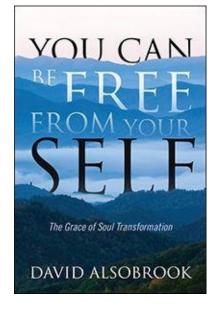
## VOLJ CAN

The Grace of Soul Transformation

DAVID ALSOBROOK



You Can Be Free From Your SELF The Grace of Soul Transformation David Alsobrook



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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the hungry souls of all ages who in their hot pursuits to find God finally quieted themselves within and let Him find them. You have been a great help to me.

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## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

You hold in your hands a book unlike most books in that it was written in a state of spiritual stillness. It should be read in this same state so you can receive maximum benefit. If your mind wants to read this book voraciously, ignore it. Instead read it slowly with no goal of finishing it soon. Take a bite, chew slowly then swallow. If you will read it this way the miracle this book speaks about can happen more quickly within you.

The truth of soul transformation is presented throughout these pages. There is no need to finish the book to receive the grace presented throughout. All that is needed is an inner yielding to the truth you will discover in various "aha" moments—when your mind recognizes a truth your spirit has been waiting for you to discover. Whenever an "aha" moment happens, put the book down and just sit still. Allow the message to sink more deeply inside you.

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples about His forthcoming crucifixion, He said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears" (Luke 9:44). This book is about your crucifixion which is the pathway you must follow to enter the Kingdom of God experientially. So read it slowly. Let its sayings sink down into your ears. Sometimes you will sense that you should go back over a portion you have just read and reread it. Whenever you sense this inside, it is important that you go back over the same portion again. Doing this will give room inside you for your Helper, the Holy Spirit, to apply needed truth to your heart. The Spirit of the Lord, Paul said, is the Transformer of the believer (2 Cor. 3:18). So, yield to Him as you read.

Let go of mental attachments also and allow a sense of distance to occur within you--between your spirit and your mind. It is then that you will see the false you, self, and how it has hindered, vexed, harassed, and tortured you all your life with ambition, regret, anxiety, stress, fear, worry, greed and other things in surface life. Whenever you sense this inner distance between the true you and the false nature, allow it. Observe the different ways your carnal-mind has operated all throughout your life. This is the beginning of its dissolution and your true freedom in Christ. You are letting in the Light. Darkness is disappearing.

Much of this book is repetitive by design. There is only one primary point made throughout. If you allow it to point you in the right direction, your life will metamorphosize. This metamorphosis, or transformation, is the work of God in your soul. It is the change you have long desired, but, up to now, have been unable to receive due to the influence and hindrance of self.

It is wise to ask your Helper, the Holy Spirit, to make known to you the truth of what you read. Ask for His illumination whenever something "new" appears in your understanding. It is much more important to receive what you read in your spirit than it is to grasp it with your mind.

Bible references that are cited but not quoted in the book are there for your reference. It may be helpful to read these references in your Bible so you can see how the thought was derived.

David Alsobrook

May 1, 2010

Nashville, Tennessee

Chapter 1

The Day Self Dissolved

One day about five months ago, my fun-loving, lighthearted son, Jordan, and I were shooting pool in the basement. He had been giving me the customary beating, rifling ball after ball into any pocket he chose. Suddenly Jordan looked up at me with uncharacteristic seriousness. He asked, "Dad, don't you think it's time you wrote a new book?" I answered him, "Why should I write another book? I have thousands stacked in a warehouse now." His soberness remained unchanged, and Jordan countered, "But you don't have a book about the big change and other neat stuff that's happened to you these last few years." I brightened and said, "Okay, I will."

I stood beside the pool table as Jordan resumed his skilled shooting. As I stood there I suddenly remembered a remarkable prophecy that had been given to me some months earlier by a notable prophet of the Lord. I quietly observed its remembrance in my mind, aligned my spirit to obeying that word, and remained standing in deep peace as the game unfolded. It was over in a couple of minutes. I then announced in the customary sportscaster's voice: "And here he is, winner and still 'champeeun' of this house: Jordan Alsobrook!"

Little did my son know that early every morning during alone time with God, I had been receiving similar impressions to write a new book. That very morning, in particular, I had asked the Lord to confirm His will to my heart. The reason I asked for a confirmation about His will that I write a book was because I had no desire in myself to write another book. In fact, the peace of God was so prevalent within that I had no desire to do anything. I had been simply enjoying life. Rather, Life, its essence and being, was ever flowing up and through and out from within. Unlike my previous half century of almost constant doing, I had spent over a year simply being. The word "delicious" is the best word I know to describe this abundant, overflowing Life of which my little life now consisted.

I knew Jordan's uncharacteristically serious remark was the confirmation for which I had asked the Lord. (Serious remarks are so unlike my son!) So, after aligning my will to God's will as had become my constant practice, I asked the Lord the next morning to give me a desire to move in obedience to His will. I soon began writing this book without notes, outline or forethought. This was my first book in fourteen years. This book was written in a much different state from the earlier titles. Each of the more than forty earlier titles had been written in a great deal of thought. This book seemed to require little to no thought as my fingers moved effortlessly over the keyboard. In short order this book in its rough form was written. It would not be quite correct to call this book the product of work, although editing did require considerable mental work, and the help of others experienced in grammar and proofing. But, all in all, this writing seemed rather like play. So now it joyfully comes into your hands. Let it come into your heart as well.

An Unexpected Appointment with God

Just as there was no way I thought I should write a book about this, there had been no way I could have known a divine appointment had been awaiting me during a nature walk in the summer of 2008. During that walk a Voice said, "Sit on that rock." It was a large, flat rock a few paces from where I was walking on the trail. As I obeyed the command to sit on that rock, a profound change occurred within dissolving the false self I had called me all these many, many years. A fundamental change in the core of my being took place there, through no effort of my own. All that was required was my obedience to sit on that rock. That morning the "me" I had thought was me all my life dissolved. Then, the true "me" emerged from its hiding place. The true "me" had been there all along, under layers of other stuff, much like my closet!

The rock in itself had no special virtue, just as the bush Moses saw had none. It was an ordinary bush until God put His glory in it as a non-consuming fire. Just so was that rock. When the glory came upon it and upon the environment surrounding it, profound change occurred inside me. This change did not occur immediately as I sat down on the rock, but happened after I had become absolutely still and quiet inside

while sitting there. I do not know how long I sat there before the brilliant light shone all around the area. Sitting there immersed in inner stillness, I was unconcerned with time. It was still morning after the transformation had occurred, but the sun had moved considerably farther in the sky.

Waiting upon the Lord

Stillness had been something that had been deepening in my life for the previous two years. Stillness had deepened in me through waiting upon the Lord. By "waiting upon the Lord" I am referring to the act of focused prayer time. This could be on my knees, sitting in a chair or prostrate on the floor. Maybe a period of time devoted to waiting upon the Lord, involves a combination of all three physical positions.

During a period of waiting on the Lord, there is no thought given to time, problems, pressing needs or even to intercession for others. It is simply time given to God for the purpose of connecting with Him and enjoying His Being, His Presence. The Hebrew word qavah, translated "wait" in the verse below, means "to twist together or entwine together". This word was used in ancient Jewish culture for rope-making:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31 KJV

"Waiting upon the Lord" is beyond the realm of mental operation, comprehension or understanding. The believer's spirit is connecting with God, becoming deeply entwined as one Being:

But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

1 Corinthians 6:17 NASB

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17 RV

There is nothing I have practiced during the last 40 years that has produced as much bliss, radiance, and vibrant life as becoming still within my soul while waiting upon the Lord. This practice has allowed Him to glue my spirit with His Spirit. It is interesting that the word used in 1 Corinthians 6:17 for "joined" is kallao in the Greek New Testament. This word means "to glue two together; to fuse two into one". This same Greek word is used of physical joining in marriage when husband and wife become one flesh. How beautiful it is that God, who is Spirit, wants to glue Himself to each of His children in the deepest part of them: the spirit. By waiting upon the Lord and becoming deeply intimate with Him, spirit to Spirit, the believer becomes one with his or her Lord.

Over the years I have heard others refer to "waiting on the Lord" as marking time off a calendar. There must be validity to this viewpoint, as some have received special direction from the Lord simply letting time pass. I can only relate what waiting upon the Lord means to me. It is something I do just about every day for an extended period of what is known as "time". There is no sense of time while doing it. There is only a sense of deep joining with God, a strengthening of the God-connection inside the deepest part of me--my born again spirit.

Early Experiences in Youth

Waiting upon the Lord was something I practiced a great deal in my youth about six months after the new birth. Reading the Book of Acts and visiting with a classmate who had been "Baptized in the Holy Spirit", I spent the night with him and received this most helpful gift from my Father. Included in this gift was a divine prayer enablement. So I began waiting upon the Lord praying in the Holy Spirit after this empowering experience before the traveling ministry ever began. As a young evangelist traveling the country and preaching in various towns and cities, I frequently spent lengthy periods with God in solitude, waiting upon Him and with Him in close communion. I would often, as the common saying back then was, "pray through on my knees" for hours at a time and enter a precious sense of divine stillness. A Presence that I knew was God would come and intensify as I remained before the Lord. It would seem to me that He filled the room where I was waiting upon Him. Back then, I frequently referred to this practice as

"basking in the Lord" because it felt like spiritual sunbathing to my soul. There was beautiful warmth that

burned inside my chest and abdomen during these basking times. My mind would become still and a theme would be impressed by the Spirit for the meeting to be held that night. After a day alone with God the meeting that night would be labeled "special" after the service by some of those who had attended.

Even though I noticed how special these church meetings were, so rich in the Presence of God, I did not grasp the significance that stillness could have in my personal life. It sounds strange to me to admit this now, but I never grasped the true spiritual nature of letting go, becoming still, and remaining that way for a period of time in daily life even though I had practiced it often in the early years of ministry times. Looking back, I can only say it was self, the false "me", that hid the importance of "praying into stillness" and abiding there until the Lord was through with whatever He wanted to accomplish within my heart that day. True, I read the Word, prayed, and praised God throughout the day, but it was amidst a lot of things going on around me in the ministry office. Waiting upon the Lord was often impressed upon my heart and I would set the alarm. As I rose early to pray for two or three hours, my mind would start racing with things to take care of before the next ministry trip, so I usually cut it short and got busy in the office.

As the ministry grew so did the responsibilities. They eventually overtook me. I was writing books, making radio programs, and speaking somewhere almost every night. As my popularity increased, time demands also increased. Eventually the ministry ran me. I was young, energetic, and zealous "for the Lord", and there were so many that needed Him, so I justified my less frequent waiting time upon the Lord, as well as my neglect of my young family in the area of "quality time" because I had "important" things to do for God. (Ah, self, you are a deceiver!) So, even when I was alone in a motel room preparing for a meeting that night, my prayer time was over the message I was studying, or for the needs in the church where I was speaking. I lost inner stillness almost completely and became more and more dominated by my mind.

My Soul Became Dry

Every now and then I would feel spiritual dryness in my soul. I would remember how I used to wait upon the Lord. I would get alone with God, endeavor to become still, and try to renew the deep connection with Him, but the two of us were never truly alone, one with each other or together as one. We were interrupted by noise--not outside noise but by noise in my head. Many things would start popping into my head, and with them, a sense of urgency to take care of them right now. Even though I was physically alone and no one else was around, my head was filled with noisy, clamorous thoughts. So, I would get up from my prayer time and tackle the many office problems at hand.

Although the ministry was flourishing outwardly, I was drying up! Other ministers I knew were equally busy, continually distracted by needs of people, and other things for which we were responsible. I held the common mental position of many of my peers--that I was undertaking all this pain and trouble for God and for His glory, of course! It was actually for self but I could not see it then. My spiritual life declined and I eventually failed the Lord, my family, and others by fleshly sin.

All of that failure happened back in the 1980s. I returned to the traveling ministry following a two year period of restoration. The ministry was not as big or as previously time demanding. I did return somewhat to lengthy times of just waiting upon the Lord to deepen our intimacy. I knew that keeping my "first love" was all-important. But most of the time when I was "alone with God", I was praying for a message from Him to preach and teach or for a greater anointing in the meetings, and often for financial supply. A lot of my private prayer time consisted of entreating the Lord for this or for that. It was not as pure and pristine as it had been in my youth, when I waited upon the Lord simply to become more united with Him. And even those times in my youth contained a lot of thought about the future. This often distracted me whenever I sensed God's Presence because self had not yet been crucified. I am now aware that in the 1990s through 2005, I often carried a hidden agenda into my alone times with God (the agenda was hidden to me but not to God). The hidden agenda was to get something from God which would help the ministry. It was not the pure motive it is now--to become one with Him.

In the latter part of 2005, I returned home from a ministry trip to discover I had been abandoned by my second wife. (My first wife had divorced me not many years after the "restoration" period.) I had attached myself to my second wife far more deeply than to my first wife. The second time around not only had I purposed to avoid previous mistakes, but my second wife wanted to travel and minister with me. This was something I never had. This enabled us to have quality time together. She not only traveled with me in the ministry, but took active part in the meetings, and was developing herself in ministry. As the years passed, however, we slowly realized we did have major differences and much "baggage" from each of our past histories. But I never dreamt that she would leave me! We had recently renewed our commitment to restore the quality of our marriage before the Lord. We had done this in a holy prayer time in our home in August. I was so grateful for our "new beginning" and made necessary adjustments I thought would help our marriage.

Her departure in October shocked me and left me in great pain. A sense of utter failure permeated my consciousness. All of this left me in a never abating sense of horrible hurting. I was disheveled emotionally and could not stand before congregations to preach, so I lived on credit cards and prayed to die. I wanted my life to end. I eventually ended up in therapy as well as in two 12-Step groups and divorce recovery counseling (see CelebrateRecovery.com). God eventually answered those prayers for death, but in a much different way than I ever envisioned.

By following my recovery program and "working the steps" noticeable progress was made in my mind and overall emotional state. The other thing that God caused to occur was a deepening of my prayer life. The hunger for God returned to my soul that I had known in my youth. In fact, it was much deeper than I had known then. I was not focused on the future anymore. I had come to the place of wanting to experience the Lord while waiting upon Him simply for the joy of knowing Him intimately. I thought my public ministry was over with two divorces, and honestly did not care all that much about "the ministry". I knew I had ministered for decades and had traveled to what seemed like everywhere. I had published four dozen books that had gone into many other languages and the books were "out there" ministering God's Word to people even if I had been shelved. As far as ministry was concerned, I knew I had laid down my life enduring different hardships and difficulties. What troubled me was that I truly had never known God as I had desired. The ministry had actually interfered with my relationship with God, just as it had with my family relationships.

With the renewal of precious waiting times in the Lord's Presence, and by practicing the various principles I was learning in the recovery programs, my sense of inner peace began to grow. Once again I was learning how to become still in God's Presence. In fact, I learned how to become deeply still even more than when I was a teenager. The Lord had purified my motives much more deeply than when I was a kid "on fire for the Lord". This is the positive side of public failure. Self loses it power to allure you before men once they have turned from you. You forgive their fickleness but have no desire to be held in their esteem. You realize they are only withering grass or vanishing clouds.

Prior to sitting on the rock out in the nature preserve, the stillness had deepened considerably. My life had become "more manageable" – that was the goal of the recovery groups I was involved with during that season. People who had been involved in recovery for years and years would approach me after group meetings and tell me how they wished they had the peace they had sensed emanating from my spirit. These were meetings I had sat in without speaking a word the entire meeting. The peace was that evident.

The Day "I" Died

As I sat upon the rock praying in the Spirit, there was eventually no conscious mind activity. A much greater stillness and a much deeper peace than I had ever known settled down upon me. Realizations began coming to my spirit while sitting still upon the rock. I had a mental concept that I had sought God often and intensely at various points in my life during the last four decades. Without any process of thought it was made known by the Holy Spirit that I had never sought God; rather, it was He who had been

seeking me. It was not God whom I had needed to find. It was me He had been seeking and now had found. It was when He found me as I sat in absolute inner quiet in that nature preserve, that I came to know who I am.

Up to this point in my life, "who I am" had always worn a label: "evangelist", "teacher", "writer" — some type of function. Sitting there, I came to understand who I am on a much deeper level. I realized that who I had thought I was all my life was a mere story on the surface of my life, not my life at all! Not me – the real me, but a made up story based on whatever I was doing in the "outward part" of life. This "outward part" is what I now refer to as "surface life". You will see this term often in this book.

As I came to know who I am, I also became aware of the reality of eternity and saw it as brilliant, unearthly Light shining beneath, through, and above the grass, leaves and trees. It even shimmered in and through the air. The wind was alive. The gray rock I sat on was luminescent; it too was alive. A sparrow landed on a twig of the bush overhanging the rock. As his little face cocked first one way and then another, his eyes peered deeply into mine, only a few inches away. He was obviously comfortable with me. He began chirping as though he was talking to me. Never before had a sparrow been so up close and personal. I felt connected with him in a different way than I had ever experienced with animals. (Later the confirmation that rocks are alive came when contemplating Luke 19:40.)

He then flew to a nearby tree, and I continued sitting in the deepest, deepest peace; I was one with life all around me. My mind was not involved in any of this; it was far deeper than the mind. It was my spirit taking in and enjoying LIFE—in its essence and all-pervasiveness. I observed the tree in which the sparrow sat. The tree began emanating unearthly Light, too. This Light shone all around the tree similar to the way light emanates from a light bulb. It radiated its life as Light. It was a sunny, bright summer day, but this Light was brighter, more intense and had substance to it. This Light was vibrantly alive. Then I looked down at the grass, and from each blade the Light of God shone in and through and around (Ezek. 43:2). This made each blade luminescent too. Radiance shone around each blade in a perfect outline of each blade. A blade of grass was pondered in absolute amazement.

I sat there but there was no consciousness of the "me" I had always felt was me. I was the real me from a deeper place inside the shell of my earthly identity. Freedom from the burden of the "other me" produced a sensation of being one with the Creator and His creation. There was no "me" anymore – not the hurting, troubled me. Yet I was there, absorbing it all.

Supreme bliss!

My relating what happened on the rock may not make much sense to your mind. It still is not comprehended or understood on the level of my own mind, but its effect was profound within me. It was transformation. It had happened by God's work within me, as I sat passively in His Presence.

To put it another way, this work of transforming me was all His work, not mine. The Holy Spirit did the actual transformation within my soul as He applied the benefits procured by the Cross. Should transformation occur within your soul, it will be as profound and unique to you as mine was to me. It is beyond the ability of words to convey the state of peace that is given to you in transformation. It is all grace, all love, all peace, and all God.

Transformation was a death — an ending of "me" that was not the true me. This other "me" had been hurting for a half century. The other "me" needed constant care, had to be controlled, restrained, and was almost always hurting in one way or another. The emergence of the true me that had been hiding somewhere inside my body all these many years could only take place after the other "me" had dissolved in God's Presence. Instead of God healing the hurting me as I had prayed for years that He would do, the Lord killed that part of me, the part that had always been so painful. He answered my prayers to die from three years earlier and I did die. He then caused the true me He had birthed November 30, 1969, to come vibrantly alive and dominant in such a way as I had never before sensed.

The Grace of Soul Transformation

This inner shift of knowing who I am produced profound change. It was metamorphosis in the language of Paul. It was deeper than anything I had ever known in over 40 years since the born again experience. It was, indeed, more pronounced, definite, and fulfilling than the new birth had been. Although I had experienced God in real ways over those 40 years, this fundamental change made previous divine touches, precious though they were, lessen in significance. The permanent change experienced in silence made metamorphosis as real to me as it must be to the new butterfly emerging from its old cocoon. The young butterfly is no longer trapped in darkness inside a tight cocoon. It is free to fly about in the light. So am I.

This profound change is not for a few--the divine work of self dissolution is available for believers everywhere. Nor is this change new; it has occurred in the lives of many Christians down through millennia. The "many" that have been changed in centuries past were actually few in number during any specific time period, so far as Church history records them. The Lord has recently spoken that "a sudden, radical transformation" is about to occur on a "worldwide scale in the lives of many" of His people.

Those who have lived lives of inner defeat, frustration, confusion, and pain as I had for so many, many years are about to wake up and never be the same again. The Lord is not going to heal the part of them that is hurting, but remove it entirely, essentially kill it. Then, the part of them that already had been made new in the born again experience (the spirit) can thrive unhindered by anything within the soul. If you have come to the point in your Christian life where you wish you could just die and go on to Heaven, this message is good news to your ears. If you are in the place in your Christian walk where you are excited about all the good things you are doing for God or are going to do for God, this message will not mean much to you now. Such a Christian is not ready for transformation because he or she is inflated by self. It is only when you have tired of self, have been disillusioned by it over and over, and have come to the end of yourself that you are ready for this message. You might as well put this book on your bookshelf, but please do not discard it. Pick it up again in a few years after self has deflated you. When you are miserable as a result of allowing self to run your life, you are then ready for this book.

Changes Produced by Transformation

The soul of the believer, having been transformed by radical change, no longer strives against the spirit of the believer. Instead, the soul resumes its original function as servant to the spirit. It becomes the vehicle through which the spirit expresses Christ in the believer's body (actions and speech). The soul is not the antagonist it formerly was, continually thinking against the spirit and even warring against it. Peace pervades the entire individual and even his or her body sleeps better. The physical body lives in harmony as part of the whole individual and the believer senses oneness within himself. You are not divided anymore. In the words of Jesus: "you are whole" (John 5:14).

This is what happened to me. It is lasting. It is real. It is transformative. It is the work of God. Since my soul is now perpetually renewed there are no new disturbances arising within it. It seems as though "all things are new" which is exactly what Jesus promised us as He sat upon His "rock":

And He that sat upon the Throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Revelation 21: 5 NKJV

All Creation Will Be Transformed

In ages to come, Christ the King will remake the earth, universe, and even Heaven. The Scriptures tell us the sky will be rolled up, all planets will be dissolved and some will be remade. (For just a few of many references, see Psalm 102:25-27; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1.) If the Lord is going to remake or renovate everything in the material universe, do you not think He could change you? Or are you so totally messed up that not even God can fix you? He who will one day burn up all the works on this planet is capable of burning up the chaff in you. If He will create New Heavens and a New Earth, do you not imagine He is capable of creating a New You? Is this not for what you have been longing?

Your problems are enormous? So is He. You have been struggling for years and He has yet to change you? You are still breathing. I struggled inwardly for decades. Nothing ever seemed to really help. Metamorphosis can happen suddenly. If you love the Lord, but do not understand why He has not answered your heartfelt prayers to change you, take heart! You are one of the "many" He referenced when He spoke of a "sudden, radical transformation" that will occur in the lives of many believers worldwide.

In the final analysis of what happened to me, it was a simple thing the Lord asked of me—to sit on a rock. I am a bench type of guy and there was one nearby on the lakeshore. I had often sat there and observed nature while praying. Yes, there was a thought there on the trail. I looked about 80 feet away and there was the familiar bench. No one was anywhere near it. Closer next to the trail was a large, bumpy rock. I remember how my mind said, "Now, why would God tell you to sit on that rock when there is that comfortable bench right over there?"

I was indeed mind-ruled up to that point in my life. But that day I did not yield to the "why" question. I obeyed.

It will be a simple thing God will ask of you that will effect enormous change in your life, too. Jesus was never complicated in His dealings with people, especially sick ones like us. He said no more than a few words to anyone He healed. They were simple words, for instance, like "pick up your bed and walk" to a paralytic, or "stretch forth your hand" to a man whose hand was withered. Each of those He commanded to do these simple things could have argued with Him. After all, He had requested that they do something impossible! But as they willed to obey what He ordered them to do, they were able to obey. They were made whole by their willingness to do that which He commanded. Just so, Jesus commanded me, "Sit on that rock."

I squirmed a little bit on that hard, bumpy rock trying to get comfortable. But I never inwardly resisted His will that I sit there. It was not the best place to sit in the nature preserve, but it was the best place for me because He had ordered it. I sat my bottom on the bumpy rock, squirmed a little, and then became still. He did everything else. What God asked of me was not hard, big, or even important as people might imagine. It was, however, necessary that I obey. I obeyed. He did all the rest.

This book did not come into your hands by coincidence but by design. You, too, may have an unexpected appointment with God.

Chapter 2 What is Stillness? Be Still and Know

Months prior to the transformation that had occurred as I obeyed His command and sat on the rock, there had been a recurring impression over and over within my heart: "Be still, and know that I am God..." (Psa. 46:10). I intuitively sensed this was God's assignment for me. So I began practicing becoming still and sitting before the Lord in my home (1 Chron. 16:17). The Amplified Bible reads, "Let be and be still, and know—recognize and understand—that I am God." I knew I was to "let be" the things in my life that troubled me—unpaid bills, no traveling schedule, and other nagging thoughts. I knew "let be" meant that I was to allow them to be as they were. I also knew I was to "be still" and not function as the busy multi-tasker I had been for decades. I knew I was "to know that [He is] God" more deeply...to know God as my "Everything"—my Supplier, my Lover, my King, my All-in-All (Col. 3:11).

A Hebrew scholar rendered the verse this way: "Let go, cease striving, relax, and you will know that I am God..." (I cannot recall where I read or heard this, but I remember it.) The whole concept of "letting go" of things and becoming still amidst the chaos playing on the surface of my life was the exact opposite of what my mind was telling me to do. My mind (and other Christians) had been telling me that I was "fixed up" and it was time to get busy. "I need to get busy on the road. I need to get busy and get caught up with bills." These kinds of thoughts, the thoughts to get busy again, rotated over and over in my mind. Had I listened to my mind and become busy about surface life, I would have missed out on the greatest blessing I had ever known in my Christian life. The Lord, unlike my mind and friends, was telling me the opposite--I was to "let go, cease striving, and relax" about everything in surface life.

"Letting go" was something foreign to my mind when the Lord put it on my heart in January, 2008. My friends at church were asking, "David, are you getting your schedule filled now?" They could tell the Lord had done a deep work in me, but they did not know, even as I did not know, that the deepest work was yet to come. They did not know that the Lord was telling me that He wanted me to let go of everything that needed to be done, to relax in Him, and "behold the beauty of the Lord" (Psa. 27:4). I intuitively sensed that I was simply to abide in quiet trust in God and not lean upon my unreliable understanding. I noticed how my church friends looked at me in disbelief when I shared what God had impressed on my heart, so I quit sharing anything He said (Matt. 7:6).

Most people who had known me over decades of ministry thought of me as fairly consecrated to the Lord (despite my public confession of failure in the 1980s). That was the way "I" often perceived myself years earlier--self had done its job on me. Since my teens I often regarded myself as a "deeply committed Christian" and was "sold out to the Lord". The truth, however, was that I was not nearly as "sold out" as self told me that I was!

In my heart remained much stubbornness and prominent carnal traits throughout four decades. I could be alternately compassionate and critical in the same hour, sometimes with the same person! I could rattle off Bible verses like a tape recorder (and was proud that I could, too). Many have told me I had carried around a "better than others" attitude at various times since the 1970s. I was "more spiritual" than many of my fellow believers — or so I "thought". People came to me and said things like, "I have never heard such a deep Bible teacher. Your books have helped me immensely. For someone who knows so much you are unusually humble." The problem with their well-meaning statements was that I believed them. I became proud that though so greatly gifted by God I had remained so deeply humble!

In early 2008, I answered the Lord's repeated impression to "be still and know that I am God". I renewed my commitment to "wait upon the Lord" in periods of lengthy prayer each day and sat alone in silence whenever I sensed Christ's Presence in my heart. I had experienced a lot of pain in my childhood —it came from a pedophile and other traumatic abuses which left me with a sense that I was badly defective or irreparably damaged. As an adult I experienced deep pain caused by my failures and from the

failure of others. Both my marriages failed, causing trauma which no amount of counseling, 12-Step group work or visits to special meetings had cured. These things had all helped, but there was something deeply damaged in me that only God could fix. I was in a place where I was willing to devote long periods of time waiting upon the Lord to become absolutely still. I finally became willing to be willing—I wanted to do whatever He asked without a hidden agenda.

Observing the Mind from Outside the Mind

Soon these times of waiting upon the Lord became "precious" to my soul. With them came a return of the warmth and occasional deep Presence of God. During these times, Psalm 46:10 would be repeated again and again deep inside my spirit, like a gentle wind whispering, "Be still and know...be still and know that I am God...be still and know...be still and know that I am God." It was in times of deep stillness that something new began to take place inside me: I began to observe my thought processes as an outside observer. I no longer identified thoughts as coming from the deepest part of me, my spirit, but understood that thoughts were the product of my soul (mind).

I noticed how my mind had operated as a ruthless tyrant all my life. It was during my "quiet time" with the Lord each day in the first half of 2008 that I had another experience. I would be suddenly outside the mind, looking at it from a deeper place--my spirit. This was a liberating exercise as it provided me the opportunity to see how my mind had functioned throughout my life. It had not functioned well. And, imagine this, I had trusted it, relied upon it, and sought to solve problems using it! Not only was this a liberating exercise because it allowed me to view my mind from outside it, but it was deeply freeing because I knew that when I was outside my mind I was still me, but not the "me" in my head. It began to dawn upon my deeper understanding that there were two "me's" – one real and one manufactured. The made up "me" was the one that eventually dissolved while sitting on the rock in complete inner silence.

I became aware through the growing stillness, that throughout my life my mind had been perpetually focused not only upon the present. There were always pressing things I had to accomplish. My mind was also occupied with past and future too. Sixty to seventy percent of my mind was in one or the other time frame throughout the course of the day, even while focused on a task at hand. I know this sounds crazy, but it is truly how my mind functioned.

Observing your thoughts is a big key to unlocking the awareness of who you are and who you are not. This will be discussed later, but we all have had a false sense of who we are. This is a direct result of the Fall of man. This impostor within us is called by different terms in the New Testament. In this book, we mainly use the word self to describe the identity within us that we wrongly call "us". In other words, self is who you think you are, but is not who you truly are.

This observation of the mind was a new function to my awakening spirit. It was a special grace from God enabling me to see what was going on inside my mind. This gave me a great opportunity to recognize mental strongholds in the form of thought patterns. It was only during deep stillness that I began to be aware of these thought patterns that had lain buried in my mind most all my life. The Lord was showing me how my mind operated so I could see the operation of self in my life. Something deep inside assured me He could free me from this inner tyrant. As I waited upon the Lord, He made it clear that I was not to allow myself to be distracted by any thought that came near and begged for my attention. I knew from deeply within my spirit that the Lord wanted me to give my full attention to the matter of observing my mind to see how it worked whenever He impressed me to do so.

Silence Increases God's Presence

During daily periods of waiting upon the Lord, the mind often rebelled. This is because it was what Paul called "the carnal-mind", but eventually it would become still as I waited and focused on Christ. During this periodic stillness something else began to occur. I would receive the sense that the self part of me was shrinking. In fact, by inhabiting my spirit more during stillness, I began to see that I was quite small, tiny as a baby. Like David had done, I was "quieting my soul within me" like "a nursing infant upon

his mother's breast" (Psa. 131:2). Not only was I small, so were my problems and concerns. I was a wee creature, no bigger than a baby, but my Father was immense! As I became smaller, He became bigger. (This is just how it seemed to me during this process. God did not change at all. It was my view of Him that was enlarging.)

One day, while in this sweet frame of mind--my smallness and His bigness—my spirit (through the Holy Spirit joining to my spirit) rose up in me, permeated all of me, and expanded outward through me. The Presence of God enveloped me in a way I had never known. This enlargement of His Presence remained not only in me but in my home where it had occurred. People who dropped by said, "I just love your home. It feels so peaceful in here. Why is it so nice in here?" My home is quite ordinary and needs some fixing up. There was nothing in the physical house which made people feel calmer when inside it. What happened was that God had taken residence in my home after my heart had yielded more to Him through periods of waiting in stillness.

A young lady, whose life has been entirely changed by our Lord, lived in my home for awhile by divine appointment. Stephana came into this house a deeply hurting, damaged young lady suffering from years of childhood sexual abuse from her stepfather, and from years of other kinds of abuse in foster care. She called me the other day from Bible College and said, "I miss your home David. Everything here at school is nice, but your home is so sweet. It was an incubator for my soul." She came to live in my home a defiant lesbian, hating and hurting. Today, she is a grateful child of God who boldly shares Jesus with others.

People can be touched by God's healing Presence when they are located in a geographic area where He is allowed to move as His children yield to His will. There is a radiating Presence of the King pouring from the heart of one He rules. His Kingdom is ever expanding (Isa. 9:6, 7).

Another benefit that waiting upon the Lord produced was deeper worship. During periods of stillness I learned what the Psalmist meant when he said, "Silence is praise to You" (Psa. 65:1 The Message).

The deepest worship happens during silent adoration of our lovely Lord. During these times of deep adoration you get lost in God, as it were, and freed from cares of life. You become lighter inside, less heavy, and less trapped in the mind. You become "outside yourself" as it were. In the Greek, Paul called it "being beside self" (2 Cor. 5:13).

Being Beside Self

Paul experienced periods of "being beside self" when he was "to God". This certainly refers to his time alone with the Lord when Paul sensed he was somewhere beside Paul. This is a beautifully liberating experience awaiting you as well. It is when you are beside yourself that you see your self. You see how the false self in you has jumbled up your mind and caused it to become disordered.

It was during these quiet periods that I came to know how disoriented, disordered, and dysfunctional my mind had become from years of misuse. It was quite a surprise one day when I realized that what I had taken for "normal" mental activity was actually quite abnormal. I suffered from impairment of thought processes on a much deeper level than I had recognized. "Our iniquities, our secret heart and its sins [which we would like to conceal even from ourselves] You have set in the [revealing] light of Your countenance" (Psa. 90:8 TAB). My prayers began to entreat the Lord for healing of my thinking disorders, mental confusion, distraction, and lack of focus.

I now understand the Lord was showing me my true state of mind through practicing silence in His Presence so He could detach me from my false sense of self. This is part of what Jesus meant when He told His disciples that they had to deny self. (We will study His instructions in Matthew 16 later in Chapter 8.)

During this period of early morning waiting upon the Lord until I sensed His release to get on with my day, different books began to mysteriously find their way into my hands. These books had been written centuries earlier by or about deep saints: Teresa of Avila, Francis of Assisi, Madame Guyon, Thomas a'

Kempis, and others. These saints were practiced in the art of inner and outer silence, and attributed this state to their profound spiritual growth. George Fox and the entire Quaker movement were experienced in waiting upon the Lord in His stillness as I had discovered. It was during this waiting upon the Lord that Fox had his "inner light" realization of Christ and experienced profound change within his soul. I benefited much from reading the various books our Heavenly Father dropped into my lap.

Past and Future are Unattainable

As mentioned earlier, I was involved during this time in a 12-Step program and divorce recovery counseling. As I listened to various people in these groups share their experiences, I sat in silence and observed their mind activity patterns. They, like me, were not only overwhelmed with what was going on in their present lives, but they were also continually focused either on the past or the future. During someone's sharing in group I sat listening and counting the times in one three to five minute period a recoveree hopped around from past to future to present to future to past to present to future. It was usually a dozen or more times, sometimes two or three dozen "time zone" changes in one sharing. I realized that we all seemed to share the unspoken belief that these mental time concepts are real, and that they actually exist somewhere.

Over the course of practicing silence, I became fully aware that both past and future do not exist. They are illusionary time zones. The present is the only time there ever is. This realization was overwhelming to me, especially as it dawned upon my understanding how much of my thinking had been devoted to two things that are not even real. I had tried to live in three time zones at once, and two of them were non-existent!

Over the years I had wasted countless hours worrying about the future and things that may or may not happen. I would "what if" different scenarios over and over in my mind, like a never ending circle. I would often go through all possible contingencies that might occur during a future event, and when it turned out totally different from what I had envisioned, I was blinded by the insanity my mind had been engaged in needlessly for hours at a time.

I had spent countless hours regretting things from the past. I would often drive for hours to or from a church meeting reliving past, painful events. I was wishing I could go back in time and change what I or others had said or done. Even though I consciously knew that time travel was impossible, I unconsciously chose to remain in the past reliving the same unpleasant events. All the years I was lost in thought I was also disengaged from reality and from what was happening in the present moment. Others caught me daydreaming or drifting off from them even during conversations. Some would even ask, "David, is what I'm saying boring you? You look disinterested." I would apologize and refocus, all the while regretting that I had lapsed from truly listening to the other person. As a result of doing this I had caused them to feel devalued. The next day I would sit around in my hotel room thinking how I had caused that person to feel that I did not care about him or her, and I would kick myself for allowing mental distractions.

I began to know deep inside me during this daily stillness, that I had not only wasted mental energy and caused others to feel less important to me than they really were, but I had depleted physical energy as well. The feeling of the future created anxiety within me, like a driving momentum of uncertainty pushing me from the inside causing physical discomfort. I felt as if I need to go somewhere, but where? This made me anxious to ponder the "what ifs" of what might happen in this place or in that situation. During my first marriage, my wife often complained that I could never sit still and just be. It appeared to her that there was a churning going on inside of me all the time. Decades later, I realized she had been correct.

The feeling of past was different from the feeling that future caused, but no less painful. In fact, in my case, thinking about the past was much more painful. There were painful memories of negative things caused by others whom I had struggled to forgive and release, as well as painful memories of things I had done wrong. These were things concerning which I had truly confessed and repented, but they still caused lingering pain that never went completely away. Sometimes the pain partly subsided, but always returned

with a vengeance. The past overwhelmed me with the pain of despair, a feeling of utter hopelessness, and a profound sense of loss. This caused pain in the pit of my stomach. There were missed opportunities lost forever, there were past wrongs done that could never be undone. These feelings of loss sometimes produced a sense that I was falling into a place that had no bottom, just falling down, down, and then down some more.

What a torturous and agonizing way to live! How different from the life of Jesus and the kind of life He had died to give us. I became aware that I could become more like Him by becoming still inside my mind.

Practicing Stillness with God Helped

I spent considerable amounts of time alone with God each day, enjoying the freedom that came with practicing inner stillness. Stillness basically consists of watching your mind while you entertain His Presence, and allowing thoughts to pass through unattached. As thoughts arise but are ignored, they disappear. Thoughts from the carnal-mind thrive only on the attention you give them. If you choose to keep focused on the Lord they dissolve.

Mental stillness is more difficult to learn when you are not in deep prayer or waiting upon the Lord. With a little practice, however, it does become a learned art, like walking, driving or bicycling. Just so, with the aid of your Helper, the Holy Spirit, your mental weaknesses will be strengthened (Rom. 8:26). One of the reasons the Holy Spirit has been given to us is to produce a "sound mind" in us (2 Tim. 1:7). He will help you even in the midst of your busy day to remain free in your mind as you learn to yield to His gentle promptings. With His help, you will become skilled in the art of thinking only when needed. The ability not to think is a glorious freedom. Once you taste it, you will practice this art daily. You will not have to think all the time! Of course, stating this to earth people will produce remarks that you have lost your mind or have gone crazy, and other derogatory remarks.

Jesus cautioned us to be "wise as serpents, but harmless as doves", so you do not need to share your ability not to think with others (Matt. 10:16).

The difference between you and a mentally challenged person is that they may not be able to cogently think. You choose not to think. Light and sweetness come into your inner life whenever you choose not to think and find you are able to become "thoughtless". Or, if you choose to think, you are able to choose only to think about things that are pure, lovely, virtuous, and noble (Phil. 4:8). Eventually earth people are drawn to citizens of Heaven when we are able to maintain "thoughtlessness" in our daily lives due to the abundance of peace we enjoy (Psa. 37:11; 72:7; Eph. 2:6). Our serenity is our sanity.

Just for fun someday look up all the verses in the New Testament in which the word "think" appears. Notice how the overwhelming majority of them appear in a negative setting. It is as if God is saying it is better not to "take thought" most of the time. This is especially true if the only mind you have is the carnalmind.

This art of inner stillness is an art the carnal-mind resists since it thrives on continuous mental activity, creating unceasing inner noise even during sleep. The carnal-mind, the thinking part of the untransformed soul, views mental silence as dangerous just as tightrope walking without a net. It will do whatever it can to distract you from silence. Your carnal mind knows it is no longer running your life continuously as it has done in all your previous years. Always remember that the carnal-mind is the thinking part of the parasite of self in you. When self is exterminated by God's power, the carnal-mind will vanish with it. In its place will be the spiritual-mind, full of "life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

Self is not the true you that you already are, but have yet to realize. Self is a foreign entity, an invader from the world system under the influence of its god, ruler or prince--Satan (John 14:30). Self's thinking part is the carnal-mind. It will tell you that you will lose your natural mind if you do not use it continuously, when the opposite is actually true. Sometimes your carnal-mind will win, and like someone awakened from sleep, you will suddenly realize you have been worrying over some problem for the last

hour completely unaware. Do not be disturbed when this happens because it will happen before full transformation occurs. Be gentle on yourself when it takes over during your workday or when a problem in the family occurs and you temporarily revert to the carnal-mind.

