

EXTENDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD...ONE PERSON AT A TIME®

ONE-TO-ONE

Autumn 2012 ®

WINDOWS
to the WORLD

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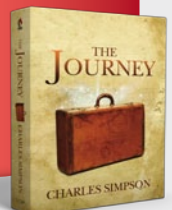
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NEW //
RELEASES
BY CHARLES
SIMPSON

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from the editor

I Can See Clearly Now

How to keep our vision sharp when days seem dark

Recently, the United States solemnly observed the eleventh anniversary of the horrific September 11, 2001 terror attacks against the nation. Nearly 3,000 people died on that day in New York City, in Washington, DC, and in Shanksville, PA. Included among the victims were citizens of more than 90 nations from across the globe. The events of that day largely shaped national policy and economics for many nations in the following years.

Shockingly, on this year's anniversary of that terrible day, there were further terror attacks against United States embassies and personnel in the Middle East. Once more, we were caught unprepared to deal with forces of evil, rage, terrorism, and chaos. Once again, a nation grieves and searches for answers.

Soon, American citizens will go to the polls to elect a President for the next four years. As always, the results of this election will profoundly affect—not only the United States—but every nation on earth. Without question, it's cause for prayer and concern for everyone reading this today.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the sky was crystal blue over New York City and no one, other than the terrorists, could have imagined what was about to ensue. The fact is, none of us knows from day-to-day what event could happen that might forever change our lives. Some tests and trials, we know about. Some come as a great surprise.

I believe these days call for vigilance and diligence, but not for fear. If ever we need to see clearly, it is now. I've found that fear or it's companion, rage, are—though natural responses to crisis—the very things that tend to blind us and exacerbate the trouble.

Another typical human response is to look to “the flesh” for solutions ... our own wisdom or strength or resources, or even, perhaps, political parties or candidates. While God does indeed raise up friends or leaders to address crises, we must never lose sight of our ultimate hope and help.

I remember taking my daughter to school early one morning in the days after 9/11/01. She was telling me what their class was learning and

she told me that their teacher had taught them memory verses from Psalm 46. I asked, “What does it say?” She said, *“God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore I will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be cast in to the midst of the sea.”* My eyes filled with tears at the power of those words.

What a beautiful reminder, then, and again in these days, of God's Sovereign plan, power, and grace. Psalm 121 says, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.” The Lord is not only the right place to look, but by looking to Him, our vision is healed and clarified, and all of life becomes brighter; direction and purpose and hope are revealed. May it ever be so, especially in these days in our history together.

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keynote

WINDOWS *to the* WORLD

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

What you see can change
you and change history!

One of the greatest novels ever is *Les Miserables*, written in 1862, by Victor Hugo. The novel is about the condition of the poor, imprisoned, and the “wretched” in France during that period. It is a story of law versus grace and the triumph of mercy. The novel was later very effectively adapted to stage and screen.

Long before Victor Hugo saw and wrote of the plight of the needy, another man looked out of his window and saw a distressing sight, and decided to do something that affected millions of children and adults. What he did continues to make a powerful impact even to this day. His name was Robert Raikes, and I want to tell you about him.

My friend Dr. Michael Peters has recently gathered and edited material on the life of Robert Raikes and released a book: *Robert Raikes: the Founder of Sunday School 1780*. Victor Hugo became very famous for his work; Raikes is not famous, though it is likely that he did more to affect millions than did Hugo (not to diminish Hugo).

Raikes was a printer, not a writer, in Gloucester, England. He was a successful businessman, well-dressed, and had a place in upper-society. Like France 80 years later, England had its "wretches" ... poor children of the street whose parents were scarcely able to provide for or instruct their offspring. The upper-class generally accepted their condition as impossible to change and sought to ignore these "wastes" of humanity.

Consequently, vast numbers of these children were destined to wind up in criminal or debtors prison.

One day, Raikes was in his office and looked out his window and saw these wretches, heard their foul language, and decided to do something which made him unpopular in Gloucester; he began what became known as

leader and abolitionist.

Windows

When I heard this story, I was glad that Raikes' office had widows. Of course, in those days before air-conditioning, a room would have windows. But Raikes not only let the light in, he let the light out. Windows should be a two-way blessing.



