

# ***I Must Be About My Father's Business***

## **Volume III**

### **Transformation**

- **Dominion Over Sin and Self**

#### **The Father's Business**

##### **Sword**

**1 John 3:8** For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

##### **Sickle**

**Luke 19:10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

**Matthew 9:38** Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

**James A. Twentier**



**I Must Be About My Father's Business** Copyright © 2007  
by Rev. James A. Twentier, Double Vision Evangelism, Inc.

Unless otherwise identified, Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. Scriptures included from other Bible versions are indicated as follows:

- NLT - New Living Translation
- TLB - The Living Bible
- TEV - Today's English Version
- GNT - Good News Translation
- NIV - New International Version
- MSG - THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary  
Language © 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson.  
All rights reserved.

PC STUDY BIBLE from BIBLESOFT was used as the source for all Scripture references and commentaries.

Please note that the emphasis within Scripture is the author's own. The name satan and related names are not capitalized because we choose not to acknowledge him.



# Contents

Dedication .....	9
Acknowledgments.....	11
Purpose and Scope .....	13
Author’s Note.....	19
Introduction.....	21
<b>I. Spiritual Growth -</b>	
<b>A Passion for God.....</b>	<b>31</b>
1. <i>Hunger and Thirst for God.....</i>	<b>33</b>
1.1 The Natural Appetite.....	35
1.2 The Spiritual Appetite.....	36
2. <i>Dreams and Visions -</i>	
<i>Under the Influence of the Spirit.....</i>	<b>43</b>
3. <i>Right Motive for Spiritual Growth.....</i>	<b>55</b>
4. <i>Depth of Relationship.....</i>	<b>61</b>
4.1 Growing in Grace.....	63
4.2 Four Levels of Relationship - The Twelve Disciples.....	67
4.3 Four Levels of Water .....	72
4.4 Outer and Inner Circles in God’s Church Today .....	75
4.5 Influence of Our Depth of Relationship.....	77
4.6 Our Goals for a Deeper Relationship.....	79
5. <i>Spiritual Maturity Summary -</i>	
<i>Impartation and Engagement.....</i>	<b>81</b>

# Contents

## II. Transformation -

### **Dominion Over Sin and Self ..... 85**

<b>1. <i>The Tabernacle of God</i> .....</b>	<b>87</b>
1.1 The Body (Outer Court).....	89
1.2 The Soul (Holy Place).....	89
1.3 The Spirit (The Most Holy Place).....	96
1.4 Three Levels of Living.....	99
<b>2. <i>Rending of the Veil</i> .....</b>	<b>105</b>
2.1 The Veil of the Tabernacle .....	105
2.2 The Veil of Sin.....	106
2.3 The Veil of Self.....	107
2.4 Born to Die - Die to Live .....	111
<b>3. <i>Changed or Chained</i> .....</b>	<b>115</b>
3.1 Initial Change - From a Sinner to a Christian .....	116
3.2 Transformation - Continuous Change of a Christian.....	117
3.3 Self-Imposed Chains of the Christian .....	120
3.4 Power of Attachments Impede Change.....	122
3.5 Significant Changes for Supernatural Results .....	124
<b>4. <i>God's Change Agents -</i></b>	
<b><i>The Refiner's Fire and the Cross</i> .....</b>	<b>127</b>
4.1 God's Balance - Trial and Peace.....	128
4.2 Purpose of God's Change Agents .....	130
4.3 The Refiner's Fire .....	132
4.4 Joseph's Fiery Trial and Promotion.....	136
4.5 Job's Fiery Trial and Restoration.....	141
4.6 The Cross .....	151
4.7 Apostle Paul's Cross of Suffering.....	154
4.8 Apostle Peter in Nero's Fire .....	159
4.9 God is Working on Our Eternal Life .....	162

# Contents

<b>5. <i>Discipline Drives Change</i> .....</b>	<b>165</b>
5.1 The Discipline of an Olympian.....	165
5.2 A Disciple -- The Disciplined One.....	168
5.3 Submitting Everything to the Authority of Christ .....	169
5.3.1 Discipline in Our Prayer Life.....	172
5.3.2 Discipline in Our Reading Habits .....	173
5.3.3 Discipline in Our Church Attendance.....	174
5.3.4 Discipline in Our Fasting .....	176
5.3.5 Discipline in Our Entertainment .....	176
5.3.6 Discipline in Our Conversation.....	182
5.3.7 Discipline in Our Friendship .....	182
5.3.8 Discipline in Our Accountability .....	183
5.3.9 Discipline in Our Business Dealings.....	184
5.3.10 Discipline in Our Career .....	185
5.3.11 Discipline in Our Time.....	187

## **III. Spiritual Growth - The Necessity of Prayer ..... 193**

<b>1. <i>Prayer - The Last Frontier of a Mature Christian</i> .....</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>2. <i>When Answer to Prayer is “No” or “Wait”</i>.....</b>	<b>205</b>
2.1 No Human Reasoning for Unanswered Prayers.....	210
2.2 Faith and Deliverance Vs. Faith without Deliverance .....	212
2.3 Twelve Apostles’ Final Testimony Written in Blood.....	215
2.4 Revelation of God to Unbelievers Through Miracles.....	217
2.5 Afflictions of the Righteous - A Pruning Process.....	221
2.6 Answers Delayed Because of Sin .....	222
2.7 Trials Become Testimonies to Others.....	224
2.8 Sickness Unto Death - Promotion to a Better World.....	225

# Contents

<b>3. <i>Prayer and the Peace of God in the Storm</i>.....</b>	<b>227</b>
3.1 Why Was Jesus Asleep in the Storm?.....	228
3.2 Peter Sleeping Through a Storm .....	229
3.3 Three Hebrew Children in the Firestorm .....	229
3.4 Daniel Sleeping Through the Storm with Lions .....	230
3.5 The Prince of Peace -- Shelter in the Storm.....	232
3.6 I Know the Anchor Holds in the Storm .....	234
<b>4. <i>My Prayer</i>.....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>IV. <i>Appendices</i> .....</b>	<b>243</b>
<i>Appendix 1 - Charts</i> .....	245
<i>Appendix 2 - Addendum Volume</i>	
<i>Chart Reference</i> .....	265
<i>Appendix 3 - Notes</i> .....	267
<i>Appendix 4 - About the Author</i> .....	269



## **Dedication**

To my parents, Ronald and Johnnie Twentier; and my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Al and Vernell Jones, thanks for passing down a godly heritage to Marsha and me. We are now living with the benefits and blessings of your dedication and example.

To our children and their spouses: Misty and Timothy Johnson; and Monte and Starla Twentier, we present to you our burden to carry on the godly heritage and legacy of our parents and grandparents. We pray that you will pass the same bright torch of truth and righteousness to your children and your grandchildren.



## **Acknowledgments**

I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to the following people:

To my wife, of 40 years, Marsha Gail, who helped me with hundreds of hours of proofreading, formatting and many other suggestions.

Joyce Houlette for assisting me with her grammatical and editing expertise.

Roland Ramos for painting the book cover scene.

Many friends who offered their support and encouragement.



## Purpose and Scope

The primary aim of Volume I and Volume II is to deal with the purposes for which God created man. That includes the foundational concept that **God works only through man to accomplish His will and work on earth**. While God's purpose for creating man included **relationship**, it was much more; it was to bring man into a partnership with Himself, and give him **dominion** to carry out His mission, will, and work on earth. God's decision to make Himself dependent upon man created a balanced relationship with God needing man and man needing God. That is an exciting concept -- God needs you and me! So the two themes are:

- **Relationship** - Man's relationship with God.
- **Dominion** - God partnering with man and working through man to carry out His mission, His will, and His work on earth.

The purpose of Volumes III, IV and V is to build on the foundation of Volumes I and II, in moving toward the vision and goal of becoming a harvest-driven Christian.

Refer to the following pages for a brief description of this project.

## This Project

The six volumes in this project are shown here to:

- Briefly describe the complete scope of this project.
- Define the purpose and scope of each volume and where this volume fits in this progressive series.

### Volume I

#### God's Purpose for Man Relationship and Dominion

Volume I sets forth God's purpose for man -- relationship and dominion. It addresses in more depth man's **relationship** with God and God's desire to have a close and growing relationship with man.

It describes God and man relationship roles: Father / Child, Groom / Bride, Friend / Friend, Master / Servant (love slave).

### Volume II

#### Dominion Doing God's Will and Work

This volume emphasizes the importance of **dominion**, since we often lead people to a relationship with God, but fail to help them take the next important step -- exercising dominion in the Kingdom of God. The two concepts of **relationship** and **dominion** working together in a believer's life will bring **balance**, **spiritual growth**, and **fulfillment**.

This book addresses the subject of **dominion** and **why** we need to be involved in the mission and work of the Father's business. It includes many examples from both the Old and New Testaments of God's plan to work through man to accomplish His will on earth.

