

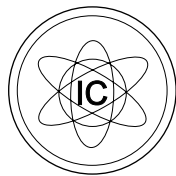
THE INTIMATE COUNSEL OF GOD

**—MORE VALUABLE THAN GOLD,
SILVER, AND PRECIOUS STONES**

BY

ROBERT W. CASE JR.

AN



PUBLICATION

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FINANCIAL POLICY

This is a grace-oriented ministry and therefore there is no charge for its materials. And, too, a believer must never be hindered in his spiritual growth for a lack of funds, nor stumble over the concept of giving if he has an honest skepticism. Furthermore, this ministry does not promise God will bless you for any other reason than Christ's own righteousness in you, and your reaching spiritual maturity. For it is the mature who give—not to get, but to bless (Acts 20:35). Hence, the symbolism of open hand—to bless others as God has blessed us (Dt. 15:14).

Therefore, when a believer sees the importance of a ministry, of his own free will he will “beg earnestly for the grace, favor and privilege to take part” in the support of that ministry which is “fully supplying the needs of the saints,” (2 Cor. 8:3-4, 9:12). This not only insures the integrity of the ministry, and keeps it free from the need of engaging in fund-raising tactics or the shameful practice of pleading for support, but keeps the focus of the believer and minister alike on the Lord Jesus Christ, “who is able to make all grace abound” (2 Cor. 9:8) to those who believe.

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PREFACE

Back in the early '70's, my mother decided to subscribe to a new mode of television. It was called *cable TV*. It was a system whereby the TV signal would come through a cable rather than a television antenna. It not only promised a more diverse program selection, but a much clearer picture. So we had to have it. I remember how we counted down the days to installation—excited to get *hooked up*. And when that day arrived, we indeed had countless more programs to view and commercials to bear. This greater variety gave rise to a greater degree of impatience on our part. But we quickly learned to satisfy our impatience by the ritual of channel *changing*. And while participating in this ritual one day, I came across a program that aroused my curiosity long enough for me to stop and focus upon its message. Its message would *change* my life.

The program was called *The 700 Club*, which was broadcast through one of these new cable networks, *The Christian Broadcasting Network*. It was through this program that I became intrigued with the concept of born-again *Christianity*. I had been baptized in the Episcopal Church and had been a faithful member, but had never heard the term “born again” mentioned with any emphasis or significance. But I was hearing it stressed over and over again on *The 700 Club*. And by the grace of God my high religiosity didn't dismiss this crude, embarrassing, and low-class term outright.

The format I observed was a Christian talk show hosted by a quite likeable fellow by the name of Pat Robertson, an ordained Baptist minister. And on this program, Pat's guests would talk about their experiences with Christ. And to my amazement, they would talk about their encounters with Christ in a very real and personal way—totally foreign to me. Such things simply were not done—not if you were an Episcopalian, that is. It was simply undignified. Nonetheless, I was fascinated by the things they said. And Pat would energetically and with great enthusiasm respond with “*amens*” and “*hallelujahs*” as they spoke of such things as hearings, miracles, and visions. These were things I believed had happened during biblical days, but surely not in 1974. I should have been skeptical, unbelieving of these simple-minded folk—but I wasn't. I should have ridiculed and taunted them—but I didn't. I simply believed. First, because I wanted to believe, and second, because they spoke with such conviction and certainty. And for more than two years, I would watch and listen,

hoping to glean some new spiritual insight. And as I did, my desire for Christ grew stronger and stronger with each passing month. Yet, my desire for Christ was not sufficient to lead me to commit my life to Him. There were still worlds to conquer, wild oats to sow, fleeting pleasures of sin to enjoy. So I would wait.

