNA? I could give you a long, scientific explanation about deoxyribonucleic acid, the molecule that contains your genetic code, but for this book I am going to use the definition, “**D**ivine **N**ature **A**cquired.” In II Corinthians, Paul wrote that, “Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.”⁸ You are given a new character, one very different from your old nature. You become a new person in Christ

because of a Divine blood infusion. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”

Not only are we created by God, it is through Him that we “live, and move, and have our being.”⁹ It is because of His DNA that you can have a significant life. Because He loves you, God’s Spirit directs you as you walk in His favor.

I learned that lesson when, at the age of eleven, Jesus appeared to me, spoke to me, and changed my life forever. I became a new creation in Him when I saw His face and heard His voice. My birthday is June 30, and on that day in 1958 I had a stomach ulcer, a speech impediment (I stuttered), and hundreds of fears, among them the fear of looking anyone in the eye. The morning after my birthday, I walked in newness of life.

Since the age of four, my father had abused me. He broke both of my arms, locked me in the canning cellar beneath our house, and almost succeeded in strangling me to death. I had no self-esteem—not low self-esteem, but *no* self-esteem. Once, my mother caught me watching Billy Graham after the Saturday morning cartoons. She walked over, snapped off the set, and warned, “Christians kill Jews, Christians hate Jews. Jesus died, don’t dig Him up!” Then she sat down and told me about her grandfather, a rabbi in Minsk, Russia. He and his congregation had been boarded up inside their synagogue and the building set on fire. Russian Orthodox Christians on the outside screamed, “Christ killers,” as the smoke spiraled heavenward. She also related that many of our relatives fled Russia to Poland and died in Auschwitz during the Holocaust.

While my mother hated Christians, my father, a professing Christian, hated Jews. Brother Bob, as he was called, went to church

regularly on Sunday morning. That was after a drinking binge on Saturday night that generally ended with him beating my mother for what he thought was her adultery.

As that scared, battered eleven-year-old boy, I had a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. I tried to intervene when my father had found yet another excuse to beat my mother. He turned his anger on me. By the time he was done using his fists on my scrawny frame, I had been dumped on the floor of my bedroom. Sometime later I awoke, my body curled into a fetal position. My face and pajamas were covered in dried vomit. Every bone and joint ached. I tried to push myself up from the floor of that dark room but fell back, the room spinning. I closed my eyes, clenched my fists in total agony, and, shaking uncontrollably, cried out to no one in particular, “Why was I born? Why?!” I saw no purpose for my life. My father hated me, and my mother suffered because of me. All I knew was my father’s warped version of Christianity: Booze on Friday, beatings on Saturday, and church on Sunday. My dad’s favorite Bible verse must have been Proverbs 23:14: “You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.” He paraphrased that as “Spare the rod, spoil the child.” There were no spoiled children in his home—only abused ones. He had never given me one word of affirmation. Not once had I heard “I love you” from his lips that so tenderly and lovingly caressed a glass of amber whiskey. Jack Daniels was his “friend”; I was “moron.”

“Why was I born?” As quickly as I had whispered those words, the room was flooded with a light so bright it blinded me. I thought Dad had come back to finish the job—to beat me to death, and this time I could not escape. My first thought was to crawl under the

bed to protect myself. I covered my face with my hands and closed my eyes as tightly as I could squeeze them. After what seemed like an eon, I realized there was no other sound in the room. Now there was only a brilliant light. I slowly spread my fingers and eased my eyes open as imperceptibly as possible.

Instead of seeing my dad's anger-deformed face, I saw two hands reaching toward me. Above each hand and in the center of each wrist was an ugly scar. I had seen those scars in Sunday school literature. They were supposed to represent the nail scars of Jesus. Someone was playing a trick on me, but who? Did I dare look beyond the wrists to the face? Was I having a nervous breakdown? Was I going crazy?

Rather than the cold, stark fear that had filled the room earlier, I now actually felt warmth. I felt a Presence that brought both power and peace. I was being immersed in an invisible liquid love that poured over me and lodged deep within my soul. I slowly raised my head, and as my eyes followed the arms upward, I saw standing there in my bedroom the Lord Jesus Christ. He was either clothed in light or in the most brilliant white imaginable—whiter than fresh snow; whiter than the clouds that float in the sky; whiter than anything I had ever seen. Draped from His shoulder to His waist was a deep purple cloth—more purple than the heavens at sunset.

As I lifted my head to take in His face, I was instantly drawn to His loving eyes. They were smiling, happy eyes filled with every color of the rainbow. It was like looking into an illuminated bowl of the world's most highly prized jewels. I felt as if I could see through them and beyond to heaven and the promise of eternal peace. They were like magnets drawing me into their depths. Keeping His arms

outstretched, He looked at me with an all-encompassing expression of love. He smiled and then said three things I had never heard before. They were like a healing salve to my wounded soul and spirit.