It also describes God and man dominion roles: Great Physician / physician; Great High Priest / priest; Great Commander / soldier; King of Kings / prince; Lord of the Harvest / harvester.

## Purpose and Scope

### Volume III

#### Transformation

- Dominion Over Sin and Self

This book addresses **what** we need to do to become more effective in the Father's business. This encompasses **foundational principles of spiritual growth** that will prepare individuals to be more fruitful Christians. The primary emphasis is **dominion over self** (the will, the mind and the emotions) vs. dominion over sin.

Spiritual growth results from a hunger and a **passion** for the things of God - **“Loving God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.”** The will of God will always lead us beyond where we are now in our spiritual growth.

**Spiritual growth at the individual level will result in church growth at the corporate level.**

### Volume IV

#### Unlimited Partnership

#### With a Supernatural God

The greatest reason for God's first creation of man at the dawn of creation was that He might obtain sons to carry out His will and work on earth. He desired to reproduce His image in a creature.

The greatest reason for God's new creation of man (through a new birth, a spiritual birth) first recorded in the book of Acts, was that He might obtain **sons to carry out the supernatural work of His Kingdom**. True son-ship is an obligation to live out, or put in practice, the nature of the Father. It is the Father's will for us as sons of God, to become, *“Partakers of His divine nature”*, His supernatural nature -- partnering with Him in His business.

# I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS – Volume III

## Volume V

### Revival and Evangelism

- Passion for God
- Compassion for the Lost

The key to soul winning is love and compassion while exercising **dominion** in the harvest field.

This book describes some of the biblical foundational principles of revival and evangelism. Discussed in more detail is the “**how to**” of putting the evangelism principles into practice through the two arms of the church:

- The **Prayer Ministry** -- reaching for Him.
- The **Compassion and Care Ministry** (attracting, winning and retaining) -- reaching for them.

**Revival and evangelism at the personal level will result in revival and evangelism at the corporate level.**

## Volume VII

### Addendum

#### PowerPoint Charts For all Volumes

The Addendum Volume contains the 8.5 X 11 copies of the PowerPoint charts supporting the themes and concepts presented in Volumes I, II, III, IV and V of the series entitled, “***I Must Be About My Father's Business***”.

The full color charts are available on CD in Adobe Acrobat and PowerPoint formats. For group teaching, these can be printed on printer transparencies for presentation on an overhead projector or with a computer and multi-media projector.

Refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for the Addendum Volume charts applicable to this book.



## **I Must Be About My Father's Business** **Five Volume Progressive Series**



The Addendum Volume contains the 8.5 X 11 copies of the PowerPoint charts supporting the themes presented in the above five volumes.



## **Author's Note**

The project of writing this six volume progressive series of books is very challenging in both scope and content. This First Edition is a work in progress and is by no means a complete exposition of the subjects. It is only a summary of themes that God has dealt with me regarding these inexhaustible subjects. It is my thesis and collection of findings at this point in my Christian experience from:

- Several thousand hours of studying various themes and subjects related to God's purpose and will for man; the restoration of the church; the endtime harvest; passion for God; compassion for the lost; dominion in the supernatural; and soul winning which involves the salvation of both the sinner and the saint.
- A theme that began a few years ago as a slice of bread from the Word of God, the Bread of Life. As my studies continued, it became a loaf of bread, and another, and another. As many of the things I had been studying came together, it became a bread truck, an overwhelming burden driving through my spirit, soul, and mind that had to be delivered.
- Many years of trying to apply these principles in my life and ministry. I have not attained all that I should, and I should be further along in His work and Kingdom, but I am reaching and striving for more.

- A direction and a burden from God, accompanied by an unusual urgency to very quickly write and complete this project. This is comparable to the burden of a message waiting to be preached. However, this feeling has lasted throughout years of work and preparation.

This project includes much Scripture text and commentary from both the Old and New Testaments. Considered redundant to some readers, I mention it here to explain that it is intentional. These collectively demonstrate the importance of themes and concepts describing the eternal purpose and will of God for man's involvement in His work on earth.

The Word of God is like a hammer. The hammer that has worn out many anvils throughout time and has not become weakened or diminished in its effectiveness. I pray that God will hammer these messages and themes into your spirit like He is hammering them into mine. ***Jeremiah 23:29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?***

This book is a product of hearing several thousand messages, reading and studying the greatest Book, the Bible, and from many other sources of great writers over many years. I have tried to give proper credit to sources where appropriate. If I have overlooked someone or something, it is unintentional and only an indication that their individual message or work has blended into the larger themes of my studies and ministry.

Your comments for changes and additions to the content of this book are welcomed and will be considered for future revisions. God bless and multiply your harvest as we labor together with Him.

## Introduction

If there is to be continued spiritual growth following the salvation experience and initial grounding in the basic foundational truths of Christian living, it will be because we pursue it consistently, diligently and purposefully -- with a **passion**.

Pursuit of spiritual growth will not be without a challenge and a battle. This battle will be staged on three fronts -- the world, the flesh and the devil. The greatest enemy is the flesh, resulting in a fight to the death -- the death of the carnal man. Apostle Paul warned the churches of his day about this battle of the flesh and the Spirit.

*Gal. 5:17*

*17 For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh . . . ; for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do. AMP*

*Rom. 7:21, 22*

*21 So I find it to be a law (rule of action of my being) that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands.*

*22 I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self [with my new nature]. AMP*

Although this book deals with dominion over sins of the body (flesh) and sins of the soul (self), the primary emphasis is “**self**”. Early in our Christian walk we should gain dominion over the sins of the flesh.

*Rom. 6:14*

*14 For sin shall not [any longer] exert dominion over you, since now you are not under Law [as slaves], but under grace [as subjects of God's favor and mercy]. AMP*

The greater lifetime struggle will be with **self -- the soul (the will, the mind, and the emotions)**:

- Self-will vs. God's will.
- Self-ways (mind) vs. God's ways (mind).
- Self-love vs. God's love.
- Self-righteousness vs. God's righteousness.

### **Sacrifices to Pursue the Depths of the Spirit**

The sacrifices of the cross to continue the journey of spiritual growth into the depths of the Spirit may seem too extreme or fanatical to the carnal man. But for the spiritual man they will become his **passion**. Summarized in this book include the following:

- Driven by a hunger and thirst for God.
- Reaching for God-given vision and dreams -- the impossible.
- Pursuing the inner circle of relationship with God.
- Pursuing spiritual growth with the right motive.
- Relinquishing self-will to embrace the will of God.
- Living as the temple of the most holy God.
- Submission of the complete man (body, soul and spirit).
- Rending the veil of self (soul -- the will, mind and emotions).
- Accepting and embracing God's change agents -- the Refiner's fire and the cross of suffering.
- Pursuing transformation -- continuous change.
- Developing self-discipline to live by the right priorities.
- Pursuing the spiritual frontier (new territory) through a greater depth in prayer.
- Accepting God's will when the answer to our prayer is "no" or "wait".

## **Extreme and Fanatical Devotion to Jesus Christ**

Rev. Randy Keyes said: **“True apostolic revival does not exist outside the realm of the fanatic.”**

The terms “extreme” and “fanatic” have a negative implication when used with an unworthy or evil cause. But these terms have a positive implication when used with a worthy or excellent cause. In this book we are speaking of having a **passion** for the greatest cause -- the cause of Jesus Christ.

### **-- From Webster’s New World College Dictionary**

**Extreme** - far from what is usual, ordinary or conventional, drastic, utmost, to the greatest degree, very great, expedient.<sup>1</sup>

**Fanatic** - enthusiastic, inspired, a person whose extreme zeal goes beyond what is reasonable, overly zealous.<sup>1</sup>

**Passion** - extreme emotion that has an overpowering and compelling effect; intense enthusiasm and zeal for a cause displayed by vigorous and untiring activity in its support.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of the concepts in this book, these terms do not mean crazy, rude, or disorderly. But they express an extreme, **passionate** love, devotion and dedication to our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ -- willing to give our life for His Kingdom.

*1 Cor. 4:10*

*10 We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ . . .*

*10 Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you are so wise! . . . NLT*

Some debate the question: “Why should the concepts and issues surrounding the Christian walk and spiritual growth be so extreme?”

The answer is, “Because this concerns the **extreme issues of life and death -- and heaven and hell.**”

Why Extreme and Fanatical? -- Because:

- **God is extremely holy.**

*1 Peter 1:15, 16*

*15 But as the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all your conduct and manner of living.*

*16 For it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. AMP*

- **Satan is extremely evil; he fights extremely hard.**

- **Heaven is extremely glorious and wonderful.**

- **Hell is extremely hot and painful.**

- **Eternity is extremely long and life is extremely short.**

- **The way is extremely straight and narrow.**

*Matt. 7:14*

*14 Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

- **God's people are extremely separated from the world.**

- **God paid an extreme price for our healing and salvation.**

- **The worth of one soul is extremely great -- more than the worth of the whole world.**

- **Eternal life is extremely valuable -- nothing in this world worth losing.**

- **Jesus, our example, was extreme in His ministry.**

Jesus was considered a radical by the religious leaders because He did not fit into the religious culture of their day.

