

Walking on the Water

A Treatise on the Deeper Life in Christ

by Al Troester ©1995

Contents

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

Chapter 1	Begin at the Beginning
Chapter 2	The New Life Principle
Chapter 3	The Old Man Crucified
Chapter 4	The Spirit Giveth Life
Chapter 5	Partakers of the Divine Nature
Chapter 6	Free From the Law
Chapter 7	Pray Without Ceasing
Chapter 8	Living by the Word
Chapter 9	Must I Go to Church

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The King James Version is used throughout the book.

To God be the glory for His wisdom and knowledge, to His Son the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and to the precious Holy Spirit for making it all possible.

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Preface

After fifty years in the ministry and many years teaching on the Deeper Life in Christ in numerous churches, I am heeding to a long-time desire and the suggestion of many believers to put these things into print to help Christians live a triumphant life in Christ, to walk on the water if you please. Solomon once said, "Of making of many books there is no end: and much study is a weariness to the flesh" (Ecc. 12:12). My own struggle in coming to Christ and seeking for inner satisfaction and victory in Him adds to the weight of writing.

While there is much shallowness in the lives of believers today, there is also a heart hunger in the lives of many to know more of the reality of Christ in their experience. The know-how eludes many who have never been grounded in the basics so that instead of walking on the water with the Lord, they are sinking with a cry for help like Peter's, "Lord, save me" (Matt. 14:30).

The deeper life teaching in Christ is not some strange doctrine but is simply the normal Christian life at its best. It is grounded in the Word of God and based on the work of Christ on the cross. His bodily resurrection is made real by the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the foundation is doctrinal and not some passing emotional experience. However, the fullness of Christ will certainly touch the emotions. Victory in Christ does not ride the crests and depressions of emotional waves causing many to sink in a sea of illusive feelings with nothing to cling to. The Christian life is solid because it is based on the stability of the Word of God. It is consistent in the reality of faith, satisfying in experience, joyful in expression, and is fruitful in service.

It is to be understood that the deeper life in Christ is not sinless perfection, which we do not attain in this life, nor is it a second blessing. However, because of the cross-work of Christ and His bodily resurrection, sin is forgiven and power over it is also provided. Salvation is by blood and by power so that a child of God need not live under the dominion of sin.

It has been gratifying to see a good response to this teaching of the Word of God in a Bible teaching ministry to the local churches where it has been my privilege to minister. God

deserves all the glory and the praise.

Introduction

I like how Brother Al Troester has opened for us the various doors that lead to a life of "Victory in Christ." It is encouraging and exciting to know that you as a Christian can be a victor and not the victim. This book takes you step by step on the journey of the believer who realizes that ... "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). The book opens with strong emphasis that you must be in Christ and Christ in you before you can live the victorious life. Birth precedes growth always. Today we are seeking to get many to grow in Christ who are not in Christ. The author's emphasis of this vital truth immediately places you on the right road to victory.

"Walking on the Water," the title, is well selected. We read in Matthew 14:29 concerning Peter ... "He walked on the water to go to Jesus." Peter is often condemned for sinking but I believe he needs to be commended for walking. He was able to accomplish this task because he had been invited to come by the RIGHT PERSON. He had a RIGHT PURPOSE—to go to Jesus. We are often confronted in life with boisterous winds and beating waves but "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). There is no unfinished business with God as every soul He saves He also sanctifies and will ultimately satisfy. This book will cause you to examine yourself, then yield to the control of the Holy Spirit as you experience the life of holiness. We are reminded that though we have been saved out of the world (John 17:6) we are still in the world (John 17:14). But we have also been sent into the world (John 17:18) as the representatives of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to separate belief and behavior — doctrine and deportment. Al Troester does a superb job of explaining from various Bible texts how strong Scriptural spiritual convictions will lead to strong spiritual conduct. The truth is clear, Christians, if you are going to talk the talk, then you must walk the walk.

The answer to the Apostle Paul's struggle as recorded in Romans 7:14-25 is clearly presented in this book. Paul said that when he desired to do good, evil was present, but he discovered the

victorious life was in submission to the mind of Christ.

Al Troester has been a dear friend to me and my family for many years. He was used of the Lord in leading several members of my family to Christ. He is foremost a man of God and a soul winner. You can rest assured as you read this book it is not just a theory he has learned, but rather it is a testimony he has lived. I highly recommend this book for you to read as it will enable you to daily enjoy your faith rather than endure your faith.

In His grace,
Wendell Calder

Chapter 1—Begin at the Beginning

The Christian life begins with a spiritual birth. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Even as entrance into life on earth began with a physical birth so entrance into life in heaven begins with a spiritual birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). In other words, the earthly birth is flesh to flesh and the heavenly birth is Spirit to spirit. The **human birth is earthly** and horizontal in that it is produced by a man and woman in its origin. The **new birth is heavenly** in its origin and one is "born from above" and from God to man and therefore vertical. There is no other way to become a Christian or to get to heaven. "Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The new birth brings the believer into a relationship with God as His child and introduces him into the family of God. Being born of God, he has imparted to him the life of God through the Holy Spirit. His sins are all forgiven and he is saved from the judgment to come. As a child of God, he has eternal life, and has the possibility of living an abundant life that faith in Christ provides. All the children of God are under His care. They are saved from the wrath to come, no longer under condemnation or the fear of death, and Hell. He can look forward to Heaven. All this brings him into the joy of salvation.

For those of you that have never been "born again" what follows is the "how". If you lack assurance, it will be a help to you too.

The joy of salvation is the first step in the deeper life in Christ. Satisfaction in Christ begins with knowing you are saved for sure (I John 5:13).

Salvation is a gift of God that one must receive. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). It must be accepted like any other gift is received, without money, work, or in any way earned. The Bible clearly states, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). To be sure of your salvation, take the following three simple steps:

I. ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE A SINNER.

When King David of Israel committed adultery with Uriah's wife and then killed him as a cover-up, he turned to God and said, "I acknowledge my transgression: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ..." (Psalm 51:3,4). One cannot hide from God as Adam tried to do in the garden. Acknowledge that you are included in the "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10); "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Be honest about it and admit it to God. He already knows that you have sinned against Him, He wants you to admit it. "Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find" (Prov. 20:6)? Now look at this next step.

2. "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED, AND THY HOUSE" (Acts 16:31).

The Bible says "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3). Again the Bible plainly says that "Jesus appeared to put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:26). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..." (Heb. 9:28). That means that when He died He bore your sins as your substitute. He had no sins of His own. He died in our place and stead, so that He could save us from eternal death and give us eternal life. "He tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). In other words, He died

for you too. Which means He died for you personally as though you were the only one on earth. "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). In other words, God laid on Christ your sin. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). By the grace of God, all sin is pardoned for all those who will admit they need Christ and will trust Him as their personal Savior. How rich God is in grace. He is also "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4). So much so that He preserves us from going into eternal Hell. It is His "great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2:4) that provided our salvation. His blood sacrifice is our one means of salvation. For, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). One of the greatest verses in the Bible is John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." God did not send Him to condemn us. but to save us. The "whosoever" is—YOU. Your part is to BELIEVE.

3. RECEIVE CHRIST INTO YOUR HEART.

If you have seen the need of the Savior who alone can save you, open your heart and receive Him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13). Take note of two little words in this verse. To those who **believe** on Him and will **receive** Him, He gives the right to be called the sons of God. **To receive Christ makes salvation real.** It proves that you believe on Him. It brings repentance into actuality. Many say they believe on Him but never receive Him. This is why so many professing believers have never come to be possessing believers. When you receive Him, you turn your back upon your old way of life. You have been born again so that now you are a child of God. He has forgiven you and expects you to live like one of His children. You have opened the door of your heart to Him as is written in Revelation 3:20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Christ is now living in your heart which is your assurance according to the Bible that you know that you have eternal life. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life,

and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"** (I John 5:11-13). Rest assured that you do have everlasting life and you know it because it is based on what is written in the Word. It is plainly given to us of the Lord from His Word. Therefore you know it is not of works of any kind such as living a good life, church membership, baptism, keeping the 10 Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, or some special feeling. It is a gift of God. Thank Him.

Experiences in salvation vary. There are no two alike. The main thing is that you came to Christ. A little child of six would come to Him without as much of a life of sin as a person up in years who lived a sinful life. In the case of a young person the life would be saved as well as the soul, but in an older person, he lived most of his life lost and now only has a few years to live for Christ. In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican that went up to the temple to pray, the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:11-13). The publican was justified with only pleading for mercy because he was a sinner. The Pharisee was lost and could only magnify himself as he prayed with himself. Whatever the experience in salvation, a person comes to Christ as a sinner and God forgives.