But my wait to commit would be short-lived. Shortly thereafter, the Holy Spirit would expose my true self to me far beyond the simple realization that I was a sinner. The specifics of the incident are not relevant here. But the revelation of my black-heartedness is. I always knew I was a sinner. Christ died for the likes of me. But this was a disclosure that caused me to "loathe"(Ezek. 20:43) myself. It was a repulsion—probably to the same degree that my thoughts, words, and deeds had all along repulsed the Holy Spirit. And that was all it took. I wanted nothing to do with the person I was. I immediately rushed within my soul to embrace the Savior and Lord that I now desired without hesitancy or trepidation. And in the blink of an eye, I was a new creation a member of the living church of Jesus Christ. I was born again—not through rite and ritual, or ecclesiastical hocus-pocus, but simply by committing my soul to Christ's lordship. I was declaring, "Take me, I'm yours. Do with me what you will." And with that, I was now a part of the family of the men and women I had watched on *The 700 Club*. It was now my club, and Pat became my spiritual cheerleader. Through this new medium of Christian cable television, I was being taught the real, living, and personal Christ. I learned that the Christ of yesterday and tomorrow was indeed the same today (Heb. 13:8)—FOR today. I learned that He was accessible, and that He desired me to be prosperous and in good health—not just in time to come, but NOW. And as important, Christian programming taught me about the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. I would learn in part of His baptism, His filling, and the need of His power to live the Christian life. This was all refreshing, enthralling, inspiring. It was good news, indeed.

But in my newfound zeal for Christ, and all He had for me, I was being subtly led astray. For I had become imprinted upon those who first aroused my desire for Christ—and out of spiritual ignorance and immaturity—I was being taken down a road that would keep me in spiritual bondage. For the emphasis and focus of much of what I watched, and subsequently read or heard, was on the various ministries of the Holy Spirit, such as tongues, hearings, and miracles, and most especially on the *blessings* of Christ in the area of finances, and not nearly enough on the PERSON of Christ Himself.

But I am grateful that these ministries at least taught that God DOES desire to bless, and His blessings are obtainable—not sometime, somewhere in the future, but now. This was hope far beyond what my religious upbringing had ever given me. For the scriptures shout this fact from almost every page, BUT we must not allow the blessings to misdirect our focus from Christ, as I once did. (And if you, too, have become indelibly marked by false teachings, or spurious doctrines—expounded by *dreamers of dreams*—Christ’s blood is more than able to thoroughly wash away all erroneous thoughts and impressions by the purity of His .)

KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON CHRIST

Yet from that chaos, God has brought forth this ministry, *OPEN HAND MINISTRIES*, so that we might “*fix our eyes on Jesus,*” Heb. 12:2. For this is the very thing that Christ revealed to me back in 1986 through a vision of Himself. The vision took place as my brother and I sat amongst a crowd of a couple of thousand people who had come to hear Pat Robertson at the Hunt ranch just outside of Irving, Texas. Yes, the same likeable fellow I first came to know years before on *The 700 Club*. But this meeting was more political than spiritual. It was during a time of high speculation and anticipation that Pat would run for the Presidency in 1988. And we expectantly gathered there that day to see if he would announce. And on the platform with Pat—under a large air-conditioned tent on that hot August afternoon—were several leading prosperity preachers. Men whom I admired, respected, and believed in. But while Dr. Ed Young, pastor of the 2nd Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, and emcee of the affair, spoke, I considered how privileged I was to be amongst these men of God. Yet, God would redirect such considerations and grant me the greatest of all privileges—to look upon His Son. In only a twinkling of an eye, a millisecond, these men whom I had just idolized were gone—vanished. And before me was only One Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a moment I will never forget and will always cherish. And as I reflect now, I’m surprised I didn’t hear a “voice out of a cloud saying, “*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; hear Him!*” (Matt. 17:5). For never have I seen a man of such beauty, power, and absolute authority. Instinctively I knew who He was and that His word was law. He was indeed the Son of God. But as quickly and without warning as He appeared, He was gone. He did not speak during His appearance. And frankly, there was no need for Him to speak. Just looking upon Him was all I could handle within my spirit. But the next day He did.

