

Designed to be Fruitful
(Genesis 48)
Iverna Tompkins
As transcribed by Jane Vaughn

We normally select to read the smaller and most significant part of a Scriptural passage on which we intend to focus our message, but I believe I need to give you the historical background for what we're going to look at today. So in honor and respect to God's Word, and a consideration of the whole context, would you tolerate a reading of this entire chapter? Please turn to Genesis 48, beginning at verse 2:

2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. 5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? 9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. 12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. 17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

You have now read the historical story that many of us (who grew up in Church and Sunday School) heard about every 7 years. Now, I do understand that not everyone was raised with that privilege, but most Sunday School curriculums traverse through all of the Bible stories in a 7-year repeated cycle. However, this story was usually presented to us as merely that – a story in Israel's history. It did carry

meaning in that we understood the blessings of God, but it didn't have a poignant *personal touch* to it (at least for me) – until the Holy Spirit began to magnify the details. How many have had that experience with the Word? Suddenly, it is just your portion altogether because He brings you insight and fresh revelation.

Now, when I looked at this segment of scripture just recently, I thought, “Well, what would I say about this story? What, Father, are You leading me to bring forth? What's significant for us today about this passage? What's the title you want communicated?” That always gives a clue to what you're going to say – knowing the title. ☺ The thought for the title came to me later, after I had studied and prayed about the course of this message. It even came after I had printed my notes, so I wrote it here in pencil. ☺ “***Designed to be Fruitful.***” Apt and to the point.

We literally are ***designed*** by God (Jer.1:5; Ps.139:14). We're not merely a happenstance. Not just a random assortment of genetic details we gain from the biology of our parents. Those of you that have recently *accepted* Jesus Christ as your personal Savior need to know that when you said, “Yes,” to receiving Him, you were actually agreeing with what *He had already accepted* – you. He *picked* you. He chose you (Jn.15:16; 1Jn.4:19). And the truth is, He chose you long before you knew you needed Him (Eph.1:4). He chose you before you got strung out on drugs, or before your home was torn apart and relationships destroyed, and before all the other messes in life that we might know about.

God said about you: “That's My kid! That one is Mine. That *person* is Mine.” He chose each of us long before we chose Him. And more than that, He had a ***design*** for our lives (Jer.29:11). Now that is just so amazing to me! But it's Scriptural. That's what the Good Book says – “*That before the foundation of the world, He knew you...*” (Eph.1:4). That is totally astounding! Before all of creation... He had this plan – a purpose in His mind for each individual. A ***divine design***.

So I have looked at that pretty carefully and read books on “purpose.” I've heard messages on the topic and so have you. And so we naturally ask, “What's my purpose, Lord?” I have preached for more than 40 years and you could name anything experienced in the ministry, I promise you I've had a little bit of it. ☺ I have been busy for God most of my life. I know what it is to serve Him – unreservedly. He knows and I know that I am His and He is mine and we often sing that song in church. I'm in Him and He's in me and that's just the end of it – no argument there.

So many songs take their lyrics straight from the Scripture and therefore are the absolute Truth, like: He thinks better than I think and that's the end of that. His thoughts are higher than mine – His ways are higher and we simply agree with His Truth (Isa.55:8,9). But do you know the frustration that I find in serving the Lord? How many want to know what that is? ☺ The frustration I find is that He does not feel obligated to explain things to me! ☺ Even when I demand it in Jesus' Name! ☺

I feel a similar frustration with some songs we sing. Like ones that tell us we have to wait – on (or for) God. I just don't like those songs! I don't want to hear it! I don't want to live it! I don't want to wait! ☺ I like this: “Ask for it (whatever you want ☺) – in Jesus' Name (of course! ☺) – and it's done!” ☺ I like the magic wand! – “In Jesus' name!” ☺

But real life simply isn't like that. Oh, it is for salvation, in that all you have to do is come forward and say, “I do want You, Lord. I *need* You, Lord.” And then, the ***design for your life*** is activated by the Designer the moment you say, “Yes! I want Jesus Christ to be in my life.”

So here we see in this story in Genesis a change of plans. Now, God's plans do not (and did not) change, but man's plans changed. Jacob, the patriarch, is old and dying. His name is synonymous with Israel – God re-named him long before this time (cf.Gen.32:28). Jacob – Israel. The names reference the same man. The story related in this passage is: Jacob, the patriarch, is dying and Joseph is desirous that his father Jacob would bless his own sons – because he knows and understands the power of blessing.