Ask your Father to forgive you as you did not know what you were doing just then (Luke 23:34). Then, thank Him that the Holy Spirit shook you gently and woke you. Know this: as you continue spending quality time alone with God each day, you are slowly but surely gaining more of God's grace during each quiet time. His grace will eventually transform your soul completely, and your soul will be renewed, or "made new again" as the soul of Adam was new prior to the Fall.

Stillness Becomes as Natural as Breathing

After awhile stillness becomes second nature, like breathing or eating. And like breathing it becomes almost involuntary and permanent. Continual, aimless thinking subsides no matter where you are--even in a crowded, noisy room. You can be in a busy airport, running to catch a plane, and inwardly completely still and peaceful. Nearing the gate there is no inner panic, only peace, as you observe the closed boarding door. You have missed the flight and begin laughing. It is humorous, after all. What will it matter on your deathbed? The desk attendant will expect you to fume and fuss as all the other passengers are doing. Instead, you calmly remark that you arrived in plenty of time but due to the last minute gate change, you were unable to catch the plane. Your peace lifts her. Unaware of the special treatment she is giving you, she puts you on the next plane in first class at no extra charge. The others ride in coach.

When you are out in nature, you can become quiet, too. I personally believe this is why Jesus exhorted us to consider the lilies and the birds. Observing God's creation has an almost immediate way of stilling the busy mind. As a child, I sometimes napped beside my father. Hearing his breathing was always calming to me, reassuring me in some deeper way than my mind comprehended. You can listen to your own breathing and calm down inside.

Stillness eventually becomes an inner state through which you see all of outward life. Watching life unfold is easy because it always occurs only in the present. Life never occurs in the unreliveable past or in the unknowable future. Life always happens only in this moment. As I gradually became more centered in the current moment, the future and past began to loosen their grip on me. The concepts of "past" and "future" are carnal-mind realities only. They exist nowhere else.

Becoming centered in "this moment" was a major emphasis in all the recovery groups I had attended during this time, coupled with long periods of prayer and waiting upon the Lord. The words of Paul that "now is the acceptable time" became a living creed within me (2 Cor. 6:2). Now became the only acceptable time to me, too. Today I have no use for the past or future except for practical purposes. I refer to the past mainly for helping others, and I make plans for future events as surface life demands. But as far as mental concepts are concerned, past and future are as real to me as Santa Claus and not nearly as jolly.

My health, state of mind, and emotions had experienced a lot of what is known as "recovery" by "working the program" in 12-Step groups. Life had become "more manageable" as is said within these groups. I was grateful for the good taking place within me. But this was only preparatory for what lay ahead--the total transformation of the soul. I can tell you that I do not live today in emotional pain or in negativity in the body. I also know from the Lord Himself that this is His will for all His children. You can experience this grace of transformation in your soul, too, and live pain-free and Christ-centered. You no longer have to cope with past and future once you learn how to abide in the Vine (John 15:1-6). Like any tree in nature, a "tree of righteousness" simply abides in the stillness of God's Presence (Isa. 61:3). Like a tree, one becomes rooted in Him, stable and fruit bearing. A tree has no sense of past and no fear of future. It simply abides in constant trust.

Soul transformation does not imply that your surface life will suffer no more losses. Negative things happen, of course, but only on the surface of life. Surface life is that part of our existence subject to continual change. It always has been and always will be like that. Accept that. Things that happen in

surface life pretend that they are all-important to you and me, but the truth is that they do not matter all that much. They repeat in a continuous cycle of negative-then-positive-then-negative-then-positive. If surface life is negative now, it will again turn positive, just wait and see. It will not stay positive forever, and you should not expect that. It will repeat its negative turn and vice-versa. This is the manner of surface life, just as Jesus promised it would be (John 16:33). The beautiful thing that happens to you in transformation is that once you learn how to live in the deeper realm of life—the Life of God in you—outward things do not matter as much as they did before this experience. God's Presence becomes a "cushion" around you for jarring events in surface life. These do not hurt or bruise you as they did before transformation. Things that formerly rocked your boat are now only a small ripple and barely noticeable.

Another thing I noticed during stillness was how nearly every day of my life seemed to contain "life or death" situations. This was another mind-made delusion. I began to understand that I had taken life far too seriously, and that God wanted me to have a merry heart instead. I had an unconscious belief that I could be happy only when everything was going fine. When things went "bad" as my mind used to label them, I had felt duty-bound to become unhappy over it. One day during stillness I heard, "Go ahead and be happy everyday, no matter what it brings."

When you no longer inject "you" into the surface events of your life (outward results), then negative outcomes will not disturb your peace nor will positive outcomes elate you with temporary highs. Things simply are what they are, and that is all. You need not allow outward disturbances to get inside you. People are so deeply attached to surface life as their primary source of meaning that they become easily affected by whatever happens. Your true life is beneath the surface events that are continually occurring. Do not allow outward things to dictate inner happiness. Try this instead: "Go ahead and be happy everyday, no matter what it brings."

Today there is an ever-abiding peace that keeps my soul anchored in the spirit part of me. This is real and makes life easy to manage. It is much deeper than a momentary state of mind because it doesn't originate in the mind. Stillness originates in the born again spirit and sweetly influences the mind to be fixed on the divine.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. 26:3 KJV).

Chapter 3

The Joy of Being Deeply Joined

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:17 RV

But the person who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.

1 Corinthians 6:17 TAB

Deeper Intimacy Arose During Stillness

When I became still inside on a more permanent basis, that is, not only when I was "waiting upon the Lord" in private prayer and meditation, but during all of life, I began experiencing overwhelming, delightful joy bubbling up within me at various and surprising times. This was different from the occasional joy I had touched briefly and sporadically before. Joy now became like a fountain bubbling up from within rather than like a brief shower from above. It is difficult to put spiritual things into natural words, so the Lord will have to help you understand what I am attempting to say. It was the joy of intimately knowing God, which is not done with the mind but with the spirit: "for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:10 NASB). It came as bliss during stillness that carried me away, yet I remained alert. It came as bubbles effervescing throughout the day. It often happened while looking at the pile of unpaid bills on my desk. It made no sense, but was pure delight. This joy was more deeply meaningful than the joy experienced in new wine outpourings in any church or conference meeting I had been privileged to attend in the 1990s, perhaps because I had become more available to the Lord. It was joyful bliss that came from deeper penetration into God's Being, and His deeper penetration into me.

This is the "yada" type of knowing in the Hebrew language or the "ginosko" type of knowing in the Greek language (Hos. 6:1-3; Phil. 3:10). Both these words are also used for intimacy between husband and wife, as well as between the believer and his Lord (Gen. 4:1; Matt. 2:25). It is a kind of knowing where each penetrates the other and is joined in intimate delight. This became the basis for the eventual sudden transformation that occurred during total stillness, when the grace of God made me like putty in His hands. Our Heavenly Lover, in vital, living union within us, makes us whole within and without. It is comparable to, but far deeper and intense, than the bliss sometimes experienced during marital intimacy as there is a great sense of oneness. As far as my experience is concerned, it is a far deeper union than is possible between husband and wife. But the bliss of pure marital love is the closest earthly comparison I know.

Oneness and Clarity in Joining

When a believer is "joined" to the Lord, there is a great sense of oneness, no sense of the subject/object relationship as there is in human relationships. It is truly a beautiful thing that the Creator of this entire universe would grant such intimacy with one of His creatures, but He does precisely this. In this state of intimate joining there is what Teresa of Avila called ecstasy or rapture. To me it is sublime serenity and a total loss of the sense of "me". It is what old Pentecostals called "becoming lost in God" or what Quakers termed "inner light". In its deepest times, intimacy with God becomes as only God – there is no sense of the human present during the joining yet you are there. But that is not quite it, either. As I said, language is limited in conveyance of spiritual reality.

When joined to the Lord in deep union with Him there is no mind activity at all. The word "joined" as stated in Chapter 1 means "glued together". Your mind is not involved in this process, only the mind of Christ is present.

Instead of petitioning Him as to what we need, as is done in regular prayer, one becomes completely passive before Him, not wanting or desiring any thing but wanting and desiring Him. That is not quite true, either. There is no wanting of any kind once close joining is occurring. You actually do not want God at that moment because He is with you, so you enjoy His lovely beauty and want for nothing. This is the essence of yada – inner stillness in close contact with God as God. After inner joining subsides the mind

is as a clear pond after the bottom has settled. You remain in a state of sweet clarity and can see your life clearly after a true joining with the Lord has been experienced. The Psalmist described his experience this way: "In Your light we see light" (Psa. 36:9 NASB).

There is no other book I've ever written like this one because it was not written on the level of the mind. True, the mind was used as a servant, but it was from the realm of my spirit during times of sweet joining with the Lord that impressions came which turned into thoughts and finally became words on a page and finally turned into a book. "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17 NKJV).

Do You Know God or Do You Know About God?

This book deals with deep soul issues many saints go through but rarely talk about. It's hard to admit to yourself, let alone to others, your struggles, doubts, and inner chaos. To even see it clearly is a miracle because most are ruled by their carnal-minds--the enemy of God--and this mind is what they think they are. There are multitudes of Christians who "think" they know God because they know a lot about God. They have studied the Bible and have learned a lot of Scriptures which they mistakenly equate with knowing God. The Pharisees had made the same mistake. They thought they knew God because they knew all the Scriptures, but when God in human form came to them, they rejected Him. Jesus said they did this because they did not know the Father, they only knew about Him (see John 8). That is, despite all their religious activity, they had never penetrated God's Being nor had they allowed Him to penetrate theirs.

There is no "in-between" phase, you either know God or you only know about Him. Perhaps you are "known of God" but still turn to religious activity as the Galatians did who thought they knew God, but had never penetrated His Being (Gal. 4:9). Had they penetrated His Being they would not have turned after Judaizers or any other religious substitute. Nothing on earth can compare with the sheer delight of intimately joining to the Lord and knowing Him. Jesus called this kind of knowing "the Life of the Ages":

And in this consists the Life of the Ages--in knowing Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

John 17:3 WNT

Religion helps people feel temporarily better because they believe that their search for God is the end in itself. What they have not realized is that it is religion itself that keeps them from finding the One they seek. Jesus spoke to the Pharisees of this peculiarity:

"You search and investigate and pore over the Scriptures diligently, because you suppose and trust that you have eternal life through them. And these [very Scriptures] testify about Me! And still you are not willing [but refuse] to come to Me, so that you might have life."

John 5:39, 40 TAB

Just so, many believers repeat this old mistake of "ever learning but never coming" into an intimate knowing of the truth "as the truth is in Jesus", settling instead for surface knowledge of biblical doctrine or even charismatic experiences which cannot transform, release old bondages or produce life (Eph. 4:21; 2 Tim. 3:7). The Scriptures, Jesus said, do not save. They only point the way to salvation. Knowing them can help direct you into true penetration of God's Being, but in themselves are only directions. Charismatic experiences cannot transform. The church at Corinth "came behind in no gift" (charisma), but as Paul correctly commented from his observations, their true spiritual state was "yet carnal" (1 Cor. 3:3).

In order to connect with God deeply He requires truth in the innermost part of a believer (Psa. 51:6). Most humans, including true Christians, live in almost perpetual misery due to layers of denial which is nothing less than self-dishonesty. They are not honest with themselves, so how can they be honest with God? As long as we live in denial of the misery under the surface of our smiling faces, we cannot experience true freedom from the chatterbox of our carnal-minds. Nor can we be freed from the negative feelings our bodies produce in response to our tortured thoughts. And we certainly cannot be "joined to

the Lord and one spirit with Him". This is why I am thankful for 12-Step groups being set within the Church again. People eventually become completely honest when huddled in small groups confessing their faults to each other (James 5:16).

I am eternally grateful that I did not have to wait until Heaven before I experienced vital joining with the Lord, glued together Spirit to spirit. Spiritual growth is fostered through regular times of joining with Him. It isn't choppy, erratic or impermanent. There is true and lasting happiness after a period of deep joining, not based on external happenings but the result of being "rooted and built up in Him" (Col. 2:7).

Why Does God Allow Pain?

God allows the outer negatives of life which result in deep inner pain to serve as mirrors so we can see the true state of our souls. It isn't that He takes pleasure in our misery, but He knows that temporal pain, if finally taken as a sign of inner misalignment, can lead to eternal change. This is true change that produces eternal treasures. When you finally cease hiding from your pain, you can begin to see your soul's true state through moments of clarity given to you from the Holy Spirit. You can then identify core defects within you. You no longer regard your pain as "normal" and have to waste your time guessing at what is wrong with you. You are allowed to see by the Spirit through the pain and troubles of the soul into the eternal part of your spirit. Your spirit is full of eternal life and countless treasures. As you become fully aware of the location of eternal treasures in you, you choose to live where the treasures are and take up residence in your spirit. You move from the mind to your spirit.

Your eternal treasures are not only laid up in the Kingdom of Heaven for your hereafter, they are in the Kingdom of God within you now.

Although the present dimension of the Kingdom of God is hidden from the external world, it is already inside every believer's spirit. God wants to expand His Kingdom rule into the soul and body. After He has worked His rule in us He wants to expand it through us to others. This is why Jesus compared His Kingdom to yeast, in the only instance in Scripture where yeast is used in a positive sense:

Another parable He spoke to them. "The Kingdom of the Heavens," He said, "is like yeast which a woman takes and buries in a bushel of flour, for it to work there till the whole mass has risen." (Matt. 13:33 WNT)

The Kingdom, Jesus is teaching us, is like yeast in that it begins small but eventually works its way through the flour until all of it has risen. In the believer the Kingdom begins in the spirit, expands through the soul and eventually fills the whole body. This is what Jesus referred to when He said that when an individual's focus is single, his whole body becomes full of light (Matt. 6:22, 23). From the enlightened believer the influence of the Kingdom of God spreads out touching other lives. It is this expansion of the Messiah's Kingdom that Isaiah foresaw and foretold: "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:6 KJV).

As the rule of God expands within you, there is more of a deeper peace in you. God is working His righteousness in your soul and, as a blessed result, "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. 32:17). This "quietness and assurance forever" is deeply calming to the soul. It is therapeutic to all that has been ravaged within the soul, and restores its former "cushion" against jarring negatives. Have you ever noticed that someone can go through a traumatic loss and maintain relative composure only to be set off by a minor upset? It is because their soul's "cushion" has been used up in the previous battle and has become weary. "This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing" the Lord promises us, but, like Israel, we "would not hear" His promise nor receive it within our souls (Isa. 28:12). What He will do for you is give your soul renewal and replenishment:

For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

Jeremiah 31:25, 26 KJV

When our Great Shepherd restores our souls He causes us to lie down in green pastures, beside still waters (Psa. 23). As we yield to His rest, we discover a glorious inheritance that we did not know was ours. "As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused them to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious Name" (Isa. 63:14 RV). And, "His rest shall be glorious" (Isa. 11:10 KJV). This glorious rest is part of our inheritance in the Kingdom of God. The rest is a result of the Holy Spirit's rest upon you. What was prophesied in Jesus becomes true of the yielded believer also: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" (Isa. 11:2 KJV).

The enemy of God's peaceful reign over us is our old self nature. Until we are delivered from the great deception that SELF has worked into the very sense of who we are, we remain imprisoned by it. We are held captive by our minds and do not know the experiential freedom of living out of our ever new, born-from-above spirits. Imprisonment inside our carnal-minds is due to our own rebellion and resistance to the Holy Spirit. Until we let Him take the reins and become Spirit-governed, we remain stubborn as mules in our generally busy, hectic, everyday lives. We also become dull of hearing His still, small voice. As a consequence of our inner resistance to His voice, we stay bound up in our unrenewed souls. We are unable to experience the deeper life Jesus continually offers us in our spirits—the place where He now resides on earth. Our souls become depressed with a "spirit of heaviness", the opposite of our inheritance (Isa. 61:3 KJV).

The "Push-Pull Dynamic"

There is a "push-pull dynamic" at work when our Father accelerates the work of transformation in us. The "pull dynamic" is the pain of your present life circumstance, for example, you experience a traumatic divorce from a mate you still love. The trauma of rejection and abandonment pushes you "over the edge" into a hopeless feeling of despair. At the same time if you can get out of self enough to sense it, a sweet "pull dynamic" arises from somewhere deeper than self. This "pull dynamic" is the gentle peace which Christ is giving your soul (where self resides) through your spirit (where He resides).

When this "over the edge" experience happened to me, I initially accepted Jesus' peace for a few moments. Then I allowed self to regain its usual place of dominance and push me into greater pain. Peace made no sense to my tortured mind. My mind, which at that point in life I had identified as "me", rejected it. When a person is mind-dominated it becomes habitual to reason away gentle impulses from his or her spirit.

"How can I be peaceful now?" I thought. "This makes no sense at all. I've been forsaken." I rejected the peace of God which He was generously offering me, and chose instead, the despair of my outward circumstance. All that I was left with was the "push dynamic" toward greater pain and despair. Of course, this poor choice, as always, increased my misery. It was this extreme despair that pushed me over the edge to the point that I finally became done with the false self or the "me" I had substituted for the true me. God, the great Architect, who plans our end before our beginning, used my poor choice of self-pity to help me see the ugliness of self and to be done with it once and for all. But freedom from self did not happen overnight. It was a two year process of seeing self and freeing the real me from it. The instantaneous transformation on the rock had been preceded by a lot of preparation:

A voice of one who cries: Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord [clear away the obstacles]; make straight and smooth in the desert a highway for our God! Every valley shall be lifted and filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory (majesty and splendor) of the Lord shall be revealed.

Isaiah 40:3-5 TAB

The 12-Step work I had done, the return to daily prolonged waiting upon the Lord, the eventual joining with Him in one spirit were the ways I was led to prepare the way of the Lord in my wilderness. In order to "lift the valleys" I had to raise my level of commitment. To bring "every mountain and hill low" I had to humble myself before the Lord. To make "straight and level the crooked and uneven" parts of my life

character issues of integrity and self-honesty had to be faced. To make the "rough places plain" I had to allow the gentleness of Jesus to show in my dealings with others. These were all necessary preparation for the glory of the Lord to be revealed sitting on the rock in the nature preserve.

I have counseled many believers over the phone and in person who have described their "push dynamic" as driving them toward suicide. "I just want it all to end," they have said in despairing, broken voices. "You can end it all," they are told, "but do not use a gun; use a cross instead." The Cross of Christ was the greatest suffering any individual ever endured. Not the part of it which most focus on-the physical part—but the suffering He endured in His soul. Jesus endured great agony of soul beginning in Gethsemane and finishing on the Cross, taking upon Himself "our grief and sorrows" (Isa. 53:4 KJV). Jesus bore everything that can ever hurt you in this life when He was "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3 KJV).

It is an amazing observation that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us of the great suffering He began experiencing in the Garden—mental, volitional, emotional suffering. None of them describe the physical suffering He endured in the Crucifixion. It is obvious His physical body suffered greatly, intensely, and profoundly (He had refused the myrrh-tinted wine which the women offered Him to numb His pain). But the physical suffering paled in comparison to the agony of soul He endured, far greater than any soul suffering you or I have ever endured. He went through it for us, so that we may experience healing of our grief and sorrows. He who was "anointed with the oil of joy above His fellows" became "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" for us!

It is by taking up your own cross that you can end your suffering and begin life in a completely new realm. Your cross comes to you out of Jesus' Cross. (We will later study this in detail.) Many Christians have wrongly believed their carnal-minds--taking up their crosses will result in even more suffering than they presently endure. The opposite is true, of course, as the Early Church often said, "It is in dying that we live." It is by taking up your cross that you bring your soul into alignment with whatever is taking place in your life and experience the grace of soul transformation. All inner misery stops!

Our Father, out of His great love for us and His desire that we come to the end of self, orchestrates all the messes our carnal-minds create into a beautiful symphony. Our relationships, careers, families, and our ultimately unreal "lives", are transformed by His grace and power. We then awaken to that which does not fade with the passage of time. This is part of His promise to cause all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28). It is life eternal and ever new--the domain of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit in the now of our everyday lives. It is nothing less than the inner dimension of the Kingdom of God which is presently on earth.

The Kingdom of God is Your Present Inheritance

Later on, the whole earth will experience His Kingdom when Jesus reigns from shore to shore, but inside us now, as Paul teaches, the Kingdom of God is a present and true reality: "for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God…" (Romans 14:17, 18). If we are capable of eating food, we are also capable of living in this present Kingdom dimension. "The Kingdom of God is near you" Jesus announced from the onset of His ministry (Mark 1:15). How could it be near then but far away now?

Notice that Paul emphasizes how this Kingdom does not exist in the external, surface realm of life but deeper within the internal realm of life. The part of us that eats and drinks is not where His Kingdom is in us, but the part of us that experiences righteousness, peace, and the Holy Spirit's joy is the Kingdom realm. It is hidden to the physical eye, but it can be seen with spiritual sight. After it is seen, this Kingdom can be entered experientially, much like Israel entered the Land of Promise after their spies had seen it 40 years earlier. But it doesn't require 40 years for you to enter; you may enter any time you become fully aligned to your Father. In fact, it is He who will give the Kingdom to you.

Jesus put it this way: "But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto

you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:31, 32 KJV). How could Jesus have meant that it was His Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom thousands of years from then?

If the word "kingdom" sounds archaic to you, use the word "dominion" instead. The Kingdom of God is the dominion of God over your life producing permanent peace within. If the word "dominion" sounds totalitarian to you, then use the word "rule" and think how your life would be if it were God-ruled. Would it not take on His nature, and be as He is, unstressed? If "rule" sounds totalitarian then know that you are not ready for transformation. Your sense of self needs more breaking. Shelve this book and pick it up again in a few years when self has done its full job on you and you are ready to do whatever is required to become freed from its tyranny. Self is a tyrant: Jesus is a King with a Kingdom. He is the "King" part of the Kingdom and we are the "dom" part of the Kingdom. The dumb need a King to order their lives. Otherwise, they make a mess of it. Our King is benevolent and kind. Self is in league with Satan. Need I say more?

You do not have to wait for the "push dynamic" that comes from inner pain to propel you into your Kingdom inheritance. You can yield to the Spirit's sweet "pull dynamic" any time you are ready to finally let go of self and surrender. If you are hungry for God, you can be brought into the Kingdom peaceably through allowing it to take place in your soul. You can experience the Kingdom as a living reality in you, but only after you have tired of self, the false you, and have allowed its dissolution. Yes, you do not have to wait for traumatic loss to propel you to the end of self. You have already had enough of self to know it produces only bitter fruit. Why not come to the end of it now? Why not save yourself tears and years ruining your life by running it out of your carnal-mind?

The Kingdom is the New Life Dimension

This is the Life of the Ages--the "Abundant Life" Jesus promised--and the primary reason He came to earth (John 10:10). He came to give us real, daily, moment by moment abundance of true life in our present existence. It does not matter what the external surface reality of our lives may be at any given point in time. It includes a peace that surpasses all mental comprehension. It keeps the heart and mind serene in utter calmness even during the worst the devil and the world can hurl our way. This is the One Pearl of Great Price that Jesus talked about in two of His many Kingdom parables; a pearl in the hand in the here and now, not later in "the sweet by and by" (Matt. 13:44-46).

The traditional Church view that Jesus came to earth so we could go to Heaven is a narrow, limited, and non-transformative one. The view that He became man to provide forgiveness for humankind is also narrow and limited in scope. Why not view the purpose of the Incarnation on a much wider, unlimited view? Why not consider that Jesus is presently King of Kings, that He received His Coronation shortly after His Ascension, and is reigning in the lives of those who yield to Him who are still on earth and not yet in Heaven? Why put off in the future what the Bible teaches is a present reality?

It is possible to enjoy Heaven on earth now. There is no need to suffer inwardly no matter what surface life presents at any time. Your happiness is not dependent upon the happenings taking place in surface life. Surface life is where you are glad when good things happen, but gloomy when they do not. You resist whatever is unpleasant in surface life, but surrendering to God's will enables you to live in a much deeper place. Surface life can be compared to the ripples or waves on the surface of a lake; but Kingdom life is the depths of the lake where everything remains calm. Even as a Christian you have spent a great deal of time in surface life and have suffered as the result of having your focus on the outward realm. You can go within yourself to the deepest part of you where Christ presently lives. You can abide in that place. You can change location by moving from your head into your heart, then let all the things of life flow from it rather than from the mind (Prov. 4:20-24).

In the dimension of new life in the Kingdom of God you discover that your happiness depends only upon the quality of your soul's submission to the will of God, moment by moment, throughout each day.

This is the only moment you ever have—just this one moment right now. This is the only moment in which you can align your soul to His will and become a fully realized citizen of the Kingdom. Your citizenship is already in Heaven; why not enter its realm within you now? (Heb. 12:18-25).

The Narrow Gate is Inner Alignment with God's Will

Inner alignment to God's will is the narrow gate that leads to life which, Jesus observed, few ever find.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad the road which leads to ruin, and many there are who enter by it; because narrow is the gate and contracted the road which leads to Life, and few are those who find it.

Matthew 7:13, 14 WNT

In another translation, Jesus says "and few are the ones who are finding it" (LITV). We see that Jesus is not speaking only of life in the hereafter; He is speaking of finding life within the framework of earthly life now. Are you one of the few who is presently finding life? Or does almost everything you find "lead to ruin"? You may have achieved many "life goals", but have you discovered deep, lasting peace or inner fulfillment in any of the things you have gained? Or is there a never ending sense of unease within your soul, even when you are surrounded by others who are enjoying a laugh on your yacht?

It is through inner alignment with His will that the way for dissolution of the false "me" in your soul can take place. The false self is that part of you which you have identified as you, but is not the real you at all. The real you must expand out of your deepest part, your spirit, and include all your soul and body. This whole you becomes the "new man" Paul exhorted believers to put on, after they had "put off the old man" (Eph. 4:23, 24; Col. 3:9, 10).

It is only when you allow the new spirit in you to regain the prominence Adam's spirit lost in the Fall, that the real you becomes the preeminent state of your life. You become a new man or new woman. Constant inner alignment to the Father's will is the example our Lord gave us in His earth walk and calls each of us to follow. This is the true meaning of discipleship. It is God's responsibility to dissolve the false self in your soul. When you align your will to His will taking up your cross, you become able to daily follow Him. This is your responsibility and mine. We allow Him to bring forth the new creation we received the moment our spirits were reborn, making all of us (spirit, soul, and body) fully new.

This is synergism at its finest. God initiates the work He desires to do in you, and you respond properly to that which He is doing in you in any given moment. This alignment to His will requires a shift in your identity and a move from where you live. Yes, you have to pack up and move to a different state! You have to leave the state of your mind. That is where I spent most of my life whether my body lived in Arkansas, Texas, Kentucky or Tennessee. I spent a half century living in my head which created frequent headaches. The sense of who I am now is centered in my belly rather than my head (John 7:37-39).

God's design is that you live in your spirit, use your mind when needed, and express His light in your body so men can see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:16).

This book will show you how to bring your soul into inner alignment with your King. As you do so, you will experience His peaceful reign within you giving you the true happiness you have longed for all your life. The word "happiness" is a superficial word, as the new state you move into provides fulfillment much deeper than any "happiness". You have sought, but have never found, lasting happiness in many outward things and in various thought processes in your mind. Instead of finding something real and permanent, you have pierced your soul with many sorrows (1 Tim. 6:10).

Now, rather than finding the happiness you have been looking for unsuccessfully through relationships, career, family, church, better fitness, more money or a big ministry, you can find something deeper than happiness. Something which when entered into will enrich your relationships and family life, in fact all of life on earth. You will enter the Kingdom of God on an experiential level. Righteousness, peace, and joy — merely the beginning of an endless list of infinite spiritual qualities — will become your constant internal

delight. It is possible to live in this realm of true bliss and blessedness always, not only at a powerful spiritual retreat, conference or miracle service.

There is no need of continuing your past misery because you can begin your life anew by living life out of your spirit, instead of out of your soul. You can start over--even if you're past 50 as I was when the Kingdom of God became my new dimension of reality, and the world (cosmos) in which my body lives became a temporary state to me. There is no dread of physical death in me; in a real sense I have already died.

Before the move from the soul state to the spirit state, this world seemed close and real and the Kingdom of God seemed far away in daily life. Today, the reverse is true and life is much sweeter. There is never a bad day here in the KOG (Kingdom of God), like there often is in the USA. There is a sense in which my outer life is the pilgrim part of me, and the inner life is my true home. I am home, at last, in the Kingdom of God. The amazing paradox of this reality is that outward life has become easy to oversee, manage, and take care of in the performance of all necessary duties.

In other words, the management of outward life, which I had always sought but never achieved, has been gained since I lost focus on surface life and went deeper into my new man in Christ. By seeking the rule of God over me, all these "things" in surface life were or are being added (Matt. 6:31). It did not come as I added a mental concept to an already heavy mind, i.e., "the Kingdom of God is real now". It came as I let go of all mental concepts and went deeper into my spirit. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God does not come by observation, but rather by looking inside (Luke 17:19-21). His Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). When the Lord makes this real to you, great will be your peace.

External negatives will be viewed for what they are: temporary. They will not find a lodging place within your mind or emotions anymore as internal negatives which create pain and suffering; they simply are for a second or two, then they pass. A negative thought may enter the mind, but viewed from the peaceful state in which life is now lived, no resistance to it is offered. Then, the negative thought is negated. It vanishes often as quickly as it appears. In the Kingdom realm your spirit will not pay attention to them. You may even be amused by thoughts that used to torment you. You come to see these thoughts for what they are: unreal. Entering the realm of the eternal does not begin after physical death, as many Christians imply when they speak of the deceased as being "in eternity". Eternity itself has no beginning, but one's entrance into the eternal state is realized more than before, after the false self has died. It seems to the individual that eternity abides in the heart and the heart abides in eternity now. In other words, time has already ceased in the transformed state, and the knowing of eternal life which was received in the miracle of the new birth is experienced. Eternity has begun (actually it has no beginning). You know eternity as your reality now.

Christians generally view themselves as time bound; the truth is that they are not. They are already seated with Christ in heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6).

Not only is the external realm or surface life seen clearly for what it is--a temporary state a believer has already transcended--it is also seen as a great teacher. In this new state of being, all externalities are viewed as teachers on the transitory nature of surface life, and the vanities it offers.

Outward Life is Melting Away

Here in the South folks whine and complain about weather in all its forms, and are especially vocal when rare snowfalls occur. It is as though alien life forms are coming down on the planet threatening human existence! One must not go out in it —"you might catch your death of cold". One must not drive in it —"you're sure to have a wreck". How different from people in the North! They go out in it, and even play in it. (Imagine that!) "Those Yankees" as some Southerners still refer to them, somehow do not die from playing in the snow. Nor do they crash their cars in huge pileups on every road. They drive more cautiously but are not in near panic while driving and the actual percentage of vehicular accidents decrease in the North during wintertime. I've been told this while visiting the Northern USA and Canada

during winter throughout the years of traveling ministry.

In my twenties I surprisingly learned how Northerners viewed snow so differently from the way I viewed it having been raised in the South. To them, snow was not something to fear but enjoy (I could hardly believe their attitude). They did not call off church meetings—the crowds were even larger, especially in Canada. Not one attendee was killed or even maimed driving to and from the meetings. Having been raised in the South, I worried over the safety of those attending the meetings. There were snow banks nine feet high by the roads. Finally, one pastor tired of my worries and checked the news. To my surprise, there had not been one accident in the large city of Winnipeg the entire week. Was I relieved when my host told me, and was he humored!

Snow, as all external expressions of creation, is a great teacher. Have you ever considered it? Unless you have taken Jesus' advice to consider the lilies and birds, it is unlikely that you have contemplated the deeper message taught by snow. Snow is a lot like you and me. Snow is white, light, pure, and unique when floating in the air (spirit), but becomes mixed, heavy, walked on or driven over on earth (soul).

Snow is not anything to become alarmed over, neither is anything else in the outward realm. All of surface life is temporary.

Like snow, we are melting and so are all our life conditions. Our existence in the natural realm will soon be over. In fact, earthly life is the shortest part of our life experience. In the grand scheme of things, nothing that seemed so serious, so all-important to us now, will matter or even come to mind in Heaven (Isa. 65:17). What you now are in the spiritual is eternal, and is unaffected by life's various "meltdowns" (things we had hoped would last, but did not).

Neither does it matter if others step on us while we're in this temporary phase of existence. Those who walk on us now will be walked on themselves. Life has a way of making sure everyone gets stepped on sooner or later. Getting stepped on, passed over, neglected or rejected by a significant person in our lives provides a rare opportunity—the opportunity of learning that no one can step on the real us.

The part of you that cannot be hurt by any life experience is hidden in Christ: "you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). Paul is speaking of the "you" that you are--not the "you" that you "think" or "feel" is you. That other "you" has posed as an impostor in your mind and you mistook it for a moment or two. That other "you" is about to end and so are all self-made problems and pain.

The Holy Spirit desires to introduce you to the true you and help you recognize that other "you" as a false self—not the true you at all! You have hosted this other "you" in your mind and body for years and years. You have sincerely but wrongly told others that this false self was "you". I was in my 50s before I learned how to distinguish between the two "me's", one real and one that lived only in the carnal-mind. You do not have to wait as long as I waited. You can stop torturing yourself with the unreal you, the false self. You can allow its crucifixion.

You can live in the spiritual realm of eternal life and manage surface life's "meltdowns" just fine. What a testimony for Christ's glory you become when you live out of your spirit, through the transformed soul, in your earthly body. People are drawn to you "for no reason at all"; but that is only what they will say. They will be drawn to the Christ in you. He is the One they unknowingly have been seeking "among the dead" parts of surface life.

"Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5 KJV).

Chapter 4

What is the Source of Inner and Outer Conflict?

What is the source of conflict each of us has experienced within ourselves, and that the entire world has experienced on every level of every generation throughout human history?

First, let's begin with looking at the source of personal conflict and also some good news about its cure. One of the great benefits of Christ's death on the Cross is to bring inner peace to every part of you. This peace arises not only from reconciliation with God--the reality of which you experienced at the new birth--but becomes more fully known in every area of your life through an inner change within the soul part of you. It is the possibility and reality of soul transformation which is the theme of this book.

Millions know peace with God through believing on Christ as Savior, but relatively few believers live in the peace of God in daily life. They do occasionally experience the peace of God briefly during worship or prayer, but few live in continual peace (2 Cor. 13:11). The transformation provided by the Cross has been slowly or never realized in the hearts and lives of believers. This is about to change! A sudden radical transformation within the souls of believers is about to emerge in the Christian community. Many will experience the Kingdom of God within themselves. This will be the greatest witness to unbelievers ever demonstrated by the Church throughout her long history and will result in many souls coming to the Lord. After all, the lost are miserable too, and are looking for love where it cannot be found.

Before a sudden radical transformation can occur within the soul of a believer the individual must experience death in his or her soul-life. This is the reason for the great inward struggle many are undergoing at the present time. They find themselves in their own personal Gethsemanes and have yet to align all of themselves to their Father's will--they must die with Christ on the Cross so that the part of them that is false can be dissolved or taken away. This is the reason they are "sweating great drops of blood" throughout various problems in daily lives. "It is hard to kick against the goads" Jesus commented to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5). A lot of Christians are kicking at goads too, causing unnecessary suffering in their souls and bodies. They are struggling hard and long against the will of God, but in their unconscious state, the state Jesus and Paul referred to as "sleep", they do not realize it. They may actually view themselves as devout, sincere Christians because they have conformed their outward manner of life to scriptural standards, but inwardly they are yet miserable and void of Abundant Life.

A despairing pastor spoke with me recently and asked, "David, did God intend for life to be this hard? Is this what Jesus died to give us?" I smiled at his questions because I knew he was getting closer to the real truth already in him, in the spirit part of him, and this is why I answered, "No, brother, life isn't meant to be as hard as we make it, and Jesus did not suffer agony on the Cross to produce more agony in us. He suffered in our place so we could enjoy the peace of God permanently."

For a brief moment his eyes flickered with the light of inner recognition of the truth his ears had just heard. Then, it was as though a curtain dropped over his eyes and face. He looked as if he wanted to say something but did not, so I said it for him. "Your mind just told you that what you just heard is too good to be true, didn't it?" Again his eyes brightened and he declared, "Yes, it did say that." Then, in an even more surprised tone he declared, "David, I just got it! What was spoken in my head is not me, is it? Not the real me, I mean. This is what you have been teaching us, isn't it?" I told him that it was indeed.

He thanked me for sharing "these new insights" with him and the congregation. I replied that I had shared nothing he and they hadn't already known, and his eyes brightened a third time in the recognition that he had known this somewhere deeper inside him all along. Then he broke out in uproarious laughter at the simplicity of it all. The genuineness of that moment was undeniable. He kept saying, "Thank You, Lord. You showed me this when You saved me, but I forgot it right away." His face was childlike and his soul calm as a sweet serenity came over him. It was a holy, sacred moment, like all moments are once you have allowed your identity with Christ to be made real to you, and, in so doing, have discovered to your

great joy the real you. You have allowed the unreal you to dissolve.

The alignment needed but resisted within believers produces great inner battles and they suffer greatly from their resistance to God's will. What is needed is that they identify fully with Christ and surrender their identification with self. People who are true Christians yet who also live in real pain, is the life experience of countless believers now. What seems bad now will become good. When transformation occurs they will experience the peace of God as never before and the abundant life Jesus promised will become actual reality within them. Permanent good will come out of the temporary bad they went through. They will no longer live in pain, defeat, and turmoil. The promise of Jesus, of His own peace inside us, will become the normality of their life experience (John 14:27).

David knew the struggles of earthly life in the false self and also knew that this wasn't God's ultimate for him. Notice the struggle his mind created:

How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Psalm 13:1, 2 NIV

Had God forgotten David? How could He? He could not forget one He had chosen. Why did David accuse Him of forgetting him? David's carnal-mind told him this, he believed it. He then suffered because he temporarily believed the lie his carnal-mind told him. Do you, like David of old, wrestle with your thoughts? Do those thoughts create pain and sorrow in your heart? Do you feel as if the enemy is triumphing over you? He isn't because he cannot. Jesus promised us authority over all the enemy's abilities, and that nothing he attempts can injure us at any time (Luke 10:19). No weapon the enemy "forges in the fire" can accomplish its intended purpose (Isa. 54:17 alternate rendering). But if he makes you feel that he is triumphing over you, he can "help" you sabotage yourself. When you see through the illusion Satan paints in thought pictures in your mind, that they are unreal, no matter how real they may seem, you can be freed from his torturous attacks.

If you wrestle with your thoughts and have sorrow in your heart everyday, you can take courage because God will do for you what He did for the Psalmist David. Read Psalm 131 to understand the man David eventually became. He no longer wrestled with his thoughts, nor did he have unending sorrow in his heart. He had experienced transformation and had become quiet within. God will transform you into a man or woman after His own heart, and will bring you into abundant life in the Kingdom of God within you. You can live free from unending mental questions of "why?" and "how long?" and become still inside in the abundance of peace. Of course, you need to be changed in order for this to happen, and God is all about changing you as He is your Creator, Father, and Friend.

We Are Undergoing Metamorphosis

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV

The word "transformed" is a Greek word that appears only three times in the New Testament. It is the word for metamorphosis and is used in Matthew 17:2 where it is rendered "transfigured" or "changed" concerning our Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Hermon:

And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

Matthew 17:2 NASB

There in their presence His form underwent a change; His face shone like the sun, and His raiment became as white as the light.(WNT)

It is used in Romans 12:2 where Paul refers to being "transformed" through the renewal of the believer's mind:

And be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is the good and pleasing and perfect will of God. (LITV)

Powerful word, metamorphosis, is it not? Metamorphosis is change, transformation, transfiguration. Metamorphosis is God's will for us. He loves us just as we are, and He loves us too much to leave us that way. He has predestined you and me to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). We cannot be conformed to Jesus' image until we lose our faulty self-image. The image created by self. In other words, we cannot be conformed until we are transformed.

Consider the dramatic change Jesus of Nazareth underwent during His Transfiguration. His face became radiant as the sun, His clothing whiter than any launderer could have made them, and His being emitted glory and light. It is this same word that Paul, inspired by the Spirit, chose in order to depict the change that can be effected in a believer's life. He or she can be radically changed, metamorphosized, just as the caterpillar is changed into the butterfly by its Creator. The performing of deep change within a human is no problem for the butterfly's Creator either. In fact, nothing is a problem to Him.

This work is being done by the Spirit of the Lord on earth today in the lives of some believers but will soon happen to many Christians. The Holy Spirit has the power to radically and completely change us and give us total transformation of our souls (mind, will, emotion). Total transformation is possible in this life, prior to Heaven! This is what Paul referred to also as being "sanctified wholly" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Some Christians have been focused on the Spirit's power to manifest His wonderful gifts through them more than they have cared to notice or have dared believe in His power to radically change them inside out. The Holy Spirit's goal is to make us like Jesus, the Model Son, the One with whom the Father was fully pleased--His Firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). He wants to "bring many sons to glory" not only in the hereafter, but in the here and now as well (Heb. 2:10). This is evidenced in many passages in the New Testament with which you may be familiar.