The following day, while my brother and I drove back to Houston, I contemplated the meaning of Christ's appearance amongst so many of the Christian leaders I admired. And at that moment, He spoke to me within my spirit. He said, "*Keep your focus on Me.*" He was reminding me of what His Father must have reminded Peter, James, and John so long ago; that they were not to honor Moses or Elijah on an equal basis with Christ. Paul taught along these lines as well. He said that it was not he, nor Apollo, nor Cephas that the Corinthians were to focus upon and be led by, but upon He who was crucified for our well-being (1 Cor. 1: 12-13). We so easily become captivated by the celebrity and the famous, the dynamic and the charismatic, that we lose sight of Christ Jesus, the one "*true celebrity of the Universe,*" as so well said by R. B. Thieme, pastor of the Berachah Church in Houston, Texas. Focusing upon men can only cause division, derision, and calamity. Only Christ can unite, legitimize, and bring about peace.

So Christ set me straight that day. He was to be my focus—my celebrity. And so, I am compelled to instruct you to keep *your* focus on Christ and Christ alone. And if we do, we will indeed experience prosperity and success, which is currently being *talked about*, but not biblically taught in a sound fashion, nor tempered, steered, or balanced by the whole counsel of God. This book, *THE INTIMATE COUNSEL OF CTOD*, was written to further our understanding of a blessed life by the teaching figure of Orbit 9, which was introduced in my first book, *THE POWER SPHERES*, and is a continuation of the *POWER SPHERES TEACHING SYSTEM*. Orbit 9 is synonymous with spiritual maturity, and the significance of this achievement is to be blessed with the *GLORY BLESSINGS*. In fact, we are called by God to receive them.

*And it was for this He called you through the gospel,
that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2
Thess. 2:14)*

*You were called for the very purpose that you might
inherit a blessing. (1 Pt. 3:-9)*

INTRODUCTIONS

Yes, it is true, you and I are called by God to inherit a blessing. Let others place their hopes on long shots. But we as God's children are assured and guaranteed glorious blessings from God our Father. I call this inheritance the glory blessings—blessings beyond all we could as or think. But the true beauty and wonder of the glory blessings is that they are the results of an intimate relationship with our Creator. It is such a relationship He longs to have with you and I.

"Glory Blessings"



God

Man

GLORY BLESSINGS are the means God has chosen to glorify Himself and bless you and me. God is glorified in blessing man; therefore, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that our good fortune and blessings are secured through working towards God's glory—not our own. However, these glorious blessings are exclusively for the Christian whose soul has prospered (3 Jn. 2). God is glorified in such an individual, for he is His "workmanship? (Eph. 2:10), and he is "*equipped...in every good thing to do His will, [Jesus Christ] working in [him] that which is pleasing in His sight,* " (Heb. 13:21). "*For it is God who is at work in [him], both to will and to work to His good pleasure,*" Phil. 2:13. Therefore, God receives the glory for our maturity because it is His work and the result of our willingness to be crafted, molded, and shaped by the carpenter from Nazareth for God's pleasure and purpose. And in our willingness to be constructed and equipped by God for His glory, we are greatly blessed.

Examples of which I speak are throughout God's Word. For instance, God allowed Moses and the Israelites to be cornered at the Red Sea. Yet, God provided a miraculous escape for His children by dividing the waters of the Red Sea. He was glorified and the Israelites were blessed with an event like no other in recorded history. Then there was Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, who was at his wits end when three warring factions came against him and his people. Yet, God Himself allowed this as a test of their faith. And faith they had. God destroyed the three factions, receiving the glory, while the people of Judah were blessed with great wealth from the spoils.

But an example I would like to use is found in the 9th chapter of John, where Christ and His disciples came upon a blind man. And the Jews, believing that all sickness was a result of sin, asked Jesus, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?” (Jn. 9:2). But Jesus replied that the blindness was not a result of sin, but that God had permitted it, so that He might be glorified. Therefore, Jesus healed the blind man, and he was blessed with sight. So we indeed see that as the blind man believed that Christ would heal him, he received the blessing of sight, while God received the glory.

