

You Can Find God's Best!

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Foreword

Wise Solomon said long ago, "By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Prov 24:6). Solomon would feel very safe today with the multitude of Christian counsellors that are readily available.

I have sampled a great many of the books that are available on Christian counselling and to be fair I must say that in nearly all of them I have found some valuable help. The virtue of this book is that there is a great deal of practical wisdom packed into comparatively few words.

The weakness of many such books lies in the fact that counsellors have increasingly isolated themselves by working almost exclusively in counselling clinics. The consequence is that in all too many cases the theory is fine but the practice less so. The strength of this book stems from the author, Eric Maddison, being a long-standing part of a strong ministry team in a successful local church at Nottingham.

Its strength comes also from the fact that all the teaching is local church founded. Further, Eric firmly believes that the Bible is the inspired word of the living God, and all his teaching is therefore Bible based. Above all, Eric is a devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his life and teaching are Christ-centred.

Colin Whittaker
Editor of Redemption Magazine.

At 81 years of age senior minister Eric Maddison has released this treasury of wisdom proven throughout a lifetime of pastoral counselling. Pastor Eric has been a blessing to our lives for over 25 years and this book is not to be missed at any price - but for free . . . what a blessing !

Dr Les Norman and Mrs Pilar Norman
The World Christian Network
<http://www.worldchristians.org>

Acknowledgments

As you read this book you will become aware that it is a series of different subjects loosely joined together. This is because they were first published as separate articles in a monthly magazine, and if it had not been for the persistent pressure from so many friends they might never have been released in book form.

Amongst the many that have helped and encouraged this venture I must mention Mike Wells of Abiding Life Ministries, Denver Colorado; David Shearman of the Christian Centre, Nottingham; also Colin Whittaker, Editor of Redemption magazine. Their constructive criticisms, constant encouragement and wise counsel have been a source of great encouragement.

Another link in the chain has been the patience and untiring labour of love that God has provided me with in Mrs. Christine Thompson. Only with her help, secretarial skill and availability could this book have been ready for its original deadline. Now as this second edition is released, I must further add my appreciation for the computing skills and help of Mike and Sharon Blackburn.

If you should find any of the insights helpful, if you feel that they ought to be published within your particular circle of God's work, even if it means translating them and publishing them in another country, please do not hesitate to contact the publishers who will guide you in this matter. God has promised that his Word will become a mighty river. Perhaps you could help by becoming one of its tributaries!

Pastor Eric. C. Maddison.

Preface

This book contains a series of topics that could touch some areas of your Christian life that might need to be brought into sharper focus.

Theological issues, even controversial ones have been reduced to their most simple terms, and the application of such principles and the appropriation of such truths could soon bring about a radical change in your Christian life.

The emphasis is always to present Christ centred counselling and to keep to the simple gospel that Paul received by direct revelation from Jesus Christ himself (Gal 6:11). The gospel that he so jealously guarded is always sublime in its simplicity, supernatural in its outworking, and is always centred in the finished work of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ (2 Cor 11:1-4).

The faith that will help you to find God's best is not one of positive thinking or that which is involved in a positive mental attitude. It is a childlike faith, that after receiving the revelation of a truth, asks the Father in Jesus name and then quietly waits for the Holy Spirit to make it real (Jn 16:13-16).

There is no way human endeavour can bring about this transfer of doctrine (knowing in your mind) into reality (knowing in your spirit). Only the Holy Spirit can make real the mighty promises of God. Our only "work" in appropriating God and sharing his eternal secrets is to believe. Jesus said "This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he has sent" (Jn 6:29). You "buy" the truth by using God's currency - by believing (Rom 3:23).

Wherever Jesus Christ has accomplished a work on our behalf we must first believe it, then step out in faith and live it. This principle of identification is biblical wisdom, by which we can freely claim righteousness, sanctification, redemption and many more aspects of our salvation (1 Cor 1:30).

For example, the forgiveness of your sins is free, it is a grace gift "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-10). If you do not receive it on God's terms you do not get it! But it is important to remember that after receiving forgiveness by faith, it must be maintained by works, i.e. the forgiving of others. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive ye your trespasses (Mt 6:14-15).

Another example is claiming deliverance from the old self. It can only become reality by believing it, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (rendered powerless) that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom 6:6). And again: "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" (Gal 2:20). But once the Holy Spirit has brought about God's death sentence upon it, you must maintain it by keeping it in death.

You "believe" to obtain the reality of God's promises, then after receiving you "obey" to maintain that reality. If you reverse this divine order or only do part of it you will never find - GOD'S BEST!

So, what is God's best? It is the amazing privilege of living in an intimate, loving relationship with God the Father and His Son, Jesus. Christ said "If anyone loves me, and obeys my word, my Father will love him, and we will come and make our home with him." (Jn 14:23 - NIV). This astonishing honour is within the grasp of even those with limited education and learning capabilities, but missed by many with brilliant intellect and academic achievements. Jesus also said "I praise you Father, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them unto little children; yes Father, or this was Your good pleasure." (Matt 11:25-26 - NIV).

You must learn, as He had to learn, to be "switched-on", alert for any communication from the Father. He learned to listen amidst all the noise of Joseph's workshop, even in the hustle and bustle of His home life. He would also slip away in times of crisis to quietly enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with His Father.

In John 5:30, Jesus says "I am able to do nothing from myself – independently, of my own accord; but as I am taught by God and as I get His orders. [I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to me, so I give a decision]. Even as I hear, I judge, and my judgement is right (just, righteous), because I do not seek or consult my own will – I have no desire to do what is pleasing to myself, my own aim, my own purpose – but only the will and pleasure of the Father who sent me." (Amplified version).

Then in John 8:28, 'So Jesus added "When you have lifted up the Son of Man [on the cross], you will realize (know, understand) that I am He [for whom you look]; and that I do nothing from myself – of my own accord, or on my own authority – but I say [exactly] what my father has taught me.'" (Amplified version). This is the secret of how Jesus lived and worked, and this is what He prayed that we, too, might have. Just before He went to the cross, He prayed "that they may be one in us" (Jn 17:21). This is an individual oneness, and out of this will come true unity with other believers.

Never forget that, foundational to learning this secret, there must be the daily knowing and living-by biblical principles and promises; because Jesus was able to say "I do always those things that please Him" (Jn 8:29), He also knew that His prayers would be heard and answered (Jn 11:41-42). He was also well able to recognise and resist Satan's efforts, not only in distorting the scriptures, but also in attempting to deflect Him from His destiny.

From the moment that Jesus said "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49) to the moment He bowed His head and said "It is finished." (Jn 19:30) He lived from the oneness, the awareness of His Father within Him. Everything He said was at His Father's direction, and with His Father's permission. He never once acted independently of His Father's authorization and power (Jn 5:30 – also Jn 5:43, Jn 10:32, Jn 10:25 Amplified Version).

How sad that this incredible secret of His life and ministry has not only been ignored, but ingeniously replaced by a subtle distortion called ecumenicalism! Oneness is the text, abundantly supported by the context (Jn 17:20-23)! Real unity amongst God's people, regardless of the many denominations, is only possible when it is the outworking of this glorious truth.

God's best in eternity is for those who will be prepared and ready to be a bride for His Son (Rev 21:2), but God's best here and now is the initiation and preparation of those to whom this revelation has come. May this book, with all its limitations, its series of different subjects loosely joined together, help to create the loving unity of the incredible mystery that Jesus prayed for.

Chapter One

Are You Missing God's Best ?

This book is written for born-again Christians who know their sins are forgiven and forgotten, but who also know that they have not found the freedom to live their Christian life without stress or strain. They know that they possess Christ as their life but in no way could it be called abundant life (Jn 10:10).

Sometimes the cause for their wretchedness is obvious such as living in a wrong relationship either with God or with men. This can range from secret resentment to open rebellion, in fact any thing that offends the royal law of God that we should love him and our neighbour as we would love ourselves.

The problem can be much more subtle, such as trying to live the Christian life in their own strength, and very often in spite of so many inbuilt weaknesses that are caused by childhood hurts.

So, contrary to all accepted wisdom this book is going to start with one of the most difficult facts to face in our search for God's best, and it will become easier as we progress. The fact that in trying to do good in our own strength will very often end in failure and despair - even condemnation!

If ever there was a case of "good being the enemy of the best", it is to be found in Paul's dilemma in Romans 7. He says, "I do not understand what I do, for what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Rom 7:15 NIV).

Firstly, it is very important to realise that his condemnation and wretchedness did not come from being a hopeless sinner. He had already found the answer to that problem in Romans 5:1. He knew that he was justified by faith and he enjoyed PEACE WITH GOD; but this new condemnation was that of being a helpless saint walking in the flesh, and he knew that until he discovered how to walk in the Spirit he would not be at PEACE WITH HIMSELF.

There is no doubt that Paul had found a measure of victory over sin. He knew what it meant to appropriate by faith the wonderful fact that on the cross, in Christ, God had put to death his old self (Rom 6:6). In Romans 7:15-24 however it seems that something was still sadly wrong, for in spite of setting his will to do good, he found himself doing evil.

It was not until he had learned the very painful lesson "that in his flesh (self-effort) dwelt no good thing" (Rom 7:18 AV). What he realised was that even in trying to do good, he was only succeeding in keeping his old self very much alive. Worse still, he discovered that when the old self was not reckoned dead and kept in death, sin was able to manifest itself!

If we are going to find God's best, we too will have to face the awful fact that our old self is not only capable of all kinds of evil, but that it is also incapable of any good!

Daily we must accept God's death sentence not only upon our ugly old self, but even upon our good old self. Both are manifestations of the independent self we inherited from Adam, and we were never created to live independent of our Creator.

If we will reckon on the fact that our old self was crucified, with Christ and if we keep it crucified (Col 3:5), we shall then not only break free from its control, but we shall be able to open up our whole being to be possessed by the Spirit of Christ, and we will be able to break free from "the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2) and find the dynamic life force of Jesus doing what the law could not do (Rom 8:3). Then we shall be able to say "there is therefore NOW no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" because we no longer walk after the flesh (self-effort) (Rom 8:1 AV).

Sin is a powerful destructive force that lies deep even within the born- again believer. It will never be eradicated, but by living in the Spirit it can be rendered powerless (Rom 6:6).

Holiness is not the inability to sin - but the glorious ability to choose not to sin! Holiness in all its spontaneity and splendour is simply allowing Christ to release his life both into you and through you to others. Holiness is easier once you claim this supernatural deliverance from the old self and allow him to be your new self. Holiness does not eliminate your unique self, but enhances it! Listen to Paul's description of the dynamic secret of an exchanged life "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20 AV).

The same simple faith that first reconciled you to God and opened your life to Christ allowing Him to save you must continue. Simple faith must appropriate the saving power of Jesus every day of your life (Rom 5:10). Normal Christianity is Jesus Christ living out his life through human beings.

Now in case you think God's death sentence upon our old self is too severe, the same principle is established by the teaching of Jesus when He said "without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). In the allegory of the true vine the main object is not to teach us about eternal life, but how to produce eternal fruit! Before we can ever produce the luscious fruit of his life we must be prepared to acknowledge that our old root system of self-effort has been cut off so that we could be grafted into him.

If we try to obey his commandment to love one another in our own strength we will continually fail. Human love cannot obey this commandment, it might be pure in its intentions but it is pathetically inadequate in its actions. All human love is tainted with self-love and although this is not always apparent, any pressure from an uncongenial circumstance will soon expose how fragile it is.

When we know these truths, we must realise that to know them in our minds is not enough. We must ask the Holy Spirit to make them real in our Spirit. Biblical knowing is not just intellectual, it is experiential! Jesus said "This is eternal life, to know God" (Jn 17:3). Eternal life is knowing God, not knowing about God. It is sadly true that you can be a Doctor of Divinity and yet live like a devil! You can be full of religious knowledge but rotten to the core!

So follow this simple pattern of appropriating Jesus Christ. First, agree that without him you can do nothing, then pray. Daily I must receive your life so that daily I will be able to release your love (Jn 15:9-16). The result will be both delightful and dynamic! It will be delightful, because there is no greater joy in life than knowing that you are a branch by which others will both see and taste the goodness of God - pure goodness!

It will be dynamic because, in conveying to others the pure selfless love of God, you yourself will win untold benefits. Love is the greatest therapeutic force in the universe. Love heals not only the one who receives it, but also the one who releases it! Disturbed and distressed minds can find calmness, emotional hurts will gradually heal, and even psychosomatic sicknesses will disappear as the body loses its stress and learns to relax.

Finally, as you become increasingly conscious that his love is flowing through you to others, the Holy Spirit will then make you aware that you can "ask anything in His name and it will be granted you" (Jn 15:7-8).

Jesus must have smiled when he made this incredible promise because he knew the subtle secret of his words. He knew that when his people live daily in this love union with him, they don't pray selfish prayers - only his desires!

So, make a total commitment of your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, then trust the Holy Spirit to lead you into this wonderful secret of the exchanged life. Make it your daily priority that you will give him no rest until self-effort is cut off and the superlative life of Jesus is a spontaneous reality.

This is God's best. Anything else, even though it is good, will be living by self-effort - flesh! Only as you come into this glorious experience of Christ in you will the "hope of glory" (Col 1:27) become a glowing reality!

Then, and not till then, will you be able to rise up from your wretchedness, shake off all condemnation and shout, "there is therefore NOW no condemnation" (Rom 8:1). Not only am I in Christ Jesus, but also because I have discovered this secret, I no longer walk in the flesh but after the Spirit. Living in and by the Spirit of Jesus you have replaced trying to be good, with the BEST!

May the following chapters bring revelation that will lead you into this dynamic secret.

Chapter Two

The Missing Dimension

So often the great central truth of Paul's teaching is lost, not only under the pressure of modern living, but shamefully in the midst of many theological arguments. The sad lack in so many lives, even ministers, the missing source of completeness in so many Christians is oneness - or union life! Jesus spoke about this intimate oneness when he said, "I and my Father are one" (Jn 10:30). This experience was never intended to be his alone, for He said "If any man loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come and make our home with him" (Jn 14:23 NKJV). In his last prayer the main burden of his heart is seen when he cries "I do not pray for these alone but also for those who will believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as you Father are in me and I in you, so that they may be one in us" (Jn 17:21). Whilst this includes corporate oneness that is so vital to his disciples the main emphasis is "as you Father are in me and I in you". This intimate oneness could almost be called the missing doctrine - the unclaimed dimension!

In all the doctrines that Paul propounded and defended, this major theme is so easily overlooked, ignored or forgotten. The great truths of justification, sanctification, and election are but streams that should feed this one superlative experience, this river of life - union with Christ!

Paul was never content to present Christ just as the hope of glory, but by teaching them with all wisdom he sought to bring them to a perfect relationship with Christ, so that hope might turn to reality. Paul is quick to point out that even this work was accomplished in the power of union life. "His energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Col 1:27-29 NIV).

This sublime secret of strength is stated so clearly in the statement "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2:20).