One day, Raikes looked out his window and saw these "wastes" and decided to do something.

the Sunday School Movement. His actions, like all true leaders, cut across "mainstream" opinion and, at personal cost, changed the lives of millions. His own pastor frowned upon his efforts; the city paid him no honor.

Robert Raikes died in 1811 at the age of 75. By the time of his death, there were many thousands of Sunday Schools across England and elsewhere. He was honored by such men as William Wilberforce, great in his own right as a political

As I meditated on windows, I was reminded that heaven has windows. They opened a flood upon the earth (see Genesis 7:11) and caused the flood to cease (see Genesis 8:2). Malachi 3:10 promises that God will open the "windows of heaven" and pour out an abundant blessing if we bring to Him all our tithes.

Now, I realize that these verses are referring to windows in a metaphorical sense. Heaven needs no

physical windows. But what I am saying is also metaphorical; I assume that we all have windows in our homes and offices. The question is, do we see and hear what is “out there”? Do many of us, in effect, live in windowless cubicles?

Life Without Windows

How would we characterize a life without windows? It would be a life so focused on our own world that we could not see the real world around us. It would be a life shut in from our surroundings, deaf to the sounds, and blind to the sights. It is a world we can walk through daily and not see it, only our own destination. It would be a world where little or no light came in and none went out. It is a world where one loses a sense of time and purpose beyond the moment. It would be a world of repetition and mind-numbing monotony.

A world without windows becomes a world where one’s reality is, in effect, unreality. We will become oblivious to the conditions and changes around us, until finally the “peasants” tear our house down as they did in the French Revolution. That did not happen in England

because some lives had windows. People like Robert Raikes saw the light and gave it to the children.

Churches Without Windows

The vast majority of the Churches see the world, at least, in a measure. But as individuals, many rely on institutions to deal with

“Do we see
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the world. Institutions often become occupied with self-perpetualization in windowless rooms. The resources remain inside more than flowing out. There are, of course, exceptions. Even when institutions do a great job, we can be robbed of our own personal sensitivity to what is around us and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Great institutions usually begin with great people who are sensitive—who have windows in their souls. But generations later may be led by those who only maintain some memory and resist

letting the light in or out.

Psalm 36:9 says, “In Your light we see light.” When the Lord shines into our hearts, we *see* the light and we *send* the light. Raikes saw the light in *His* light. When churches and other institutions are visited by “the light *of* the world”, they become light *to* the world, not only as group, but as individuals.

World View

Worldview is often thought of in philosophical terms. How do we see the world? Do we see it as creation? Do we believe in creation laws? Do we believe in absolute truth? Do we believe in human accountability to our Creator?

Another question is, does how we view the world really matter? Is one worldview as good as another? That is the multicultural, post-modern worldview.

How we view God, the world, individuals, or government matters a lot! Raikes’s worldview required that he act upon what he saw. His worldview was that humanity was accountable to the Creator, so in spite of insults, he worked in prisons and with children of the street. Wilberforce’s worldview was that slaves were human and slavery was wrong, therefore he was the prime mover in removing slavery and slave trading from

England. His friend, John Newton, a former slave trader, came to Christ and gave us the famous hymn "Amazing Grace".

A worldview of biblical principles has given to us universities, hospitals, and a host of beneficial results, not to mention strong families, churches, and worldwide missions. A post-modern worldview gives no such results, only irresponsibility, self-centeredness, and windowless rooms.

Open the Curtains

I live in a nice neighborhood. Behind our home is an Indian family. She is a laboratory biologist, and he is a cardiologist. Down the street is a Muslim family. African Americans live nearby. I pastor one African American pastor who works with newly released prisoners. This is not the world I grew up in! India was "way over there." Islam was too. Now it is all here. My daughter is in Costa Rica as are seven of my grandchildren. Growing up, I doubt I could have found it on a map. The Lord has forced me to "open the curtains" from my windows and look outside.

One of my granddaughters is very

interested in stopping sex slave trafficking and writes a blog about the evil effects of human slavery that is growing among us. We need new "Robert Raikes" and "William Wilberforces". One of my friends recently asked, "Is Church a *noun* or a *verb*? What is it with you?"

Find the Door

Jesus said, "I am the door." He also said that His sheep hear His voice; and He calls His own sheep by name and **leads them out** (see John 10:3-7). If we know His voice, we go out and then Church becomes a "verb".