Why is there so little ongoing change in the lives of many Christians? Metamorphosis is slowed by the interference of the self-life, the flesh, the carnal-mind, the old man, and other such terms in Scripture which all denote the same thing: the unrenewed part of us which needs total transformation. We are using the term SELF to shorten all the terms into one word. It is the self in your soul which is the false you. It is this self which interferes with the emergence of the true you in your spirit. Once the false self is done away with, the soul experiences change and becomes the spirit's ally rather than its enemy. The true you is all the parts of the made-new you: spirit, soul, and body. Yes, even the body becomes at ease and nothing in this moment disturbs its various functions. This is why sleep becomes more restful and the body often experiences new vitality in those grace has transformed.

Personal metamorphosis begins as a process. We experience a great change at salvation and another big change with the Spirit's empowerment in the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. About the time we begin to think we have arrived, we then discover to our amazement and disappointment we are nowhere near the attainment of spiritual growth we had thought we were! The old ego, self, resurfaces and spiritual life plummets! We get disappointed in ourselves whenever we are not as loving, kind or Christ-like as we had imagined we were. We may have periods of personal growth followed by periods of stagnation during the process, but sudden transformation is possible. I know because it happened to me one lovely day, and I am convinced it can happen to anyone who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

Life's "Lows" are Stepping Stones

It took me years to realize that the various lows in my life were the very things God was using to help prepare me for Kingdom advancement. This is what Jesus meant when He spoke in riddles such as to live you must die, to be exalted you must be brought low, to rule you must serve, to be first you must be last, and so on. Much that He said has never been realized by the Church throughout her long history as we tend to keep His teachings on the surface level of the mind, but what He pointed to is a deeper, spiritual reality which comparatively few believers, including Christian leaders have ever perceived, let alone have

experienced.

Indeed, many of the followers of Jesus who have experienced dynamic change were not in positions of leadership when their unique transformations took place. It is those who sense their great poverty of spirit that He enriches with His Kingdom treasures. They include vastness of His life within the soul, overflowing love and compassion toward others, and deep, wide peace that secures the heart and mind. As long as one views himself as having arrived because of outward position, he cannot experience the miracle of transformation. When someone he knows comes into a deeper experience with God, the church leader may feel threatened because he intuitively senses something deeper in the one who has been changed. What the leader knows in his spirit, his mind reasons, "If God wanted to do this in my church, He would have done it in me first!" How unlike the lowly Master they proclaim but fail to demonstrate when they verbalize their thought from the platform.

The way of life for most Christians is a tug of war between the false self in the soul and the new life in the spirit. Paul referred to the false self in the believer's soul as "the flesh," "the carnal-mind," and "the old man" in the King James Version. In other translations we also see him referring to "the lower nature," "the old self," and "the body of sin." None of these struggling believers will admit that they enjoy their personal struggles but some of them are so completely lost in the false self, that they derive a weird type of pleasure by the pain they themselves create. This is why when things are going smoothly in the family, office or church that they find it necessary to create problems where none had existed. They enjoy observing the misery they create for others, and then complain, after people have seen through them, that no one is friendly anymore. They remain blind and miserable continually judging others, unable to see that they are the cause for their own misery. Self blinds them to it.

What is really happening inside carnal, soulical Christians is a struggle between the individual's old self-life, in the soul part of each of them, and the new spirit life, in the deepest part of them. It is a tug of war, sometimes they are truly living out from their spiritual nature, and are unusually joyful but do not know why. Most of the time they are living on the surface level of their unrenewed minds and in perpetual misery. When this tug of war ceases in the transformation experience, the formerly miserable believer experiences new and deeper peace, lightness and freedom in worship and buoyant joy of heart in daily life. Life takes on a new ease. This "newness" in daily life was briefly tasted during what many had previously called their "honeymoon with Jesus" in the days following their initial conversion to Christ. But the new turned old as they became more trapped in self. It is their involvement in a mind-heavy religious system that eventually wears many new believers down to the sub-level of "normal" Christianity.

Even when faith is strengthened through testing after transformation, tests do not produce inner suffering. The war between flesh and spirit, both of which were "contrary the one to the other," is over (Gal. 5:17). Self has been vanquished by the indwelling Christ in the believer's spirit. The one who had been pressing his or her way into the Kingdom of God discovers with great joy that the Kingdom has been given to them by their Heavenly Father. There remains no need to continue pressing into the freely-given Kingdom (Luke 12:31, 32; Acts 14:22; Heb. 12:28). The old self has surrendered to the new life deeper within the believer and has been, in the words of Paul, "done away with" (Rom. 6:6 NIV). What had been pictured in water baptism has finally been experienced as their reality. In identifying with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection they have, at last, experienced the ultimate on earth before Heaven, what Paul called "walking in newness of life" (Rom. 6:1-3).

What can happen to you in a moment is a deep shift from identifying with the false self, thus allowing it to die. Thereafter battles are no longer within; they are only from without. Life is so much easier after this occurs. True, you do yet encounter difficult or challenging situations, and this means you must maintain vigilance until the last breath, even as our perfect Master did. Maintaining diligence is easy to do by listening to your spirit. Your spirit alerts you whenever the enemy approaches and you come to full

attention within. Then you "resist the devil" by simply remaining in the new you. (The word "resist" actually means "to stand, to stand against" and doesn't depict pushing with great effort as many mistake it to mean.) Then, the devil "runs away in terror" (taken from the literal Greek of James 4:6, 7).

You may not wish to talk to others or, more importantly, to yourself whenever your spirit senses the devil's rare approaches. Jesus told His disciples that He would not speak with them much after their table talk had ended at the conclusion of the Last Supper. He sensed the enemy approaching Him the night He was betrayed. Christ withdrew into inner stillness so He could be alert to what was happening in the unseen spiritual realm as "the god of this world" was approaching Him (John 14:30, 31). He later prayed with great agony in the garden as He came into an even deeper alignment with the Father's will during His human experience.

During His final prayer sessions in Gethsemane an angel from Heaven empowered Him with dunamis-power to pray through to the place of inner victory for the crucifixion that lay ahead, and Jesus, for the joy now set before Him endured the Cross despising the shame (Luke 22:43; Heb. 12:2). This is why the Selfless One told the weeping women along the Via Dolorosa that they should not weep for Him but for themselves and for their children (Luke 23:28). Jesus had set His joy upon His forthcoming Resurrection and reunion with His Father in the glories of Heaven. He wasn't coming to the end as observers wrongly viewed it; He was coming to a new beginning.

When you allow self to die you are coming to the end of life as you have known it, but what is truly happening is that you are coming to the beginning of a new life, a new you.

Your Parts Make Up Your Whole

5:22, 23).

You are a complex creation, but not the complicated one the carnal-mind has told you that you are. Paul identifies the three major parts that make up a whole human as spirit, soul, and body. Redemption affects the entire person--all your parts will one day be like Jesus, the body being the last to undergo dramatic change when He returns. The spirit is the first part of a person that changes and this change happens in a moment in the new birth.

Your Spirit—the realm of the new life in you.

The spirit (Greek: pneuma [new.mah]) is the deepest part of you. Jesus called it the belly saying that it is from this area where the Holy Spirit flows out of a believer (John 7:37, 38). It is here where God, whom Jesus described as "Spirit" (John 4:23, 24), is joined with the believer becoming "one spirit" with him or her (1 Cor. 6:17). It is the spirit where Jesus indwells an individual who has been regenerated (born again, anew, from above). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). "Jesus Christ is in you" (2 Cor. 13:5). "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit" (2 Tim. 4:22). It is the spirit part of you which is birthed by the Holy Spirit in the miracle of initial salvation (John 3:3, 5). It is your spirit which is empowered as you are immersed in the Holy Spirit. It is your spirit from which the charismata (gifts) of the Spirit manifest. It is from within your spirit that all the fruit of the Spirit grow and eventually manifest through the soul in the body (Gal.

You contact, commune, and co-create with God here in your deepest part. This is where you know (rather than think, reason, imagine), and the "anointing He has given you, which is true and not a lie" "teaches you all things" and you "know all things" here in your spirit (1 John 2:20, 27). David called it "the hidden part" saying it was the place where God made him "know wisdom" (Psa. 51:6). The Lord and His child are one here in the spirit realm (1 Cor. 6:17).

If you are honest with yourself, you may object that you are one "in spirit" with your Lord because you frequently get troubled, anxious and feel overwhelmed. There may be areas of your life held in sinful bondages, in the body or in the mind and emotions. The answer is that although the deepest part of you is your new spirit, you still have an unrenewed, unrestored (or partly restored) soul and live in this earthly realm in a body yet affected by Adam's fall in a yet fallen world.

Yet, total transformation of the believer's soul is possible now. Whether your church teaches or denies that it is available this side of Heaven in no way makes it any less real to those who experience a radical change within them. Jesus meant it when He taught that His followers are to be "perfect as [their] Father in Heaven" (Matt. 5:48). It goes against His character to imply He was teasing us.

Your Spirit is the Part of You Where God Initiates His Work on Your Soul

It is the spirit of the believer that becomes "a new creation" in the miracle of salvation. The new creation is that part of you where old things have passed away and everything has become new:

Therefore, if any man is in Christ—behold a new creation! Old things have passed away and all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17 literal

You might respond, "Well, I do not feel like everything is new." You are partly right. Not everything in your soul is yet new, indeed a lot of the soul is still unrenewed, unrestored, untransformed. But there is indeed a part of you where everything in it is new and everything old has passed away. That part of you is the part of you that was birthed by God in the first miracle of salvation: the born again experience. Jesus referred to it this way in the Greek Interlinear Translation:

That which is born [out of] a physical body is a physical body, and that which is born [out of] the Spirit is a spirit.

John 3:6

It is your spirit which is born of God, has His seed remaining in it, and cannot sin:

Everyone who has been begotten of God does not sin, because His seed abides in him, and he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.

1 John 3:9 LITV

It is your spirit where your Heavenly Father takes up residence in you, where Jesus lives in you, and where the Holy Spirit abides in you:

No one who disowns the Son has the Father. He who acknowledges the Son has also the Father.

1 John 2:23 WNT

"If any one loves Me," replied Jesus, "he will obey My teaching; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

John 14:23 WNT

Or do you not know that your bodies are a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is within you--the Spirit whom you have from God?

1 Corinthians 6:19 WNT

It is your spirit where God initiates His work on you after He has taken up His residence in you in the Person of the Holy Spirit. His work on you is primarily focused upon transforming your soul to the image of Christ in your spirit. He was fully pleased with Jesus, the Firstborn, and has predetermined that you are to be conformed to Him. As He works on you the Father also works through you as you yield to the Holy Spirit.

It is where He dwells in you, your new spirit, that He initiates all His work on and through you by causing you to desire to do His will and giving you the grace to perform the actual doing of His will in your body:

For it is God Himself whose power creates within you the desire to do His gracious will and also brings about the accomplishment of the desire.

Philippians 2:13 WNT

This desiring to do His will is not to be confused with willpower. The function of willpower is part of the soul part of you. The desire to do God's will in your life comes from the deepest part of you, your new spirit, and influences the soul as you bring your soul into alignment with your spirit. More on this later, for now just know that your volition which has always operated within your soul must be influenced

by something deeper and stronger than your soul. It is God whose power creates within you the desire to do His will! He initiates all the changes He does in you.

It is in your spirit where God makes Himself known to you and the reality of God, His realness, becomes alive inside you. This is the part of you filled with His life, love, peace and Presence. It is the spirit part of you where your Heavenly Father originates all the work He does in your soul and body.

Your Soul—the part of you where your human personality including intellect, volition, and origination of emotion are. This is the part of you where the sin-principled ego resides until it is dissolved.

Your soul is the human personality within you. The Greek word psuche (pronounced: soo.kay) is the root word for the psyche. It is most commonly believed to be composed of intellect, volition and emotion. To be precise the origin of emotion is located your soul, but is experienced as feeling in your body. This is what produces a close "soul-body connection" in you. Your volition (will) is located here. Your likes and dislikes, your preferences in natural life, are here in the soul. This is what your family knows as you. They know if you like chocolate more than vanilla or strawberry. They know if you prefer to be awakened early or if you prefer to be allowed to sleep later. Those closest to you are often able to predict how you will respond to different situations because they know your soulical patterns as a result of close interaction with you. They know the "buttons" they need to push to get what they want from you and will do so whenever self prompts them. Self runs most homes and ruins many of them.

Your mental concepts of the world around you are formed in the soul from infancy forward. Your ambitions, desires, attractions are mostly based here. This is the place where you form opinions of others, make judgments of people and situations (whether positive or negative), label the weather or the shopping trip as good or bad, and so forth.

When attitudes originate solely in the soul they are denoted as "soulish" and if a believer lives primarily out of his or her soul, that person could be labeled "soulical" rather than "spiritual". This word "soulical" is an actual word in theology, not one I just made up. Soulical means "of the soul" just as physical means "of the physic" (physique).

Your Body—the outward part of you that relates to earth.

Your body (Greek word: soma) is that part of you that manifests in the world in your outer form visible to others. It is composed of the physical nature, its frame and functions. This is why many have referred to the body as the "earth suit" because they believe it is only a temporary identification. You will eventually live in it forever, whether you are on the new earth or in Heaven or anywhere else in the new universe God will create. The same body you live in now is part of your eternal identity. Yes, it will return to the dust from which it came, but it will awake and shine forever in the Resurrection (Dan. 12:2).

Many people, Christian and non-Christian, view the body as inherently evil because it has been used in the commission of sin, crime, wrongdoing, and so forth. But it has also been used in many good and noble deeds done by our race upon this planet. God looked at everything He had made and pronounced it "good" (Gen. 1:31). His pronouncement included the physical body since it was the highest part of His original creation on this planet. Yes, the body was created good, but due to man's sin it became capable of doing evil. I view the body as neutral. It depends what goes on inside a person as to what his or her body does. The body does both good and evil according to what is willed within.

After the full salvation Christ accomplished for us upon the Cross has been fully experienced at Christ's return the resurrected body will be capable only of holiness. When a believer's soul is transformed in this life, the body radiates the life of Christ from within and is the expression of His life on earth through words and actions. Men see what is done in the body and glorify God, so how is it evil? (Matt. 5:16).

The Rise of False Self

It is also in the soul where you, at your earliest stages of childhood development, allowed the arising of a sense of personal selfhood. As a newborn you did not have much of this personal sense of self, so

everything and everyone was viewed with awe and wonder, but this quickly changed as you grew and observed those around you. What arose was the "me" that lives in each of us. This false self or "mindmade me" as some have termed it, is also known as the ego in modern usage. The ego, and all of us have or have had one, developed its unique personal sense of self. This is the part of "you" that isn't the ultimate you, but is definitely part of you now, isn't it?

Unfortunately this sin-principled self was mistaken as the real you as you grew up, but this was far from the truth. The "you" you have called "you" is not the real you at all. The sin-principled ego inherited in your soul partly from your parents and partly developed over time in the soul part of you, invented a "false self" in your mind which you have mistaken since childhood as the real you. Believe it or not, it is this soul-formed self which has been the source of most of your problems in life. Most of your problems did not come from other people but from something in you that wrongly reacted to them.

It is this false self which God is out to kill rather than cure. Self is a master of disguise and hides behind good intentions and noble deeds, but in the Light of God's Presence self is exposed and exterminated. Self is a parasite that sucks the life out of its host with the eventual result of killing its host. This is why God is against it. Self is in league with Satan, said none other than Jesus Himself when He rebuked Simon Peter in front of all the disciples addressing him as "Satan":

But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan; you are a hindrance to Me, because your thoughts are not God's thoughts, but men's."

Matthew 16:23 WNT

Jesus is telling those who have ears to hear that men's thoughts often come from the Adversary of their souls, the devil. It originates in Satan, but his door of influence over us is self. It is the "things of men" (KJV) that both the enemy and self delight in and with which they in league together tantalize, tempt, and seduce people, even born again believers.

Who you think you are, who you may even feel you are, is not who you truly are! But this is hidden to most of us for years even into old age. It is sad to live out of the mental concept of who you are as you are doomed to perpetual frustrations, sensations of lack and unworthiness, and general negativity about yourself. But this is the sad state of many believers for the bulk of their natural lives. Except for rare occasions when their minds become still, and they sense their true essence, most live out their days bound by self and blind by it and to it. When they do experience momentary periods of freedom from self they bubble with joy in God and in life and say "I wish I could always be like this." The truth is they can.

This self was manifested between you and your siblings frequently in childhood. It was self vying for prominence among your brothers and sisters, arguing over who took your toy (as you had attached your sense of self to something outside of you). It was your self that caused you to suffer real pain, crying out to your mother to "make him give it back to me." It was your brother's self that wanted predominance over you which is why he grabbed your toy out of your hand in the first place. It wasn't that he really wanted the toy; he just wanted to show he was bigger than you, superior to you.

Adults laugh about childish behavior saying "they'll grow out of it" but have we? True, we adapt our outward behavior to social norms, but inwardly we still want our boss's car or our supervisor's position because we want recognition. We want something outside ourselves to make us feel better about the person we think we are or want to become. It's an illusion created by the false self and energized by the enemy. Yet it is one many spend their entire lifetimes pursuing. It was about this self—the ego driven aspect of carnal life—to which Jesus addressed most of His parables. (It seems as though you get a new Bible after transformation, and the parables of Christ speak to you in a way they never had before.)

Outward Suffering is Produced by Self

It is this precisething, the sin-principled ego, SELF, that has been behind social chaos and has caused all the world's wars. Almost all human suffering (apart from natural disasters) are driven by an inward lust, as James points out, and even when its goals are achieved they do not satisfy. The KJV puts it well:

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain" (James 4:1, 2).

Converse with an individual bound to any destructive pattern and you will hear the frustrating unhappiness of desiring without obtaining that which they pursue. Even if they get it, they still want more of it—more money, more respect, more advancement in society, more hair, more muscle, more beauty, more, more, and still more. The driving force behind this "more" is ego driven desire or lust (in the New Testament the word "lust" is used for desire of things besides sex, although it includes sexual lust too). Self is never fully satisfied or, to put it another way, if self finds satisfaction it isn't satisfied for long. This is the driving force behind various addictions that plague humans.

Collective Self Causes World Problems

You and I are not the only ones who have suffered from SELF that we have mistaken for ME in our heads. Everyone has it or has had it and only a comparatively few people have ever even seen it, let alone have been delivered from it. If self has driven you crazy, imagine what it is capable of when joined with other selves? Individual self strengthens as it coalesces into collective selves and takes on group identities. Religious groups rail against each other, but when they are alone and have no outward foe to combat, they invariably turn against each other from within. It has always been this way since Adam's Fall. We collectively have chosen to go against the small inner voice that tells us this path is wrong, and have created all kinds of misery in our lives and in the lives of others. This has happened because we have leaned upon our own understanding in ascertaining the nature of a problem that all sense and none can solve. Thus we generate perpetually misery within us and spill it over to the family at home, associates in the office, and people in the church or community.

Jesus referred to the collective self when He predicted that "nation shall rise against nation" in wars. Throughout history our race has killed each other in defense of mental ideas and concepts that arose out of the collective false self. Each side of a war believed their cause was just and honored those who sacrificed their lives in pursuit of a national dream of becoming better and stronger than other nations they fought. Each of the kamikaze pilots during the Second World War believed he was performing a noble deed, and their families back in Japan honored each of them for killing themselves by dive bombing their planes into USA warships. Jihad martyrs are similarly honored in some parts of Islamic culture today. Volumes have been written detailing similar examples of needless suffering and death of humans caused by humans. This is the sad story of human history. People die for something that is not ultimately real or lasting. Wars erupt and are won or lost. Then there is a temporary period of peace and then another war erupts.

Unspeakable atrocities arise from the soul-based, ego-driven energies of self. Individual crimes are fueled by the false self as well. Violent crimes against fellow humans are carried out by individuals lost in the insanity of the carnal-mind, the thinking part of self. Dishonest business deals are conjured in the carnal-mind as self seeks to use another rather than value others.

Self Causes Religious Problems

Self is the fuel of religious conflicts too, from individual church splits to denominational splits. It was the false self that fueled Christianity's so called "Holy Crusade" as well as the later Inquisition, as well as the numerous jihad movements in Islam. Buddhists have implied superiority to other religions in their famous claim that they have never fought a war, and this is true on the surface in that their leaders have never proclaimed a war, sponsored a war or even endorsed a war. But even Buddhists must admit that the lesser known near extermination of the Himalayan Bun religion by the lowland Buddhists was driven by the same principle of self. How dare some other group teach that a noble prince had given up his life of comfort to identify with the lower class some 1,200 years before their Buddha's lifetime! The Buns were not enamored with the Buddha because they too had an "Awakened One". When Buddhism entered the highland Himalayas and found the Buns, they heard their teachings about their enlightened prince and

became so infuriated that the "peaceful" Buddhists killed all the Buns they could! They burned the Buns' sacred writings except for those recently discovered. These are the writings that the Buns had hidden millennia before in the high Himalayan caves.

Every religion that first teaches peace and later practices violence is showing to objective observers that all religion is indeed, when it is not based in spiritual reality, a mere mental concept void of transformational power. It is soul-based, rather than spirit-based. This is especially true in the most devoted followers of any particular religion. Their sense of self (the false understanding of who they are) is fueled by fanaticism which is ego-originated and ego-driven zeal.

This is not to deny that there are also many beneficial things done through the various religions, but there is a difference between what is soulical and what is spiritual. What most people think is spiritual is yet another mere mental concept they have added to their already heavy minds. It is actually religious rather than spiritual.

It may or may not surprise you, depending on whether you have had previous experience with organized religion, to learn that the word "religion" in its Latin radix means bondage! This in itself is astounding because every religion proclaims freedom! No religion advertises, "Come to us and follow our teachings. You will become more miserable than you already are." This bondage has found its home in the collective ego of SELF in all the various religious groups. The "we are better than you" mentality is not spiritual but soulical, and eventually demonic. It is from "the wisdom which comes from below" (James 3:15). All religions, including Christianity, have it. All Christian denominations and non-denominations are poisoned by it. You cannot have a good, old-fashioned church split without the sintainted self at work! Strife and division are, as Paul observed, part of "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16-20). Strife, in no matter what form it takes, is always rooted in self. Wherever you find strife, discord, and division the poisoned self is at work.

Self Causes Family Problems

Let's leave religion and get closer to home. This is the reason family reunions, after the initial euphoria wears off, turn to petty squabbling after two or three days. Unrenewed, false selves always end up clashing over differing beliefs, life views, behaviors, and so on. This is also why individual families suffer from strife within the rooms of nearly every home in every neighborhood. This is why husbands and wives argue with each other, often in front of their children, and also why children fuss and fight with each other. The self within these selves is vying for preeminence over the others. Have you observed how family pets leave a room when humans begin fighting with each other? Animals do not like the energy they feel in the room, and wisely choose to leave it or run under a couch and hide. Cats attempt to close their ears with frowning faces when angry words are voiced in loud tones. Animals are able to sense tension in humans and do not want it.

Self Causes Your Problems

Let's leave the family and now look only at you. This is why you may truly enjoy the Lord's Presence and the peace His gives at home, only to later find yourself embroiled in inner turmoil at work. This happened because you confused self located in your unrenewed soul with the deeper part of you in your spirit. The peace and joy you experienced in worshiping the Lord was real and deep inside you before you left the house. As long as you stayed centered in that part of you, you sensed God's Presence in a real, undisputable way. After you lost the deep connection to your spirit through mental noise on the job, your peace left and was replaced with turmoil. It was in the soul part of you where conflict arose on the job and you allowed it to disturb your soul. This is why sincere Christians often behave one way, and later a completely other way. Some observers may judge them as hypocrites, but what they are is fragmented—living part of the time spirit-based and the rest of the time soul-based.

After the soul is transformed in the experience of the cross-death, you will not find yourself embroiled in inner turmoil on the job. When it arises in your coworkers you will allow it in them but not in you.

From the vantage point of your aligned spirit-soul you can observe self in operation in other humans. You know who you are, so you learn your correct posture in any negative situation in which you are placed. It is always correct not to resist negative situation, but allow it as you have no control over others. It will soon pass and some will make up with others or not, depending on the strength of their identity with the false "me" within them. You can remain in peace during office conflicts. You never have to take sides with an ego-ruled person, but neither do you have to oppose him. You can remain free inside no matter how crazy others are in surface life. You can allow them to be as they are, and not get entangled by their soulical webs. You can choose to view them with deep compassion, not judge or label them, and, if you practice this you will remain in peace.

It is with the soul that we contact others, form our personal sense of self, and allow the tainted sinprincipled ego to arise. This is why we suffer from conflict within ourselves and with other self-ruled persons until the soul is transformed.

The flesh, carnal-mind, old man, unrenewed self, false self, ego--call it whatever you wish--is based in the soul. It is this part of you that can experience total transformation through deeper surrender to God.

Personal Inner Harmony

When the believer's soul experiences cross-death, the new life within that one's spirit fills and overflows the soul. When the Lord made His Kingdom real to me the bliss that followed for days was indescribable. Words fail to convey what transpired within. Paul knew the experiential reality of this domain within his soul and described it this way:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:23 NASB

There is a peace from within that fully permeates the soul and emanates outwardly whenever a believer experiences this state of grace. When self has been crucified, there is peace in the soul part of you, not only in the spirit part of you. The state of Heaven on earth within the heart, a peace not found in the world nor given nor taken by it is then experienced and real (John 14:27). The soul is renewed, transformed, and changed by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). Emancipation from mental and emotional slavery result during transformation. The literal Greek rendering of "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" is "where the Spirit of the Lord is Sovereign, there is emancipation from slavery" (2 Cor. 3:17).

We are getting closer to looking more deeply at cross-death and the resurrection that follows. Your inward slavery will cease when the rule of Christ overtakes your soul. This will result in your very own transformation. It can happen even now. If you can see it, you can receive it. This was the last message Elijah gave his servant Elisha (2 Kings 2:10).

This is the prerequisite Jesus gave Nicodemus as well. He had to be born from above so he could receive new eyes that would enable him to "see" the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus had to first "see" before he could "enter" the Kingdom of God (John 3:1-5). His new birth would not guarantee that he would either "see" or "enter" it, but it would make both possible for that old Pharisee. You have been born anew, but have you "seen" the Kingdom of God yet? If you have "seen" it, have you since "entered" it experientially? If you have experienced the rule of God over your soul, Jesus will cause your soul to permanently "find rest" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Chapter 5

What Are You?

We looked at Paul's teaching on metamorphosis—a word he chose from the Greek language that refers to complete change, total transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). It is Paul's belief that God desires metamorphosis for each of His children. That is, it is not His will that His children stay as they are when He births them into His family. He desires growth, change, and maturity in each of His children.

Transformation is "Wholeness"

What Paul described as "transformation" is the same truth expressed by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount as "perfection" or better "wholeness". A believer, Jesus taught, can attain wholeness even as the Father Himself is whole (see Matt. 5:48, Aramaic). What did Jesus mean by "whole"? He meant that all of our parts are in perfect alignment: spirit, soul, and body. There is no inner conflict between any of our parts; we are complete even as our Father is complete, undivided, always in total harmony within ourselves. This is what Jesus meant when He told us to be "perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Christ did not mean that we would ever become God or attain omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, but simply that we would become one within ourselves even as our Father is one or whole, undivided and complete.

Does this describe you? Does this describe others you know? Do most Christians conduct their lives in complete, undivided harmony within themselves? If not, why not?

It is the transformative power of grace arising out of the spirit part of each of us that contains the capability of producing oneness between the spirit, soul and body. The body takes on a luminescent, transparent quality and becomes the "bulb" throughout which His Light emanates through us to others who are in darkness, thus making a believer the Light of his or her world (Matt. 5: 14, 15). Light shines from within and those who see it are drawn to us by something within them that intuitively senses our wholeness through our transparency.

This is authentic Christian living...we become lights in the world. Two verses after telling us "You are lights in the world" Jesus went on to explain our purpose toward others: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 15 NASB). Paul, taking his cue by meditating on his Master's teaching expressed the same concept this way:

...so that you may always prove yourselves to be blameless and spotless--irreproachable children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as heavenly lights in the world, holding out to them a Message of Life...

Philippians 2:5, 6 WNT

What Are You?

We noticed that each of us in our human nature is "tripartite" or three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Searching all the Scriptures has led to debate within the Christian community as to what man is. Is man a spirit? Is man a soul?

Contemporary theologians tell us that man is a spirit, he has a soul, and he lives in a body. Their basic reasoning is that since man is made in the image of God and that Jesus said "God is a Spirit", man also is a spirit.

Historic theologians have a different view on the nature of man. They say that man is a soul, he has a spirit and he lives in a body. Historic theology bases its argument on the early Genesis record that when God breathed into the clay form, "man became a living soul" noting that the word "breath" is translated from the same word as "spirit". Years ago when I was interested in theology I studied both sides with interest, and was able to comprehend them and see where each side had derived their understandings but sensed neither view was complete. Which do I believe now? Both views are partly valid. The part of each view that contains the word "are" is correct, but when they add the word "has" they are incorrect.

There is a third possibility which none have considered so far as I know. Keep the word "are" with all three parts of man: You are spirit, soul, and body.

We are all three parts. What you are is not only spirit or soul, and a body is not simply an "earth suit" as many term it. Your body is not only something you live in; it is part of the eternal you as much as your spirit and soul. Your soul is not just your mind, emotions, and volition...it is part of what makes you, you. Your spirit is not all of you, but it is certainly the deepest part of you, that part of you that is connected with God directly. So the real you is spirit. The real you is soul. The real you is body. It takes all three parts to make up the whole you, indeed, the whole eternal you.

Part of the real you is spirit, but that isn't all of you. Part of the real you is soul, but that isn't all of you, either. Part of the eternal you is body as well, otherwise, why will God raise it from the grave? If He had no interest in our bodies, what is the need for the Resurrection? You will live forever in the same body that you live in now. It will also undergo complete change, total transformation, before its eternal state can be achieved. This will happen when Christ comes again. So the believer doesn't simply live in a body, like a locust that sheds its shell, moving from one temporary body to another one. Your body is part of the permanent you.

The Apostle John saw some of those who have died and are in Heaven now. He identified them as souls (Rev. 6:9; 20:4). This was prior to the Resurrection, obviously, but he could see each person clearly. They retained each of their personal identities. Some of them had been beheaded in earthly executions, yet they had their soulical heads in heaven. But in the Resurrection of the Just, the body each believer inhabited from birth will be changed forever in a moment, in "a twinkling of an eye," and the Whole You will live forever in the same body you now inhabit, minus the extra pounds, wrinkles, and gray hair. In its transformation, the natural body becomes a spiritual one (Rom. 8:11, 1 Cor. 15:35-56).

It is obvious from what John saw that the soul of a believer is that one's inner body because it looks like his or her outer body. Peter and Paul are in Heaven today. Their bodies have long since returned to dust and are awaiting resurrection. But Peter looks to Paul in Heaven as Peter looked to Paul on earth, at least close to what he looked like on earth. Paul looks to Peter as Paul looked on earth. Each is seeing the other's soul — the inner body that had filled the outer body.

The body is the last part of you that will be completely changed in God's work of metamorphosis in your life. And just as the soul must experience death before it can be renewed, so the body must undergo death before it can ultimately know its newness. That is, only after it has decayed and returned to the dust and the trumpet of the Lord sounds, can the body come forth from the grave in its eternally new state. This will happen to all believers (except those who are yet living when the Lord comes again). The appointment with physical death has not been annulled by Jesus' death on the Cross, but it has been rendered temporary and powerless (Heb. 2:14, 15; 9:27). The believer's body in its present state can experience touches of the Lord effecting healings and better health, but it still has a stingless appointment with death (Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 15:21,22).

In the Lord's work of metamorphosis in our lives, the body plays an integral part in the body-soul connection. The body is affected by the degree of wholeness in an individual's soul. The Bible teaches that many physical ailments are actually soul-based. "A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones" and "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Pro. 14:30; 17:22; see also 26:22). In other words, the health of the outer body is influenced by the health of the inner body.

In Chapter 4 we saw that there is a part of us that is already new, perfect, and complete: the reborn spirit. It is this part of us that is fused with the Lord, knows and communes with Him, and has the Father's nature in it. Yes, His DNA, as it were, is in your spirit. This is only a manner of speaking as our Heavenly Father has no physical, corporeal body containing DNA. He is a Spirit, but the "blueprint" in Him is in your spirit now. It is this part of us that changes instantaneously in the born again experience, and is

subsequently empowered in the infilling of the Holy Spirit. But the spirit part of us is only the first place that He changes us. It is the born again spirit that is a complete "new creation in Christ" where "old things have passed away and all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The soul becomes the focal point of change from conversion forward as not everything in the soul is new in the miracle of the new birth. This is because the soul is not born again, only the spirit is. The mind, will, and emotions are to be conformed to the image of Christ, the Firstborn Son. This process takes years and tears to complete, as it did with this author, and for some believers conformation to the image of Christ is left unfinished during earthly life, although, as we have seen, Paul believed it could be completed by God in a believer this side of Heaven. Perhaps you should accept this possibility as well. Do not persist in mind-made doctrines that limit the power of God; they can prevent you from entering into more of God on earth—His Kingdom within you (Luke 17:20, 21).

The Body-Soul Connection

Do you realize that your body is closely connected to your soul? Emotions are the body's response to what is going on in the soul. When the soul is troubled, the body's blood pressure is affected or the stomach produces excess acid. When the soul is calm, the body breathes easier, and a sense of wellness pervades it. There is more energy when physical existence is not burdened by mental heaviness.

Your soul looks like your body, indeed the Hebrew word for "soul" that is used in the Old Testament (nephesh) is said to be located in the blood (Lev. 17:11).

The blood circulates throughout the whole body. The soul is the life force for the body. This is why an amputee can still feel the missing part of his or her body. The physical part of the person was removed, but not the soulical part. This is how the once-rich man in hell remembered his brothers still living on earth. His dead brain was in a grave, but his soul remembered everything he had formerly processed in his then living brain. The same was true of long dead Abraham whose soul resided in Paradise (also known as Abraham's Bosom) which was located "a great gulf" away from Gehenna where the formerly rich man was now located. As he and the man in hell-fire conversed, Abraham asked him to remember (Luke 16:19-31). Abraham and the former beggar were in the place of comfort and obviously had access to water which the lost man in hell-fire could see and desire, but could not receive due to the "great gulf" between Paradise and Gehenna. His dead body buried in the grave did not thirst, but his soul in hell did thirst.

Paradise has since been moved to Heaven and is no longer located in "the lower parts of the earth" in Sheol/Hades (Eph. 4:8-10). But, prior to the resurrection of Christ, it was the place of comfort in the region of the dead, separated by a great gulf that could not be crossed, from the place of torment which Jesus referred to as "hell-fire". (For more study on this see the author's book Was the Cross Enough?)

The body is the physical frame and its functions. It is closely tied with the soul whether the soul has been transformed or is yet unrenewed. Take sight, for one example. The eye looks upon something in this natural world and the ego in the unrenewed soul immediately suggests: If I could look like that I would be so happy! From there it builds a whole range of idea upon idea of the benefits looking better would provide "me" ultimately producing personal happiness, fulfillment, and success. Beauty, as aging women have discovered, is fleeting (Prov. 31:30). But no aging woman should ever feel "less than" as she grows older. She can allow her true beauty located in her ever new spirit to illuminate her body, expressing an unearthly beauty that shines through her.

How Many Christians Possess Abundant Life?

Jesus came to give "abundant life" or overflowing life in the here and now (John 10:10), but many believers have a life experience that seems to contradict His promise. Family, friends, and others perceive them as struggling in life, always fighting battles, and rarely at rest inside. What about other believers you know? Do they outwardly express the abundant life of Christ through them?

How many Christians do you know who seem to be full of helium, always rising above problems they

face? No matter what they go through, nothing ever fazes them, touches them or harms them, and they remind you of the promise, "Great peace have they which love Thy law and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:165). Yes, the promise of Jesus has been fulfilled in their daily lives: these live in abundance of peace which the world cannot give nor take away (John 14:27). Whether abased or exalted "the peace of God which passes all understanding keeps [their] minds and hearts in Christ Jesus" (Ph. 4:7). How many do you know whose hearts and minds are kept in peace, no matter what circumstance arises?

How many children of God do you personally know who live in continuous joy? (John 15:11). Who walk in constant love for others? (1 Cor. 16:14). Who never murmur or complain throughout various fluctuations in daily life? (1 Cor. 10:10). They are "founded upon a Rock," and it is evident to all who know them (Psa. 27:5). People love being around them due to the peace of God emitting continually from them (Matt. 5:9). During dark times they yet have "a song in the night" and during low periods they leap with "hinds feet upon high places" (2 Sam. 22:34; Psa. 18:33; Isa. 30:29; Hab. 3:19). How many do you know who "weep with those who weep," and then "rejoice with those who rejoice"? (Rom. 12:15). These people have been transformed and are freely expressing spiritual states of being.

Please pause and go back over the two preceding paragraphs. Do these paragraphs describe your inner state of life? Do you personally know anyone who virtually every sentence in the above paragraphs describes? How many Christians do you know who are free from inner struggle? How many live free from fear? How many do you know who never display angry outbursts? How many followers of Jesus do you know who obey His command to "take no thought" for their lives? (Matt. 6:25-34). How many truly love their enemies and pray for those who despitefully use them? (Matt. 5:44).

How many believers, if they were honest, would admit they frequently battle sexual lust? How many believers admit their covetousness, greed or avarice? How many continually whine and murmur? Murmuring is the one sin Israel never overcame in the Wilderness. Who do you know who is willing to be honest with themselves, with others, and with God? Are you willing?

Ask yourself this question: why is it that so few believers evidence the abundant life Jesus promised? Indeed, His promise of abundance of life is interpreted by large groups of believers as material things whereas Jesus Himself said otherwise: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). Your Father already knows what things you need and has promised to add them if you make His Kingdom your primary search. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt. 6:31 KJV).

If a man's life does not consist in the external realm of "things", and since Jesus said it does not, where and of what does a man or woman's life consist? This is a good question and one worth pondering. A man's life must consist of intangible yet real things that make for peace, spiritual things he can use to edify others. Paul said it this way:

So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Romans 14:19 NASB

These are the things of which true life consists. Do you truly have Abundant Life? Material things cannot provide it; spiritual things, which consist of a substance that the carnal-mind cannot perceive as things, are the essence of Abundant Life. The carnal-mind will attempt to deceive you into believing that you need more "positive emotions" to make you happy. Love, joy, and peace are not positive emotions, as is often believed. They are deeper than emotions. They are spiritual states of being. They do affect the soul and the body, but do not originate within those parts of you. Spiritual qualities originate in the new spirit part of you. The word "emotion" in its Latin origin means "to disturb". There is no such thing as a positive disturbance.

Most advertising appeals to the false self and millions believe they could be happier if they only had this or that. The world is always telling us we need to add something to us from the outside in order to make us complete inside. The truth for the believer is that you are already complete in Christ: "you are

complete in Him" (Col. 2:10). Nothing from the outside needs to be added or even can be added to the New Creation you already are in your spirit. Everything that pertains to life and godliness has already been given to you. You are a partaker of the divine nature; you have been graced with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:4).

The carnal-mind, which is the thinking part of self, doesn't believe this because it cannot (Rom. 8:6). If it cannot distract you with the acquisition of material things, it will tell you instead that if only you were more spiritual, more holy, more prayerful you could then achieve the peace you are lacking. If the sin-principled ego cannot get you into material pursuits, it will turn its attention to spiritual ones. But self is incapable of pursuing what is spiritual, so it confuses you with what is religious. Religion in any form cannot satisfy the real you, but it is capable of making the false you in your soul feel good temporarily.

After awhile the new "ism" or "anity" you have begun to follow leaves you in the same misery you had before you began to follow "Buddhism" or "Christianity". A faithful Buddhist broke down during a conversation with me in my home. She admitted she had no real peace, but received only a fleeting calmness during meditation or "practice". She came from a long line of Buddhists and all of her family and relatives, she said, were miserable too. I had met her in an auto repair shop. Sitting near me waiting for the mechanic to finish her repair work, she had sensed something she wanted but did not have. One conversation led to another and she eventually invited me to attend a Buddhist meeting. I agreed on the condition that she would come afterward to my home and look over books I had written. She agreed and talked about the differences between Buddha and Jesus. I told her Jesus had given me a peace that did not go away, but remained in me after I had yielded to Him and had allowed Him to dissolve the part of me that resisted His will. She said I was the first "real" Christian she had met and that she had lived in this country almost all her life.

