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## Holy Spirit/Cliff #1

2013 04 20, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

### Chickens & broken windows

My little brother and his friends weren't any more than 10 years old when it happened. They had been down at old Mrs. Smith's farm to gather eggs for her from her few remaining chickens. She was over 90 years old and frail, and my brother and his friends loved collecting eggs and doing little jobs around the small farm that she could no longer do. In return for their cleaning and such they got to keep all sorts of treasures like old bottles and worn out radios and other trash that any 10 year old boy would find valuable.

But one day after the eggs had been collected the boys started throwing rocks, aiming for windows in the old tool shed. Back when her husband was still alive the tool shed must have been a busy place; part workshop, part tool shed, part depository of all things needing repair. But now it was falling down on itself, so no real harm was done.

That was the story Steve gave our mom when she learned he had the most accurate throw that day: No harm done because it was falling down anyway, and everyone else was throwing rocks. Before scolding him and walking him down to Mrs. Smith herself to witness his apology and turn over his allowance to pay for the window, mom asked the question that every kid our age heard multiple times growing up: "If all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you jump too?"

### Back in the day

The 1970's saw a charismatic movement in the denominational churches that was all about Jesus and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Millions left the denominations to attend home meetings, often called 'prayer and praise' gatherings. Though many acted like the things of God were toys to be played with, getting out of balance on things like personal prophecy where some thought they were prophets because they could give a personal prophecy or word of wisdom, or if they had cast out demons they thought they had a 'deliverance ministry', it was a simpler time.

We didn't know the Word back then, and many spiritualized everything, blaming demons for all their problems. Francis Hunter told of this conversation one day: "A very distraught woman came to me for prayer because she had gained 10 pounds (4.5 kilos). I asked what she was doing, and she replied, 'I cast the calories out of all my deserts in Jesus' name, but I still gained 10 pounds. What am I doing wrong?'"

**Ah the 70's!** But the 70's gave way to the consumerism of the 1980's, which was marked by Yuppie's - 'Young urban professionals' or the more common 'Young upwardly-mobile professionals' referring to people in their 20's & 30's with conspicuous lifestyles of materialism. With pastel jackets for the men, big hair for the women, and TV shows like 'Miami Vice', technology was also booming in the form of video arcade games like Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, and Centipede. (Though personally, I'll take Galaga over all those)

Money was flowing and the yuppies were experiencing prosperity the World War II generation had provided, and conspicuous greed entered society. It was about to enter the body of Christ.

### A conversation among pastors about 1984

Pastors and the church world in general couldn't keep pace with the prosperity. One pastor noted "We are losing our youth to video games" while another said "Our church still looks like it did in the 1950's, how will we attract new people looking like that?" Still another noted, "People have more things than they used to; they would rather be out on their boat or in their camper on weekends than in church."

They noted that church had become irrelevant and the subject of comedian's jokes as examples of being backward. Instead of church being a catalyst for changing society and culture, society and culture was changing the church. One pastor asked, "The world has the best, yet we are God's children, so why shouldn't we have the biggest and best to attract people?"

### What happened next

While the Word of Faith movement started with balance, originally providing much needed grounding in areas like righteousness, the power of Jesus' name, God as our source, and the gifts of the Spirit, which was good for the overly zealous charismaniacs from the 1970's, disciples of the original 'faith teachers' started twisting scripture towards making money to match the prosperity of the world.

Twisting passages that don't have anything to do with money into being all about money, like the '100 fold return' of

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The Church Without Walls International  
"THE WORD & THE SPIRIT IN BALANCE"

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Mark 4, greed entered the body of Christ in an effort to keep up with the world. Churches started spending money on video and other games to draw in and entertain the youth so they could give them a 20 minute sermon.

For the adults it was new buildings everyone could be proud of, boasting such things as Italian marble in the entry, expensive sound and video equipment, cafe's in the lobby, and pastors thought they could 'make it big' if they could just broadcast their services on TV. Becoming a speaker at a convention was a career goal.

### **Jumping off the cliff**

In John 6:1-13 we have John's description of the feeding of the 5,000 men plus women and children. Jesus had gone over to the other side of the lake, yet thousands followed Him because of the healings He had done. But it was now late, out in the country, and time for the evening meal.

"Jesus said to Philip: 'How are we to buy bread, that these people may eat?' This He said to prove (test) him, for He well knew what He was about to do."

Jesus never changes. He is the same today. He still places decisions before us to see what we will do just as He did to Philip, while He knows what He wants to do in our lives. We must realize as the Lord oversees His body from heaven, He places us in positions where we have a choice to make; do we jump off the cliff with our friends, or make the hard decisions which will mature us in Him and lead us into His will for us?

