

THE SPIRIT IS THE ANSWER

Today is the 153rd day since I have been incarcerated. The number 153, as I have stated before, has been a significant number in my journey. My case number was 153, I had the ankle bracelet on for exactly 153 days, so I was excited to see what the Father would have planned on this very special day.



I told myself for over a month that there is no way that the visions, dreams, and supernatural revelations could continue at this pace or I was convinced that Elijah himself would show up in a chariot of fire and say, “**Hop on boys.**” (I would have been totally fine with that happening, by the way.) But they *have* continued at the same pace, and they’ve even increased. There continue to be more revelations and I am being transformed from the little caterpillar that was confined by the speed of my own talents and giftings, trying my best to grow as fast and as big as possible so that I could be as effective as possible for the Kingdom when all along I was never meant to be a caterpillar. I was meant to fly. **You** were meant to fly. But first, we must struggle. We must

qualify for our wings. And this is where most of us run...the second we feel the heat of the fire under our chair, a fire that *He* started.

When I was first taken into custody, I desired freedom more than I've ever desired it before. There were things in my case that I felt were unfair and I was really struggling with how the law operates in not giving grace or any room for "*unintentional*" fraud. I conceded that I got trapped in a "technicality" of the law and that, as Paul says, that technicality "*killed me.*" It is only now that I can see the Father allowed these circumstances to happen for a purpose. He was pushing me into a dark corner for a reason that I initially could not see or understand. Like a cocoon, He first trapped me in a space so small I could barely breathe. I panicked in an effort to destroy what I perceived as the "enemy" and what I thought he was doing to me. Little did I know it was my Daddy that tied my hands and my feet like a baby steer being roped by a professional rodeo cowboy, all for the purpose of His larger plan: to transform me into the likeness of His image. Something that can fly.

In January of 2014, I was sitting in a hotel restaurant in Charlotte, North Carolina with my wife and another gentleman named Keenan Bridges, a pastor, and author from Florida. We were both scheduled to be on Sid Roth's *It's Supernatural* television program the next day. As the three of us sat there having dinner, Keenan said that he saw a vision of me standing at the edge of an ocean looking out across the horizon and that all the land behind me had been conquered. At the time, I did not have much of a gift of interpretation, so we just chalked it up as a cool vision of something that maybe God would bring the answer to at some time in the future. *Well, today would be that future.*

My day started with a reading of my daily devotional book that was kindly given to me by my good friend Tony Robinson. I was one day behind on my reading, so I started with February 29, the leap year devotion. The opening Scripture for the devotion was "Put out into deep water" (Luke 5:4). The Spirit immediately brought back that vision that was given over two years ago before I even read the rest of the devotion. The land behind me represented the Truth side of the coin and the ocean in front of me represented the Spirit side. I had accomplished all that I could accomplish on the land and had pursued Truth with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength and the yellow brick road had led me to the edge of this expansive wilderness of water and I stood there dumbfounded. The ocean was the next great unknown that He wanted to take me into. It was the water slide journey that I was now on. As I stood there, the Spirit let me feel the feelings that I felt as I looked out at the edge of the water. Feelings of confusion, bewilderment, and almost depressing awe of just how mammoth the expanse was that I was looking at with no idea what to do or where to start.

The experience of standing before this great unknown ocean started the day of my sentencing, where everything I knew and loved stood behind me, and the chilling waters of the great unknown that would shock every cell of my being stood in front of me. This was the road He chose to get me off the land of firmly planted soil and sure footing of confident control and into the ocean currents of the Spirit that would drown the logic and the walking-by-sight methods that I was so used to. He wanted to force me to breathe the embryonic fluid of the Spirit like a child that is fully at peace in the womb. It was time to experience the "fullness of God" and, as Ephesians 3 says, the "*length, depth, width, and breadth of the love of Christ.*" It was time for

me to begin my training in “**walking on water**” and experiencing the real power of the Almighty. My castle was firmly protected because of all the defense I had played in the chess game of my life. Now it was time for Him to teach me how to go on the offense.