Many Christians have also admitted their lack of permanent peace while conversing with me since the soul transformation occurred in this disciple. They too have sensed something they do not have. Even though they may enjoy peace with God as a result of the born again experience they do not live in the peace of God. They look at me through eyes of disbelief and wonder. But they cannot deny what they sense is real within me. Some have begun to yield to God more than before. Others have walked away shaking their heads.

The Truth about Mind-Made Goals

The unrenewed soul loves goals and self will try to get you focused on them. You end up following goals much like farmers used to tie carrots onto sticks that hung down in front of a mule. This way the mule walked toward its ever elusive carrot and the farmer got his field plowed. A carrot stick approach to life in any of its various forms is ultimately frustrating. Mind-ruled people refer to their carrot sticks as "personal goals" they hope to achieve. Even if and when they do achieve a goal the fulfillment they gain is only temporary, and leaves them wanting more fulfillments. They are constantly adding new goals to their improvement of self so they "can become a better person", and are ever pursuing all the various kinds of "carrots" the world or religious systems offer them. It took me almost 40 years after the new birth before I realized I had been pursuing carrots too.

It took 40 years for Israel to at last enter her inheritance in Canaan. They spent four long decades making circles in the sand.

This may sound strange to you, but I do not have any regrets at all about my time spent in the desert of self. Yes, the time spent in the wilderness could have been shorter. In retrospect, I see offers made time and again made by my Heavenly Father to shorten the length of stay I chose to spend in barren unfruitfulness. I could have yielded to the sweet pull of the Holy Spirit and would have then avoided needless pain as well as having caused pain in others too. But, having said this, there are no regrets. Not one step was wasted. Having learned that the best David Alsobrook can do is walk in circles creates new gratitude each day as I still encounter the same negative outward circumstances that used to greatly upset,

sadden, and depreciate my sense of "me". The fact is that they do not produce inner negatives anymore, so there is an ever deeper appreciation for the "land that flows with milk and honey" after 40 years wandering in circles.

If I had been brought into Canaan straight from Egypt self would be complaining about how heavy one cluster of grapes can be!

Jesus Bore All Our Regrets

Not only do I not regret my time in the desert, I do not regret anything at all, including the many abuses in childhood. I do not regret any sin I ever committed or any failure or mistake I made, having repented before God of them all and, to the best of my ability, having asked anyone I have ever hurt for their forgiveness. Nothing is regretted in my past, as God used it all for good (Gen. 50:50). In my experience all failures became mirrors so I could see the false me as the impostor it was, tire of it totally, and allow my Father to bring forth the new me. What a great and wonderful God we have!

One of the many things our Messiah bore for us on the Cross was all our regrets! Are you aware of this aspect of our redemption? It has been rarely seen and taught, but the word "sorrows" in Isaiah 53:4 is makobaw and includes in its meaning "sorrows, anguish, regrets for past failures, lingering shame" (see Gesenius, Wilson's, JFB and other Hebrew resources). Thus Jesus carried (or "removed to a distance away from us") our regrets, the anguish they cause us, and lingering shame. All of this becomes wonderfully real within your soul in transformation. This is Isaiah 53:4 in my alternate rendering:

Certainly! Why, of course! He Himself has lifted up upon Himself our sicknesses and pain, and has removed to a distance from us by carrying them upon Himself all our regrets, heartaches, inner pains, lingering shame, disappointments and emotional traumas.

Time Doesn't Matter

The sense of time passage with which one is well familiar on the surface level of human life also disappears in the eternal Kingdom of God. Instead of regret for wasted time, there is gratitude for each moment in the new beauty of this Kingdom. Any "price" paid through years of circular wandering vanish in the beauty of the One Pearl of Great Price now held in the palm. I cannot find words to adequately describe this new state. I can only marvel at its beauty, simplicity, and eternality. Everyday I am lost in moments of grateful worship that overtake me without effort. Adoration of Jesus flows from within the spirit through the soul and out of the body in the marvel of His full redemption.

Chapter 6

The Process and Crisis of Metamorphosis

Is radical transformation in a believer's life a process or a crisis?

Let's look at three words in this question before answering it. "Radical" transformation is change at the radix or root of a believer's life, what John meant when he said, "the axe is laid upon the root of the tree" (Matt. 3:10).

The "process" of transformation refers to gradual change, a series of actions continuing to an end. The "crisis" of transformation means that change occurs in a definite, precise moment.

What do you think? Is radical transformation in a believer's life a process or a crisis?

If you answered "process" you have answered as most churches teach. They believe that deep change inside a believer takes years. If you answered "crisis" you are in the minority of modern Christianity. Few believers today know the power of Christ as a living reality available in the Holy Spirit which is necessary to effect change (2 Cor. 3:18). Or, if they do accept God's power as available and operative today, they limit His power to external situations and conditions. God is able to heal bodies and perform miracles of supply—this about sums it up. As far as profound and deep character change is concerned in the life of a believer, they too can only conceive of it happening over a lengthy period of time.

My answer to the opening question would have been "process" as deep change at the root of my life was indeed slow for years, sometimes even stalled. I found it far easier to modify behaviors than attitudes and thought patterns. As a result of what happened sitting on the rock, however, I would now answer "crisis" as a result of what happened to me and what I have seen also in Scripture. But I would not leave the question answered "crisis". Since the moment of definite change which happened to me on the rock, there is a process of continuing change. Indeed, the process has not only continued but has accelerated. So my final answer to the question is "both".

In the instantaneous radical transformation, a deep and abrupt miracle happens in a moment in time. The result is a never before experienced freedom. A deep and profound peace permeates the being that others afterwards can sense when they are near. Those who have experienced deep change are not completed in the change God wants in their lives. They continue in the process of expansion into more Christ-likeness.

The growth after transformation is much different than it was before. The believer no longer experiences deep, inner struggles. The soul becomes so rooted in the spirit where the "good tree that brings forth good fruit" is growing, that they are not overtaken by mind-made problems as they had been for years before (Matt. 7:17, 18). The "bad tree that brings forth bad fruit" has had the axe of God laid at its root. It is now dead and is no longer growing in the believer's soul. George Fox found it impossible to worry after his "inner light" experience of soul transformation, yet he continued to deepen and increase in peace. George Mueller lived in perpetual peace, a sanctified, holy man. His faith level continued growing all throughout his latter years. Mr. Mueller, it was observed, was never in a hurry.

I discovered from Bible study in my teenaged years how great a sin worry is, but found it impossible not to worry. Now, the opposite is true. I find worry impossible because resistance to God's will was broken by the Lord's work in my soul as I sat in silence on the rock. Perpetual worry has been replaced with deep, constant, moment-by-moment trust.

Thoughts of whatever sort sometimes come but are observed in the new state as an outside entity. The transformed believer finds them absurd, amusing, and sometimes even entertaining, rather than heavy, serious and all-important. This is because a transformed believer has moved to a new location. He has packed up and moved to a new state! He no longer resides in his mind (head); he now resides in his spirit (belly). He has no sense of dwelling in the head, but actually is aware of himself living in his belly. The inner state of such a believer is lighter than it was before. Nothing ever distresses him or her.

If momentary drowsiness occurs, a transformed soul snaps out of it quickly and comes to alert

attention. Those who have been totally transformed do not lapse into full sleep again as the brightness of the Light of Christ shining on them in the awakened state makes spiritual sleep impossible (Eph. 5:14).

Those who have "found rest" in their souls do not need sleep (spiritual unconsciousness); their souls are continually refreshed. Their souls are never "weary" or "heavy" as before necessitating the common "sleepwalking" phase of carnal-minded life. This "found rest" state of the soul is different from the "given rest" they had known for brief periods during their earlier walk with the Lord. It abides permanently in the soul.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Christ refers to both kinds of rest. "Given rest" is experienced when one simply comes to Jesus. "Found rest" is experienced after taking His yoke, His rule, over one's life and learning Christ within the new state. There are two invitations in that passage. The first one is to come to Christ and receive the rest He gives. It is temporary in nature. The second invitation is to "take [His] yoke upon" your life where one finds rest within his or her soul. The rest the believer has labored to enter is too delightful to disturb with worry or hurry. Nor does a transformed believer initiate anything on his own. He or she waits for inner prompting from the Spirit. "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" (Heb. 4:10 NASB).

The Transforming Power of Light

In His parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus said that the Bridegroom delayed His arrival to the Wedding Feast. While they awaited His arrival, all ten virgins in the bridal company slept (Matt. 25:1-13). Jesus frequently exhorted His disciples to wakefulness and alertness. He was referring to the inner state of His followers, not the fact that the body must sleep. Paul referred to this spiritual sleep at least three times in his writings. He wrote to the church in Rome that "it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11). To the Corinthians he exhorted, "Awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Cor. 15:34). And to the Ephesians he said "Awake sleeper! And Christ will give you light" (Eph 5:14). All Christians are likely to sleep during some point along the spiritual path. Remember, "a son who sleeps during harvest causes his father shame" (Prov. 10:5 paraphrased).

My past included prolonged sleeping periods. I was sleepwalking through life, even though I was busy with ministry projects endeavoring to help others. The Psalmist said, "In Thy Light, we see light" (Psa. 36:9). One fact about light is that it is the alarm clock calling all of nature to awaken It was great when I awakened in July 2008 and realized I had been dreaming.

Sunlight is transformational in the realm of nature. Plants, animals, and people grow because of sunlight. The food you eat everyday provides warmth and energy to your body. What you eat owes its existence to the sun. Sunlight has been transformed into calories to warm and energize your physical body.

Spiritual light is transformational too. When the True Light came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, He exposed darkness by His Presence (John 1:4). The people sitting in darkness saw a "great light"--an extremely brilliant, intense light--says the Greek (Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79). Without the Light people would have continued in the belief that sitting in darkness is "normal". What you are in the new realm of your spirit, and what you are becoming in the transformed realm of your soul, and what you will be in the eternal state in your body, you owe to Christ. Without His Light, existing in darkness seems normal but it is abnormal.

I had been ministering with another speaker in Queens. The pastor took a group of us to a high class restaurant in Manhattan. It was unusually dark inside that establishment. At first it was difficult to see the water glass in front of me, but after awhile my eyes adjusted and it was easier to see. Some of our group had difficulty reading the menu, so the waiter lit a candle on our table. One of us wondered aloud how our waiter could possibly adjust to working in the darkness of that restaurant. He chuckled quietly and said that working in the dark had become so "normal" to him, that at home he was unconsciously turning off lights as the house seemed too bright to him. This habit became an annoyance with his wife who followed him flipping switches! What seemed normal to him was abnormal to her. She did not work in darkness but

in a well-lit office.

"Normal" people get used to spiritual darkness. This is all they have ever known so they prefer it over Light. John said "men loved darkness more than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Anyone who is used to light prefers it over darkness. It is then easier to see things as they really are.

The Transmuting Power of Light

Light wants to come in because that is its nature. You do not have to beg sunlight into your home--you only have to part the curtains. The same is true with Christ's Light. All you have to do is allow God to have His way with you and in comes the Light. The curtains of the carnal-mind do not part easily because "the carnal-mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:6). The problem is not with the Light, but with the curtains. When one is deeply changed, the "curtains" part through the vastly superior power of the new spirit.

Parting the curtains of the soul which have kept out the born again spirit's Light, cannot be achieved by willpower. Willpower is part of the unrenewed soul. The curtains are parted by the effect of God's grace operating in the renewing soul. Light penetrates the soul by the Light shining forth from the believer's spirit where everything is already new and where godly desires originate (2 Cor. 5:17). This desire is God working within you. You suddenly desire to part the curtains only to learn you cannot do what you will to do no matter how hard or often you try. You cannot part the curtains blocking the Light of the Son into your soul. You simply allow it to happen as you surrender to the Lord more deeply. You can keep it from happening if you continue to resist His will, but willing cannot make it happen. Yielding, surrendering, letting go is what He wants in you. He is waiting for your acknowledgement of your weakness before He reveals to you His strength (2 Cor. 12:9).

You have the choice to submit or to resist. This choice God leaves up to you. If you choose resistance, the most common choice, your pain will increase to the point that you feel as though you do not have a choice. You are forced into surrender, or are you? Will you then truly surrender to God? Maybe not as you find different ways to numb the pain with something you ingest inwardly or identify with outwardly. The pain becomes temporarily assuaged, but does not go away. It returns even more intensely. You finally decide to allow His inner prompting in your spirit to bring real alignment within you to His will. It is when you truly give up and let God have His way that you become childlike before Him. Passive in His Presence you become still inside.

When the soul becomes passive through inner stillness, God can work on it.

Jeremiah perceived this spiritual reality visiting a potter's house. He observed a potter working clay in the process of producing a different vessel from the one it was originally being formed into (Jer. 18:1-6). Jeremiah also noted that a leopard cannot change its spots. Jesus expressed this same truth in His Gospel of the Kingdom--we cannot change our height or true hair color (Jer. 13:23; Matt. 5:36). Real change cannot come from you no matter how hard you may try to change. All true change, the kind that brings eternal reward, is the work of God inside the one being changed. It is divinely initiated work creating the desire to change as we simply allow the Holy Spirit to do whatever He wants. John observed that darkness is weaker than light (John 1:5 WNT). Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). In the Greek the word "nothing" means nothing. The same as it means in life. We are helpless without Him.

The Light of Christ not only transforms but also transmutes. That is, as the Light of Christ transforms the sin-principled soul wherein lies darkness, it transmutes the darkness in the soul into Light. The result is an enlightened soul and the permanent end of inner suffering.

Centuries ago a devoted follower of Christ, later known as St. John of the Cross, went through a prolonged period of deep inner darkness. John gave it a term which has stuck through the centuries: the dark night of the soul. Reading his journey is enlightening. He discovered the power of Christ's Light to transmute the darkness. To summarize his teaching, John said that the wood, hay, and stubble are the things

of the dark night. When God puts His fire to it the things that were problems become fuel for the fire and the brighter the light glows! The greater the wood, hay, and stubble within the soul, so much greater is the transmutation experienced.

I am deeply grateful for having come to know experientially what John of the Cross taught. He was correct when he taught that God's flame is ever burning deep within once "the dark night" has become "a new day". Where there was once prolonged regret for the stubble and chaff, there is now gratitude for everything gone through to obtain the One Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:46). After all, the man who found the One Pearl "went and sold all that he had" to "buy the field" and legally obtain the One Pearl. In doing so, this man experienced the reality of the Kingdom of God.

What do you have to sell that is of any spiritual value? Nothing. All you "possess" is what you have obtained through your soulical and physical efforts. These consist of highly human valued attainments, achievements, and accomplishments. These are, from God's perspective, only "wood, hay, and stubble". Paul remarked that his own earlier achievements in which he had found miserable fulfillment was actually "garbage thrown to the dogs" (1 Cor. 3:12; Phil. 3:8, an alternate rendering of "rubbish"). To the unrenewed you, however, this garbage is highly valuable, just as the homeless in our society value other people's trash.

What Do You Exalt in Your Heart?

Jesus expressed the same truth decades earlier than Paul during His earth walk: "for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15 RV). "Men will praise you when you do well for yourself" (Psa. 49:18). That which they highly exalt: achievements, gain, education, and societal exaltation. All these things are detestable in God's sight. Why does He detest them? It is because these are the very things for which men sell their souls. They gladly give up eternal reward for temporary gain—what loss!

What are the things that Paul first viewed "as gain" but later saw through his mind-made illusion and saw the truth: his once valued assets were trash? When you look at his list in Philippians 3, he refers to genealogy, esteemed familial position, superior religious achievement, and societal position. In addition to what he said in Philippians, we are informed by Church historians that this apostle possessed extraordinary mental powers. Paul had not only studied "at the feet of Gamaliel", the most learned rabbi, he had surpassed his contemporaries in other areas of education too (Acts 22:3).

Paul discovered he had to surrender all his former identity as "a Hebrew of Hebrews" and "a Pharisee of Pharisees" (a member of the Sanhedrin). Paul also gave up everything included in his list and more, all the things his flesh had prized and prided. These were the things he willingly surrendered to God when Paul, the former highly regarded Saul of Tarsus, followed Jesus' advice and "sold all that he had." What he gave up gladly was exchanged for the joy of intimately knowing Christ more deeply within his spirit. Because Paul allowed his soul to be transformed, Christ was magnified through his body (Phil. 1:20).

Identification with Outward Functions Produces Misery

Jesus will give all of Himself to you freely Paul is telling us both by word and example, but in doing so it will cost the disciple everything to which he attaches his sense of self. All highly prized values of earthly achievements, identifications with various roles, societal positions, and material acquisitions, even one's members, if necessary (Matt. 10:37). One gives up inner attachment to everything that is exalted among self-ruled men.

In the Church the giving up of inner attachments includes the heart surrender of any leadership position. Many leaders have been absolutely amazed to find their primary inner attachment was not to Christ but to their ministries. I have watched them sit and shake their heads in amazement of what self had kept hidden from them. I have watched them weep openly at the discovery of their hidden idolatry.

They also discovered, while under the Father's disciplines, that they had unconsciously viewed their

positions as identities as well. It was to a religious position they had attached their sense of who they are, and when that position changed or lessened, they had suffered great pain. Self always produces pain in its host. Let it dissolve and you will know true freedom.

The apostle Paul went through many things far worse than anything we may go through in life, but he was always rejoicing, never murmuring. He felt no sense of inferiority when working to support himself during his ministry (Acts 20:34). Paul did not experience any sense of personal injury when the Galatians turned to Judaizers and rejected his leadership (Gal. 4:12). To him living was simply "Christ" and everything else was loss (Phil. 1:21). He felt no inferiority to others when imprisoned or impoverished. That is not to say that every disciple will become disparaged by society, and experience privation as was that apostle's outward life experience. No, that is not Paul's message to us in Philippians 3. It is the attachment to and identity with these things in the inner life of a disciple that must be surrendered. Only then can God trust him with the "true riches" that Jesus contrasted with "mammon" (Luke 16:11). Mammon is not only money obtained through greed, but anything you esteem as valuable, but is merely wood, hay, and straw.

Inner Attachments Produce Suffering

In his spiritual journey a faithful disciple of Christ may be abased outwardly or may abound outwardly. He or she may experience both situations during surface life. What the disciple has surrendered is his or her inner attachment to external situations, so it does not matter because the inner state is yielded to God.

No one should be stereotyped due to an external situation or role they presently occupy. A rich man may be free from materialism in his inner state, while a poor man may be fully attached to gaining material possessions as his primary goal. The man with no money may have money as his god, while the man of means may be completely free from the love of money. The poor man's inner state, in this example, is the one that is materialistic. It is a matter of the heart in every case. God knows what is in each of our hearts, and will tolerate no competitors for His people's affection--no idols--if they want to enter His Kingdom. The primary commandment we must obey is to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). God clearly wants our love. Our lives are impoverished if they are not rich in love for Him.

Where is Your Treasure

In God's dealings with Abraham, He demanded the highest prized possession of the rich old man: his one and only son, Isaac. The Hall of Faith says this is when Abraham was ultimately tested: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac..." (Heb. 11:17). Most Christians view the quarter century wait for Isaac's birth as Abraham's greatest trial of faith, based on the Genesis 12-20 and Romans 4 accounts. It most definitely was a great test of faith. After living with the reward of his faith for about 14 years, Abraham developed great inner attachment to his son of promise. It was

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you about."

Genesis 22:2 NIV

Imagine the great love the old patriarch had for Isaac! Now the voice of God, which Abraham intimately knew, demanded Isaac for a burnt offering! The Voice did not require all of Abraham's material riches, as Abraham's sense of self was not attached to material possessions. He had possessions, but they did not have him. Abraham was attached to and placed his future identity in his dearly loved son. It was through Isaac, the old man correctly believed, that Abraham's destiny as "a father of many nations" was to be fulfilled (an earlier word from God).

Imagine the consternation of soul Abraham went through during the three days between God's command and his arrival at Moriah! He came to a place of faith, that even though he would sacrifice Isaac, God would raise him from the dead, from which Abraham "received him back in a figure" (Gen.

22:5; Heb. 11:16-19). This was especially strong faith demonstrated by Abraham because during his lifetime no one in all of human history had ever died and then been restored to life.

Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). This is why Paul advised us to set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. We know we have been raised with Christ and are seated with Him (Col. 3:1, 2).

Attachments to Mental Goals Produce Misery

When you were a young adult and "left the nest" of living with your parents, you likely felt a freedom, an enlargement of yourself. You were now "on your own" producing two simultaneous excitements in your soul. One excitement concerned the possible dangers you might face living on your own, and the other excitement concerned fulfilling an inner goal of independence you had set within yourself. Perhaps you had viewed your parents' lives as unfulfilled, and you predetermined that your life was going to be different from theirs. No, you were going to do this or that and be happier or wealthier than they had been.

Every generation has experienced this early inflation caused by self, and the temporary excitement of grandeur it produces. When old age approaches, most people realize they have ended up the same way their parents had. Perhaps the way your life has gone also has not been what you had envisioned in your youth. Despite your best efforts the rise of disillusionment within your self tells you in no uncertain terms that you too, like your parents before you and their parents before them, have failed "to arrive". This realization may have left you with a self-produced label of "failure" and you may have become bitter "over the way life has treated" you.

Disillusionment is based, as the word suggests, on illusion. The "dreams" people pursue are illusions, not truth. Dreams turn into nightmares as loss is experienced in one or more of its various forms. They can come as loss of financial resource, loss of relationship, loss of respect or position, loss of health, loss of opportunity, and other losses. The experience of loss may make an individual's soul "heavy" or even "bitter". He or she becomes filled with heaviness even to the point of despair. This is all some senior citizens are able to talk about, how unfairly they have been treated all their lives. Some come to the place where they question the purpose of life and ask themselves what is the value of life at all? As one elderly person said to me not long before her death, "Life's a joke, and the joke's on you, kid. I've seen through it." She grimaced in visible pain although she was not physically ill as she bitterly grunted her words.

This realization—that self-ruled life is futile and empty—provides an opportunity for an individual to come to the realization of life's true purpose. The Westminster Catechism describes it succinctly: "The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." But how many will even acknowledge the emptiness they feel within themselves? Do you feel empty inside? Have you had enough of surface life to know that it is, in itself, ultimately unfulfilling?

Instead of realizing the deeper truth that loss provides a great opportunity for Kingdom advancement, many Christians live out their final days sighing about "this old life". All they think they have to look forward to is Heaven, but this can be self-pity in another form. They desire Heaven in order to finally realize their earthly ambitions. "I'll have a mansion over there and walk on streets of gold," many have said whose primary unfulfilled goal was financial success.

Heaven is not the realization of earthly ambitions!

Heaven's wealth is the Being of God and our union with Him. Whatever setting it is placed in is not worth esteeming above the truth that we will know Him ever more deeply in Heaven than we have on earth. You can experience the reality of Heaven now in your spirit. You do not have to wait until your body has died. You do have to wait until self has died in your soul. When you experience the reality of the Kingdom within you, earthly life becomes different from living "under the sun" in "vanity and a vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:14). Surface life takes on a general richness, sweetness, peacefulness, and joy becomes concentrated and intense within you, so that it is pure fulfillment now. You long for nothing in the Kingdom state. You are satisfied. Thus, the promise of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is your state in

the "now" of your life (Matt. 5:6).

Inner attachments to outward things--possessions, achievements, health, and others' opinions of you-are yielded up to God in the surrendered state of spiritual life. You come to the inner realization of the truth that these are of no lasting value. They looked so real, but were not real after all! Indeed, all that is "under the sun" is an illusion of reality but not authentic reality. Hebrews says the external realm of earthly life is "a shadow" and Paul says Christ is "the substance" of present life (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). How is a shadow, which is all surface life is, capable of fulfilling the deep yearning for substance? It cannot.

Are earthly possessions real and permanent? Look at them a hundred years from now, then again in a thousand years. Most or all of your material possession will have returned to the earth out of which they arose. The reality is that your lovely home is dust in another form—temporary and not permanent. It is useful to you in your present state, and that is all. There is nothing to which you should attach yourself-not that house, car or any other material possession.

The universe is presently dissolving:

Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end.

Psalm 102:25-27 KJV

Modern day pagans pray to "the Universe" as though it were God. It is only His creation and is aging and already dissolving, like present cooling of our sun, for example. The inspired Psalmist wrote the passage above more than 3,000 years ago. God, however, is always the same and His years shall have no end. What is there in all of material creation to be attached to? Nothing.

Why fix your wish upon a star?

Give up Nothing for Everything

When you relinquish your identity of who you are based on your function or role in surface life you are free to gain the true knowledge of who you are in eternal reality. It is a knowing that goes deeper than the mind can comprehend, formulate or articulate. In the past two years I have been graced with a taste of intimate fellowship with God surpassing all my previous decades on earth.

Yes, nothing can compare to the present daily state of my soul in this Kingdom realm of transformed life. What I experienced two years ago is ever deepening within, and remains something I cannot explain or put in words. I know in my spirit what my mind cannot formulate or express. There are many realizations of "joy unspeakable and full of glory" experienced during this intimate penetration of our Lord's Being and His intimate penetration within this follower's heart (1 Pet. 1:8).

There were so many frustrations, struggles and defeats for 40 years! How I desire that every believer come into his or her inheritance in the present reality of Christ's Kingdom. The greatest blessing I have ever been privileged to receive has now become the greatest "burden" I have every carried for the Body of Christ. But the "burden" is not heavy. It is light and joyful to carry, just as writing this book has been. I desire God's desire – to share with others the wonders of this Life.

You Can Go Deeper

The greater your letting go of temporary identities and heart attachments to all external things, including inner dependency upon all its dearest persons (family and friends), the deeper your spirit penetrates the Eternal.

Think of it this way: just as Paul expressed that he counted all as loss in the outward realm of life in exchange for the surpassing joy of intimately knowing Christ within, he also realized, deep in his innermost being, that he had given up nothing and had gained everything! Once you lose attachment to things of life, you become a recipient of the essence and reality of the One Life. You have the sweet realization that you have lost nothing, because you truly had nothing permanent in surface life. All your

possessions are temporary, all your achievements will be surpassed by others and people you love will pass away. All of surface life is constantly changing; nothing external is permanent, lasting or ultimately fulfilling. This is the realm where, as Jesus noted, "moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal" (Matt. 6:19).

Why not give up your attachment to it and end your misery?

This has been realized by many who have returned to visit childhood neighborhoods after decades of absence. Nothing they were inwardly attached to now remains as they remember it. Many visitors to old neighborhoods have felt profound loss in their sense of self. "You can't go back" has become the common saying for this feeling of loss. Have those who have tried to go back in time during a visit to the old stomping ground only to discover that they could not do so, embrace their own transitory state? A few, perhaps, but most go deeper into denial and attempt to get their mind off what they had glimpsed is the true state of this world. If they embraced what they had felt during their visit, they would be forced to acknowledge that they have wasted all their lives on that which fades and perishes. This glimpse of reality produces intense pain most try to forget by getting their minds on something else as quickly as they can. Their carnal-minds do not want them to ponder anything that may lead to spiritual enlightenment.

Those who embrace the loss they felt revisiting places unseen for decades, find that the hole they feel within themselves is suddenly replaced with a deeper peace than they had previously known. All losses, in whatever ways they come to us or however they may occur, are used for good in our lives if they are embraced and not resisted. A visit to the old neighborhood was used by God to awaken one elderly man to come to the Lord Jesus. This is God's purpose of allowing loss in everyone's life. Loss, no matter how it comes, reveals the emptiness produced by inner attachments to outer things.

The beautiful thing God does inside us when we embrace a severe loss is to deepen the well for more of His Spirit in our lives. He enlarges our hearts as we accept the current situation or experience. Even a beloved loved one who passes away unexpectedly or tragically can make room for a deeper peace than the grieving relative has ever known. A traumatic event like rape can never be undone, but the pain it caused can be dissolved. I know. Molestation happened to me several times at the tender age of seven and was a constant source of deep internal pain even when I was unconscious of the hurting in my surface mind. I "went off" on others for no reason at all, especially any man whose name was "Glen". Nothing hurts inside anymore, and there is no inner shudder whenever I meet someone who introduces himself as Glen.

Nothing Here Lasts

This age, like all the others that preceded it, is currently passing away. So why treasure it? What is there in the cosmos of humankind, the things people value and strive after, which has lasting value? The memories others hold of you will fade, all your earthly possessions will wear out--including your physical body. Our deeply loved pets, all of them, die.

Let go of an inner belief that Sparkie will be wagging his tail as you enter the Heavenly Gates. Yield that belief to the Lord. Why is this important? Because it is now causing you pain. It is making your soul "heavy" instead of light as there is not much or anything in Scripture to suggest he is there. So, you sit and hope that God will reunite you with your beloved pet. Underneath your hope there is pain. If so, there are other hidden pains which weigh upon your soul of which you are unaware. Let go of one attachment and another one will be revealed. If Sparkie is waiting for you, he will not mind your releasing him now. I do not know if my beloved childhood beagle, Herman, is waiting for me either. But there is deep gratitude for the time I had him. It is in the nature of your soul to become easily weighed with wishes and longings. Yield them all to God – longing for a mate, desire for success, and everything your future may or may not hold.

As you yield inner attachments to past memories and no longer wish to go back to them, change them, and make wiser decisions that would have better affected your life, your soul becomes lighter. The Holy

Spirit knows the inner attachments of your soul, and you cannot love God with all your soul until you are free from all inner attachments to outward things.

When the inevitable temporary state of your life reveals its temporariness to you, you will most likely suffer great pain. This pain is present in you because of your inner attachment to that outward thing. The way of the world is to inwardly attach oneself to outward things—things that are certain to change, decay, and dissolve. This is the reason Paul exhorts believers, "do not be molded, fashioned and formed to this outward passing age, but be continually transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2, alternate rendering). This outward age in which we live is a passing age. It will not last. If you have come to accept the transitory state of surface life before your body hastens the dying process it has already begun, you will not suffer inwardly from your body's inevitable decline. Though the outward man is perishing, the inner man is daily becoming new (2 Cor. 4:16).

James described our physical life-spans as clouds which "appear for a little while" and then disappear (James 4:14). Isaiah described the brevity of life with another form in nature--grass:

A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:6-8 NASB

You, me, and the cancer patient in final stages, are terminal. Accepting that your body's present state is temporary (whether eighty days or eighty years) will help you look upon the unseen. By contrast, nothing in the unseen Kingdom of God, which has always been and always will be, is transitory or temporal. Millennia ago a Psalmist declared: "Thy Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" (Psa. 145:13 KJV). One might say this Kingdom is a dimension of the Life above and beneath all temporary external manifestations of life.

When a believer's spirit is awake and alert, and his or her mind remains still, this Life can be seen underneath, above, and through all the various forms of life in the material universe. The seeing of this underneath Life reveals the glory of God. The Glory of God is not the created thing itself, but is the quality that radiates through the various material things He created. All matter came from this Life, is sustained by this Life, and when the material decays, dissolves or passes away, the Life itself remains, untouched by that which has dissolved. The Life is that in which "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The Life is God.

Most ancient peoples did not comprehend God as the Life underneath the external and temporary creations He made. They worshipped the various creations such as planetary bodies or even rocks and trees. They made the still prevalent mistake of the outward form being the Glory they intuitively sensed in it, rather than a temporary manifestation of the Life of the Ages, which is all it is. It is for this same reason that some believers idolize ministers, although they lie to themselves whenever the Holy Spirit endeavors to reveal this to them. Any outward form that is adored is an idol.

"And by them the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles" (Rom. 1:23 TAB). Idolizing a human is no better than worshiping a snake.

Moses, Paul and many others in Holy Scripture kept their continuous focus, during the latter part of their earthly lives, upon that which is not temporary, fading or unfulfilling. They endured by "seeing" the unseen God.

Knowing this is the only ultimate reality, Paul advised us as to our present outlook: "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18 NIV). This is how Moses endured his many trials leading the rebellious people of God in the desert. "He kept on as seeing the Invisible One" (Heb. 11:27 LITV). This is what will help



Chapter 7

The Body-Soul Connection

We now return to a theme introduced earlier in the book, in order to look at it more fully and gain greater understanding. It is vitally important that you understand the connection between your body and soul. We alternate between referring to it as "the body-soul connection" or as "the soul-body connection". These two parts of you are so closely connected that it makes no difference how you refer to this connection.

The Original Pattern

In the original pattern for man, Adam was to live from within his spirit, through his soul, and express life out of his body. His spirit was the biggest part of him, it surrounded him, and through it he fellowshipped with the Creator. His soul was innocent, pure, and without defect. In the soul his mind functioned only when needed, and when called upon from his spirit, his mind operated on a level we today would term genius. With his mind Adam gave names to all animals, birds, and other parts of creation. He catalogued them with perfect precision, and recalled them whenever the will faculty of his soul desired (Gen. 2:19, 20). Obviously, the animals spoke freely with him and he spoke freely with them. Adam represented God to them, having been made in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26, 27).

His body, although physical, had been created in perfection and youthful maturity. It would never malfunction, age or die in the sinless state. His spiritual state of being was continual joy, and in his body he only sensed pleasure, happiness, and fulfillment.

It must be understood that although the first man and woman were created perfect as two entities, there was no division between them on the soulical or spiritual level. They were considered one unit in God's view, which is why He "created them in His image; male and female created He them and called their name Adam in the day He created them" (Gen. 5:1-3). There was no Adam and Eve in the garden prior to the Fall. There was Adam, the male, and Adam, the female. Together they made up "Man". The name Eve was given to the woman only after they had sinned and had split into two completely separated identities (Gen. 3:20). Men and women have experienced profound difficulties relating to each other ever since sin entered the race, creating division between them, as well as creating division within each person.

The Fall

The familiar story of the Fall occurred as recorded in Genesis 3. We will leave it with heavy minded theologians who enjoy endless speculation and debate to ponder the whys and wherefores of the first temptation and sin. We know that Adam, the female, was not surprised that the serpent could talk. This implies that it was not uncommon for all animals to communicate with each other and with our original parents. The serpent, having yielded to and having been taken over by Satan, was the instrument of the temptation. After the woman ate the forbidden fruit, the fruit that grew from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, she gave it to her husband and he ate it with her.

Immediately, their spirits died, shriveled, shrank, and became the smallest part of their being—black holes inside them. Their physical eyes could then see that they were naked. Their minds, formerly untainted, were now infected with a hideous virus, something completely foreign to their previous innocent state. It was the arising of the sin-tainted ego, self. Their minds, having tasted of knowledge, began the process of labeling things, experiences, events, and situations as "good" or "evil", based only upon thought processes. This was mental based knowledge, not the intimate, experiential knowledge previously coming from their spirits. This is where the mind took over, and rather than being man's servant as before and operating only if and when called upon from his spirit, it now began operating almost continuously. It filled our race with ideas of grandeur, importance, achievement (on the one hand) or failure, inferiority, and despair (on the other hand). Thus, humankind began the misery we now know as "life". This is not life at all, but mere existence, and a miserable one much of the time.

I do not know who first said it but this has been repeated by many: "One realizes how far man fell

only after he begins the journey back." This has been my experience as well. Has it been yours? If so, the dynamic transformation God has reserved in your name is like a unique jewel for which you may trade all your trash. Jesus said this is why He came: to give overflowing, abundant, and never ceasing LIFE (John 10:10). His purpose was not to provide eternal existence, but eternal life. "Life", in the Greek word used (zoe), denotes a higher quality of life, a life that transcends natural life into spiritual life itself.

Why is it few genuine believers in the Messiah experientially live the abundant life He came to give? Did He not accomplish His purpose on every level or did He fail to provide all that was necessary? Did He not defeat both Satan plus all his works? (Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 John 3:8). If Christ did so, it follows that we have authority over the enemy (Luke 10:19). What hinders us from experiencing all that our Lord provided us?

The Problem of the False Self

There is a problem, that is for certain, and any honest heart will readily admit it. The problem is with the unrenewed soul part of what we are. Our spirit is new in Christ, and whenever we allow the Holy Spirit to center us in the realm of our new spirit, life is rich. As born again people, we have all experienced these sweet times. The problem comes when we allow the mind to take over, do not keep it governed by the Spirit, that it resumes its former place of tyranny. Its appeal is that we enjoy thinking of ourselves as wise, intelligent, capable of doing whatever we imagine. This is the basic root of the unrenewed soul which John aptly termed "the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

Thus, leaning to our own understanding, forgetting that "the way of man to direct his steps is not in him", and that without Jesus we can "do nothing", we fall back into the soulish mode of natural, unrenewed, sin-tainted life (Prov. 3:5; Jer. 10:23; John 15:5; Rom. 7:18). Then we suffer. Self, before it is dissolved and the real you comes forth, always produces suffering, even if its goals are achieved. Contained in every unrenewed-self, soul-based gain is pain; contained in every spirit-based, renewed soul gain is joy. The pain of self-centered, soul based gain may not manifest immediately, but eventually the sweetest thing obtained by the unrenewed part of ourselves turns bitter. Carnal life can be sweet in the mouth (when it is first tasted), but bitter in the belly (as it cannot be digested).

The Body-Soul Connection is a Primary Teacher

In His mercy, God has provided His children an easy way to know when they are living soul-based, rather than living out of the new spirit: the body.

Listening to your body is an easy way to tell if you have become unconsciously trapped in your mind, and are living out of your unrenewed soul rather than your new spirit. Emotion, which in its Latin root means "disturbance", is the physical sensation you feel in your body. Love, joy, and peace are not, as many mislabel them "positive emotions". They are not emotions at all because they do not cause disturbance. Love, joy, peace and all other eternal positives are spiritual states of being.

Most believe that emotions are part of the soul. It is true that they originate there, but emotions are experienced as feelings in the body. There is a close soul-body or body-soul connection in most people. This is considered normal, but it only seems normal because of man's fallen state. The soul-body connection is an unnatural alignment, one that was necessary once the spirit had shriveled into a small, black hole. This was not the divine design of the human in the original state. It was not experienced in Man prior to his Fall. It is not part of the present state of the new you in Christ. You may not have yet realized this in your experience. In the grace of transformation, you become the new you that you already were but did not realize that you were.

When you become conscious of your soul-body connection, you can use it to your spiritual advantage. There is no need to wait for "total transformation" or any kind of special experience. A believer can easily catch himself or herself going into the abnormal state. A person's breathing is the first indication of the descent from spirit into soul. Breathing becomes shallow, short, and tense. The pulse is another thing you can monitor. The heart always beats faster when anxiety or fear are rising in the mind. Your muscles

also become tense. A general sense of physical unease always indicates a believer is moving into the soul realm, away from the spirit realm.

This most often happens in family or job situations, but it can also occur when a believer is totally alone except for his noisy mind. Being surrounded by huge egos in other people can trigger the sin-tainted ego in you. Once the sin-tainted ego or "old self" has been dissolved, the ego driven energies of others have nothing in you to connect with and they are unable to disturb your peace. Others can no longer make you unhappy.

What is disturbed in you by other egos is your own false self or as Paul called it "the old man", "the carnal-mind", "the flesh", etc. It is the "you" your mind has told you for ages that is you, the "you" you probably still believe you are, but it is not the real you. So, whenever inner disturbance occurs in your workday or home life, you must not blame those around you. The truth is that no person and nothing external ever makes you upset. It is your reaction to them that upsets you. They did not "make" you fall into the false self. Most likely, it is their normal realm of existence. Your reaction to their carnality was something you chose. It is something you cannot reverse until you take responsibility for it. Blaming others for your own inner state is a carnal-mind pattern sure to keep you in prison.

Many Christian women have complained to me, "Pray that the Lord will save my husband. Then I can live in the Spirit." This is a mind-made delusion. A carnal husband or wife can actually help a believing spouse become Spirit-ruled, thus becoming a functioning citizen of the Kingdom. Be grateful for your life circumstance and either it or you or both will change.

Listen to your body. It is a good barometer of what is going on inside you.

Your body will teach you when you are beginning to entertain resentful thoughts, fearful thoughts, anxious thoughts, self-pitying thoughts, etc. It will teach you as you learn to listen to it and become aware of physical changes.

It is wonderfully true: the body, which you may have regarded as an enemy to spiritual growth, is actually your friend. Remember, you do not merely live in a body. Part of the real you is your body (you will live in it forever after Christ comes again). You are spirit, you are soul, you are body...you are a complete being. Christ made full redemption for the entire you.

Becoming Spirit-Governed

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

Romans 8:14 NKJV

Understanding this verse is pivotal in becoming a mature child of God.

The verb "are led" is ago in Greek and actually means "to drive, control, lead about, govern." Following our Lord's baptism by John, the Holy Spirit literally "drove" Jesus into the wilderness (yes, the word "drove" is the correct meaning in the Greek). Jesus obeyed what the Spirit was compelling Him to do and consequently our Lord was Spirit-led (or Spirit-governed) in everything He said and did (Luke 4:1). The Holy Spirit operating in your born again spirit desires to lead and guide you too. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is your Helper, and as such, the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth, show you things to come, and reveal Jesus to you in an ever greater measure.