However you have come to Christ, whether in tears or dry-eyed, emotional or not, it makes no difference, you have established a relationship with God such as you never had before you were saved. Before, you lived contrary to Him, but now you have been reconciled as is written in the Word of God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for

Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:17-20).

You are no longer at enmity with God, but the peace of God rules in your heart. Now your life belongs to Him and you want to live to please Him and to serve Him in some capacity.

The rest of this book will help you know how to live a triumphant Christian life as a new creature in Christ. Read it prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Chapter 2—The New Life Principle

Prior to our coming to Christ, we were dead in sins and lived "according to the course of this world ... in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:2,3). It was the old self-sufficient life of disobedience to God. It was living according to the "former lusts in your ignorance" (I Pet. 1:14). We were blinded to the truth and in bondage to the weakness of the sin nature.

But now, having received Christ, we live in "newness of life" according to the new life principle "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20). **There is no more wonderful truth in the Word of God for the believer to understand than this one.** The Bible declares this a mystery that has been hid from "ages and from generations but is now made manifest to his saints" (Col. 1:26). To experience the reality of this great truth in experience is to know the riches of the abundant life in Him. The supernatural Jesus controlling the Christian life is what makes it supernatural. It lifts life above the "natural man" to that of "the spiritual man." It is that great truth that we must believe and practice if we are to be set free in Him. Jesus said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). This is the kind of life Jesus came to give.

The new life principle is made possible by the resurrection of Christ. The fullness of the Gospel includes His death and resurrection. By His death the believer is free from the penalty of sin and by His resurrection is set free from the dominion of sin. To be "born again" is to be born dead to sin and alive in Christ. Salvation is by blood and by power as is illustrated in the blood

of the passover Lamb and the dividing of the Red Sea when God delivered His people from bondage. Because we are "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:2), and "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs 11) "sin shall not have dominion over you" (vs 14). The Bible teaches that we should "not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). It does not mean we will be sinless, but it does mean that we should sin less.

We do not worship a dead Christ but one who is "alive." He is not still on the cross or lying in the grave. He is alive in you. It is His life in you that makes Christian living a satisfying experience of contentment of heart, peace of mind, joy within, victory in life. No wonder the Apostle said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). In preaching the Gospel of Christ and His shed blood for our sins, we certainly must magnify His sacrifice and His substitutionary death for us. We must also magnify the reality of His resurrection life for us and in us. Otherwise we only preach half a Gospel. We dare not forget the glorious truth that He lives.

There are two aspects to the resurrection ministry of Christ. One has to do with the living Jesus at the right hand of God "for us" (Heb. 9:24; 4:14-16; Rom. 8:34). The other aspect is the living Jesus living "in us." The first is His intercessory ministry bodily on the throne of grace. The second is His life in us. He is both "for us" in heaven and "in us" on earth. His presence at the right hand of God keeps us saved. His presence in our lives helps us live that abundant life of satisfaction and victory in Him. Both aspects are absolutely essential. His work for us and in us makes the Christian life dependent on Him. He said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

To have our Lord Jesus at God's right hand in heaven, for us, is our assurance that we will be kept saved forever. The fact that He is there is the witness to God the Father that He died for our sins and now lives to make good what He did. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Some interpret this as saying He is able to save from the "guttermost" to the "uttermost". However true that may be, it even means more. **By shedding His blood on the cross, God made it possible to forgive us of all our sins.** God raised Him

from the dead to prove it. We read that Jesus "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). It actually means that, "He was raised again on account of our justification." In other words His shed blood is our means of being justified by God. When in His death He justified us, God raised Him to prove His atoning work of the cross was acceptable to Him. **In that Christ ever lives at God's right hand, He makes eternally good what He did for us so that we are eternally kept saved.** Keeping eternal life therefore is not a matter of our being able to maintain a sinless life or any amount of good works, but it is rather that we are kept saved by His life which is the living witness of what He did. **The believer in Christ maintains good works not to keep himself saved but because he is saved** (Titus 3:8). Note also that "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:9,10). **We maintain a godly Christian life to bear witness of what Christ has done for us. It is a living testimony of His saving grace.** If in moments of weakness we should sin, we confess it immediately and He forgives (I John 1:9). This does not keep us in eternal life, but in fellowship with God. The relationship of being His child never changes.

Now notice the wonderful truth and the new life principle that is found in Gal. 2:20. It is not only a memory verse but a life-giving operational principle that gives depth and victory to the Christian life. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." **To say, "I am crucified with Christ" means that the Christian life begins with a death.** It is a joint death with Christ that brings the "I" life to an end. It magnifies the principle of which Christ spoke, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). To pay the price of death for life is little understood as all want to live and not die. Only faith can comprehend this truth. The Apostle Paul follows up this kernel of truth with "nevertheless I live". But understand it is "not I" but "Christ". Then comes that great truth that only faith can accept, **"Christ liveth in me"**. First of all, **there is that astounding fact of Scripture that Christ lives. He is alive.**

He arose from the grave and is no longer on the cross or in the grave. Then comes that second life-giving fact that "Christ liveth in me." Again only faith can accept that glorious truth. How can one person live inside another? This is what brings reality into experience and sets the believer apart from unbelievers. It is very personal to each child of God and is what gives each Christian eternal life. The eternal Jesus lives in the heart and life of the believer and therefore he has eternal life (I John 5:10-13).

It is possible for a believer in Christ to live for many years and not to know the reality of this wonderful truth. In fact, I was ministering one Sunday in a rather carnal church in Maine preaching on John 1:12 for a text and comparing it with Rev. 3:20 and emphasizing receiving Christ into the heart. I was seeking to show the fact of Christ living in the heart of the believer with the enlargement of Gal. 2:20. After the message, a lady came to my wife in tears and said, "Now I know what happened to me 20 years ago." These were tears of joy when the Holy Spirit enlightened her to the truth of "Christ in you." How sad to have gone 20 years without knowing the reality of this exciting truth. Hudson Taylor, that great missionary to China, had served there many years when he came into the reality of this truth and it changed his whole ministry.

One need not look for a feeling or an emotional experience of some kind to verify that Christ lives within. It is simply to believe because the Bible says so. It is not that you have to crucify yourself which is an impossibility. The crucifixion with Christ is historical and has already taken place when He was crucified. It is a present position and a fact of Scripture if you will but believe it. Thank Jesus that He is in your heart if you are a believer and rejoice in the reality of His presence.

"Christ in you" makes salvation perpetual as well as being personal. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20) and "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). He said to His disciples, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27,28). You can be assured you will never be lost again and can rest in the joy of eternal salvation.

Understand too that "Christ in you" makes salvation most practical and is the new life principle that all believers should know in daily living. If the living Jesus in the heart is allowed to take control and be Lord of your life, the reality of the abundant life in Christ becomes a life-style. He not only wants to be resident in your life but also president. The Apostle Paul stated in Gal. 2:20, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." In union with Him, the strength of His life becomes the strength of your life. Remember that Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). The Apostle Paul also said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). His life in the believer is what He wants to produce. Allow all that Christ is, to be all that He is in you if you want to know real satisfaction in Him.

You may have real victory in your life when you yield to Christ and allow Him to be in you what He is. He who never sinned will keep you from living in sin. He who holds all the planets, moon, and stars in their orbits will hold you in the way of life that pleases Him and will keep you from falling. He who is holy will help you to be holy. He who takes care of the birds, the animals, and all of nature will take care of you. He who walked on the water will help you to walk on the water with Him so as not to sink under your circumstances. He who is the Creator will create a new life in you if you allow Him to mold you in a way best for you. He who was never bound by any dirty habits will keep you from living in bondage to any. Trust Him, and He will help you to be more than a conqueror. He knows all about you and your circumstances, how and where you live, your weaknesses, trials, temptations, defeats, worries, needs, and aspirations now and for the future. Wait on Him.

Christ declared. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). **He will be true to His Word and feed your hungry heart, and quench your thirsty soul if you will eat His Word and drink of His Spirit.** (John 7:37, 38; 4:14; Matt. 4:4). He said. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). **Follow Him and He will fill your life with light.** He said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). He

will not only save you but will feed you in His rich pasture land. **He is also the "good shepherd"** (John 10:11). **He gave His life for you and He will guide you if you come to Him. He wants to be what He is, *be what He is*, in you.** He makes Himself available to you. When He came to the grave of Lazarus, He declared, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25,26). When He had prayed, He called, "Lazarus, come forth" and he that was in the grave four days came forth. He is your resurrection too.