Paul daily accepted the death sentence upon his old self, so that he might enjoy the dynamic life of Christ being released into his life and ministry (Rom 6:6-13). He laboured, but from a position of rest (Heb 4:10-11). Christian service that leaves you frustrated and exhausted is often due to working in your own strength. It is not only wrong, but could prove to be worthless. It is far better, much easier and more glorifying to God for your service to be the result of union life; that is: Christ living in and working through you.

Drained, dehydrated Christians are often the direct result of failing not only to know what union life is, but to see it as the crowning glory of human experience: so let us seek to understand and appropriate what God so earnestly longs to give.

Union life is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for it is possible to be like the Corinthian church, crowned with every spiritual gift - but carnal (1 Cor 3:1-4)! The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives you power gifts for service, but union life gives additional power, to live and love (1 Cor 13)!

This is not sinless perfection - this is a sad distortion of this superlative experience. Union life is not the inability to sin, but the ability to choose not to sin (Rom 6:12-13). A holy life is allowing Christ to control the whole of your life.

This does not restrict the unique personhood of the believer, it releases him from every restraint of the old self. Christ can now be released and revealed in all His radiance!

Union life is an expanded awareness of the mystery Paul was called to pioneer and proclaim to the church of Jesus Christ. The most humble believer has higher privileges and greater potential than any Old Testament saint could ever know. It is not just the total release from the "old self" but the overwhelming experience of Christ in you, bringing into being an exciting "new self" (Rom 6:4)! Service, even suffering and satanic opposition can now be faced with almost supernatural strength (2 Cor 4:8-18).

Throughout church history, the stark naked testimony of successful saints has been "not I - but Christ in me".

John Wesley knew union life, and was used of God to bring England back from the brink of spiritual and social disaster. His whole being was made available for the resurrected Christ to ride up and down the land, so establishing His church in every city, town and hamlet. Listen to the eloquent and exquisite words of his brother Charles' testimony, as he bears witness to enjoying a similar experience:

' Me with a quenchless thirst inspire,
A longing, infinite desire,
And fill my craving heart.
Less than THYSELF, oh do not give:
In might THYSELF within me live,
Come, all thou hast and art! '

William Booth knew union life and formed an army of Christian soldiers that invaded the public houses to bring thousands to repentance. This army then tackled some of the evils of the day and not the least was poverty.

C. T. Studd, in union with Christ, forsook fame and fortune. He left the playing field to pioneer on the mission field. Many spiritual giants of church history were inspired and inflamed to take Christ to the multitude by his example.

Hudson Taylor laboured to establish the China Inland Mission, but it was only after eighteen years of working in his own strength that he discovered union life.

Many of God's mighty men and women, some known, but many unknown, have triumphed in the far-flung corners of the earth. The secret of their success is always the same, "not I but Christ in me"! Small wonder that they will cast their crowns at his feet in the coming day of universal recognition and restitution of all things (Rev 4:9-11)!

So if you have to drag your exhausted body and drive your tired mind to face the demands of everyday duties it could be because you have not discovered this superlative source of strength. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

When we rightly see and fully understand God's way we shall know yet another facet of his wisdom in the cross. Two vital truths must be appropriated daily if we are to tap the vast resources of our Lord. They must be brought together and kept together, for what God hath joined let no man put asunder.

The objective facts of God's word must become subjective experience. Faith must do more than admire the cross and acknowledge the resurrection - it must appropriate their power daily!

If there is a lack of revelation, or refusal to accept God's death sentence upon our old self (Rom 6:6) we shall not only be severely hindered, but it will sadly restrict the release of his resurrection life into our whole being.

The old self is every trait that we have inherited from Adam. It is every negative thought, emotion, reaction, and intention - yes, even in the born again Christian! As pointed out in chapter one the condemnation that Paul rejoiced to be free from in Romans 8:1-4 was not the condemnation of being a hopeless sinner, but that of being a helpless saint (Rom 7:15-25).

To be born of the Spirit but to walk after the flesh is the sad story of so many Christians. "Flesh is self" says Watchman Nee. "Self" says William Law "is the root branch and tree of all the evil nature of our fallen state".

There is nothing you can do about your old self until by revelation you have recognised **that God has already done it for you!** Yes, your old self WAS crucified. (The original Greek is in the aorist tense, a once completed and final act). Now, as you see this first truth and daily affirm it, the Holy Spirit will confirm it. Gradually the power of the cross will demonstrate God's wisdom. It will weaken and wither the damaging and debilitating power of the old self.

But you must add the second truth. Not only did you die with Christ, but you were also raised with him to walk in newness of life. See this truth, believe it and daily confess it until his resurrection life streams into your life continually.

Once your life is rid of the old self and you are re-energised by his life your new self will have no problem putting off the old habit patterns that will still tend to cling for a while (Rom 8:13, Col 3:5, Eph 4:17-32, Eph 5:1-7).

How and when to start? Now of course! Right now make a total commitment of your whole life to the Holy Spirit so that he can bring you into union life. Ask him to strengthen your will and to sustain your desire until the hope of this glory - becomes reality!

Don't allow discouragement to put you off, and even if you fail don't believe the devils lie that it works for everyone else but not for you!

Your continuing confession of the creative Word will call it into being (Hebrew 11:3). Gradually and beautifully the old self will lose its dreadful dominating grip. Gradually and beautifully Christ Jesus will emerge in many new and exciting ways.

The new radiant you will surprise your family and friends. They will notice that you are more relaxed. Your work and witness for Jesus will be more spontaneous - it will be Jesus working through you!

You will not only be able to love the unlovable but even laugh at your own mistakes. Union life is not just a luxury it is a dire necessity.

Always remember that living in the flesh, the old man, and the old self are synonymous terms that simply describe a life lived by self-effort, independent of any help from God. Such was Adam's plight when both he and all his descendants forfeited the presence and the power of God within their lives. In falling into sin they became men of flesh (Gen 6:3). Union life is a life that is saturated with the Spirit of Christ.

Chapter Three

Believers In Lead Boots

When the flesh is still active, uncrucified, you can no more walk in the Spirit THAN RUN A FOUR MINUTE MILE IN LEAD BOOTS!

Many are born of the Spirit - but find themselves unable to walk in the Spirit. The Corinthian church did not lack any spiritual gift (1 Cor 1:5-7), but Paul reprimanded them for being carnal! They were also guilty of moral laxity, schism and downright selfishness even at the Lord's table (1 Cor 3:1-4). These were but three obvious manifestations of flesh - that deadly enemy of life in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-21).

Even the Apostle Paul himself suffered from the same problem when trying, in the strength of the flesh, to keep the Law (Rom 7). We do not know how long he wrestled to find the answer, but when he did he became the apostle of deliverance. He blazed a trail from the defeat of Romans chapter 7 into the glorious freedom of chapter 8:1-4.

The permanent address of so many believers is Romans 7 - and it is not unknown for ministers to live there. That sad experience was meant to be only for a short time, just a passing phase in the development of the believer. It was never intended to be more than a temporary exposure to the weakness and ugliness of the old man, the old self.

Do you recognise when your life is not totally dominated by the Spirit of Christ, (Rom 8:2) or do you excuse the outworking of a nature that is anything but Christ like? If it's a struggle to manifest the fruits of the Spirit, YOU HAVEN'T YET DISCOVERED THE SECRET!

Often, in spite of your best efforts, "the works of the flesh are manifest" (Gal 5:19). It is not only given to lust, but also able to lie and exaggerate. It can be arrogant, abrasive, aggressive, prone to moods, merciless and power mad. It snaps, snarls and is easily soured at another's success.

The old self is conceited, quarrelsome, cold and critical. Another evidence of the old self is that it is quick to blame others, but slow to accept responsibility for its own faults. It is impatient, impetuous and indifferent to hurting others; it sulks, sneers, and often wallows in self-pity. It is suspicious, sly and easily resorts to sarcasm. Unreasonable, unreliable, unforgiving, unrelenting in its fault finding even if it needs a muckrake and microscope to do its dirty work. Ad infinitum - ad nauseam!

Such are some of the outworking of the flesh. Such are the un-Christ like attitudes that manifest themselves especially when under pressure. No amount of discipline, dedication, or even sublimation will restrain its breaking forth. Day after day, year after year you struggle on - but only from one defeat to another.

If you have to drag yourself to church, very often out of a sense of duty, if you have to struggle to manifest "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self - control" (Gal 5:22). Even the slightest problem will expose the shallowness of your experience, it will soon leave you so exhausted that you will have no strength left to sing, or smile - let alone sympathise with someone in need!

FLESH - as Watchman Nee points out in *The Normal Christian Life* - is seen to be what it really is if we remove the "H" and reverse the letters - SELF!

Self conscious, self righteous, self important, self centred, self contented, self opinionated, self pitying, self indulgent, self exalting, self glorying - in other words - FLESH!

Some believers are in this sad condition, simply because of their stubborn refusal to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of their lives. Like the Children of Israel, they rebel, they murmur, they refuse to believe God's promises. Their whole life is one of going round in circles until the day of their death (Heb 3:7-19). Everyone and anyone is blamed. One day it is Satan - the next day it is the Minister! Some blame their parents, others even dare to blame God! Round and round they go in ever decreasing circles of discontent until they die. Many a church is haunted by them even before they are gone.

Sadly, the vast majority of God's people fail to find deliverance simply BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW GOD'S WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA!

How can you "walk in the Spirit, so that you do not fulfil the desires of the flesh" (Gal 5:16)?

You must recognise that the old man, the 'Adam' nature, that causes you to walk after the flesh, is so loathsome, so rotten, so wretched, that there was only one thing God could do with it - PUT IT TO DEATH! This is just what he did when Jesus was crucified, his death not only delivered us from our sins, but also from our old selves. But do you KNOW this? Knowing this is the first step to claiming deliverance! "For we know that our old self was crucified with Him" (Rom 6:6, NIV).

Now faith must constantly accept this deathblow to the sin-dominated self-life. Jesus not only took your sins to the Cross (1 Pet 2:24) but he took your sinful self as well.

Knowing that CHRIST DIED FOR YOU is wonderful (1 Cor 15:1-3), but when the revelation comes to you that YOU DIED IN CHRIST (Col 3:3) it is even more wonderful!

Accept God's death sentence upon your sin-dominated ego. Agree that all your self-effort is futile; it is not of faith (Rom 6:6-11). Take this faith position daily. Apply God's Word CONTINUALLY until the mighty dynamics of the cross destroy sin's power within you: then the work of mortifying the flesh will be easier (Col 3:5). So also will be your efforts to conform to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).

Your initial baptism into his death and rising to walk in newness of life MUST BE CONSTANTLY APPROPRIATED! (Rom 6:1-13).

Daily receive his resurrection life into your yielded personality (Rom 6:12-13). You will discover that HIS CROSS will destroy every negative thought, emotion, and reaction. Then HIS LIFE will impart every positive thought, emotion and reaction. This will result in power and peace to walk in continual victory! Life in the Spirit will never bring you into a position where you are not able to sin, but it will give you power to choose not to sin!

As you grasp this glorious secret, the life of Jesus will gradually emerge in many beautiful and exciting ways. Your flesh controlled ego is not the real you. Only when Christ Jesus dominates your whole personality will the unique you come forth to amaze you, and even astonish your nearest and dearest friends!

The faith that claims this incredible life is God's type of faith - SPEAKING FAITH! Jesus promised you quite clearly in Mark 11:20-35 that by speaking faith you will remove mountains. Saturate yourself in these mighty promises, then claim them by confessing them verbally!

Daily you must appropriate this great secret, so that daily you "will be saved by His life" (Rom 5:10). Jesus said that you must "eat of His flesh and drink of His blood" (Jn 6:53). If you want his life to be in you CONTINUALLY you must CONTINUALLY assimilate him who is the bread of life, not just one day a week, BUT EVERY DAY!

Foolish - says the natural mind (1 Cor 2:1-8). Illogical - cries the philosopher (Col 2:8). Heresy - scream the Jewish Sanhedrin (1 Cor 1:23). "But unto us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). "The foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor 1:25).

The foolishness of God, the preaching of the cross, contains the hidden wisdom of God. "None of the princes of this world knew for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor 2:7,8).

If you seek forgiveness of sins then you must GO TO THE CROSS (1 Jn 1:9). If you need power to break the pull of this world's pleasures and pursuits again you must GO TO THE CROSS (Gal 6:14)! If you need authority to silence the accusations of Satan, ability to withstand him, your battle cry is, THE VICTORY OF HIS CROSS (Rev 12:11). Likewise, when you long for deliverance from your old self, so that the nature of Christ will be released, again you must GO TO THE CROSS (Rom 6:6). By going to the cross we mean trusting the Holy Spirit to lead us into the reality of all its benefits.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of spiritual strongholds (2 Cor 10:4). They are mighty to defeat "the world, the flesh and the devil". Faith takes the Word, faith speaks the Word, which is the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17) and the powers of sin, self and Satan are disarmed. Through the cross of Christ power is made available to save you in every situation. God in his WISDOM has given you RIGHTEOUSNESS, in Jesus you are forgiven and accepted. SANCTIFICATION, in Jesus you are qualified to engage in holy activities, and REDEMPTION, in Jesus you are given total freedom from Satan (1 Cor 1:29-31).

Never live another day of your life without appropriating both THE POWER OF HIS CROSS, and THE POWER OF HIS LIFE! Do not allow Satan to distract you or discourage you, but set your face like flint to possess this continual life of victory.

As his life starts to replace yours, you might ask; will I still feel hurt when people insult me? Yes, but you will not retaliate! Will I still feel the pull of temptation? Yes, but now you will have power to overcome it! Will I still panic, get anxious, afraid? yes, but only just briefly. Then as you quietly confess your faith in him to help you your fears will soon subside and fade away! Will my damaged emotions, my strained nerves, and all the physical hurt in my body begin to heal? Certainly! (Rom 8:11)

As your life is freed from all its negative reactions, and flooded with Christ's powerful and victorious life, health will stream into every part of your being. The victory of his life will be transferred into yours (Isa 53:11). By his stripes you will be healed - even though time might be needed to bring this about (Isa 53:5). There is no wound, no bruise, no hurt, that will not heal and recover as you apply "the balm of Gilead" (Jer 8:22).

Release your faith, RECKON upon the fact that your old self was crucified. RECEIVE Christ's resurrection life, and finally RESIST Satan's efforts to thwart you from walking in the Spirit.

Do not be put off if there is no immediate awareness that the Holy Spirit is applying the death sentence to your old self and releasing the resurrection life of Jesus into your spirit. Simply affirm your faith that he will lead you into the reality of what God's word has promised. As surely as day follows night, "spirit knowing" will replace all other "forms of knowing". Do not allow your feelings, fears or failings to fool you into forsaking your claim upon these eternal facts.

When this delightful miracle has taken place your spirit will enjoy a beautiful sense of buoyancy, inner power and an indescribable peace. Your labour to enter into this rest will have been well rewarded - but now you must learn the secrets of how to release it to others.

Chapter Four

Full Of The Spirit But Blocked

It is possible to be full of the Spirit but at the same time be frustrated because we cannot release it to others. This is because we fall foul of Satan's determined efforts to BLOCK OUR MINDS and so prevent the breaking forth of the Holy Spirit. "Therefore be clear minded" (1 Pet 4:7 NIV).