Now, in case you don't know me well, I always try to preach 7 or 8 sermons in one message, so you can take your pick – whichever one God quickens to you. ☺ And one of those messages here at the beginning is that **we need to know that God has veto power!** So – no matter what you vote or how loudly you vote – by stamping your feet and using the Name of the Lord, not in vain but *repetitiously* (see Mt.6:7) – “In Jesus’ Name! In-Jesus-Name! In-Jesus-Name! In-Je-sus-Name!” ☺ You can rapid-fire it all you want, it is not a magical phrase! ☺ And you just cannot manipulate God, no matter what you say or do.

There is a divine plan – a **design** – for your life and you, as His precious child, are not going to get very far away from that master plan. Those of us, who are older and lived longer under God's direction, have learned – that is a good thing – being unable to get away from His plan! It truly is a positive thing! I have no desire to go it alone – I want His plan to be effective and effecting in my life!

What I want us to see is **the intention of God!** “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*” Paul said in Ephesians 1:3, “*who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame in Him*” – note: in Him!

Don't let the devil beat you up and toss you around by taunting you: “You're not holy. You are not holy. Look at you! You think *that* is holy?” But the Truth is, you are holy – in Him! We are a *holy nation* (1Pet.2:9). We're *royalty!* The royal blood of Jesus Christ the King flows through our veins *from the moment we accept Him!* And I'm truly tired of Christians getting beat up by the devil! I hear the lament in counseling or at the altar: “Oh, I have sinned – I had bad thoughts today. I didn't do what I should do. I did this... Oh, Pastor, I just... I don't feel that I'm holy at all.”

Holy doesn't feel! It just is!

I'll tell you who knows you're holy – the enemy knows that Truth! And he hates you! That's mutual, isn't it? He hates me and I hate him in return! I hate everything he does to people! He hates your relationship with God through the blood of Jesus Christ. I hate his plans! Oh, I know they'll ultimately be thwarted and I know God's going to win in the end. I know all that – I read the end of the Book! ☺ But I don't like the process – when the enemy just beats up on people. And one of his great, most successful tools – is guilt. I just can see your heads nodding in agreement and understanding, because he has done it to you!

How many would just love to never have another guilty feeling in your life? Well, according to the Word of God, you can be free! “*Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free!*” (Gal.5:1). Paul goes on: “*And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

We sing about that freedom. “I'm free! I'm free! Salvation is here! I'm free!” Well then – claim that! When the enemy starts badgering you, in your thoughts, that's the time to praise the Lord! No, you don't *feel* like it! What you *feel* are the accusations of the enemy: “You're no good!” “You've failed – you had opportunity and you missed it!” Those are what you *feel*. But that stands in contrast to what we know is the Truth and is what is important – “*I know in Whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him*” (2Tim.1:12). You see – that's the confidence. “*This is the confidence that we have in Him...*” (1Jn.5:14,15).

Now – I break, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that *false guilt* that so many of you have to deal with. For those of you who seriously say, “I want to be free,” agree with me now: I break that spirit of guilt! It is not of God! Freedom and release from condemnation is of the Lord (Rom.8:1,2).

Joseph knows of the blessing. Of course he knows the blessing! He has experienced the lack of it – and he has experienced the blessing as well. So, he says, “I need to get my Dad to bless my sons before he dies. Now, I want you to be first, Manasseh. You are my firstborn and should get the double-portion. And you can be second, Ephraim, because you were born second.”

I never get used to that, do you, Pastor? You look at people that come into your church and they're going to be committed to the Body of Christ, or become a part of the church, and you think (and evaluate!), "Oh, she's the... I want her! Oh, I'm going to bless her first." And then you see another one in the line, "Uh... not him – he's..." But who does God bless first? Him! ☺ God picks the most unlikely persons to succeed. Have you noticed that? That's how we got in! ☺ He says, "I'm going to make you an amazement – to everyone."

So, that is what we have read. Jacob (Israel) seems to be confused and his hands are changed – or crossed over. The old man who isn't seeing very well anymore *seems* to make a mistake. I can't tell you how many times I've said that to God. "Yoo-hoo. You're lucky You have me. I'm going to straighten this whole thing out for You." ☺ And I hope you're laughing with me. ☺ We think we know how things should go, but God is Sovereign and has a master plan. You're simply not going to get away from the *design*.

The old man explains, "I know what I'm doing. I do know what I'm doing. I know Ephraim was the second born and I'm blessing him now with my right hand (on purpose!) and I'm putting the firstborn blessing on him. Of course, you know, I'll also bless the firstborn as well."