### **Back from the edge of the cliff for John and Barb**

When I worked for the PTL Club in Charlotte, North Carolina in our first year of marriage, 1978-79, we tithed from my meager pay to Jim and Tammy Bakker's church we attended - either \$11 or \$15 based on my \$150 per week salary or the \$111 take home pay. That \$4 difference could mean a treat eating out or not, as Red Lobster had an 'all you can eat popcorn shrimp' special for \$2.89 at the time - they did NOT like to see me coming because they lost money on that one! So if the need and appetite was such, we tithed \$11, and if bills were current and we weren't going hungry, it was \$15.

We believed the '100 fold return' teaching that was starting up at the time, so changed to giving \$15, believing \$1500 for each week was coming our way someday. Soon. But something didn't feel right. Barb said one day: "We used to give out of love for God and His people, but now we give out of greed, to get something in return. We need to repent and get our hearts right." We did - we had stepped back from the edge of the cliff.

I was on staff with a large church in a highly visible position, this happened about 1997 or '98. During the annual week-long series of meetings that summer the woman teaching proclaimed a special blessing for everyone who placed \$100 at her feet on the platform. Under peer pressure by the Pastor and Associate Pastor who was among the first to do so, many of the upper staff at the church followed along dutifully.

I sadly confess here to you that I did as well. It is an action I'll regret all my days, and though I know the Lord has gotten over it, I could still kick myself for caving under church peer pressure. I glared at the pastor as I passed him on my way to the platform for not shutting that woman down right then and there, and it was all I could do not to yell out "charlatan" to the teacher and "Ichabod" (no glory, or glory has departed) to the pastor and crowd assembled. I was so ashamed of myself I kept right on walking out of the meeting, not wanting to have anything to do with any of them anymore. I had jumped off the cliff with the rest of them.

But I repented and climbed back up to the edge of the cliff. That was the last time I was near the edge.

### **The Holy Spirit and the cliff**

So this series is about how Jesus through the Holy Spirit places decisions before us to see if we will jump off the cliff with others, or go the path He wants for us. It is about how to make right decisions in Him. We'll look at several passages in the gospels and other examples from life. Stay tuned, more next week!

Blessings,  
John Fenn  
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## **Holy Spirit/Cliff # 2**

2013 04 27, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,  
I wanted to mention that we are now offering 'Visions and Dreams 2', which is part of a 3 part series. It's a very good

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study of spiritual dreams, visions, the types and the how and why - a valuable teaching!

### **The Lord's testing**

Last week I mentioned John 6:5-6 where Jesus asked Philip upon seeing 5,000 men plus women and children before them: "Where are we going to buy enough bread to feed all these people?" The very next line says "This He said to test him, for He knew what He was going to do."

James 1:2, 13, 16-18 says, "Count it all joy when you fall into various tests, trials, and temptations...but let no one say when he is tempted, tested, or tried that God is doing it to him. For God is not tempted by evil and neither does He tempt, test, or try anyone with evil. Do not err my beloved brethren; Every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness nor changing of His character. Of His own will he birthed us with the Word of Truth, that we would be a kind of first fruits of His creation."

So the Lord doesn't test us with evil, but He does test us. He tests us with good. His testing would be better understood as 'proving', for He knows us and our potential and our destiny, so He places us in situations which provide us the opportunity to prove what is in our hearts.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:19; 'Wisdom is known by her children', which means a decision of wisdom is usually not openly obvious that it is wisdom, but that decision's "children", the results of the decision, will reveal that the decision made back then, was in fact the right one.

People who jump off spiritual cliffs with the rest of the crowd don't make wise decisions. They can't look down the time line of their lives to see that paying the price now to make the hard decision will yield dividends later. They have a hard time believing the Holy Spirit would be leading them to make a very difficult decision. They don't want the Spirit to lead them through painful transitions, but He does.

### **How are we going to get enough money?**

If we examine what Jesus asked Philip we will see it was a perfectly normal, 'natural' question to ask. "Where are we going to buy enough bread to feed these people?" The question gave no hint to the supernatural provision that was a few moments away. Opportunities to move in the supernatural provision rarely present themselves as supernatural, and much of the kingdom works by 'according to your faith be it to you.'

We cannot fault Philip for responding to a natural question with a natural answer. Yet the Lord was testing him to see how he would respond. Philip had no way of knowing Jesus would multiply a boy's lunch for he had never done that before. Jesus has never changed, He still asks questions of us to see what we will do. He still asks us to think about what could be, to think outside the box.