Each year, we meet with 250 leaders and friends in Gatlinburg, TN. I've been blessed with the quality of ministries that, like Raikes and Wilberforce, see windows. And, having seen the light, they have found the door. From Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia, as well as here at home, they have gone out and borne fruit. I am so encouraged by them. In 2013, April 17-19, we will gather again; I hope you will join us. Visit our website or contact our office for more information.

I urge you to look out of your window, not as a mere duty, but as a grand opportunity for you and those

that you touch. Our goal is not fame, but simply to hear the Shepherd's voice, the One Who died for the sins of the world; His voice will cause us to see the world around us and go out to meet it with the Gospel. 121

For more information about Dr. Michael Peters' book, contact: Pleasant Ward, PO Box 428, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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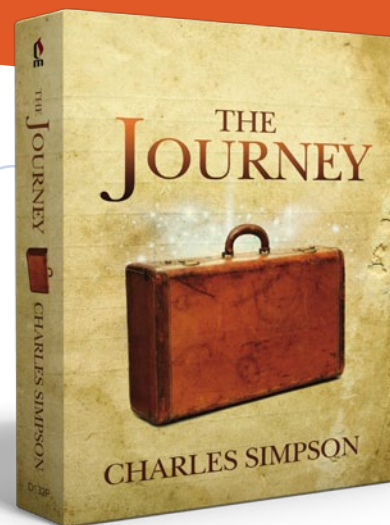
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This 4 part series is intended for seekers, adventurers and pioneers. (WARNING: Will cause great discomfort for anyone seeking to settle down, quit, or to escape from the tests that produce testimonies.) Delivered at a Men's Conference in Virginia, this series provides practical and inspiring leadership examples and principles that will equip you for the journey ahead. Charles Simpson draws lessons from the journeys of two imperfect men who became great leaders: Abraham and Moses. Discover how their walk relates to yours! (4 CDS)

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PIZZA, POLITICS, AND RELIGION

One way to shape your
children's worldview

BY STEPHEN SIMPSON

There are two subjects generally frowned upon in polite dinner conversation: religion and politics. However, I'm about to suggest violating that rule, at least with your own family around your own table.

We live in a society that aggressively working to shape our children's values on a host of issues. Sadly, the prevailing culture today often holds values that are contrary to our values as Christian parents. And so, in schools, in movies, in music, on television, on the web, and in advertising, children are being told that "god" is whoever or whatever we want it to be, that our sexuality is in a state of flux and should be explored in every combination and form, that abortion is simply a choice of whether or not to



dispose of an anonymous blob of tissue, that the government should decide how we spend our own money, and should forcibly confiscate and redistribute our money as it sees fit.

In the United States, the history of America is regularly revised, re-defined, and twisted to suit current agendas that directly contradict the intents of our founders. And all of this is aimed squarely at the emerging generation. Whoever wins the youth wins the future.

THE POWER OF THE TABLE

However, I still believe that with all of the billions of dollars that secular humanism has at its disposal and the millions of mentors it seeks to place over our children, none of that has the powerful potential that the family dinner table has. Or the family prayer time.

In the face of all that opposes our families and our family values, it is vital that parents actively engage in prayer and discussion with our children about what matters most to us, and why. We must not sit passively by while an antagonistic world seeks to form the hearts and minds of the children God has entrusted to our care.

It is in times of family time together where truth can be taught and

modeled. I can remember many times around the table, listening to my parents and grandparents discuss the great issues of our day, what they meant to our nation and our family, and what the Bible had to say about those issues.

From those times, I not only learned about those issues, but I learned that Scripture has a lot to say about our daily lives and about the events that shape the world we live in. I came to highly prize biblical perspectives on history and current events, and since then, I've sought out books, teachers, and mentors who have continued to significantly affect my worldview.



It was at the dinner table where I heard truth that resonated in my heart, and I learned the names of great authors, preachers, philosophers, thinkers, and doers. My parents and grandparents had earned my trust through their own love, behavior, and integrity toward me and those around them. If they said they valued the opinions of a particular person, then that caused me to

value that person.

I didn't do most of the talking, but sometimes I would ask questions. They would take the time to explain to me, or hear follow-up questions about these issues. I saw that biblical principles and ideas could actually be applied to what was happening in our nation and government.