*John 2:17*

*17 The zeal of your house consumes me. MSG*

*17 My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire. GNT*

In our kingdom we are fanatic about something that excites us, something we enjoy doing more than anything else. The standards



we set in our kingdom for our pursuits are the beginning standard to measure our commitment to His Kingdom.

On Judgment Day, possibly the harshest judgment will be how we conducted business in our kingdom, compared to how we conducted business in His Kingdom. We should be fanatic about the business of His Kingdom -- *Love the Lord thy God with **all thy heart**, and with **all thy soul**, and with **all thy mind**, and with **all thy strength**.*

### **Extreme Length of Eternity Vs. the Extreme Brevity of Life**

We are allotted 70-100 years to live in this life; it is just a vapor. But we will live 999,999,999,999,999,999,999,999 . . . years in eternity. This concept is unfathomable for our finite minds to comprehend. It is like working for a company for **one minute**, and then being awarded a retirement package worth a billion dollars a day for the rest of our life.

- **If we can grasp and understand this one truth, it will revolutionize our life. We will live this one minute time span, called life, with the utmost extreme dedication to our heavenly Father and His business.**

This one concept should startle us into action, with an extreme desire for spiritual growth and dedication to God.

### **Benefits and Rewards of Spiritual Growth**

I pray that God will give us a greater revelation of the benefits and rewards that far outweigh the, “seemingly negative aspects” of the struggles required for attaining spiritual growth.

Understanding the many benefits of continuous spiritual growth is a part of the journey. Since they are beyond comprehension with the carnal mind, they must be revealed by the Spirit.

As we proceed into spiritual growth, we will receive a greater revelation and experience more of the marvelous blessings of God.

1 Cor. 2:9-11

9 *But as it is written, **Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.***

10 *But **God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.***

11 *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so **the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.***

We have often interpreted this Scripture to refer only to the glory and rewards of heaven. But this refers to the revelation of unbelievable, supernatural things available to believers to enjoy now as we pursue the deeper things of the Spirit.

-- **From Barnes' Notes**

The declaration in 1 Cor. 2:10, is conclusive proof that Paul does not refer to the happiness of heaven. Here he says that God has revealed these things to Christians by his Spirit. But if already revealed, assuredly it does not refer to that which is yet to come.

[Eye hath not seen] This is the same as saying, that no one had ever fully perceived and understood the value and beauty of those things which God has prepared for his people.

[To say that the eye had not seen, nor the ear heard, was, therefore, the same as saying that it was not known at all. All people had been ignorant of it.

[Neither have entered into the heart of man] No man has conceived it; or understood it. It is new; and is above all that man has seen, and felt, and known.<sup>2</sup>

- **The incredible benefits that God has for His people in this life, are infinitely beyond our comprehension, without the revelation of the Spirit.**

## Introduction

- **At the end of our life, we will receive a rich, incredible, and incomprehensible reward -- the inheritance of eternal life in heaven.**

*Rev. 21:4, 23*

*4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

*23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

*Rev. 22:4, 5*

*4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*

*5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign **for ever and ever.***

*Rev. 2:10*

*10 Be thou faithful until death and I will give thee a crown of life.*







**I.**  
**Spiritual Growth -**  
**A Passion for God**

---

## ***What Are Your Desires?***

- ***Whatever you desire, you will pursue.***
  - ***Whatever you pursue, you will obtain.***
  - ***Whatever you obtain, you will become.***
-



## *1. Hunger and Thirst for God*

God created man with the ability to hunger and thirst. Hunger and thirst pertain to a longing or earnest desire for something. Hunger is a healthy human sensation. It is a compelling passion, insisting on satisfaction. The longer hunger goes unsatisfied, the more intense the desire becomes. Hunger and thirst are the strongest natural appetites. Likewise, the hunger and thirst of the soul should be awakened to passionately desire the things of the Spirit.

A basic requirement for the natural growth of a child is hunger for food and thirst for water. Without them, the child will not grow and eventually will become malnourished and die. Similarly, a basic requirement for the spiritual growth of a child of God is hunger for the Bread of Life (the Word) and thirst for the Living Water (the Spirit).

This should be accompanied by a desire to be led by the **Spirit** and live in obedience to God's Word and His will. God has set eternity in our hearts. He has given us a hunger which can only be satisfied with the Bread of Life, and a thirst which can only be quenched by the Living Water from the Rock of Ages. Jesus declared this timeless truth of hunger and thirst.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*Matt. 5:6*

*6 Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst** after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

*John 6:35*

*35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

*John 7:37-39*

*37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.***

*38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

*39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

King David wrote often about his thirst for God. He was called, "The man after God's own heart", because of his hunger and thirst for God and his consuming desire to do all the will of God. "*I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after mine own heart**, which shall fulfil all my will.*" (Acts 13:22)

*Ps. 42:1, 2*

*1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

*2 My soul **thirsteth** for God, for the living God . . .*

*Ps. 63:1-3*

*1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: **my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth** for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*

*2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*

*3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

## **1.1 The Natural Appetite**

The **appetite that satisfies the natural man** (son of man) is driven by hunger for things in man's kingdom. Hunger and thirst for food and water is the strongest drive in human nature.

### **God Made Provisions for Food and Drink for the Natural Man**

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Water for Ishmael in the wilderness.

Israel with manna and water in the desert.

Raven by the brook to feed Elijah during famine.

An angel to feed Elijah.

Miracle of the meal barrel to feed widow woman and Elijah.

David was allowed to eat the shewbread (reserved for the priest) when he was fleeing from King Saul.

Jesus allowed His disciples to pick corn on the Sabbath.

With five loaves and two fishes, Jesus fed the 5,000 men (plus women and children).

With seven loaves and a few fishes, Jesus fed the 4,000 men (plus women and children).

The Bible instructs us to feed our fellow man.

Other appetites in man's kingdom include desires for:

- Liberty
- Comfort
- Happiness
- Possessions
- Recognition and power
- Companionship and love
- Knowledge and higher learning
- Pleasure, recreation and entertainment

## 1.2 The Spiritual Appetite

The **appetite that satisfies the spiritual man** is driven by a hunger for the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. Satisfied by spiritual things, the spiritual man (son of God) -- craves prayer, the Word of God, the house of God, and doing God's work -- loving and helping people.

God also makes provisions for the spiritual hunger and thirst and is even more eager to supply the spiritual needs of man:

- If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? (Luke 11:11)
- How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him? (Luke 11:13)
- On the day of Pentecost they were hungry and they tarried and prayed until they were filled. (Acts 2:1-4)
- Cornelius was hungry for God and an angel was dispatched with a message that led to the satisfying of his soul and the souls of his entire household. (Acts 10:2-33)

God desires to fill those with salvation who are hungry for a change in their lives. God also desires to fill the Christian who hungers to fulfill God's will and purpose -- to meet God's needs. God only responds to needs -- those of a sinner, those of a saint.

*Isa. 44:3*

*3 For I will **pour water upon him that is thirsty**, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:*

*Rev. 21:6*

*6 I will give unto **him that is athirst** of the fountain of the water of life freely.*

*Rev. 22:17*

*17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let **him that is athirst come**. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

## *Hunger and Thirst for God*

When we become satisfied and no longer hunger to be transformed into the image of Christ, backsliding begins. God only responds to need. To attain spiritual growth, man must feel his need of God; he must be hungry. God creates in every man's soul a longing for His presence. Like other tastes, a hunger for spiritual things is strengthened by exercise and weakened by neglect.

Satan seeks to replace spiritual hunger with desire for temporal things. We should consistently ask God to perpetuate and increase our strong desire for His righteousness.

### **-- From "Power Through Prayer" by E. M. Bounds**

"There must be an ardent desire which stirs and breaks all self-indulgent chains."

"Our laziness after God is our crying sin. The children of this world are far wiser than we. They are at it early and late."

"Are we waiting for something to happen, or are we seeking God with all we have?"

"God does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comer and goer."<sup>1</sup>

### **Fasting**

To be filled with things in His Kingdom, we often must fast from certain things in our kingdom.

- Remove the pleasure of food -- being more hungry for God than for natural food.
- Being hungrier for, "*The rest that causes the weary to rest*", than for natural comfort.
- Hungering for, "*In His presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore*", rather than for natural pleasures.

An appetite for God and the things of God can be awakened and

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

nurtured by prayer and fasting -- **“Oh God, I want You; I want You more than anything in my kingdom.”** In doing so, God will satisfy **our burden**, and increase our hunger to meet the needs of **His burden** -- ministering to the needs of His sick and desperately lost children.