When we think we have some sort of vote in the matter, I can just hear God: "I'll bless her and I'll bless him too, but this one is going to be that and that one's going to be the other thing."

Let me interject a little "Mama" advice to you as a church, especially to the *young* churches. Listen, for this will help you. When the Lord starts moving in your church, He's going to raise up leaders – other than the present staff members. He probably will not replace these, but God's going to raise up other leaders from among the congregation and it may not be the ones for whom you vote. Now, if you *dare* to leave the church *over that*, because you didn't agree with God's choices, you'll get a worse leader wherever you go! Count on it. If God is Sovereign – then He is sovereign! And His plan will include stretching you along with the others.

In the Bible, people were named for a couple of things. One – they were often named for the situation that was prevalent at the moment of their birth. "This is happening and so if I have a child now, I'm going to name the child after the happening." And, even unknown to the parent who did the naming, it was often a *prophetic statement*. Parents didn't always realize what they were doing specifically. So, when Joseph named his sons, he thought, "I'm naming them based on what's going on." He thought, "Manasseh is my firstborn." (The firstborn should have received the double-portion blessing, just for being born first.) "The reason I named him Manasseh is – it means 'forgetting.'" And (this is a quote from Joseph) "*God hath made me to forget all my toil and all my father's house.*" (Gen.41:51).

Now, if you know the story of who it is that is talking here, Joseph, he had a whole lot to forget! As he grew up, a young lad in his father's house, he was the favorite son. He was not the firstborn but his Dad loved his mother more than all the others (see Gen.37:3,4). Jacob just adored this boy! More than all his brothers.

God also loved him in a special way and so Joseph began to have *spiritual dreams* – insightful dreams (Gen37:5ff). In the dream, he saw himself standing out in a field and his brothers were all bowing down to him. Now, if you have a dream like that from the Lord, one that is that wonderful – shut up! ☺ That is not a dream to be shared! But he's just a kid – and he doesn't know any better. He believes it is a message from God and he believes it's true – so he goes straight to his brothers! "Guess what God showed me!" Now he's the youngest among the ones he shares it with, and they're already jealous of their father's special treatment of Joseph, and their attitude is: "Over my dead body!" And one of them says, "No, over his!" ☺ And you know the story of this boy (Gen.37:8ff).

His Dad (Jacob) gave him this beautiful coat of many colors (Gen.37:3) – which I think represents something permanent that lasted when the coat was long gone – but you’ll have to buy that CD if you want that message ☺ (“Joseph and the Incredible Coat” in print on this website or “What Coat are You Wearing?” available on CD). His brothers take him out, throw him in a pit, ultimately sell him as a slave to the Midianites who are just passing by. They take him into Egypt and give him – well, not “give.” Never would a Midianite give anything! They sold him to Potiphar, the Captain of the Guard (37:36), to be a household slave (37:28ff).

Now – don’t miss this particular sermon. ☺ When the blessing, or as we rather lightly speak it – the *anointing* of the Lord – is upon and within an individual – it does not leave when they go into captivity. The anointing makes a way for us – whether you’re selling lumber – or whether you’re traveling in ministry – or whether you’re serving another – it doesn’t matter what you’re doing – that *anointing* rises in wisdom and power and people say, “WOW!” That’s why my doctor daughter could get people to take medicine that nobody else could get them to take. She just went into the situation with the anointing (1Jn.2:27a).

Now, we don’t always realize it! We don’t always realize – “This is the *anointing* operating.” But it does operate everywhere we go – everywhere YOU go!

Joseph in Potiphar’s house... He just got better and better. Everything he touched turned to gold for Potiphar and he kept receiving promotions there. Even Potiphar’s wife noticed him and lusted: “WOW! I want his body!” ☺ You can read it for yourself. It honestly is there (Gen.39:7ff). And she makes an improper pass at him which he refuses: “Hey! Hold it! My Master’s been good to me and that’s not where I’m going with this situation” (39:7,8). She grabs his coat, rips it off of him and yells, “Rape!” (vs.14) at which point the officers come in, take him and throw him into prison – on a false charge!

Now – how do you feel about that? I mean, I don’t even like being accused when I’m guilty! ☺ But how do you feel when you’ve done your best, your brothers have failed you and sold you off to others – betrayal – and yet you’ve done nothing but serve God faithfully and God’s shown Himself strong in you – and now you find yourself down in – in a prison! Out of a pit into prison. And there you are – what do you do?

