

CHAPTER 5

The Power of Free Will: *Belief and Choice* (pages 63-71)

Overview: This chapter explores the power of free will in the Theophostic Prayer Ministry. It examines obstacles created by lie-based thinking and offers solutions to move past them with questioning techniques.

In James 1 the Apostle described a person who is “unstable in all of his ways.” This person is guilty of holding an impure faith or belief system. He is called a “double-minded man.” Double-mindedness occurs when not everything that I believe is consistent with the truth. It is the state of holding two or more opposing beliefs at the same time. Each of us has this going on from time to time. For example, I can know the truth that God is in control yet live in fear when life seems to be out of control. My fear is evidence of double-mindedness since “perfect love casts out all fear.” When my experiential belief that is contrary to truth stirs my emotion, I tend to choose what I do next based upon what feels true, not necessarily what is true. Everything that we do is based upon our belief and consequential choosing. I call this the Belief and Choice Principle.

The Free Will of Man: The Second Most Powerful Force in the Universe

There are two major forces at work in every Theophostic Prayer Ministry session. The first is God’s power: “GOD ... IS AT WORK IN US, BOTH TO WILL AND TO WORK FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE” (*Philippians 2:13*). The second is our free will, as we choose to what degree we will cooperate with His work.

There is no question that God is “ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKS WITHIN US” (*Ephesians 3:20*). However, God has allowed a limiter switch to be installed in the circuitry called

“free will.” This does not mean that we have more power than God, of course; it simply means that He does not force us to participate in His power apart from our choosing. The free will element in the process is alluded to in the verse I just quoted, where it says, “WORK OUT [choice] YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, FOR IT IS GOD WHO IS AT WORK IN US ...” (*Philippians 2:12-13*).

The prayer that Jesus prayed in the Garden, “Not my will but Thine be done,” shows the importance of will. Jesus was getting His will in line with the Father’s.

Our true will is generally determined by our inner beliefs. I have witnessed a few cases where people pushed through the resistance they have felt in a ministry session and chose to go forward in spite of their experiential belief, but this is rare. Choice is greatly determined by what we feel in the moment, and what we feel in the moment is dictated by what we believe. When people become stuck during a ministry session it is always because of their own belief and then choice.

Contents

The Free Will of Man: The Second Most Powerful Force in the Universe	63
Helping People Move Past Roadblocks of Belief and Choice	65
Ask Questions to Deal with Obstacles of Belief and Choice	68
We Have Choices to Make for Good or Evil	69
Theophostic Prayer Is About Refining Our Beliefs.....	69

The common response in the face of wayward and troubling emotion is to deny the feeling and just choose to do the right thing. This is great for the limited few who claim to succeed. However, it is also very difficult and feels more like keeping the law than it does walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to suggest that the walking out of our faith becomes easier as our faith (belief) is made pure. When I know the truth in my innermost being, my emotions will change to match this belief. The only reason that my emotions are contrary to the truth is because I am double-minded and holding an opposing belief at the experiential level.¹

The Will Is a Verb I formerly considered the will as something that I possessed, like the mind and emotions, a part of me. I now understand will to be an action that we do—a verb.

We *will* things to happen. We *will* to go places, do things. When we choose, we will things into being. Our will is the expression of our capacity to make decisions. Our will is whatever we are doing in any given moment. If people are stuck in a ministry session, then this displays their will in action. It may not be their desire, but it is their choice. Wherever we are in any given moment is an expression of our will or choice, based upon what we believe.

Some of the most frustrating moments for the facilitator in a ministry session occur when what needs to happen seems obvious, but the person will not make the choice to bring it about. I have said to myself many times such things as, “If he would just go there . . .” “If she would just let the feelings come, she could move forward,” “All she needs to do is . . .” It is in these moments that the facilitator’s own lie-based pain may surface, exposing his own need for ministry.

As facilitators, we hear people say that they really do want to go to the places of their pain, and truly desire this at the conscious level, yet they remain frozen. We may hear them accuse God of not helping them, blame the Theophostic Prayer Ministry process for not working, or even make us the problem. Nevertheless, it is always about the person’s belief and choice.