He also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). **He is your way to the Father, the truth about the way, and your very life.** He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). He is your very strength and source of life even as the vine is to the branch so that you may be fruitful and bear much fruit for Him.

This abundant life in Christ can be your life if you can learn to live in Him and allow His life to be your life. His joy can be your joy. His strength can be your strength. His peace can be your peace. His inner satisfaction can be your inner satisfaction. The key to it all is to abide in Him, yield to Him, obey him, stay in communion with Him, and trust Him to make Himself real to you. **Participate in His life rather than just be a spectator trying to imitate it.** When we partake of what He is, He takes care of what we are. This is what Paul meant when he said, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Let Christ be all in all to you so you can walk on the water with Him too.

Chapter 3—The Old Man Crucified

If the truth sets one free as Jesus said (John 8:32) then the truth must be understood and believed. **Faith for salvation is established on clearly established facts that are to be believed.** This is also true if one is to live the abundant life in Christ that He came to give. Jesus also said, "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Truth is sometimes hard to believe if one does not

experience it or feel it. However, truth is truth whether you experience it or not. Truth must be accepted as a fact of Scripture just because the Bible says so whether one believes it or not.

The unsaved find it hard to believe God will save a sinner by just believing that our Lord Jesus Christ died for him. It seems so impossible, so easy, and so simple. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18). **It is equally hard for the Christian to believe that the old man was crucified with Christ in order to set the believer free from the power of sin because he may not be experiencing deliverance.** If the old man is crucified, why do I still live in sin is the question many folks ask. Failure to understand this truth causes many to doubt it. However, the Bible says. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). The crucifixion of Christ sets the believer free from both the penalty of sin and the dominion of sin (6:14). Three times in chapter six (vs. 7,18,22) it is stated that we are "free from sin." Christ died for sin and unto sin once. (6:10). But notice the last part of the verse "but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Verse two asks a question. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" The next verse says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" There are two baptisms to be reckoned with in verse 3 and 4. Verse 3 speaks of the baptism of the Spirit and verse 4, the baptism of water. The believer was baptized by the Spirit into Christ's death when he was born again (John 3:5). Then baptized by water afterwards to symbolize his death with Christ. When he is raised out of the water he identifies himself with the resurrection of Christ and that from then on he is going to live in newness of life with Christ and also unto God. This is all to show that in Christ's crucifixion, the body is to be reckoned dead to sin and now alive unto God (vs. 11). That the body is destroyed means that the body in relation to sin is terminated.

The believer that fails to live for Christ after his baptism might just as well never have been baptized since his baptism was meaningless to him. It is the resurrection life that counts.

One is not able to live a victorious Christian life over sin unless he is free to do so. A prisoner with a ball and chain

around his leg is obviously not free to walk out of prison. God sets the believer free from the "old man" so he can live in freedom. This is a fact of Scripture that must be believed that "the old man is crucified with him." **For the sinner to be saved, he must know that Christ was crucified for him. For the believer to enjoy liberty, he too must know something—the fact that when Christ died on the cross "the old man" was crucified with him.** Believe it or not, it is true. Christ has set the believer free from the old man so that he may be free from the dominion of sin. He does not have to use his body as an instrument with which to sin. The fact of the old man being crucified with Christ is a judicial fact of Scripture. Adam was not there in person, but judicially and positionally he was. The problem is to identify "the old man" (Rom. 6:6). There is no need for conjecture as the Bible identifies him for us.

Both the Greek text and the antecedent of the "old man" refer to him as Adam in Romans 5:12-14. The Greek text says "ancient man" which would certainly mean "the man of old." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Verse 14 identifies the "one man" that brought sin into the world as Adam as seen in Genesis 3. The rest of chapter 5 is a contrast between Adam and Christ. Adam was a figure of Christ who came after him (vs 12). Sin came into the world through Adam. The reign of death also came into the world since all have sinned and are under condemnation. In Christ, in contrast to Adam, the believer is free from the condemnation of sin and the reign of death and should now reign in life. The Bible speaks of the first Adam and the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-49). **The last Adam is with reference to Christ. The entire human race is considered to be either in Adam or in Christ. "In Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"** (I Cor. 15:22). As Adam sinned and fell, so all men were born sinners by nature and by practice. Those who receive Christ are not in Adam but are in Christ. The cross of Christ has cut the believer off from being in Adam and placed him in Christ the Head and progenitor of a whole new class of people who are called believers, the sons of God, Christians, and saints. **Our relationship now is with Christ and not Adam. The believer has no obligation now to be what he was in Adam. In the believer's new relationship to Christ, he is set free from slavery to sin and has become a**

slave of righteousness. Our human nature has been tainted with sin as a result of the fall of Adam, but in Christ it has been regenerated to be a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:18).

This does not mean that a believer has been constituted sinless in this new relationship to Christ, but he should certainly sin less. The human nature will always have the possibility of sinning until it is glorified when Christ returns. However, there is the possibility and the availability in Christ not to have to continue in sin. If God provides victory over sin, then sinning is a matter of disobedience to His revealed will and my choice, and not an inner compulsion to evil to which I must yield. God has made every possible provision for the believer in Christ to live a triumphant life. The cross not only separates the believer from Adam but also from sinful living. It is the dividing place between heaven and earth, life and death, Heaven and Hell, God's children and the Devil's children, the sinner and the saint. The cross is more than a matter of geography or history. It is a redemptive act of God performed in time to set the believer free from sin and its power and consequences. It is the place not only where the sinner is given access to God, but where God is given access to the believer that He might do a mighty work in him.

In God's provision for the believer not to sin, He has also made provision for those who do sin. They are not lost again nor have they broken relationship with Him. When they confess, He forgives (I John 1:9). Sin breaks fellowship not relationship. We still have eternal life. However, a child of God may still come under God's chastisement (Heb. 12:5-11). To be born a child of God does not mean we can do as we please. It is not a license to sin, but a responsibility to live for Christ and be a witness to His saving grace. To sin under grace is not becoming to the child of God and is a misinterpretation of salvation.

Now that God has severed connection for the believer from Adam, he has no more excuse to live under the dominion of sin. To say that I cannot live for God because I still have the old man with me is to live in continuous defeat and miss the joy of walking on the water with Christ. **For a prisoner to stay in jail after he has been set free is to stay in bondage within the prison walls.** To keep living in sin by excusing myself in order to do so is to minimize the work of the cross and fail to

understand deliverance.

You are detached from Adam. Live in the liberty of being set free and do not allow sin to have dominion over you anymore. **Remember that if the "Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"**(John 8:36). You are not free to sin, but free not to sin. One of the reasons that Jesus came was to "proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18).

Please comprehend that the victory that God gives is not a second blessing eradication of the old nature so that I am completely sanctified and unable to sin again. Neither is it the suppression of the old man so that I constantly try to hold him down like holding a balloon under water. When I press it down in one place, it comes up in another. The Bible declares crucifixion to be the answer to the old man. The believer lives from the cross. It is part of the great blessing that comes to us with being a Christian. **What I am in Christ far surpasses what I was in Adam.** An illustration will help to clarify this life-giving principle. Many of you know that I play a musical saw. Actually, it is an old carpenter saw that was given to me years ago by the wife of an elderly man who used it in his business as a contractor. I had the joy of leading him to the Lord. After he died his wife gave the saw to me. Since then it has stopped cutting wood and now plays music for the Lord. The man that had it never knew that it could play or even how to play it. He never heard it played and the saw did not know it could play. It spent all its time for many years just cutting wood. **The secret of saw playing is simply that the old man must die.** Now this new man plays it and has for many years. **It does not cut wood any longer because I will not allow it to cut wood anymore.** It is still the same old saw that it ever was with the same nature that it always had. The difference is that a new man now controls it. It only had one nature but with two possibilities, to cut wood or to play music for the Lord. The difference is in the one who controls or holds it. **The Christian too only has one human nature. What we do depends upon who controls us.** When Christ controls us, we stop living in sin and live for Him, just as I add my nature to the saw and it plays. When Christ adds His nature to ours we live for Him. Remember that He said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

We are sinners by nature from our birth as descendants from Adam. It is not the tendency of our nature to live for God. The natural man does not receive the things of God and lives a self-centered life in the world. He wants to control himself and do as he wants to do without any regard for God. What God hates, the natural man loves. What God loves, the natural man hates. **One cannot be a natural man and a spiritual man at the same time. He cannot be in Adam and also in Christ.** When Christ comes into one's life and controls the life, he becomes a child of God and lives contrary to nature. Life is now a supernatural life under the control of the supernatural Jesus. He now becomes a new creature in Christ whereby the "old thing are passed away" and "all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). **You have been set free from all that you were in Adam to be all that you can be in Christ.** You can rejoice in your freedom in Him like a bird released from its cage. It is faith in Christ that makes the difference.