What is truly wonderful is that the Holy Spirit will produce His fruit within you--the "fruit of the Spirit" (John 16:13-15; Gal. 5:22, 23). What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? The fruit is His spiritual qualities of being—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness, and temperance. These "fruit" or spiritual states of being are the nature of God in you. The Holy Spirit is joined to your spirit, the two are one (1 Cor. 6:17). Your maturity into a full grown son of God depends upon your moment-by-moment yielding to the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul is teaching in Romans 8:14.

A form of ago is used in Acts 16:20 when Paul and Silas "were brought" before the magistrates. It is doubtful that they wished to go before a judge and be thrown into jail. Those arresting them dragged them before the judge according to the Modern English Version.

I am using this example only to illustrate how much the Holy Spirit wants to take the reins of each child of God and direct him or her into maturity and Christ-likeness. True, the Spirit is a gentle dove, but I have been sharply rebuked many, many times. But His rebukes, though firm, are not damaging; they are full of love and can be life changing. This is a different expression of the same agape-love that comforts. In this expression, however, God's holiness is revealed to a believer whenever he or she is rebuked by the Lord. Jesus said, "As many as I love (agape) I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

The Holy Spirit in you can be quite insistent about the same thing. Thank God this is true! The Lord compares us to the mule whenever we are stubborn, asking us not to be like it (Psa. 32:9). There were plenty of times this disciple was "mule-headed" – a term originated by farmers who plowed with mules and had to use strong restraints and rebukes to get their compliance. Thus, the term "mule-headed" found its way into our vernacular and is used in describing people who exhibit strong stubborn tendencies.

The Greek word in Romans 8:14 for "sons" is unique and its meaning is needed for a deeper understanding of the verse. There are several different Greek words used in the New Testament which depict various stages of growth (brephos, nepios, teknon, pedagogue). These words respectively describe infancy, toddler, young child, and student through adolescence. There is one word, however, which refers to an adult son, a full grown son, and this is the word huios.

It is this word (huios) that Paul was inspired to use for "sons" in Romans 8:14. Therefore the verse could be more fully translated this way: "For as many as are governed by the Spirit of God, these only are the full grown sons of God." If you desire to become a full grown son, one who is mature and whole even as your Father in Heaven is mature and whole (Matt. 5:48), you must come under the Spirit's rule in your daily life.

Living From Within Produces Light for You and Others

In order to come back into the original pattern, a believer must live from within his or her spirit, through the soul, in the body. The soul must become once again the servant of the new spirit, and the body will follow with transparency, allowing the True Light of Christ to shine through it. Someone who is in the Spirit becomes luminescent, and becomes a Living Epistle "known and read by all men" (2 Cor. 3:2). This Light is not a temporary ministry anointing, but a general state of abiding in the One Source who is the Light of the world.

Some believers, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, have emphasized the word "anointing" beyond its actual scope of effect. Anointing, especially as it relates to ministry, is a temporary empowerment for a specific task, whereas light is the permanent state God is, and wants us also to become (1 John 1:5). Jesus expressed this reality to His disciples that He was the Light of the world as long as He was in the world, but then went on to tell them they were to be "children of Light" after He had left (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:36).

God's design for man in his original state was to be governed from within his spirit, through his soul, and out of his body. The three are to work together in harmony and oneness. This cannot take place as long as self rules in the soul of a believer. The often disruptive soul-body connection is the norm for most people, even true believers. Few have allowed themselves to come under the rule of God from deep within the spirit and thus experience dissolution of self. Their state of life, consequently, depends upon the various frequently fluctuating events of outward life. Fluctuation and constant change is the reality of life from which you will never escape as long as you live on earth, but there are no inner disturbances or distractions whenever outward fluctuations occur after self has experienced crucifixion.

You can live in continual peace (2 Cor. 13:11). There is no need for disturbance of the soul when it remains under divine governance in the believer's constantly new spirit. Your spirit part of you is not static; it is ever beginning, ever new, ever flowing. This is why Jesus likened it to "rivers of living water" in that you can never step into a river twice in the same place (John 7:37-39). There is something about

the nature of the true you that you learn after transformation: you are always beginning and never ending. You come to understand that beginning is not something that happened in the past but is ever happening now! This is the realm or domain of the Kingdom of God which is within you; this is His best for you.

Thank God Man Fell!

All the original man and woman knew prior to the Fall were the positive blessings of God. There is no way they could have fully appreciated the loveliness of their environment, status, and daily fellowship with God as they had nothing negative with which to compare it in their life experience. All this changed after the Fall. They understood the greatness of their former state of blessing and longed for Paradise lost. Yes, it was sad; all the wars, disease, ungodliness, crime, and death are sad as well. Paul teaches in Romans the famous "much mores" we now have in Christ. He teaches that what is given to us in Christ far exceeds what we would have had, had Adam not sinned. He expressed it to the Ephesians slightly different, that we are legally seated with Christ in heavenly places now (Eph. 2:6). This was never Adam's state even prior to the Fall! When transformative grace has done its amazing work within the soul of a believer, he or she experiences Heaven on earth. This makes life truly alive, rich and full--a never ceasing joy in the inner life. A deep gratitude arises continually within the spirit and is experienced as joyfulness in the soul and thankfulness in the body. Adam did not have this deep appreciation in his innocent state. How could he? This level of appreciation can come only after redemption from sin has been experienced and we understand how deep a pit our Savior has rescued us.

The much more abounding state of grace in which we now find ourselves in Christ gives us far more than Adam ever knew. The good news is we can enter into so much of this abounding grace now in the present reality of the Kingdom. We do not have to wait until Heaven "some sweet day" to experience eternal gratitude. We can have life, and that more abundantly, in the now of daily living as we allow the Lord to bring us into our inheritance—entering into our Canaan and the delightful rest it brings.

When you enter into God's rest for your soul, you cease from soul-energized works from then on, and you experience the true Sabbath within (Heb. 4:10). You have entered into rest. Burnout is impossible in this state. You no longer burn wick, only oil.

Chapter 8

The Cruel Torment of the Carnal-Mind

...to be carnally minded is death.

Romans 8:6

Most of the people I know live in a state of near continual mental torture. They are tormented by their minds, just as their parents were, their current families are, their neighbors are, and their fellow church members are. It is so common for people to live this way that they unconsciously consider it normal. It is actually abnormal, and in its more severe forms, becomes unbearably painful. If the person seeks professional help, he or she will be informed that they are suffering from a neurosis and be placed on medication. So much for "normal"!

The cruel torture of the carnal-mind is the reason behind suicide. The incessant thinking causes throbbing head pain, like Chinese water torture. Some kill themselves with alcohol, drugs, work, amusement, role playing. Whatever else they have abused to medicate inner pain, no longer dulls the pain within them. Others kill themselves gradually with the poison negativity injects into their bodies, like a poisonous wasp as the carnal-mind slowly stings them to death with incessant worries.

I knew my "furrow was burrowed with care" as an old English writer described it, but I was unaware of a capital "H" in the middle of my forehead until my then four-year-old grandson, Hayden Dickens, pointed it out while on my lap. "Papaw, how did you make a capital "H" on your face?" His shining eyes beamed thinking I had put it there for his benefit. I denied its existence, but he insisted, so I looked in their bathroom mirror and saw it plain as day: "H".

I came back into the Dickens' living room and admitted to Hayden that he was right after all, and Papaw had been wrong. There was a definite "H". But, as I explained to Hayden, the "H" stood for "Headaches" which soulical living had produced on my forehead. I told him that life, including the part of it when his mother was a teenager, had made the "H" on Papaw's forehead. The room erupted in laughter. His little sister Brenya, age two, laughed not because she understood the conversation, but simply because everyone else was laughing. (Grandchildren are grand!)

But it is not true Life that etched the capital "H". It was life "under the sun", surface living for decades, that burrows "worry lines" on anyone's forehead. Thus, I am reminded each morning when I first look in the mirror of the destructive force of worry. There is an immediate sense of deep gratitude that I have never found a reason to worry since July 2008. I formerly could not help but worry over virtually anything and everything. My mind had a mind of its own, and I had no power over it. I tried for years to cease from worry in my own strength but could not achieve the worry free state Jesus commanded in Matthew 6:25-31.

Freedom is Glimpsed in Stillness

Teresa of Avila referred to the carnal-mind as a "monkey-mind" that has to be "lulled to sleep" before one's "steps grow lighter". That was her way of describing both the operation of the human mind in its present state, and one's need to disregard it through inner silence. Disregarding the carnal-mind through inner stillness is a good start. It does provide temporary relief, and affords a glimpse of freedom. Inner stillness in itself does not result in the death of the carnal-mind without the necessary accompanying surrender to God of your entire being. Transformation happens when stillness and surrender are coupled. God comes upon the offered sacrifice of self in great light, power, and glory. He then changes the individual to become fully His. The result of this grace of transformation is living in permanent peace. Yes, true change of the soul is something only God can effect. The good news is that it is something He has already provided all of His children to enter! This is precisely what the Cross of Christ provided: execution of the old man. The "old man" is one of several expressions Paul used to describe the inherent fallen nature within humankind.

Notice what Paul said Jesus accomplished when He died upon the Cross:

For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

Romans 6:6 NIV

Other translations are no less clear. Check them out yourself. You will frequently find the word "destroyed" when you read them. God is great! He does not want to reform the fallen nature by providing "coping skills" as well-meaning therapists teach their patients. Often such skills are helpful in finding temporary relief from mental torture. But God, as always, has a better plan: He is out to destroy it in you! He is not going to obliterate your soul as that is one part of the eternal you. He is going to dissolve self within your soul which you have misidentified all your life as "you".

Forgiveness is One Provision of Redemption

Forgiveness of sins through the shedding of Messiah's blood is only one provision of our multifaceted redemption (Col. 1:14). There is also freedom "from the dominion of darkness" (Col. 1:13). The Church has unknowingly minimized the fullness of our "so great salvation" when focused only upon the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 2:3). True, it will take eternity to express our gratitude for this one aspect of our salvation in Christ Jesus. We must never minimize the importance of forgiveness of our sins in any way. We are forgiven of all of our sins! Praise God forevermore! We are saved from hell eternally! Thanks to the Lamb that was slain!

How is it that we who have experienced forgiveness in Christ live in a kind of hell on earth now? We do if we are ruled by the carnal-mind. It is unrelenting in its torture in most believers, even though some of them read their Bibles, attend church services, and share their struggles with fellow Christians in an attempt to alleviate the pain inside them. These means of grace do help temporarily, thank God, but temporary help is not God's idea of Life Abundant. What most churches offer parishioners (a word closely akin to "prisoners") are nice platitudes and bumper sticker theologies designed to help the believers "feel better" about themselves! God has provided something far, far better.

Death of Self is Another Provision of Christ's Death

We are not only delivered from sin's penalty (which is the emphasis of the Church); we are also set free from sin's power (which is the emphasis of Jesus and Paul in the Scriptures). But this wonderful deliverance from the power of inherent sin has been aggressively fought by many church leaders throughout our long history. As a believer, I find it truly amazing how defensive Christians become when you threaten their "right" to be unhappy! Heavy-minded believers sometimes become angry, upset, defensive or even rude when they hear this liberating truth of Christ. They get up noisily, shaking their heads, muttering and storm out of the meeting, slamming the door. What is even more amazing is that most of those who storm out consider themselves "mature" believers.

This reaction is the result of carnal-mind domination for years, and the root behind it is either denial, fear or a combination of both. It is quite sad what true Christians have been willing to put up with inside their minds. They shut their eyes to it, like a child does when discovered during a game of hide-and-seek.

Freedom from the sin nature with all its forms of mental torment and emotional pain is the central theme of Romans 6. It is also one of Paul's general themes in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and his pastoral epistles, too. Search these letters for yourself and the Holy Spirit will make it clear to you.

Ah, one objects, what about Romans 7? They believe victory over the sin nature is temporary, at best, and often quote Paul's statement "Oh, wretched man that I am" in a mourning, whining moan. What they fail to notice are the first two verses of the chapter. Paul turns his attention, not to his original Gentile readers in Rome, but to those among them who are as he is according to the flesh: Jews. He addresses his remarks to those who were married to the Law. Even though he is writing in the present tense, his entire remarks are set in what is known in English prose as the "historical present tense."

This historical present tense is not known in the Greek language, but Paul writes here in that mode.

What is historical present tense? I just used it in the previous sentence: "Paul writes here in that mode." Paul wrote that letter two millennia ago. By saying Paul writes here or Paul speaks now concerning the believer's relationship to the Law God gave to Moses, I am using historical present tense.

Let me ask you this: do you truly believe in your heart that our beloved brother Paul lived in utter defeat within his soul as a believer? Is the theme of Philippians presented to us in a whining tone of defeat? That letter was written in a despicable Roman prison where the soldiers walking above them on grated flooring urinated on them regularly, even while they slept. Is Paul ever grateful despite his outward, negative external life situation? He is continually rejoicing in the Lord. For Paul, living is simply "Christ". Even the worst negative external condition—death—is viewed as gain by this often grubby, filthy, hungry, tired, but happily rejoicing jailbird!

This is why Paul emphasizes the theme of Spirit-governed living in Romans 8. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives the believer power to walk in the new nature. The Spirit is mentioned more times in Romans 8 than in any other chapter of the Bible. Whenever Paul speaks of living or walking in the Spirit, he is speaking of being presently under the Spirit's rule. He is echoing Jesus' invitation to take His "yoke" upon us and find permanent rest in our souls (Matt. 11:28-30). The yoke in that agrarian society was a governing device. Jesus' yoke is the daily authority of the Holy Spirit in a disciple's life, allowing the Spirit to lead, guide, and direct in practical rather than mystical ways. Some have learned how to yield to the Holy Spirit to empower them during ministry times, but have never learned to sweetly abide under the Spirit's gentle rule in daily life. Oh! The difference between the two is amazing!

The Spirit Empowers the Real You into Transformed Living

Not only is the believer "changed (metamorphosized) by the Spirit of the Lord" because the Spirit sets the mind prisoner "at liberty"; the believer is also endued with dynamic power inside the innermost being (the new spirit). The new spirit rises to its rightful position of dominance over the soul and, in so doing, transforms the soul itself (2 Cor. 3:17, 18). Once transformation has accelerated within a believer, the image of Christ is stamped more clearly upon the believer's soul. While he or she never loses their soulical identity as a unique individual, that person has the face of Jesus Christ shining through the entire personality.

After taking up their personal crosses and following the path Jesus laid before us, believers experience not only crucifixion of the sin-principled ego as well as the resurrection of a selfless state of Christ-likeness. Sin no longer has dominion over us in full salvation because sin is strange and alien to the transformed soul.

If our Example was never bound by worry and fear, why should His followers expect to live that way? After all, He commands us in the Gospel of the Kingdom never to worry or fear (Matt. 6:25-31; Luke 12:31, 32). The angel instructed Joseph that his yet virgin wife would bring forth a Son whom Joseph was to name JESUS. In explaining the meaning of Yeshua, the angel declared: "He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). The word "from" means "out from among, from the effects of" their sins. Search it out for yourself if you have difficulty accepting this. Read all your Greek study aids concerning "from" in Matthew 1:21. Your own homework will convince you that Jesus did not come to save us in our sins or as we sin, but from our sins—their old power over us is broken in the present rule of the Kingdom of God.

The Carnal-mind is God's Enemy and Yours

One of the primary effects of our sin is the carnal-mind. Paul goes so far as to declare it God's enemy (see Rom. 8:7 in various translations). If something is God's enemy, would you not be wise to consider it your enemy? If something is an enemy of God, and yet is operating in our lives, how can we expect "life and peace" to dominate our earthly lives? No amount of whining about the way things are in this world will change you; rather it will harden you into a semi-permanent state of defeat.

The carnal-mind has been done away with by the Cross of Christ. Paul says the believer is now in

possession of "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). Nothing could be clearer than this. If we have the mind of Christ, and the Scripture does not lie, how can we justify enduring the cruel torment of the carnalmind? The carnal-mind is not part of the believers' Canaan inheritance.

If you are like Israel of old--living far beneath your Kingdom inheritance as you walk around in circles in the desert of the carnal-mind--wake up and realize God's call is to press forward toward your land of milk and honey. You are in the Wilderness of Self where unbelief, fear, and worry torture your inner state. That is where you barely make it, hang on by a thread, murmur at God and others, and are in perpetual self-made suffering. Your life is heavy and your sorrows many when you are self-ruled instead of Spirit-governed.

His Canaan for you, the Kingdom of God within your spirit, is a place of fullness, not scarcity: "a land that flows with milk and honey" (Num. 14:8).

His Cross Leads to Your Cross

There are two crosses emphasized by our Lord in the good news of the Kingdom of God. The first was the Cross He was to bear. The second is your very own cross, tailor-made by God, reserved for no one else but you. Your cross, if accepted, will enable you to become transformed and cause your old soul tendencies to dissolve. What will be left is the new life of the Risen Savior in your soul. Your soul will become servant to your spirit and the Light of Christ will emanate from within you, causing your whole body to become full of Light (Matt. 6:22; Luke 11:36).

Matthew 16 is most illuminating about the work of transformation.

In this chapter, Simon (whose birth name means "reed") is given a revelation from His Heavenly Father concerning the true identity of Jesus, the Son of the Living God. Many thought Jesus was one of the prophets. Simon, after telling Jesus who He was (is), then received his own spiritual identity from Jesus. In other words, Jesus gave Simon his spiritual identity in the new name "Peter" (petros means "rock"). Contrasted with a reed, a rock is not easily blown by the wind. Jesus was telling this disciple that He was going to transform him into a rock, and it certainly happened (Peter became one of the pillars of the Early Church). Where he had been weak, even to the point of denying his own Lord, Peter later boldly proclaimed Jesus. After his empowerment with the Holy Spirit, he proclaimed Jesus in the same city where he had earlier denied Him.

Something happened not long after Jesus pronounced Simon as "blessed" and told him he was now Peter. Matthew 16 goes on to describe our Lord's rebuke of Simon Peter, to the point of addressing him as Satan. This does not mean that Peter was literally Satan. What he had actually spoken — Christ should not be crucified — had originated from the Evil One. Simon, full of self, spoke the words that were put in his mind. Then, turning to His disciples, Jesus laid out the keys to the Kingdom or personal transformation:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself (Grk: "his soul"), and take up his cross, and follow Me. For anyone who desires to save his life (Grk: "his soul") will lose it, and anyone who loses his life (Grk: "his soul") for My sake will find it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV

primary meaning in the passage!

The power of this passage has been completely lost on the modern Church, because we fail to grasp the Greek for the words "himself", "his life", and "his soul" in the passage. It's all the same word: psuche in reference to the believer's soul. When Jesus says "anyone who desires to save his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life for My sake will find it", He is not, as the Church has interpreted, referring to martyrdom. True, the passage can be applied in that way, and those who have lost their physical existence due to persecution for Christ are given special rewards in the Heavenly Kingdom--but this is not His

Furthermore when Christ asks, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" He is not primarily

referring to someone becoming wealthy and then dying and suffering eternal damnation, although this is also an application of His words which are indeed true. It is true that if someone were to gain the whole world, and no one ever has, and then lose his soul in eternal damnation, it would have profited him nothing.

But this is not the point Jesus is making to His future leaders. Their danger is not eternal damnation (excepting Judas "the son of perdition"). Their names are already written in Heaven as Jesus is speaking to them (Luke 10:20). Read the Matthew 16 passage slowly and the Spirit will show you this is true. What Jesus is telling His original disciples is that if they lose themselves in whatever advancement they find in the world, what they gain will bring them nothing but misery now. Television "reality shows" of the rich and famous, for example, reveal how much misery, conflict, and distress they suffer, just like the rest of ordinary humans. Nothing anyone outwardly gains contains the power to inwardly transform them.

This is the ever new message of Jesus for His disciples in all periods of time in which they have lived or will live.

Jesus is focusing on the state of a believer's earthly life in the entire three verses. He is referring to soul transformation for all His disciples, including those who live on earth today. Simon Peter demonstrated his need of soul purifying in speaking words from the Father producing Jesus' blessing, followed by his speaking words from Satan resulting in Christ's rebuke. Jesus is saying there is nothing on the planet more valuable for a disciple than complete, personal transformation of his or her soul. By comparison, to gain the whole world and be unchanged in your soul would not be profitable. That disciple would be left in mental torment and emotional pain regardless of any outward achievement or gain. Anything a disciple gains in the material world is empty, futile, and vain without prior transformation. The reverse is also true: anything any disciple loses in the external realm of earthly life is no loss at all if that disciple's soul is transformed. Anything a follower of Jesus ever loses in external life always contains within it the possibility of further Kingdom advancement. Inherent in every temporal loss is the potential for eternal gain.

In context, notice Christ is speaking to His disciples, all of whom, except Judas, were destined for Heaven. Their names were already written there and they are enjoying its beauties today (Luke 10:20). Although they were true believers, His disciples were far from transformed. Within them, all were defective in several or many areas. James and John had lots of soul-based ego which manifested in pride and at least twice in anger. Christ's disciples were "slow of heart to believe," they frequently "hardened their hearts," and they were often incapable of understanding spiritual truth. Once Jesus asked them, "How is it that you do not understand?" (Matt. 16:11). He understood His disciples' natures perfectly. All were self-centered. They were soul dominated, just as His disciples today are soul dominated in the false self--the "me" each of them has created in their unrenewed minds.

What Jesus is emphasizing to all His disciples, then and now, is that just as the Father has purposed a Cross for Jesus, He had also prepared a tailor-made cross for each follower of Christ. The beauty is that it is the same with each disciple that it was with the Master. The choice for or against crucifixion is left up to each one alone. It is a personal choice for you no less than it was for Jesus. Will you accept your cross? If you do, many others will be blessed. If you do not the many you could have helped will be left untouched by you but God will send someone else to them. There is only One person that was indispensable to His plan, Jesus. Had He chosen the way of self and refused His Cross we would be lost. There was no Plan B for humankind's salvation.

Not only will you be far less useable to God in your unrenewed state, you will also be far less joyful, alive, and peaceful than you could have been. There is only one way you can enjoy the risen Life of Christ within your soul: you have to die on your cross first!

The Purpose of Your Cross

Wait a minute, brother, you may ask, "Did not you teach earlier in this book that when Christ died

upon the Cross we also died there with Him?" Yes, that is correct. "Well," you may continue, "why do I have to die on my own cross if I already died on His?" Accepting your cross and experiencing death in your soul makes your death with Christ experiential within the soul.

It is true that all believers died with Christ and identified with His death, burial, and resurrection in the "watery grave" of baptism (Rom. 6:1-4).

This is what is known in soteriology--the theology of salvation--as "legal standing" or "forensic truth". But the actual experiencing of ones' own personal death of self is realized when each disciple takes up his or her uniquely tailored cross. This experience affects what is known as "actual state". Your legal standing and actual state may differ dramatically. The former never changes; the latter changes quite a bit in most believers. Their inner state may be one of peace during morning prayers but may change to one of turmoil later during the work day. In the believer's legal standing he or she is already "the righteousness of God in Christ" but in the believer's actual state he or she may be living far beneath their legal righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). God's purpose in "rooting us out of this present evil world" is to raise our state to the level of our standing (Gal. 1:4).

Your cross differs from my cross, and each of us has unique things in the soul to which each must die. Material possessions may mean a great deal to one believer, whereas ministry position may mean a lot to another believer. Your cross is uniquely designed for you alone. The constant for all crosses is that they all come out of the Cross of Christ and they all are different, suited only for each follower of Christ. You take up your cross, the one made only for you, and upon it you must die.

Many of the Lord's followers live in mental torment and emotional pain. The state of their souls is not one of health or "wholeness" as Jesus put it, kodesh is the Hebrew word for "holy" but this word followed out in Hebrew usage also means "healthy". (The word "kosher" which means "clean" comes from the word "holy", so "healthy" is a proper derivative. Jews avoid foods that are not labeled "kosher" today because to them the eating of these foods is unhealthy as well as unclean.) Mental torment and emotional pain are not only unhealthy but also lead to various sins: resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness, judging, angry outbursts, slander and many other sins. To be unhealthy in one's soul leads to sins of all kinds, even fleshly sins.

Some believers seek medication for inner pain but when presented with what appears to self as "bitter medicine"—dying to self which produces wholeness—self-ruled people balk. When you tell someone in pain that their solution lies in dying, it sounds to them as though you are speaking in tongues. Why? The Bible truth of soul dissolution has not been presented in many churches, let alone emphasized. Unless a believer has taken the words of Jesus in the Gospels seriously it is doubtful that they have even heard of the believer's self-death required in the soul of every disciple of Jesus.

This message doesn't tickle the ears, after all, who wants to die? We want to feel good about ourselves and this doesn't sound like it will feel good, does it? Much of the Church, not only the "seeker-friendly" part of it, flat out rejects the message of the believer's cross. This is for the same reason the world rejects the message of Jesus' Cross. Both rejections are due to the same thing: the old nature in every human. The self recognizes the truth that if the individual in whom it thrives accepts his or her God designed cross, self will cease. It fears its own death and endeavors to keep its hold upon its victim by deceiving him that its death will mean his death. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is only when a believer experiences true surrender of his soul to God then he or she experiences the death of self--the "old man" as Paul termed it. It is then that the soul of a believer is transformed. The soul of a believer is then restored to the original state it knew prior to Adam's Fall. This occurs when a believer embraces and experiences his own death by taking up his cross. When the soul is restored to its original function in a human being, the soul ceases as adversary to the believer's spirit, and once again becomes its servant. Instead of continuing in the misery of soul-rule, the believer becomes Spirit-ruled. As a consequence of proper soul alignment the transformed believer has come to the end of self-induced

suffering. Life becomes vibrant.

Inside every true believer in Christ there has been birthed a new spirit, which is deeper inside him or her than the soul. This new spirit is where God indwells His children and where He gives true believers the deep desire for change in their souls. This does not mean that all true believers allow their Father's inner workings in them to produce transformed souls. Many live their entire lives resisting what the Spirit of God wants to produce within them. Their eternal rewards in Heaven will be far less than what God desired them to enjoy. They will be called "least in the Kingdom of Heaven" Jesus predicted (Matt. 5:19). Many who will call Heaven their eternal home will yet "suffer loss" as their earthly works of wood, hay, and straw will burned up at the Believers' Judgment--the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

It is because our Father wants His children to be "partakers of His holiness" and receive eternal rewards that He deals with us quite severely when we resist His work of inner change in our souls (Psa. 118:18; Heb. 12:5-14). When God's children reject their crosses, their loving Heavenly Father chastens them in a variety of ways including adverse life experiences; it is through chastening that many of His stubborn children finally come to the place of willingness needed to accept their crosses and die to self. I was one of our Father's "problem children". It was necessary that I suffer intense pain, loss, shame, and the threat of deprivation before I became willing to become willing to die on my cross. It was necessary for me to go through many tribulations before entering the Kingdom experientially for one reason: I made it necessary.

Several key times in my life I had suffered greatly, yet remained inwardly stubborn to Jesus. There were times I had imagined that I had yielded all to Him, but it was just another trick of self's carnal-mind, in its effort to preserve self. I allowed self to deceive me and convince me that I had finally yielded my all to Christ any number of times during the previous four decades. It took a dramatic encounter with God as I sat on a large, flat rock in the middle of a nature preserve that I finally saw self in a subject-object type of way. I saw my greatest enemy and it was the false me that had masqueraded as me all my life. It was only then that my Lord dissolved the tyrant of self in me.

This ability to see self and watch it dissolve was nothing I did but only allowed. It all was the operation of God's grace, not the result of previous preparedness through diligent disciplines, as many who have heard me teach this message have wrongly imagined. This is self's trick in them lying to them that David has made some great and wonderful sacrifice to God to be qualified to receive the blessing of soul transformation. Quite the opposite is true. I was stubborn, often mulish, and full of pride. That is all I am going to reveal!

It is true that eventually I had become so disillusioned through self's deceptions that I hungered and thirsted for righteousness, but all the hungering and thirsting were also grace-initiated from the Lord. Yes, I chose to deny self in my soul, but I would not have yielded at long last [close to 40 years!] had my Father not worked in me to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). He had patiently allowed me to come to the end of self so He could at last have His sweet way within my soul. I merited nothing that was freely given. One of the many wonderful characteristics of grace is that it is given without regard to merit or demerit. Transformation is a synergistic work of God. (Synergism means both God and the individual work together toward the same result.) You eventually must cooperate with whatever God initiates in you, or transformation will not occur in you and you will suffer throughout your entire, miserable life. I want to stress that the author ranks among the great sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). This is one reason I suffered so greatly, and so badly needed God's work of transformation in my soul. When it comes to grace your disqualifications qualify you. This is one of the Lord's many beauties, the grace of God.

You do not have to follow the stubborn path I followed, but most of the believers I have known over the years are ruled by self rather than the Holy Spirit and are indeed quite stubborn and self-willed. This is why they suffer. Some yield to the Spirit in ministry performance, as they have learned this is the only way to have an anointed meeting, but in their everyday lives they resist Him just like other believers. Stop creating your own misery! Allow the Father to bring you into your inheritance the easy way--because He delights in you--not because you had no other choice than either surrender or die in the desert choking on a mouthful of sand (2 Sam. 22:20).

What He is saying in this book is this: "Listen child, you cannot avoid pain. Instead of continuing in it all your years, go ahead and embrace it. After you embrace it, take up your cross and die. Then, inner pain will cease and new life will become your realized state in the land of your present inheritance, the Kingdom of God."

No, you do not have to die to the self life if you do not want to; in fact, it can only happen if you want it to happen. Furthermore, you will only want it to happen if God has given you the desire to allow your self's dissolution. You must decide that you cannot continue in resistance to His will as you have in the past. But I can promise you this: if you continue to quench the Spirit's desire to change you, you will continue in misery and it will become only worse than it is now. Your inner suffering will continue increasing if you continue hardening your heart to God's persistent voice in your spirit. After death your eternity will not be as wonderful for you as it could have been. If you do not take up your cross and let your old self dissolve, you will always be less than you could be, both now and forever.

You need a soul that is renewed in order to realize your full potential in the Lord, as the old soul cannot enjoy the Kingdom of God in its present unrenewed state. You will never enjoy abundant life on earth, which is Jesus' provision for each of us, until you allow the old self to dissolve or die. You will not radiate God's glory in eternity to the degree you could have either. You will be saved from damnation, but you will yet "suffer loss" (1 Cor. 3:15).

Save yourself some painful years, and make your eternity the best one it can be by gladly embracing your own cross. Your cross is where your will crosses God's will and you choose His will over yours. This is how a disciple stays in Kingdom alignment and continues in the transformed state of daily grace: "Not my will but Yours be done."

Ask the Lord if what you are reading is true. Let the Holy Spirit show you. The paragraphs you have just read point to your spiritual liberation. Then, consider this passage soberly:

For this reason--as the Holy Spirit warns us, "TO-DAY, IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS YOUR FOREFATHERS DID IN THE TIME OF THE PROVOCATION ON THE DAY OF THE TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT, WHERE YOUR FOREFATHERS SO SORELY TRIED MY PATIENCE AND SAW ALL THAT I DID DURING 40 YEARS. THEREFORE I WAS GREATLY GRIEVED WITH THAT GENERATION, AND I SAID, 'THEY ARE EVER GOING ASTRAY IN HEART, AND HAVE NOT LEARNT TO KNOW MY PATHS.' AS I SWORE IN MY ANGER, THEY SHALL NOT BE ADMITTED TO MY REST"

--see to it, brethren, that there is never in any one of you--as perhaps there may be--a sinful and unbelieving heart, manifesting itself in revolt from the ever-living God.

Hebrews 3:7-12 WNT

inheritance in this life and lessening your eternal reward.

You will do well to pray over this admonition and enquire of the Lord, "Dear Jesus, is there a sinful and unbelieving heart in me? Is part of me revolting from the Eternal God?" Then wait upon Him. Allow the Holy Spirit to show you that worry is a sin—one form of adultery, in that it fosters unfaithfulness in your soul from continual trust in God. Most of the Christians I know regard worry as a little thing, and actually believe it is impossible to live worry-free. Worry is a horrible sin, one that corrodes the soul of any believer who practices it. Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life" (Matt. 6:25 NIV). To do so is to sin against the Living God and become hardened in heart, preventing you from entering your Kingdom

The Lord tells His disciples that we must first "deny our souls" prior to coming into the emancipated life. What does it mean to deny the soul? Does it mean more than saying "no" to your "self"? Yes. It means

to disallow, disregard, and disidentify with the sense of who you have always thought you were. Who you have always thought you were, is not who you are. Who you are is deeper than thought.

Dissolving the Sin-Principled Soul

It is clear that dissolution is what Jesus meant when our English Bibles tell us that He said we are to "deny" ourselves. Speaking Aramaic as He did, not Greek into which the Gospel of Matthew was first translated (this is the studied opinion of many scholars), Jesus was speaking of total dissolution of the sin-principled ego in the soul, so that the soul then could be transformed, restored to its original purpose. Just as He told us earlier in Matthew that we were to be "whole" even as our Heavenly Father is whole, He now says that the old, unrenewed soul part of us is to be denied, abrogated, disowned, no longer identified with or dissolved. This comes into complete harmony with Paul's teaching that the old man, having been crucified with Christ, is now to be "destroyed, done away with" (Rom. 6:6 various renderings).

Your soul is your earliest identification as you. This is the part of you where your sense of self arose during the earliest stages of childhood: my toys, my room, and my clothes. Your earliest outbursts of anger may have been demonstrated when another child entered your room uninvited and played with your toys! This is the old self, my friend, and welcome to the human race as we have all experienced the rise of false self. We never outgrew it either, but it did outgrow us until it ran almost all our lives. In transformation it is experientially dissolved, and you no longer indentify with it...your new identity is your unique creation in Christ, and He is not a cookie-cutter God, either as demonstrated in billions of differing creations in the universe. Like Simon discovered, Christ will give you a new name. The new name is your spiritual destiny in Christ.

Your spiritual destiny is unique to you, pictured in the New Testament as your very own new name on a white stone that only He who gives it, and you who receives it, can understand (Rev. 2:17). You can wait until heaven, if you like, to receive it or you can let the Lord tell you who you truly are in this life. This can happen only when you pay the price of true discipleship (denying self, taking up your cross, and following Jesus). Then, you will never suffer from inner confusion produced by not knowing who you are anymore, and will never need to attach yourself to an outward label, function or identity as you have done so frequently in your past. Death can happen quickly and the new life you thereafter enjoy is unending. Dissolution of my 52 year-old false self happened in an instant. I have never suffered inner pain since.

People find this difficult, if not impossible, to believe only if they foster within them an unbelieving heart which is continually going away from the Living God. The main manifestation of a Christian's unbelieving heart happens not when they hear that God is capable of performing healing miracles on earth today, but when they are told that He is able to kill self in them so they can truly live in new freedom they have never known.

What most churches teach is suppression of self. Keep a watch on the lower nature they advise. Do not give in to the sin principle they say. Why is it so hard for church leaders to understand the purpose of a cross? Does a cross denote suppressing someone or killing him? A cross depicts death, not suppression! Death can happen suddenly and so can resurrection. Early Christians had a creed they chanted when they were led to lions in the Roman Coliseum: "It is in dying that we live." This can be your experience, too. When it happens in your self today's Romans will marvel at your serenity when facing life's "hungry lions".

Let me ask you this: if you suppressed a murderer with ropes would not he be able to attack you again after he was untied? If you killed him instead would not you be permanently free from him? Since the murderer is far more vicious and cunning than you are you would be the one defeated if you took him on yourself. (You always have been defeated whenever you attempted to do it on your own, haven't you?) This is why self has run you over every time you tried to handle it in your own strength. Let God kill the deceiver instead and then you will be done with the old you.

If you die before you die, you will live the rest of your life.

Your New Name is Your Permanent Identity

Throughout the Bible names are important. They denote natural and spiritual destiny, nature, purpose and such. Simon's old name was something he had always lived down to. His new name, Peter, was something he eventually lived up to. Your new name is your spiritual identity in Christ, and it is possible for you to know it on earth, but, if you are made to know your new name, you will tell no one who you are. You will let the Lord reveal it to them if He so desires. There are things He says in secret that you are not to repeat to others, and in the new state there is no ego present that makes you want to tell others. There is no competition in the Kingdom of God, no place for self to boast. Until He can trust you with it, it is uncertain you will receive your new name.

Your new name is not a role, ministry or function you may fulfill on earth. If the Lord has called you to be an evangelist, then it is perfectly fine to tell others that you are an evangelist, so long as you do not allow yourself to be caught up in a role identity, as, sadly, many preachers and teachers have been. A ministry function is not a spiritual identity. Identifying ministry function as spiritual destiny is a recipe for personal misery whenever there is a shrinking of the function you perform. Diminishment, of one sort or another, in every earthly function, will indeed happen in this surface realm of constant flux and entropy, "where moth and rust corrupt."

Prior to his death, a famous preacher spoke of his withdrawal from the scene of active ministry and the discomfort it caused him. He remarked during a television interview that he had to find out who he was as he had never known his true identity. This famous preacher, his name a household word, even imagined himself becoming homeless in his old age! This dear old man was still bound by his false sense of self. Whether you are a famous preacher, politician, powerful military leader, maintenance attendant, bookkeeper or house servant, there is one thing you can count on: your outward role is sure to diminish with the passage of time. This is the frailty and fickleness of life "under the sun".

But, if you have experienced transformation of your soul through allowing the false self in it to dissolve in God's Presence, you will not suffer as a result of role change or by a lessening of others' opinions of you. Surface events no longer matter to you, and you are humored by names and terms people call you. They do not know who you are because they cannot know who you are until they know who they are. People called the beloved apostle Paul, a false teacher, and religious leaders said Jesus was of the devil (Matt. 12:24; 2 Cor. 6:8). Their labels of Jesus and Paul did not affect either of them and you will be unaffected by what carnal-minds say about you as well.

In other words, once the sin-principled ego in you--the old, unrenewed part of your soul--has dissolved, a beautiful thing happens in your inner state: tormenting thoughts of all kinds immediately cease. This includes tormenting thoughts of comparison with others, as well as tormenting thoughts of past and future, condemnation, regret, failure-consciousness, worry, despair, etc. All negative thoughts in the mind and corresponding emotions these thoughts produce in the body simply go away. You will be conscious of some of the changes, but not all until the Holy Spirit reveals something new that is now in you. Then you will offer new praise and worship from somewhere deeper inside. You no longer sense a need to catalog yourself or take personal inventory. Your life becomes one of continual gratitude as your renewed, transformed, sanctified soul is kept in the undisturbed peace of God.

It took me days to mentally process many of the changes that occurred instantly sitting on the rock. Much time has passed since that life-changing day, and still I have not processed it fully. I sense no need to because the mind's role in my life has lessened dramatically. My lack of mental comprehension of all I experienced in the new dimension does not hinder my enjoyment of it. I do not need to understand with the mind what I know and freely enjoy in the spirit.

The main change you initially experience is that you sense a lightness of heart within and a difference in outlook. You come to understand you have taken circumstances and people far too seriously. People are

like grass; they wither. Circumstances are like weather; they are undependable and constantly change. People around you and different forms of nature are beheld in a serene, calm state. Negative things which may occur in your presence seem to pass through you. They no longer stick to you and rub you the wrong way. Inner walls of resistance have crumbled and negatives just pass through. They do not lodge within and grow weeds of bitterness in the garden of your heart as they did before this change happened.

You may still have an "H" on your forehead, but there are no more worries within the mind. People remark that you seem younger than you appear. You tell them your age and they say, "You seem younger somehow." They do not know how to put in words the newness they intuitively sense. Their eyes tell them you are older than their hearts say.

Another interesting thing that has happened since transformation is that people frequently assume that I am financially rich. My clothes are quite ordinary--usually jeans and a t-shirt, and I wear no watch or jewelry. A young man approached me the other day and asked for a loan. This led to a discussion about true riches. He left without any money, but with a new awareness of wealth. Will he ponder the truth he recognized? Maybe not now, but after he has tired of self he may.

Another profound difference I noticed was how life became suddenly simple. There is less mental activity, but whenever the occasion calls for it, the rested mind becomes active and is much sharper than before. When the present moment has no need for thought, the mind simply quiets itself and remains still while the spirit actively communes with the Lord. Instead of inner noise, there is inner stillness, akin to the stillness you may feel when you are out in nature, one with life all around you. That same stillness resides in you no matter where you are because you remain centered deeply within your spirit. There is continual fulfillment in earthly life in God's Kingdom.