Believe me, I know how frustrating this is, from both sides of the fence. I have been stuck many times in my own mind renewal journey while expressing a strong desire to move forward, but could not seem to

budge. Nevertheless, in every case I eventually moved forward when I made the choice to do so.

Making the choice to do so is always resting upon what I believe. Keep in mind that what I know logically to be true and what I know experientially are not always the same. My choice to move forward rests most heavily upon my experiential knowledge and more so than the Bible verses I can quote. It is the experiential knowledge that carries the emotion, not my logical truth. Desire is usually based upon the truth that we logically know. I can ask people what they logically know to be the truth about moving into their pain and facing what is there. They often acknowledge, “I will be free.” However, if I ask them what feels true about moving forward, they may say, “I will die.”

The illogical and irrational lie-based belief will tend to win out when it comes to making the willful choice to move forward in the ministry session. “I will die” and the fear attached to it has greater influence than the logical truth “I am safe now and no longer in danger” thought. Whatever I experientially believe (and thus feel) has great influence on what I choose.

Free Will and Dissociation It was not until I did extensive ministry with dissociated people that I realized how influential subconscious choice seems to be over conscious choice. I am convinced after much experience that the final authority over our choices is often not at the conscious level, but the subconscious or experiential level.

This is demonstrated most obviously when working with a person whose mind is fragmented into an alter system.² The person may consciously express a willingness to go to a painful memory and work as hard as possible to do so. However, if an alter personality surfaces and creates strong resistance, nothing will happen until “they” agree. The alter personality’s lie-based belief is in conflict with the host person’s desire to move forward.

Recipients’ true choices are made evident by whatever they are doing. If they say they choose to go to the memory but do not, then what is their will? It is amazing how a person with DID will move forward when the alter presentation of the mind finally works past all its objections (lies) and receives the Lord’s perspective. Remember that even if the mind has dissociated into

different personalities, we only have one mind and will. I will discuss the area of dissociation later.

Helping People Move Past Roadblocks of Belief and Choice

As a Theophostic Prayer Ministry facilitator, you play an important role in helping people discover what hinders their pathway to freedom by encouraging them to identify their lie-based thinking and defer it to Jesus' truth. You might envision this process to be like the friends who carried their paralyzed friend to the feet of Jesus. They had to clear the way (bypass the crowd, cut a hole in the roof and lower him down with ropes) so that he could receive directly from the Lord.

Roadblocks are connected to the person's belief and choice. What follows are specific steps you might consider as you help others deal with these roadblocks.

1. The Person Sitting in Your Office Is There Because of Choice

The fact that someone has come is evidence that the desire to find freedom is greater than the inner avoidance of pain. Keep this in mind if and when people become stuck later in the ministry session. This desire for freedom is still present and will move them on as the hindering lies they believe are exposed and released.

It is not helpful to say this to a person who is "stuck": "You just don't want to be healed!" or "Just choose to go there!" People would not be seeking your help if they didn't want to be free of the pain they carry. They have simply run into an inner belief that has greater influence than the desire to go forward.

It is your role to help them uncover the belief that has them stuck, and receive a word from the Lord that will free them to move forward. These lies must be exposed and deferred to Jesus for His perspective in order to move in deeper for mind renewal.

2. Expect to Encounter Blocks During Ministry Sessions

Get used to the fact that blocks will happen, and remember that the reason is never that God is withholding truth from them. If the pain they are feeling is rooted in lies, God always wants them to know the truth and release them. The reasons will usually be something that they believe about moving forward, an unwillingness to acknowledge what they know, an unwillingness to feel, or anger held onto for protection.

Sometimes there are lies about the current situation that cause them to choose not to move forward. For example, if a woman has a good relationship with the same person who hurt her in the past, she may subconsciously refuse to go to the memory because of the fear of damaging or losing something in the present.