WALK BY FAITH, NOT SIGHT

But there is more wealth to the 9th chapter of John, for it reveals how we come by the glory blessings, and that is through FAITH. Now in Christ’s day, the Pharisees were the teachers of God’s Word. These were highly religious men, who followed every jot and tittle of God’s Word as well as hundreds of traditions which had been handed down to them. They were probably the most religious men ever to walk this earth. But such was their downfall. For they became proud of their religiosity, their knowledge, their position in Jewish society, and so-called rank before God as they perceived themselves. These were those that Christ said, they “*trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt,*” Luke 18:9.

In seeking themselves as virtuous, righteous, men of power and prestige, the Pharisees became blind to the Word’s spiritual content. Their self-importance had gone to their heads (for lack of God’s Wisdom in their hearts), and God’s people were suffering for lack of spiritual food.

We see Christ expose this fact concerning these religious men throughout the Gospels, and we see it clearly in the 9th chapter of John. When the Pharisees had learned of the blind man’s healing, they questioned him as to its origin. The man told them, Jesus had healed him. This was not the answer they sought, and they became indignant. Their indignation arose from their jealousy of Christ, for the people were following His teachings, and they felt threatened. They continually saw their power base eroding. This they could not permit. Their reply to the former blind man’s statement that Christ healed him is an amazing one. First, they rightly said, “Give glory to God,” but then in the same breath, heavy with sarcasm, stated, “we know this man

(Jesus) is a sinner,' (Jn. 9:24). This statement clearly indicates and reveals that God was simply a means towards their personal greatness and Christ could only detract from it. Their legalistic and mechanical approach to God and His Word left them hollow-dead inside. They had become so focused upon laws, rules, tradition, that they made pains to even tithe the smallest of seeds in their gardens (Mt. 23:23). Yet, when it came to compassion and mercy, they were conspicuously devoid of any such attributes.

In their misguided zeal for the law, they lost sight of its purpose: to ensure liberty, not promote bondage. Thus, they had become totally blind to faith, spiritual reality, and Godly wisdom. They relied upon their own intellect in interpreting God's will. And in so doing, they perverted God's Word into a system of *do's and don'ts*. And Jesus did a don't in their estimation when He healed the blind man on a Sabbath. It didn't matter if the work performed was a work of compassion or not, for in their minds it broke God's commandment of keeping the Sabbath holy. Therefore, Jesus was a "sinner" and could not possibly be from God.

But the man who was born blind knew Jesus *was* from God and told the Pharisees so. They became furious over his insolence, and put him out of the synagogue. Jesus later found the man and revealed to him He was the Son of Man, the Messiah.

This was a tremendous revelation. There are only a few instances in the Bible where Christ openly revealed Himself as God in the flesh and the purpose for which He came. The Bible teaches Christ came to *"save sinners," "to bear witness to the truth," "to fulfill the law and the prophets," "to bring division," "to give abundant life,"* and so on. But to this man He states that He came into the world "for judgement." That is, to differentiate those who live according to God's pleasure as opposed to those who live according to their own particular pleasure, purpose, and will. And the consequences of those who live according to God's pleasure and purpose will come to know God in a personal and intimate way. They will come to *see* God and become recipients of His abundant blessings.

For judgement I came into the world, that those who do not see [or do not claim to be intimate with spiritual realities and therefore acknowledge the need for Christ's teachings (His light or saving truth)] may see [the spiritual reality of God's Word and therefore be saved]; and that those who see [claim to have spiritual

insight without the need for Christ's light] *may become*
blind [to the Word's spiritual content and therefore
remain condemned). (*Jn. 9:39*)

First, it is important to focus upon the word “judgement.” To understand this word, we turn to John 3:19, allowing scripture to interpret scripture. The verse reads as follows:

*And this is judgement, that the light is come into the
world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for
their deeds were evil.*

Light refers to Christ's saving grace and the judgement spoken of is the condemnation that is incurred upon all men who reject Christ. AU this because men refuse to believe they are inherently evil and in need of salvation; or, that they believe that they can gain salvation through good works, thereby rejecting salvation by grace alone. Therefore a distinction has been made: men who love darkness and reject Christ's saving grace and men who love the light and accept Christ's truth about themselves and take appropriate action—“repent and *believe in the gospel*,” Mark 1:15. And in John 9:39, we have a distinction between men without a trained, theological mind, yet with faith in Christ, will gain spiritual truths, versus men who are trained theologians and scholars, but fail to grasp the mind of God due to pride and reliance on their own intellectual prowess.

It's important to point out that Christ is indeed speaking of spiritual sight, not the physical act of seeing. Physical blindness is no more God's will for man than is spiritual blindness. Yet in our context, the Pharisees were to be the spiritual leaders of God's people. They claimed to know God intimately. They were to be “*guides to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature...*” (Rom 2:19,20). Yet over the centuries these highly religious men had become proud and arrogant-loving the praises of men rather than acting in a praiseworthy manner before God. Therefore, God shut these men off from receiving God's truth. No longer would they see or spiritually perceive God's wisdom, for they proved themselves not to be worthy to be entrusted with the truth. And the effect of this was to leave God's people in darkness as well. But there was always the promise of the Messiah. And in this ninth chapter of John, the Messiah has come.

So not only does this chapter in John reveal to us the principle of the GLORY BLESSINGS, but gives us a clue as to how to receive them. The clue is in the word *see* and refers to the ability to spiritually

discern God's wisdom. This is only possible as we WALK BY FAITH, not sight or trusting in intellect alone. Therefore, the objective of the Christian walk, lifestyle, or manner of conducting one's life is to glorify God and become a recipient of His blessings. Both are accomplished upon reaching spiritual maturity.

THE VALUE OF WISDOM

Now the key to unlocking the mysteries of God's kingdom and advancing in God's plan for our life is WISDOM. And that's why *THE INTIMATE COUNSEL OF GOD* was written and this ministry formed: that YOU might be made aware of God's wisdom, what it is, what it does, and how one acquires it. I will use pictures, diagrams, and figures as I did in *THE POWER SPHERES* to give you a mental picture of the spiritual realm so that you might add substance to your faith and better understand the workings of the Holy Spirit in terms of growing in grace.

ONE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

Could I interest you in diamonds, rubies,
sapphires and gold, or
Silver and pearls and emeralds untold?
How 'bout newly found treasure
and crowns of kings,
Or coral and crystal and all precious things?

Were you interested in the above offer? I can't think of anyone who would not be honestly interested in such things of beauty, or what they could mean in terms of wealth to their possessor. Likewise, it is my hope to interest you in God's wisdom, for I am of the unshakable opinion that such treasures were put on this earth for the expressed purpose of symbolizing the wealth and beauty which comes from and is of heaven, God's WISDOM. God uses these rocks, stones, and precious things from the earth and sea to teach us the inestimable value of His counsel. Jesus is the "*one pearl of great value*" (Mt. 13:46). Men die over the scarcity of gold and the perfection of pearls here in the earth, but in heaven they are used to pave the streets and to construct its gates. God wants it crystal clear that, as precious as these earthly jewels are, His wisdom is far more, abundantly more precious. The value of God's Wisdom should be even more highlighted in your

thinking when we consider it was God's precious Son, Christ Jesus, who died that we might possess such eternal wealth. Yes, what God has for you and me are the glory blessings and through His wisdom, they are attainable—NOW AND FOREVER.

Yet man in his arrogance does not see the spiritual value of God's treasure, nor does he esteem God. Like the Pharisee, he is blind and has no fear for God's name. He putters around this earth in search for that which will bring at best temporary moments of fame, fortune, and pleasure, while he forever lets the glory blessings slip away.

This is the theme of the 28th chapter of Job, which was often quoted by Solomon, that men are skilled and adept at finding the earth's riches, but at a loss for the whereabouts of heavenly treasure.

But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value. (Job 28:12-13)

We are going to find the answers to these questions and come to know the value of God's wisdom. We will discover things few teach. And we will learn that the earth's riches won't look so valuable when we see what they will NOT purchase: God's wisdom, power, and joy. Therefore it is God and His glory we seek, and we begin with some wise words. Solomon, who was the wealthiest of men, because he was the wisest, said,

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding. For its profit is better than the profit of silver, and its gain than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. (Pr. 3:13-15)