It’s CHOICE time! ☺

Because “*the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet*” (1Cor.14:32) – you don’t have to allow the Spirit to flow through you. Poor Joseph could have thrown a pity-party – or released an anger-streak. (Don’t ask me how I know about those two options! ☺) He could have gone any direction in the natural and God wouldn’t have killed him. Why? He’s in the *design*. We just choose how long each step takes. That’s why I’m so old! ☺

But Joseph lets the *anointing* of God flow through him. (Good choice!) Every time anyone has a difficult situation in the jail they can’t handle, someone says, “Do you know, Joseph?” Upon hearing the situation, he’d reply, “I’ll pray about it. I’ll ask my God.” And then he’d have an answer! One thing he did there was to interpret dreams (Gen.40:8ff). Now, Joseph had promises from people down there with him in the jail – “When I get out of here, I’ll tell them about you, Joseph!” But they didn’t – they just forgot (vs.23). How many have had that kind of betrayal?

Betrayal hurts me, I think, as much as or more than anything you could do to me. I hate to be betrayed! Don’t you? There’s just something about it. And when I’m in that spot, soon I think of this: “*The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed...*” (1Cor.11:23). He made a choice! He took bread and broke it and He served others – that’s just amazing to me! Judas, who had been so close to Him, had betrayed Him completely! And He still served him!

Joseph knew about betrayal – over and over again. But he just kept interpreting dreams until finally he was called for by Pharaoh. He went up to that audience and interpreted another dream (Gen.41:14ff). Ultimately, Joseph ended up being promoted to Ruler of all Egypt! (vs.40ff). **But he's still in Egypt!** I'm going to pause here long enough for that to penetrate your entire being! Joseph was still in Egypt!

You see, you are Ruler over your own spirit. That's Kingdom language. You can choose to rule in the midst of Egypt – this world – this political, social world we live in right now. Oh, my! I'm glad I don't have to try to explain to you what's happening out there in the political world today because I don't have a clue! Every day the news changes and I think, "Well, where's someone with charts? This has to fit in somewhere!" ☺

I can tell you this much about our world today – the truth is – it's BAD out there! ☺ It's *really* bad out there! The hatred is so strong! If I didn't have the Word of God to come back to where He actually says, "Yeah, Israel will forsake Me and go their own way – and they're going to suffer because they're *choosing* the most difficult path there is for My order to come into their lives. They're choosing it! They're choosing the hard way to go!" I'm not sure I would understand anything that is going on over there!

Then I see within my own country: we war over – pardon me – just stupid things! We spend many, many dollars and many, many sessions in government deciding whether we should keep the Constitution as it was written! Or should we, you know, *interpret* it? I want to say: "DUH!"

I hate the wickedness that's all around us. I'm a very sensitive individual and I *sense* it everywhere. Don't you sense the evil? There's just so much! The world is taking such a strong stand against us. Now, I do know why. I know *why* the world hates us – because – they're smarter than we are. ☺ They know what's about to happen. They know that the ***lions in the pew*** – which is **you!** – are going to rise up to Proverbs 28:1: "***The righteous are bold as a lion!***" (which just happens to be our ministry motto and why we use the lion as our logo). But that boldness is coming to you!

You must have a measure of it before you can go out and knock on someone's door and say, "We're from such and such a church here in the neighborhood. How can we help you?" It takes a little boldness to do that. But you see, that's just a little bit of boldness – and that's great! You'll be successful when you go out to minister to the people – and you will win souls! Yes. But then we bring them into the church. We "bring in the sheaves" and teach them the ways of the Lord so that His ***design*** for their lives can be fulfilled! Does that make sense to you? It takes the **boldness** of the Spirit of God to help us go and witness to the world about the wonderful message of Christ (Ac.1:8)

Joseph says, "My firstborn – Manasseh. God made me to *forget* all the negative things that have happened to me." I believe I have to say to some of you today – that is the one thing that holds you back from spiritual growth – you can't forget! The "Yes – but" syndrome. Now, I'm not talking about literally never remembering those hurtful situations, because only God has that capacity (Heb.8:12;10:17). Of course we remember what happened. I remember hurts in my past. I even can tell you the details – like what the weather was on that specific day. I mean, we clearly do remember the events. But what we instantly do with that memory is what makes the difference – whether we harp on it, going over and over how wrongful and painful it was, or whether we just let it go!