If you feel stressed, anxious or even angry when people get stuck, this is just exposing your own lies. It is very important that you are operating from peace in people's moments of blockage. If your recipients sense that you are "stirred up," it may cause them to become even more stuck.

3. Make the Discovery Process the Recipient's

Responsibility The ministry recipients know what is in their head better than you do. If you start trying to analyze and diagnose their troubles, you are projecting and directing in ways that are no longer Theophostic in principle.

When people get stuck, one of the first questions to ask is, "What do you think is the reason for the block?" Their first response is usually, "I don't know." If so, follow this with a statement such as, "Yes, this process can be difficult, but look inside again and try to figure it out."

Encourage them to feel, watch, listen and discover what they believe that is blocking them. Usually you will gain at least a little insight into what is happening; take this information and ask further questions related to what they have discovered. When they come to accept that you are not there to rescue them, but that it is their responsibility to figure things out, they very well may do just that.

Someone might say, "Why not ask Jesus to figure it out for them?" The problem is, they already know why they are where they are. They simply need to be encouraged to look at what they already know. I sometimes pray something like, "Jesus, will you give Andrea the grace to make the choices she needs to make in order to move forward?" Or, "Jesus, will you encourage Andrea to discover what it is that is keeping her stuck?" However, I never pray, "Lord, tear down this blockage." "In the name of Jesus I command this wall to be moved!" or "Lord Jesus, take Mary to place she needs to go." These prayers are contrary to the person's own belief and willful choice.

I never ask Jesus to reveal memory information, figure it out, or show them their memory. He will not violate their will since it is their own choosing that is keeping them stuck. Never lose sight of the fact that the person already knows everything they need to know to move to the place where the Lord can release them. They themselves must make that choice to go there. Since they are where they are due to their own belief and choice, if Jesus were to reveal what they themselves have hidden, it would be a violation of their will. The facilitator is prone to pray these sorts of prayers when the moment seems desperate and he feels a need to attack the situation. Never forget that everything that is happening in the session is always directly related to the person's own doing.

4. Ask Questions to Expose the Belief Blocking the Process I ask many different questions according to what people have surfaced and encourage them to listen on the inside for the answers. *See chart on page 68.*

Listening to one's thinking is something anyone can learn to do. I find that I talk to myself off and on all the time and believe that this is normal behavior for most people. (At least I hope it is!) Not only do I talk to myself, but my "self" talks to me. All I am really trying to do here is to encourage people to slow things down and listen to their own thoughts. Much is going on inside our heads if we will just listen.

I encourage people to listen to themselves as I ask questions that may help expose their true beliefs. I simply have them focus on the blockages, the feelings, or whatever they are aware of inside, then to notice their inner responses to my questions. It is amazing how clearly people become aware of the reasons for the blockage.

To those who challenge the validity of this process, I can say this: As people listen to what their own minds tell them and we defer this thinking to the Lord, they often find freedom to move past the blockages. There is no question that something happens in these moments that moves them forward.

Some think that to do this is to expose themselves to deceiving spirits. I agree that it is possible that a person might receive a message from a demon by doing this. I also believe that I can receive a demonic thought while reading my Bible or listening to the Sunday sermon. Demons do speak at such times.

However, when this occurs we deal with it. Never forget a demon's message only has power to the degree that it is believed, so if people hear a demonic message, and it influences them, it is actually their false belief that the demon is voicing. On such occasions, I ask them if the thought they have received or surfaced *feels* true (not if it is true) and if it does, I instruct them to offer it up to the Lord for His truth.

It is important to note that the questions that are asked at this juncture in the session are only focused on the hindrance to moving forward and never to obtain memory content information. The only purpose is to identify any lie that is keeping people from moving forward. Any question seeking to obtain memory information is not a "Theophostic" question.

All through this part of the process, many questions can be asked to help people identify the belief that has them stuck. A simple question that can be asked is, "What do you believe will happen if . . .?" What you are looking for is the underlying belief that has the person stuck. You might ask, "What do you believe will happen if you go back into the memory and remember what happened?"