### -- From **“A Hunger for God”** by John Piper

Our appetites dictate the direction of our lives – whether it be the cravings of our stomachs, the passionate desire for possessions or power, the insatiable appetite for entertainment and pleasure or the longings of our spirits for God.

For the Christian, the hunger for anything besides God can be our enemy, while our hunger for God -- and Him alone - - is the only thing that will bring fullness, satisfaction and victory.

Do you have that hunger for Him? Do you have that thirst for Him? If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God in our lives, it is because we have not drunk deeply from His fountain. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great.

If we are full of what the world offers, then perhaps a fast might express, or even increase, our soul's appetite for God. Between the dangers of self-denial and self-indulgence is this path of pleasant pain called fasting. For when God is the supreme hunger of your heart, He will be supreme in everything. And when you are most satisfied in Him, He will be most glorified in you.<sup>2</sup>

- **What are your desires? Whatever you desire, you will pursue. What you pursue, you will obtain. What you obtain, you will become.**

## *Hunger and Thirst for God*

We usually receive those things for which we hunger and thirst. However, the treasures of earth such as money, possessions, power, praise, pleasure and entertainment don't satisfy -- the treasures of heaven do.

### **-- From "Evangelism God's Heartbeat" by Shelly Hendricks**

Could it be that we are not having the great harvest we have asked for because our carnal desires are greater than our spiritual desires? In man's kingdom -- our economy is measured in dollars. In God's Kingdom -- His economy is measured by lost souls that are healed, delivered and saved.<sup>3</sup>

- **The more we seek spiritual things in God's Kingdom, the less we desire natural things in our kingdom. The more our desires are for the natural man, the less we desire spiritual things.**

One person with hunger, commitment, persistence and endurance will accomplish more than a thousand people with mere passing interest. Quitting is a habit and so is persistence. "*Hunger and thirst for righteousness*", mirrors a passionate force inside the soul crying for more of God. Many people begin the good fight of faith, but they become satisfied too soon and their appetite for other things replaces their hunger and thirst for God. When we lose motivation for more of God, spiritual growth ceases.

### **Jesus, Our Example of Hunger and Thirst**

In the heart of Jesus burned a hunger and thirst to save men. Evident at the early age of 12, He said, "***Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?***" His hunger and thirst was not quenched until His work on earth was done and His cry from the cross announced -- "***It is finished.***"

In the ministry of Jesus, His hunger was satisfied only by doing the will of God.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*John 4:31-35*

*31 In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.*

*32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*

*33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?*

*34 Jesus saith unto them, **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.***

*35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh **harvest**? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are **white already to harvest.***

- **The hunger of the saint should parallel that of Jesus -- to bring the Bread of Life and Water of Life to the needy.**

Like Jesus at the well of Samaria, we should satisfy our thirst by doing His will in ministering to needy people. We must hunger to see the souls of our fellowman saved. We must thirst to have our children, work associates, and our neighbors delivered and set free. And for ourselves we must desire to have our soul awakened to a new level -- with a hunger and thirst for more of the righteousness of God.

- **One day our hunger and thirst will be eternally satisfied.**

If we continue to seek Him, His perfect will and His Kingdom in this life, we will receive the reward of heaven in the next life -  
- forever ending our hunger and thirst.

*Rev. 7:16, 17*

*16 They shall **hunger no more, neither thirst any more**; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*

*17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto **living fountains of waters**: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*



## *Hunger and Thirst for God*

- **While we seek for Him -- He is searching for us. God seeks those who hunger and thirst for Him and His righteousness.**

*2 Chron. 16:9*

*9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*

*1 Peter 3:12*

*12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers . . .*

*John 4:23*

*23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for **the Father seeketh such to worship him.***

*Ezek. 22:30*

*30 And **I sought for a man** among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.*

---

*The only thing worse than not reaching your  
dream -- is not having a dream.*

---

## 2. *Dreams and Visions* - *Under the Influence of the Spirit*

What you are dreaming today, you will be doing tomorrow. But if you do not have a dream today -- you cannot see it fulfilled tomorrow.

**Vision** is seeing beyond the present circumstances. It is looking beyond the temporal and the physical world of reality. It is seeing by faith something that does not yet exist. Faith is the spiritual energy to reach for, to sustain and attain the vision. Vision is the object of faith; it sees the end from the beginning. Vision is a picture of what you are going to be and do. Vision reveals what God is going to do through you!

**Dreams** or visions are referenced over 200 times in the Bible. The greatest relevant Scriptural example of spiritual dreams and visions is stated in Joel, chapter 2, and fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts, chapter 2. It states that when one is under the influence of the Spirit they will begin to dream dreams and see visions -- spiritual dreams and visions.

What kind of dreams and visions does the Spirit want to create in our life? When we are filled with the Spirit, we should be dreaming and seeing visions like people in Acts, chapter 2. Such dreams and

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

visions will concern the **wonderful works of God that the Spirit will be working through our lives.**

### **Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit:**

*Joel 2:23, 24, 28, 29*

*23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.*

*24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.*

*28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will **pour out my Spirit** upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall **dream dreams**, your young men shall **see visions**:*

*29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.*

### **Response to the outpouring of the Spirit:**

*Acts 2:10-18*

*10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,*

*11 Cretes and Arabians, **we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.***

*12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*

*13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

*14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

*15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.*

*16 But **this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;***

*17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will **pour out of my Spirit** upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters*

*shall prophesy, and your young men shall see **visions**, and your old men shall **dream dreams**:*

*18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

-- **From Thayer's Greek Lexicon**

**Dream** OT:2493 - a dream is a vehicle of revelation.

**Vision** OT:2384 - a vision is an oracle of prophecy, a divine communication.<sup>1</sup>

-- **From Webster's New World College Dictionary**

**Vision** is to conceive, envision, realize, image, ideas out of this world.

**Dream** is a fantasy, not real, a dreamer proposes plans impossible (for man) to work.<sup>2</sup>

• **Vision will always precede and drive change.**

**Visionaries drive change.** This is true concerning breakthroughs in the fields of medicine, technology, aviation, etc. This is also true in the Kingdom of God.

Change results from our dreams and visions because they transport us to places where we have never been. Without change, there will be no fulfillment of our dreams. We must manage change and not let it manage us. Change is a negative word to negative people; but to positive people, change means the hope of realizing their dreams and visions.

When we suggest change, obviously it excludes changing our values and doctrines; we must not lose the precious truths of God's Word. We must hold on to old values while reaching with new vision -- sharing old values with new vision. Our greatest challenge as born-again believers is not the loss of doctrine and standards of righteousness, but the loss of vision. Otherwise, spiritual growth of the individual and the church stagnate. It is God's will that we continuously grow and change to be more like Him.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

- **A vision or a dream is the target of faith. So, without a vision or dream it is impossible to have faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.**

*Heb. 11:1, 2, 5, 6*

*1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

*2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

*5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he **pleased God**.*

*6 But without faith it is **impossible to please him**: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

- **In our natural world -- seeing is believing. Conversely, in the spiritual world, it is the opposite; believing is seeing (by faith).**

*2 Cor. 5:7*

*7 For we walk by faith, not by sight:*

*2 Cor. 4:18*

*18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

- **When under the influence of the Holy Ghost, our speech and actions will reflect the wonderful works of God.**

When God's Spirit comes to live in us, we will have visions and dreams of God's wonderful works. When the Holy Ghost was poured out the first time on the day of Pentecost, they spoke under the influence of the Spirit, "*the wonderful works of God.*"

When the Holy Ghost works in you, you will:

- Sense powerful things that God wants to do.
- Say powerful things that God wants to do.
- Become part of powerful things that God is doing.
- **The Holy Ghost is not negative and when a person is under the influence of the Spirit:**
  - The impossible seems possible.
  - The invisible becomes visible -- seeing through spiritual eyes.
  - The inaudible becomes audible -- hearing with spiritual ears.
  - The devil looks like a defeated foe -- because he is, in the name of Jesus.

The Holy Ghost gives us more than just power to live above sin, a source of joy and hope of heaven. Joel stated a truth that we need to embrace -- that under the influence of the Spirit we **will see visions and dream dreams**. These dreams and visions will concern ourselves working in the Kingdom of God beyond our ability -- enabled by His anointing and supernatural ability. What does your vision reveal concerning your involvement in the Kingdom of God -- what are you dreaming?

We need a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire to bring about visions and dreams. Dreams and visions will affect our speech. We will then talk about the work of God and what God is going to do to us and through us. Critical and negative conversations are not of the Holy Ghost because the Spirit will speak of the wonderful works of God.

- **Worse than not reaching a dream, is not having a dream.**

*Prov. 29:18*

*18 Where there is **no vision, the people perish**: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*18 Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law. ESV*

One of the worst things that can happen to Christians and a church is to lose their dreams and visions. Where there is no vision, people cast off restraint; there is nothing to hold them on course. People become spiritually lazy and undisciplined. There is a loss of commitment and sacrifice. Nothing is more dangerous than a dreamless life.