Here, Joseph is saying, "I have a son now and I'm going to name him 'Forgetting.' I'm going to forget the things of the past," as Paul said: "*forgetting those things which are behind*" (Phil.3:13). All of you – all of us – have experienced that kind of thing in the past. We're human beings, raised in a fallen world. My Dad was my pastor; his Dad was his. I've been in the ministry for years – decades. I grew up in the ministry. You would think by now that I would be immune or protected from all that, but there are still things I have to forget. I understand how people can be insensitive and cruel.

Forgetting those things which are in the past and reaching for something higher, Paul says. I want my destiny to be fulfilled – my destiny in God – what He has destined for me. What’s *His* purpose? Why?

The importance of a name.

And then Joseph had a second son he named Ephraim. Ephraim means “*fruitfulness*.” It actually means “fruitful” and “increasing.” Now I am thrilled when a pastor takes time to publicly ask: “How many of you have been “clean” for this long – a week? How many for that long – a month? Six months? How many...? Bless your hearts when you respond with honesty! But may I put a big B-U-T in there? ***It isn’t enough just to stay off of something negative or harmful – you have to grow.*** You have to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You have to stay in the Word. You may say, “Well, I don’t have the time. I work full time...” I’m not talking about *hours* of deep study. I’m talking about *daily time with the Lord*. “*Our Father – which art in heaven... give us this day our...*” What? “*...daily bread*” (Mt.6:11). What we need for today. What we need from Father for today – just to get through the day!

Your pastors and/or the pastoral staff at your church are not responsible to break daily bread for you! If you don’t understand the King James language – get The Message. That paraphrase is God’s Word made so clear in common “street language” – and purposefully so – so you can’t miss the meaning of what He said! Find a translation that makes sense to you, but ***stay in the Word because that is the only thing that will hold you firmly together through all your life experiences.***

So it says, “The blessing is there. It was *intended*. Ephraim, you’re blessed to be *fruitful*.” Your church is blessed to be fruitful, Pastor. It may have started out as just a little home group years ago – just you and your family members. Why would anyone start out like that? I can imagine you heard lots of questions: “Why don’t you just go to someone else’s successful church?”

The answer to that is – because there was a ***design***. And when it was God’s time to begin to draw the design, He began to turn the crank inside of His people, His future pastors. “Why are you doing this? Where are you going to meet?” “Well, we’re going to meet in the public Library.” “How long are you going to meet there?” “Until we go to the school.” “How long are you going to be in the school?” “Till we go to that run-down church building – the old one the other church couldn’t handle.” “How long are you going to be...?” “Well, we’re here now. I hope this is enough. We’ve unpacked!”

I’m sure lots of Israel unpacked! Every time they made a move out there in the wilderness. And just as they got everything put away in the tent – all the utensils in the kitchen, girls – just as they got... they heard: “*BE-DE-BEEP-BEEP!*” The cloud’s moving!” “Oh, no!” ☺ “I’m not going to pack up and move again!” So you stay – while the cloud moves.

Do you understand what I’m saying? When the cloud moves, it means He’s going to do something else! His revelation is going to come to His people – other than what you’ve known before. Not “instead of” but “other than” or “more of.” Because there’s a ***fruitful design*** for the Church. There’s a fruitful design for *your* church. You have to go with the cloud or you die! Outside of the light, plants cannot survive.

Oh! May I finish that mini-message? (that was number 7 ☺). If you stay without the light (and you die) and the light moves on, those people who stay in the Light will be fruitful even if you’re mad that they went on without you. Now, there’s a second point – if you decide to move *before* the cloud decides to move... Are you there? If you say, “Alright! I’ve packed up – there’s things to do. There’s a whole mission-field out there and I’m so ready! Besides, Pastor’s been preaching the same thing – the same old thing – for weeks – months. And I’m sick of the same old songs. I’m outta here!”

If you move and the cloud doesn’t, you’re going to trip up! When you’re not with the cloud, you are absolutely wide open for error. I would be afraid to do that in this day! I truly would! Because not too

many Christians know the difference between *anointing* and *fervor*. And there's a lot of false stuff out there being delivered with great fervor! Stay in the Word and then no one can fool you!

The intervention of God. Jacob says, "I'm going to do it *this* way," and so Ephraim is blessed with that *fruitfulness*. Did it work? That's the question. "Did it work?" Oh, yeah. But let me tell you, there was a season of time when it looked like it didn't work.

Manasseh's tribes outgrew Ephraim's tribes by twenty thousand (Num.26). I don't know who this is for, but it's going to help you. **When we get a word from God**, and we know it's from God – know it's a valid word so we hold fast to it – and **then we see what appears to be just the opposite occurring** – that is a very difficult moment in the life of a *designed* person. Does that make sense to you?