If people do not receive anything at first, encourage them to calm down, relax, and just listen while you repeat the question. They might respond with thoughts such as, "I will get stuck in the pain and will not be able to get out," "The pain will be too much for me," "I do not think I want to know what happened in the memory," or "If I go there I will die!"

When these belief statements surface, *do not* try to reason rationally with them or give them the truth. Do not say, "You won't have to stay in the pain, you're not there anymore, you are safe now," and so on. This only wastes time. They will agree with you logically and then still be stuck. Simply ask them if they are willing to receive what the Lord wants them to know about these beliefs. If they agree, then ask the Lord what He wants them to know about what they have surfaced.

It often helps to restate their belief aloud to the Lord. For example, you might say, "Jesus, what do you want Jim to know about his getting stuck in the pain and not being able to get out?" If he does not receive anything from the Lord there is always a reason. Ask him to try to figure this out as well. *See demonstration next page.*



Charlene was **stuck**. We had been moving forward in the session, but then suddenly **everything went quiet**.

Charlene: *Something just happened. All the pain I was feeling just went away and all I feel is calm.*

Facilitator: Is what you feel peace and release or is it numbness? [Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; numbness is the way we prevent ourselves from feeling pain.]

Charlene: *Not peace, this is a familiar feeling. This is what I feel most of the time when I am not feeling the pain inside; I think I am stuck.*

Facilitator: This is okay. Many people become stuck in this process from time to time. What is it that you want to see happen here?

Charlene: *I want to move ahead. I want the pain gone.*

Facilitator: Look inside yourself and see if you can figure out what is happening. Focus on whatever is going on. Think about the pain you were feeling, and ask yourself why you think the pain left.

Charlene: *(After a few moments) I think this is what I do all the time when the pain gets stirred up. I don't know how not to do this.*

Facilitator: I am going to ask a few questions, and you listen on the inside and simply report whatever you hear, sense, feel or see. What do you believe will happen if you allow the pain to come back and we move forward to its source?

Charlene: *I hear the thought that if I allow myself to feel, it will not ever get any better. It always just gets worse.*

Facilitator: Charlene, are you willing to listen to see what the Lord wants you to know about this belief?

Charlene: *Yes, sure.*

Facilitator: Jesus, what do you want Charlene to know about what she believes about feeling this pain and it only getting worse?

Charlene: *I did not hear anything.*

Facilitator: Look inside and try to figure out why you are not hearing anything.

Charlene: *I think I am mad at Him for not helping me with this pain over all these years.*

Facilitator: What do you want to do with the anger you have carried all this time?

Charlene: *I want it to be gone. I want Jesus to carry it.*

Facilitator: Are you sure? Is there any hesitancy to do this?

Charlene: *No. I am ready to let it go. Jesus, I am angry with you, but I also know that you are my only hope in getting free. I choose to let this anger go and listen to your voice. (Sigh)*

Facilitator: What happened?

Charlene: *I felt Him lift the anger off of me. That feels much better. I also just sensed Him say that I am now in a new place, and if I will trust Him, I can be free of this pain.*

Facilitator: Are you willing to allow the pain to return?

Charlene: *Yes, I am.*

Charlene gradually began to feel the pain return and we were able to move forward into the memory. Eventually, she found **truth** and **peace**.

Ask Questions to Deal with Obstacles of Belief and Choice

These questions and statements are provided as examples rather than a formula for dealing with obstacles that arise in the ministry session. They all relate to the person's beliefs and free will choices.

When Fear and Avoidance of Pain Are the Blockage:

- "Why are you fearful about going into this memory?"
- "What do you believe will happen if you go into this fear and follow it to its source?"
- "What will happen if this blockage is gone and you move forward?"
- "Are you willing to look at what is behind the blockage and feel what is there?"

When Mental Defenses Are the Blockage:

- "Look inside and see if you can discover what your mind is doing to block this."
- "Is there some part of your thinking that is not allowing you to move forward?"
- "What is it that this aspect of your thinking believes?"
- "Try to figure out what it is your mind does to block the pain [put up a wall, create the headache, etc.]"