Compare the distinctions between being in Adam and being in Christ.

In Adam	In Christ
Adam reigns.....	Christ reigns
a fallen nature.....	a renewed nature
death reigns.....	life reigns
condemnation.....	justification
many sinners.....	many righteous
sin abounds.....	grace abounds
born in Adam.....	born again in Christ
lost forever.....	saved forever

Let me summarize a few facts from the context of Romans 6:6 concerning the fact that our "old man is crucified with Him (Christ) that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." **Those that were baptized into Jesus Christ were "baptized into His death"** (vs 3). **This is the baptism of the Spirit that takes place when one is born again of the Spirit.** Consequently, the believer is dead to sin. Therefore one is "buried with him by baptism into death" (vs 4). Baptism in water as seen here is a burial symbolizing we have died to sin. It is a symbol of being baptized with Christ into

death. A death has taken place because of Christ's crucifixion. It included crucifixion of the old man which is Adam positional and judicially. It happened in geography and is also in history. The believer is to "know" this as a fact of faith to apprehend. He likewise must "reckon" himself dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead and now lives unto God. In His death is our death and in His resurrection is our new life in union with Him. While this death of the old man may be positional as God sees it, the believer must make it good in his experience. It happens in experience when the believer no longer "yields" the members of his body as instruments of sin, but "yields" to God as those that are alive from the dead. Being made free from sin through a death, we are now to "obey" God and be servants of righteousness (vs 18). The fruit that we now bear is a life of holiness exemplifying one who has everlasting life. Being made "free" from sin, we have become "servants of righteousness" (vs 18). **The four words to remember in this chapter—"know", "reckon", "yield", and "obey"—are key words in the life of victory. To apprehend them is to pass from death to life.**

Chapter 4—The Spirit Giveth Life

This is a wonderful truth and it is found in II Corinthians 3:6. **"The Spirit giveth life."** The small "s" has been changed to a capital "S" in accordance with the original text. **Salvation is made possible by the shed blood of Christ and made real and powerful by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We are born again by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"** (Titus 3:5). Regeneration has a root meaning of "genesis" which means "origin" or "source". The dictionary says "produce anew" "reform", "regrow". The idea of "re" is "again" or "back again". One could say that regeneration is a rebeginning. Jesus speaks of the "regeneration when he shall sit in the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28). It is still future and speaks of the millennium which is a regensis of this world system or a reproducing anew. **The new birth is a reordering of one's life from the old to the new. It is a change from the old life of sinful living to a new life of holy living in the renewing presence of the Holy Spirit who giveth life.** One who is born again is inhabited by the presence of God and He now lives as a child of God and is controlled by Him. It is a new life

far better than the old life of self-centered living in the flesh controlled by sin and ending in death. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). "A new creature" is better read a new creation. **In other words, a person who is born again is created by God into a new creation at the time of his regeneration.** His previous moral condition has passed away. "All things are new, previously nonexistent, begin to be far different from what they were before" (Greek lexicon). "New denotes the new primarily in reference to quality, the fresh, unworn" same as above. The context says "And all things are of God..." (5:18). The same expression is again used in Galatians 6:15, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation." It is like saying, "Give a child new toys and he will throw away the old ones." God's new things are so much better than the old. **The believer is now not only to be indwelt by the Spirit, but he is under the command of God to be "filled with the Spirit"** (Eph. 5:18).

If you are a child of God, the same Holy Spirit that dwells in you is the same Holy Spirit that raised up Christ out of the grave and will raise you up out of the old life of the flesh. "But if the Spirit of God that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Jesus said, **"It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing"** (John 6:63). Bear in mind that the cross gave God access to you so that He who is the Creator can create a new life in you that pleases Him. In the Book of Genesis 1:2, the first book in the Bible that records the beginning of life, it is said, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." **In other words, the same Holy Spirit that was active in creation and brought life out of nothing is the same Holy Spirit that is active in you to bring life out of your nothing if you will allow Him to have full control over your life.** If He could create the world, He can create something beautiful out of your life too. He brought order out of chaos and will also bring order out of your chaos.

There is much confusion over the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit today, yet it all is so simple. Jesus promised that when He ascended, the Holy Spirit would descend to abide in the believer.

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7; 14:16,17,23). He also said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." **When Christ ascended into heaven after His resurrection, the Holy Spirit came down on the Day of Pentecost.** The Bible says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). Jesus also promised that when He should come He would also endue them with power to be witnesses unto Him (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). **The promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when He came down and each believer was filled with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:4). Peter said, preaching on the Day of Pentecost, "**The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call**" (Acts 2:39). **Ever since that day, all believers are born of the Spirit (John 3:5) and indwelt by Him. They are supposed to know it just because the Bible says so whether there is any feeling or not. Experiences vary and are not reliable.** They vary according to a person's age or lifestyle. You must depend on what the Bible says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" (I Cor. 6:19,20)? **Do not allow your feelings to betray you or sidetrack you at this point. Just thank the Lord that you have Him.**

The confusion comes over the use of the terms and their interpretation as used on the Day of Pentecost. Many will read into those words their own meaning so as to make them say what they want them to say. In other words, they want their experience to fit the terms used. Others may read into those words their denominational meaning. Actually, the Bible is its own best interpreter when it is interpreted in the light of the context and comparing Scripture with Scripture. The Bible must be read as it is given and we must simply believe what it says. To read into the Scripture what it does not say or to make it say something I may want it to say breeds all kinds of error and false teaching

that may give rise to the teachings of cults.

There are five terms or words used to tell us what happened on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended as predicted. The word Ghost should read Spirit as in the original language. Ghost gives the connotation of something spooky like some spirit that came afloat out of the grave and wanders around at night. The Spirit is not something of an apparition or phantom. He is a person equal to the Father and to the Son and is spoken of in the masculine gender. **The five words used on the Day of Pentecost are "baptism", "pour", "endue", "filled" and "gift".**

1. The word "baptism" is used by Jesus as the promise of the Father. The disciples were told by Jesus to wait at Jerusalem for Him to come as promised by the Father. He said, "For John baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). The word baptism is not used on the Day of Pentecost except in prediction by Christ of that day and not used again in the Book of Acts until chapter 11:16 where it is used in retrospect of that day by Peter. The Apostle Paul uses the word in the 19th chapter of those who had not even heard that He had been given. **The word baptism as used on the Day of Pentecost is that particular work of the Holy Spirit by which He placed all believers into the body of Christ as seen in I Cor. 12:13.** "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body: whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The one body refers to the origin of the one true church which is the body of Christ of which He is the Head (Eph. 1:20-23; Acts 2:32-36). **All believers are so baptized when they are born again of the Spirit** (John 3:5). It is a fact of our redemption and of the origin of the church regardless of feeling or no feeling, signs or no signs.

2. The word "pour" as used in Acts 2:17 is also with reference to Pentecost. It is the quotation taken from the Prophet Joel, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy...and I will show wonders in

the heaven above...blood and fire and vapor of smoke...before that great and notable day of the Lord come; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Because God is saying this, **it indicates that the source of the Holy Spirit is God Himself and that He comes from God, and He is God. "I will pour out of my Spirit."** We need to realize that the Holy Spirit is none other than God Himself. He is not a lesser being nor some power apart from Him. He is God. His coming sets the time as "in the last days." The last days for the church are now, and for Israel they are yet to come. God will pour out of His Spirit during this entire age or else there could be no salvation, revival, or the sense of His presence.

3. **The word "filled" is the most general word used since Pentecost.** All the believers were filled on that day and all are commanded to be filled in these days (Eph. 5:18). All believers are indwelt by Him and are in constant need of being filled. To be filled with the Spirit is to have one's whole being come under His control: body, soul, and spirit. His fulness makes real the presence of God as well as His power. The evidence of His fulness is the "consciousness of His presence by faith", "the revelation of His fruit", and the "manifestation of His power". It is the result of faith, obedience, confession, feeding on the Word, and growth. Every believer has the privilege and the obligation to be filled with Him. No signs are needed and the experiences will vary.