A spiritual vision or dream is a picture of what we are going to be and do in God's Kingdom. It is seeing the end from the beginning; thinking like God -- having the mind of Christ. A vision or dream will cause us to be directed by our future instead of our past.

- **There is danger in failing to have a dream or a vision.**

What causes people to backslide, to regress from a position they once held in God, (the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, bitterness, etc.)? What severs, suspends, and decreases desire for the things of God? What detracts, deters, and sometimes eventually destroys relationships with God?

- **The root cause is a damaged, deteriorated, or dead dream or vision. When the dream or vision dies, faith dies. When faith dies, backsliding begins.**

What is the indicator of the loss of the Spirit's influence -- an absence from church, compromise of personal righteousness, lack of prayer or personal devotion, and loss of joy? These are all symptomatic of the demise of the Spirit's influence. **But the root cause is the loss of a dream or vision.**

It is impossible to live a victorious life without faith -- ***“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”*** Our vision or dream is the object that does not yet exist -- the object of our faith. Faith is the connection between where we are now and to where we are reaching -- our vision, our dream.



Satan's major assault on the church is to visually impair us, thus destroying our dream. We must fight the good fight of faith and believe God will fulfill our dream and vision.

Martin Luther King, Jr. shook a nation and changed the world when he announced, **"I have a dream."** Let us resolve to shake our world by declaring, **"I have a dream -- satan, you will not destroy my vision and my dream."**

### **The Life Cycle of a Vision**

- **A dream or a vision is not fulfilled overnight. Usually the life cycle includes a time delay between the dream and its fulfillment.**

The four stages of a dream or vision are:

- The **birth**.
- The **death**.
- **Alternatives** to fulfillment (man trying to make it happen).
- The **resurrection** and **supernatural fulfillment** (God makes it happen).

Refer to Chart H-22, "The Life Cycle of a Vision" in Appendix 1.

The resurrection of the vision depends on our response to the fiery trial and time delay during the death of the vision, because there will always be human alternatives to supernatural fulfillment. Satan, an "angel of light," will assault us to give up, and forfeit the dream, or trick us to use our own wisdom and ability vs. God's wisdom and supernatural ability.

### **What Destroys a Dream or a Vision?**

Many things can dissolve or destroy a dream. Two primary related reasons are: **temporary circumstances** and **divine delays**.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

### **Temporary Circumstances**

Don't allow a temporary situation to affect the rest of your life. Trials are temporary circumstances -- "***After that ye have suffered a while.***" The refiner's fire heats gold to a melting point to reveal and remove the impurities -- not to destroy it. This is addressed in detail in Section II, Chapter 4.

*1 Peter 5:10*

*10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Regardless of the source of trouble, when we humble ourselves, something good will result. We will emerge stronger and with a greater foundation. The sun will shine again. The storm will end. When God says it is enough, it is enough -- it is over.

Jesus borrowed a tomb, because He didn't need it for eternity. It was just a temporary circumstance, because He would rise from the grave in three days.

Is there something you are buying that you should be borrowing? Don't buy that valley, downtime, or problems, just borrow them, because these are just temporary circumstances.

### **Divine Delays**

There are times when it seems that life is falling apart. Although we are living right and praying for the fulfillment of our vision and dream, it seems that God is doing nothing to remedy our situation. The most difficult time to trust God is waiting on His timing. Between the prayer and the answer, lies the time between the dream and the fulfillment.

God's clock differs from ours. When the answer doesn't come in our time frame, we are prone to work it out our way instead of waiting for God. Rather, we need to rely on the faith that believes

God will fulfill the vision. During the delay, God simply instructs us to wait and trust Him.

*Lam. 3:25, 26*

*25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.*

*26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*

- **Bible characters who endured a divine delay -- a waiting period between the dream and fulfillment include: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus' disciples.**

**Abraham** envisioned being a great nation, but his wife Sarah was barren. When Abraham was very old God promised he would be a father. Five years passed, ten years, fifteen years and it still hadn't happened. Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90; there was a divine delay. Abraham tried to intervene and bring fulfillment to the dream. He took Hagar, his Egyptian handmaid, to wife and Ishmael was born. But after Sarah was beyond her childbearing years, God performed a miracle and gave them the promised son -- after a long, divine delay.

*Gen. 17:17*

*17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*

*Gen. 18:13, 14*

*13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?*

*14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.*

**Joseph**, at a very young age, saw a vision of being a great leader and people bowing down to him. When he was 17, he was sold into slavery, falsely accused and thrown into the dungeon.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

Seemingly his dream was dead. God allowed him to interpret dreams for others. This ultimately led to his dream being fulfilled with promotion from the prison to the throne when he was age 30 -- following a 13 year divine delay.

**Moses** had a vision of leading the people of Israel out of Egypt from his position in the royal palace. But he had to flee for his life and became a shepherd on the backside of the desert. After his dream had died and been buried beneath the desert sand, God promoted him as a leader for the miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt -- after a divine delay of over 40 years.

The **disciples** envisioned being a part of Christ's earthly Kingdom. But Jesus was arrested and crucified like a common criminal; their vision died. But then dawned resurrection morning and the birth of the New Testament Church and their vision was resurrected.

In every grain of wheat, there is potential for reproduction. But first it must die, rotting in the earth. Then life springs forth from death and a great harvest is reaped.

*John 12:24*

*24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but **if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.***

*24 The truth is, a kernel of wheat must be planted in the soil. Unless it dies it will be alone -- a single seed. But **its death will produce many new kernels** — a plentiful **harvest of new lives.***

*NLT*

The temporary circumstance of fiery trial and divine delay waiting for the dream to come to pass, produces Christian character and brings spiritual growth:

**Patience** - Learning to wait on God's timing.

**Faith** - Knowing what God will finally do, and

*Dreams and Visions - Under the Influence of the Spirit*

visualizing this before it ever happens.

Anticipating God to reveal His will even when it seems impossible.

**Trust** - Without understanding what is going on, trusting God -- knowing He will never make a mistake.

**Humility** - Realizing human ability cannot make the dream happen and that our great God can do all things.

The new birth experience, with God coming to live in us, is a wonderful, transforming experience that brings peace of mind, contentment and the joy of the Lord. But the Christian walk does not mean, “living happily ever after”, without problems, sorrows or tears. As Christians, we will not escape fiery trials.

The force that will sustain us during these difficult times is a dream or a vision:

- Believing what God is going to do for us and through us in this life.
- Believing in our eternal, rich, heavenly reward in the life to come.

Refer to Chart C-2, “Spiritual Growth - Vision”, in Appendix 1.

---

*The right motive for spiritual growth is to become more effective in the Father's business -- ministering to the needs of others, driven by a pure love for God.*

---

### 3. *Right Motive for Spiritual Growth*

For spiritual growth to be realized in the life of a Christian, there must be the right motive -- a biblical one. A new convert's initial spiritual growth must focus on the foundational fundamentals:

- Becoming rooted and grounded in sound doctrine.
- Learning how to crucify the carnal man by identifying and removing hindrances to the spiritual man.
- Developing a love for the Word of God through a consistent daily study habit.
- Developing a love for prayer as part of daily devotion; learning to hear and follow the voice of the Spirit.
- Learning how to worship God in word and deed -- walking in the paths of righteousness.

The Bible refers to newborn Christians as, “*newborn babes*” who need milk compared to an adult who can eat meat. Apostle Paul addresses this in his writings:

*1 Peter 2:2*

*2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*Heb. 5:12-14*

*12 For when for the time **ye ought to be teachers**, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

*13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

*14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Further, Apostle Paul states there is a time when the Christian should advance from basic foundational principles to become spiritually mature. As this happens, the Christian will become more outward focused -- concerned about the needs of others and the work of the Father's business.

*Heb. 6:1*

*1 Therefore **let us go on** and get past the elementary stage in the teachings and doctrine of Christ (the Messiah), advancing steadily toward the completeness and perfection that belong to **spiritual maturity**. AMP*

### **The New Christian Vs. The Mature Christian**

<b>Newborn Christian (Babe)</b>	<b>Mature Christian (Adult)</b>
Inward-focused - for survival	Outward-focused - for revival
Nutrition for babies - milk	Nutrition for adults - strong food (meat)
Needs to be taught	Needs to be teaching
Retains what he receives	Engages and uses what he receives to help others



## **Why Christians Don't Reach Spiritual Maturity**

When Christians don't reach spiritual maturity, there are three basic reasons why:

- 1. Not enough depth in their foundation of Spirit and truth to survive.**
- 2. Failure to protect and retain spiritual gains.**

Repeated cycles of inconsistent Christian living result in:

- Spiritual gains and losses.
- Spiritual highs and lows.
- Times of faithfulness followed by unfaithfulness in church attendance, personal devotion and Christian service.