When Demonic Powers are the Blockage:

When the block is demonic, remember that the person is not a helpless victim that you have to rescue. The demon is likely supplying a way of escape or a solution to pain, based on the person's true will. If you seek to battle the demon, you are in fact battling the person's own choice.

Instead, address the person's will and ask her what she wants to see take place. For example, if the demon is producing a "cold black wall" that is keeping her from moving forward, ask something like, "What do you believe will happen if this wall is removed?" "Are you willing to feel what is behind this wall and see and know the memory that it is blocking?" Another option is to ask, "Do you want this wall removed?"

The demon is not the problem; it is actually providing helpful clues as to what the person believes and what her true will is choosing. Everything that the demon is doing is connected to what the person is holding onto in her thinking. Learn to "read the demons" before rushing in.

Ask the following questions:

- "How does this demon's presence make you feel?"
- "Is this demon doing something for you that prevents you from feeling or going forward?"

"What will happen when the demon stops doing what it is doing?"

"Do you really want the demon removed? Are you willing to move toward, to feel, or to see whatever this demon is blocking from you?"

"What does it feel like to think of this demon and its actions as no longer being available to you?"

"Are you willing for this wall [or confusion or distraction] to be gone so you can move forward?"

"Is the demon providing a way of escape from having to move forward, feel or know something?"

When Suppression or Repression Is the Blockage:

"If what you are feeling is coming from a memory, what do you think will happen if it is remembered?"

"What will happen if you let the pictures that match these feelings emerge?"

"Is there some part of your thinking that is not letting you see, feel, or remember?"

"When you think about moving toward the source of the pain, do you feel any resistance or hesitancy?" [If yes, have them focus on this, and ask questions pertaining to this emotion.]

When Anger Is the Blockage:

"Is this anger protecting you in some way?"

"What do you believe will happen if you let the anger go?"

"What do you feel behind the anger [the more vulnerable emotions]?"

"What do you believe will happen or where will it leave you if the anger is no longer available to you?"

When Shame or Guilt Is the Blockage:

"What do you believe will happen if you go to the place where you first felt this shame/guilt?"

"Are you willing to allow yourself to fully feel this shame/guilt and look at where it is coming from? If not, then why not?"

"Are you willing to allow the Lord to search your heart to see what is causing this guilt/shame?"

"What keeps you from looking at why you are feeling guilt/shame?"

We Have Choices to Make for Good or Evil

The Scriptures and history teach us that God does not violate the right He gives to us to make decisions. He allows us to make evil or good choices and even allows us to violate each other's will without His intervention.

The hard fact is that people are violated and wounded by the willful choice of evil people. Some report that during the time of the trauma, they cried out to God to help them and to deliver them but to no avail. He apparently sometimes allows people to do very evil things even when His children cry out for help.

When we have choices to make, even though God may place signposts in our pathway that confront our direction, He does not interfere with the free-will process of decision making. We do not have to choose His will; we can go in a different direction, sit down and do nothing or even end our own life. It is still our choice.

Although God will not violate our will, He often orchestrates our environment and circumstances to motivate us to move in the right direction. For example, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. Jonah said, "No," and God allowed him to run in the opposite direction. However, the Bible says that "THE LORD HURLED A GREAT WIND ON THE SEA AND THERE WAS A GREAT STORM ON THE SEA" and "APPOINTED A GREAT FISH TO SWALLOW JONAH, AND JONAH WAS IN THE STOMACH OF THE FISH THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS" (*Jonah 1:4, 17*).

God does make it difficult for us to make bad choices at times because He loves us and we belong to Him. God hindered Jonah's direction, but Jonah still had the responsibility to make choices.

God will cause things to occur in people's lives to motivate them to go where they need to go in ministry. Sometimes people have failed to get to a place of peace in a particular session, and we scheduled them to return later. I have been amazed at how things will then happen in their life that are exactly what they needed to motivate them to go forward during their next session.

When people become stuck you could ask the Lord to "hurl a great wind or appoint a great fish" to motivate them. But pray the same for yourself. We all need

to stop asking God to remove the "wind and the fish" he appoints for us, and learn to submit to His work. Peter the Apostle said, "THEREFORE, THOSE ALSO WHO SUFFER ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD SHALL ENTRUST THEIR SOULS TO A FAITHFUL CREATOR IN DOING WHAT IS RIGHT" (*1 Peter 4:19*).

Theophostic Prayer Is About Refining Our Beliefs

The letters of the apostles often speak of the inevitable testing of our faith. The word that is commonly translated faith is *pistos* in Greek, which basically means belief. If our faith needs testing, it implies that something is not yet perfect in what we believe.

If we examine our belief system, it will be obvious that not all that we hold is truth. Some of what is at the core of our belief is falsehood and needs to be refined. When we are placed in the fire of testing, whatever we believe will be exposed just as the dross comes to the surface when gold is placed in the refiner's furnace. In the Theophostic Prayer Ministry process we learn to confess lie-based thinking and offer it up to God, seeking His perspective or truth.

A common interpretation of testing is that God is seeing "what we are made of" or whether we will give in under pressure. I think that God is not so concerned about determining our breaking point, as He is about the quality of our belief. Our *pistos* needs to be grounded in truth, because when it contains lies, we will struggle.

Often people ask for prayer to endure hardship, meaning they desire to somehow make it to the other side or to hold up without folding. The truth is we will get through every trial that we ever encounter one way or the other. Some people endure their trials by using drugs, having sex, eating, not eating, entertaining themselves, or even going to church and praying. Even someone who dies gets through the trial since death ushers them to a new place. Yet endurance is not about what we do to get through the trial but rather what we obtain through it.

Everyone faces trials, but not everyone is refined. Refinement of our faith is a willing cooperative effort in submitting to the "MIGHTY HAND OF GOD" (*1 Peter 5:6*) and "ENTRUSTING OUR SOULS TO A FAITHFUL CREATOR IN DOING WHAT IS RIGHT" (*1 Peter 4:19*).

James 1:2-8 and 1 Peter 5:12-19, 5:1-10 show that the purpose of the trial is the refining of what we believe. God desires that what we believe be pure like precious metal that has been refined by fire.

This refining process is a primary tool of sanctification. Those who own their negative emotions and choose to submit to the Theophostic process are in a position to find freedom. We are told to “COUNT IT ALL JOY, MY BRETHREN, WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS TRIALS, KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES ENDURANCE” (*James 1:2-3*). Endurance is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, synonymous with the word patience or longsuffering as found in Galatians 5:22. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is not something that we produce ourselves but is an outcome of God’s work in us.

Endurance is the outcome of a refined faith. When I know the truth, my faith is refined. I will not be “DRIVEN AND TOSSED BY THE WIND” (*James 1:6*) in the midst of the trial, but will be able to rest quietly, allowing God to do His deeper work.

A person who is not living out of refined faith will be a “DOUBLE-MINDED MAN UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS” (*James 1:8*). Double-mindedness is holding two opposing beliefs at the same time or having impure beliefs. In the midst of the trial when we are being “driven and tossed” or stirred up, we can look inward for the lie-based thinking and expose this to the Lord for His truth.

Here we can ask God for wisdom. For “IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL GENEROUSLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM” (*James 1:5*) “SO THAT THE PROOF OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD WHICH IS PERISHABLE, EVEN THOUGH TESTED BY FIRE, MAY BE FOUND TO RESULT IN PRAISE AND GLORY AND HONOR AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST” (*1 Peter 1:7*).

For a detailed explanation of this refinement process go to www.theophostic.com and order the DVD series that covers this topic.

When the Pressure is Increased, Our True Belief Will Be Exposed The events occurring around us in these troubled times can easily penetrate our outward veneer. Our emotional status is clear evidence of what

we really believe as opposed to what we logically profess.

It seems that the world is going to continue to deteriorate as the seams holding things in place weaken and eventually unravel, spilling out what is inside. Although the outcome may indeed be overwhelming, the church can be in a pivotal position. Christians can then show how to own our feelings, identify what we believe, and choose to look to Christ.

Initially there may not be much difference between the emotional responses of the church and the world when the fire comes. Even now I see much fear, anxiety and distress coming from the community of faith. Yet my prayer for all of us is that while the flame is still low we will be honest about what is being exposed in us and find His truth and peace so that when the flames increase we will be able to “stand in it” and proclaim Christ.

Although we are new people in Christ and have His heart, our minds are still corrupted with the falsehood of this world. They are in the process of being made new (Romans 12:2). Our evidence of renewal is a testimony to those who have no hope. May we identify with the lost, pursue Christ, and be renewed by the transforming of our minds.

As I travel, I meet many new people in airplanes, airports and out-of-the-way places. No matter where I go, the conversation eventually moves to the same topic: anxiety and concern about what is happening in the world and how it is emotionally affecting my fellow traveler. I find many opportunities to share the Good News in these situations, because in the context of crisis and trouble, people are often very open to hearing about Jesus.

Although believers know the Lord and should walk in some measure of truth and peace, we still are infested with lies. Circumstances will inevitably reveal that we all have minds in need of renewal to some degree. Spiritually speaking we are now citizens of heaven and are crucified to this world, but the emotional distress we sometimes feel is a bridge of identification with the lost world. We can honestly say, “I know how you feel,” yet also show the way to peace.

As I was sitting in a restaurant some time ago, I asked the waitress how she was. She responded, “I’m having trouble sleeping at night with all the bad things

happening in the world.” I identified with her fear and then asked her if she would like to have it resolved.

To make a long story short, I was able to offer her Theophostic ministry and as a result, she also prayed with me to invite the Lord, the Prince of peace, to become her Savior.

Choosing to Set Our Minds on the Spirit Before I end this chapter I want to address an important aspect of the will: the role it plays in each passing moment of life. The Apostle Paul teaches us clearly that wherever we choose to set our minds on will have impact of great magnitude. “FOR THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS DEATH, BUT THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE” (*Romans 8:6*).

We have a choice about where we will focus our attention. Satan knows this well and works hard at getting us to focus on the things that fulfill the flesh, ease our pain, distract our anxiety and fulfill the lusts of our body and mind.

A common way that he does this is through mental creations that I call “fantasy scenarios.” If you feel stirred up by a real-life situation, you might find yourself visually playing out a “what if” story in your mind. When you set your mind on a hypothetical episode,

you are actually focused on a lie. If it is not the truth, then it is a falsehood.

I believe that these false realities are often planted by the evil one as emotional areas are stirred up. Once the scenario is played out in your mind, and your emotions are in a whirl, you become easy prey for the demonic suggestions of the “roaring lion.” If you act in a way that is motivated by this emotion, you have taken the bait and been deceived.

We can choose to focus on the things of the Spirit (who is truth) and thus live in peace, or focus on the flesh (which is lie-based) and dwell in death. This area of choice or free will is the battlefield of the mind. It is here that the war is won, not in our desperate attempts to control behavior. It is important when in the midst of an emotional situation that we call to the forefront of our minds that which is true and reject that which is imaginary and not reality.

Ask yourself the questions, “What do I know to be the truth in this situation?” and “What do I know about what God has promised concerning this?” After finding the answers, choose to focus on this truth and resist the devil’s options. At the same time, take advantage of the trying situation to see what lie-based thinking God is exposing in you and then find His truth and peace.

1 If you want a more in-depth look at this idea, you can obtain a copy of the 3 DVD set of messages I presented at the IATM International Convention entitled *Theophostic Prayer and the Refining of Belief*.

2 When a person presents with two or more personalities there may be extreme dissociation present as is seen in a mental condition called Dissociative Identity Disorder. If you suspect this to be the case, be sure to work in tandem with a mental health professional that is experienced in this area of concern.