Although our thought patterns can be influenced from many sources and by a multiplicity of things, it will help to simplify our understanding if we consider the three main areas that need our watchful attention. Satan's main objective is to create confusion and distraction, so we must not be "ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor 2:11). We must also use spiritual weapons to defeat his tactics as carnal arguments are of no avail in this warfare (2 Cor 10:4).

The first area that we must guard is that of EVERYDAY MATTERS that demand our attention, the immediate tasks and responsibilities that we get involved in, such as our work, our family and spare time activities. The danger here is that of allowing these things to TOTALLY DOMINATE OUR THOUGHTS. Jesus makes reference to the "cares of this world" that choke the word, (Mk 4:15) so preventing fruit (Matt 13:22). Satan will seek to block our minds even with legitimate and needful things. He will also provoke us in the constant battle of relationships as we feel we must either assert or defend our rights.

He is continually at work seeking to promote those sordid squabbles in the home, at our place of work. Sadly even in the church as we try to get our own way even if it brings bitter envying and strife. This is spurious "wisdom" and the sad result is disorder and every evil work (Ja 4:15-16 NIV). All this is in violent contrast to spiritual wisdom that brings a harvest of peace (Ja 4:17-18 NIV). So how do we deal with this problem?

There is no better way to begin a busy day than by engaging in a quiet time with the Lord. Like Mary, we must sit at Jesus feet, listen to his words and look up into his face (Lk 10:42). Then as we face the daily chores they are less likely to distract us. The encumbrances of the day will be handled far more efficiently if we have not neglected our communion with him. There is no doubt that we will radiate a beautiful calmness and confidence as we emerge from our time in his presence. Incidentally, very often a tune or a text that invades our mind can be the Holy Spirit trying to alert us to a situation in the hours just ahead of us.

If it is possible we should seek to order our activities for the day. To have a meaningful plan of action will not only save time and conserve strength, but also avoid needless duplication of effort. This first channel to the mind, though busy, MUST NOT BECOME BLOCKED! Then, as we keep it clear, the life of Jesus will be able to flow out unhindered, enabling us not only to carry our own burdens but also the burdens of others (Gal 6:2).

The second area is when Satan attempts to violently invade our thoughts so that we become bewildered and confused. At times like this it is not unknown for some believers to come very close to having a mental breakdown. If we follow every so-called 'guidance' without carefully and prayerfully checking it, we could be in danger of listening to THE VOICE OF THE STRANGER! If we fail to exercise discernment in this area we are failing to heed the warning of the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:5). So how can we recognise our enemy?

We can recognise him by the TONE of his voice, the TACTICS he uses, and finally the effect that his words have upon our spirits. The enemy will be AGGRESSIVE, seeking to drive you to do unreasonable things, even quoting scripture out of context (Matt 4:6). He will ACCUSE YOU - suggesting that you are such a failure that going to church, reading your Bible, or even praying is sheer hypocrisy (Rev 12:11). He will CREATE ANXIETY by continually harassing you, suggesting many doubtful things that leave you unsettled, uneasy and under stress.

Yes, be on your guard against the bullying, harassing, accusing voice of the stranger. Do not give heed to the voice that is more like a butcher than a shepherd.

Whatever tactics Satan uses, even if you are not sure. DO NOT BE PASSIVE! Like Jesus, you must actively resist him (Lk 4:8). Do not argue, but use the word of God as a sword (Eph 6:17). Remind him he is a defeated foe (1 Jn 3:8); that you are in Christ who conquered him (Col 3:3); and that nothing can ever separate you from his love (Rom 8:35-39). Tell the enemy that God's love for you IS NOT BASED UPON YOUR PERFORMANCE - but on the perfection of Christ's love for you (Eph 1:6). Remind him of his coming judgement and final doom (Rev 20:10).

Speak out aloud your confession of faith. Say, "I choose to hear only the voice of my Shepherd. I silence every interference from the stranger, by all the power of Calvary - I resist him!"; if you feel you need more help, get others to stand with you in prayer, but remember, you must actively continue to resist - you must not expect others to do all the fighting.

Now we come to the third area you must guard and the reason for all this Satanic activity. It is to distract you and drown out the still small voice of your Shepherd (Jn 10:3-4). In direct contrast to Satan's harsh and demanding voice Jesus is so gentle in his approach, his voice so full of love, that the danger now, is THAT YOU CAN EASILY IGNORE IT!

After you have aggressively silenced all disturbing sounds, learn to respond to the gentle urging of the Shepherd. You will be led into His green pastures, rested and refreshed by His still waters. His presence will comfort you and guide you through every dark and difficult circumstance. You will have no fear of need (Ps 23:1), "green pastures" (v.2), "still waters" (v.2), "restoration of strength" (v.3), confidence in his guiding hand (v.3), and complete peace of mind (v.4).

Then do we follow every thought that we think he is trying to put into our minds obeying it without question or checking it with the scriptures? Of course not! But if the communication fits our circumstances as key fits a lock, and is in harmony with biblical principles, then faith should gently turn the key and obey the word.

But a word of caution, be careful not to force the key or push too hard, for when God opens a door of guidance it swings on well-oiled hinges, and no man can slam it in your face (Rev 3:8).

This is how Jesus walked in daily communion with his Father - always alert and listening to that inner voice. He said "I am able to do nothing from myself - independently, of my own accord but as I am taught by God and as I get my orders, I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to me so I give a decision. Even as I hear I judge and my judgement is right" (Jn 5:30 Amplified Version).

As we live in the Spirit we will be increasingly "led by the Spirit" (Rom 8:14). Sons who have broken free from the slavery of Satan to enjoy freedom and liberty to live for Jesus!

However, if your moving ahead brings a sense of uneasiness and unrest in your spirit, then prayerfully re-check your position. It is also advisable to share your insights with Spirit-filled praying brethren who will also confirm and support you in your step of faith.

God will never upbraid you for making sure (Ja 1:5). Also never forget that Jesus has promised that whoever follows him will not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12). God's word will always bring LIGHT into your problem. Light will not only bring confidence, it will also give you a LIFT in your spirit. Then as you obey the light and take courage from the lift, you will come into amazing LIBERTY!

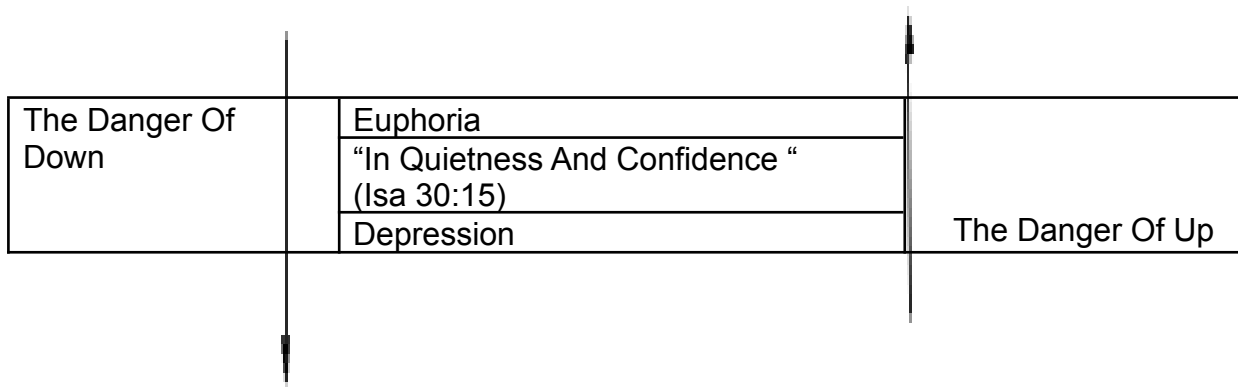
So walk in the Spirit, keeping your mind free from any blockages of Satan and open to the prompting of Jesus and it will not be long before you are pleasantly surprised at the beautiful ways in which he will minister through you.

Now, to fullness of the Spirit, add freedom of mind - but there is still another barrier that must be recognised and removed.

Chapter Five

Control Those Emotional Swings

Full of the spirit, clear minded, there still remains the final problem of keeping your emotions in equilibrium. God counsels his people, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa 30:15) but if unguarded, your mood change can so fluctuate that your life is like riding a roller coaster!



Satan's first line of attack upon your emotions is to drive them down into depression! He will use people, problems and pressures to create this further hindrance to the release of the Holy Spirit. If you do not take immediate action to remedy this situation it will not be long before you are wallowing in self-pity, morbidly introspective, and physically drained. What action is necessary?

Open up your whole being to the Holy Spirit so that any area where you might have grieved Him (Eph 4:30) can be exposed and corrected (Ps 139:23-24). One of the most prolific causes of depression is that of failing to deal with matters of offence - but remember, the principle of correction plainly taught by Jesus is to localise discord as much as possible. To publicise it in the church is the last resort, NOT THE FIRST! (Matt 18:15-17).

If after repentance, confession and rectification of any wrong, there remains a feeling of uneasiness - it could be FALSE GUILT. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cannot cleanse imaginary guilt (1 Jn 1:9), but it can silence the accusations of Satan as you declare your faith in the victory of Jesus (Rev 12:10-11). So, seek the counsel and confirmation of senior and spiritual brethren who will help you aggressively resist oppressing spirits that exploit such feelings of doubt and uncertainty.

Now, whilst every act of obedience brings the Holy Spirit's approval (Acts 5:32), you will still need to take further steps to break free of depression.

PRAISE IS DYNAMITE! It demoralises all opposing spirits and clears the atmosphere about you. It does your own soul good (Ps 149) and God delights to hear and respond to his praising people (2 Chr 20:22-25).

WORSHIP WORKS WONDERS! When you glorify God you do yourself good. Worship is the human heart losing itself in love for God, but unaware that all the glory given to him is then reflected back upon the giver (2 Cor 3:7-18).

CONFESSING YOUR FAITH - WILL MOVE MOUNTAINS! Jesus said, "Have the faith of God" (Mk 11:22). God's type of faith is SPEAKING FAITH! Jesus said on three occasions in v.23 that we would POSSESS WHAT WE CONFESS!

Tell your soul, "Hope thou in God" (Ps 42), and then get up and get moving. Ignore your feelings and fight your way back to quietness and confidence (Isa 30:15). But now you must be alert to Satan's second line of attack! The danger of up! Yes, I said danger, because as soon as Satan recognises that you are succeeding he will quickly take all the pressure away from you, and with great cunning will now seek to excite and elate you -UNTIL YOU BECOME EUPHORIC!

The warning signals are varied, but mainly excessive laughter and foolish jesting (Eph 5:4) instead of gravity and sincerity (Tit 2:6-8). Fun is good - but flippant, light-headed talking can be dangerous and double-sided (Rom 26:18).

If this condition is not quickly corrected it can lead to a veritable minefield of damaging experiences. When a believer is euphoric he could easily feel "led to the mission field", or "full-time evangelism", give up his employment and "live by faith", discontinue medication without proper supervision, or even marry in haste.

One could fill a book with such tragic mistakes and painful memories made by sincere believers who have been deceived by Satan, he is a specialist increasing and exploiting this emotional high.

Once you recognise this mood swing, you must take immediate steps to calm down, to act sensibly and soberly. Use the lift in your emotions and harness them to positive ends. Learn how to be full of the Spirit, but not drunk in the Spirit! Yes! We understand and can appreciate the wonder of Acts 2:12-21. Work off the elation and excitement by tackling some of the difficult and challenging tasks that you have avoided or neglected. Live in the area of maximum strength and safety, where your emotions are calm and controlled.

Power under control is real power - safe power. To be full of the Spirit, to have a clear mind and your emotions in balance, is to release the river of life that Jesus spoke about (Jn 7:38) into the thirsty desert of human need.

Now working for God is without strain. We labour, but from a position of rest (Heb 4:9-10). Acts of mercy, ministries of love and care burst forth among God's people. They no longer need to be driven - just directed! The years of famine are forgotten and the wilderness of want becomes a garden of plenty (Isa 35). The ransomed of the Lord return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They have obtained joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing have fled away.

Attracted by the love of God, the unbeliever enquires, and soon is enjoying the goodness of God. The old lovingly adapt to the disturbances caused by happy excited youth. The young respect and care for the elderly. Even the children are affected as the presence of Jesus finds release among his people.

The winter is passed, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth green figs, the vines with the tender grape give a goodly smell. Jesus is among his people, saying, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song of Sol 2:11-13).

Yes! It's worth it all, learning to walk in the Spirit, keeping your mind free from blockages, and guarding your emotions from crippling mood swings. The river of the Spirit is now able to flow out of your innermost being to satisfy the desperate thirst of others (Jn 7:38).

Now a word of warning about some of the dangers, difficulties and delights that might distract you!

Chapter Six

Difficulties, Dangers And Delights

YES, there are difficulties to be faced and dangers to be on your guard against, but when once you have pressed through, THE DELIGHTS ARE TREMENDOUS!

Living in the Spirit has been likened to energising a huge heavy flywheel. Initially it hardly seems to move, but as you persist the momentum increases, generating power and ongoing movement requiring only a minimal amount of effort to sustain its motion. So beware of initial difficulties and don't get discouraged, and don't be fooled into thinking it works for everyone else but you!

As you are increasingly filled with the Holy Spirit, your life, your world, your work, your sport, your marriage all lose their stress, because you are right with God. Your every moment becomes spontaneous living for God; this is what the bible calls 'rest', and is what Jesus offers to all who are "weary and heavy laden" with the pressures of life (Matt 11:28).

As you DAILY, by faith, appropriate your death with Christ, every negative thought, reaction and emotion will be overcome (Rom 6:1-10). As you continually open up the whole of your being and surrender your faculties to Jesus, so every positive thought emotion and reaction of his dynamic personality will be released in you (Rom 6:11-23). But a word of warning!

If you are an objective person less affected by emotion, it is most likely that the release of Christ's life into yours will be almost immediate, so overwhelming, that there is a distinct danger of you becoming excited - even euphoric!

If you are a subjective person prone to "thinking with your feelings", bearing the scars of rejection from childhood and past painful circumstances, the possibility will be that of becoming discouraged. The introspective monitoring of your slow progress will only hinder the release of Christ's life and if you are not careful, you will become depressed!

Remember too, that Satan is reluctant to lose such a foothold in your life. Those who walk in the flesh can easily be made to fall, so he will put in overtime, distracting, discouraging and doing all the mischief he can to, unsettle your faith!

So much for difficulties in getting started, but now let us look at THE DANGERS of walking in the Spirit. Here are several dangers.

As your life is progressively liberated from the old self, and there is a growing consciousness of his life releasing your new self, you must now be alert, for mistakes that will upset your spiritual equilibrium!

BEWARE of using your newfound power and poise to score an advantage over others who do not yet know or enjoy the secret you possess.

To gain such an unfair advantage over another will only resurrect the old nature - in spite of all your faith reckoning.

BEWARE of any up-rising of the old self. DON'T PANIC! look the situation squarely in the face and declare your faith, "That is part of my old self, I refuse to allow it to rise again - Jesus, right now replace my failure with your Life". Your death with Christ is FACT (Col 3:1-4), do not allow failure or feelings to undermine your faith, even if you do fail, it remains an unalterable fact!