PRAYER AND ACTION

This principle transcends party politics. At our home, it was never simply about "Vote Democrat" or "Vote Republican"—and our family voted for both—but it was about why to vote for a particular person, party, or policy. Furthermore, when we would gather to pray before bedtime, it was not unusual in our house to pray for our nation or our leaders, or pray about issues happening around the world. We prayed for the poor and the hungry, for the lost and the dying, for the oppressed, and for the military personnel who were defending freedom.

My parents were always reading, and we had Encyclopedias and Almanacs in our house. Yes, this was pre-internet, although it was post-dinosaur! They made sure I knew about the Judeo-Christian values of our Founders and the way that faith had affected our history. I knew about the First and Second Great Awakenings, and the impact that these had on great events like the American Declaration of Independence and the abolition of slavery.

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The Business of Salt & Light

An Interview with Rod Smith,
Vice President of Costa Solutions

> JONATHAN SIMPSON

“Are you creating the climate around you, or are you simply OK with reflecting the culture in which you work? The challenge and opportunity is there for us every day as Christians in the marketplace to be salt and light to the world, but how tasty and illuminatingly different are we?” These are questions Rod Smith, Vice President and Partner of Costa Solutions is asking and taking to heart. It was my pleasure recently to interview Mr. Smith, who is largely responsible for his company’s overall vision and direction.

—Jonathan Simpson



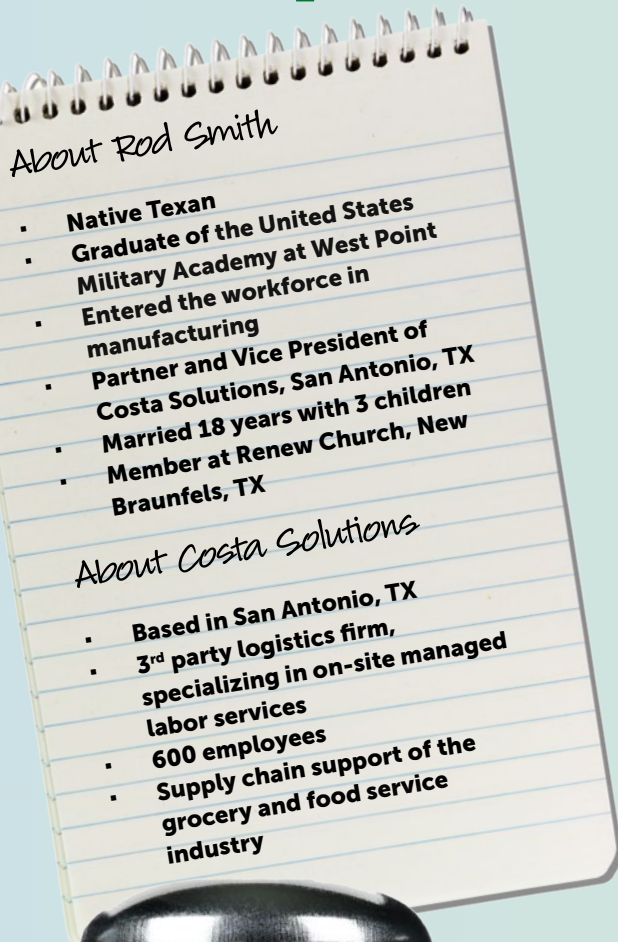
> Rod Smith is on the left, pictured with a teammate.

121: What are some pitfalls for us in the marketplace in becoming “salt and light” and how are these pitfalls avoided?

RS: Setting a poor example through personal modeling will undermine every relationship as well as company directive.

If a leader or employer

is a self-centered person instead of Christ-centered and outward focused, it is all the more damaging due to his/her increased



influence and responsibility. Only short-term gains can be made with such a short-sighted approach. It's also important to realize that you can change the culture where you are. You don't need to be a CEO to do it. If you wait until you are the leader to learn to lead, you won't be ready.

The misdirection of a Christian life is often that we'll make a difference when we have more time, money, resources, or knowledge to give. The truth is that we will never truly "arrive," so we need to make an impact right now with what God has given us in this current season—this is the definition of stewardship. Our failure to live in an effective and relevant manner leads to mediocrity which leaves a flavorless, lukewarm taste in the mouths of a hungry world.