### **Chris was dying**

After his first 24 years of living at home, our oldest and handicapped son, Chris, moved to a group home nearly 2 hours away. His little brothers had graduated high school and moved out of the house and got on with their lives, and Barb and I realized we needed to make a decision for the long term. It was the hardest decision we've ever made and we felt like the worst parents and people in the world.

Chris is mentally about 4 years old. He loves the Lord, but ever since he turned 4 he has remained 4. How do you tell a 4 year old he can't live at home anymore, and has to live 2 hours away, suddenly seeing mom and dad only once every 4-8 weeks (due to ministry travel and that 2 hour drive)?

For years he thought he had done something wrong. He would ask the staff to call home, and on the phone would start crying, sobbing through his tears "I'm sorry for what I did wrong, maybe you can let me come home, I'm sorry what I did wrong!" Because he is mentally retarded, it took 2 years just to get it through to him that he did nothing wrong, but as Jason and Brian had gone off to 'school' so did he now have to go to 'school', just like them.

The staff battled temper explosions, common to those suffering from brain injury, whether Cerebral Palsy (a term describing any brain injury incurred in labor or delivery) or from a later head wound - unexpected loud noises, changes to routine - anything could set him off on a destructive tirade. Then once the wrath was expressed, he would become meek and docile and apologize.

But by the summer of 2008 Chris had lost the will to live. At home with mom's good cooking he weighed about 175 pounds (79kg), but he refused to eat at the group home, dropping to 138 pounds (62kg). His lowest healthy weight was calculated to be 135 (61kg) and he was nearing that quickly. He then refused to get out of bed, refusing food, even using the bathroom in his bed, having totally lost the will to live.



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The House Manager and nurse told me he was at the point they needed to discharge him to a nursing home to be allowed to die. I recoiled in horror, the seriousness of what was happening slapping me in the face like a cold washcloth, and was so thankful Barb wasn't there at that meeting.

### **Jump off the cliff or believe for a miracle?**

There is a philosophy in ministry that says if a minister will tend to God's people and work, even neglecting of his own family, God will take care of everything. That thinking is why Preacher's Kids (PK's) have the reputation and hurt they do - dad was taking care of everyone else's family but his own.

This manifests by the minister dad taking a ministry call while the family is around the dinner table, even if his child is in the middle of telling her story about school. It means when the minister's child has a school play on Wednesday night, dad won't let someone else lead the service that night so he can see the play, he feels he has to be the one to do the service. A PK grows up realizing they are 2nd place behind God, and how can they compete with Him?

Barb and I have never held to that belief. We believe if we take care of our family first in God then it will all work together. So I refused (refuse even now) to take calls at the dinner table. If one of my son's had an event that I needed to be there for, I delegated out to others that I might attend. Even now when I am with Chris I won't take a ministry call. The same if Barb and I are having time together and so on.

### **The move**

Chris was dying, but he lived 2 hours away. Immediately I began taking 2 days each week to drive up the turnpike to be with Chris. Sometimes Barb and I would both go, sometimes just me. I'd get Chris out of bed, give him a shower and shave, take him to McDonald's or for a drive - anything to get him out of bed and to try to get him to want to live once again. In fact, those weekly visits were what he lived for, and soon his emotional well being became dependent on me coming to see him.

Soon, we were spending as much as a mortgage on a house in time, fuel, tolls, meals just visiting him twice a week. I didn't have time off because those 2 days had to be like clock work. Would we jump off a cliff with the rest of the crowd - just let Chris die and say 'What we are doing in the Lord is more important than your life', or would we believe God for something totally outside our 'box'.

It was summer of 2008. The economy was imploding, loans were drying up as everyone waited to see what Congress would do. AIG, Lehman Brothers, various large banks were all going under - in the natural there was no solution.

We decided in spite of our core house churches in Tulsa, Chris would have to come first, meaning we'd move to be near him. Barb and I were 50 years old that year. We didn't want to rent an apartment as Chris needed a permanent home. We didn't want to rent a home which was paying someone else's mortgage, and we realized the small town where his group home was located wasn't exactly the jewel of Oklahoma's cities.

I concluded that we needed to be within a 30 minute drive of Chris, and if we had a home on a nearby lake, Grand Lake, that we could buy, it would be a home that could save his life. It would hold value against a down economy, and be ours. We would need a wheelchair ramp at the front door however, for his home visits, and we would need a flat and level yard as many lake properties were on bluff high above the water.

### **And what do you do for money?**

After we had established our priorities, that we would not let Chris die so that we might continue in ministry unhindered, but that we would rearrange our lives to save his, and when we had worked through the rent/buy and where issue to conclude we would need to buy a place on the lake, THEN we went to the Father in prayer.

We were very much like Philip needing a miracle to feed the crowd. We had no cash, I tried a mortgage broker but at every turn was told they were waiting to see what Congress would do, so we were totally helpless. At that point I went back to the Father and said 'Father, we will need the owner to carry a note because no one is lending right now, at least not to us'.

This was all outside the box thinking. Normal thinking would have continued running up the turnpike weekly, every increasing the stress on us which meant other things that needed to get done weren't getting done, or normal preacher thinking would have let him die...that wasn't us.

AFTER putting all that to the Father, I suddenly felt a peace about it, and saw a mini-vision of Grand Lake, with an oval drawn around the north and west shore, like an invisible hand drawing an oval with a pen on a paper map. I knew that was the area the Father had provision.



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So immediately I stuck the GPS to the windshield, and spent 2 days driving around the entire lake going to everywhere EXCEPT where I had seen the hand of the Lord draw that oval. I wanted to educate myself on what was available, what a reasonable price was, and so on. When He gave me that peace, He also gave me a price, \$127,000, so I needed to see what that kind of place would be like. He had also given me a picture of it at the time as well - a small home surrounded by trees, white with black shutters, and a ramp going up to the front door.

On the 3rd day I felt I had learned enough, and zeroed in on the area I had seen drawn. I entered a neighborhood of mostly double wide manufactured homes and other small homes, driving to the end of the road where I saw the house in the vision. Plus, there was a 'for sale by owner' sign in the front yard. The owner was a Baptist pastor and his wife who needed to be closer to their church on the other side of the lake. They carried the note and we moved in, and Chris immediately turned around, gaining weight, deciding 'Dad, I like this house'. And here we are today.

But it never would have happened unless we had understood that God does test us with good things - difficult decisions, decisions that require 'outside the box' thinking and believing, moved by principle and right priorities - the Holy Spirit leading as we indicated we would take a step toward the impossible.

Next week, more about the Lord's testing of us with good, other not so obvious ways He leads, and more!

Blessings!  
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## **Holy Spirit/Cliff #3**

2013 05 04, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,  
Last week I shared how Philip responded to a normal question Jesus asked, with a normal 'natural' answer. Yet we are told in John 6:5-6 that Jesus asked the question to test Philip - in other words to see if Philip would think like the rest of the crowd, which he did: 'It would take half a year's wages to buy all the bread needed to feed them', or would he think outside the box about what God could do?

Jesus has never changed, and this series is about how He leads us by the Spirit to these same points of decision, and how He tests us to prove what is in our hearts just as He did in the gospels. Here is another example:

### **Who am I?**

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah, but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:13-18)

This is just like Him testing Philip in John 6. The conversation is going along a 'natural' path, giving no hint He is looking for revelation, looking for someone to respond with 'outside the box' thinking.

When Peter responded with, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God", Jesus said he was blessed because flesh and blood had not revealed this to him - He didn't come to that conclusion by debating with other's ideas about Him being Elijah or Jeremiah come back from the dead - Peter had received revelation from the Father that Jesus was the Christ and said so.

In both of these cases Jesus was watching, observing, letting the thought processes play out in Philip and Peter, looking for revelation from them and thinking that was not the 'jump off the cliff with the rest of your friends' kind of thinking.

### **What will you drive?**

The year was 1978, August, a month before Barb and I were married. I was working at the PTL Club near Charlotte, North Carolina, in the part of the ministry known as "Heritage USA". Barb was back home in Indiana getting ready for the wedding while I was working, had rented an apartment for us, and was now waiting on the Father to provide us a car. It was a 15 hour car drive from Indiana to Charlotte.

I had begun working there that May, driving my mom's 'spare' car until I could get my own. The trouble was I had not saved anything towards a new car and mom needed her car back after 2 months. I was seeking the Father about how He was going to get us a car. Earlier in the year Barb and I had made a checklist of everything we'd need in a car: Automatic transmission since her first (and last) effort at learning how to drive a stick shift ended dramatically with my stalled car and other's cars backed up 3 deep at a 4-way stop.

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### **Details, details**

We wanted air conditioning as we were going to be living in hot and humid North Carolina, and 4 doors as we'd have wedding presents and such to take to our apartment, and good gas mileage. Once we made our list I was drawn in my spirit to the cover of a car magazine called 'Motor Trend' that pictured the 'Cars of the Year' for 1978: The Plymouth Horizon/Dodge Omni. I knew in my spirit that was what the Father had provided - there was such a pouring out of peace and assurance from my spirit bearing witness to that fact. So we stopped looking.

Several months had passed since I knew we were to have that model of car, but no car materialized. I had pondered how it might happen - a wealthier friend might give us a car, maybe a car for a wedding present from my dad or maybe even my mom or her parents would buy and gift one to us? The scenario played over and over in my mind how God would fulfill His word.

### **Desperate for that car!**

I had been getting rides to and from work from my co-workers, but our wedding day of September 16 was drawing close, only 1 month away, so I hit my knees one Saturday and really, really sought the Father about that car I was going to need in about 3 weeks to make the drive to my wedding in Indiana.

Suddenly I heard His voice, but it wasn't about the car. He started talking to me about how to be a husband, how to treat my wife (He said to treat her like a queen, though I readily admit I've not always fulfilled that instruction) and learn what it meant to lay down my life for her, and other things I've never shared with anyone, not even Barb. But nothing about a car.

Then He told me some other things concerning my time at PTL, where He was sending me to school after PTL, but nothing about a car. When I asked about a car He was silent - no response. Strange I thought since He had just been so talkative about marriage and our future over the next year.

Raising my upper body from the floor and leaning back on my legs, I pondered His silence. It was just like the incidents above with Philip and Peter - I knew the Father and Lord were watching me, watching my mind whirl, watching my heart reason things out.

I concluded that maybe getting that car was actually up to me and not someone else. It may be that someone wasn't being disobedient or hesitating about gifting us a car, maybe the Father was silent because the means to get a car was in my hands.

That couldn't be I thought. I had no money down, had never bought anything on credit - could the Father's provision be THAT easy? Have I been hitching rides these last 2 months and had borrowed mom's car the months before while completely ignoring the possibility the provision was there all along; that the supernatural part would be approval for credit for me? Could it be?

### **I told Him!**

"Father, if you don't tell me about how I'm going to get that car I'm going to march down to the first dealership I find and make a fool of myself trying to buy a car! You'd better talk to me now!" (How bold and foolish was that, even for a 20 year old still wet behind his charismatic ears)

Nothing. Zip. Not a word. He stayed silent and I could tell in my spirit He was watching me like a Father watching a son. But now I was forced to follow through with my threat - so I did. I walked the mile to the first dealership I found, a Chrysler dealership, and there on the lot sat a white Plymouth Horizon that I almost bumped into as I clambered up the hill to the dealer and bounded into the parking lot.

I had never bought a new car, and the \$5400 price (brand new, 1978) seemed huge as I was making \$150 per week. But they either had some 'new driver' program or were desperate for sales in the natural, but in the spiritual the Father provided, and I drove that car off the lot with no money down and just \$157.88 per month.

### **Another car story**

Several years later, after the Plymouth Horizon had driving its last mile, we made some bad business decisions and ended up having to borrow a car once again. This time it was from someone in church and was a big, 2 doors the size of wings, Lincoln Continental. It was OK for me to drive around town, but not suitable for our family of 5. A church had opened up about a 3 hour drive away and we were preparing to move, but once again realized we needed a car and had no means to buy one.

My pay wouldn't start until we had moved to the church, so I knew there was no chance of me securing a loan through





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a bank as I was still technically unemployed at that point. Yet we were moving in a week and the Father had not provided another car for us.

Once again I had gone through the thought processes about someone giving us a car, but heaven was silent on the matter. One day I was reminded of how I had bought the Plymouth Horizon and told Barb: "Philippians 4:19 is true no matter what the circumstances say; He provides our needs according to HIS riches in glory, and this is a need not a desire. And II Peter 1:3-4 says "All things that pertain to life and godliness have been provided through the Lord", so I have to believe provision is out there. I keep feeling drawn to that little used car lot by the church, so I'm going over there to see if that's where the Father has provided."

Again, we had made up a list: Automatic, 4 doors, air conditioning, good condition, and not required to make any payments until 30 days after taking possession of it. Those were needs, so it was settled in my mind.

As I walked the parking lot I came across a white, 4 door Chevy Impala and asked about it. The lot owner told me he was selling it on consignment for a friend of his from church. When I said I was a pastor and asked what church, I found out I knew the woman who owned the car. The lot owner suggested I call her and talk to her, and he would waive any fees if we worked something out. When I called her she immediately agreed to everything - I told her what I thought we could afford, told her I couldn't start paying her for 30 days, and she said that was fine. I drove it off the lot!