BEWARE of dropping your guard, for you are now surrounded by subtle foes who will seek to gain a foothold. A Spirit-filled believer can never be possessed, but powerful spirits can harass! They will quickly exploit a careless or foolish action, "Do not allow the sun to go down on your wrath, do not give the devil that sort of a foothold" (Eph 4:26 J. B. Phillips). If you RECOGNISE your mistake, REPENT, and quickly RETAKE the ground in Jesus name!

BEWARE of touching the glory or taking credit for any out flow of his life through your yielded members (Rom 6:13) the only reason to rejoice is in the triumph of his cross (1 Cor 2:2). Your only glory is in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31).

BEWARE of seeking to impress or impose your experience on others. Before the full glory and revelation of walking in the Spirit is enjoyed (Rom 8:1-4) the wretchedness of the flesh must be exposed (Rom 7:23-24). Always be alert to help, but do not abort God's dealings with that person.

BEWARE of getting involved with any form of spiritual warfare unless you are "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Eph 6:10). The best armour in the world is useless if the morale of the man inside the armour is suspect! The only one capable of conquering Satan and his hosts is not you - but the Christ who is in you!

BEWARE of abusing the assurance and authority of His life within you to enhance your position or reputation. Now you can suffer without squealing and squirming, so that the lamb like disposition of Jesus will be manifested (Isa 53:7). Now let us consider some very special delights.

Quietly confess your confidence in the power of the cross. Quote the apostle Paul's superlative statement of faith "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" (Gal 2:20). Then simply expect your old self to die, and your new self to emerge!

Faith will make real the fact that you died with Christ (Rom 6:6). Your false ego will disappear and the real you will come forth (Gal 2:20). That you died in Christ will not only silence all the claims of the law (Rom 7:4) but will render sin so powerless you will be able to enjoy the luxury of choosing not to obey it (Rom 6:12-13). Putting off the old man and putting on the new will be so much easier (Eph 4:20-24).

Not until your Christ dominated personality is released will your relatives, friends and acquaintances KNOW THE REAL YOU!

A Christ anointed MINISTER never lacks revelation or inspiration to both bless the saints and reach the sinners.

A Christ filled HUSBAND is quite a delightful surprise to a wife who is struggling to be submissive and supportive (Eph 5:22).

A Christ energised WIFE is so breathtakingly beautiful and bright, the husband finds it easy to love her as Christ loves His Church (Eph 5:25).

A Christ motivated TEENAGER is so respectful and obedient to parental authority that restraint becomes unnecessary (Eph 6:1-3).

A Christ inspired WORKMAN is so diligent and dutiful, the employer no longer needs to resort to pressure and pleading for higher productivity (Eph 6:5-8).

A Christ led EMPLOYER will be more caring and less profit motivated, resulting in better working conditions and improved relationships and the lessening of strife.

A Christ activated CHURCH MEMBER is now so faithful, seeking any and every opportunity to love God's people, so that the church cannot fail to be edified.

The Christ IN THEM (Col 1:27) is no longer restricted and restrained. The hindering layers of the old self have been removed. Jesus IN THEM is now released THROUGH THEM! The believer has come to a perfected relationship with Christ, ready and able to manifest his glory (Col 1:28).

Yes! There are starting difficulties, several dangers to avoid, BUT THE DELIGHTS ARE TREMENDOUS! Now learn to walk in the Spirit.

WALKING involves movement, action and purposeful direction. All doctrinal teaching in the Word of God is intensely practical, and like normal walking, at all times you have at least one foot firmly on the ground - you don't float!

Many and varied are the weird concepts and crazy notions of "walking in the Spirit" but the Word of God is very clear about this point (Gal 5:16). When you are motivated by the Holy Spirit your life is intensely practical. You live responsibly and keep well in touch with reality.

Some believers remind you of gas-filled balloons. They float in and out of churches, doing the rounds, doing their own thing. Their activity is so unreal and unrelated to everyone else that they spend all their time doing precisely nothing! If discipline is enforced, or dedication required, there is a tremendous escape of gas, some rather rude noises, and once again they have disappeared into isolation, but, sadly, only to re-inflate themselves and return with more gas!

If your "theology" does not produce "do-ology" it's just a lot of kidology! Some seem to imagine that doing God's will is dodging responsibility. The blunt fact is, that if your walk with God does not make you a better workman, a more diligent church member, a loving and considerate husband, a faithful and supportive wife, its time you asked yourself the question - who's kidding who?

Walking in the Spirit is not shambling in a stupor, living in a dream world or retreating into the deceptive cosiness of a passive mind. It is living and aligning your actions with clear spiritual principles. It is cold-blooded discipleship that denies itself, takes up its cross and follows the teachings of Jesus even in the minute details of everyday living (Matt 16:24).

From where do these weird and wonderful friends get their unscriptural, unsound and often unsavoury ideas? If you ask them they will smile at you with a far-away look in their eyes and answer, "I was led by the Spirit" - NONSENSE!

Christians who live by impulse, carelessly following "hunches" or "leadings" without checking them with God's Word are easily duped by Satan. People who live like that lack stability, and have no sound guidelines. They wander from one unreal experience to another. God wants sane, sensible sons, not mindless zombies!

Sudden lunatic decisions are Satan's speciality, such as resigning or giving up a responsible job, running away with someone else's partner, emigrating without contemplating all the circumstances, changing your church.

Major decisions like these are seldom right, often rushed, and very often contrary to sound common sense. These moods of madness must be blocked and checked by submitting them to the counter-signature of the Holy Spirit. If any major plan in your life seems to be the slightest bit suspect, submit it to the authority of the cross, God will then cause it to die, or quietly to grow into a deep, settled conviction.

Walking is a steady, purposeful and progressive striding out. It should be a beautifully, balanced action, with lightness of step and consistency of pace.

In the early days of our Christian life, we seem to go in fits and starts, pursuing a very erratic and unsteady course. How well the hymn-writer describes this stop-start spirituality:

Once I thought I walked with Jesus
But such changeable moods I had.
Sometimes trusting, sometimes doubting.
Sometimes joyful, sometimes sad.
But oh, the peace my Saviour gives.
Peace I never knew before,
For my way has brighter grown
Since I learned to trust Him more.

Walking in the Spirit is freedom from all those sudden jolts and sickening jars that spoil our first efforts to follow Jesus. Walking is two feet in rhythmic motion. The life in the Spirit is similar. It requires an initial effort to defy gravity and get to our feet, followed by faith and ACTION! It is trusting and OBEYING! Knowing and DOING! Hearing and GOING!

Where do we get our energy to walk? How is it possible to swing along effortlessly and easily? In our own strength? – Never: If Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5), He meant NOTHING!

The classic mistake of so many Christians is of trying to copy Jesus with their own limited resources. Far better to know the secret of how to be a continual channel of his life, then you release REALITY (Gal 2:20)!

In sincere faith, count on the glorious fact that every weakness in your personality that causes you to limp. Every disability that you have sustained through childhood and the harsh circumstances of your life can be replaced by the living energy of CHRIST IN YOU! (Rom 6, Col 1:27-29).

Don't sing "He walks beside me". That is true in one sense, but it can be misleading. Better to sing the hymn "Christ liveth in me, Oh what a salvation this, that CHRIST LIVETH IN ME" (2 Cor 6:16). "God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people".

Unaffected by hatred and hostility, you will walk in love! Depressing conditions and discouraging circumstances will not disturb your joy! In spite of chaos and confusion all about you, Christ in you will give you incredible calm and perfect peace! Men might oppose you, and Satan seek to oppress you, but you will remain unruffled, well able to manifest longsuffering!

In spite of the violent reactions of problem people and people with problems, you will still manifest gentleness! Although everyone around you is filled with gloom and despair, nothing will quench the firmness of His faith! The one who walks in the Spirit has character, which manifests itself in controlled strength. There is no weakness, just meekness! The final crowning virtue of a balanced and beautiful life is its moderation, consideration and care of others, evidenced by temperance!

So beware of floating, wandering aimlessly and lurching all over the place - just keep walking! Walk the streets of your town and release the Spirit of Christ wherever you go. Be a living revelation of the Son of God, But never forget, although it's you, it's not you, - BUT HIM! (Gal 2:20).

Chapter Seven

Rejection Holocaust

Sweeping through our society at hurricane strength is a 20th century tornado called REJECTION. Lives are being lost, homes destroyed and families torn apart as it gathers increasing momentum. The damage done by this Satan-inspired scourge is deep within the personality, striking at the roots of an individual's personhood.

To be rejected is to be refused the recognition that makes you feel loved and appreciated. Any treatment, be it open hostility or simply neglect, whether you are abused or just used for another's advantage, is hurtful. The result is that you are made to feel worthless and unwanted. Such loveless and inconsiderate action will sow seeds of inner sadness that when fully grown will yield a bitter harvest of mental and emotional instability.

Rejection damage is one of the main reasons for a rebellious attitude to any authority figure, such as parents, police and even God. Another sad consequence is the rising crime figures of murder, rape and violence.

If a child is unwanted because it has been conceived out of wedlock, the result of rape or just not desired, in some inexplicable way the unborn foetus is able to "feel" rejection. The divine order is that every tiny babe should be born of love, bathed in love and brought into the loving environment of a stable home. Sadly, this is not the case as Satan-inspired selfishness proliferates human suffering upon its helpless victims.

Childhood and youth are often a continuing story of destruction when exposed to neglect or not sheltered by love. To be "s-mothered" and spoilt can be as equally damaging as not giving firm guidelines and freedom to develop and discover their own identity. To inform a child that he or she was never really wanted, or to tell them you would have preferred them to be a different sex, is tantamount to thrusting them through with a knife. If a child is "inconveniently" born to a business couple whose only aim is material gain, or if it is just an unplanned pregnancy in mid-life, the information, if communicated, could cause a chain-reaction of real or imaginary rejection.

One of the most devastating forms of rejection is that of sexual violation from which many never fully recover. The mental shock and emotional scars often remain even after many years of marriage. Marriage, too, can be a veritable minefield of continuing hurt as a partner is denied such simple things like care and companionship, or even conjugal rights (1 Cor 7:3-5). Divorce is the ultimate form of rejection in the marriage situation. Often the pain and hurt that so many think is to be avoided by such a course of action turns out to be far more than that of honouring their covenant before God. There is no easy answer to such sad circumstances except to seek the sustaining grace of God (2 Cor 12:9), and to ensure that you are submitting to the Lordship of Jesus (Eph 5:22-33).

God has made it abundantly clear that he has no unplanned, unwanted and unloved children in his family, for we have "been chosen in Him even before the foundations of the world" (Eph 1:4). His sovereign and loving care even arranges both pleasures and problems so that "all things [even evil] will work together for our good, making us and moulding us to be like Jesus" (Rom 8:28-31). No longer do we have to struggle and strive for acceptance, for we are unconditionally "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). His love is constant, never anything less or more than 100% and never dependent upon our success or failure.

We are given supplies of strength in such abundance we are well able to "walk before Him in holiness without blame" (Eph 1:4). Because we have been redeemed (bought back) "by the blood of Jesus" (Eph 1:7) we are not only infinitely precious to God, but our sins are forgiven and forgotten, buried in the sea of his superlative grace. Nothing, absolutely nothing, will ever separate us from His love (Rom 8:38-39). We can rest assured that His abundant "wisdom and prudence" (Eph 1:8) is well able to thwart all of Satan's plans and has even drawn the sting of death.

Paul said "What can we say then, if God be for us who can be against us"(Rom 8:30). If God accepts us, what matter who rejects us? It is to God's eternal credit - "the praise of His glory" (Eph 1:6,12 & 14), that we are and ever will be surrounded by his breathtaking love. No longer do we need to strive for his love, but the life of the Spirit becomes a river that carries us along by its irresistible power and sustaining strength.

Hymn writers and poets have striven to express God's eternal, unconditional, utterly selfless love, but human thought will never be able to express fully its greatness and grandeur.

Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know
Spirit breathing from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so.
Oh tis full and perfect peace,
Oh this transport all divine,
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His and He is mine.

Heaven above is softer and blue,
Earth around is sweeter green,
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen,
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know as now I know,
I am His and He is mine.

Things that once were wild alarms
Cannot now disturb my rest,
Closed in everlasting arms,
Pillowed on the loving breast.

Oh to lie for ever here,
Doubt and care and self resign.
While He whispers in my ear,
I am His and He is mine.

His for ever, only His,
Who the Lord and me shall part?
Ah, with what a rest of bliss
Christ can fill the loving heart.
Heaven and earth may fade and flee,
First-born light in gloom decline.
But, while God and I shall be,
I am His and He is mine.

(G. Wade Robinson)

There is no rejection damage in your life that cannot be healed by Calvary's continuing love. Your mental strain and emotional scars will soon disappear. There is no bruise that it will not heal. No broken heart that cannot be made whole. No prison doors of circumstance can keep you captive. No poverty of spirit or lack of life's advantages will restrict or restrain you (Lk 4:18-19).

Rise up, and revel in a love that no human words can describe, no human mind can grasp, no earth-bound imagination ever see, GOD LOVES YOU. Though indescribable, it is not totally unknowable for as the Holy Spirit "helps our infirmities", we are able, if only in part, "to know the love of God which passeth knowledge" (Eph 3:19).

Its breadth is so wide it encompasses the whosoever.
Its length so long, it stretches from eternity to eternity!
Its depth so deep, it reaches the most degraded!
Its height so high, it lifts us into heavenly places to sit enthroned with Jesus!

Recognise it, revel in it, rejoice in the love of God. Never again think about REJECTION.

Chapter Eight

Further Insights Into Rejection Damage

According to statistics, murders and muggings are on the increase making it unsafe to walk after dark in many of our major cities. Of equal concern is the damage sustained by thousands who suffer from a negative self-image, so that they fear to even walk the streets in daylight! I refer of course to the injury and hurt that could develop into INFERIORITY, INADEQUACY and INSECURITY.

The victims of such rejection damage show little outward sign of the horrific inward wounding they have received. It is only to the trained eye, or the people who have to live with them that the tension can be seen. The victims live in such a perpetual state of near panic that it only requires a small problem to precipitate a crisis. This permanent state of edginess is often evidenced by uncontrollable muscular spasms, by the sadness of the face and dullness of the eye.

Our first hurt is INFERIORITY. This is a damaging comparison of yourself with other people. It is a deep inner dread of having to face them because you lack confidence to relate either in conduct or conversation. This negative concept of your worth is easily seen in your apprehensive features, awkward postures and nervous gestures.

This attitude of mind constantly uprates everyone else, but continually downgrades your own ability. Its most innocuous manifestation is a condescending manner that smacks of servility. Its worst expression is seen as the sufferer constantly resorts to carping criticism of everyone who appears to be a threat to his or her own shaky security.

The sad feature about people with such a jaundiced view of themselves is that when the facts are examined, often there is no justification for their feeling inferior! They have lacked a faithful friend whose constructive criticism and careful evaluation would have not only allayed their fears, but injected confidence and composure.