4. With reference to Pentecost, Jesus told His disciples "to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until ye be **"endued"** with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Again He told them in prediction of that day, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). **All believers are in need of being endued with power both to live as a Christian and to be a witness for Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit is not divorced from the person of the Holy Spirit. His fulness makes real His power.** Being "filled" with Him makes possible a victorious life above sinful living. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Maintain a consistent walk in the Spirit by prayer, confession, obedience, and meditation in the Word of God and His power will be real to you. Do not wait for a feeling.

5. The final word used on the Day of Pentecost is the word "gift" as used by Peter in his sermon on that day. He said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). He spoke these words to the unbelieving Jews that had gathered for that special day. Gift refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit Himself is God's gift to the believer. God's great gift of salvation is His only begotten Son. Here it is Himself. **In the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God made Himself available to each believer so that each one may have the life of God in him. What more could God do but give Himself? Get the wonder of this if you can comprehend it. God in you!** A church in which I was pastor a few years ago gave me a brand new car one year for Christmas. What a gift. Cost nothing. But, the greatest gift I have ever received is God Himself. How could I not live a victorious life with Him in me. It is the Spirit that giveth life. The salvation that was wrought by Christ in His crucifixion on the cross is made real internally by the gift of the Holy Spirit in me. In Him there is liberty, for He brings the historical work of the cross up to date and makes what Christ did for us real in our experience. The fulness of the Spirit sets the believer free from any bondage to the flesh. The child of God is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9). This is true positionally and the child of God needs to make this true in practice.

The Spirit-filled life is the realm of liberty for the believer in Christ. Outside this area of liberty in the Spirit, the flesh can again take over and bring one into bondage and slavery to sinful habits. Let me illustrate. A fish is free to swim in the water, the area of its liberty. If it would jump out of the water and seek to fly across the land like a bird, it would lose its liberty and die. Likewise a bird is as free as it likes and can fly in the heavens in the realm of its liberty. It can fly where it likes and enjoy the area God gave. It is not in a cage. But if it decides it wants to swim across the ocean and dives in for the attempt it will immediately lose its life and die. It is out of its realm of freedom. **Even so, life in the Spirit is the realm of liberty for the Christian, not in the flesh. The believer that lives in the flesh is out of his area of liberty and will lose his liberty and die. To die, means to dry up spiritually, or atrophy.** A train is

free to run down the tracks, but if it jumps the tracks it will end up in disaster. Fire is free to burn in a fireplace where it is delightful to watch, but if it should jump out of the fireplace and run across the floor and over the furniture and up the wall, it is extremely ugly, most destructive, and will ruin the house. A trickling brook is delightful to see but if it floods its banks, it can be vastly devastating. **A believer that lives within the confines of the Spirit-filled life enjoys real liberty, and his or her life is as fragrant spiritually as a rose in full bloom.** Such a one is a joy to be around because of the radiance of Christ that is evident in his or her life. However, a believer that has lost his liberty and again lives in bondage to the flesh can be as ugly as a brook or fire that is out of control. He can lose his joy in the Lord and he can be a problem in the home as well as in the church.

I used to have an old rowboat tied up on the shore below our house. When I untied the rope I was free to row across the lake. There were struggles against the wind and waves so I would put down my 5½ horse power Johnson Motor and go over the lake with ease. **If you are still having struggles in the Christian life over the flesh, learn to operate by the power of the Holy Spirit.** He takes the struggles out of life and helps you live with greater joy and ease. He is given of God to give you the power you need over the difficulties you face.

If you are having problems with realizing the life of the Spirit in your own life, it may be because you are looking for a special kind of feeling, or a so-called second blessing such as speaking in tongues or whatever. You need to be reminded that the Holy Spirit is in you because you were born of the Spirit. At that time He came to dwell in you forever. His fullness is not a matter of a feeling, a second blessing, or some experience beyond your salvation. No Scripture demands any of these things. There can be, however, many blessings of the Spirit in one's life that may touch the emotions, but they are not a necessity. If you have never come to know the Holy Spirit in your life, be assured that He is there just by what the Bible says, for example I Cor. 6:19,20. The consciousness of His presence may come to you at some time after salvation as you study the Word of God. This may well seem like a second blessing. There can be many more such blessings, the first, second, third, fourth, and so on. The Christian life is full of

blessings.

If you want to know the reality of the power of the Spirit in your life, begin by thanking Him that you have Him in your heart. In other words, acknowledge Him and stop ignoring Him. If you have been sinning against Him, confess that to Him. **The Bible says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"** (Eph. 4:30). The sinful activities of the flesh grieve Him as mentioned in the context verses 4:17-32. **So many believers live like unbelievers.** Just like a son or a daughter may grieve their parents by fleshly living, even so we who are believers grieve the Holy Spirit. Tell Him you have grieved Him by your manner of life that was not pleasing to Him.

The Bible also says, "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. 5:19). In other words, take heed to His promptings and act upon them. It is sin when you do not. Many believers are guilty of presumptuous sin which means that we presume upon God's mercy and grace, and sin expecting Him to forgive us. There are no sacrifices for presumptuous sins in the Old Testament. **Remember that God "has given His Spirit to them that obey Him"** (Acts 5:32).

When Ananias and his wife Sapphira sinned against the Holy Spirit by keeping back part of the price of the land they had sold, pretending they had given it all, Peter said to him, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3). He lied unto God (Acts 5:4), and God took his life. When Sapphira came in, Peter said to her, "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord" (Acts 5:9)? She died on the spot and the young men came in and took her out and buried her. They were tempting God to bless them despite their sin. **We do the same thing. We hang on to our sin and pretend everything is all right and nobody knows, but God does.** By saying we are Christians, the unsaved assume that we have given up all, but we know differently. There probably would not be too many left if God took all who were just pretending.

God has many blessings for those who will yield to His Spirit. Believers will not know the Spirit-filled life unless they learn to walk in the Spirit. He will make real the deeper life in Christ to

you as you walk in Him, yield to Him, spend time in prayer with Him, and meditate on His Word. **You can WALK ON THE WATER with Him above the evils of this life and live without sinking if you will live the way He has planned for you.**

Chapter 5—Partakers of the Divine Nature

One of the amazing truths in God's provision to aid the believer to live the abundant life in Christ is the fact of being made a "partaker of the divine nature". This adds the supernatural aspect to life in Christ and helps the believer to WALK ON THE WATER with Him. The divine nature makes God available to us in all that He is in His person, power, nature and moral character. It makes us to be without excuse in our ability to live for Him. His "divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness..." as the Bible declares (II Pet. 1:1-4).

We have all inherited a sinful nature in the fall of Adam. It is totally depraved and sinful through and through without any ability to save itself. Man is a moral failure although in his pride he will not admit it. He wants to think of himself as born good and possessing a spark of divinity. He thinks he can achieve his own salvation and attain to heaven by his own goodness. He finds it hard to accept the fact that "there is none righteous" and that there is "none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Jesus said, "None is good, save one, that is God" (Luke 18:19). This is the reason for the need of a Savior who can both forgive the penalty of sin and save us from its power by His blood atonement. Righteousness is imputed and eternal life is granted to him that will believe in Him. **The need that God will make us "partakers of the divine nature" should be perfectly obvious.**

When Peter writes his second epistle, he addresses it "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ..." (II Pet. 1:1). The word "precious" is peculiar to his writings, but **what could be more precious than the fact that we are partakers of the divine nature. It is a priceless truth to comprehend and it will be life changing to those who hunger for a closer walk with God.**

In order to impress this vital section of Scripture on the mind and give life-giving food to assimilate, let me quote it.

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.(II Pet. 1:2-4)

If you are a child of God, you have two natures, your own and God's, the human and the divine. The believer is a combination of the two but not a commingling, that is not to mix or blend together or to combine to make one. God does not become humanized nor does the human nature become deified. It is not that both are so blended together into one nature that God is lowered and man is elevated. However, it is a spiritual union as Jesus spoke of the vine and the branches. In being a partaker of the divine nature, God empowers or strengthens and undergirds the human nature so that the human can fulfill its full potential and the Christian can live like a child of God. God energizes the Christian with resurrection power as seen in Eph. 1:19, 20. Note that Satan, "the spirit that now worketh [energizes] in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) does the same in his people.

There can be a conflict between the human and divine unless the human submits to the divine as God intends for it to happen (Gal. 5:17). How you live therefore depends upon whether or not you will submit to God. If the human nature with its tendencies to sin controls you, you will live a fleshly life in sin with all of its defeats and its frustrations, shortcomings, and its fears. **If God is allowed to have His way in your life by your submission to Him in every area of your life, you will live a triumphant life over the flesh with all of its sinful habits.** The divine nature is made real to you by the Holy Spirit in your life. It is He that gave life to Jesus when He arose from the grave (Rom. 8:11). Likewise, it is He that will bring new life to your mortal body so that you can live in the power of His

resurrection. You are under no obligation to live a fleshly sinful life when you are a partaker of the divine nature.