We must remember we are in a battle. The Word of God clearly describes that we are in a war for our spiritual well-being and life. Satan will attempt to destroy every spiritual improvement, every spiritual gain, every new consecration and every new commitment.

Meanwhile, we must fight "*the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.*" We must wield the sword of the Spirit and fight to live a consistent Christian life with cycles of building and retaining, building and retaining -- protecting the invaluable issues of eternal life.

*Rev. 3:11*

*11 Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.***

- 3. Focusing only on the basic foundational biblical principles of salvation while remaining inwardly focused on their own spiritual well-being.**

Christian living then becomes only a fire insurance policy, to escape the flames of hell. Actions are driven by fear and not a pure love for God. This self-centered focus will result in:

- Self-will vs. God's will.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

- Self-ways vs. God's ways.
- Self-love vs. the love of God for others.
- Self-righteousness vs. God's righteousness.

If this continues, spiritual growth will stagnate as actions will be driven by self-righteousness; not God's righteousness. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day were faithful, but driven by the wrong motives:

- Going to God's house -- loving the house of God but not the God of the house.
- Reading God's Word -- loving the Word of God but not the God of the Word.
- Prayer -- seeking His hands for needs without seeking His heart for His will.
- Fasting -- for selfish, proud reasons to impress others.
- Giving tithes and offerings out of duty.

If all of the above is **not** motivated by a pure love for God and love for others, the result will be to become **religious** (self-righteous) and not **spiritual**. This is dealt with further in Section 1, Chapter 5, "Spiritual Maturity Summary".

### **The Only Pure Motive is Pure Love for God**

- **The right motive for spiritual growth is to become more effective in the Father's business -- ministering to the needs of others, driven by a pure love for God.**

#### **-- From "The Spiritual Man" by Watchman Nee**

As a believer goes on his spiritual way, he gradually begins to realize that, to live for himself is a sin, yea, the greatest sin of his life. To live for himself is as it were a grain of wheat which having fallen into the earth refuses to die and hence remains alone. To seek the filling of the Holy Spirit in order to be a powerful spiritual person is solely to please himself, to make himself happy. For were

he to live purely for God and His work this believer would not consider his personal happiness or feeling. He certainly would understand the meaning of spirituality. But in the depth of his heart lodges instead a soul's self-love.

**Spiritual life is for spiritual work, spiritual work expresses spiritual life.** The secret of that kind of living lies in the incessant **flowing of that life to others.** Spiritual food of a believer is nothing more nor less than **accomplishing God's work** (John 4:34). **Spiritual food is simply to do His will.** Preoccupation with one's own supply causes lack, whereas concern with God's Kingdom brings satisfaction. He who is occupied with the Father's business and not with his own shall find himself perpetually full.

The way to retain what he possesses is to **engage it.** Burying it beneath the earth is a sure way to lose it. When a believer allows the life in his spirit to flow freely, he not only shall gain others but shall gain himself as well. One gains by **losing self for others** and not by hoarding for oneself. The life within a spiritual man must be released by performing **spiritual labor.**

If one's inner being is always open and free, the life of God shall flow out from him to salvation and edification of many. The moment spiritual exertion ceases, at that moment spiritual life is blocked. No matter what earthly occupation the believer may have, he is apportioned a measure of work by God as well.<sup>1</sup>

**To pray, fast and study the Word just to be a powerful, spiritual person, is only part of God's plan. A Christian living only for self will become stagnant because it results in man's will vs. God's will and man's love vs. God's love. Being concerned for our spiritual welfare alone is selfish, and will eventually result in a spiritual lack in our lives.**

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

Refer to Chart C-15, “Charity -- the Bridge to Spiritual Growth”, in Appendix 1.

Study of God’s Word alone yields knowledge, but combined with the Spirit through prayer, will bring revelation. This revelation should include new insights into God’s Word and provide understanding of how it applies to our lives in practical daily Christian living and service -- fulfilling God’s will and purpose.

## 4. *Depth of Relationship*

Seven generations after Adam, lived a man who enjoyed a close walk with God. Genesis recorded that Enoch walked with God in such a way that he pleased God. His close walk with God was such that he became the first man to bypass death and be translated from earth to heaven.

*Gen. 5:24*

*24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

*Heb. 11:5*

*5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

We are also interested in being translated from this earth to heaven just like Enoch. There is soon to be a mass translation of those having a close walk with God. To be in that number, we must continue to walk closer to God -- moving into a deeper relationship with Him.

Forty-nine books later in the Bible, (several thousand years after Enoch), Apostle Paul was still writing about a closer walk with God. His instructions were to trust in the Lord, allowing our spiritual roots to grow deeply.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*Col. 2:6, 7*

*6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

*7 **Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith,** as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

*6 And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him.*

*7 **Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him. See that you go on growing in the Lord, and become strong and vigorous in the truth** you were taught. Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all he has done. TLB*

It is important to understand more fully what a closer walk with God means, and discover what is available to those who seek spiritual growth. Holy Scripture contains many writings promising a deeper walk with God and examples of people who chose that unbeaten path.

This old hymn portrays a desirable theme for our lives:

**“Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.”<sup>1</sup>**

In the Kingdom of God, the spiritual law of gravity precludes a stationary position. The natural and spiritual laws of gravity are very similar -- neither allows a stationary position. We are either pressing forward or slipping away from a position we once occupied. The only exception is in time of fiery trial when we dig into a position of survival until the storm passes. When mountain climbers scale upward, they are relentless until their goal is attained. We, too, should constantly move upward, having the same mindset to progress up the mountain.

## 4.1 Growing in Grace

Scripture describes a closer walk with God as growing in grace and going on to perfection. Apostle Paul writes about this in:

*Heb. 6:1, 2*

*1 Let us stop going over the same old ground again and again, always teaching those first lessons about Christ. Let us go on instead to other things and become mature in our understanding, as strong Christians ought to be. Surely we don't need to speak further about the foolishness of trying to be saved by being good, or about the necessity of faith in God;*

*2 You don't need further instruction about baptism and spiritual gifts and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. TLB*

*1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of **repentance** from dead works, and of **faith** toward God,*

*2 Of the doctrine of **baptisms**, and of **laying on of hands**, and of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment**.*

### -- From Matthew Henry's Commentary

We have here the apostle's advice to the Hebrews -- that they would grow up from a state of childhood to the fullness of the stature of the new man in Christ. Here observe, in order to their growth, Christians must leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ. How must they leave them? They must not lose them, they must not despise them, they must not forget them. They must lay them up in their hearts, and lay them as the foundation of all their profession and expectation; but they must not rest and stay in them, they must not be always laying the foundation, they must go on, and build upon it. There must be a superstructure; for the foundation is laid on purpose to support the building.<sup>2</sup>

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

Apostle Paul mentions six principles which are the **foundations of the Christian faith**. They must be well laid at first, and then built upon:

### 1. Repentance

Repentance is the decision to turn away from actions that lead to death. It is the inward change of mind and the outward change of direction. It is a foundational principle of the salvation experience. ***“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).***

### 2. Faith in God

This is a firm belief in the existence of one God, of His nature, perfection and attributes (omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent). ***“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4: 5, 6).***

### 3. Doctrine of Baptisms

This is baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (born of the water) and the baptism of the Holy Ghost (born of the Spirit). ***“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).*** ***“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).*** Obedience to this commandment is recorded in: *Acts 2:38; 10:44-48; 8:14-18; 9:17-18; 19:2-6.*

### 4. Laying on of Hands

This was exemplified by the early church in the laying on of hands as they prayed for people to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (*Acts 8:14-18*) and to receive healing: ***“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14).***

### 5. Resurrection of the Dead

The hope of the Christian is the resurrection unto eternal life. *If in*



*this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:19, 20). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:52).*

## **6. Eternal Judgment**

We must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and receive our just rewards -- the wicked to everlasting punishment; the righteous to life eternal. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5:10).*

In dealing with unbelievers and new converts, we must identify and explain these foundational principles. But in this writing to the Hebrews, Apostle Paul is challenging mature saints to go on to perfection.

We all love the foundation, the necessary support, but let us continue building for our spiritual man to have a closer walk with God. The riches of God are boundless, endless, and immeasurably deep.