There is no greater friend than the indwelling Christ and the constant companionship of the Holy Spirit. The one who gives the laws of life also lives the laws of life within us! To walk in their sweet fellowship and to become highly sensitive to their companionship is to walk in strength and safety.

You are a child of a king (1 Jn 3:1-2). Everything about you is special and unique, so learn truth, love truth, live truth and it will set you free (Jn 8:32). Lift up your head, pull your shoulders back and look every man in the eye with confidence. You have been Born Again, not to beg, but to give! The indwelling Christ will enable you to bless everyone who crosses your pathway. So don't grovel Don't run away from life, but reign over it like a king's son (2 Cor 6:1-10).

Our next hurt is INADEQUACY. Inadequacy is an attitude of defeat where you doubt your ability to tackle the task in hand!

Some seem cursed with this lack of confidence from the moment of birth, and it is not unlikely that in some cases damage was done, even before birth!

More to be pitied are the vast majority who have been programmed by parental pressures. Their performance as children has been subjected to a continual stream of criticism, their efforts have been constantly and publicly belittled by such cutting remarks as, "he's hopeless"! "you can't trust her to do a thing", or, "he's bound to make a mess of it". Later on, in the playground, their companions have been quick to detect and often mercilessly continue the damage done at home.

Faith must now reverse the fear of failure. Instead of the instinctive, "I can't". There must now be the confident confession, "I can do anything God has asked me to do with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power" (Phil 4:13 Living Bible). After speaking your faith, **START WORKING!** "Faith without works is dead" (Ja 2:24). Apply yourself to the task in hand, trusting the indwelling Christ to give you the wisdom to work, and strength to succeed. Do not allow any fears or feelings of failure to weaken your will to win.

Another deep wound is INSECURITY. This is a continual and undue sensitivity to how others appreciate and regard us as a person. God's intention is that every child born into the universe should enjoy the security of a home where it is loved as a person and not just loved on the basis of performance!

The sad consequence of so many broken families is a society where insecurity is rampant. Children who are merely pawns in divorce court proceedings are denied the very basic needs of life - love and security. To be rejected by parents or partners, to suffer physical or mental abuse, to be unwanted or even the reverse, such as being "s-mothered", or subjected to demands far beyond your capabilities, is to know insecurity.

God has done everything possible to ensure His children know they are secure. Jesus Himself said "No man is able to pluck them out of My or My Father's hand" (Jn 10:28-29). The Apostle Paul is equally emphatic when he states that "It is to the praise of His glory that we are accepted in the beloved!" (Eph 1:6). We are secure because we are within the same circle of love he has towards Jesus. We are loved because of our position in Christ, not because of our performance!

There is no variableness or shadow of turning with God's love (Ja 1:17). He is not subject to 'moods' nor does he have any 'off days' but at all times he is the perfect expression of self-giving love. Once you grasp this concept of God's love for you, that you are precious and unique to him and "living within his constant care" (Eph 1:3-12 J. B. Phillips), the struggle for acceptance is over, the search for identity is ended. Now you have found yourself, you can lose yourself in loving others and helping them to find the secret of acceptance and assurance.

What is God's answer to these inborn and implanted negative concepts that hold you captive and in many cases control your emotions? The answer is in the death and resurrection of his Son.

The cross is not only the place where our sins were blotted out, (1 Cor 15:3) but also where our old self was put to death (Rom 6:1-14) and subsequently buried. Christ dying for us, ends the guilt of the past, but our death in Christ ends the damage of the past (Gal 2:20, Col 3:1-4)!

As we daily and continually seek the release of his Resurrection life into ours, the restructuring of our mental concepts will be much easier (Rom 12:1-2) for inferiority, inadequacy and insecurity were unknown to him! This heavenly wisdom is foolishness to Freudian psychology - but it is the only power in the universe to save us from our sins and from ourselves (1 Cor 1:17-25, 2:1-16).

God is not seeking to repair our faulty self-image but to completely replace it! Christ in us at our conversion is the hope of recovery. Christ perfected in us is the on-going and out-working of that glorious purpose (Col 1:27-29). All that remains is for us to live like kings (Rom 5:17). Until the remaining phase of our redemption takes place, namely a new body to live in (Rom 8:23), and a new universe to revel in (Rev 21:1-7); until then, let's enjoy this one!

No matter how crippled you are by negative concepts about yourself, JESUS IS THE ANSWER. In union with Him every provision is made for you to be complete and mature (1 Cor.1-30). CHRIST IS GOD'S ANSWER TO INFERIORITY, INADEQUACY AND INSECURITY.

Two more causes of heartache and heaviness of spirit are REAL GUILT and IMAGINARY GUILT. The first is responsible for more mental breakdowns than many psychiatrists are prepared to admit, whilst the second is so difficult to handle, so elusive, it can easily evade every attempt to eliminate it.

Real guilt can rear itself at the mere sound of a once popular song. If it is not a song, then perhaps a particular perfume, or just the mention of a certain town. What was then a delightful moment of madness is now a dreadful memory that haunts you. What was once a wild mood of romance and risk has become a wretched festering sore, a raw exposed nerve in your conscience.

Guilt buries itself deep within the system of the sinner and exerts enormous pressures upon the personality. It extracts joy and peace of mind, it destroys happiness and health. Mentally, physically and emotionally, we receive "the wages of sin" which is death (Rom 6:23). The destructive power of a guilty conscience can become so acute it often accelerates the natural progression to death. A guilty conscience cannot relax but is constantly on edge. It only requires the slightest circumstance to trigger off inner panic (Mk 6:16). No drug can kill the squirming worm of conscience, neither can drink extinguish the fires of remorse.

It can only be described as premature hell (Mk 9:44)! Satan's so-called cures for guilt are really curses in disguise! The side effect of all his 'conscience-calmers' is either sleepless nights or living in a dream world during the day. Is there no physician, no cure for the sin-sick soul? Yes, but only one.

You will never be cured from the deadly effects of a guilty conscience until you realise there is nothing you can do about it (Rom 5:6-8).

Next, you must face the fact that either you pay the penalty for your past sins - that is death (Rom 6:23) or you believe the incredibly good news that someone else has paid it for you. (Rom 3:23-26). Yes - Jesus Christ the sinless Son of God offered his spotless life as a substitute for you (1 Pet 3:18). He accepted your death penalty. He took your place. Your sins were dealt with on a lonely hill just outside Jerusalem (1 Cor 15:1-3). It is impossible for a holy God to demand two payments for one debt! Your sins have been paid for. The past is not only forgiven, but forgotten! (Mic 7:19).

As you recognize and rest your confidence upon this astounding truth it should cause a double reaction in you. It should produce in you a revulsion for past sins followed by a present reaction against them. You must now turn your back on sin - and with great rejoicing receive the power of Christ's resurrection life, to enable you to live like a child of God (1 Jn 1:12). If the death of Jesus reconciled you to a holy God, how much more will the release of the life of the holy Son of God within you completely and continually revolutionise your life? (Rom 5:10). Now if you should fail and fall into sin, do not allow your adversary to exploit your new guilt. Confess your sin quickly, then pick yourself up and start walking again (1 Jn 1:9). God will be satisfied with your repentance and faith in the blood of his Son and you will soon be smiling again

Now we must tackle this very awkward and elusive thing called IMAGINARY GUILT. This is a nagging accusation that never goes away no Matter how many times you confess and seek forgiveness for what you feel is unforgiven sin.

Some are continually haunted by a solitary act of carelessness that caused great harm to someone else. It could be a faulty diagnosis by a doctor, a mistake by a nurse as she cares for the sick, an accident in which a mother harms her child, the failure of a driver or workman involved in machinery vital to public safety. God understood your motive and your mistake. That is why he provided cities of refuge for those who innocently harmed others (Num 35:25-32). He also instituted a trespass offering for those who sinned unintentionally (Num 15:22-29). Do not spend any more time in morbid recrimination but rest in the fact that if God is so loving that he will forgive even deliberate sin, then surely his love extends to you in your unintentional sin!

Resist Satan as he seeks to disturb your rest. Refuse to listen to his accusations (Rev 12:10). Talk with senior and spiritual Christians who, with their objective judgement and authoritative praying, will not only silence Satan, but also calm your misguided fears and feelings. A Spirit-filled minister would soon be corrected if he gave you faulty advice. The Holy Spirit would quickly check him if he failed to represent heaven's concern for your well-being and spiritual welfare.

Finally, after inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy and guilt, come worry, doubt and fear! These are easy to describe but very difficult to deal with.

Worry is concern carried too far. It is an anxious uneasy feeling that stubbornly refuses to leave, even though you have made every effort to deal with it and drive it from your thoughts. Even after you have done all you can do about certain situations there often remains much that you cannot do. At such times you must "cast all your cares upon him for he cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7).

Jesus told us that sparrows live a day at a time and sweetly trust God for tomorrow. Flowers, too, should teach us to enjoy today's sunshine and face tomorrow when it comes. We are commanded to follow their example knowing that if we seek first the kingdom of God all other things will be added to us (Lk 12:22-30).

Doubt is to be in uncertainty about truth. It will make you unsure, afraid and apprehensive about what you believe, and what action you must take. This crippling affliction will rob you of confidence and sap away your strength. Now whilst Satan is always alert and ready to instil doubts into your mind, Jesus has promised us that the truth will always set us free (Jn 8:12). Knowing God's Word and doing it will destroy your doubts, shine light into your darkness, and make you single-minded.

Fear is a state of alarm that can be real or imagined, a painful apprehension of danger that brings torment (1 Jn 4:18). Fear can paralyse your will and keep you a prisoner in your circumstances. The Word of God is full of faith-inspiring promises that, if confidently confessed, will not only break your prison doors but move mountains out of your pathway (Mk 11:23). For every problem God has a promise. He will either perfect your understanding of his love so that it will cast out fear (1 Jn 4:18) or he will give you faith to gird yourself with truth until it becomes your garrison of defence (Ps 27:1). The finest way to destroy your fears is to speak your faith. God's word upon your lips is able to drive out fear and give you confidence.

If we have been hurt in any of these ways we must call for God's help and arm ourselves with God's Word (Rom 10:13), for failure to do this it will lead to an ever-increasing sense of frustration. Failure to resolve any of these eight areas of weakness will eventually lead to frustration. Continued frustration will then lead to a build up of inner hostility that will often manifest itself in either verbal, or physical violence or both. If hostility is vented, unloaded upon some poor innocent and unsuspecting individual, it might relieve the frustration but it will also certainly increase the guilt of the aggressor.

The subtle danger is that of contained hostility. If out of consideration for others or fear of retaliation, we hold it back, then it is driven deep into the personality where it will disturb the mind or damage the emotions!

Inner hostility must not be unloaded on others, neither should it be buried within ourselves. The answer is to find God's grace within the problem - and God's way out of it!

In situations where we are called to absorb the vented hostility of others, God is well able to give so much sustaining grace. It not only protects our own spirit, but prevents further provocation.

God is well pleased when we suffer with a smile when, like Jesus, we have courtesy and even compassion towards those who hurt us (1 Pet 3:8-14). When God sees the reflection of his own Son in his "other sons"(Heb 2:10) it gives him great delight. Jesus, too, will see the travail of his own soul being duplicated in those who meekly break the vicious circle of evil.

If we do not succeed in absorbing or overcoming hostility, it will make us feel so ill at ease it could eventually lead to sickness - dis-ease! Whilst psychosomatic illness is recognised as being responsible for a large proportion of ill health, it should not be so amongst God's people.

The apostle John prayed that we might know total health through walking in the truth, "Beloved, I wish above all things that you will prosper and be in health even as thy soul (personality) prospers" (3 Jn 3:2-3). The apostle Paul also teaches that "godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim 6:6).

God desires that our whole being, spirit, soul and body will enjoy total health. Our service for him will then be without strain, because although we labour it is always from a position of calm and rest (Heb 4:9-11).

Our service for God should be a spontaneous outflow of the indwelling Christ (Col 1:29). This was the secret source of every thought and action of Jesus. He knew He was indwelt by the Father, "who lives continually in me, it is He who does the works, they are His miracles, His own deeds of power" (Jn 14:10, Amplified Version)

When we have learned the very hard lesson that without him we can do nothing (Jn 15:5), that in our own fleshly efforts there is no good thing, then our desperation will drive us to the delight of living our whole lives in the Spirit (Rom 8:1).

The law of the Spirit of life, as we walk in union with Christ, totally liberates us from the law of sin, death and natural limitations. When we continually and confidently confess our faith that "I am crucified, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2:20), then we continually see Him released through our yielded members (Rom 6:13).

When Jesus Christ the risen Son of God becomes our "permanent inner identity" then every hurt and harm we have sustained through living by our own resources is healed and overwhelmed by his total wholeness.

To be saved from being a "hopeless sinner" is wonderful (Rom 5:1), but to be saved from being a "helpless saint" is incredible (Rom 8:1-4). This is not just life - but abundant life (Jn 10:10). This is not just being a conqueror - but more than a conqueror (Rom 8:37). This is not running from life but reigning in life by One, Christ Jesus (Rom 5:17).

This is walking free, feeling 10 feet tall. This is life that knows no limitation or intimidation. This is how to put these enemies to flight.

The nightmare years of oppression and depression will quickly be forgotten as the sunshine of God's love makes the path of the righteous like the dawn of a beautiful new day. When you step out into the sunshine of this experience, darkness will retreat before you. Those dark forces that would seek to molest you will creep away in fear. No longer will you be trapped! This is God's way of repairing the damage you have suffered. Now let us look at one of the ways he removes bad memories.

Chapter Nine

Another Gospel

Healing of the memories by methods unknown to the apostles, however plausible and seemingly successful, must stand in danger of Satanic manipulation and possibly God's condemnation. The Bible knows nothing about going back into the past to find answers for the present. The Scriptural emphasis is to see the past as God sees it - forgiven and forgotten!

Although many might give glowing accounts and beautiful testimonies to "being healed" by such concepts, we must never replace God's word and God's ways with techniques that are patterned to principles of godless psychology (Ps 1:1).

If ministers fail to teach and men fail to find Christ as their only secret of wisdom and source of inner healing (Col 2), God in his loving kindness and care for his hurting children will reach out to heal them, but his love must not give us licence to develop wrong concepts.

If every call to heaven's throne had to be checked out on some theological computer, if every request for help had to be word-perfect, the greater part of our prayers would go unanswered. We must never allow his gracious interventions to become Scriptural deviations.

God's Word never counsels you to go back into your pre-conversion memories to find answers for the present problems. There is no New Testament teaching that tells you to return to your painful past, seeking to "FEEL the presence of Jesus" and "IMAGINE him helping you to relive it". This not only opens up the possibility of Satanic deception, but the resulting trauma could prove to be psychologically dangerous!

The apostle Paul knew nothing of such inner healing techniques to solve the problems of his past life. He only knew that it had been "buried with Him [Christ] in baptism" (Rom 6:3-8) and that his life had been revolutionized because he knew he had been "raised to walk in newness of life" through his union with the Son of God (Rom 6:4-10). Not only had he been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, but he now enjoyed the daily dynamic of being saved by his life (Rom 5:10). His sinful past had been judged and buried (Col 2:12). His present was so wonderful, it completely healed the wounds of bygone days (2 Cor 5:14-16).