The first line in the *Streams in the Desert* devotion for that day was, “*The depth of the water into which we sail depends upon how completely we have cut our ties to the shore, the greatness of our need, and our anxieties about the future.*” It was time for Jim Staley to leave the shore. It was time for me to cut the line of all that was holding me back. For my entire life, whenever there was a problem, there was always an answer. My gift was problem-solving. I approached my life the way one would approach a crossword puzzle that needed to be solved: there was a list of problems each day that would be solved with the wisdom that God had given me. I had run both my private life as well as PFT this way. We were obeying His commandments the best we could and using every resource at our disposal to teach others to do the same. The message we were spreading was powerful as it was the “front of the book,” as I like to call it: the Truth side of the coin. I thought we already had the Spirit. After all, we were riding the bicycle and making tremendous headway. Little did I know that we had about as much of the Spirit as a half-filled super soaker in a fight with a military-grade water blaster. And although the Spirit was and is very evident at PFT, Yahweh doesn’t grade on a curve, and His standard for where He planned for us to be was far higher than our current understanding.

That day’s devotion went on to say that as we sail into the depth of God’s Word (the Sword of the Spirit), “the words we knew in the past will have an ocean of new meaning, which will render their original message very shallow.” Wow. The Father was saying that although the message of the Torah, the deeper Truths of God’s Word, and being in alignment with Him were all very important, the new message that would go with it would be so balanced and beautiful it would make the original message that we were broadcasting seem shallow. That is a strong statement, a statement that I am learning is overwhelmingly true. Learning how to walk and live in the Spirit **WHILE** staying in alignment with His word is the real power He has destined all of us to live in.

“*We must keep on until the Spirit becomes a clear and glorious answer to our prayer; our most careful and tender guide; the most thoughtful anticipator of our needs; and the most skilled and supernatural sculptor of our circumstances.*” Did you catch all that? How many times do we pray for wisdom, ask for help, beg for answers, and look for open and closed doors as we beseech the ineffable? Listen carefully to what I am about to say. When we pray, we pray for God’s help so that we can know what to do! No wonder we are always stressed out, full of anxiety, and depressed! We are looking at Yahweh as if He is some technical genius on the other end of an 800 number that is going to give us instructions on how to fix our life’s problems. We are praying with the intention of staying on the beach! We are praying and waiting like a long-anticipated email from tech support, when, in reality, the Spirit *is* the “clear and glorious answer to our prayer”! The **SPIRIT** is the answer, not the instructions! He is “the most skilled and supernatural sculptor of our circumstances.” Are you catching this? *HE* is the one that answers our prayers by sculpting our very circumstances right before our eyes! If your eyes are still crossed, keep reading. I pray the Ruach will open them to this most mysterious but powerful truth.

We are looking at God all wrong when it comes to our prayers. We have forgotten that He is truly a loving Father that deeply cares about the affairs of His children. *“We must endure until we fully comprehend its infinite detail and goodness and its far-reaching provision and care for us.”* Ladies and gentlemen, He knows your hurts. He knows your pain. He has every hair numbered on your head and already has a plan for whatever you are going through. If you are going through something right now, it is either because you are reaping the consequences of breaking His Word and He is lovingly chastising you so that you can receive the “peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11), or He is allowing something to happen to you to teach you a deeper truth, to draw you more intimately to His side. If He is feeding the birds daily in the dead of winter, does He not know your situation? Does He not already have the answer? The problem is that we are praying in the physical and looking for the physical answer instead of praying in the Spirit and expecting the Spirit to be the answer.

Let me explain further. If I was the son of a millionaire and I was overseas and lost my wallet, all I would have to do is make one call to my dad and know he would take care of it. How he chooses to take care of it is his problem. We are so focused on the problem and the need of an answer that we have forgotten that our “Dad” **IS** the answer! We may not know what the answer is or what the blessing is within the struggle, but we know that He holds both of them and is working on it as soon as we hang up the phone.