It is no wonder that Peter spoke of "precious faith" that we have obtained through Christ. It is that wonderful body of truth that is ours in the Gospel of Christ and includes God's "divine power", the "precious promises", and the "divine nature" as presented in the context quoted. God, by His divine power is able to fulfill all His precious promises to make His divine nature real to you. Notice that the power in our lives comes not from the exertion of our own nature but has its source in the power of God.

Chapter 6—Free From the Law

No one likes to live under a legal system or law of any kind. It is the nature of man to want to be free. It can be very aggravating to drive down the road at the legal speed of 55 miles an hour when your heart tells you to go 65. How we rebel when the curfew says 10 o'clock and we want to stay out until 12 o'clock.

The whole book of Galatians was written by the Apostle Paul to preserve our liberty in Christ and to show that a believer in Christ is free from the law. The Judaizing opposition to Paul's teaching had come from Jerusalem to add the law to the Gospel. They had sought to get the believers to revert back from a position of grace. Paul called it another gospel. He said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But **though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed**" (Gal. 1:6-8).

The Apostle Paul was jealous for the Gospel. He stood firmly on the Gospel of grace that he preached. The believer likewise must be rooted and grounded in grace for salvation lest he be led astray. **The works of the law are never sufficient to save anyone. It is grace and grace alone.** When Paul writes to the Romans he says, "**And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work**" (Rom. 11:6). **There is no clearer verse in all the Bible than this one on the difference between law and grace.**

When a person receives our Lord Jesus as personal Savior and puts his confidence in His shed blood as his only means of salvation, he immediately stands in grace. The righteousness of God is imputed to him and he no longer is under the law. His sins are all forgiven and he has become a child of God. This is made plain in Ephesians 1:6-8 showing us what we have in Christ. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace: wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Notice that we are accepted in Him, sins are all forgiven through His blood, and all because He is so rich in grace. This has nothing to do with keeping the law. Grace has set us free from bondage to the law. This is "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

Paul goes on in the book of Galatians where he rebukes Peter for being a Jew and living after the manner of the Gentiles and asks him a question. "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Then he says, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:14b-16). Peter had been eating with the Gentiles, but when certain Jews came from Jerusalem, he left the table.

Salvation is a heart matter and has to do with Christ in the heart. This is the new life principle by which a believer lives. He closes chapter two of Galatians with the fact that a believer is "dead to the law", that he might live unto God (Gal. 2:19). He stressed again the truth that life is in Christ and not according to the external keeping of the law. Again, it is all of grace as he says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (2:21). Throughout the rest of the book he shows conclusively that righteousness comes by faith in Christ and not in any sense by the law from which a believer is free.

The Gentile believers at Galatia received the Spirit by faith and not by the works of the law. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so

foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2,3).

In the same chapter, Paul uses Abraham as an example. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:6-8).

Again, they that "are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them ... Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:10,13). Scripture shows a believer is free from the law.

The covenant that God made with Abraham was "confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise" (Gal. 3:17,18). **Consequently, the law had no effect on the promise God made to Abraham. It came four hundred and thirty years later.**

One could very well ask the question, "What was the point of the law then?" Paul answers, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made ... the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:19,24, 25,26).

Paul then uses a well-known illustration among the Jews. A child is on the same plane as a servant though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until he is of age. The Jews likewise were under bondage to the law. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,

Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:4-7). There is therefore a transferring from being a child under the law to being an adult under grace. Hallelujah! "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

Paul draws his argument to a conclusion as we come to the end of the book of Galatians. He includes in his final words of exhortation, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:2-4). (In other words, the position of grace.) "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Gal. 5:13,14).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22,23). You can have all you want of His fruit.

Paul asks a question, "What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:15,16). When the Apostle writes to Titus after that wonderful section on salvation, he says, "I will thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8).

Let me give you one more word on this from the book of Romans. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are

become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:1-6).

In other words, you are now married to the Christ of the resurrection and you should bring forth fruit unto Him.

"Free from the law, O happy condition!
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.
Once for all—O sinner, receive it!
Once for all—O brother, believe it!
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall
Christ hath redeemed us once for all."
—Philip P. Bliss

Chapter 7—Pray Without Ceasing

And Jesus, "Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). Daniel, "Kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed" (Dan. 6:10). "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). "Call upon me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3). Prayer is that wonderful gift that God gave to man. If you can pray, you have it made. If you cannot, you are licked.

There are three vital "c's" to observe in prayer. **You must first "contact" God by faith.** Moses was not a born leader but he knew how to pray. Many times he turned to God for help. For the most part, his prayers were short and right to the point. He knew how to get answers. No wonder God used him to lead 2,000,000 Jews out of Egypt. Remember that God is with you and you can contact Him at any time day or night without the necessity of working up some kind of special feeling. You are His child. Just talk to Him like a child talks to his father. After all He is your Father. Peter began to sink when he tried to walk

on the water. He did not have time to do anything else **but call upon the Lord. He cried, "Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him"** (Matt. 14:30,31). There are times when prayer needs to be short. At other times prayer is lengthy like Jacob who wrestled with God all night in prayer until God blessed him.

The second "c" is "concentrate". In other words, fix your mind upon what you are saying. Prayer takes real concentration. You have to realize that you are talking to God. The mind must be actively engaged on content so that it does not wander off and pick daisies. Do not let it woolgather or go off on a tangent when you pray. If you cannot keep your mind on God and what you are saying to Him, you are only mouthing words that go nowhere. Prayer is communication with God. He is listening on the other end. When you talk on the telephone, there is someone on the other end listening. You would be terribly embarrassed if they hung up on you. Be thankful for God's patience.

The third "c" is consecrate". It does not make any difference when you talk on the phone whether or not you are consecrated to God, but it does to God when you talk to Him. Consecration means that you are clean before Him. In other words, you are living a holy life. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Is. 59:1,2). There is no one at the other end if you hide sin in your heart. Confession is needed. Then you can contact God effectively. You may have wondered why your prayers do not seem to go any higher than the ceiling.

Let me give you a little helpful recipe when you pray. It is more important than baking a cake!

1. Be mentally alert.
2. Be physically awake.
3. Be spiritually alive.
4. Be emotionally active.
5. Be morally able.

There are at least 8 biblical injunctions concerning how we should pray. They are most important and must be followed if we are to be successful in prayer. Failure in prayer can well

mean failure in living a victorious life. It is through prayer that we take hold of the promises of God and make them real in our lives. The quality of your prayer life is more important than the time it takes to pray.

1. Pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13,14).

Jesus said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." This is where prayer begins. "Whatsoever" and "anything" are all inclusive, but the condition is "in my name". He is the Son of God and He unlocks the door to the Father in heaven. In other words, your prayer needs His approval. That means only believers have the right to pray. One comes to the Father through Jesus. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). **When you come to the Father through Jesus, heaven is open to you.** My son went down to our town bank to cash a check one day but they refused him. I told him to give them my name since I have an account there, so he did, and they cashed his check. Only Christ has access to the riches of heaven but He will share it with you when you pray in His name. The possibilities of prayer are tremendous. There is no end to the resources of heaven.

2. "Pray in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

The Apostle Paul follows the list of weapons of our warfare with the resource that gives us the power to use them which is PRAYER. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." **The armour is useless if we do not pray to make it effective.** It is like getting a new car with no key to turn it on. **To pray in the Spirit is first of all a spiritual position.** One is "in the Spirit" when he is born again. (Romans 8:9 will clarify it.) "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." **Second, prayer is practice in the Spirit.** In other words, prayer is to be controlled by Him in your thoughts and actions. When a person is controlled by the Spirit, the very things we should pray for come from His promptings. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit [himself] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the

saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26,27). You cannot ask for things that are improper if the Spirit directs your prayer life. But if He is in you, and directing your prayer, you will receive what you are asking for. God the Father knows the mind of the Spirit and answers your prayer accordingly.

3. "Pray according to His will" (I John 5:14).

Right after one is made sure of eternal salvation in I John 5:13, God gives the believer the confidence to pray in His will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." The fulness of the Spirit in your heart will let you know whether or not you are praying in His will. If you are praying in His will, you will have the quiet assurance that your request is proper. **If the Holy Spirit puts the request upon your heart, you can be sure that it is His will.** Find some ground for your request in the Word of God. There are many things we may want of God, but they may not be good for us to have at the time. For example, my son may have asked for a motorcycle when he was twelve. At age twelve, he could not handle one obviously, and it would have been out of the question for me to buy one. So while the petition may have been good, the timing was off a few years. The need, the timing, the finances would have to be considered as well. Is it a necessity or only for pleasure? God knows what is best for us, as well as the when, and we simply must wait on Him and trust Him for His timing.