Do not walk in the counsel of ungodly men (Ps 1:1), nor allow anyone to dig up what God has buried. Grave digging is a ghoulish business, but even more so when it's you they want to exhume!

Satan will always try to take you back into your shadowy past where his ghostly apparitions can haunt you in its semi-darkness. However, like all such spooky figures, they soon disappear when daylight comes.

How reassuring to hear Jesus declare "I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12). Never let anyone dare to suggest to you that your past sins have not been cleansed, forgiven and forgotten. This is a slur on God's integrity for "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9).

To allow Satan to insinuate that the blood of Christ has lost its power is not only beyond contemplation - it is blasphemous! Of all the ugly lies that Satan has "fathered", this "offspring" must be the ultimate of his fornications (Jn 8:44)!

Always remember that feelings of cleanness follow faith, they are seldom given to develop it. Assurance comes when, in spite of all your fears and feelings, you agree with God's eternal Word - it then becomes a rock against which all the waves of mood and circumstance will never prevail.

Paul the apostle could have spent sleepless nights and many saddened days if he had needed to resurrect his horrendous past. Had he not persecuted the early church, compelled them to blaspheme and committed many to prison (Acts 26:9-11)? Not only was he personally involved in the deaths of many Christians, even torturing them, he was also present at the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:58). In spite of this, there is no record that he sought healing for such devastating memories.

He implicitly believed God's word that he had been saved by grace, through faith (Eph 2:4-8). He knew that every sin had been remitted and that righteousness was God's gift to his guilty soul (Rom 3:21-26). He flatly refused to listen to any voice that sought to condemn him and declared that nothing would ever separate him from the love of his forgiving God (Rom 8:31-34).

You too must silence every voice that would dare to suggest you need to have your past resurrected, re-examined and re-cleansed!

Your 'soulish' emotions and sub-conscious fears must not submerge the witness in your spirit, for "His Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God" (Rom 8:16). The sure way to heal past wounds and remove the scars in your memory is to believe and speak God's superlative certainties now!

God is not in the repairing business but the re-making business. "Therefore if any man is in Christ he is A NEW CREATION. The old has gone, THE NEW HAS COME" (2 Cor 5:17 NIV).

See yourself as God sees you. The new you is THE INNER YOU! It has been quickened to life by the same power that raised Jesus from the tomb (Eph 2:1).

Until you know how to walk in the Spirit, you will have problems with the OUTER YOU! Failure is often God's way of making you realise that your problem is not because of your past, but very much to do with your present (Rom 7:15-21). The condemnation of being unable to be completely new will eventually drive you back to Jesus where he will finish the work he has begun (Rom 7:23-25).

Wretchedness will be replaced by wonder as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets you free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:1-4).

Your present problems have nothing to do with your past memories except as they have left you with the old habit patterns. Once you have learned how to appropriate Christ as your total life (Gal 2:20), it will not be too difficult to put off the old man, and put on the new (Eph 4:20-32).

Always let the word of God divide 'soulish' fears and feelings from the fact of the witness in your spirit. Never allow surface emotions to disturb the deep inner knowing within you. Even if you fail, never allow doubts to deny what God has said - you are a new creation and soon the world will see what God sees!

Satan has perpetrated the enormous lie that our subconscious mind is almost super-conscious in its power - IT IS NOT! It is wrong for the Christian to attribute to his subconscious mind power that it does not possess, for we have been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col 1:13). We should now have the mind of Christ. When it is fully informed by the Word of God we should be able to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought and make it obedient unto Christ" (2 Cor 10:5 NIV).

To doubt that the past is buried could rob us of power to walk in newness of life. To doubt that the blood of Christ has power to cleanse all sins could rob us of assurance. To doubt that we have been made into new people could hinder the completion of God's new creation.

Paul continually had to defend the gospel given to him by "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12). He constantly refuted not only Satanic "additions" and "subtractions", but also man-made "alterations" and "modifications"!

God's answer to all of our problems is to be found in one source only, that of living in union with his Son, Jesus Christ. He who is Lord of all is the mysterious yet mighty strength to all who call upon him (Col 2:1-23). We must not be moved away from our divine centre. The one who created and sustains the whole universe is well able to take care of our affairs (Col 1:16-19). Nothing must be allowed to move us from the simplicity of the salvation that God has provided in his Son (2 Cor 11:3-4).

God's Word and God's way of healing our past memories is to make the present so exciting and real that any thoughts of grave digging and ghost hunting is repulsive. Do with your past what God has done with it, trust the Holy Spirit to bury it where no one can dig it up. There is only one gospel - the gospel that Jesus gave us - we need no other.

Chapter Ten

Buried With Him In Baptism

Now let us turn to one of God's most powerful ordinances that will open up the way for the Holy Spirit to once and for all break you away from the past, deliver you from the domain of Satan and set you on a brand new way of living. The secret of this ordinance is found in simple obedience and simple faith that God has a supernatural way of dealing with your past - he buries it!

After answering God's call to repentance and knowing the powerful work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, many fail to understand that water baptism is more than an act of witness or simple obedience - it is a means whereby faith can appropriate miracle deliverance from the painful elements of their past.

They fail to understand that when God's Word declares the believer to be "buried with Him [Christ] in baptism"(Col 2:12). This statement of truth contains divine power to sever the believer from his former self and set him free to walk in newness of life. Simple faith in the operation of God's sovereign power buries the past with all its painful memories and brings him into glorious freedom.

Failure to comprehend this truth often results in failing to claim its reality. This in turn creates a serious shortcoming in the believer's experience. The damage is often compounded as people resort to unscriptural concepts and ungodly advice in their efforts to compensate for this tragic lack. The obvious inference behind this sad and superficial understanding is that God is unable to make good his Word miraculously. It carries the sly suggestion that when God "buries" our former self, somehow it remains very much alive!

New Testament doctrine is often confirmed by its Old Testament type, so let us look at the occasion when God's people were "baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:2). When God delivered the children of Israel from their painful bondage in Egypt, he did it with mighty miracle power. Moses was instructed to tell the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you - you need only to be still" (Ex 14:13-14).

In this instance their faith was to be demonstrated by standing still and quietly awaiting divine intervention. They were not disappointed - their deliverance was total!

If this Old Testament type was so miraculous, why do we fail to recognise the reality of its New Testament fulfilment? Even worse, why do we replace God's ways and God's wisdom with worldly wisdom? "For you have died with Christ and are set free from the ruling spirits of the universe" (Col 2:20 Good News Bible, or "elemental spirits" RSV).

If their translation out of Pharaoh's kingdom of fear was so wonderful, why do we expect less when we are brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ? If Moses led them forth in triumph, leaving behind the memories of their pain and persecution, why do God's present-day people settle for anything less?

Entwined within the memory patterns of all believers there are things that are helpful and good. Sadly, intermingled with these beautiful and precious memories, there often can be deep-rooted, ugly experiences that lie buried in the sub-conscious mind.

God - and only God - has the sovereign ability to separate the two. As with Pharaoh's army, he not only drew them out, but also totally destroyed them! His Word to Moses came true, "The Egyptians that you see today, you will never see again." They were completely obliterated. Long before modern day psychology was invented, millions of radiant Christians have also been released to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Every New Testament believer should be able to emulate the Israelites as they sang and danced on the shores of deliverance (Ex 13). "Joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints, in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:12-14).

Centuries later, when God spoke through the prophet Isaiah to promise his people release from their captivity in Babylon, he reminds them that he is still in the deliverance ministry. He recalls the memory of the Red Sea, but with it there is a new and necessary discipline. "I am the Lord your Holy One. Israel's Creator, your King. This is what the Lord says, He who made a way through the sea, drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick - forget the former things, do not dwell on the past - see I am doing a new thing"(Isa 43:15-19).

Did you notice? Forget the former things - do not dwell on the past! This will require discipline, but it can be done!

If you have never claimed your full freedom - start now! Confess that God's word is ETERNAL FACT, then ignore every feeling that would seem to contradict it. This will enable the Holy Spirit to confirm your confession. Use the Word of God to destroy the lies of the devil. Determine that you will never allow friend or foe, Satan or any unscriptural counsellor to resurrect what God has declared buried.

Resist any and every device of the devil to deceive you. Don't fall for this age-old strategy of suggesting that God might not have said it, or meant it as they understood it. Beware of his subtle insinuation - "Hath God said ...?" (Gen 3:1)

Reject his lies, refuse to go back into the past, and declare with confidence that God has buried every bad memory. Better still - REMIND THE DEVIL OF HIS PAINFUL PAST! Remind him that on Golgotha's cross Jesus stripped him stark naked of every authority and power he possessed.

Read aloud to him the song of total triumph. God not only raised his Son from the tomb, but with the greatest display of power this world has ever seen, disarmed every rank of the demonic hierarchy that tried to prevent him setting Jesus upon the throne of the universe.

"[God] disarmed the principalities and powers ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it [the cross]" (Col 2:15 Amplified Version). "And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his [own] right hand in the heavenly [places], far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named - above every title that can be conferred - not only in this age and in this world, but also in the age and the world which are to come." (Eph 1:19-21 Amplified Version).

Do not forget that after the Holy Spirit has confirmed what you have affirmed, there remains a simple discipline - there must be a deliberate forgetting of all your hurtful past and a confident expectation of God's "New Thing" (Isa 43:19).

Why remain a spiritual cripple, why not claim your full salvation? Arise and shine as this light comes to you. As you begin to confess that your past with all its painful memories is buried as totally and as supernaturally as God buried the Egyptian army, it will not be long before you will be singing "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host has He cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are sunk in the Red Sea. The floods cover them; they sank in the depths [clad in mail] like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. In the greatness of Your majesty You overthrow those rising against You; You send forth Your fury; it consumes them like stubble" (Ex 15:2-7 Amplified Version).

This is the day of the Lord's deliverance. Do not allow the devil to limit this great salvation another day - do not allow his lies to prevent you enjoying total freedom. I am grateful to D. Richards of Basingstoke for the following testimonies that give some indication of the unrealised and so often largely unclaimed power that is available to those who are redeemed out of Satan's kingdom.

Some years ago a young man from the Basingstoke area was saved. During his life he had been involved in the 'Hells Angels' and had a tattoo on his left upper-arm that said 'Hells Angels', - this obviously troubled him after being born again. He repented and came for water baptism. When he had been through the waters of baptism the first thing he realised when he had dried and dressed was that the tattoo had completely disappeared from his arm. God had completely taken it away in the waters of baptism.

There was a man in London who wanted to locate some long lost friends - a couple. As he could not find them, and being ignorant of God's laws, he turned to a spiritualist medium for help.

The medium contacted the spirits who told him that his friends could not be contacted from a particular date. The man was unhappy with this answer and so travelled around to their last known location. A helpful person remembered the couple and directed him to a local minister who had contact with them. The man explained he had been to a medium for help to locate his friends. The minister did two things, he first explained the danger of consulting a medium - and then told him his friends were very much alive. He then asked the date that the medium had told him was the last recorded date his friends had been contacted. The date was the exact day that the minister had baptised this particular couple in water. It seemed that the spirits had lost all their records from that day.

It would be a grave mistake to imagine that these and any similar signs are to be the normal expectation of believers as they go through the waters of baptism. The most effective work of the Holy Spirit is done in the deepest recesses of the personality. Perhaps it would be wiser to recognise these two testimonies as a parallel to the singular incident when Jesus healed the man sick of the palsy. To silence the unspoken criticisms of the sceptics he turned to them and said "so that you might know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins - arise take up your bed and walk" (Matt 8:6).

The forgiveness of our sins opens up the way for God to forget our sins, so also water baptism can be a wonderful way for God to bury our past. Then we too can also forget it.

If you have not been baptised in water do not delay any longer but in obedience enter the water with a full understanding of all that is explicit in the act and then quietly expect the Holy Spirit to confirm your step of obedience by supernaturally burying your past.

If you have already been baptised in water there is no need to repeat this act of obedience, in fact it could well be possible that God has already bestowed its blessings upon you, but like Eve you could have been tempted to believe Satan's lies and in so doing given him a legal right to rob you of your rights.

If this is the case, repent of your unbelief and recover your lost ground by reconfirming your faith that you were "buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4).

Our next chapter will help you to realise that in discovering how to live in the Spirit you will have stumbled upon a very precious treasure. You will find your true identity and self worth as an individual. You will know why you were born and just who God wants you to be.

Chapter Eleven

Identity Crisis! Resolved!

Who is the person who looks at you with a puzzled expression every time you gaze into a mirror? Who is it that stares you straight in the eye and yet seems to be a total stranger? Do you really know that person? If you cannot answer the questioning look with a fair measure of confidence then you could be heading for an identity crisis, so perhaps a few insights would be helpful.

Your identity is mainly a combination of three factors, a sense of having a measure of success in the PAST, plus satisfaction with your PRESENT situation in life, but also it needs the added dimension of exciting goals to aim for in the FUTURE! It gives you a certain awareness of your true self-worth; it is a sober assessment of your success as a person; it is a sensible evaluation of the character you have formed by facing up to the challenging circumstances of life.

Normally the development should begin in the home where loving discipline and firm guide lines give security and at the same time lay the foundations for one of the most precious laws of life, namely - SELF-DISCIPLINE!

Home should be where a child is not only given freedom to develop its own singular identity, but also taught the responsibility of not taking liberties that deprive others of their freedom! Learning to be considerate of other people is another law of life that leads to SELF-ENRICHMENT.

From there it should progress into youth, when in spite of the traumas of adolescence there should be a developing sense of direction in life. If the discipline of study and hard work to achieve those goals is accepted and applied with diligence the result will be not only success, but the learning of another law of life - SELF MOTIVATION.

Later on will come a growing awareness and acceptance of sexual desires. Because this area of our life is so vital, and it so powerfully affects every part of our make up, God has given explicit instructions in the book of Proverbs about its consequences. Failure will not only bring upon us the judgment of God and a guilt complex that will ultimately damage our health. Also one of its lesser known, but more far reaching effects is that it lowers our inner sense of dignity. Whereas success will bring abounding blessings, and not the least is a heightening of SELF-ESTEEM.

If in the process of growing up a person does not learn to overcome selfish habit patterns and love others, then marriage, even with all its romance, will not prevent the ruthless exposure of the real person just below the surface. Loving another and sharing yourself is never losing your identity but rather the enhancing and enrichment of your true SELF-WORTH.

Self-deception is a sure way to self-destruction. The one who cheats only cheats himself out of self-worth.

The one who steals is the ultimate loser. The liar lowers his self-esteem and brands himself a moral coward. Selfishness never enhances or ennobles your personality. It insidiously erodes your integrity as a person. The one who descends to the depths of lust will lose the ability to scale the heights of human love. Honesty is not only the best policy in business, it is the only policy in the life that brings record profits of self-respect. Blaming others when you are at fault is only belittling yourself in your own eyes! Integrity is a precious commodity of life but dishonesty will only bring moral bankruptcy.

Scriptural standards are God's highway to wholeness, an open road that takes you round the many pitfalls of life. His commandments are like mountains that should challenge you to climb out of obscurity and become someone of eternal worth.

No Christian need come to an identity crisis, for their past, present and future is bound up with the Eternal Son of God. Identifying ourselves with him will bring us into the wonderful realisation that our days were determined before the dawn of time (Eph 1:3-6). That our present circumstances are not only of his sovereign design but also subject to his loving control (Rom 8:28-29), above and beyond all this, is the loving assurance that our future is secure in him (Rom 8:36-39).

Every believer should be content with their own God-ordained individuality and secure in the knowledge that they are A UNIQUE EXPRESSION OF HIM! This is not pride or presumption but a Mature spiritual evaluation of their true selfhood. Every Christian should aspire to be like Jesus, where they will be able to say, although in a more limited degree, "he that hath seen me hath seen" - the Christ!

Jacob is a classical example of how God never gives up on people no matter how warped they might be. He was a supplanter by name and also by nature, but God knew he had deep-rooted desires for spiritual blessings. God saw his potential to be a prince, so he patiently waited for Jacob to come to the end of his scheming supplanting self. We are all like Jacob, we have all supplanted the divine pattern of living in total dependence upon God. Many of us have to be put into painful and embarrassing situations to bring us to the place of admitting that in our own strength and by our own scheming we can do nothing (Jn 15:4-5).

The apostle Paul is our New Testament example of how God relentlessly drives his people into the Romans 7 syndrome of despair. Not until we have been ruthlessly exposed and made to recognise that even as Christians, if we continue to live in the flesh (self), we will not only live in condemnation, but we might never know the delight of finding our true selves (Rom 8:1-4).

Finding PEACE WITH GOD and release from the guilt of being a sinner brings freedom from our first condemnation, but the fullness of salvation that brings PEACE WITH OURSELVES only comes when we know freedom from walking after the flesh (self). This is not possible until we know the secret of the exchanged life (Gal 2:20).

Self-worth is what you win by self-denial and no man is denied this blessing, for regardless of rank or learning, every man can endeavour to be true to himself.

Everyone can aspire to live to the limits of their integrity, but blessed above all men are those who deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Jesus (Matt 16:24-25).

So the next time you look into the mirror, you should be able to say with confidence I was chosen to be a child of God, even before I became a sinner! I am exceedingly precious to God. I have been purchased by the blood of his Son! (Eph 1:3-14). I have been rescued from Satan's dominion of darkness and I am safe in the kingdom of Jesus (Col 1:13).

Say to yourself, even now "with all my faults, foibles and failings, even whilst I am being changed (2 Cor 3:18) God sees me as a **UNIQUE EXPRESSION OF HIMSELF** and although I am not perfect, I will be patient, because I know he has not finished with me yet"! Go to the mirror and say it now!

Our next chapter will take you even further into the wonderful secrets of God's so great salvation. Through the generations they had been hidden until God revealed them to the Apostle Paul (Col 1:26). Now learn that all this is God's way of recovering the glory that Adam lost through disobedience.

Chapter Twelve

The Search Of The Centuries

Throughout the centuries men have sought to find the missing dimensions of their make up. They have asked serious questions, but failed to find any satisfactory answers. Questions like, what is my reason for living? Why was I born? What is my real identity and where do I find my true self worth? What is the great empty void in my life and where can I find satisfaction? In beginning to understand these problems we must turn to the word of God and ask, "What is man? Why was he created? - What went wrong?"

Adam was a unique being, handcrafted by God out of the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7). He was made a little lower than the angels and so subject to death, but far superior to animals. He not only possessed incredible powers of reason and capability to reflect the moral character of God but he also had the prospect of becoming deathless (Heb 2:5-8). He was given a body so marvellously contrived that its mysteries will for ever leave men astonished at the things they do know about it, but forever searching to understand the things they do not know (Ps 139:13-16).

With all its wonders it was built for higher things, for into that body God breathed his own breath and man became a living soul (Gen 2:7). Contained within that body there was now a vibrant personality capable of not only living, but also loving and serving its Creator.

But surpassing all the splendour of this, there was an added dimension that made him higher than the animals. He was given a spirit in which he could contain a measure of his Creator - a capacity and capability not only to commune with God but also to rule over his creation with power and authority. For God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Gen 1:26).

This was the glory of man! This was the high honour to which he was appointed and from which he fell. Although forewarned by God that disobedience would bring death he was persuaded to doubt. In sinning the shadow of death cast darkness into the spirit of Adam, and at the very same moment God vacated the inner shrine of his being. Even worse, Adam was then expelled from paradise, "lest he also put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever" (Gen 3:22-24).

The day before he fell, his whole being had been saturated with a divine presence: not only had he effortlessly reflected the likeness of his Creator, but he had easily exercised authority over his creation.

The day after the fall, the awful truth would begin to dawn upon him. Instead of the power and presence of God within him, there was now only a terrible aching loneliness.

Instead of the intimate union with God that had caused him to walk with supreme confidence, there was now the consciousness of being a separate entity. He was a self! Not only that, but stirring within the depths of his being was a dark evil force - it was the power of sin! He was now by nature, a child of wrath (Eph 3:1-3).

As 'Federal Head' of the human race, Adam had not only brought sin into the world, and upon all his offspring, but they too would be cursed with the ugly confusion of a separate self. They too would be denied the glory of God. His offspring would be perpetuated down through the ages but sadly, perpetuated in their incompleteness!

Throughout the centuries men have only had glimpses of their lost glory. The capacity again to know the wonder of God within them would not be possible until another Adam would later come on to the scene of time. He would not only redeem them from their fallen condition, but also with his powerful quickening Spirit, bring them back to a living relationship with God. With that would come the hope of recovering their lost glory!

John said of Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh, and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14).

Stepping out of eternity into time came Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not only to reveal the glory that Adam lost - but to restore it as well! He would show men the fullness of life that God had intended them to enjoy, the reason why they were born and the glory of a human being full of God.

Later Jesus would give his spotless life as the ransom price for mankind (Matt 20:28). In submitting to death he had to trust his Father to raise him from its power. He knew that after his resurrection God would then release his Spirit into millions.

Already the prayer of Jesus has been partially fulfilled in your life, but now the time has come for further advancement. Jesus prayed: 'My prayer is not for them (his first disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that they all may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. I IN THEM AND you in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent Me and have loved them even as you have loved Me. Father, I want those you have given me to be where I am, and to see my glory, the glory that you have given me because you loved Me before the creation of the world" (Jn 17:20-24 NIV).

Jesus prayed that you should not only see the glory but also share it now! So begin to confess your faith that "God is in Christ, and Christ is in me, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so in this union with Jesus I can be complete" (Col 2:6-10). Wholeness is gloriously possible (Thess 5:23).

Along with your confession of faith must be the continuing denial of self, for having received the nature of God who is love, you must now make more room for him by denying your old self - loving self. The result will be increasing glory.

As you yield yourself totally to God his sovereign power will arrange all the circumstances of your life so that you will be moulded and made like Jesus (Rom 8:28-29). Only as you present your whole being to him as a living sacrifice will he be able to restore the lost completeness and show you the purpose of your life - your reason for being born!

Only God can ensure that the Christ who is in you as a hope of glory, will become Christ in you - a glowing and glorious reality (Col 1:28). So if you would discover your reason for being born, if you would know your true identity and enjoy your singular destiny in this world and the coming age - this is the price! But how small when compared to the eternal weight of glory to be won!

Few Christians have been called by God to suffer as the apostle Paul, yet he summarised his God ordained pathway in these words, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18). Because of the brevity of our days he appeals to all believers, "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you will be able to prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom 12:1-2).

God will then be able to get maximum glory out of the small scrap of your humanity, not only will others receive maximum benefit from your being born, but you yourself will know maximum fulfilment. Surely this is not so much a price but a rather superlative privilege. This is finding the missing dimension of life. This is what men have been searching for throughout the centuries!

Before you are overwhelmed by the wonder of this let me bring you back to earth by reminding you that your life was planned in the eternal purposes of God even before God laid the foundations of the world (Eph 1:3-6).

Chapter Thirteen

The Facts Of Life

Jesus said, "I assure you most solemnly, I tell you that unless a person is born again (anew from above), he cannot ever see, - know, be acquainted with (and experience) - the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:3 Amplified Bible).

If knowing and experiencing the Kingdom of God is only possible for those who are born again, then it is vital that we are acquainted with the facts of the life that will not only bring us into the Kingdom now, but also take us on into its eternal dimension later. Because the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to teach us the analogy between our first birth into this world and our second birth into the spiritual world, we will use the same terms.

Rightfully and beautifully a child is first planned in the loving purpose and intimate desires of the parents. Long before conception takes place in the womb the child is a creation of the thoughts: We were desired and conceived out of the eternal purposes of the Godhead. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestined us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph 1:4-5).

Regardless of our earthly parents or circumstances, God intended that we should be born - so that we could be born again! It has always been his purpose to have a sinless earth filled with deathless people. But even more wonderful, he has given us son-ship within his eternal family and is now preparing us to inherit and enjoy a future glory (Heb 2:10).

We were born again not of the corruptible seed, but of the incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. We believed and received the eternal seed into our inner most being - even our spirit (1 Pet 1:23).

Without the aid of modern technology, the Psalmist describes our first beginning when we were created and cushioned within our mother's womb. "You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body" (Ps 139:13-16 NIV).

But the day dawned when our world of water was broken and we came forth into this world - the incredible miraculous moment when one lifeline was severed and another started.

Jesus made it very clear that unless we experience this second birth, we will never enter into the spiritual world. "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5 NIV.)

The world of the Spirit is like the movements of the wind. We feel its energy, observe its effects, but we cannot plan or control its force. However, one thing is certain, that when a human heart becomes conscious of the unseen but powerful movements of heaven and yields to the love of God, a divine conception takes place in the spirit.

The day of our new birth is the beginning of a different life. No longer are we sustained by the umbilical cord of our senses, we take our first deep breath of the spirit world and cry "Abba Father" (Rom 8:15). The miracle has happened; we have been born from above (Jn 8:23).

For our mothers, the moments of our earthly birth were filled with many conflicting emotions - uncertainty, fear and pain, followed by a sense of awe, mixed with relief and joy. For some it was relatively easy, whilst for others it was painful and protracted. So it is with our heavenly birth, for some the assurance of the Spirit is so easy and uncomplicated, whilst for others it is a long hard struggle!

As a babe turns instinctively towards its mother's breast for nourishment, so we turn to the Word of God "as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word so that you might grow" (1 Pet 2:2:2). The loving arms and the tender care of those whom God had provided within his church helped us through the traumas and trials of spiritual babyhood. However, sterner days were ahead, as we took our first faltering steps in learning to walk by faith without being supported by human hands.

Next came the strong meat of God's Word to create spiritual bone and muscle "according as his divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, and beyond all this giving all diligence we added to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness, brotherly kindness charity, so that in possessing these things we would not be unproductive in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 1:3-8).

Gradually, the character of Christ was being formed in us (Gal 4:19). Spiritual childhood soon passed and moving into youth we began to face the need of direction in our lives. It began to dawn on us that men do not drift into their destiny in life, but it only comes to those who make a determined effort and apply themselves with dedication and commitment.

The apostle Paul urged the saints at Rome "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you will be able to prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God for your lives" (Rom 12:1-2).

Growing up in life means that we begin to take up wider responsibilities. Having reached maturity we are expected to move out of our own circle of living to build up the lives of others.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28). The apostle John also speaks about young men who have overcome the evil one and become strong in the Word of God, and of fathers whose understanding of God is complete in the perfection of knowledge and revelation (1 Jn 2:13-14).

Now even though we become mature in our spiritual lives that is not the end. The outward man perishes but the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor 4:16). The earthly body finally fails - but it only falls asleep (1 Cor 15:20-22). Those who are born of the incorruptible seed not only live differently - they die differently. The graveside becomes a gateway into a glorious deathless future (Phil 2:21-23). We sorrow at the temporary parting, but not as those who have no hope (1 Thess 4:13).

Added to this is an even greater expectation, the exciting possibility that we could be among the millions who one day will cheat death as Jesus returns to change and then take us to be with himself (1 Thess 4:13-18). Just as surely as he has gone to prepare a place for us, so just as certainly will he take us to enjoy the family inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled that will never fade away, reserved in heaven for those who are being kept by the power of God (1 Pet 1:5-6). Whether we pass through the grave or go up through the clouds, one thing is absolutely certain we shall be as deathless as Jesus is!

Marriage will no longer be needed, for Jesus said, "In the Resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels in heaven (Matt 22:30). No more travailing in birth, no more sorrow; crying and pain will pass away. Death will never claim another victim when Jesus makes all things new (Rev 21:4-5).

These powerful promises assure us that our new birth is but the beginning of a life that will never end. One day we will enter and enjoy the glories of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1-7). These are the facts of eternal life!

So until Jesus returns to reunite his family he is asking us to do one simple act of love - to remember him in the breaking of the bread. As we do, simple faith must not only remember the cross and the resurrection, but realise that these two eternal acts of love make it possible for our spirits to be nurtured by his Spirit; a communicating of his life and love until he comes.

Chapter Fourteen

Just A Memory ?

How sad that so many believers fail to enter into and enjoy the full meaning of the simple, but superlative secret of the communion service. Faithfully, they obey his call to remember him in the breaking of the bread. Thankfully, they recall the cross where Christ died for their sins according to the scriptures. Hopefully, they look forward to the glorious day of his return when they will "eat it anew in His Kingdom" (Matt 26:28), BUT SADLY, they often forget that it was meant to be more than an act of commemoration - it was meant to be a communion service, a time of supernatural communication!

Simple faith must see beyond the symbols. Faith must reach out to receive the very life and virtue of the Son of God. Faith must take the bread and wine and with worship say, "as my body receives and assimilates these emblems of his love, so my spirit assimilates the very life of God."

Remembering Jesus in the breaking of the bread must be more than obeying a divine ordinance. The inspiration and emotion can soon pass, whereas the impartation of His life will go on to change us from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18).

Calling to mind such love is very beautiful, but as with most memories, the effects can also be very brief, especially if our daily task is to live and love those who are indifferent and even hostile to God. Looking forward to a glorious future can be a very uplifting experience, but often the painful realities of our present circumstances can very quickly bring us down to earth with a bump.

Even when we bow our hearts to worship the Lord Jesus and contemplate with wonder his lion like-courage to die as a lamb. We quickly forget and fail to follow His example when we are called upon to face provocation and persecution.

Even when we see the controlled strength of his meekness and realise that such gentleness inherits the earth, we seem to spend half of our lives jealously fighting for our rights.

If Moses saw the Israelite people being sustained by "angels' food" (Ps 78:25), how much more wonderful to be sustained by the very food of eternal life. Those who eat the very substance and sustenance of the life of Christ will live on into the ages of the ages. They enjoy the communication by the Spirit of the very principles and virtues of Christ's manhood; the mystic sharing of the very life of God with mere human beings. Those who assimilate the life of Christ are immortal. They live differently and because of him they die differently and one day they will sing exultantly, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9-10).

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing" (Rev 5:12).

We must never forget that our Christian life began by receiving the quickening spirit of Christ into our dead spirits (Eph 3:1). More importantly, that life must be maintained and continuously sustained by simple faith drawing upon the same supernatural source!

Unlike all other religions that are the results of men seeking after God, Christianity is a relationship with God, as he not only seeks after men, but actually shares with them the life of his Son (Jn 3:36).

The apostle Paul continually had to alert the Churches about the danger of being drawn away from the source of their life, which was union with Christ. He continually warned them not to be moved away from the simplicity of the Gospel, but even as they had first received Christ Jesus by faith, so they must keep on receiving him by faith (Col 2:6, Gal 3:3). They must not only maintain him by fellowship, prayer and instruction in doctrine but in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42).

If spiritual strength and vigour are to be maintained, then receiving his life must be more vital to us than even our daily bread (Jn 6:48). If Jesus warned us in no uncertain terms that without him we could do nothing, then it is our folly if we attempt to either bring forth fruit or seek to do any service in our own strength (Jn 15:4-5). Why are we warned to examine our hearts before we approach his table? Because of two dangers, the first is self-inflicted conflict, and the second is the severe chastening of God (1 Cor 11:23-33)!

As we repent and believe that Christ's death has redeemed us from Satan's power and reconciled us to God, we are then regenerated as we receive his quickening spirit into our spirit. No longer are we 'children of wrath' (Eph 2:11), but children of love (1 Jn 4:7). Instead of being spiritually dead we are now alive with the very life and loving nature of God.

But the new birth immediately creates a new problem as the Spirit of Christ comes into conflict with the old selfish habit patterns (Gal 5:17). If there is a continual denying of self, then there will be continual power and peace. If self is not denied or brought under God's death sentence (Rom 6:6), then the unresolved inner conflict will eventually produce depression, disease and possibly death!

Walking in love is denying self and living for others (1 Jn 2:7-11). Walking in love aligns a new self with a new nature and the obvious results are joy, peace, happiness, health, abundant living and fruitful service. Loving selfishly is not only sinful, it is dangerous!

Paul the apostle warned the Corinthian church that their selfishness was a blatant travesty of the very table at which they were sitting. They had met together to remember Christ shedding His blood for them but they themselves were not even prepared to share their bread! (Cor 11:21-22).

By their disgraceful behaviour, totally destitute of love, they had failed to discern their brethren as part of the Lord's body. Then to add insult to injury, they had failed to realise the true implication of discerning his body in the breaking of the bread. Such audacity must have filled the angels with astonishment, but far worse than that it eventually moved the hand of God to judgement!

Let us never forget his loving invitation to, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Cor 11:24) and let us drink of the cup, remembering our blood sealed covenant with him (1 Cor 11:25).

In a day not too far distant, our faith will be replaced by sight. We shall see him as he is. Until such time there is no reason why our union with him should not be so intimate and so real that heaven will just be a change of scenery! Hallelujah! Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Chapter Fifteen

Divine Health

From Genesis to Revelation the Word of God ruthlessly exposes the archenemy of men, the devil. It also reveals the damage we can sustain if we follow his rebellious life style. Whilst sickness is often the direct result of stress and strain caused by living for sin and self, we must never forget that many are the innocent victims of hurt caused by others. The Word of God not only gives clear warnings to the guilty but teaches sound wisdom that will help us to cope with suffering (2 Tim 3:16). It could be likened to preventative medicine.

The majority of patients in the doctor's surgery (some put the figure as high as 60%) are ill because of mental or emotional strain. The body is ill at ease (dis-ease) because of things such as anger, resentment, fear, worry and, worst of all, guilt. These are but a few of the wrong attitudes and wrongs suffered that become the root causes of sickness.

Very often the doctor has to lay aside his stethoscope, thermometer and other means of diagnosing our ills because he cannot find anything organically wrong. He then has to resort to the old-fashioned but well-proven skills of sympathy and common sense in seeking to find the problem behind the pain.

Even in cases where germs and viruses have penetrated the body's defence mechanism, it can often be because stress and strain have previously drained it of its ability to fight off sickness.

God's priority has always been to promote vigorous health (Ex 15:26). If we fail to recognise or refuse to respond to his health-giving Word we suffer the consequences. "Listen, son of mine, to what I say, listen carefully. Keep these thoughts ever in mind. Let them penetrate deep within your heart for they will mean real life for you and radiant health!" (Pr 4:20-22 Paraphrase Living Bible).

God goes even further. He can so "satisfy our mouth with good things; our youth will be renewed like the eagle's" (Ps 103:5). Only he can rejuvenate the body and extend our years (Gen 25:1-4) and he does this by giving us our heart's desires and delights to the full. Many of our middle-age problems would be minimised if we used our freedom from family cares to love God and his people with a renewed fervour. If God can revitalise the eagle; so replace its moulted feathers with new; so rejuvenate its strength that it can once again soar into the heavens as majestic and awesome as ever - he can do it for his people!

Only God can forgive sin and cleanse you from the stains of a guilty conscience. To turn to any other source for help in this matter is both foolish and futile (Mk 2:7-12 and 1 John 1-9). Peace of mind is vital to health but only God can give it (Rom 5:1). Only God's Word will help you to replace the destructive patterns of living for self - and sin. It is folly to walk in the counsel of ungodly men (Ps 1:1). This is why our society is sick and reeling with unreality.

Contentment of mind is not only great gain - it brings good health (1 Tim 6:6). To rejoice in the Lord always might be hard - but it is good for your arteries (Phil 4:4). To live at peace with all men might sometimes seem to be almost impossible - but it helps you to sleep better (2 Tim 2:22).

These are just a few of God's counsels but even more powerful, more potent than any drugs or medicine are faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13).

FAITH is the only answer to health-destroying fear and anxiety. God's Word is full of fear defeating, faith inspiring promises. Almost every problem and circumstance is covered in the Psalms and Proverbs. From the heart of the Bible God can speak to your heart. He will give comfort and calm if you draw near to him. Jesus himself went to great lengths to warn us about anxious fears (Lk 12:22-34). Surely if sparrows can happily live a day at a time seeking food and still have time to sing, if lilies can open up and enjoy the sunshine, so can we if we will but learn.

HOPE is of great value. Hope is not only to do with our eternal home - but also for our earthly health. Hope always sees God as our bright tomorrow, the great sufficiency for every future need and strength for body, soul and spirit (Phil 4:19). Hope is a buoyant, exciting anticipation that tomorrow will be even better than today. Hope relaxes and rejoices in the sure knowledge that every circumstance is under his control (Rom 15:4, 5:13).

LOVE is of paramount importance. How sad that we so often ignore or deliberately forget this first commandment of Jesus (Jn 15:12). When you love it is not only proof that you love Jesus (Jn 14:21) but it is wonderfully designed to bless your brother and bring health to your own body. Hatred, anger, bitterness and resentment release powerful poisons into every part of your system, leaving your poor kidneys to struggle with the overload.

If you have an unforgiving attitude to your brother don't be surprised if you find yourself afflicted and tormented by illness (Matt 18:32-35). If you read carefully the full context (Matt 18:21-31), the Holy Spirit might persuade you that better than all the drugs the doctor can prescribe might be a good dose of godly fear.

If you bear a grudge or allow resentment to sour your spirit, you are failing to discern that your brother is part of the Lord's body - if you harm him, you could harm your own (1 Cor 11:27-34). The greatest expression of your love for Jesus is seen not in what you say or sing, but how you show kindness and share the burdens of his people. If you are guilty of unforgiveness, it's no good changing your doctor - it would be far better to change your attitude.

If you have developed a gloomy outlook on life, if you enjoy being miserable that you grumble at God, everybody and everything, don't be surprised if your poor body lets you down - it can only take so much punishment. "A merry heart doeth good like a bottle of medicine" (Rom 17:22). Smile, learn to laugh and even allow others to pull your leg, it's good for your health - and your face! Fun and good humour are relaxing providing you do not go too far or enjoy it at another's expense (Eph 5:4).

Although Paul was seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6) his feet were very firmly on the ground of earthly realities. His good sense advised Timothy "to take a little wine" for his stomach trouble (1 Tim 5:2-3). A timid temperament isn't changed overnight but only as faith grows by experience. Before we belittle Timothy's nerves, it might be good to remember that if we had shared his sufferings and labours, most of us would have gone for convalescence or sought early retirement. Trophimus would have been told to rest and recuperate and maybe even delegate his responsibilities (2 Tim 4:20)!

If God seems to be failing to answer prayer, or point out the reason for your sickness (Ja 1:5), perhaps it would be wise to ask him to guide you in similar practical ways. Many of our food products contain chemicals to preserve and colour them. Household and industrial products can be injurious to health. Pollution can reach you from many sources, but beware of becoming morbid or developing a phobia about such matters (Mk 16:18). God is well able to alert you to these dangers if you ask his help. Overwork, overeating, lack of sleep, failure to wind down are also some of the many simpler causes of sickness.

God wants you to enjoy abounding health and vitality. He can and will give miracles and healings, but his Word also teaches us how to avoid many sickness-producing attitudes. Love him with your whole being - love his people with all their shortcomings. Rest and relax in the sure knowledge that he loves and cares for you (1 Pet 5:7). Have faith and hope to believe in a bright tomorrow. This is God's way to divine health!

Chapter Sixteen

Don't Hurt Yourself

Design and build a gallows 75 feet high and hang yourself? NO! NOT LITERALLY OF COURSE! Although that is what happened to Haman, for in seeking to make a public spectacle of Mordecai, a man of God, all his plotting and political manoeuvring only resulted in his own downfall. He actually brought about his own death. Because God is against all such men, he was hanged on his own gallows (Esth 3-7).

From Genesis to Revelation God has continually assured his people that "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord" (Isa 54:17). Anyone who touches the Lord's anointed, and that is not exclusive to ministers, but every member of his body who walks uprightly and serves him faithfully, is duly warned that God is the great protector and vindicator of their righteousness (Ps 105:14-15).

Never secretly plan another's downfall, for no Matter how skilfully you cover your tracks or however plausible your arguments, God will expose you! If you dig a pit for someone's feet, you yourself will fall into it (Rom 28:10). If on the other hand you keep your motives pure, your intentions peaceable and your hands clean, woe betides anyone who touches you or even dares points a finger at you. Let us look at several instances of God turning the tables on those who persecute the righteous.

If like Daniel you find yourself trapped in a dangerous situation, rest assured! Without the help of Mogodon, Valium or any other form of artificial sleep, he enjoyed a good night's rest. Have you ever wondered what he used as a pillow? Yes, God either gave the lions lockjaw or temporary loss of appetite - but only until the right meal was served (Dan 6:24).

Nothing should disturb your sleep, except of course the occasions when your subconscious mind carries on praising God (Ps 91:11), or if you are attending to the needs of others, such as babies, and sick people. John Wesley is quoted as saying that he never lost a night's sleep through worry or anxiety. No anxious thoughts should disturb your rest for "He giveth His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps 91:11). God is always alert and on call if you should need him: so there is no need for both of you to stay awake (Ps 121:3-4).

If you feel like the children of Israel when chased by Pharaoh and trapped with no way of escape, don't panic! God is well able to make water stand upright and turn mud into a highway (Ex 14:21-22). Reserve your sympathies for those who persecute you, for when they have moved you into the way God wants you to go, he will allow water to revert to doing what it does naturally (Ex 14:27). Every seemingly threatening situation in your life is not initiated by Satan - but God! Satan is but an unpaid servant, working to strict rules and is not allowed to exert one ounce of pressure more than you can stand (Job 2:1-10).

All things good and evil are made to serve God's great purpose of making you like Jesus (Rom 8:28-31) so in your problem situation ask the reason, learn the lesson, and come out laughing (Job 42:12-17).

At midnight or mid-day it might happen to others but not to you (Ps 91:5-13) and God gives clear warning to any who persecutes the righteous, "touch that man and you touch me" (Acts 9:5, Isa 41:11-14, Ps 109:29). God covered his people with a protective cloud as they travelled through the wilderness (Ex 14-19). He continually showed his ability to sustain them from thirst and starvation (Isa 49:10).

Under his care you are safe from all past and present prognosticators who claim that stars are your destiny. Even the moon's gravitational pull cannot affect your mood or cause lunacy. Yes, all cosmic forces are under his control. Sun, moon or stars are unable to affect or hurt you (Ps 121:5-6). You have nothing to fear!

Yes, the trapper will be trapped in his own nets (Ps 141:8-10), for God sees the noose and guards the innocent from being snared (Ps 142). God is the author of poetic justice. History records and eternity will reveal that his judgements are incredibly just (Ps 94:21,23). He will confound the enemies of God's people, overwhelm them with confusion, scatter them like chaff, chase them, persecute them and put them in slippery places (Ps 35:1-9). Those who go to war against the innocent are to be pitied (Isa 49:24-26), for in trying to invade the fortress of God's sovereign protection they will be totally defeated (Ps 91:2).

History is but his story of how he watches over his people and protects them like the "apple of His eye" (Zech 2:8). So relax, don't panic, stop feeling sorry for yourself and reserve your sympathies for those who persecute you. The shadow of the gallows is not for you, the roar of hungry lions, the raging furnace, the howling mob at your heels need not cause you to fear or cause you to lose any sleep. Only you can harm yourself!

Chapter Seventeen

You Will Find God's Best!

If your heart is sincere in its search for God's best, if you will avoid being stupid or stubborn, if you will be sensitive to the gentle prompting of the Holy Spirit, you will find God's best. This is not an empty promise, it is a prophetic statement direct to your spirit.

The Father heart of God has sent his only Son to win back legally your rightful heritage. The Holy Spirit can now act as heavenly executor on your behalf. He will prove your case and bring you into all your inheritance. Because you are God's child you have more legal right to make a claim upon his love than any claim you could ever present in an earthly court of law. The will is sealed by the blood of Jesus. Satan is unable to contest it. He can only try to make you doubt it.

Do not be content in knowing doctrine. Doctrine is only the means whereby the Holy Spirit can lead you into the reality of knowing God. All heaven has promised that you will come to know God's good acceptable and perfect will for your life.

If you will present your body as a living sacrifice and withstand all worldly pressures that would seek to squeeze you into its mould, and if you will allow the Word of God to re-programme your whole thinking patterns, you will not fail to find God's best.

God will get maximum glory out of your humanity - that is GOOD. Others will get maximum benefit as you find your destiny in him - that is ACCEPTABLE. Finally, you yourself will get maximum fulfilment - that is PERFECT (Rom 12: 1-2).

Without God's love; without the work of his Son; without the work of the Holy Spirit: you would never have found God's best, even if you had lived to be 10,000 years old. With their help: you will!

God's amazing grace has reached down into your insignificant life, destroyed your sense of 'lost-ness' in the vastness of his love. You have been born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God and he will perfect that which concerns you. The government of your life is upon his shoulders. All things both good and evil will be only good, for out of the good and evil God will create in you the image of his Son (Rom 8:29).

God has heard the cries of your heart for more of him. He has seen your many searchings after himself. Now He will move heaven and earth to bring you into HIS BEST!

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