You see, when I know I'm *designed* by Him, and I'm here on His "game board" and all the rest of it – I know He gave me a promise and I'm waiting for Him to finish the drawing (the *design*) – but the person next to me gets it! The blessing. The anointing! And off they go! *Vrooom!* ☺ That's hard to cling to what you heard... and maybe now think you only *thought* you heard what you heard! ☺

"Twenty thousand! God, they've got twenty thousand more than I do! Don't You remember where the hands of Jacob were placed?" That's what a lot of people think prayer is – giving God "unknown information." ☺ "Don't You remember, when he crossed his arms and put his right hand on...? Do You know that I'm the one that has the promise – of the double-portion...? Yoo-hoo!" ☺

Hard. Difficult moments in time. Proving grounds, actually. I hate them. ☺ I really hate them. I mean, I love coming and telling you about it – when I've passed through them – when the test is finished and I have passed! But I just don't like the *walk*. We all go through "proving grounds." It's just the way it is. God has to show us to us – the strong parts (when we're leaning on Him) and the weak (when we think we can go it alone!).

And so it looked like Manasseh's tribe was really the successful one – fruitful. All the other tribes are looking at him and saying, "WOW! What's he doing right? Is that great, or what! I'll go to that church – that's *whew!*: very impressive!" "What about Ephraim's? (there we go comparing again!) He has the *double-portion-promise*." "Yeah, well. He's short twenty grand." ☺

The Israelites all go through some things – some battles and some captivity and so on – and during Moses' time, *slowly* Ephraim's tribe begins to build up – and up and up – and over (Deut.33:17). It's never equal, you realize – but more than... until he so supersedes all the tribes, *except Judah*. What does *his* name mean? Judah means "praise"! Nobody can supersede that!

Ephraim supersedes all the tribes, except Judah, who's first. First in numbers and first in line (Ex.2:3). And he becomes the leader of the royal tribe. Didn't look like it back there! There are some people today who are looking at situations and circumstances and saying, "It surely doesn't look like... I mean, I don't want to doubt God, but *ffeeuum!*: You know, they've got twenty thousand more! They've got... They've got more..." *They* aren't your problem!

I talked to the Lord about "they." It was when I was at a desperate point in my life. I was trying to make a huge decision and said, "Lord, they say..." and "They tell me..." and "They..." (I learned then that everyone has a plan for your life!) I heard the Lord clearly say to me, "They who?" "Oh. You mean they're not as important as I think they are? Their advice and their opinions?" The Lord declares, "No, they're not. And as long as you can still hear Me, I'd like to stay in charge." ☺

Unlike them, and unsatisfactory to their *design*, although Ephraim received the inheritance, he didn't protect it. When he was given a place in the Promised Land (another whole message, isn't it? "What's there? Who is it? What's it mean?") – when Ephraim was given a place in the Land, instead of driving out all those who were claiming it, he let them live there (Josh.16:4,10).

Now, listen to me for just a moment longer. Anything that God delivered you from when you “got saved,” as we say – when you met Jesus as your personal Savior – when you acquiesced to His calling – the things He touched in your life at that time and said, “Those things are washed by the Blood! Those are cleansed!” If YOU don’t walk out of those habits or activities, they *will* come back and claim a position in your life as though the territory really is theirs! (cf.Mt.12:43-45). Just like the “ites” who lived in the Land before God gave it to the Israelites: the Hittites, Girgashites and Amorites, the Canaanites and Perizzites and Hivites and Jebusites (Ex.23:28ff; Deut.7:20ff). God gave the territory to Israel, but they had to take possession of it.

You know you still have a desire to do that thing that once ruled you! You know you still want to! You know you still... But that is the lie of the enemy that causes us to believe we’re not really set free! We’ve got to come to a position of saying, “Number one, **I will forget!** I’m not a part of that anymore! I’m a new creation! (2Cor.5:21). Number two, I will walk in **fruitfulness.** I will grow. I will grow in grace. I’ll grow in the knowledge of Jesus (Col.1:9,10). I’ll grow in the fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5:22ff). I will read my Bible. I am in this for the long haul. I’m not here to be defeated. I’m not here to let the enemy that had a piece of me come back and say, “That’s the piece that’s mine!” because it’s been taken over – and it’s colored RED! The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from – ALL – Oh, say it again! “**All unrighteousness!**” (1Jn.1:9).