This concept came alive as we continued our Bible study that night. And at **EXACTLY 2:22 AM** on the 153rd day at the all-inclusive, fully protected Marion Satellite Prison Camp Resort, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to the “formula” of how to navigate this ocean of the Spirit that I was swimming in. I heard the Spirit ask me, “Did Jacob really beat the angel that he was wrestling with?” And instantly the answer was as plain as the nose on my face.

Jacob had a problem. He needed an answer. He had no idea what the blessing would be or what the answer to his problem would be concerning his brother Esau. He only knew that this angel had both the answer and the blessing within his grasp. For the first time in his life, he had no power to manipulate, no power to control, no way to get something that he wanted. The only thing he could do was struggle with God, not let go, and beg for a blessing. Did the angel really get beat by a human? Why did he show up in such a high-stress, extreme circumstance? Simple.

You guys, the answer has been in front of us all along on how to solve the most hazardous problems in our lives. We have missed the true meaning hidden away in the story of Jacob for almost two millennia. God had already seen the problem long before Jacob ever prayed. He knows our needs before we do. The angel (the struggle/the overwhelming circumstance) **WAS** the answer! The Angel was sent to bring the answer and the blessing, but Jacob had to qualify for it first. He had to **WRESTLE IN THE SPIRIT**. He had to go to war **IN THE SPIRIT!** He had to hold on to the promise of God and not let go until it was fulfilled naturally! We do not see Jacob asking the angel for a blessing and then panicking about his circumstances, dripping in a sweat about what to do, anxiously sitting in front of the computer awaiting the special email from God that has detailed instructions about what to do. What we see is a man in desperate need of an answer and the Spirit teaching him that the answer is found in wrestling with the Spirit in dedicated, anguished prayer and not letting go.

Yahweh needed to know that in order for Jacob to receive the blessing that He desired to give him, he would no longer be able to hold onto his own giftings, his own talents, or his own wisdom. God needed to **KNOW** that Jacob was going to hold onto HIM and **NOT LET GO!** Jacob's blessing was not contingent on his talents, his abilities, his wisdom, how much He knew the Scriptures, or anything else. It was contingent on one single thing: that he pressed into the Father, made his declaration as if he was already endowed with the authority of a king, and that he did NOT let go until the answer was given.

At daybreak, Jacob received his blessing, and his name was changed. In Hebrew culture, this meant that his destiny and mission had changed. Instead of it being about Jacob, it was now going to be about Israel. And guess what happened while he was wrestling with the Man of God? The Spirit was "sculpting the circumstances" and changing the heart of his brother Esau in such a dramatic way that Jacob and his entire company would be left in shock at his warm embrace.

Do you handle your problems and circumstances like Jacob, praying like Ephesians says as if you are already seated in heavenly places with Christ, not letting go and pressing in all the way to the end until the situation is resolved? Or do you find yourself throwing up a prayer here and a prayer there when you're not scattering around trying to fix it yourself, wiping the sweat off your brow from all the stress you are under because of it?

When we pray, we **CAN NOT** let go until the answer comes. We cannot doubt! We must **know** that He already knows our problem before we get there in prayer. We must **know** that before we pray, He already knows what the solution is. We must understand that as we pray, we press into the side of the Father with both our arms wrapped around Him like we have just jumped out of an airplane with Him, and He is wearing the only parachute. We **BELIEVE** that the answer is already in the making. We **BELIEVE** with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength that he is "sculpting our circumstances" as we speak. We hold onto His promises all the way until our feet hit the ground and the blessing is realized in the physical realm.