I've shared these stories from my own life because they may help someone not jump off the cliff like everyone else which leads to lack and/or not living in the supernatural provision of heaven - it may help someone realize often when there is no provision, it means it is within your hands to decide to trust God, or not. It is within you to go with natural thinking as Philip did, or to let revelation pour from your heart as did Peter. Much of heaven is 'according to your faith be it unto you'.

The Holy Spirit will lead you to the edge of decision, Jesus still tests us, gives us opportunities to prove our potential - but He can't make the decision for us. Examine the choices before you, be grounded on right priorities, and then do what is right - it may just be outside the box you had been thinking in. More next week - blessings,

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## Holy Spirit/Cliff #4

2013 05 11, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

I've been sharing ways the Lord tests us for good, proves our potential, and today how He tests our motives and gives us opportunities to adjust our hearts.

### **Eat my flesh, drink my blood**

Matthew, Mark, and John record Jesus walking on water, and each records a particular point of view of the event, but only John captures what happened AFTER the boat got to the other side. (Mt 14, Mk 6, John 6)

You'll recall Jesus had just fed 5,000 men plus an unstated number of women and children by multiplying a boy's lunch. Afterwards He sent the 12 away in a boat with instructions to get to the other side and He would join them later. Meanwhile, He went up into the mountains to pray, but came walking on the water to them between 3am and 6am. (Mt 14:25 states it was during the 4th watch, which was 3-6am)

Matthew is the only one who records Peter getting out of the boat and walking on water. Mark tells us Jesus would have kept walking right past the boat had they not cried out in fear. And John tells us when Jesus got into the boat "Immediately the boat was at the land to which it was going." What we call 'translated' - boat, contents, and the 13 men in it - were instantly transported 3-4 miles (5-7km) to the shore on the far side of the lake. (John 6:21)

"The day after, the crowd that had been on the other side of the lake when He fed them saw there was no other boat there, only the one Jesus had sent away with the disciples in it, and knowing Jesus had not gotten into that boat...and when they found Him on the other side of the lake they asked Him, 'Rabbi, how did you get here?'

"Jesus answered them saying, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me NOT because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the bread and were filled.'" (John 6:22-26, my emphasis on 'not')

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### Motives

Jesus is still cutting right to our true motives today: 'Truly, truly I say to you, you want to be involved in the Sunday school not just to give to others, but because you hope the pastor will notice.'

'Truly, truly I say to you, you want this job not so you can give more as you have told people, rather you want the raise and boost to your ego it would bring.'

'Truly, truly I say to you, you aren't going to the Wednesday night service to receive from me, you are going because you hope I will notice the extra effort and be reminded of that prayer request you want answered.'

'Truly, truly I say to you, you aren't fasting just to draw closer to Me, you are fasting to also lose 10 pounds.'

Truly, truly I say to you...fill in the blank. The only difference between John 6 and now is that today we have the Holy Spirit within trying to be heard by that still, small voice, asking us to purify our motives.

What if purifying our motive means someone else with all the wrong motives gets that position you wanted? Will you rejoice in your heart that you grew just that much more in Christ today, or mourn the position lost?

### Separate the men from the boys - back to the loaves/fishes people

Once Jesus told them they were following Him not because He was Messiah, but because He was apparently an endless supply of food, He taught them the loaves and fish were a type of Him being the endless source of eternal Life. He also taught them Moses' manna was a type of eternal life, not just food.

This is similar to people following Jesus 'with strings attached' today - He seems to be their endless supply of ... These are users of people and God, and impure in life, using God and man to get what they want.

Jesus is always going to direct us through the Holy Spirit to purify our motives, holding up our ugly impure motives before our face, giving us the opportunity to reject them and choose Life, moving into maturity just that much more, all in a moment in time. Some choose wisely, some choose to serve God for the endless supply of the things of earth.

These people followed Jesus all the way around the lake and many followed Him into town where, and still weren't dealing with their motives, so He finally put an end to it by saying this in the local synagogue:

**"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life..." (6:54)**

If they are willing to purify their motives THEY will make a decision towards their destiny even if their mind doesn't understand the parable. But many did not want to deal with their motives: "From that time on MANY of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. (These weren't just 'followers' and 'hangers on', these were DISCIPLES of Christ.)

We don't know if Peter understood all Jesus said, but we know he stepped back and looked at the larger picture, which helped purify his motive and identify his core values. Jesus said to the twelve, 'Will you also leave?' Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life! And we believe and are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (6:66-69)

The Lord is still asking us to not jump off the cliff with the others who were offended and left Him; He is still asking us to identify our core values and purify our motives. Are we jumpers or disciples?