John Wooden says, "When you're through learning, you're through." Keep learning, developing yourself every day in both your craft and your relationship with God. If we fail to grow and learn, we are at risk of being ineffective, irrelevant, or easily dismissed by the ones that we should be reaching. We definitely must renew our minds daily and wash ourselves in the water of the Word, not living off of yesterday's victory or relationship. We are called to be most ready and engaged in the moment of the present, especially with our Heavenly Father.

There is never a better place to start making a difference than where you are. For millions of Christians worldwide, that opportunity exists in the marketplace, en masse. The places



> **Rod Smith helps a teammate in the obstacle challenge.**

where we work are the most available, yet largest untapped mission field, affording each one of us excellent access to positively impact the lives of friends, co-workers, customers, vendors and all of their families. We need to be about our Father's business and the marketplace group represents a lot of folks.

121: In your role at Costa Solutions, what is your approach to establishing vision and direction, and how is it imparted throughout the company?

RS: Strategic planning starts with core values, then mission and vision statements; all current and future decisions, direction, and policies, must be run through the filter of the strategic plan. Effectiveness is born out of having a foundation that accurately represents the essence of who you are and where you are going. Good communication is essential to engagement and

impartation. Believers in leadership should practice the following:

(a) Personally model and be accountable to a Christ-centered message; (b) Develop, disciple, and have buy-in of key leaders and staff; (c) Disciple leaders who make disciple leaders.

121: What kind of culture would a new employee encounter at Costa Solutions?

RS: A growing and changing culture—we haven't arrived yet. The HR term is "healthy labor relations," but the feel is a caring, loving, candid environment. Our work is typically challenging and labor intensive, so the environment is not soft, but it is fair and supportive, building relationships of trust and confidence.

121: How do you quantify your effectiveness?

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freedom

Who Do You Own?

Human Slavery Starts With A Mindset

> VICTORIA G. SIMPSON



You have probably participated in a form of human slavery. And so have I. We didn't mean to do it. But we are part of a culture which has a way of commodifying the human being and desensitizes us to the worth of each individual person. This desensitization can lead to a willingness to be unaware, or even to more dangerous and seemingly unthinkable actions such as physically owning slaves.

For most of us, this process of losing sensitivity comes from the usual suspects: magazines, television, movies, music, advertising, and other media. Just one consequence of commodification has been the obsession our culture has with body image, which affects the way so many people live; not just women, but even men.

SLAVES TO IMAGE

While this has been widely reported among women, did you know that more than 10% of all people now suffering from an eating disorder are male? Men are now feeling the pressures of image. They have to market their image just right to feel a certain amount of acceptance. And what's disturbing is that for men and women, what others think about us, or what we

think about ourselves, in terms of worth, has become such a visual and aesthetic issue. Those things are often tied to sexuality. As they say, sex sells.

The people we worship in this society are beautiful. Many successful celebrities have beauty but lack talent, sending the message that success is solely based on how sexually desirable you are. So, men and women now believe they must appear sexually attractive in order to gain any success.

GOD-GIVEN BEAUTY

We are used to the pretty people telling us what to buy. We're used to them using their bodies to get us to do what they want. Sounds a bit like prostitution, right? And many people are enslaved by this way of thinking. People are no longer people in our eyes. They are commodities. You're too ugly, fat, or old? Sorry, your number is up, and you are no longer useful. Disposable.

The more comfortable we become with this way of thinking, the easier it is to make things more tangible. The only difference between porn and prostitutes is that one isn't physically in the room. Porn is just in front of your eyes, in your mind, burrowing into your soul. Those men and women

are just images to consumers, not people. I think we all know that porn is a sort of "gateway drug". What was it that infamous serial killer Ted Bundy said? That porn started it all for him? Is our culture becoming a gateway to porn?

I'm not writing this to be ashamed of beauty or the human body, but to say that there is a problem when all that makes a human worthwhile is what their shell looks like. If we take the whole God-created human being into account, everyone has the potential to be beautiful. Beauty is more than an image. The danger is taking the image and discarding the rest, forgetting that the model on the magazine staring back at you is a human being too. That the girl on the street selling herself is one. That the male stripper being commodified in sleazy Hollywood films is one.

"Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart" (see 1 Samuel 16:7). I think

part of the reason God gave us those words is because without looking at the heart, we are at risk of losing our humanity. 121

VICTORIA GRACE SIMPSON

recently earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in International Studies with a Minor in Professional Writing from Spring Hill College, Spring Hill College, and recently earned her certification to teach English as a Second Language in Italy.