The spirit part of you is primary, the soul part of you is secondary, and the body part of you is tertiary. All three are the complete wholeness you become in transformation. The soul, having been transformed and restored to its proper place in the divine design, is at rest. Sleep becomes more restful, physical functions such as eating become more enjoyable and you are satisfied, perhaps, with not as much of it as before. Sex becomes something used to express love to your mate, not something that drives you which you desperately need. If your life situation makes sex morally unavailable you are content. You never feel deprived, but rather fulfilled.

Whining has millennia of momentum behind it in our race, but it ceases instantly in transformation. Everything is fine including greasy, cold fries. You may choose not to eat them, you may even ask for a replacement, but you do either action in a state of peace, not murmuring or complaining. People whose jobs involve waiting on the public are continually thanking you for your patience or your kindness. You are unaware of either, you simply are aware of deep peace.

Yesterday, a lady at a busy fast food counter had been swamped with demanding customers. I was standing in the back of the line enjoying the peace of the Lord. When it became my turn, I calmly placed my order and smiled at her. Her immediate response was, "You're a Christian aren't you?" "Yes," I replied, "how did you know?" "Jesus is all around you. Thank you for coming in, I was overwhelmed but I sensed someone was praying for me and kept noticing you. You have brightened my day." She was no longer overwhelmed with the busy day in which she had felt trapped. She ceased her resistance of what she was feeling which had produced inner misery visible on her countenance. She now expressed peace and relief on her face. Her load was lightened by my peace.

Life takes on a flavor of enrichment. You enjoy everything as it happens; there is grace for living. There is peace. There is sweet contentment. Complaining about weather vanishes in this new state as you discover how rain can be as refreshing to the soul as sunshine, and snow is sweetly peaceful. The desert is beautiful in its barrenness, and a single tree becomes as magnificent as a great forest. An ordinary lake or pond becomes as meaningful as the ocean. There is peace in every loss, and joy in any diminishment that occurs. You sense an enlargement of heart in God's Presence when outward negatives occur (2 Cor.

6:11).

This is the new state of the Life of the Ages in you now. It is not new chronologically; it is ever new spiritually. It seems as if your life is ever beginning, ever new. His mercies become new every morning in your senses (Lam. 3:23).

The will of God is not heavy and burdensome (Psa. 40:8; Matt. 11:28-30). Jesus delighted in doing His Father's will, and we will delight in His will whenever we experience the deep peace that comes from abiding in Him. Jesus said His burden is light (easy to carry) but it becomes Light itself (radiant and glowing). Whether preaching to thousands or waiting on tables, whatever you do in this new state brings the same fulfillment. It is a deep and abiding fulfillment.

It is fulfilling because calm attention is given to whatever you do, and the result that may or may not follow, is relatively unimportant. You know that you did it well, "as unto the Lord", regardless of the outcome or outward result.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Colossians 3:23 NASB

You attach no label of "failure" when something "goes wrong", knowing you cannot fail because you are "agape-love motivated" in all you do (1 Cor. 13:8; 1 Cor. 16:14).

Follow Jesus

Following Jesus each day is simple when we keep our focus on Him and abide in moment-to-moment trust. The Holy Spirit does His work in us and through us in this new state of inner stillness. We are like branches connected to the vine. The flow from the Source we are joined to produces grapes on our twigs (John 15:1-6). Fruit grows effortlessly as we allow Him His way with us moment-by-moment. He keeps us on track as we allow Him to govern us. His yoke of authority over us is gentle, and His burden is easy to carry. We follow Him; He makes us. "Follow Me, and I will make you…" (Matt. 4:19). Our job is to do the following. His job is to do the making. He makes us into different vessels as it pleases Him; one vessel is no more special to His heart than another vessel—each is deeply loved by the Maker of all things.

Jeremiah observed that the clay on the potter's wheel was soft, moist, and pliable and took on whatever form the potter desired. As you become soft and pliable in the hands of God, He makes you into whatever earthly function He desires. To you there is no opinion, it does not matter anymore, as your delight is abiding in His will. You cease striving, let go, relax, and become still. And then you know God, and He knows you (Psa. 46:10 Amplified). You may undergo several different functions that change in the earthly existence of your spiritual destiny, but you do not identify with any of them. They simply and easily happen in you and through you.

To clarify this, let me illustrate it from personal example. In this moment, I am not a preacher. I am a writer. When I put down this laptop, I will cease my temporary function as a writer. What I will be a few minutes from now is a pool player attempting to defeat my still undefeated son in the basement (the place where this book crystallized). Yes. It was in the ordinariness of everyday life that God spoke to me through an uncharacteristically serious moment in the life of my vibrant, fun-loving son. In a few moments, I will not be a writer. I will become a poor pool player and enjoy every minute of the game watching my son's excellence at the pool table. I will enjoy every moment of the game as much as I've been savoring every moment of this entire day, which has mostly been spent in my prayer room with my laptop.

There is only one thing that is constant in my life: I am. What changes are various functions, but I do not identify with them. Functions are less than secondary, but they are always fulfilling if He is asking or allowing me to do something at this precise moment. Life becomes so much lighter when you are focused on who you are in the core of your being, rather than carrying around a mental weight of "I am a writer" or "I am a carpenter" or "I am a homemaker". If asked what I do, I may simply respond on the same level

as the question, knowing that the answer is correct in surface life. Even though I am a permanent citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, no less one this moment than I will ever be, I still use earth language when speaking to earthlings.

When earthly life is taken lightly: "It doesn't matter whether you win or lose. It only matters how you play the game."

Chapter 9

Transformation through Mind Renewal

Therefore, brothers, I call on you through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is the good and pleasing and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1, 2 WNT

As we have seen earlier in this book, Romans 12:1, 2 is a pivotal passage where Paul speaks of metamorphosis. Paul connects transformation with the experience of mind renewal or what is commonly called "renewing the mind." He precedes mind renewal with a call for deeper consecration to Christ, urging his brothers to present themselves as living sacrifices to God.

Most teaching I have ever heard about renewing the mind has centered upon reading, studying, learning and confessing the Word. Mind renewal is taught as reprogramming the mind so much so that teachers have compared mind renewal to computer reprogramming. I have never heard anyone preach or teach that the renewing of the believer's mind is preceded by one making himself a living sacrifice to God, which is Paul's only emphasis in the text.

The knowledge of the Word is fundamental in a believer's life. The study and learning of Scripture is vital to spiritual growth, providing milk for the newborn in Christ and meat for the maturing saint (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13, 14). The Word of God is spiritual nourishment and this is why first reading, then studying, and then meditating on it day and night produces growth. Paul certainly believed this as any cursory reading of his letters shows, but he does not emphasize the importance of learning the Word for renewing the mind or in Ephesians 4:23 where he says, "And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind" (TAB).

As important as knowledge of the Scriptures is, it is not Paul's focus in our text. He emphasizes the giving of our entire selves to God. He says it is only right that you and I do this, telling each one of us that it is "your reasonable service" or "the spiritual service it is right for you to give Him". Jesus gave His all for you and me. Therefore, it is only reasonable that you and I give our all to God. It is the only "acceptable sacrifice to God" "in view of the mercies He has shown you" (alternate renderings of Rom. 12:1).

I personally know many followers of Christ who believe their minds are renewed because they have made "the Word of God their primary focus" through countless hours and years of study, and believe certain truths the Bible teaches. These same people are yet totally mind-dominated by trivia, pointless, useless, mundane thinking. Their minds run to first this thought and then the other thought, their considerable Bible knowledge notwithstanding. These Christians are completely unaware that their ceaseless mind activity is one of the greatest hindrances to their spiritual lives.

This "living sacrifice" differs from Old Testament sacrifices, in that they were already dead when presented upon the altar. Our sacrifice is living rather than dead because the spirit part of the believer doesn't die in the presentation of a living sacrifice, only the old self dies or is "done away with" (Rom. 6:6 NIV). The sin-principled ego in the soul deceases. The living sacrifice, then, includes death even as the word "sacrifice" infers it.

This is Paul's way of echoing Jesus' teaching that unless one denies his soul, takes up his cross, and follows Christ, that one cannot be Jesus' disciple. Paul is teaching the same thing his Master taught, although he is presenting the same truth in the Hebraic understanding of making sacrifices. Jesus presented the same point in the common Roman-era punishment of crucifixion. None of His disciples misunderstood what Jesus meant when He told them they each had to take up their crosses. They correctly understood that He was telling them they had to die in order to follow Him.

What is Consecration?

In Hebrew thought, to consecrate something meant that one set it apart for sacred service. This is precisely what each disciple is called upon to follow before mind renewal can occur. It is something one does alone, individually, and apart from others. The question for each of us is: have I truly set apart my entire being for God? The question is not: have I surrendered to the ministry? Or, have I committed my children? The question is only this one: have I set apart all of me for God alone? The answer can only come from the Holy Spirit within you. He will assure you if you have done so; He will convict you if you are withholding part of your being from God. It would be wise to put this book down and prayerfully consider this question before reading any further. Have you truly set apart as sacred your entire being unto God?

For myself, the utter and complete consecration of my entire being occurred in July, 2008. As a young believer, I thought I had done this many times, but the Holy Spirit revealed to my heart, that prior to my utter consecration in 2008, there had always been a hidden agenda which self had carefully masked and hidden from my awareness.

The agenda as a young preacher was that God would use me more, and, of course it was only for His glory! During lengthy prayer sessions and days and weeks of fasting, I was consecrating myself for a greater anointing, a bigger ministry, and other such things. I was not consecrating myself, as Paul said it, "in view of God's compassions and mercies" toward me. There was always the surface "me" somewhere in the previous partial consecrations.

Entire consecration is true consecration: it is done out of appreciation for all God has done for the individual, not for what the individual may wish to accomplish for God! In the utter and complete consecration one becomes aware that in giving everything he is to God, he is giving nothing to God at all! He is merely returning to God what is rightfully His.

Herein lies the gaping difference, and it is as wide as the Grand Canyon. Have you truly given all of yourself to the Lord? Come on now, really?

What step work accomplished in me was revolutionary, and provided the basis for the complete consecration that followed, but many others have fully consecrated themselves to the Lord without working a formal program. The Holy Spirit may not be leading you down this or that path. He is the Perfect Guide. Let Him reveal to you what is needed in your life in order for you to become able to "present yourself as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." Following the leading of the Holy Spirit is the one vital key to the consecration that produces transformation. He led me into a formal program, whereas He leads others down different paths. Since each individual is unique, it is up to you, friend, to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" as it is "God who is working in you both to desire and to perform His will" (Phil. 2:12, 13).

I, for one, am grateful for any discipline that helps people consecrate their lives more fully to God and do not criticize any program, church teaching, renewal movement, prayer style or study method that helps whomever surrender him or herself more fully to our Lord. After transformation happens, however, you will eventually lay aside whatever primary discipline you followed because it no longer speaks life to you as it once did. There is no need within the transformed soul for attachment to any outward practice or study method, just as school children eventually lay aside books from which they have learned much because they have outgrown them and are ready for more.

Transformation Follows Consecration

Paul says that after a believer fully yields, surrenders, and consecrates himself to God, he will "be transformed" by "the renewing of [his] mind".

No one who is transformed is ever without peace. This is the criteria for proving transformation to oneself. Do I live in continual peace? Paul makes mention of "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7 KJV, but read 6-10 for the background). He doubtless lived in that realm, having been transformed, and he knew experientially that there is nothing on earth that can compare to this

blessed inward state. It makes every bitter thing sweet, and turns dross into gold.

God often shows Himself to His object of change through adverse life situations. He did this with Job. The one who is arguing with God by complaining about adversity is demonstrating that he or she is not consecrated. One who complains over this or that, murmurs about how terribly unfair life has been to him or to her, resists what is going on now in the content of life, is at odds with God.

There is no way around this, precious child of God. If you are complaining, you are not consecrating. Instead you are in resistance mode. This is not good because whenever we resist God, He resists us (Jam. 4:6). Whenever we are in resistance mode, we are not in submission mode. When we are not yielded to God in all things, the result is inner disturbance, sometimes even to the point of chaos, in our souls.

When this outward, passing form of earthly existence is seen truly for the first time--it is not dear and nothing to be clung to--then consecrating all of oneself to God becomes easier. The world is ever in a state of "passing away" so why should it be precious to us? (1 John 2:17). It is a delusion of the carnal-mind to cling to this outward passing age, which is why Paul continues on with the profound statement "and do not be conformed to this world" after he speaks of the consecration offered to God as a living sacrifice. The main way believers today are conformed to this world is in their view of time. You may not have even thought of this before. I surely had not until the Holy Spirit revealed my made up mental time bondage to me. In transformation one of the main things you experience is the stoppage of time. You step into eternity. The eternal is your home. It is here that you are one with God. He is the eternal out of Whom all things, including time and space, have come.

It is during the transformation experience that the sense of time as you have known it all your life ceases as an inner reality. During the grace of soul transformation a believer becomes, as Paul said, "spiritually minded". You are outside of time in the sweet embrace of God, one with the Eternal. You live, move, and have your very being in God. You are blessed evermore as you live in this state. You have been renewed in the spirit of your mind.

The "Spirit" of Your Mind

...be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Ephesians 4:23 NASB

As we have observed earlier in this book, the spirit and the soul are distinguishable as two separate parts of each of us. The new spirit and the old soul cannot combine, they war against each other. This is the "normal" Christian life. A small amount of the time a believer is located in his or her spirit, such as during unusually deep, focused prayer, worship, or in receiving prayer from another who is anointed. Sometimes a believer's spirit is also his or her location while in deep meditation of the Word, although most believers generally do not go deeper than the reasoning process of the mind when in the Word.

Most of the time, however, a deeply devout Christian is located in his or her soul. They are aware of the spirit part of them, and can often sense Christ's Presence there, but they are not located there. They remain in their soul part of themselves.

During transformation the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (which typifies the soul and the spirit) is removed. The two areas are no longer divided inside, even as they were never divided when viewed from the outside. In the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tent of Meeting (where God and man met), the Holy Place and Holy of Holies are each contained in two sacred tents, but later when Solomon built his Temple both places were contained in one building, what was termed the Sanctuary or "the House of the Lord". Indeed, the two compartments comprised the entire inner building (2 Chron. 5).

This building was surrounded by various porches and contained smaller buildings used for different purposes so Temple ministry could function. It was correspondent to the Outer Court of Moses' Tabernacle. This area was part of the House of the Lord and, therefore, sacred but not as holy as the Sanctuary. There were steps which worshippers had to ascend in order to reach the outer perimeter of Solomon's Temple. They, too, were considered as part of the House of the Lord in a general sense. The

Israelites prayed various Psalms as they climbed the steps up to the House of the Lord. The entire area was considered sacred, even the city in which it was built was sacred (Jerusalem). The Land in which Jerusalem had been built was also considered sacred (Israel) and distinguished from "the nations". In the Jewish mind each sacred place varied in degrees of holiness. The Land of Israel, sacred though it was, was not as sacred as the city of Jerusalem. The city, sacred though it was, was not as sacred as the steps leading up to the Temple proper. The Temple proper containing all the sacred buildings was more sacred than the steps leading to it. The Sanctuary was holier than the Outer Court of the Temple. The Holy of Holies was also known as "the Holiest of All" because of the visible Presence of God inside it.

The Outer Court was the place where the blood sacrifices were offered throughout the course of the year upon the Brazen Altar. Behind the Brazen Altar was the Brazen Laver positioned in front of the Sanctuary (the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies). It was at the Brazen Laver where the priests had to wash their hands and feet prior to entering the Holy Place. They entered the Holy Place by parting the first curtain that kept the contents of the Holy Place shielded from the Israelites' view when they went into the Outer Court to offer sacrifice through ministering priests that served at the Brazen Altar.

The Second Curtain

Once inside the Holy Place, the priests who had entered through the first curtain had access to everything in the Holy Place – the Table of Showbread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense. But that was the limit of their access inside this building. There was a beautiful second curtain embroidered with Cherubim which hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. (This is why the Sanctuary became a reference for the Holy Place more often than it did for the Holy of Holies. When priests were said to be ministering in the Sanctuary, they were only in the Holy Place and not in the Holy of Holies.)

The purpose of this curtain was to separate these two compartments in this building. Only the High Priest could pass into the Holy of Holies and he was permitted to do this only one day of the year: Yom Kippur. This was the most sacred day in Israel's calendar, the revered Day of Atonement. When the High Priest parted the second curtain and went into the Holy of Holies (also known as the Most Holy Place in Scripture) he was privileged to behold the Shekinah--a theophany of the visible Presence of God. This small, glowing Cloud hovered continually above the Mercy-Seat. The Mercy-Seat was a golden lid on top of the Ark of the Covenant. This Ark was a rectangular chest that contained the Tablets of Stone on which were written the Ten Commandments, a pot of Manna, and Aaron's rod that had budded with life.

The High Priest had carried a bowl with him into the Holy of Holies. The bowl contained animal blood from the victims he had earlier sacrificed "before the Lord". The High Priest sprinkled this blood seven times upon the Mercy-Seat. On both ends of the Ark of the Covenant sat a gold cherub whose wings extended over the Mercy-Seat. The cherubim (plural of cherub) faced each other and the Shekinah, the only Light in the Holy of Holies, hovered there between the wings over the golden lid. The Shekinah was considered by the Hebrews to be the very Face of God, the visible manifestation of the Invisible One (Heb. 9:24). Yahweh beheld the sprinkled blood on the golden lid and kept His people "atoned" or covered throughout the following year. (If you would like to study this see Lev. 16; 23; Heb. 9; 10.)

When Jesus died on the Cross a remarkable thing happened to the Second Curtain, the curtain the High Priest of Israel annually parted on his way into the Holy of Holies. This second curtain, at the time of Jesus of Nazareth, was located in the second rebuilt temple of Solomon, the Herodian Temple. It was 60 feet high:

But Jesus uttered another loud cry and then yielded up His spirit. Immediately the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom: the earth quaked; the rocks split;

Matthew 27: 50, 51 WNT

Scholars have pointed out the fact that this gorgeous curtain had been woven in parts and sown together. The manner in which they were weaved and sewn would have made a ragged and irregular tear

had a natural force, such as the earthquake, caused the tear. Although we cannot be for certain concerning the nature of the tear, the wording in the Greek can suggest that the curtain was split in two evenly. This caused it to divide into two halves of equal size. Had the curtain split in two from the earthquake it most likely would have also split from bottom to top, rather than "from top to bottom".

What is evident here is that the sword of the Lord must have sliced the second curtain downward in a straight slice. True, I am reasoning that this is what happened. No one can be certain as the Jewish leaders did not want to report this event to the populace – their reason surely was to avoid embarrassment of the fact that there was no Shekinah cloud hovering over the Mercy-Seat. The beautiful, ornate Temple of Herod, the apostate Jewish puppet-king allowed by Rome, was empty of the Glory of God! This was unthinkable to the Jewish people who considered themselves to be near to the Lord Himself when on the sacred Temple grounds. The Presence of God represented by the Shekinah is what made the Temple holy! No Glory (Hebrew, chabod) in the Holy of Holies meant that He had not accepted or even observed their worship of Him. Their costly sacrifices for which they had been charged exorbitant prices by Temple attendants had been for naught. Any Jew who had been told the truth of what had happened in their most holy Sanctuary would have been aghast. It meant one thing: their religion was empty and vain.

The Importance of the Curtain's Tearing

There was more to the Second Curtain's rending than exposing Israel's emptiness before God.

But there is something vastly more important in the splitting of the second curtain hanging between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The emphasis of Hebrews 9 is that Christ entered the Heavenly Temple which was the original Temple (the earthly Temple was a physical copy). He entered not with the blood of animals, but with His own Blood and accomplished more than an annual covering. He ratified the new and eternal covenant. The rending of the Second Curtain in Herod's Temple at Christ's death signified that the way into the Holy of Holies has been opened for us. There no longer exists a division between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

This takes on even greater significance when you consider that every believer is now a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). In this symbol of you as a temple of the Holy Spirit, the Outer Court corresponds to your body. The Holy Place corresponds to your soul. The Holy of Holies corresponds to your spirit.

Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in you, which you have from God, and you are not of yourselves? You were bought with a price; then glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are of God.

1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20 WNT

In an untransformed believer there is a definite division that exists between the spirit and the soul. The believer is "located" we might say, in one or the other place, the Holy Place (soul) or the Holy of Holies (spirit). When he or she is in the Holy of Holies you can see it on the believer's face. There is peace and a sense of the Presence (Shekinah-the Face of God in the glowing Cloud) upon his or her countenance. This happens often during particularly "good" worship services, anointed prayer meetings, and such. This does not happen often, but when it does, all present sense the reality of God, His Presence, in what is described as a "wonderful" way. Such a believer is located in the Holy of Holies and is visibly altered from their usual state. He or she is joyful, confident, peaceful, and care free. There is a freshness about them.

When you see this very same believer the next day, he or she may be troubled with cares, or if they are "fine" they are noticeably different from they were while in the sensed Presence. You can see, as it were, the gears of the mind working. They are now "located" in the Holy Place or in the soul. They are more "normal" in this state in their behavior, much more like an average person who does not know the Lord, yet they are still different. Although their souls may be "heavy" with cares and responsibilities to handle on their jobs, they do not curse, tell coarse jokes, or behave rudely with others. They are obviously

Christians, but they have lost His almost visible Presence upon their countenances.

This realm of life of being located in the soul rather than in the spirit is the way most believers live, work, and play. It is considered "normal" Christian living. They may have daily devotional time, spend time with the Lord in His Word, but they operate a more or less natural manner in daily life. It is apparent that the spirit part of these believers remains "curtained" from the soul part of them.

The miracle of transformation takes the Second Curtain down as an experienced reality within the believer. The spirit is now attached to the mind, able to continuously renew. This is what Paul meant when he said, "be continuously renewed in the spirit of your mind" after he told the Ephesians to "put off the old man" (Eph. 4:23 TAB). The Presence of God is more present than before, more obvious in everyday life. Their God-connection is strong and others enjoy being near them even if they cannot tell you why they do. "He has such strength," or "she is so calm" are common expressions one overhears about a believer who is located in the Holy of Holies.

Another benefit of the second curtain's rending is that the spirit and the soul become harmonious. Although each is still distinguishable, there is no division between them. The sanctified soul becomes transparent so that the ever new spirit can emanate sweetly from it. The transformed, sanctified soul no longer has nothing in it to grieve the born again spirit. This type of believer is a "complete" child of his or her Heavenly Father (Matt. 5:48 WNT). When others are near them they intuitively sense this difference about this individual and may remark that he or she is "vital", "alive", and "different" than others. Many opportunities to glorify God naturally appear as a day unfolds.

The Sweet Comfort of the Spiritual-Mind

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Romans 8:6 NKJV

My meditation of Him shall be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord.

Psalm 104:34

As we have seen when one lives out of the carnal-mind, life becomes heavy, dreary, and burdensome. As Solomon discovered, in that period of his life which he called "under the sun"--living totally in the flesh--such life is vain, empty, and futile: hence, the expression "Vanity, vanity! All is vanity!" Solomon observed in his emptiness, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:14 KJV).

Futility (inner vexation) is the inevitable and unavoidable result of living a mind-ruled life. Remember that when Adam fell, the soul rose up and began leading or better, misleading humankind (the spirit shriveled up, died and became a sort of black hole within our race). Man lived by reason, imagination, wit, and cunning—soul functions. This pattern is unfixable in surface life which is why it is prevalent in every society, religion, and government. Of course, every mind-solved problem creates another mind-made problem! Almost every problem man has tried to fix in his environment has inevitably created bigger ones. Not only is this true in the realm of nature, but society, home life, business, church—virtually everything that is run by the human mind — ends up a bigger mess than it was after we "fixed" it. Humankind's environment is unfixable by humans; God designed it to be futile, empty, and short-lived (Jer. 10:23). He designed life to be productive and fulfilling only when it is lived under His rule.

God predicted this weariness and emptiness when He told Adam, "in the sweat of your face you will produce bread until you return to the dust from which you were taken" (Gen. 3:19 paraphrased). Life is full of sighs until the Life of the Ages is experienced within the soul of a man or a woman. Then, all of life becomes vibrant—even negative experiences are turned into positive blessings. Life becomes lighter, easy to bear, and one "counts it all joy" when negatives come (Jam. 1:2).

As John of the Cross experienced centuries ago, negatives serve a useful purpose in God's plan of transformation: they become fuel for the fire of God's transforming power, and one goes "from glory to glory" as Paul said when he expressed the same truth (2 Cor. 3:18). The promise of Jesus that "nothing

shall under any circumstance harm you" becomes living and real within the transformed or renewed soul (Luke 10:19). "Every bitter thing is sweet" to such a blessed one (Prov. 27:7).

What is the Spiritual-Mind?

The "spiritual-mind" refers to an individual whose mind has become submitted to the spirit part of that believer. In other words, the soul has once more become secondary, and the spirit primary within a believer's inner life. His or her spirit grows, expands, and surrounds them—the spirit becomes the biggest part of them, rather than the smallest part of them as was the case prior to the new birth.

After the new birth experience, a believer's spirit begins growing, but only until a disciple of Jesus has allowed his or her spirit to become dominant in daily life, which occurs after personal consecration as a living sacrifice, does the spirit of a believer truly govern his soul (mind, will, and emotions). Because his or her spirit is fused with the Holy Spirit, that one becomes more than spirit-governed (little "s"); he or she becomes Holy Spirit-governed and grows into a full, mature child of God (Rom. 8:14). This growth happens quickly during the transformation experience—indeed, it is a miracle. The soul fuses with the spirit part of the believer in this miracle and there is immediate expansion of the Presence of God in the believer's spirit to filling the believer's soul.

The "life and peace" Paul speaks of in the "spiritually minded" is unspeakable. There are no words to properly describe it. I am reminded of the story concerning an old southern preacher over a century ago who underwent great transformation and spent more than an hour describing the joy he now knew. Seeing that the congregation was not understanding him, he finally threw up his hands and said, "Folks, it's better felt than telt."

Chapter 10

Stay Out of Mind Zoos

When my sisters and I were quite young our parents took us to a zoo. Oh, what fun! We stayed together as a family and went from one exhibit to another. I can still recall visiting the Chimpanzee Exhibit. The cage held eight or nine chimps and they loved entertaining us. Jumping from limb to limb, chattering away as they swung all around the cage made for lots of laughter from all the children, and even amused young parents and older grandparents as they gathered around the exhibit.

I'll never forget that after we had had our fill, the entire group turned away from the chimps and headed toward another exhibit. Suddenly, a chimpanzee began screeching. All the children and some adults were alarmed. The monkey put his hand over his chest and fell from a limb to the ground. We had all believed something serious had taken place and ran as quickly as our little legs let us. "Is he dead?" we asked each other. The chimp lay still and motionless. Suddenly he jumped up, looked at us all and laughed. Other chimps joined in the mockery of the fooled humans; some of us laughed too. Then we turned away once more.

The chimp tried his trick again, but none of us were fooled the second time as we walked on toward the hippos. Soon he tired of his screeching, and all went silent at the chimp cage until another group arrived some time later. All in our group could still see the Chimpanzee Exhibit from other exhibits because the zoo was laid out in a circular pattern. Then, everything repeated itself. When that group tired of the monkey entertainment and moved away, the same chimp (well, it may have been another one—they all look alike you know) shrieked loudly, clasped his chest, and fell to the floor of the cage. People turned and ran back to the cage. Children mistook it for dead and some even cried. Then the chimp jumped up and laughed hilariously as did other chimps. Those of us who were observing the fooled humans laughed at them too, as some earlier group, perhaps, had laughed at us.

And doesn't the above paragraph remind you of your mind? Has it not followed a similar pattern throughout your life? Has it not laughed at you? Has not your mind been like a zoo at times with a lot of pointless activity and noise going on inside it with unfamiliar creatures? Is this how you want to continue to live? You do not have to.

Teresa Saw this Type of Mind Centuries Ago

Many decades later as I was reading Teresa of Avila, something she wrote grabbed my full attention: "when you have lulled the monkey-mind to sleep, your steps will grow lighter." Monkey-mind? This phrase reminded me of my zoo visit so many years earlier. Was my mind like the chimp cage? I heard a strong voice come from within myself – yes it is.

It was a moment of clarity cutting through years and layers of self-delusion. I had placed such importance upon the mind. My carnal-mind loved it because this false self had made it the control room for the entire ego within me. Am I the only person to whom this has ever happened? Perhaps not...maybe the false self has done a similar job on you? Do you value your mind above all else? Most people do. They are mind-ruled, mind-dominated, and mind-controlled. Some of these people ruled by the carnal-mind are deeply religious. Their carnal-minds tell them they are "better" than other people.

Self Loves Attention

The lower nature, old self, old man, flesh self, ego (whichever term suits your fancy) keeps itself in power through the carnal-mind in many believers.

The carnal-mind loves to play silly mind games. Until one learns they are not to be taken seriously, one will remain soul-centered or soul-based, rather than spirit-centered where Christ indwells every believer. The carnal-mind or monkey-mind loves attention, and thrives upon the attention most people give it. It's constantly playing games. Ignore it and see if it doesn't crave the attention you used to give it. It is an unconscious habit with most people. Breaking free of this pattern is something you can begin now. You need not have a total transformation experience to begin breaking free of carnal-mind patterns.

Consider the following suggestion: the next time you observe the monkey-mind making noise, rather than giving it attention, ignore it. Instead of taking each thought that comes to your mind seriously, take them lightly. Chuckle at the thought inwardly and allow it to pass on through your mind. Do not attach seriousness to it. Realize that most of the thoughts you have had during your life have never materialized, and the bulk of your past worries were for nothing. You have wasted a lot of inner energy with worry, hurry, "what if", and "if only".

Awareness of the monkey-mind decreases its hold on your life. Do not be annoyed by the monkey-mind as this is another one of its many tricks to keep you in its hold. Do not resist it either, as this only strengthens the false self. Instead, just ignore it and deliberately turn your attention toward something else. If you do pay it any attention, laugh at its silly thoughts.

As you move away from the monkey-mind, it realizes it is losing its hold on you during your waking hours. So, it may go wild in your dreams. Do not make the mistake of taking your dreams seriously either. Most dreams are the product of the monkey-mind. If the Lord gives you a spiritual dream, there will always be a deep, inner state of serenity in your soul when you awaken, even if the dream itself contains a disturbing message. Spiritual dreams are rare occurrences; the others are common and should be dismissed when you awaken. Become still inside and allow whatever you have dreamt during sleep to dissolve. A spiritual dream will not dissolve. It will intensify in God's Presence during stillness. A monkey-mind dream will dissolve almost immediately in the first waking seconds once you learn how to awake and be still with God (Psa. 139:18).

Stop taking the old nature seriously and it will lose its power over the new nature in Christ--the born again spirit. By being aware when the monkey-mind is talking, you immediately free yourself of its power. This practice is quite liberating as it exposes lies you have unconsciously believed since childhood. When you intimately know the truth, as it dawns upon your consciousness, you are then experientially free (John 8:32).

The Carnal-Mind Resists the Present

Another thing that will help you rid yourself of the monkey-mind is awareness of when your mind is going into the past or the future. Most of us actually believe the past is. In other words, we unconsciously believe that the past is real and that it is still going on somewhere now. Where it is going on we do not know, but we have an inner belief induced by the carnal-mind that it is present somewhere somehow. Ask yourself if this is not true and wait for the answer. You will discover this is true on the unconscious level. (I personally prefer "unconscious" rather than "subconscious" but whatever works for you is fine.) People actually watch television shows and movies that show people going back into the past or forward into the future. This proves that they unconsciously believe in both the past and the future as present realities. How insane! Past and future are mental concepts and this is all they are. They only exist in the carnal-mind. This is why many not only believe the past is they also believe the future is as well, on some imaginary other plane, other dimension or faraway galaxy!

Paul said the carnal-mind is the enemy of God and is not subject to His rule. The reason the carnal-mind (or monkey-mind) focuses on the past and the future is because this is where it can stir negative feelings in the body-soul connection. These feelings: regret, blame, and despair are produced by thoughts that are focused on past history. The feelings of anxiety, fear, and dread are caused by thoughts focused on the future. When mental thought stories start in you, you can monitor them by observing feelings in your body. By listening to your body you can easily stop them.

When despair and gloom attach their negative energies to your body, you feel low and despondent. This means your mind is focused on the non-existent past, but you still believe it is. You are an adult but have not outgrown fairytales. You unknowingly produce them in your carnal-mind.

When your body is tensing up or feeling dread, your breathing becomes shallow and your heart beat increases. Your mind is focused on the future, which never comes or is experienced. Like the past, the

future is just another fallacious mental concept. Your body does not know that what your mind is thinking is unreal, so it responds with feelings which an unbeliever or an unenlightened believer accepts as real. This is why the body's intelligence, which operates independently of the human mind, tells your body to shut down to prevent it from becoming prematurely old. The body shuts down by making you tired. Its hope is that you will fall asleep so it can repair itself.

The body was not designed by its Creator to live in past or future; it only functions well in this moment. But as the monkey-mind "what ifs" jumping to the future or "if onlys" retreating to the past, the body tries to adjust to what it thinks is really happening and the body's organs become overworked, especially the heart and adrenal glands. How can it do otherwise as long as it gets its signals from a confused mind?

Slowly the body's intelligence gradually becomes aware that it is housing an insane mind and tries to shut down. It creates even more tiredness so it can put itself to sleep. The carnal, unsound mind reacts vigorously by trying to keep the body awake with additional stimulants, such as caffeine or external excitement. The sufferer keeps himself or herself awake or sleeps shallowly.

The individual lives in his or her self-made torture, unaware of the injury they are causing themselves. Your carnal-mind is a killer--make no mistake about that. If stress does not end your physical life prematurely, it will surely lessen its sweetness and enjoyment. The carnal-mind, as stated earlier in this book, is a parasite that eventually kills its host. Not only is self-induced torture tolerated in our society, many view self-induced torture in the forms of anxiety, fear, and dread as normal. How greatly our society has been deceived! Some people actually believe that they could not function well without stress. This is insane.

"He works best under pressure, so I try to always keep him that way," a department head remarked to her supervisor who commended her for keeping her employee unusually productive. She went on to say, "I rarely tell him he's doing a good job; instead I constantly threaten to fire him. He hates me, but the outstanding results speak for themselves!" Little did she know she was about to be axed less than a month later (true story). Her supervisor realized her subordinate could handle her job. So he promoted him and terminated her.

The overly demanding and critical supervisory did not know the spiritual truth of the law of sowing and reaping and how this truth operates in all facets of everyday life. If you do not value your employees, your superiors eventually will not value you. Whatever a man or woman sows they will reap, and whatever judgment you place on others will be placed on you with greater intensity (Matt. 7:1, 2; Gal. 6:7).

As you have been reading this book, have you become aware of mind patterns you had previously regarded as necessary and helpful but are, in fact, completely unnecessary and even injurious? Have you become aware that your common mind patterns involving "past" and "future" are especially hurtful? All of your life has always occurred now, and will forever unfold in the present. This is often heard in recovery groups: "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift which is why it is called 'the present'." Nothing ever happened to you in the past that wasn't in the present when it happened. Nothing will ever occur to you in the future that will not be in the present when it occurs. It seems silly to state the obvious, I know, but isn't it more silly to live as if past and future are actual entities instead of mental concepts? It makes you sick to live in this so-called "normal" way. Is it not insane to make yourself worn out, tired, and even sick by the fictitious shenanigans of your carnal-mind?

Being in the present is where the All Powerful One eternally resides. This is why He told Moses that His name is "I AM" (Exod. 3:14). The God "who is, and who was, and who is to come" chooses to live in the Eternal Present (Rev. 1:8). If He who is wisest lives in the eternal present, maybe it would be wise to become "now focused" ourselves, as this is where faith is operative (Heb. 11:1; Rev. 1:4). Being in the present is I AM's gift to you. Accept His present of the present and you will change. Your faith will grow

as there is rarely anything truly dangerous happening, is there? If your focus remains in the present when something "big" does happen, you will have clarity to process and handle it much better if you have a Spirit-produced "sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

All who are past-oriented or future-oriented are now-resistant. There are no exceptions. They are always complaining about the way things are wishing it would be different from what it is. This is "now resistance". The weather is not the way one prefers, so a complaint is thought and spoken. The coffee is too strong or weak, so another complaint is thought and spoken. The jeans are too tight or loose, the traffic is too congested, the President is woefully stupid, and so is the boss in the office. What a pig! And, poor me, I have to work under her! It's just my luck that I'll be stuck with her for the rest of my life! Oh, no! So far in this paragraph the woman who is complaining has been up for only two hours of her day. She saw the weather outside her bedroom window, went down and made coffee, put on her dress jeans, got in her car, turned on the radio and heard news about the President whom she judged as stupid. This caused her to think about her boss whom she judged as stupid too, and then projected that she would have to work under "the pig" for the rest of her life. She has held her present job less than two years. She got out of her car, dreading the day ahead of her and entered her workplace gloomy with dread and self-pity. This is the way "normal" people live!

Paul said that the sin of murmuring always destroys (1 Cor. 10:10). One thing murmuring always destroys is the consciousness of God's Presence in the present. This is why murmuring people are deeply miserable and rarely satisfied fully with anything they experience in life.

Resistance leads to more resistance. One layer of pain piles on top of another layer of self-inflicted pain. Would not it be better if it was just the devil doing all of this to us? We could stop him instantly in the name of Jesus. But these are things the carnal-mind does to us, in its league with the enemy. The false self in you that operates in the mental area as the carnal-mind, is the culprit behind your resistance and pain. This is why it needs to die. Satan had nothing in Jesus because Jesus was egoless (John 14:30). Simon Peter was a different story (Luke 22:31). Satan had access to Simon through the chaff of self in him.

Living now-resistant is a sure way to stay in bondage to self. Things rarely, if ever, are good enough. Even a nice picnic is sprinkled with complaints about how it would be nicer "if only" the breeze was a little lighter, stronger, warmer or cooler. Or this picnic would be much nicer "if only" flies were not all around our food. In fact, why did God create flies or did the devil make them? Why would God create such pests? How can God be good and create mosquitoes? Then, there are ants here, too. Oh, these awful ants! They are crawling everywhere here. Just look at them. All we wanted to do was have a nice family picnic, just for once. Why do bad things always happen to us? They do not happen to other people ALL the time, do they? Why do we get picked on? Hurry, let's get up and move over to that table over there. There are probably fewer flies and ants over there (?).

Yes, "the grass is always greener" in the carnal-mind. People live as slaves to the old self creating misery in themselves, as well as in others around them. Ants, mosquitoes, wasps, and flies simply are. You do not need to understand how they came into being, why God created them. Why question God's wisdom during a family picnic instead of enjoying your loved ones fully focused on them, connecting with them in deeper love? When it comes to the "ants" of surface life, you can choose to eat with them or not. If you share your meal with them they won't eat much. Only eat in peace when you eat, where you eat, and with whatever you eat (1 Cor. 10:31).

Ants Do Not Eat Much

God tried to teach me this lesson in the Philippines in my 20s. I was continually alarmed by my Filipino hosts and their attitude toward ants. As ants dove into the ketchup on our plates, I tried in vain to remove them. My hosts laughed at me saying in unison, "Do not worry, Brother Alsobrook. The ants don't each much." I tried to explain to them about germs ants carry. My hosts tried to stifle their laughter as I

explained the existence of germs, but eventually they all broke out uproariously. I certainly could not see anything funny about germs. I could not understand why they laughed at all, let alone so hard and long. It was a mystery to me.

The mystery cleared up a few later when I overheard two young pastors chuckling among themselves: "Brother Alsobrook is so smart in the Bible, yet he believes there are small Germans on the ants!" "Yes," another one who had been cooking remarked, "The other day Brother Alsobrook asked me, 'Did you wash your hands after you patted the dog? They have Germans on them, you know.' He's a silly man." Little did they know, I had been in my room moments earlier complaining about "these poor, stupid idiots" and then whining in my religious voice, "Dear Lord, why did You bring me here? I thought You loved me!" Since I was religiously self-ruled at this point in life, I mistakenly called this activity prayer!

Do not Resist Negatives—Practice the Principle of Acceptance Instead

This is what Jesus meant in His Kingdom teaching when He said, "But I say unto you, do not resist what is evil..." (Matt. 5:39). What Jesus is teaching here is the principle of acceptance. What He is referring to concerns things that appear as evil in daily life. Someone attacking you appears as evil, but instead of retaliating you wisely choose to follow the example of Him "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not" (1 Pet. 2:23). Ask your Helper, the Holy Spirit, to help you be like Jesus when what appears as evil seems to assault you.

People most often resist us with words in our society, rather than face slaps. There have only been a few times I've been face slapped in the service of Christ, but each time there was a fresh grace infusion to not retaliate, accompanied by a deep peace as I accepted His will in that moment. There have been hundreds of times I have been "word slapped" or "look slapped", especially in the Church. These occasions have not been yielded to the Lord as well as the face slaps! I have often returned evil with evil with a well-placed "come back"--a word blow in rebuttal. This always resulted in a diminishment of the sensed Presence of God in my heart. Thank God, I no longer retaliate or even inwardly resist anyone's assessment of what I am, and consequently the peace and Presence of God abides. People often become quite agitated with me whenever I speak on the subject of this book, so I have many opportunities to practice the principle of acceptance. Their negative reactions enable me to become deeper in peace.