### Motives, motives

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will guide us into all **truth**. That truth also means the ugly truth about our own motives and ego. How many of us started out as a disciple just loving God, but along the way we attached expectations and strings, some to the point they think God serves them, or that faith is for getting things from Him, or they can make Him do things, or He is a means of getting rich?

When I was in Bible school I worked the night shift at a convenience store. When the shifts changed the cash and receipts were balanced out so that the next shift began 'even' in terms of cash on hand.

One day when money was very tight for us, my cash drawer came out \$20 extra at the end of my shift. I momentarily had a thought God was blessing me with that \$20 and I could pocket it, thinking how much that would help with food that week, but I rejected that and recorded it properly. My motives had come up before my face in a moment of time by the Holy Spirit, and I responded properly, dismissing my genuine need and thought of spiritualizing an illegal act in the name of God in order to justify the crime.





### Rich young ruler

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus, he said; "Good master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Most miss the fact Jesus immediately exposed his core need and issue: "Why are you calling me good? There is no one good, but God!" (Mt 19:16-22)

In other words, Jesus was asking him; By calling me good, are you calling me God? We read from one sentence to the next in 10 seconds never stopping to realize this was a real conversation taking place, full of pauses, reflections, responses, over time. As a result we fail to grasp that it took place over minutes not seconds - these pauses and exchanges indicated for us by a period or comma or semi-colon. Are you calling me God because you called me good? Pause, wait for answer, no answer, change tactics.

The failure to answer the direct question from the Lord meant the young man wasn't willing to deal with his true motive and true love of riches openly, so Jesus would have to make him deal with it another way: "Go and sell all you have and give the proceeds to the poor and you will have riches in heaven, and come follow me." The man went away from Jesus very sad, for he was rich.

The core issue was the man wanted to serve God while loving money and status and never settling in his heart just who Jesus is. Because he wouldn't answer directly if he believed Jesus was God, the Lord exposed his motive and made him deal with it by telling him to sell it all for the sake of riches in heaven, AND become a disciple of Jesus. If he had done that he would have purified his heart and started serving God with no strings attached, valuing heaven alone - just pure love of God.

People want to hear God's voice and have all sorts of spiritual experiences, and I fault no one in this, but the truth is He speaks to us most often down inside, asking us for purity of focus, purity of motive, purity of love.

More next week on how the Lord leads us in these ways. Blessings,  
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### Holy Spirit/Cliff # 5

2013 05 17, John Fenn, [www.supernaturalhousechurch.org](http://www.supernaturalhousechurch.org)

Hi all,

Can you imagine asking a friend, 'While I'm gone will you mow my lawn, water my plants, feed my dog, get my mail?' and they responded, 'Not all that, but I'll get the mail for you!'.

That would be disappointing wouldn't it? Jesus and Peter had a similarly disappointing exchange.

### Two kinds of love

In John 21:15-19 Jesus twice asks Peter if he loves Him, using the Greek word *apape'* both times. *Agape'* is unconditional, lay-down-your-life-for-others love. But Peter responds both times using the Greek word *'phileo'* love - a lower form of the word love, the love of best friends, tender affection love.

Not all that Lord, but I'll get your mail!

Jesus is again cutting to the core issue of the heart, testing, probing, proving - as if slicing into Peter's heart in preparation for Pentecost a month or less future, and a life of sacrifice. "Do you love me unconditionally Peter?" Jesus asks 2 times. But 2 times He gets the response, 'I love you like a best friend'.

This is NOT up to the level of love Jesus is looking for. Yet He still gives Peter the commands after each response to 'Tend my sheep'. How interesting that even though Peter doesn't seem up to the level of love required for the call on his life, Jesus still issues the call - aren't we exactly the same? YES!

If you can do what He has called you to, its proof you invented the call, for He only calls us to that which is impossible with man, that the glory might be of God and not of us.

### We are Peter

Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever - He still asks us about our love for Him - as this series has covered, He asks in different ways, leading us and inviting us to examine our hearts, our motives, but it boils down to the question: What is most important to you; Me and heaven, or going with the crowd off the cliff?



The story is told of a meeting of Christians in a home church in the USSR, when soldiers burst through the door with rifles leveled. "Anyone who is not a Christian may leave!" Most quickly left, but a few stayed, in great fear about what was to come next. As the soldiers shouldered their weapons after the others were gone the leader said: "Finally, we've found some real Christians!" and they joined the time of worship, Bible study, and discussion. Would you be in the group of Christians that left, or the ones that stayed?