4. "Pray in faith believing" (Mk. 11:24).

"Therefore, I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21:22). If you doubt the answer when you pray, you might as well not pray. This has to do with whether you are praying according to the will of God and praying in the Spirit. You might ask yourself these questions. Is my request for the glory of God or is it for some selfish reason? Is my request sensible or plain foolishness? Am I asking God to bring the moon down so I can get on? Is my prayer logical? Don't be like the fellow who asked God to remove the mountain near his house and when he got up in the morning and found the mountain still

there said, "Just as I thought."

5. Pray with thanksgiving (Eph. 5:20; I Thess. 5:18; Phil. 4:6).

"In every thing give thanks." "Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." You cannot beat a thankful heart. We are always on the "gimmie" end of things instead of "thank you, Lord". A personal friend of mine who has gone to be with the Lord always ended his prayer with, "And we thank you, Lord, for what You are about to do." I have never forgotten his prayer. A thankful person cannot be defeated. He is always grateful to God for everything. He is always on the optimistic side of life and very refreshing. We are to give thanks for everything as well as in everything. "Be careful for nothing" actually means "be anxious for nothing". If you are given to worry, give it over to the Lord and trust Him for Romans 8:28. God will take care of you whether you worry or not, but it will relieve you of much anxiety. Worry is a waste of time and shows a lack of trust.

6. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Fervency is lacking in our prayers today. We seldom hear the word mentioned. It means to show some intense spirit or real warmth in our prayers. A fervent prayer is ardent and filled with spirit and passion. There is intensity of feeling. It comes from a hot burning heart. The verse should read, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working." Fervency shows a real concern in one's prayer life. It reveals a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit.

7. Pray with importunity.

Jesus said unto them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give

him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:5-8).

Importunity has to do with being overly urgent or persistent in soliciting a request. It is to urge or press with excessive persistence. It has to do with prevailing in prayer. In other words, you keep on praying until you get the answer. Notice that the answer goes beyond friendship because of the surpassing need. God will hear you, not because you are close to Him, but because of your extreme need.

8. Pray according to the promise.

"And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9,10). Ask, seek, find, what could be any more simple than to ask and to keep on seeking until you receive the answer? That is real importunity put in practice and prevailing until the answer is yours. Remember that Jacob prayed all night until he got an answer.

9. Ask, but do not ask amiss (James 4:1-3).

James talks about lusts that war in your members. What squabbles they caused in the church. He spoke of wars and fightings among you and he attributed it to prayerlessness which is found in the church of today, too. He says, "You have not because you ask not." The simple word is "ask". Instead of fighting each other and causing contentions in the church to get what you want, why not ask God. The prayer meeting is the least attended service. We talk about the hour of prayer and most folks do not attend it and those who do have very little power. The trouble according to James is that, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." There is so much praying amiss amongst us. That is, praying to consume it upon our lusts. That kind of praying avails nothing. It receives no answer.

This may have been a lengthy discussion on prayer but it is most vital if one is to walk with the Lord in a deeper life. **By prayer you draw upon God, and all the riches of heaven can be yours.** It is possible to have all the doctrinal verses on the deeper life well in hand but little or no prayer with it. It has been said that much Bible study without prayer makes a cold, academic

believer, and too much prayer without any Bible study makes an emotional believer with no doctrinal foundation. Obviously both are needed. **The Lord Jesus arose a great while before day to pray. If we are to be His followers, we will need to spend more time with Him in prayer.** It seems that when Christians fail in the Christian life, it begins with the failure to maintain a consistent devotional life of prayer and Bible study.

Chapter 8—Living By the Word

The Bible is the Word of God and one must believe it to be triumphant in Christ. It is where one begins. Back in the early days of my being a Christian I had some doubts about the Bible and no peace of mind. Then one day after reading it I said to the Lord, "Lord, I believe this Book to be Your Word. I receive it as such and will no longer have any doubts about it. There are some things that I do not understand in it, but I accept it as your Word." When I took that step, the Lord gave me peace of mind. I have never had any doubts about it since and I have been teaching it for years. I thoroughly believe it and stake my life on it. If it is not the Word of God, I have wasted my years in the ministry.

The Bible claims to be God's Word. It is God's revelation of His ways to your heart. This is how God talks to you. It is the only positive way that you can be sure you are His child. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:23-25).

The Thessalonian believers have so received it. Paul said. "And you became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were enamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" (I Thess. 1:6.7).

The Bible is inspired by God which makes it an amazing book. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly

furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16,17). No other book can compare with this book or claim for itself what this book does.

God told Joshua, when he took the place of Moses, to operate by the Bible. If all believers would do what he did, they would live successful Christian lives. He said, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8). The two things Joshua must do and all believers in Christ must do if they would be a success for Him are (1) meditate in it, and (2) observe to do according to all that is written therein. To meditate is to chew God's Word as a cow chews its cud. Read a paragraph and chew it over. In other words, think it over, and assimilate it. Get it into your system so that you understand it and observe to do all that it says. How simple. It takes more than just reading a passage. It must be applied to the life. Do what James said, "**But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves**" (James 1:22).

The Book of Colossians says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ..." (3:16). In other words, let the Word be at home in your heart and you be at home in the Word. That takes spending some time in the Book.

Jesus clearly knew the value of the written word when He said to Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). It is the best weapon one can use against the wiles of the tempter. Satan came to Him in a moment of weakness. He was hungry after having been in the wilderness for forty days and nights. The devil came to Him at that moment of His life and said to Him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3). The use of the memorized Word can stop Satan at any time. No doubt this is the reason the Psalmist wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee"(Psalm 119:11). Memorize it if you want victory over temptation. The Holy Spirit will bring it to your mind as you need it.

How much we take in to keep our spiritual life nourished should

be more important than what we eat physically. Life is more than food. The Apostle Paul had it right when he said, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). To live a deeper life with our Lord, one must take time to eat the Word. Remember Jeremiah the prophet said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16). We too are called by His name but we do not take time to eat the Word. **It is vital that we take special time every day to apply the Word of God to our lives that we might be spiritually strong. To be filled with the Word of God is another way of saying be filled with the Spirit. Actually a person is filled with the Spirit in direct proportion to how much he is controlled by the Word of God.**

Jesus prayed for the believers in John 17:17. **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."** Notice that Jesus makes sanctification and His Word synonymous. If you want to be sanctified, it does not take an emotional experience of a so-called second blessing. What it takes is obedience to God's Word. **You are being sanctified as you obey and do His Word.** Sanctification is what God has previously done in you. When you were born again, He at that time set you apart from the world for Himself. What He has done in you, you now agree with and set yourself apart for Him. You do this by your practice of obeying the Word. **The more you obey His Word, the more you become sanctified.** In other words, you are sanctified in proportion to where you are in obedience to the Word. That is progressive sanctification. Complete sanctification takes place when one arrives in heaven. It takes a sanctified life to walk on the water with the Lord victorious over your trials. **Christ gave Himself for the church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish"** (Eph. 5:26-27). As you spend time in the Word, you will see your sin, like a person looking into a mirror, and it should cause you to confess your sin to God. As you confess and forsake your sin, you are being washed by the Word. You are being conformed into the image of Christ. You are becoming a "sanctified vessel, meet [or fit] for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21).

God's Word will be your guide if you want to please Him in all that you do. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. 48:14). "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5,6). **You need not walk with any uncertainty when you have God as your guide.** He will lead you in the right paths and around life's pitfalls. The deeper life is one of assurance in Christ. You tread with a solid step in Him. He knows the way you take and where you are going.

Remember that God wants you to grow as a believer in Christ.

Let me give you a few suggestions on how to study the Bible for yourself and get something out of it for your heart.

1. DO A PARAGRAPH STUDY.

A paragraph consists of one unit of thought like bricks in building a house. In the Bible you build on them like you do in any other book and it can be any number of verses. You may even have a Bible that has paragraph markings "¶" indicating where a new paragraph begins.

2.GIVE THE PARAGRAPH A TITLE ACCORDING TO ITS CONTENTS.

Make your title as brief as possible. It does not have to be fancy, but use words that express what you see to be the main thought in the paragraph such as "The Ministry of John the Baptist".