The Early Church took this commandment seriously--His commandment to not resist what is evil. James commented years later that it was common for believers to even undergo murder and offer no resistance to the evil men who did such things. Speaking to the wicked rich of his society, James observed, "You have condemned--you have murdered-- the righteous man: he offers no resistance" (James 5:6, WNT).

It is common in our day to resist everything that might become negative and may be only neutral. Take weather, for example, it is always only neutral. Many Christians, like non-Christians, constantly judge weather as "good" or "bad". You can make a decision that will affect the outlook of your entire life if you decide to welcome weather in all its expressions. It is God who sends wind, lightning, rain, ice, snow, and sunshine (Gen. 7:4; Psa. 48:7; 78:26; 107:25; 135:7; 147:8; 148:8; Matt. 5:45). By no longer resisting weather in its various forms, you will come to enjoy it and see the beauty it continuously presents. "The heavens declare the glory of God" always--not only when the sun is setting or the clouds are fluffy white against deep blue (Psa. 19:1).

When weather appears to be interfering with your picnic plans, instead of complaining or murmuring about the weather, do something different and choose non-resistance to the weather instead. This is a helpful practice for producing continuous peace in daily life--bring submission to God about the weather and everything else by practicing continuous surrender throughout the day. On rainy days, "bad days" as they are labeled, the son's ball game gets called off. You can stand outside rebuking the devil if you want to, and increase your own unhappiness since you are resisting the Author of the weather or you can choose to just accept the day as it is with joy. Then, in your place of present acceptance, an idea will come to you

of something else you and your son can do to deepen the bond between you.

Thus you can transform a "bad day" into a good one. What is even better is this: the day is just a day, neither "good" nor "bad". On sunny days, days that the mind labels as "good days", the game goes on as planned and your son knocks a homerun. Oh, the "good day" just became a "GREAT DAY" the mind now says as you eat ice-cream with your beaming son. On another day that began as "a good day for the game", your son has a front tooth knocked out by an errant ball and the "good" day immediately became a "bad" day. You drive to the dentist murmuring and complaining about the unfairness of it all and your general unhappiness with life. "Why do bad things always happen to me?" you may whine (the truth is that they do not). Complaining won't change anything. It will, however, increase the misery level inside you. The day itself is neither good nor bad. It is only your mind that has changed the day. The change in the day is only in you, not in anyone else. At the exact same time you judged this day "bad" someone else has just proposed to his sweetheart a few miles away. He will tell you that today is a great day. You are both wrong. Today is just today. It is not good, bad, great or awful. The day just is what it is like every other day.

Another area where resistance-mode thinking is evident is traffic. Oh, the moaning when the traffic line is long! You see them on their cell phones and can easily read their body language. They are complaining to someone elsewhere about the "horrible" traffic. Some drivers sit inside their slow moving vehicles trying to push the traffic forward! You can observe their efforts in their body language. Notice how people actually move their bodies forward thinking somehow that they are making traffic move faster! This is insane, but true. Just notice it, and you will be continually amused by what you observe in the crawl of "rush hour". Witnessing the insanity in others produces instant gratitude for the change God has wrought inside you. You do not judge them either. You feel great compassion knowing that their entire lives are most likely miserable--continually pushing against life in general "driving" themselves and others crazy through resistance.

Begin practicing Jesus' teaching on acceptance in all your life situations. In the carnal-mind state you have made an unconscious habit of judging things beforehand. Things will turn out certain ways, usually "good" or "bad". Later, you may realize that you ended up with the opposite of what you had predicted. Guess what? You were wrong! So, you stopped judging outcomes beforehand, right? Wrong. You kept up the insanity of predicting the future. This happens over and over to "normal" people who never see their thought patterns. See this thought pattern as insane and make a quality decision now to stop attempting to go into the future because you cannot do this, even in a single day. If you predict something will go a particular way and life causes it to go another way, you then become happy or unhappy according to your earlier judgment. You can stop judging a day beforehand and make this moment a happy one by your inner alignment to whatever is going on. You can practice Jesus' teaching on the principle of acceptance by inwardly ceasing to resist whatever initially appears as evil.

One day about four decades ago, a young man walked up to me and smacked me hard on the side of the face, knocking me to the ground. I felt only love and compassion for him, there was no inner retaliation while laying on the ground and no outer retaliation after I slowly rose. (It took awhile to regain my senses. I clearly remember being overwhelmed with the love of Christ within me even before I realized in my senses that I had been assaulted.) Years later, Saul became a fiery evangelist who publicly included this story in his testimony of conversion. Saul told how he, in anger at hearing a classmate talk about Jesus, delivered a right hook and knocked "the Jesus freak" to the ground. Saul expected retaliation but was told, "Saul, Jesus loves you." Saul went home, thought about the love he felt and eventually gave his heart to Jesus Christ.

From my perspective, I remember getting up slowly from the ground which took considerable time (Saul had a powerful right hook), and feeling the overwhelming love of God pour upon me. I remember saying, "Saul, Jesus loves you," and walking away from the other kids who tried to urge me to return evil

for evil. They were hoping to see a fight as I had earned quite a reputation as a tough guy prior to conversion. They called me disparaging names hoping to stir up anger inside me, hoping I would go back and fight Saul who also had earned a reputation as a tough guy. I remember overhearing different ones wagering who would win the fight. Their remarks only evoked compassion arising from somewhere within that overflowed from my heart to them. I told them all how much Jesus loved them.

Instead of retaliating with blows or threats, I had felt no desire to strike back. I was so overwhelmed with a fresh realization of God's great love for me that I quickly dismissed the outward realm of my location among a bunch of rowdy kids. I was caught up completely in the profound love of Christ. Had I retaliated, I would have lost the peace of Christ that was overwhelming me in that moment. The impulse to retaliate never came. Such a thought never entered my mind. At that moment, I was completely surrendered to God. Whatever life brought me, I was in the palm of His hand. I had been studying how all my days were written before there were any of them in the days preceding this incident (Psa. 31:15; 139:16). I felt no fear, no anger, and what little sense of pain I felt in my body was transmuted by the greater love being emitted from my spirit into my soul and body.

The instant reward I was granted was greater than anything outward life could have given me in the beauty of that moment. This was an early prefigure of how all my life would be lived out decades later. Today I welcome insults, nasty letters, disparaging phone calls and rude emails. I always sense a deeper love within overflowing me--always.

Jesus Commanded Us Not to Judge

This is the deeper meaning of Jesus' teaching on the unreliability of making judgments or attaching mental labels to things in the external realm. When Jesus said, "Do not judge or condemn and you will not be judged and condemned. For in the same measure that you dole out judgment to others, judgment will be heaped back on you" (Matt. 7: 1, 2 alternate rendering), He was teaching more than is commonly believed about judging the eternal fate of another human. Many Christians do not even practice this. They are continually sending other people to hell in their thoughts.

Jesus was addressing the carnal-mind's tendency to continually judge or label whatever arises in daily life as either good, bad, too hot, too cold, not enough, too much, inferior, superior, ugly, pretty, too fat, too skinny, and finally "just right" or "disgusting". It's no wonder that people who live centered in their minds are tired and worn out by the end of the day! Their minds are constantly working. The mind is not designed for continuous overload with unceasing thought activity.

I read in a scientific magazine that overworked minds cause interference in electrical brain wave activity causing disruption in mental processing. Do you realize it is you, not your wife, who is driving you nuts? Do you realize that the worry lines on your face are much deeper and pronounced than they should be at this point in your life? Why? You think too much, too hard, and too long. Much of this thought activity involves constantly judging things. Do not sit in front of a television and bemoan the evil programming as ungodly. You are judging. You may be right, but why vex your soul like Lot did? (2 Pet. 2:8). Did it help him? Does it help you? Stop judging! Is someone holding a gun to your head as you watch a television show that grates against your spirit? Are you incapable of turning it off? Take positive action instead of continuing in negative thought patterns.

When transformation occurs within you, this practice of judging things as they appear will cease (John 7:24). My advice is that you do not wait for something better to happen to you, another mental judgment derived from reading this book about a hoped for future state. Perhaps a future based thought has risen in your mind while reading this book: if only I can experience soul transformation sometime soon I'll be so much better. If all you have received from reading this book is a hope that someday in the future you will receive total peace then you have wasted your time. Wasting your time reading this book is not the worse time you have ever wasted because some seeds of truth have dropped into your spirit and may grow years from now. Wasting time doesn't really matter anyway because you have wasted years of your life already

in future or past thoughts and may continue wasting time until you die. In fact, you have probably wasted "tons of time" as people say which reveals that time, in their view, is quite heavy.

Instead of waiting for something wonderful to happen to you in the future begin now to cease from mentally labeling the quality of your day, your hamburger, your spouse, your car, your home, your job. The hamburger is what it is. You can either eat it or discard it, but do so without mental noise. This will make the entire quality of earthly life much simpler and more enjoyable. I do not suggest that you discard your spouse, but you can leave the house for awhile if he or she becomes temporarily insane. You needn't subject yourself to verbal abuse in any of your relationships. You can leave the room when someone is "going off" on you. Just do not slam the door on the way out. Leave in peace with compassion in your heart for him or her. Go your way and focus on Christ and the peace He gives in this moment (John 14:27). Let His love fill your heart once more for the tormented person you live or work with. If abuse becomes physical or unending you may be led by the Lord to end it, but you can do that in peace too, with great compassion for the abuser. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12 RV).

What you need to do instead of judging and labeling is live by the principle of acceptance of the present. This practice will not allow the carnal-mind to control you. It will weaken and you will receive more and brighter glimpses of the total transformation awaiting you.

Your mind may be telling you now that what you have just read is impossible. There is no way you can continuously practice peace in your present everyday existence. Follow this thought of "impossible" to its source and you will find that self suggested the word "impossible" to you. In the light of this awareness the false self begins to dissolve. This is because you are viewing your self nature in the light of your new spirit. This is precisely how transformation occurs. You acknowledge that it is impossible for you to control the carnal-mind. This awareness provides an opening inside you for God to step in and change you. Miracles happen when we acknowledge our weakness. But if a miracle doesn't happen in this moment, accept that too. And the next time a negative arises that you inwardly judge as "bad" or "should not" or "oh no", catch yourself and say, "I can allow this situation as it is and abide in peace."

My New "Ministry"

You may surprise yourself at how your entire perspective can change standing in the long line at the grocery store.

The occurrence of "bottom bumping" happens a lot in grocery lines as you also will observe from now on since reading this. I often get bumped in grocery stores nowadays because I am not continually watching the person in front of me inching my cart toward them with baited breath. Instead I simply am as I wait my turn with the cashier. I may be looking out the front of the store unaware that the person in front of me just moved a few inches. The person behind me has focused her or his gaze on the line ahead and is inwardly resisting their position in the line. Then, an insane notion arises in them that pushing their cart into my bottom will somehow cause the cashier to work faster. The thought arose due to their impatience. When I get bumped, I turn and say "thank you" and it proceeds from my heart. Why do I say "thank you"? I do not know. I just do. When your life is lived in the Spirit you do things without taking thought beforehand.

After I thank them, do I move my cart when I get bumped? No, I am not going to bump the person in front of me because the person behind me bumped me. I would lose my peace if I took a violent action. I continue waiting patiently despite whatever I begin hearing behind me because I do not move my cart closer to the bottom in front of me. Usually there are moaning sounds of pain, grumbling swear words, or vocal complaints like, "Enough already! Get this show on the road!" I remain in silence and let the impatient one grow angrier if that is what they choose. Recovery programs taught me that I am powerless over others. I am helping "cart pushers" learn the futility of "bottom bumping" in the grocery line. It's my

new "ministry".

Recently I sat my bottom on the cart behind me because the pusher would not stop pushing. Was I resisting her resistance? No, I found sitting more comfortable than standing. I sat down on her cart in absolute peace. There was no inner resistance or getting back at her. I suddenly found myself resting on her cart. Finally, I heard laughter. I turned and looked peacefully at her and she said, "Thank you. I needed that." She appeared to be genuinely relieved of pent-up anxiety. I was happy for her and laughed with her. Then, I asked her to move back. She did, and I took the spot behind her insisting she go ahead of me. It was all sweet and delightful. She thanked me four times for my example. It was an eye-opening experience in her harried life. If she later reflected on what had compelled her to bump into the shopper in front of her, and his strange response, she may have experienced something even deeper inside.

God can use even common, everyday experiences to lighten the heavy time loads people unknowingly carry.

Yes, you can really live life this way and begin to experience life as delightful in whatever form it takes. Begin practicing the principles of acceptance and non-judgment now and see what happens! Do not wait for anything to come later like a glorious experience of total transformation. Instead, obey Jesus' command to not resist evil and do it now.

Some believers write me that they cannot wait for what happened to me to happen to them. I am reminded of the guy who realized he needed more patience. He prayed, "Lord, give me more patience... and make it snappy!"

Those who impatiently hope for a transformation experience are projecting a positive "what if" into the non-existent future. This keeps their present life unchanged. I was practicing the principle of acceptance for months before the transformation miracle was experienced sitting calmly on the rock. I did not expect anything to happen, I only became still on the rock. Self dissolved. Whatever else happened in my perception of nature around me was nice but not necessary. The important thing was the miracle inside. My life had already begun changing in marked ways prior to the dissolution of self.

Waiting for a special miracle of transformation to occur before you can be more peaceful is similar to what Christians have done throughout history. They projected the future state of Heaven as unattainable in the mundane or negative reality of present living, so they pinned their happiness on their future state of heavenly bliss. Many hymns of previous generations were not focused upon the glories of Christ, but upon the desires of unfulfilled men. "When we all get to Heaven" we'll "sing and shout the victory", but in the meantime we will just have to "make do and hold on to the end". Somebody quick, "throw out the lifeline". Yes, "the burdens of this weary life are more than we can bear", we moaned like dying water buffaloes, but "some sweet day we'll sing up there." These self-based songs were part of our "worship" of the Lord! Isn't this amazing? We sang about how Heaven will be after we get there, as though it is our presence there that will make Heaven wonderful!

Do not postpone your happiness by depending upon something future that may or may not happen. Instead, and for no good reason at all, just go ahead and be happy now. Life isn't what you want it to be? Be happy anyway. Do not judge, label or balk at any negative. Instead, just allow it. If you sense the presence of the evil one, calmly dismiss him in Jesus' name. Do not go into panic mode and start screaming at the top of your voice. That will only make you hoarse, not free. Besides, your name is probably not on the enemy's Top Ten List of Most Wanted Saints. What is more likely than legions of devils assaulting you is that your carnal-mind is harassing you. If so, you can "bind Satan" all day long but you will not abide in peace.

Jesus embodied the principles of acceptance and non-judgment throughout His earthly life, reproving Peter's resistance of the soldiers with the question: "the cup which my Father has given Me shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). He did not earlier label the cup as "bad" when He asked the Father to remove it; it simply was "the cup" the Father had given Him to drink. He did not label it "the bad cup" or "the awful

cup" when Jesus asked the Father to let it pass. It was simply "the cup". Abba said no. Jesus drank it. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, and so will you once you have ceased resisting whatever may appear as evil (Heb. 5:8).

If you are resisting whatever is in the present moment you are inwardly miserable. You are not spiritually awake; your center is based in the unrenewed soul, not in the new spirit. It is only when you are in your new spirit that you can enter the Kingdom of God experientially (John 3:3-7; Eph. 5:14).

Accepting whatever appears in surface life does not mean you prefer what has just happened. It does not mean that you do not take any positive action either. For example, if your car breaks down in traffic, you do not sit by the side of the road. You take the necessary steps to remove your car from the road to the garage and you do not wish it had not broken down or imagine how much it will cost and whether you will have enough money. Things are as they are. Then, you may pray and ask the Lord to be glorified in this present situation. You ask Him to cause His will to be done in earth as it is in Heaven. You thank Him for supplying His provision. You ask His help to remain in peace. Then you just remain still while you wait for the tow truck. You look around yourself noticing a tree or different flowers. You smile at people as they walk on the sidewalk near your car. They are amazed at your peace. God is glorified and you remain calm, undisturbed, and your car eventually gets repaired. Yes, I have practiced this.

The External Realm is in Constant Flux

Carnal-minded, sense-ruled people are in near continual misery because their focus is always upon the external realm: weather, bills, family problems, obnoxious neighbors, and such. This is not where the Kingdom of God is presently located on earth. The Kingdom of God is within (Luke 17:21).

Staying focused on the external realm of life, and basing your hope for happiness upon happenings that occur or do not occur in this outward realm of existence, is certain to keep you unhappy. Indeed, it has kept you miserable all your life although you might profess that you have been Jesus' follower since the age of five. Jesus doesn't understand discipleship without obedience, "And why do you all call me 'Master, Master' and yet not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46 WNT).

There is one thing always true about the external realm: it never stays the same for long. It is constantly changing. The old car was wearing out (this was "bad") so you traded it in for a new car which initially brought happiness (this was "good"). Then it began to show signs of wear, and is not yet paid for (oh no! this is "bad" again). You were in a small, cramped apartment ("bad"), so you got a raise and got to move into a brand-new house ("good"). The new house has things going wrong with it from the start (what? "bad" again), the plumbing isn't right or the power keeps going off (oh no, more "bad"). A believer's resistance to the external realm of what is can lead him or her into un-Christlike behavior in dealing with others, and hinder the work of Jesus in drawing all men unto Him (John 12:32).

The repairman cannot seem to get whatever is wrong with the house fixed ("bad"), so he ends up getting chewed out by the "Christian" homeowner. He sees the sweet face of Jesus on the wall behind her upset, angry face (now, this is bad because she is valuing her temporary home more than the repairman's soul). The repairman's inner belief is that all Christians are hypocrites (he judges every Christian based on her ugly behavior); at least, he is an "honest sinner" (his inner label). He is hardened within once again. He persists in his delusion that such a thing as an "honest sinner" truly exists (it does not as all sin is lie-based, just as the first sin was) and his deception remains. He leaves the Christian homeowner more hardened in his heart than he was earlier before he met her. He speaks some choice words about her in his repair van as he drives off fuming. He realizes he needs to "chill" so he "heads for the mountains" (the local bar) and "downs a few". As he's downing them he's judging the lady earlier over and over. This produces more pain inside him, so he keeps drinking. All the while he is cussing her out to others at the bar. They have all had bad experiences with "hypocrites" too. They tell their useless stories too, cuss and judge some more.

Then he drives home and takes out his "bad day" on his wife and kids. Pain produces pain which, in

turn, produces more pain that creates even more pain. We live in a pain-filled society! The crime rate goes up as inner pain arises. Whenever you live in peace, you are helping lower the crime rate in your city. Your peace emanates outward toward others. Neighbors I have met have told me they "felt something" driving by my house. "Oh, is that where you live?" They look astonished. Why? Something in them registered on a deeper level that peace remained and abode and emanated from my home (Matt. 10:13).

Practicing Jesus' teaching of accepting whatever is on the surface realm of life will help you maintain peace no matter whatever happens in the outward, surface realm. You will not be in pain or create pain in others despite whatever happens. It will also help you maintain the right spirit in negative situations, and people will appreciate your patience and express it to you after you waited in a long line or have called the repairman to come and fix the same problem the third time and each time you spoke to him in love. You will have a God given opportunity to share Christ and point others to Him by your loving spirit. Jesus' teaching of accepting whatever is at this moment does not exclude your taking positive action. It does not mean you like what has happened. It does not mean you accept it as God's will either. What has just happened may not have been the will of God.

Not long ago I was in a convenience store in the early, early morning buying a cup of coffee. Three young men bolted in the door, grabbed up cases of beer and went flying out the door so fast one shattered the glass with his case of beer. Cans of beer were suddenly projected all around the front of the small store hitting displays. The young men were cursing loudly and continued their run, leaving one very nice running shoe somehow jammed in the door.

I was taking my first sip of coffee as they burst in the front door. I continued calmly drinking the coffee as they did everything they did in the store. My body did not tense up, jerk, or react. I remained in peace. The one employee in the store called the police and I began to assist him in sitting up a candy bar display that one of the young men had knocked over in his haste to get out. The employee was angry, frustrated, and immediately began swearing and complaining about his ---- life as I helped him straighten the display. I remained in peace and noticed how the peace of God was intensifying within me as I put candy bars back in their correct places. I let the employee boil over emotionally as I continued helping in peace. Then began to share with him, encourage him, and tell him things that greatly comforted him. I began to leave the store and remained in deep, deep peace. The one employee was smiling. The policeman arrived so I paused and asked him if he needed me as a witness. The officer asked me to wait. The policeman then turned to the employee and asked, "Why are you smiling?" The employee said he did not know, he just felt good because "that customer over there has been so nice to me." The policeman turned to me and thanked me. I thanked him for serving the community. There was an instant bond between us and he said, "You are a Christian, aren't you?"

You may experience an accident and be in intense pain. Instead of resisting what has just happened and wishing it had not happened or judging the other driver as careless, accept that it is now as it is now. Pray for the other driver and for yourself to be healed of the pain in your bodies. Forgive the other driver for his carelessness. If you awaken with a sore throat, do not go into a story that you caught it from someone else in your home that has recently had a sore throat and that "if only" they had been more careful you would not have caught it. Instead, accept that you have a sore throat without blaming yourself or someone else that your throat is sore. Then, in an attitude of peace, faith will rise within your spirit and before you can even finish your formal prayer for healing all soreness leaves and does not return. Both of these things have happened to me since transformation occurred in my life. The other driver repented of her clumsiness and I prayed for her and she was instantly touched by God's power. Her eyes widened in amazement. What my mind would have formerly labeled as a "tragic" accident that "should not" have happened became an opportunity to glorify God. Both of us were blessed. When the sore throat came it soon vanished by God's power.

This is the way things happen in outward life once you have begun walking in the Spirit, the way God intended that you should live (Gal. 5:16). So what if things are always changing and cannot be controlled? As you live in His Presence negatives are kept outside your heart. You cannot wish away negatives from happening—they do and will continue to occur in this life. You can keep outer negatives from becoming inner negatives by accepting them without murmuring, blaming, or judging them.

Opportunities Appear in Outward Life

John observed this constant change in the external realm when he said, "The world is ever passing away and its desires with it, but he who practices the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17, literal). Nothing outward stays the same, at least not for long, and all of it is in a state of decay and entropy. Once you accept this, that outward life is like what Isaiah described as "fading leaves"; you won't despair when your car breaks down the third time, and you must shelve out \$2,000 more which you cannot afford, in order to fix it. Rather, you will be in a state of peace and suddenly you will sense an impression to go to a particular store. There you will "bump into" a recently emigrated European from Czechoslovakia. He, it turns out, specializes in the work your old Volkswagen needs.

When you pick up your car days later, the mechanic will want to know more about you. "Vy are vu nicer, Meester David?" Then you will have the sweet joy of saying simply, "Jesus" with a smile. The dirty mechanic won't let you leave the shop without hugging him behind a closed door in his office while you pray for him, sensing his loneliness in this strange, different country. You will feel his body shake as he sobs under your loving embrace. The Holy Spirit's sweet Presence envelops you both, as he reluctantly finishes his embrace with this near total stranger. He slowly opens his office door and allows you to leave, but only if you promise to stop by to visit soon. "The God of love and peace" has promised to be with you when you are involved in a negative circumstance but only if you "live in peace" (2 Cor. 13:11).

Then, you walk out to your car in the sweetest peace and drive to the state inspection center and, at last, your car passes the emissions test. Your car hums as you head home and you offer gratitude and thanksgiving to God. Life goes on sweetly and yet "we fade as a leaf—all of us" (Isa. 64:6 YLT). Nothing here is permanent, including that which is pleasant or unpleasant. You can make the unpleasant things easier to deal with by encasing them in a sweet atmosphere of peace that comes from your spirit. As you encase negatives in peace and love they transmute into objects of great value.

Four months later the old VW develops problems again. You take the car back to the same mechanic. He remembers you. He asks how your mother is doing now (the first time he met you the car needed the work done quickly so you could drive to Texas to see your ailing Mother for her 79th birthday). He smiles when he sees you, brightens up, and lends you his own pickup truck this time to drive for as long as it takes to repair your car.

How to Make Pearls

John saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descend out of Heaven to the new earth. He observed that there were twelve gates to the city and the gates themselves were each a single pearl: "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each of them consisting of a single pearl" (Rev. 21:21 WNT). A gate is a passageway providing

one entrance into something that otherwise would be closed.

There is only one way to make a pearl and that is through allowing irritants, rather than resisting them. This is how the oyster does it. He keeps his mouth almost shut completely, but as he filters the water for nutrients a grain of sand invariably gets in causing inner agitation. The oyster, instead of resisting the irritant, surrounds it with that which is already inside it, forming one beautiful layer upon another with an inner substance. Pearl divers go into the waters to get the pearls hidden within oysters because people value pearls as things of great beauty.

Jesus likened His Kingdom to pearls (Matt. 13:44-46). He is telling us that it is through our allowing of outer irritants that we surround and transmute them from what is common into jewels of great value. We

are also making a gate within ourselves which will grant us entrance into a greater fellowship and intimacy with God.

People in the world are almost always in resistance-mode living even if they have fame or riches. Despite their pleasant surrounds, they are inwardly miserable most of the time and cause misery for others who are "fortunate enough" to be near them. This is why Paul taught that conforming to the world is a recipe for inner misery. He taught that the only "acceptable service" is being renewed in one's mind through continual presentation of the believer's body and everything within it as a "living sacrifice" to God (Rom. 12:1-2). In his teaching, Paul echoes Jesus' earlier teaching that while believers are in the world, if they are true disciples, they are not of the world. His prayer to the Father was not for our isolation from the world as we live on the planet, but for our insulation from the evil in the world through keeping His Word (John 17, read entire chapter).

If we are taken out of the world, into various "cloister" groups or private communes, we lose our influence in the world. How can lights shine in the darkness if they are removed from dark places? Of course, Christian communes eventually disintegrate within because these "secluded saints" have brought their own Achan into the camp: self. Most of those who are "hiding in the wilderness" think they are "away from the devil and the Antichrist" but they implode because their true enemy is not "out there" as they have imagined. They have succeeded in externalizing what is actually wrong inside their souls, and have failed at the real test life presents: practicing Jesus' teaching of accepting whatever is in surface life.

Your "awful" job could be the place God has put you to be a Light to those who dwell in darkness. If you continually complain about your job, your unrenewed soul has become the bushel you have placed over your illuminated spirit. Earthlings around you are not seeing His Light through you. God is likely to keep you in that "awful" job until you change. You change, of course, only one way, by not resisting whatever arises in your current external life circumstance.

The Principle of Acceptance Enables You to Take Up Your Cross

It is by bringing acceptance to the present outward reality of your family, your job, your so-called "life", that you align yourself with the Father's will for you at any given moment. This is the path to true transformation of the soul.

This is precisely what the Master meant when He instructed each of His disciples to "take up your cross." It was explained earlier in this book, but it bears repeating and enlarging: Your cross is your own, uniquely designed cross, the perfect cure for your defected soul. Your cross is seen when any life situation crosses whatever it is you want and you submit yourself to God's will in the matter. After submission to God, He takes over and gives grace to bear the situation or changes it altogether. Your only concern is that you are submitted to His will now.

Your "cross to bear" is not what religion has made it out to be. Your cross is not a stubborn mate or child, but your own resistance to what is in the present state of the mate or child. When you take the other's stubbornness as it is, and entrust it to God through believing prayer, you then make the way for God to work on the stubborn mate or wayward child. He is better at changing people than you and I are. When we play God with family members and try to change them out of our own soulical power, they usually get worse after we "fix" them! When you give the individual utterly to God, you remove self from the equation, leaving room for God to work and even use you (the new part of you) as part of the solution to the other one's deepest needs. Of course, He is not dependent on using you at all to meet the other one's needs and change his or her life.

The individual for whom you pray for change may not experience God's work quickly. Just as it has taken many years for you to truly change within, it may take him or her years to come to the end of self. Time won't matter to you if you have truly surrendered the loved one to God and you are free to love that person in his or her present state. Your attitude remains constantly in the sweet mode of trust. You have given the problem person to God, warts and all, so you remain free.

Your Cross is Tailor-Made to Fix You

Each of us needs fixing. God has made the perfect fix for each one of us. This is why my cross is not the same as yours; each cross is tailor-made by the One who knows us best. You are different from me, and I from you. We may have many of the same similarities, but each of us is also unique. The sure cure for self is each disciple's own cross. Your Heavenly Father, out of His great love for you, has fashioned your particular cross according to your particular needs.

Practicing the principle of acceptance for the external things in your life which presently annoy or disturb you is the path to peace of mind and heart. Do not wait for a future transformational experience to change you into a state of practicing the principle of acceptance. If you do, it may never happen. This is only adding another future concept to your already heavily burdened "self". Instead, begin practicing acceptance now. Look around the room where you are now reading these words. Is there something irritating you in this room, beyond your power to change? Bring acceptance to it, and notice how the sound, behavior or situation no longer irritates you but seems to pass through you. Congratulations! You are in compliance! This is the "nowness" of the Kingdom of God arising in your soul from your spirit. Yes, it really is this simple--and this profound. If you can change the irritant do so without mentally labeling it as this or that. Just clean it, arrange it, or whatever. If not, accept it as it is.

A thought will probably arise as acceptance dawns upon your understanding: if I could only do this all the time. Once more, tension is rising in your body from this thought, pulling you back into the monkeymind state of ever increasing thought activity, lessening the peace you briefly held in your soul. Did this just happen to you? What you need to do at this precise moment is let go of that thought. Were you able to do so? Did you experience a freeing of the mind again? What if another thought now arises? Let go of that thought, and the next one too. Stay in the here and now right here and now. Stay with what currently is in the surface of life by allowing it, and the surface will change or you will change or both may change. This will enable you to enjoy moments of "sweet nothingness".

"Sweet Nothingness"

This is how Thomas a' Kempis described it, and if I recall correctly, so did Madame Guyon. A "sweet nothingness" overtakes the soul when it is submitted to the believer's spirit, the part of you where Christ dwells and reigns. Periods of "sweet nothingness" overtook my soul as a young teenager during lengthy prayer seasons. Sometimes I abode in those sublime states for hours, allowing my mind to settle down in the Presence of God. They seemed like minutes, and later when I finally looked at a clock, I would be amazed at the amount of hours that had elapsed. "Sweet nothingness" is actually the eternal state of God's Being arising within your spirit not being resisted by the soul. The Presence you are entertaining overtakes the soul for varying periods of time. It is in the foreground much of the time after transformation is received, and remains in the background the rest of the time. It is like the sound of a sweetly running brook reminding you that God is on His Throne, and His Throne is in you as well as in Heaven.

Have you ever experienced "sweet nothingness" before? It was glorious to you at the time it occurred, but later you may have allowed it to become minimized by your carnal-mind as uneventful or unimportant. This happens all the time to Christians attending a "glorious" conference, outpouring, or meeting. Now do you remember them? Aha, the carnal-mind is losing its hold over you in the present. This is true spiritual growth, and it happened as you read this paragraph. Spiritual growth, unlike physical growth, requires no time. In fact, it happens only in the timeless realm of the Spirit.

Let me share an early experience of "sweet nothingness" which lasted for about three months in this disciple's life.

Kathryn Kuhlman

The one human being I ever saw that was most yielded to God during ministry meetings was the late Kathryn Kuhlman. On the afternoon of July 21, 1974, in the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California, Miss Kuhlman was directed by the Spirit to call out a 20 year-old evangelist. She asked him his name and

what he did for a living, laughed with him a little, and then asked, "David, do you want the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon your life?" I replied, "I already have the anointing Miss Kuhlman." "Yes, I see, dear," she chuckled knowingly, "but do you want an EVEN GREATER anointing of the Holy Spirit?" "Yes, ma'am, I do."

I saw the Person of Christ in her radiant eyes as she reached out her hand praying, "Dear Jesus, bless him." Her fingernails lightly stroked my forehead as an amazing bolt of pure, white energy akin to lightning hit the top of my head that memorable afternoon. It was life altering. The fragrance of Christ abode upon me for days, even weeks afterward. For a period of three months, each time I went into lengthy prayer sessions, "sweet nothingness" overtook the soul. Hours passed as minutes.

The meetings I conducted took on new life, energy, and dynamic. Revivals broke out and went for weeks in whatever church I visited. But self rose amidst a glorious outpouring, first in the host pastor and then in this young immature evangelist, and a bitter, private doctrinal dispute occurred! (Disputes of one kind or another always end revivals.) The periods of sweet nothingness were replaced with long, laborious prayer vigils, but the blessing of God had evaporated over the church meetings and over my private prayer vigils too.

All these years later, I can still recall as though it were yesterday, how God's visitation in that church was so special, unique, and rare. One night a Shekinah Cloud appeared above the heads of all present. All witnessed it, marveled at it, and this sign caused the crowds to increase dramatically. One dear man near death was healed of leukemia and others were saved, filled with the Spirit, healed, delivered from vices, and many other wonderful blessings of the Lord happened. Due to self in me and in the pastor I can see how together we grieved the Holy Spirit during our doctrinal arguments and have since asked the Lord's forgiveness for this sin. I went to the dear pastor years later and asked his forgiveness and he asked mine too. He went home to Heaven a few months later. He was truly a precious man of God, but like so many dear men of God, he allowed self to hinder the greatest revival in the history of his ministry much to his later chagrin. When we met again years later, he stated that for some unknown reason he had not realized how highly indoctrinated most young evangelists are. He furthermore said he would have been wiser to refrain from allowing a doctrinal difference to hinder his fellowship with a kid crowds were flocking to hear. A kid who could have used his fatherly advice during the years that lapsed between our grievance and our restoration.

It is sad, is it not, that the great revivals and visitations of the Lord upon His church down through history have been shortened and even sidetracked by self in the leadership? Self is the great culprit behind the seeming slowness of the Lord's moving in His Church. He allows us to do things our way and miss His best for us.

The truth remains that a deposit of Heavenly Treasure was received through Kathryn's laying on of hands as she followed the leading of the Holy Spirit during that memorable service in the Shrine Auditorium. This deposit resulted in great outpourings throughout various times in my travels—especially when self got out of the way and allowed the Lord to pour His Spirit out upon a congregation. Those times were always precious and dear saints of God remind me of them whenever we see each other years later. People do remember true touches of Heaven. They become ever more precious with the passage of chronological time.

Foretastes Divine

God enjoys giving foretastes to His servants. A foretaste is a little touch that encourages one to go deeper into God. It is a promise pointing the way to greater fulfillment. To put it in a Scriptural context, it is like the huge bunch of grapes carried back by the Hebrew spies. Each grape, the size of a man's fist, was a foretaste of the Canaan blessings awaiting the entire congregation of Israel. However, they were told by 10 of the 12 spies that while the blessings were abundant, so were the giants in the Land that lay before them (Num. 13:23, 24). You know the rest of the story...a 40 year period of circular wandering in

the desert resulted before the next generation went into the Land that God previously had given Abraham more than four centuries earlier.

A grape of Eshcol is what Miss Kuhlman's prayer was for me that eventful day in 1974. Later problems in my life (rebellion, fleshly sin, wrong attitudes, etc.) were allowed in the rebellious soul part of me (self). It was nearly four decades from the time He saved me (1969) to the time He eventually brought me into my inheritance (2008). What has transpired since in my soul makes the blessing in 1974 seem small. It was not small; nothing God does within anyone is ever "small," but in reflection of it now, it is "small" compared to the "vastness" inside my spirit now.

During dark nights of the soul in this often weak and fragile disciple there were always the sweet memories of various grapes of Eshcol. One occurred with Miss Kuhlman's laying on of hands. Another one occurred in April, 2003—the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus healing me of a serious heart problem on an EKG treadmill in Baptist Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. There were others along the way. The Lord drops "handfuls on purpose" for each of us, as Boaz's servants did for Ruth. All of these "grapes" or "handfuls" are divine foretastes of what is awaiting us in Heaven (if we wait that long) or in the Kingdom of Heaven now (if we experience its reality now).

I thank God every day that He brought me into the genuine experience of both seeing and entering the Kingdom of God experientially during my lifetime. There had been a real death, however, not a physical one, but one just as real occurred by taking up my cross and following Him. It was the death of self.

Transformation Brings You into the Kingdom

Soul transformation brings a child of God into the Kingdom of God experientially. It is as if you have entered an entirely new world, yet one you had visited earlier during personal times with the Lord. You are now no longer a temporary visitor, but have become a true citizen who lives in the Land of your inheritance (the Kingdom of God). Death to self was the passageway, just as ancient Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Land. Jordan, in Hebrew, means descender, and as you descended by allowing the diminishment of the unrenewed soul state with the eventual dissolution of self, you ascended into the new spirit state--God's Life. To put it in Christ's words, you humbled your soul and were exalted in the Kingdom (Luke 14:11). This is exactly what Jesus meant when He said, "Whoever loses his life (Greek: soul) for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25 NKJV). If you voluntarily lay down your soul-based life for Jesus' sake or involuntarily lose it and not resist the loss, you will then find your spirit-based life and become a full citizen of the Kingdom of God. You will then enjoy all the rights and privileges as a citizen of the KOG.

Perhaps you have experienced visits to the Holy Land of your spiritual inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Those visits occurred when God seemed more real to you than your breath. It is one thing to visit your inheritance, and totally another to live in the Land! This is nothing less than "the glory of His inheritance in the saints" now, once "the eyes of your understanding" have been "enlightened" (Eph. 1:18).

Many visit the Land temporarily through anointed meetings, private prayer or deep meditation in the Word. The good news of the Kingdom of God is you can actually live in your inheritance now before you die and go to Heaven later.

Jesus promised that as you hunger and thirst for His dominion over your whole life, you will be "filled" (Matt. 5:6). This "fullness" is the Being of God intertwined within you as one. There is nothing else on earth that can compare to the state of blessedness produced by total transformation of the soul. Ah, the peace of this state! The sweetness of "union with God", as Jeanne Guyon coined this term, is sweeter than honey, sweeter than the juiciest grape of Eshchol.

Stay out of mind zoos from now on and you will continue to deepen spiritually. Go deeper within and find treasures hidden in Christ (Col. 2:3). The treasures that are awaiting your discovery will enrich your soul, and the soul part of you will bear the image of the Heavenly One (1 Cor. 15:49).

Chapter 11

The Divine Movement within You

Our Selfless Example

Jesus of Nazareth was the only human who never knew the rising of the carnal nature in His personality. Although a man, fully human, He was untainted by the sin of our race, not only because He alone never sinned, but also because He knew who He was from the beginning, the Second Man. As the Second Man, Jesus was an entirely new kind of man. All who had lived before him were continuations of the First Man in his fallen state. Paul expressed it this way:

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:47 KJV

Jesus as man was capable of experiencing temptation, just as Adam was capable of experiencing temptation. But unlike the First Man, and all who since were born in Adam have yielded to temptation and have sinned, not so with the Second Man. Jesus was tempted in every point we are, but remained sinless (Heb. 4:15). The First Man (Adam) was tempted and failed, as does everyone who is born in him. The Second Man was tempted too, but never gave in to any temptation He underwent. His victory in His earthly existence has become our victory through His completed work on the Cross. This means that we too can become free from sin both in action and in nature. Paul put it this way: "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14). When you are reborn in Christ there is part of you (your new spirit) that does not sin because God's seed remains in you (1 John 3:9). As you experience death to your false self, allowing it to dissolve as you take up your cross, sin's dominion is broken over your soul and body too.

The Singular Uniqueness of Jesus

Before birth, while yet in His mother's womb, the Son fellowshipped with His Father. He spoke through the mouth of David while in His Pre-Incarnate state (the Word who later became flesh and dwelt among us, John 1:1-14). He spoke of His Cross in Psalm 22 as something that had happened or was happening as He spoke through David's mouth "they pierced My hands and My feet" (v. 16). He also spoke of His Resurrection, Ascension, and Glorification in other psalms. He spoke of His future earthly reign too. Any study Bible can point out many references in Psalms to show you these things in detail.

Did you know that Christ spoke of His gestation time in His mother's womb also, centuries prior to His birth in Bethlehem? It is given to us in Psalm 139 where David was describing God's intimate knowledge of him in all his life, even in his pre-birth state. Suddenly, someone else speaks through David, and once again, it is Christ in His pre-incarnate state speaking of the period of His Incarnation, the part of it that began in Mary's womb:

My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.

Psalm 139:15-18 NASB

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, fellowshipped with His Father in Mary's womb. He knew about sand because He had made it eons earlier as the Word Pre-Incarnate (before He became flesh). His spirit communed with God as He had always communed. They turned into mental thoughts about the Father and were active in His little brain as an unborn infant. Why am I pointing all this out to you?

There is a not too popular error in the Church today: The Doctrine of Gradual Awareness. This strange doctrine teaches that Jesus was an ordinary child, and an ordinary teenager. He sensed He was different in some way, but He did not understand how. When He saw a mountain He would have a faint remembrance of it in some intuitive way, but could not recall it. The young Jesus much like an old man who puttering around in his work shop would see a tool he had used years earlier in making a dog house,

but couldn't quite recall his building of that dog house.

According to this error, Mary never told her firstborn the unique events surrounding His conception and birth (well, that may be true...we do not know). But this is where the line of thinking clearly deviates from truth: as the carpenter's son, Jesus did not know God was His true Father until He was motivated by some internal compulsion, which He did not understand, to be baptized by John in Jordan. According to this error, it was only then at His baptism when the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and He heard a Voice speak from Heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son" that Jesus became aware of who He was and comprehended that He was the Son of God! This error is a good example of how the carnal-mind, when it tries to interpret Scripture, only succeeds in twisting it.

Here is someone who experienced temptation growing up, but unlike all other boys and young men, He never yielded...not once. And yet, according to this error, He assumed He was just "one of the guys"? Here is an individual who never fought with His half-brothers and half-sisters. He observed his younger half-siblings behave as other children knowing He had never behaved that way, yet, He did not understand His uniqueness! (This is what General Awareness teaches.)

Consider this. When Jesus was a 12 year-old lad, He was mistakenly abandoned at the conclusion of a feast week in Jerusalem, Israel's Holy City. Each of His parents assumed he was with the other. (The men traveled with men; the women journeyed with women.) In Luke 2:40-50 we are given the historical account of the time Jesus went missing. Mary, who left the festival in the company of her female relatives, thought Jesus was with Joseph, His step-father. Joseph, who was traveling with the male side of the extended family, thought Jesus was with His mother.

When they met, perhaps in the late afternoon to gather their family, the younger half-siblings of Jesus are all present but He is missing. Panic-stricken, the couple left their other children with their relatives and headed back to Jerusalem. They visit all the places they had been during the festival except one, the Temple, which Jesus later in His public ministry referred to as "My Father's House." As far as we could determine in research no one called the Holy Temple "My Father's House" in ancient Israel. How did Jesus, at age 12, know this revered Temple was His Father's House if He did not know who He was?

It is not difficult to imagine the consternation of soul His mother must have gone through during those three days! Doubtless she recalled the Angel Gabriel's visit, the impregnation as the Holy Spirit came upon her, her visit to Elizabeth's home where the Holy Spirit filled both women again and they prophesied, the angels singing after His birth, the visit of the Magi who presented Him gifts, and other unique things about Jesus. When the parents finally went to the Temple in search of their lost son three days had lapsed since either had seen Him. Much to their amazement, Jesus, age 12, one year short of Jewish manhood, was not waiting in the Lost and Found section, but was sitting in the midst of the experts of Moses' Law and religious leaders. He was listening to them and asking them questions. They were all amazed

at His wisdom and understanding of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets. They had never seen anything like this whiz kid before. He has been given no special education, the supposed son of a common worker. He can quote Scripture perfectly as it was recorded in the rare Scrolls. His understanding of it was deep and illuminating as well as He commented upon Scripture in their hearing.

Mary, much relieved, collected Jesus and mildly scolded Him that she and Joseph, whom she identified to Jesus as "your father", had been searching for the youth desperately. Where on earth (or in Jerusalem) could Jesus be? This had been their preeminent thought as they looked high and low during the three days Jesus was missing.

Jesus, listening to her was amazed that they hadn't known where to begin their search in the city of Jerusalem. What was more amazing to Him must have been that she referred to Joseph as His father! He listened patiently to her as she relayed her amazement at the wondering of His whereabouts and her undoubtedly unrealized erroneous words spoken without forethought about Jesus' "father". He answered

her question in the same way He often answered questions--by answering questions with questions. How is it that you have been searching everywhere in anguish? Did not you realize that I would not be lost, but that I would be taking care of My Father's business? Did you not realize you should begin your search here in His house?

In essence, this 12 year-old calmly reminded His mother of the events surrounding His singular conception and birth, and the unique way He had lived in her presence the past dozen years. His deeper question was, "Hey, Mom, have you forgotten who I am? I have not! When you and Joseph were nowhere around I went home to My Father's house. I've been here all along. I have never been lost." On the way back to Nazareth, Mary pondered all these things in her heart.

One wonders why she pondered until one remembers the job self has done on him or her too. She realizes Jesus is telling her He knows who He is, and He is not Joseph's son. He is His Father's Son, and it is His Father's business that Jesus must be about. Does this sound like something any 12 year-old kid might say? The gradual-awareness guys must be kidding!

Jesus of Nazareth was all about His Father's business. What about Jesus' ego? He did not have one. His entire life was spent doing His Father's will. He never deviated from it. This is why His Father announced to all at Jordan, including the deeply revered prophet John the Baptist who, only moments before, had seen the Holy Spirit in bodily shape as a dove, descend and remain upon the Lamb of God: "This is the Son of My love in whom I am fully pleased" (see Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:20-22).

Standing there in the Jordan River, Jesus had not preached His first sermon, had not performed His first miracle, nor had He raised a decaying corpse, yet He had fully pleased His Father. He had cared for His mother and her other children taking over the family business after Joseph had died, which was a common thing in that day. The oldest son, the firstborn, became responsible for the care of the family. This was noble but not unusual.

What was uniquely distinct about Jesus of Nazareth was the fact that He had delighted in doing His Father's will during "the Silent Years", as they are labeled. Throughout three decades--a full 90% of His earthly lifetime--this common worker had never deviated once from His Father's will in thought, in word or in deed. He had fully pleased His Father all His earthly life, before His "work" ever began. Theologians use the word "work" to denote Jesus' earthly ministry. But they are wrong. Jesus was doing His Father's "work" at age 12 involved in His Father's "business" as He put it. He had been doing His Father's business as He worked in Nazareth. Everything He did, He did as unto Yahweh. This proves that one doesn't have to be a preacher to please God.

The fact is some preachers do not please Him, even though they work miracles, prophesy, and cast out demons (Matt. 7:22). What does one have to do to please God? Obey. Obedience was the one constant in Jesus' life.

It was this Selfless One's perfect obedience that pleased His Father. Jesus knew life is only lived "in this moment". He was always surrendered in just this moment which made up every moment He lived. "Not My will but Thine be done" was His focus and passion. Jesus lived for one reason, to please His Father. There was no consciousness of self in Jesus, no self-will, no self-love, nor was there any self-produced hidden agenda lurking in the back of His mind.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus did not heal the sick because He wanted to; He healed the sick because the Father wanted to (John 6:38; 8:29). Or we could say the same thing this way: He did want to heal the sick because the Father wanted them healed; this is why Jesus attributed all His miracles to the Father (John 14:10, 11).

So close and exact was His constant alignment with His Father, that the Two were One (John 10:30). He only did what He saw the Father do. He only spoke what He heard the Father say (John 5:30; 8:29; 12:49). Amazing? Yes. Unbelievable? Yes, when you compare Him to the rest of humanity. Unique? Undoubtedly so, was, and is Jesus unique.

Our Spotless Substitute Asked a Question

When the sin of our race was laid upon Jesus on the Cross, Jesus of Nazareth for the first time ever in all His life sensed Abba's displeasure. Not in Him, but in the sin that He bore. It is true that Jesus never became sin in His spirit, yet He bore "our sins in His own body on the tree" when He destroyed "the enmity" between God and men "in His flesh" (Eph. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:24). He felt something heavy laying upon Him, in close proximity to His soul, the inner body that filled His outer body. The loss of His Father's felt pleasure was almost more than the Sinless Man could bear. For the first time ever in His life He questioned God: "My God, my God WHY....?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). Thus, in asking God the "why" question, Jesus fulfilled His mission of completely identifying with the human race. We are walking "whys?".

The "Why?" in Humankind

The "why" questions of life...some are innocent, others are not. A child learns by asking why grass is green. This is an innocent question. A child rebels against a parent's request with "why?" too. When you and I have made the worst mistakes of our lives, we were asking "why?" in defiance of God's stated will in His Word. Jesus had never asked His Father a defiant or even doubting "why?" question all His life, and even upon the Cross, in great agony of soul and body, He asked one "why?" question in a temporary temptation to doubt His Father.

Until this moment hanging there on the Cross not only for us but as us, He had never questioned God. This is what our original parents did in the garden when they were tempted to eat the forbidden fruit. It was the "why?" question that intrigued the Adams' family. The serpent told them that God did not want them eating of the tree He had forbidden because He did not want them to be as He was. This is how the "why?" question arose in their minds. Not only did sin enter the race, but so did SELF—the nature behind sin entered too because of the first "why?" question.

It is the "why?" questions, especially when they are directed toward God, which allow the independent sense of self, the ego, to rise within the soul. Jesus questioned His Father one time and one time only. It was on the Cross--weak, thirsty, naked, defenseless, and in excruciating pain--that Jesus sensed the very essence of that which causes humans to choose their own will over God's will: self. The "why?" question Jesus asked was answered not by an outward Voice from above but by an inward Voice from within. The answer He was given we are not told, but His question must have been answered. He was able to become peaceful. He then turned the care of His mother over to His bosom friend, John. His focus had returned to meeting the needs of others, and He knew He was meeting humankind's deepest needs at that precise time by bearing our sins.

It is important that we notice how that even in His pain and suffering, Jesus did not give in to the temptation to deviate from His Father's will. It was His Father's will that Jesus bear both our false self nature as well as our sins. Others have given into the "why?" questions of life that arose during undeserved pain and suffering. Others have ended up disobeying God, because the innocent "why?" asked in a desire to understand turned into a guilty "why?" demanded in defiance. But Jesus, hanging there in all His pain and suffering, did not give into the second "why?" but returned to His steadfastness. He did not yield in His inner state to the greatest temptation He had ever faced—the temptation that came in the form of questioning the wisdom of His Father's plan.

This was the greatest temptation He had ever endured. The temptation to question His Father's wisdom was greater than anything in the wilderness after 40 days of fasting, as well as the whole lot of common temptations all humans undergo. It was even greater than the temptation He had undergone during His prayer marathon in the Garden of Gethsemane—the temptation to say no to the cup the Father was presenting Him. Now, with legions of unseen powers of darkness surrounding Him as He hung on the Cross, along with the great weight of our Sin crushing Him, Jesus did the opposite of what the Serpent whispered in His ear. He did not ask the "why?" in defiant rebellion, but committed Himself one last time

to His Father's will.

He who had begun earthly life in obedience to the Father ended it the same way. His death upon the Cross had been the plan He had known theoretically all along, but the experiential knowing of the plan came only as He fulfilled it in perfected obedience upon the Cross. This is what Hebrews means when it says, "Although He was God's Son, yet He learned obedience from the sufferings which He endured" (Heb. 5:14 WNT). And so the Son, in perfect obedience to the Father, did not ask for twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53). With what little physical strength yet remaining in Him, Jesus victoriously "cried out with a loud voice, 'Father into Your hands I commit My spirit' " (Luke 23:46).

And with that, He died.

Selah (pause now and be still). Be reverent before Him right now. Lay this book down and worship Christ your Lord.

(Later): Let the death of Jesus and all it involves sink into you. Do not let the mind hurry on to the Empty Tomb--just linger with the women and John for awhile. Meditate on the Cross awhile longer. Meditate upon what the death of Jesus when He identified as you means to you. Can it possibly imply the death of your ego, your SELF? Ask the Lord if this is the deeper meaning of the Cross—the meaning you have avoided all your life. There is so much more in the Cross than the forgiveness of your sins, isn't there? Put this book down, again, and become still within. Then a divine movement, a shift, will occur within you.

Surrender Your "Rights"

Have you surrendered to God your supposed "right" to understand things about which He has chosen not to reveal the answer? When you surrender the right to understand everything about God, His plan, this world, your life, your family, your friends, your circumstances and everything else that concerns you, you are given "the peace that goes beyond and surpasses mere understanding" (Phil. 4:7 alternate rendering).

This is one of the last self traits to go, and it happens only during complete surrender. It is clear that when our Savior asked "why?" He did so because He could not comprehend all that was transpiring that day upon the Cross. It is most uncomfortable to an individual to have questions left unanswered and situations left unexplained. This is what leads people to doubt God's goodness and question His wisdom. But if you will surrender your right to understand things beyond your comprehension, the greater your peace will deepen. The same experience will be yours as you surrender every "right" to which you believe you are entitled. It is God's will that you ask for understanding; it may not be His time to yet reveal it to you. Jesus said, "I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear [them] now" (John 16:12 LITV).

This is true even for the most mature Spirit-governed believer. Paul was deep in the Lord yet there were some things he knew only "in part" (1 Cor. 13:9). There was a thorn in Paul's flesh which the Lord chose never to remove. He did give Paul more grace so he could handle it easier (2 Cor. 12:7-10). But the "thorn" still remained in his flesh, prodding him. Paul surrendered his supposed right to have it removed. The "thorn" became his unintentional friend as it helped Paul yield ever more fully to his Lord. True, Paul had been transformed long before the thorn had been given, yet it was still needed to help him remain a recipient of ever more grace.

It is only when a believer accepts that surface life will be ever deficient in satisfying every need, wish, or desire, that the fully surrendered state is entered and maintained. Your Father is too wise to leave you without at least one thing to prod you into more of Him.

The Totally New You

As you meditated upon our Lord's death, were you able to see yourself on that Cross? You and I were both there too. We were crucified with Him, as Paul observed later (Rom. 6:1-4). Allow the Holy Spirit to cause you to know it deeply--as He caused Paul to know it--and you will be changed as Paul was, and as countless others have been since. You will experience total transformation of the person you now are,

the result of a divine shift within you. You will become a totally new you:

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Romans 6:5-7 NKJV

Notice, we are not only freed from sins (behavior), we are freed from sin (nature). The evangelical message needs deepening. Christ not only died so that we can be forgiven; He died so that we might die too. It is after we experientially die with Christ that we then become fully alive, experientially alive, in Him who loved us. Only then may we speak truthfully the words of Paul with Paul:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 KJV

Chapter 12

The Treasure in Your Jar

For God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine," is He who has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory, which is radiant on the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in a fragile vase of clay, in order that the surpassing greatness of the power may be seen to belong to God, and not to originate in us.

2 Corinthians 4:6, 7 WNT

Whenever a believer experiences the grace of soul transformation, the image of Christ within his or her spirit is imprinted upon the soul. This might be compared to the impression made by a coin pressed into soft clay or putty--everything is there and those who look on the impression can see with clarity the details of the coin.

When "the soul has been lifted to the Lord," and He has been allowed to have His gentle way within the yielded one, that one begins to "bear the image of the Heavenly" in a clarity others can see (Psa. 25:1; 1 Cor. 15:49). The treasure of Christ within them is easier for people to see through them. This is the Light of the world that Jesus desired for His representatives to shine forth after He left earth and had returned to Heaven. The renewed soul of a believer does not block the Christ Light shining out of that one's spirit as before.

This is the reason the enemy of men's souls desires that the Church remain in the present "world conformed" state, rather than experiencing the grace transformed state (Rom. 12:2). In this transformed state believers no longer hide the Light of Christ to those in darkness. Not only are the eyes of a transformed believer illuminated by the Light of Christ within, but the Light shines out from them more brightly than before. The soul or the inner body is free of the sin principle that had been in it in the form of the false self, and having been changed, the freed soul becomes transparent. The physical body of a transformed believer becomes somewhat translucent, and at times radiant. "They looked unto Him, and were radiant; their faces were not confounded" (Psa. 34:5 ASV).

It isn't that the Church doesn't have the Light, we do. But we are hiding His Light under bushels of heavy souls, which hinder His Light from shining to others who are sitting in darkness and in the region of death (Matt. 4:16). Jesus said, "You are the light of the world...men do not light a candle and hide it under a bushel" (Matt. 5:14, 15). Men do not do that, it is true, but Christians have been hiding their Light for millennia. We have hidden the Light of Christ within and have not become beacons of Light for those in darkness as He was, and as He intended that we too become. He was and is the Light, and His intent is that we be like Him, by allowing His Light to shine out through us to a dark and lonely world.

What "bushel" are you hiding His Light under? Your "bushel" may be a mind heavy with cares of this life that keeps His Light in your spirit from shining out to others. Your bushel could be an inner mask you wear when around certain people--usually people you desire or fear something from--and you wear the mask of false self to hide behind. Ask the Lord to reveal to you what bushel you are hiding His light under and then become still and wait for Him to reveal it to you. He will.

The will of God is that we manifest outwardly what we already are within our spirits: LIGHT. It is only then that those who are in darkness will see Christ through us: "among whom you are seen as bright lights in the dark world" (Phil. 2:15 TAB).

Whatever Light Illumines, it Illuminates

The transmuting power of the Light is what Paul referred to when he made an amazing and profound statement. Most English translations do not convey the full impact of his words in Ephesians 5:13, but consider these versions:

But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. (KJV)

But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible

is light. (NASB)

But everything can be tested by the light and thus be shown in its true colors; for whatever shines of itself is light. (WNT)

Researching this verse more deeply leads one to recognize that Paul is saying this: "Light reveals and reproves things that are dark and changes them into light shining on its own." Thus the Light of Christ transmutes things of darkness into Light and makes them (and the vessels Light shines through) pure Light.

Paul knew there was nothing in him of any real value that he had not received from above, therefore he had no reason in himself to boast (1 Cor. 1:31). The same was true to those he wrote (including you and me):

Why, who gives you your superiority, my brother? Or what have you that you did not receive? And if you really did receive it, why boast as if this were not so?

## 1 Corinthians 4:7 WNT

Since anything we possess that is of eternal value did not originate within us, we have no place for boasting, except in the Lord. But just as there is no room for boasting, neither is there any place for regret. There is no regret in the life of one who has been divinely transformed. It is God's grace that enables a person to see that it was the place of their defeat which opened their soul to receive the Power of Christ to change them from within. This is why Paul, who had murdered Christians prior to his conversion, later spoke to the Church asking them to receive him because he "had wronged no man" (2 Cor. 7:2; 1 Tim. 1:13)

The deep blessing of a sudden, radical, transformation experience in the Kingdom of God produces a sense of timelessness. Time is no longer needed, wanted or even experienced in the inner life. No one regrets "how much time it took" as he or she is so delighted over the timelessness within them. They now hold One Pearl of Great Price in their hands, and every pain they endured prior to entering the unseen Kingdom experientially is forgotten or, if it is recalled, is found to be a source of unending amusement.

No one who has entered the unseen Canaan lingers over circles in the sand of their past, as the "new now" is so delightful. All that was formerly "wasted" is forgotten over the surpassing abundance at last in easy reach. You come to perceive the deeper truth that not one step you took in the Wilderness of Self was a wasted step at all. It was the best you could do in yourself at that time. It was far beneath the level God has now brought you, but it was needed to help teach you that nothing eternal can be done by the human alone.

## A Single Eye

As earlier stated, Jesus spoke the Aramaic dialect of Hebrew. He used Aramaic expressions such as entering through the Straight Gate, a camel passing through the eye of a needle, and many other then common expressions which His original hearers understood more easily than readers today. (You can research these in Lamsa's Gospel Light.) The same is true when Jesus spoke of the eye being "single", resulting in the "whole body" being full of Light (Matt. 6:22, 23; Luke 11:34).

A single eye refers to having one primary goal, and setting all your focus upon it. When your eye is singly upon the Lord Jesus, your entire focus is upon entering His Reign over you (the Kingdom of God). Your whole body experiences being flooded with light, as George Fox experienced during his silent meditation upon Christ. When your body is "filled with Light" self begins dissolving. Many of the Quakers who practiced stillness profoundly experienced the Kingdom of God as they were filled with light, and people noted the profound changes in their countenances, demeanors, and behavior.

Many Christians today know nothing of this "Light experience" by singly focusing upon Christ. Their countenances and lives are marred by fear, worry, rejection, greed, covetousness, jealousy, and strife. This is what prevents them from inheriting the Kingdom of God on a personal level now. The gentle rule of God over one of His subjects produces righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit and much, much more (Rom. 14:17).

The Lord has made it known that the inner dissatisfaction and turmoil many believers live in and express as "normal" or "life" will end for many as they awaken from this delusion. They will perceive the domain of God as attainable in this life, and experience the Kingdom of God and His peaceful reign in the "now" of surface life. The heavy burdens of daily life will be replaced with ever renewing lightness and joy as they go throughout their daily routines, not dreading, fearing or worrying about anything. Their hearts will know no enemies, and they will look upon everyone with no judgment of his or her life or state (Matt. 7:1). They will not consider anyone less than or greater than themselves, nor will they spend their time consumed with themselves. They will be absorbed in Christ-consciousness and will abide in continual delight in the One in whom they live, move, and have their being (Acts 17:28).

The Light within them will shine through them. They will have received a state of transparency where others read them as Living Letters from God (2 Cor. 3:2). Thus, the Life of God will flow in and through them, permeating them and others wherever they go as "the sweet aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15). Their Father will supply their every need as they will become what they already are--the apples of His eye, the ones in whom His soul delights.

Seeing the Treasure within You

Many sincere Christians have seen or have partly seen, the treasure of Christ in a human vessel in the form of a beloved pastor, evangelist or mature saint. When they are told that their Lord has made a deposit of Heaven's wealth within them too, they nod their heads outside but disagree inside. It is most difficult for those who know themselves best to believe that, in their present state, they are useable for the Lord. The message of the hour now is that the Lord is not willing to leave them in their present state, but that He desires to accelerate the grace of soul transformation within His Church. Then we become lights wherever we are physically located. Others see the Light and are drawn to the Lord. The Light is not something you force, you simply allow it by dwelling in the peace of Christ that comes from continuous inner alignment with His will, and then His Light shines from you. You do not have to do anything; you only need to abide (John 15:4, 5).

What is required in order for you to see the treasure within you is an enlightenment of your spiritual sight, which Paul referred to as the "eyes of your understanding being enlightened" so you can see "the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in God's people" which, of course, refers to you and me (Eph. 1:18). We are "God's heritage" on this planet, the people in whom He has deposited "the wealth of His inheritance" (1 Pet. 5:3). Part of every believer is the home of Jesus Christ "in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored up, hidden from view" (Col. 2:3 WNT). From whom are the treasures hidden? They are hidden from Satan who cannot see them. It is in this hidden place where the Lord causes you to know the real you—the new creation.

For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:3 LITV

We will look at "the hidden life" more deeply later in this chapter, but for now let's focus on what happens whenever a believer has fully identified with Christ and has lost his or her inner attachment to a former false identity. The thought of whether that one is useable to the Lord doesn't enter the mind. Nor does the transformed one take thought about his or her outward function in ministry or society. The one thing that is all-consuming is that he or she remains aligned with God's will in all of life. The concept of "all of life" is continually reduced to this moment now, so it is never overwhelming. The question never arises, "am I aligned with God's will in all my life?" but only "am I aligned with God's will now?"

The joy of simply abiding in Christ is something the Lord Himself made real to me after a year of living the free life produced by His transforming grace within my soul. I was so happy within that nothing could disturb the peace that ruled the heart:

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..."

Colossians 3:15 ASV

The word "let" in Colossians 3:15 does not mean "make" but "allow". Paul is saying "allow the peace of Christ to rule in your hearts."

This boundless peace wasn't due to any outward manifestation of blessing, in fact, the phone rang 20-30 times a day from various creditors, and few churches invited me to speak. None of this mattered to me in the realm of surface life at all. I experienced as much joy sharing the love of Jesus with one person in a coffee shop or a grocery store as much as I had experienced all the years preaching to congregations. Well, that is not exactly true. I experienced more joy in sharing with only one as I had before when preaching to congregations. Guess what? Light shined in darkness wherever daily life took me.

So, there was no unfulfilled need in this vessel to do anything in the common concept of doing. For me it meant I did not need to preach or teach in order to fulfill a need in me, as there had been before all through the years. There was only a continual fountain of delight within. There was so much of the Kingdom of Heaven within that things of earth did not arouse my interest anymore. Hours flew by as minutes; sometimes whole days passed in ecstasy and bliss in His Presence.

Sleep had changed too. It reminded me when, as a small child, I would awaken feeling new and vital inside. This produced new delight in life; all the old heaviness was gone. The Lord led me when to work at my desk, when to eat, when to go here or there. This made living fun.

I couldn't get excited or depressed about media news, and rarely watched it. There was (and is) a sweet field of peace around everything that now happens, and an unshakeable knowing within that everything little men do on this tiny globe is held in God's big hands. I had no concerns about anything, just sweet peace, joy, and periods of uninterrupted bliss. I knew the Lord had made me whole.

As I tried to share what the Lord had done in me, only a few could comprehend or understand. So I gingerly shared with others only tidbits as they were able to receive them. If I sensed there was no inner response in them able to relate to the new things from Christ in my soul, I remained silent, holding the sweet peace inside me.

My son, who lived with me, welcomed the new Light he saw in my eyes. Jordan had witnessed how distressed and depressed I had been, but now saw the new joy and continuous delight in life. He was happy for me.

Nothing I say can convey the reality within the soul. It is difficult and actually impossible to communicate with language the inner reality of the Kingdom of God. My pastor and other pastors for whom I spoke could not understand how I could be so continually fulfilled without regular public preaching. One minister expressed his inner state this way, "I would not know who I was if I wasn't preaching all the time." My inner response was one of great compassion for him having had the same faulty concept of myself for years and years.

But unlike these well-meaning pastors, I could no longer relate to finding fulfillment in any outward function, yet when I sensed the Lord leading me somewhere, the ministry times were always special and blessed. I enjoyed every minute sharing the deeper things of Christ with groups. When the meetings concluded, the function as "guest speaker" was over too. I carried no sense of "I am a teacher in the Body of Christ" but rather only a sense that "I am". Whatever the Lord said to do I did it without regard to outward position or place in the eyes of men. Life is now lived coram Deo--"before the face of God"--and it is so much sweeter now than before.

The Surest Way to Remain in Life

Living in the moment with God is the surest way to continual peace. Whenever the mind tries to return to its former state of worry, which is invariably future-based on what may happen, the heart remains fixed on the "I AM" and brings the mind back into calm centered in God's will. After awhile the mind chooses only to dwell in this peaceful moment as it enjoys not being forced to work all the time. Plans are made on a practical basis, clock time is observed for the necessary functions of outward life so appointments are always honored. However, the mind doesn't attach any importance to the passage of time as it did before

nor is any sense of self-identity attached to the future. All is left in God's hands in a state of unwavering trust. This is how it was finally discovered in my life to "fix" or cement my heart upon God (Psa. 57:7; 108:1; Isa. 26:3). This is how you, too, may live in continual peace by living all your life only one day at a time. After all, no one but God knows the future, "when, all the while, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. For what is the nature of your life? Why, it is but a mist, which appears for a short time and then is seen no more" (James 4:14 WNT).

So, you cease from making big goals for the future, resign from the "what if" state of life, and choose instead to abide in moment-to-moment trust. By living in moment-to-moment trust the heart is kept in peace and "daily bread" comes from the Heavenly Father who is ever mindful of us and knows that we have need of earthly things. This is one of the core teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, the good news that God's Kingdom is a present reality (Matt. 6:7-34).

You no longer view your job with a heavy sense of duty, but it becomes something you carry out in "just this moment" throughout the day "as unto the Lord", and your heart remains fixed trusting in the Lord throughout all waking hours. It becomes second nature not to rely on your understanding of the way things appear outwardly (Col. 3:23). You go by an inner compass that never misleads, and your day has many "coincidences" as they are so termed by earth people. But there is no coincidence in the life of a citizen of the Kingdom of God. There are "divine appointments" that are kept as we listen to His still, small voice.

You know more deeply than the mind could explain or even understand that your day has sprinkled within it divine appointments that you keep as you peacefully move forward in the flow of life issuing up from your spirit. Things are done in His timing. You use your mind as a ready servant, in this state of alert attention, and others ask, "How did you come up with this? That's a great idea!" You are tapping into the true intelligence of "the mind of Christ" in your spirit, and your human mind receives its messages. This is the realm of the spiritual-mind—the realm of continuous "life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

Seeing the Ordinariness in You

In the first miracle of salvation, your new birth, the Light of Christ turned on inside your spirit. At that point in your existence you received the greatest miracle: resurrection of your dead spirit. In God's Light you received His Life, His Love and all His nature in seed form. In God's Presence you received a seal of the Holy Spirit, marking you as belonging to Him (1 Cor. 6:19). You became His child, fathered by Him, and you cried "Abba, Father" out of your spirit (John 1:4, 5; Acts 26:18; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13; 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 John 1:5; 2:10).

The treasure inside you is housed within a common clay jar, your ordinariness. Your ordinariness is not the Light of Christ that began shining within you when you were translated out of the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). But the ordinariness in which you live and move in natural life becomes the medium from which the Light of Christ shines out of you. The more ordinary you are; the more extraordinary Christ is seen through you by comparison to you. People see that you are quite ordinary but they sense something quite extraordinary about you and are curious as to what it is about you that makes you seem somehow extraordinary. It is then that opportunities arise to tell people about the treasure you received from God.

George Mueller's "Secret"

It was through this moment-to-moment trust in God, which sometimes took him several hours to attain through Bible reading and prayer, that George Mueller fed and cared for thousands of orphans every single day. It has been the habit of thousands who are amazed at Mueller's life and the fruitfulness it yielded, to excuse it as a special distribution of faith given to him but withheld from them. If they had instead seen it was a moment-to-moment trust in which George permanently abided, they could have seen the hand of God demonstrated more greatly in their own lives too. God is no respecter of persons; everyone is special to Him (Acts 10:34).

During his lifetime Mueller constantly downplayed this common belief, that he had been especially

graced by God in some extraordinary way. George did not perceive himself as some mighty man of faith. He insisted that he was ordinary and that his faith was the size of a mustard seed. It was his God, Mueller stressed, who was infinite and almighty. Instead of his hearers and readers perceiving the nugget of gold in Mueller's words, they often remarked to one another "What a strange man!" as they left his meetings or closed books about Mueller unchanged. "He is unusually blessed by God, yet cannot even see what is apparent to all of us." They thought him a blind oddity. None of their remarks or attitudes seemed to bother God or George at all, and together they continued feeding thousands daily.

But the truth is that Mueller wasn't strange; he was transformed. He was humble, this is true, but not so unusually humble as to set him apart from any one else who is a spiritual believer. If there was one unusual character asset in Mueller it was his unvarnished honesty. He saw himself as ordinary and God as extraordinary. This was Mueller's secret and the truth of the matter as far as he and God were concerned.

The peaceful temperament of Mueller's nature often surprised visitors. They expected to meet a man burdened with heavy responsibility, but instead he was lighthearted and peaceful. Peace seemed to ooze out of his pores, visitors remarked. Here was an individual responsible for the care of thousands of orphans daily who looked to no one but God for their supply. "All he can do is pray and God has to meet the need," different ones marveled as if trusting God is like walking on air. Mueller's constant reminder to the carnally curious was that underneath him and the orphanage work was not air, but "everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

He was a man without great oratorical skills, unusual intelligence or outward gifts that men appraise, and Mueller, instead of perceiving himself as limited, gloried in his limitations. George Mueller practiced the principle of acceptance. It was by glorying in his weaknesses that the provision of Christ daily manifested through George.

You and I, like Mueller and many others before us, must see ourselves as ordinary clay jars or in the language of J.B. Phillips, "Styrofoam cups" in order for us to become more useable to the Lord. If we are ordinary, Christ can be extraordinary in and through us. A Styrofoam, plastic or paper cup is quite ordinary. "Men serve their finest wines in rare, exquisite glasses. But God serves His best wine in Styrofoam cups," Judson Cornwall once observed while driving him to a speaking engagement. He probably never realized the impact his words had upon me, and how they linger still. It seems that the Lord must want people to comment on the taste of His fine wine more than His drinking glasses.

In soul transformation one loses all sense of specialness, and sees himself clearly as pertaining to his humanness. It is the deposit that God has placed within each of His children enriching their spirits with vast heavenly treasures. The treasures within us are that which is so special, unique, and rare. The realization of the treasure one finds in the ordinary field of himself is that the treasure in the field is what is rare; the rest of the field is common.

Why does God delight in using what is common and ordinary? It is by doing so that He receives all the glory for everything He does (1 Cor. 1:29).

The Hidden Life

What does Paul mean when he tells us that we are "hidden with Christ in God"? He means that we are hidden in the Invisible One: the One whom only the "pure in heart" are allowed to see (Matt. 5:8). In God's ongoing work of redemption in our lives, He grants us the ability to see the hope of His calling for our lives, and enriches us with Heavenly treasures.

Some of these Light Treasures become revealed to us out of dark times we pass through:

And I will give you the treasures of darkness, even treasures in secret places, that you may know that I am Jehovah, who calls you by your name, the God of Israel.

Isaiah 45:3 LITV

If you are in a dark place now, do not despair. Go on a treasure hunt! It is important that you understand that no evil can touch you if you have submitted your soul to God and at the same time you

have not been given the understanding of what is going on in the external realm of your life. You are under His protection; guard your mind from "why" questions and learn to trust Him more. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

The hidden place in God cannot be seen by the evil one. "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen" (Job 28:7 KJV). There is a highway we can travel upon in this life upon which no lion or ravenous beast is permitted to walk (Isa. 35:9).

You died with Christ on the Cross; you were buried with Him in baptism; you rose with Him in His Resurrection and your present life has been hidden with Him "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). But not only are you hidden in God, so are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden there also. They are where you and I are, laying all about us but hidden to mental perception! If God opens your spiritual eyes and permits you to see them, you can receive them and "be enriched by Him in all utterance and all knowledge" (1 Cor. 1:5). Praise God! You never earn a treasure you desire in Christ as His treasures are freely given. Yet, there is a small price you pay. You enroll in His "Trash for Treasure" program!

What God Gives is Bought

Gold that Jesus counsels us to buy from Him, is gold purified by the fire of testing: "I advise you to buy from Me gold having been refined in the fire, that you may be rich" (Rev. 3:18). This is the price you "pay" for His gold. Whenever you joyfully endure a fiery trial of testing you are rewarded with more of His divine nature permeating your soul. The important thing for you to do during a difficult trial is not to complain or murmur about it, but endure it joyfully knowing your faith is being strengthened as you go through it. Peter advises us that a fiery trial is not to be regarded as "a strange thing" (1 Pet. 4:12). If you regard it as something alien you will set up stubborn resistance to it. As you allow whatever happens to happen with no resistance to it, the trial will be over much sooner, and you will receive many other treasures as your Father rewards you. Complaining about anything is grievous to the Holy Spirit and prolongs any trial of our faith (Eph. 4:30, 31). Here in the Kingdom of God there is no complaining in our streets and the people here are always happy because the Lord is our God (Psa. 144:14, 15).

Have you noticed that the things that are "freely given us of God" are things in many cases that we must yet pay a price to receive? (1 Cor. 2:12). Notice these phrases from Jesus' parables:

And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there not be enough for us and you. But rather, go to those who sell and buy for yourselves.

Matthew 25:8, 9 LITV

The Kingdom of the Heavens is like treasure buried in the open country, which a man finds, but buries again, and, in his joy about it, goes and sells all he has and buys that piece of ground.

Again the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a jewel merchant who is in quest of choice pearls. He finds one most costly pearl; he goes away; and though it costs all he has, he buys it.

Matthew 13:44, 45 WNT

Yes, it is true that all spiritual things have been provided by Jesus' death and shedding of blood. We only pay the price of selling out to Him, enduring whatever delay or obstacle with joy motivated by love for God. What a small price this is—the best bargain you'll ever find. He then pours out of His bounty. Otherwise the treasures hidden in Christ, where we are, remain hidden to our understanding and even though they are near us, we do not enter into them.

An old preacher once looked at me and said, "Son, grace is free, but it isn't cheap." It sounds paradoxical, as many divine truths sound to the natural mind. Yet it is true that the blessings God is waiting to pour out upon His Church, those things His people have yet to enter, are freely given to those who sell all that they have. He longs for us to long for Him, and then when we are hungry, He fills our mouths with good things (Luke 1:53).

You can heal the sick, cast out demons, prophesy, and do all manner of miracles in Jesus' Name without paying a price to do any of these things as you already have been given authority to do them (Luke 10:19; Eph. 1:20-23). Yes, you can truly operate in the gifts of the Spirit without ever paying the price necessary for obtaining the One Pearl of Great Price, the riches of the Kingdom hidden in Christ, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The gifts of the Spirit are grace gifts freely operated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. But your inheritance in the Kingdom comes with a price tag: selling all you have. It has been repeated over and over in Church history: believers have confused their gifting with their inheritance. Gifting is entered into by yielding; inheritance comes only after death of the self-life in the believer's soul. This is why no ministry function brings permanent fulfillment after the gifting has been exercised. It is only the Kingdom inheritance that brings permanent righteousness, peace, and joy.

What do you "have" that you need to "sell" so you can "buy" your inheritance? You have everything you are inwardly attached to in outward identity, function, and relationship. You have to surrender them all to God, just as we saw earlier how Abraham surrendered his beloved Isaac. Isaac was a blessing from God, a gift from Him that would bless the nations and through whom Abraham would become a father of many nations and through whom the Messiah would come who would bless all who believe in Him. But God was concerned that Abraham had begun to attach his identity to Isaac rather than keeping his identity —the sense of who he was—attached only to God. Abraham had begun to attach himself to the external realm which is why God demanded his inner death to the outward blessing. It wasn't Isaac who died on Moriah; it was Abraham.

It is not your ministry, your gifting or your outward function in life that will die as a result of your inner transformation. It is you that will die to the former significance you had placed on these external things—perhaps things that have been greatly used by God in the past and to which you had attached your sense of identity. God's design is that as far as you are concerned only Christ remains your life, your love, and your attachment.

Keeping your inner state free from outward attachments of any kind doesn't mean you must leave your family, but it does mean you must keep them surrendered to Jesus. It doesn't mean you must resign your business position, but it does mean you must not be attached to it as your identification. Your reputation as a good or great whatever you are in the external world also belongs to Jesus, not you. It doesn't mean you must isolate yourself from the world, but it does mean you mustn't set your affection upon it or its things (Col. 3:1-3; 1 John 2:16). Instead, as you abide in the secret place of the Most High, you become attached only to Him—in whose Presence you discover overflowing joy and unending pleasure (Psa. 16:11; 91:1).

If you keep your soul submitted to the King in your spirit you can lose your reputation and not suffer inwardly from the loss. You can lose your business position and not suffer inwardly as well. One or more family members may choose to distance themselves from you or may even choose to desert you. This also will not produce suffering because your inner connection with your Heavenly Father remains undisturbed and even deepens when you welcome any external loss: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Psa. 27:10). Christ is your all and in your all (Col. 3:11).

Life takes on a newness, depth, and richness you never before have known as you--by allowing the Holy Spirit to remain in charge--easily maintain your spirit's supremacy over your soul. At the beginning of each new day you awaken still inside; if you aren't still inside you choose to become still by focusing on Jesus. Then, you take up your cross and disown any sense of self. You do this by practicing inner alignment with God in the waking moments of each day choosing His will over yours as you go through the day. You continue in the inner alignment with His will moment-by-moment allowing your spirit to alert you if you begin to entertain a thought that does not arise from His will. It is actually an easy thing to do, and becomes a near unconscious activity. It seems as natural as breathing.

In this new state of life, suddenly, you are rich!

About the Author

David Alsobrook was born again in 1969 at age 15. Two years later he began traveling in fulltime ministry across the USA and abroad preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His ministry has taken him to more than two thousand congregations of many different denominations and non-denominations. He has preached in 48 states and in all the lower provinces of Canada.

In his 20s he began writing books which have found their way into no fewer than 50 nations. They have been translated into numerous languages including Spanish, Greek, Portuguese, French, German, Japanese, Latvian, Russian, Chinese, Creole, Indonesian, Arabic, Cebuano, Tagalog, Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Myanmar, Swahili, and other African languages and dialects. He has written, cowritten, or ghost written four dozen titles.

David is not a high school graduate and only briefly attended college as a non-degree student. His ordination is orthodox Anglican, but his ministry is trans-denominational in scope. Despite his lack of formal education he has taught the Word of God in numerous Bible schools and Bible colleges.

Thousands of people have received life changing experiences with God through his ministry including numerous miracles of all kinds. He has been miraculously healed of Epstein-Barre Virus, a heart problem and failing eyesight (all confirmed by later medical tests). The greatest miracle he has ever received since his new birth, however, was a miracle of sudden, radical transformation in 2008. This miracle brought fullness of life, freedom from mental anxieties of all sorts, and deep, profound peace.

David welcomes your correspondence and will personally pray for you.

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