He said, “Son.” It was the first time anyone had ever called me “Son.” It was said so gently, with such love and respect for me—for me!—that I felt my heart melt. The word *son* echoed in my spirit again and again.

“I love you.” Someone really did love me. What joy! I felt as if I’d just escaped a death sentence and was free. That statement alone was enough to sustain me for the rest of my life. But He continued, “I have a great plan for your life.” The power and presence of Jesus were like a holy fire igniting my soul. I had a purpose! God had something for me—Michael Evans—to do. Then there was silence. I am sure only a few seconds had passed, but it felt like an eternity.

I closed my eyes, and tears slid slowly down my face. I was consumed with an inexplicable happiness. Eventually I realized that the light had departed but the overwhelming warmth remained. He was gone from my room but not from my spirit, not from my heart. I never wanted to lose that feeling of love and peace and warmth, and the unmerited Favor of God.

Despite my treatment by my father, as an adult and a Christian I knew I had to overcome my inner battles and make peace with him. He still exercised some power over me, and for a reason I failed to understand, his acceptance was important. No matter what I did, Dad withheld his approval. I could not get a word of affirmation from him to save my life, although I desperately wanted it. I didn’t try to impress him with the people I had met or the places I had

traveled. I knew that no matter what successes I might have in the ministry, he would never encourage me, never say, “I’m proud of you,” or never call me “son.” What he did call me was “bastard” because he thought I was the result of adultery on my mother’s part.

For five and a half years I sent half of my paycheck to Dad to help with the house and car payments and more, yet I never heard “thank you” from him. He had to know that Jesus was real in my life. I wanted him to see that a real encounter with God could change his life forever, and I wanted to be free of his condemnation.

The day finally came when I knew I had to confront my father, but not in the way I had imagined it would be. Instead of demanding that Dad apologize to me, the Holy Spirit had prompted me to apologize to *him*. I was reminded that Exodus 20:12 says:

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

It says nothing at all about the parent, but rather speaks directly to the child. Honoring him was not contingent upon Dad being kind, loving, good, meek, or repentant. It simply says that I, as a son, must honor my parents. So, I went looking for Dad.

After searching his regular haunts I finally found him at a local bar, working hard to entice the young woman sitting next to him to go home with him. He was holding the hand of someone about the age of one of my sisters, and calling her “Baby Doll.” When he saw me, he shouted to his bar buddies that there was a preacher in the house. “Preach, preacher, preach,” he laughed. He wasn’t at all happy when I insisted that he take me home instead. I heard a few muttered “morons” before we were finally settled in his living room.

Obedying what I knew to be God’s leading, I got on my knees

and said, “Dad, God wants me to humble myself in obedience, generosity, and humility, and ask your forgiveness for any sins I’ve committed against you.” I began to confess my failures as a son—pride, not praying for him as I should; disrespect, not to his face, but behind his back and others. Not once did I enumerate his wrongs against me. I didn’t relive the beatings at his hand or the curses from his mouth. I didn’t ask him why he repeatedly called me “bastard.” Neither did I talk about my own successes; I even began to confess any sin I had committed since becoming a preacher, those that the Holy Spirit had revealed to me.

“Stop it!” he cried. “I can’t take any more. I have committed the unpardonable sin for what I have done to you. I can never be saved! My home will be in eternal hell.”

As I talked to Dad about Jesus and what He meant in my life, his hard exterior began to crack and he began to tell me of his childhood. He told me about his father’s abuse and how he was made to work in the fields from the time he was five or six years old. He confessed that he could barely read or write. Then he leaned forward in his seat and gripped my hands so hard his knuckles turned white. “Son,” he cried, “I should have been put in prison for what I done to you.”

He wrapped his arms around me, and at that moment I felt his tears running down my neck. As he began to weep, he told me he had not cried even when his father died. Instead he had said, “I’m glad the old fool’s dead.”

God’s grace and mercy filled me. My heart overflowed with compassion for the man I thought I could never forgive much less love, and I led him to Christ there in his living room. That was the

beginning of a healing process that lasted until the day he died.

In the last weeks of Dad's life, he willed everything he owned to me. God's favor on my life has been so abundant that in turn I was able to give his entire estate to my six brothers and sisters. I spoke at his funeral and talked about his record as a war hero and how much he loved his mother. Sadly, those were the only good things I could say about him. His funeral was the conduit for the Favor of God to once again explode in my life.