This concept sounds simple enough but is FAR more difficult to actually put into practice. It is anything but simple for me right now. I hope that someday I will be able to say that it is as easy as breathing the oxygen that is around me. Right now, it is as about as easy as breathing underwater. As we move forward, I am going to share with you some of what the Spirit has me doing to grow my spirit man and significantly develop this side of the coin. What I am trying to help you catch for now are concepts, not formulas. Concepts are the building blocks of belief systems, and a belief system is the foundation from which every action we take stems. For those of you that grew up in the average Christian church, these concepts will sound familiar, but because they were not matched with the foundation of the "front of the book," they were underdeveloped and fell far short of the real power they hold. Praying out of alignment is like a teenager asking to borrow the car when he hasn't learned to do his chores. The chances of getting the car are pretty slim.

Understanding what Yahweh wants us to do to please Him is one thing. It has been the focus of my life and ministry for over a decade. Understanding HIM is something completely different. It's one thing to work for the King. It's a whole other thing to **KNOW** the love of the King, His character, His power, His going in, and His coming out. I'm talking about knowing Him, not in

the typical “I’m saved so I know Him” way, but knowing Him like you know your spouse, your best friend, or yourself. This is the kind of “knowing” that we are headed for. The Father wants us to go beyond being servants and learn to be His Bride. And all of this hinges on us putting into practice trust, belief, and faith on the Spirit side of the coin.

How well do you think you **REALLY** know Him? I didn’t say how much do you think you know **ABOUT** Him. That’s on the Truth side of the coin. When you pray, do you tend to pray the same thing over and over again out of worry, just in case? Like He didn’t really understand the first 100 times you asked? When you fall into a pit and your circumstances seem overwhelming, do you tend to stay in that place for quite some time before you realize who your Father is? Do you tend to ask God for the answers to your problems so that you can know what to do? After you pray, do you still continue to sweat and try to figure it all out yourself? When He comes through in His perfect timing, do you find yourself shocked, surprised, and then embarrassed that you ever doubted Him?

If you answered “**yes**” to any of these questions, you may not know Him like you thought you did. To **KNOW** Him is to know that He **IS** the answer and the sculptor of our circumstances. How we respond to situations tells us what we really believe. His entire existence as it relates to us is to get us to the point where we are utilizing the full power of the “key” that was given to us to take back this earth from HaSatan, the god of this world. When Adam and Eve fell, they handed over that key and a part of us has been submitted to him ever since. There is a way to get it back. There is a way to have him submit to **US**! The power is there. Its depth, width, length, and height of it are incalculable. Imagine living with the power of the first-century church. It’s not only possible, but also happening right before our eyes. We are standing on the shores of that all-powerful ocean right now, and the Ruach is guiding us to leave the shore of our intellectual beach house that is shackling us from the depth of all that He has to offer.

For those of you that are left-brain intellectuals like I am, I encourage you not to look for a formula or an “end game.” The left-brained, solution and goal-based thought process will kill the spirit man before it ever learns to crawl. The transformation and growth of the inner man happen in the **PROCESS**, the **JOURNEY**, and the **STRUGGLE**, not in the understanding, calculation, or the “figure it out” mentality. Like salvation happened at the level of desire and surrender, so the spirit man grows in proportion to your desire for it to grow and how much you surrender to its will. When we all comprehend the true power and wealth of a mature spirit man, we will seek it beyond the likes of gold.

As we continue to move through this personalized Bible study that the Spirit is putting together for us, take these concepts and just absorb them. Let them sink in; don’t attempt to understand them. Abraham Joshua Heschel said it best in his book ***Man is Not Alone***. “*In the light of faith, we do not seek to unveil or to explain but to perceive and to absorb...not to know more but to be attached to more than anything we can grasp.*” A steak does not try to understand the ingredients of its marinade. It just sits quietly and absorbs what the maker put it in and, by default, ends up being exactly what the maker desired.

The next time you face a trial or a difficult God-sized problem, the only thing you need to understand is that your answer **IS** the Spirit. If you hold on and continue to “marinate” in His

presence, not letting go until the solution presents itself, the Spirit will begin to sculpt your circumstances while your eyes are closed and will begin to work things out for your good and according to His purpose.

Shalom,
Jim Staley