Every form of Bible study uses four simple words: observation, relationship, interpretation, and application.

3. PRACTICE OBSERVATION.

This is where you put your powers of observation to work. List everything that you see in the paragraph such as people, places, things, doctrine, location, grammar, etc.

4. STUDY RELATIONSHIPS.

A teacher in a college I attended years ago said, "You do not

study anything until you see relationships." How do things you have listed relate one to another? How does this paragraph relate to the previous one or to the one following? Does it continue the narrative, is there some exposition? Is there a comparison, a contrast?

5. INTERPRET THE PARAGRAPH.

What does the paragraph mean or say? When you interpret you are getting an understanding of what it means. What did it say to the ones to whom it was written originally? Put it into your own words.

6. APPLY IT TO YOUR LIFE.

List the spiritual lesson or lessons that you have learned for yourself. Never leave the paragraph until God has spoken to your heart. This is where Bible study has value for you. This is what can be called eating the Word. It is where God talks to you and may even touch your emotions. The Bible will be alive to you when you get something out of it for yourself. Take time to pray in it and do a little meditation. Thank God for what He gave to you and ask Him to make it real in your life. This is application. Don't miss it. Chew the food and digest it. Do a paragraph a day. Memorize a meaningful verse. The deeper life in Christ means Bible study. Prayer and Bible study are how you stay in touch with God. A paragraph a day will keep the devil away.

Chapter 9—Must I Go to Church?

Many folks ask this question before they are saved. They have some preconceived notions about the church that makes them not want to go. **This is where the followers of Christ go after they have received Him. It is a part of being a Christian.** When I say church, I recognize there is the universal body of Christ called the church and the local assembly which is part of the body if it is made up of born again believers that have come out of the world through faith in Him. The building does not make a church. It is only the place where believers gather. The local church is the most important place in any town.

It passes in importance the post office, the grocery store, the barber shop, the school building, the gas station and any other place that could be named. The church is a glorious place and

excelleth any other place as the sun excels the candle. **If a person wants to live a triumphant Christian life, he needs to align himself with a Bible believing church and become associated with those that have come out of the crowd and have become the followers of Christ.**

The church belongs to Christ. He said, "I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). There is nothing better established. The gates of Hell shall not overpower it or in any way supercede it. It is eternal and will never pass away. **When you belong to the church you are in big things.**

Christ is the Head of the church which is His body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23). He died to purchase it "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). He lives in it as the Bible declares, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). His Holy Spirit within the heart of the believer makes that a reality as the Word reveals. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9-11). As the Head of the body, He has all the wisdom needed to lead the church from the day of Pentecost until He comes again. It is good to know that the life of the Head is also the life of the body. It has no life without Him. He has all the ingenuity, the insight, the creative ability, the foresight, the power, the knowledge needed to build and operate the church. He knows each believer in the church and cares for each one. He is the only living consecrated person who has all the gifts and talents needed to take that place. He is the God-appointed One.

Why is the church here? The answer to that question gives the church its identity. There is no other body that is here for the same reasons. It is not only a meeting place where believers gather, but it is a home base from which believers spread out to serve the Lord. As such it is a local organization and a living organism with a distinct calling of God.

It is here to glorify God. This it does by the examples of the believers who realize they are in the church with a work to do. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). It is the lives of the believers that advertise why the church is here. Outsiders should be drawn to the church. If each believer would so live as to glorify God, we would make a lasting impression on the world. Christ will

lead the church to do this if we follow Him.

The church is here to evangelize the locality where it exists as well as all the world. Jesus gave the church its marching orders when He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). When He was on the earth for 40 days after His resurrection He predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit and said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Many of the believers were persecuted for their faith in the early days of the church. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). Jesus as Head of the body is still interested in lost souls and wants to lead the church to win them if we will submit ourselves to Him. If we do this He said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20). **Each one in the church is responsible to be a witness.**

The church is here to edify one another according to what the Bible says in I Thess. 5:11. This is one of the reasons why we have the gift of "pastors and teachers" for the "edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). A local church is a Bible School to teach believers, as well as a missionary base to win the lost. It is also why we have established Sunday Schools. **Believers need to be edified and taught how to serve the Lord. It is another good reason why we should go to church.** An habitual churchgoer will grow to be a strong Christian.

The church has been established to give believers an outlet for good works. It is not to live within closed doors and become ingrown and self-centered. The Bible says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). It is first of all responsible to take care of its own. "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). Paul said to Titus, "I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). There are many poor and sick people needing help. The Gospel certainly has social implications and the church needs to get involved in them.

Now, why should you go to church? It is assumed that you are a believer seeking to live a deeper life with the Lord. Consequently, church membership is a must for you. Just make sure that the church you attend is a good, sound, Bible-believing church that preaches sound doctrine.

1. The Bible says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). The verse speaks for itself. There are some that do not attend at all. Others are only Sunday morning churchgoers thinking they are doing God a favor by attending. The majority of Christians never attend the prayer meeting. We ought to be faithful goers in light of all that Christ has done for us and in light of His coming soon. It does say, "As ye see the day approaching."

2. It is Christ's church and you want to help Him build it. He has not promised that He would build anything else such as the government, a club, or some of the world's societies. You want to be in something that has God's approval and lasts. His church is eternal and will last for all the ages to come. Everything else will some day pass away when Christ returns. You want His church to prosper and be a glorious one as we read in Eph. 5:27 "that he might present it to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

3. You want to show that you are on His side and believe in all that He stands for before the world. His way is the right way and you want to have people see that you are not ashamed to walk on the narrow road with Him. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13,14). Thank God you found it.

4. You want folks to know that you are a Christian. Not that all folks that go to church are Christians, but the world thinks they are at least. You are not a hypocrite but an honest believer in Christ and want those around you to know it. You live in contrast to others who may only be pretenders. He is real to you

and you wish to show it. You go where real Christians gather if Christ has become your life and reason for living. The least you can do is to attend church.

5. You want to help in His work. You are not of those who just want to make a good impression. The church is more than just a meeting place. It is where Christians gather together to get ready to go to work. Most of the time spent by Christians is not in the house of God but out amongst the people where the work is. At each service you are edified and being prepared unto every good work. This is one of the reasons our Lord gave pastors to His church, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11,12).

6. When you go to church, you are taking your place with Christ apart from the world. If the world hates you for this, remember that Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Jesus said, "believers are chosen out of the world" (John 15:19). They are still "in the world" (John 17:11), but "not of the world" (John 17:14). Christians are not worldly people but are "sent to the world" (John 17:18) to witness to the world. Some believers stay away from the church because they still love the world so much and cannot let it go. The world and the church cannot mix. Sometimes it is hard to tell where the church ends and the world begins.

7. One goes to church to please God. There is no better reason. Jesus said, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). Christians would do well to live by that same rule too. Many Christians are not pleasing Him by their not attending. We need to check up on this.

8. Go to church to hear the Word of God proclaimed. The pastor will be in the pulpit to "feed the flock" (I Pet. 5:2). It is his calling. Take heed to the Word and you will grow and become a "doer" of what you hear (James 1:22,23). His teaching will help you live the deeper life in Christ and learn to walk on the water with Him. If there are things that you do not understand, ask him after the service. Fellowship with God's people. They may have faults and are not perfect but they are the best on the earth. They are trying to live by the same book. Attend all the services of the church from the start and go with

regularity.

9. When you go to church, present your body to the Lord.

The Bible says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2). Your body belongs to the Lord; is indwelled by the Holy Spirit which makes it His temple (I Cor. 6:19,20). Step out from the world and keep your life clean before God. You do this because God was so good to you in His boundless mercy to save you.

10. Go because you want your life to be a witness to your family and neighbors around you. They watch your life and know you have something they do not have.

11. Above all, go to church to worship God. This you do whenever you sing His praises with others. Fellowship with believers is delightful whenever you meet. The Word of God will be taught to edify your soul and it will fill your heart with joy. You will find the Lord Jesus will become more and more real to you as you attend faithfully. The more you learn of Him the more He will grow on you. If you go to church with the proper attitude, you will find you do not want to miss any of the services. It will become part of your life to attend God's house and not something tacked on. You will learn to pray together as you bring your burdens to the Lord. Include giving as a part of your worship and it will become a special blessing. You will be pleased when the Lord returns for His own at the rapture that you are part of that great crowd that goes to meet Him. Those of our loved ones that have died in Christ shall be raised first and we who are alive will be caught up with them "to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:13-18). It will be a tremendous event to be glorified with Him. You will be glad you have been "WALKING ON THE WATER WITH HIM."

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