Apostle Paul states this concept in his letter to the Romans:

*Rom. 11:33*

*33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how **unsearchable** are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

Our relationship with God should include walking in His paths and talking about His truth and goodness. It should be a continuous search and reaching for the riches of His Kingdom.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

### Spiritual Growth

Heb. 6:1	- Going on to perfection.
1 Cor. 9:25	- Striving for the mastery, temperate in all things, running the race, fighting the fight of faith. bringing the body into subjection.
Heb. 12:1	- Laying aside sins and weights, patiently running the race.
Phil. 1:9	- Abounding more and more in knowledge and discernment.
Phil. 1:11	- Being filled with the fruits of righteousness.
Phil. 3:14	- Having not yet attained, but seeking the goal.
Col. 1:10	- Increasing in the knowledge of God.
1 Thess. 3:10	- Perfecting our faith.
1 Thess. 3:12	- Increasing and abounding in our love.
2 Thess. 1:3	- Faith growing exceedingly and charity abounding.
Eph. 3:18	- Being filled with all the fullness of God.
Rom. 11:33	- Attaining the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.
2 Peter 3:18	- Growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 1:4-10	- That ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . . add to your faith virtue . . . knowledge . . . temperance . . . patience . . . godliness . . . brotherly kindness . . . charity . . . Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

Apostle Paul admonished the Christians to continue growing, walking and moving forward. After all that, Paul still desires: ***“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”***

Another truth regarding a closer walk with God is repeated numerous times in Scripture. Progressive levels of relationship, (circles and inner circles) exist with God and are available to those with a zeal for more. The following are examples -- one from the New Testament (twelve disciples) and one from the Old Testament (four levels of water).

## **4.2 Four Levels of Relationship - The Twelve Disciples**

During Christ’s ministry four circles and inner circles of relationship with Him are demonstrated by the 12 chosen disciples. Refer to Chart F-4, “Leading the Inner Circle Into the Supernatural”, in Appendix 1.

Large crowds followed Him daily. Most were in the outer circle, but many were around the fringes just to see His miracles.

### **In the 12 handpicked disciples are four circles of relationship:**

#### **1. John (Most Inner Circle)**

- He sat closest to Jesus at the table: . . . *The disciple whom Jesus loved; which also leaned on his breast at supper. John 21:20*
- Five times in Scripture, he is described as, ***“The disciple that Jesus loved.”***
- The only disciple who stood by Jesus at the cross.
- The disciple whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother at the time of His death on the cross.
- The one chosen to see and write about the revelation of Jesus.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

### 2. Peter, James and John (The Inner Circle)

- Jesus took these three with Him up the mountain to pray, revealing His glory as He was transfigured.

*Luke 9:28, 29*

*28 He took Peter, John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.*

*29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.*

*Matt. 17:2*

*2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*

- At special times of healing and raising the dead, Jesus took only these three: *Mark 5:37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John.*
- At times only these three met with Jesus and He taught them: *Mark 13:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us, when shall these things be?*
- In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus led them a little further than the others: *Mark 14:32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.*

### 3. The Other Eight Disciples

- All of these men obeyed Jesus' last commandment to: *Luke 24:49 "... Tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high": Acts 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,*

## *Depth of Relationship*

*Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.*

- All tarried in the upper room and were present when the Holy Ghost was poured out on the day of Pentecost.
- All became great men, who moved into the innermost circle, their ministry impacting the world and became martyrs for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **4. Judas (Outer Circle)**

- He betrayed Jesus.
- The first disciple to die (suicide).
- He lost both his physical and eternal life.

Judas received the highest calling when he was chosen as one of the twelve disciples. He was invited along with all the other disciples into this close-knit group. He was favored by Jesus and was privileged to be a part of His ministry. He ate miraculous bread with Jesus when the loaves were multiplied. But Judas did not respond to this great privilege or the invitation to a close relationship with Jesus. He had selfish priorities and remained on the edge, uncommitted in the outermost circle.

At the Last Supper, Jesus washed Judas' feet and gave him, "*the sop*", in His last attempt to reach him. Judas rejected this final loving gesture. Immediately satan entered into him; he went out and it was night. He traded the light of the world for the darkness of an evil kingdom. After he realized his horrific error, he hung himself.

A most sobering Scripture describes this tragic event preceding the most exciting event in history -- the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost:

*Acts 1:17, 20*

*17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

*ministry.*

*20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.*

- **The closer the relationship with God, the greater revelation of God.**

It is evident that Peter, James and John enjoyed a closer relationship with Jesus during His earthly ministry than did the other disciples. They participated in a unique time of teaching and prayer alone with Jesus. They alone witnessed the revelation of Jesus in His glory as He was transfigured before them -- the brilliant light shining from Him.

Also apparent after John witnessed the transfiguration, something dramatically changed in his relationship with Jesus. Thereafter, he was referred to by the other disciples as, “*The disciple whom Jesus loved.*” Certainly Jesus loved all of the disciples, but John’s special bond was stronger than the others at that time.

When God chose who would paint the last brush strokes of the New Testament, the one privileged to record the Revelation of Jesus Christ, He selected John, the one closest to Him in relationship. By this time, the other disciples had greatly impacted their world with their dedication to Jesus Christ and died a martyr’s death. There was an attempt to kill John by boiling him in a pot of hot oil, but he was miraculously delivered.

By then, John was possibly 80 years old. After all his love, sacrifice and suffering for Jesus Christ, logically, he should have lived his last days as a respected apostle in peace. But God designated one more assignment for John -- one that transported him, as a prisoner, to Patmos, a remote, lonely island.

There are no barriers that can prevent or diminish one’s relationship with Jesus. John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day; no one else was around -- just Jesus and John.

## Depth of Relationship

*Rev. 1:10, 12-16*

*10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,*

*12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;*

*13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

*14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;*

*15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.*

*16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*

John did not see Jesus as he had seen Him in His earthly ministry - as the lowly Shepherd or the bleeding and suffering Savior. In this revelation, he saw **Jesus as the lion of the tribe of Judah in all of His power and majesty; as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.**

- **If we are to experience a greater revelation of Jesus Christ, we must also develop a deeper relationship with Him.**

This special encounter will only occur when we, like John, leave the hustle of life's distractions and climb the mountain of prayer to be alone with Jesus. This will require a sacrifice of our time, and a change of our priorities and agendas. The setting will be isolation without distractions, where we will have:

- A new revelation of Jesus in His beauty and glory until He is elevated to the very center of our life, while all other priorities blur into the background.
- A revelation of ourselves, of who we are now and what He intends for us to be in His eternal purpose.
- A revelation of His will compared to ours; His mind

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

compared to ours; His love compared to ours.

When we have experienced this encounter with Jesus, His light will be shining through us, affecting our dark and hurting world. We will be sitting in heavenly places and will be singing the song of the redeemed recorded in the book of Revelation.

- *Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.*
- *Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God.*
- *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.* (Not only reigning over the universe, but ruling and reigning in our lives).

### **4.3 Four Levels of Water**

The Spirit of God is referred to as water many times in Scripture:

*Isa. 12:3*

*3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*

*Isa. 44:3*

*3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty . . . I will pour my spirit upon thy seed.*

*Isa. 55:1*

*1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money . . .*

*John 4:14*

*14 Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

*John 7:37, 39*

*37 Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*



*39 But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive . . .*

**Ezekiel 47 addresses four levels of water proceeding from the house of God: water to the ankles, water to the knees, water to the loins, and water over the head to swim in.**

*Ezek. 47:1, 3-5*

*1 Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.*

*3 And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the **waters were to the ankles**.*

*4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the **waters were to the knees**. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the **waters were to the loins**.*

*5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, **waters to swim in**, a river that could not be passed over.*

Although this text is from the Old Testament, there is a spiritual application for us as we examine the available levels and depths of relationship with God.

### **1. Water to the Feet**

In ankle deep water your walk is affected. The path you take and the places you go are different than on dry land. But a shallow experience can be dangerous, because it is too close to the bank (the world); it is too easy to return to the shore.

Ankle deep water depicts an unstable and inconsistent walk; part of the journey is affected by the water (Spirit) and part is affected by the land (world).

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

### 2. Water to the Knees

This depth affects our lifestyle in a greater way. It reflects a greater commitment further from the world. It affects our knees; we bend our knees in a more consistent prayer life, walking closer to God.

### 3. Water to the Loins

This deeper level is where living for God gets exciting. We quit talking about the places we can't go or things we can't do. We didn't give up anything, compared to what He gives us in return. We traded the curse of sin and death for salvation and eternal life. He gave us beauty for ashes (*Isa. 61:3*).

- **How can you compare giving up things in your kingdom for things in His Kingdom? The eternal and temporal are not on the same level; not in the same world.**

When we are in spiritual waters to the loins it gets in our innermost being. It gets inside of us, and becomes a part of us. We have to do something for Him -- we have to tell somebody. Jeremiah described it like this: "*His word in my heart is like fire that burns in my bones, and I can't hold it in any longer.*"

### 4. Water to Swim In

At this level we are in the deep water where the undertow of the Spirit will cause us to lose control of our life allowing Him to have full control. We know He is **first** and He knows He is **first** in our life. He is the Lord of our life and has **preeminence** in every area.