We lived in the South in the 1960s, and my parents taught me by example and instruction to love all God's children and make them welcomed in our home. People of different colors and ethnicities and nationalities were often guests around our table and even stayed overnight with us. A few of our neighbors were not happy about this, but my parents were not deterred.

COHESIVE WORLDVIEW

In this age of instant information and a 24-hour news cycle, there is a flood of data flying at our families at the speed of light. It's important for parents to be informed, not just with random bits of trivia, but with a cohesive worldview that can help our children process all they are seeing and hearing.

Next time you sit down at the table with your kids, ask them what they see happening in the world around them, and pray for wisdom and peace to help them process it. Let them know what the issues are out there that you see. Tell them about your voting, and why you plan to vote that way. Watch and pray together that God will raise up righteous leadership. If Christian families across this nation will do that today, it will bring a great blessing tomorrow ... not only for our nation, but for the world. **121**

RS: That's a tough one to answer because we are still growing in our effectiveness, but here are some: (a) improved retention and decreased turnover rate; (b) better, more open dialogue with all team members; (c) an "open door" and alternate dispute resolution policy that works; (d) increased ministry activity among leaders and team members; (e) ability of the newest team member to articulate the basic essence of our company's core values, goals, and desires.

121: What recommendations do you have for personal, "salt and light" development?

RS: Lots of reading, as well as meditating and renewing your mind in God's Word. An excellent book on Christ-centered leadership is *The Way of the Shepherd*, by Dr. Kevin Leman. I also believe personal development and growth is best served in an environment of accountability. To that end, I am part of a Christian CEO and Owner peer board called the C12 Group. The group has helped us hone our strategic plan, establish and communicate the core values of our company, sharing our vision and mission with the leaders and teams of people that help us live it out. As "iron sharpens iron," and it makes us more effective in Christ, as a person, as a leader, in business, and finally in our business as a ministry. **121**

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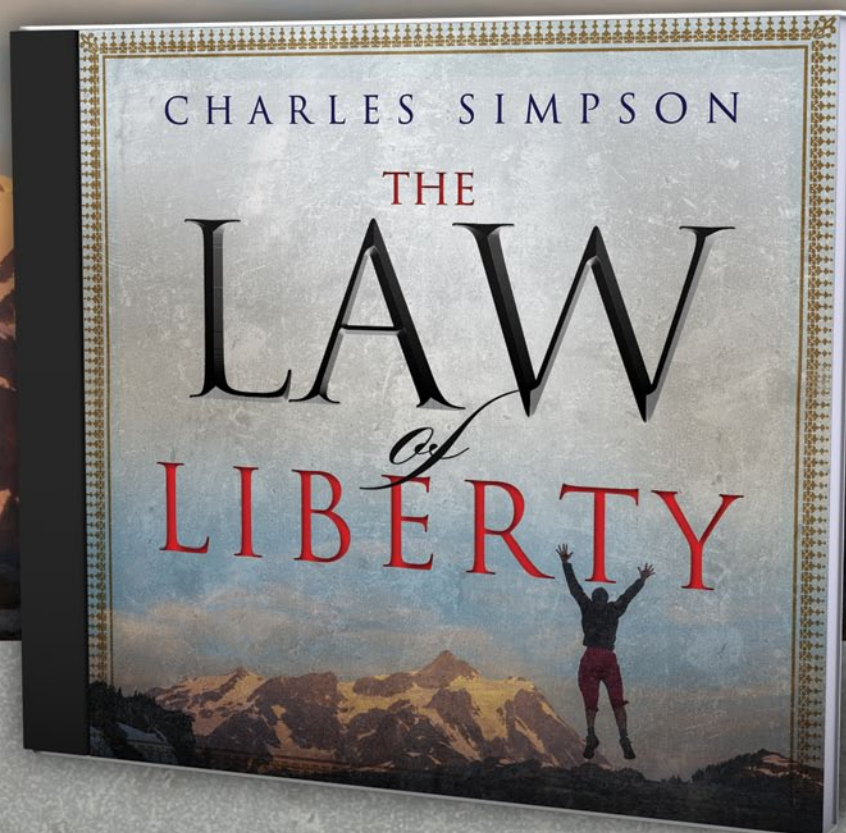


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