The morning after my father's funeral in Dothan, Alabama, I flew back to my home in Texas. As I walked through the garage, the Holy Spirit of God reminded me of a scripture I had circled in my Bible years before—a verse in Revelation: “See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.”¹⁰

Then the Spirit of God said, “You are to go to New York City, now. Go to the hotel of the president of Iran. You will meet with the most evil man on earth, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran.” I knew that Ahmadinejad hated Jews and Zionists and wanted to wipe them off the map. I accepted the assignment, feeling that he would never meet with me; I'm a Jew, and a Christian Zionist, and had written four books against the Iranian regime—*The Final Move Beyond Iraq* (a #1 *New York Times* bestseller), *Jimmy Carter: The Liberal Left and World Chaos*, *Showdown with Nuclear Iran*, and *Atomic Iran* with Ahmadinejad's picture on the front cover. I've written two other books about him in which chapter after chapter told of his insane behavior. I've also been on dozens of shows on the Fox News Channel, decrying his terrorist activities as well as launching a petition campaign to keep him out of the United States. There would be no way he would meet with me. The moment anyone in his

organization *Googled* my name, they would realize I was close to the prime minister of Israel. The year before, I had given a copy of the book I wrote against Ahmadinejad to his chief of staff to give to the Iranian president.

I made flight arrangements and left for New York City not knowing what hotel housed the Iranian delegation. What I was about to attempt was indeed the definition of “How dumb can you be and still breathe?” I checked the Waldorf Astoria, but he wasn’t there. I was told Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was in residence at the Tudor Hotel. It was just one block from the United Nations. As I walked to the hotel, huge fire trucks blocked the street. Hundreds of policemen were keeping people away from the hotel, and SWAT teams, Secret Service, and CIA agents were providing additional security. A policeman stopped me and asked, “Where are you going?”

I replied, “I’m going to my room in this hotel.”

He stated, “You don’t have a room there.”

“Yes I do, and I’ll show it to you if you’d like.”

I was allowed to continue to the front entrance, where I was stopped by the Secret Service. No one *not* on their list could enter the hotel. I said, “I need to get to my room.”

Again they checked the list, and I was told, “You don’t have a room here. Please leave.”

“But I do. Please come up to the desk, and I’ll show you my key.”

In the natural, I didn’t have a room in the hotel, but the Word I had just received from God had assured me, “*See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.*” I believed the voice of God

just as strongly as when I'd heard Jesus the first time at the age of eleven. I knew every room has a door, and if I have a door, surely I had a place in the hotel.

When I approached the front desk, a Secret Service agent accompanied me. He was ready to remove me from the premises—or worse, arrest me. I said to the clerk, “Can you give me my key? I'm in a hurry.”

She replied, “You have no room here.”

I asked to see her boss. When the second person came to the front desk, I was handed a key, even though I had no luggage. It was still at the Waldorf. During the next four days, I sat in the lobby of the small Tudor Hotel and prayed with twenty-one Iranian cabinet ministers. It wasn't complicated. I would approach them with “Hello. What's your name?” Most answered “Mohammad,” which was confusing. Each one seemed to be a Mohammad, but their surnames were different. I would ask them about their families and then say, “I know you are under a lot of pressure. May I say a prayer for you?”

Several times during those four days, Iranians would point at me and shout, “Zionist! We know who you are.” I continued with my plan.

On the third day, I was told by Ahmadinejad's chief of staff that I could have a meeting with the president. I was so excited that I called Fox News and asked if they would like to interview the president of Iran. Before the broadcast could be arranged, Ahmadinejad delivered a ranting speech before the United Nations. So adverse was the reaction to his speech that the interview with the president was cancelled. I called Fox with the message. I can't repeat what the

reaction was of the enraged producer.

My frustration and humiliation knew no bounds. I spent the night in the lobby pacing, praying, and quoting the scripture God had given me. Early the next morning, as people congregated in the lobby, a distinguished-looking man rushed through the crowd. I sensed in my spirit that I was supposed to approach him. I had no idea who he was but walked over to him, touched his arm, and said, “Sir, I only want to thank you for setting up the meeting with the president of Iran today.”

He turned and looked at me as if I had just crawled from under a rock. He had no idea who I was, and I didn’t know him. “Who are you?” he asked as he moved toward the elevators.

Two hours later, when it seemed as if the Iranians were packing to leave the hotel, an Iranian came to me and said, “Go to the Barclay Hotel. You will meet with the president at 10:00 a.m.”

I called the Fox producer back. The network arranged for a camera crew to be there, and the meeting took place just as God had said it would. He had just done the impossible in the same way He had when I was eleven. I understood that He was proud of me, that I was His son, and that He had a great plan for my life. God loved me and was crazy about me. One scripture that had been activated by faith provided favor and affirmation.

For me, a Jew and the founder of the world’s largest Christian Zionist intercessory prayer movement—The Jerusalem Prayer Team—to walk into that hotel in New York City should have been virtually impossible. Add to that the fact that I’ve written books against the Iranian regime including *Jimmy Carter: The Liberal Left and World Chaos* (a six-hundred-page book with over 1,000

footnotes and interviews with the former Empress of Iran, former Iranian ambassador to the U.S., former president of France, and prime ministers in Israel). I have also been highly visible with prime-time, pro-Israel television specials and in my relationships with the prime ministers of Israel. My published articles alone should have been more than enough reason for not one Iranian diplomat to meet with me. Yet the Holy Spirit once again opened the door for me to live in the F.O.G.—in the Favor of God—and activate the Word of God in my life.