*Col. 1:18*

*18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the **preeminence (first place)**.*

At this level, we are one with Him. Immersed in His will, we are seeking His supernatural power. We are praying and coveting the best gifts to be used to deliver, save and heal others. We are

## *Depth of Relationship*

seeking the limitless depths of Christ. We can dive to the 20 foot depth or we don our spiritual scuba gear and dive to the depths.

We can choose ankle-deep, knee-deep or the limitless depths of God's Kingdom. The only limit is our passion and hunger for God.

In the church of Jesus Christ are circles, inner circles and varying depths of relationship with God that we can attain. We can passively remain in a comfort zone or advance to new levels.

- **It is very important the level or the circle of relationship where we identify ourselves. But more importantly, is the direction we are looking or the direction we are going.**

It is better to be in the outer circle headed toward an inner circle of relationship with Him than to be going the other way. We must be careful where we are looking, because that is where we will soon be going. Bishop James Kilgore has said many times: "If your heart is not in this, your body will eventually join your heart out there, somewhere away from God and the church."

### **4.4 Outer and Inner Circles in God's Church Today**

Summarized here are only the **middle (maintenance) level** and the extremes -- the **outermost circle** and the **innermost circle**:

- **The Outermost Circle (The Flesh Ruling)**
  - Perimeter area around the church where people do not abide completely by the teachings of the Bible.
  - Places they go and things they do are inconsistent with the Christian walk.
  - Limited daily personal devotion of prayer and the Word.
  - Motive for church attendance is to soothe their conscience or to visit their family and friends.
  - Seeking a comfortable zone, simultaneously trying to be a part of the church and a part of the world.
  - Other things (jobs, entertainment, hobbies, etc.) have replaced God as first in their life.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

- **The Maintenance Level (The Soul Ruling)**

- Faithful to the house of God in attendance and offerings.
- Personal daily devotion of prayer and the Word.
- Inwardly focused (pursuing their own blessings); not being involved in personal evangelism with compassion and care for others in need.
- Not struggling with sin but with **self** (the **will, mind and emotions**):
  - Their will vs. God's will.
  - Their mind (ways) vs. God's mind (ways).
  - Their love (emotions and care) vs. God's love.

- **The Innermost Circle or Level (The Spirit Ruling)**

- God placed as the highest priority.
- Seeking God's ways, desiring to do His perfect will.
- Consumed with the purpose and work of God.
- Seeking to be a book of Acts Christian.
- Praying and living in the Spirit.
- Seeking anointing (divine ability) to operate as a son of God in the supernatural -- to effectively reach lost souls.
- Willing to endure sacrifice and self-denial; giving up anything to be closer to Him; willing to go anywhere to fulfill His perfect will.

Refer to Chart C-14, "Moving From a Maintenance Driven Christian to a Harvest Driven Christian", in Appendix 1.

Our lost and hurting generation will only be delivered by God's supernatural power working through those living in the innermost circle. The gifts of the Spirit sit like giant tool boxes in the most holy place (inner-most circle), waiting to be used by those desiring to be used as a son of God. Not just a one-time decision, this is a continuous decision to sacrifice and purify at new levels and

depths. New levels of relationship with God require more sacrifice and purity.

The initial sacrifices we made as a new convert are very small in comparison to the sacrifices He requires of those seeking the innermost circle.

- **The sacrifices that God requires of those for dwelling in the most holy place makes the ones we made initially to separate from the world appear exceedingly small.**

#### **4.5 Influence of Our Depth of Relationship**

Our choice of what depth we will pursue, will not only affect us, but our children, family and others under our influence.

Among the most important decisions is the circle of relationship with God that we choose. Most likely, that is the circle our children and family will chose. It will also affect others watching our life.

**God is calling the head of the house to be the priest in their home.** Don't let anything come into your children's life that will keep Jesus out of their heart. Set the spiritual theme and standards in your home -- kill the giants. If the head of the home has a close walk with God and pursues the deeper things of God, likewise, their family will reach for the deeper things of God. However, if the head of the home is in the outer circle it will negatively influence their children and family.

We must build a home on a foundation that will not crumble with the storms of life. The most rewarding and lasting thing that we can do is to build people and the first place to start is with our spouse and children. The greatest challenge in life is to be a godly influence for your family's salvation. Even when your children are adults, continue to be the spiritual leader to them and your grandchildren.

Part of your responsibility is to ensure that righteousness and truth are passed to the next generation. You can be a stepping-stone or

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

a stumbling-block to your children and the next generation. You are cabled to your spouse, your children, and other family members, like a mountain climbing team and you are the lead man. If you fail to walk in the depths of God, your family will be adversely affected. If you are careless and fall, it will adversely affect all of them. They are depending on you to be the spiritual leader, the priest, in your home.

It is terribly heart-rending to witness the inconsistencies of your own life repeated in your children. But how rewarding and fulfilling to see your children following your good pattern.

As we approach the end of time, it is needful for us to take inventory, and evaluate where we stand in our walk with God, and in our spiritual growth. We need to make sure we are not living in denial of His soon coming. We must make sure our actions in serving Him are consistent with the demands of the endtime. If we do not allow the momentum of His Spirit to motivate and move us forward, we will **slip** away from where we once were.

*Heb. 2:1*

*1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them **slip**.*

*1 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift** away. NIV*

Periodically we should climb a mountain in the Spirit, and reflect on past blessings and victories. Then we should look forward to the potential heights, depths and victories available to those willing to sacrifice, purify, and pursue the dreams and visions that He has given us.

As we approach the soon coming of Jesus Christ, let us ask two questions:

### **1. Lord, how much time do we have left?**

If we apply ourselves in study and prayer, He will give us an understanding of the times, and a warning of future events.

## **2. Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?**

This is the second question that Apostle Paul asked when he was knocked down on the road to Damascus. His first question was, “Who are you Lord”?

Like the children of Issachar, we should pray for an understanding of the times and to know what we ought to do: *“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”* (1 Chron. 12:32)

### **4.6 Our Goals for a Deeper Relationship**

As we approach the endtime, let us set some goals to have a closer walk with God:

- Move deeper in our relationship with Him -- to the innermost circle.
- To be the spiritual leaders in our families.
- Spend more time on eternal things and less on temporal ones.
- Be more spiritual, less carnal.
- Spend more quality time in prayer.
- Seek for more of God’s wisdom.
- Exhibit the fruit of the Spirit more abundantly.
- Minister love and compassion to the needy.
- Sacrifice and purify more.
- Acquire a servant’s attitude, *“Lord what would thou have me to do?”*
- Know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

**Untold glory awaits those going to a new level and a deeper walk with God:**

- Abraham - staggered not at the promise of God. He became the father of the faithful.
- Joseph - overcame adversity, preserving a nation.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

- David - overcame the disdain of brothers; the threat of the giant and achieved victory (*served his generation by the will of God*).
- Paul - overcame perils, beatings, hunger, persecutions -- then shook the known world for Jesus Christ.
- Ten spies came to the outer perimeter of the Promised Land and refused to enter, causing an entire generation to die in the wilderness.
- **In this last day, God desires to take us into new territory -- into the supernatural and restoration of the first century apostolic ministry.**



## *5. Spiritual Maturity Summary*

### *- Impartation and Engagement*

#### **Impartation**

Impartation is what we receive through our relationship with God. Volume I concerns our **relationship** with God. Section 1, Chapter 4 of this volume, addresses the depth of our relationship with God.

#### **Engagement**

Engagement is active involvement in the Kingdom of God, ministering to people in need. This is **dominion** in the harvest field and the battlefield -- the two categories of the Father's business. We get to know someone by doing business transactions with them. We will get to know our heavenly Father better as we partner with Him in the transactions of His business. Volume II discusses our dominion role -- doing God's will and work.

Spiritual maturity will never be reached for a Christian who merely receives and never gives. The formula for the Spiritual Maturity Cycle is:

**Impartation + Engagement = Spiritual Growth**

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - A PASSION FOR GOD

Impartation + Engagement = Spiritual Growth

Impartation What we receive through our relationship with God	Engagement What we give as we minister to those in need
Entitlement to the Father's Business	Experiencing the Father's Business
(Dan. 11:32) They that do know their God	Shall be strong and do exploits
The Two Commandments: Love God with all your heart.	Love your neighbor as yourself.
Knowing Christ - Passion for God	Making Christ known - Compassion for lost souls
Purpose of the Fivefold Ministry: (Eph. 4:11, 12) - Perfecting of the saints	- Equipping of the saints for the ministry
God is seeking two things: (John 4:23, 24) - Worshippers	(Isa. 59:16) - Intercessors
Jesus' invitation: - Come unto Me	Jesus' commandment: - Go minister to needs of others
Man needing God's help: Ps. 121:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.	God needing man's help: Judg. 5:23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty.

## *Spiritual Maturity Summary*

### **Continuous Cycle of Change**

Conversion can be viewed as a **straight line** with four sequential steps which can happen in one day:

**(1) Believing + (2) Repentance + (3) