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Introduction

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. —Isaiah 55:9 KJV

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. —1 Corinthians 3:18 KJV

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. —1 Corinthians 2:14 KJV

These verses have long intrigued me. As I write I acknowledge to the reader that this book is indeed a record of how these verses have been implemented in my life since I first believed them in 1980 as a junior in high school. Like Abraham of old the realization of these verses has been a dawning experience growing over the years in their impact and subsequent results. Two words serve as guideposts in describing this journey of faith.

The first is *serendipity*. Quite simply, it can be described as a pleasant and wonderful surprise. This has been my experience as I have staked my life on these concepts. Let me illustrate.

Imagine if you will that you were going on a journey to visit a relative, an old and somewhat ornery aunt (whom we'll call Nancy), out of a sense of family duty on any given holiday, say around Christmas time. The visit is boringly predictable. There will be the niceties of a simple visit, some conversation about distant relatives long not seen, perhaps a

little assistance with some household chores and after enduring the stuffiness of the room with temperatures ten degrees higher than any healthy human being could stand, one will begin the departure process and gathering the kids for the drive home. There will be a mild sense of fulfillment in bringing encouragement to a needy soul as well as a sense of self gratification for fulfilling one's familial responsibilities, but all in all *boring predictability* is a perfect way to describe both the event and the subsequent aftermath of internal emotions.

Unfortunately, this is the way most people live, in the realm of boring predictability—so plain, so bland, so tasteless, like hospital food served up for the faint of heart. They go through life empty and longing for something more all the while following the script for boring predictability. It is this sense of emptiness, this gnawing sense of “something is missing” that drives sane people to the insanity of such culturally common anomalies as Internet chat rooms (and worse), gambling addictions, fantasy, immorality, and just plain depression and emptiness. Deep down in our heart of hearts we scream, “There has got to be something more.” Do we not often think “*Why is everyone living such fulfilled lives and ours is so boringly predictable and full of struggles?*” We see images in the media of people fulfilling their dreams and doing exciting things while we have average kids with more than an average share of difficulties and family problems.

This book is about breaking away from the script. It's about a new and exciting type of insanity that leads not to self-destructive behaviors and the resultant internal wreckage, but to the introduction of whole new vistas of thought and experience bringing fulfillment unimaginable through touching our Creator in a deep and practical way often forsaken today.

Let's suppose our visit with Aunt Nancy took a different turn. Suppose somewhere between the tomato soup, saltines,

and tuna sandwiches and taking out all the trash that built up in the back hallway over the past month that Aunt Nancy made an amazing revelation. She presented you with a check for \$275,000! You and your wife sat there awestruck thinking “How can this be happening?” Instantly the ramifications of this *now serendipitous visit* flash through your mind. Mortgage paid off. New car. Home repairs will be a slam dunk. A REAL vacation. Now all of a sudden the possibilities are endless! Whole new horizons of opportunities are opened up. Life is changed instantly and wonderfully.

That is what this book is about. It’s about a new way of thinking and living so that *serendipitous events can happen at any moment*. The visit with Aunt Nancy is a once-in-a-lifetime, no, a never-in-my-lifetime event. “This kind of stuff happens to other people, not me.” Have you ever felt that way? But there is a disclaimer for the reader.

What you are about to read is my story. It is a living parable of how these principles have worked out in my family. The principles are for everyone but there is a cost.

One day the disciples asked Jesus a question and they simply could not believe the answer he gave. Their thought was “this is impossible who could believe it!” To which Jesus replied “Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.” (See Matthew 19:11) So it will be with this book. It will not be for everyone, but it is my prayer that some will find hope and confirmation of the principles that the Holy Spirit is already teaching them because truth can only come from the Spirit of God revealed to the human spirit (2 Corinthians 2:14).

This brings us to the second word, *counterintuitive*. As these verses tell us, the ways of God are often opposite or at least very different from what our natural thinking would lead us to believe. *Often following the path to true fulfillment means*

denying popular thinking and even at times our own internal human intuition. Indeed this book is about contemplating a “new approach” to life. Let the reader beware: Any implementation will be at a cost of risk, sacrifice, and certainly misunderstanding from family, church, friends, and the world around us at times.

The spirit of this book is not about being Maverick or being different for the sake of being different. Some will react to what they perceive to be a “Lone Ranger Syndrome,” or perhaps the thinking that one is “holier than thou” for choosing a different path. Doing things differently will always bring misunderstanding. This too is part of the cost. To keep it in perspective, let’s talk briefly about the payoff.

We must understand that we do not reap in the season that we sow. Our family plants our garden in May and June and we reap in August through October. There is always a gap between sowing and reaping in which toil and painstaking labor and often more painful—waiting—take place. This is why I am currently writing this book. After nearly 25 years of sowing and experiencing trials, hardships, misunderstandings, and numerous serendipitous events, the reaping of recent years has so excited my soul that I wish to share it with hungry hearts, those that long for something more.

There is a saying that goes something like “You can’t argue with success.” Or “nothing breeds success like success.” Americans are enamored with success. Usually this means financial success and worldly accomplishments. (Most societies of the world are satisfied with survival but Americans crave success and achievement). Thus this book.

This is really a result of a recent dawning realization—these life-giving principles I “stumbled upon” in my youth have opened the door for a life of fulfillment and success that I didn’t understand I had so longed for and are the *true* desires of

our hearts. It is my prayer that God will use these concepts to bring personal fulfillment and lasting success for each reader. Further any personal gains or accomplishments noted in this book have been purely by the grace and mercy of God in spite of myself and to the glory of Jesus Christ and his remarkable ability to continue to reach into human history to deliver us from the greatest peril of all, the peril of ourselves.