Peter and Jesus had known each other about 3 1/2 years, and His question comes after the resurrection, so Jesus feels comfortable asking Peter if now, after all we've been through, after all you've seen and heard and done, do you love me unconditionally in that 'lay down your life for Me', agape' love?

We know that Peter is honest and transparent - what you see is what you get with him - so he answers honestly, 'I don't love you unconditionally, I love you (phileo) as a friend'.

### Agape' and phileo

Agape' is the love that describes the Father's love of His Son in John 17:26, and how the Father 'So loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son' of John 3:16. It is unconditional love, dependent completely on the giver of that love; Therefore the receiver of agape' cannot do anything to change, modify, or affect the love they are loved with.

Phileo love on the other hand means 'tender affection' and is used of the 'tender affection' between the apostle John and Jesus as friends - remember John leaned on Jesus during dinner in John 13:23 - the love of best friends.

Twice Jesus asked Peter if he held that deepest love for Him, and twice Peter said no.

### If he isn't ready to come up to my level, I'll come down to his level

The third time Jesus comes down to meet Peter where he is; "Do you phileo me, love me as a friend?" Peter was distressed at being asked a third time about if he loves the Lord, but responds as he did before - I told you I love you as a friend! - thinking he finally got his point across to the Lord.

That is why Jesus immediately prophesies how Peter will die - making a subtle but powerful statement that Peter will eventually come up to agape' love for Him when he is old; He will be crucified just as the Lord was.

I am amazed at the Lord's grace. Right then, somewhere around 32 AD, Peter doesn't yet love the Lord with agape' love. Yet Jesus tells him when he is older he will - Peter died around the year 66 AD, 34 years future - and the Lord was content to tell him 34 years from now you have come up to agape' for Me even if you don't hold that love for Me now. Amazing love!

### Another view

Another view of this exchange is that Peter thought loving the Lord as his friend was higher than agape'. I love you as my best friend! To think phileo is higher than the agape' isn't correct, but it may have been what he was trying to say - I love you tenderly as my best friend!

But that would mean he really, really missed Jesus' point which would be consistent with his history in the gospels. So Jesus met him where he was at, the third time asking if he loved Him as a friend.

And that is how we are today - the Lord either goes right to our heart asking what kind of love do we have for Him, or we totally miss what He is trying to do in us. How many times have we asked Him to deal with someone who has hurt us, but He seems to ignore that request and instead zero in on our heart asking us to forgive and do good to them! Argh! Just teach them a lesson Lord and don't ask me to deal with my heart! lol

### Fraternity life

When I moved into the fraternity at Indiana University in 1976 I met several other Christians. I thought how wonderful all these guys are serious about the Lord in such a party University in the ever ready to party world of fraternities and sororities. Some of us were there to study and in my case, also because my dad had been in that fraternity, so I was thrilled to find what I thought were solid believers.

My world was shaken when I saw one of them stumble down the hall drunk during the first of the school year weekly Thursday night beer party with a sorority. Then another described the next day how one of the sorority sisters came into his room and stripped, and he asked us 'What was I supposed to do?' (Not what he ended up doing that night, that's for sure)



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Of the 8 or so Christians in the house, only 2 of us consistently walked the walk in our lives. The temptation was there to jump off the cliff with my Christian fraternity brothers, but I never did. Barb was a year behind me in school so she was back home finishing her senior year of high school, and I think that helped keep me focused.

We wrote letters back and forth (this was before the days of emails and texting), and when we felt like all the other lemmings were jumping off the cliff we consoled ourselves, correct or incorrect, as lone believers refusing to follow the herd. But we were able to stand strong because we loved the Lord and heaven's opinion more than we loved earth and man's opinion.

### Summary

Over this series we've seen a common thread in the Lord's probing and proving men's hearts, and that thread is about valuing heaven above earth.

He is the same today, asking us about our core values, about who He is to us. But who He is to each of us has changed over the years. None of us started our walk with the Lord by being in agape' love with Him. We got saved because we sought Truth, or were in a tragic situation only God could change, or some other reason. We progressed from not knowing Him to barely knowing Him to loving Him like a friend, and many have moved on to the love Jesus asked of Peter: Agape' love.

This is a life-long process, for every time we choose to do the right thing, we lay down our lives a little bit more for Him, proving we value heaven's treasures, proving we value heaven's thinking above our own.

Don't jump off the cliff with the rest of the crowd, establish your core beliefs and values and allow them to form a line you will never cross even if all your friends jump off the cliff. New series next week, 'The Big Picture'. Blessings,

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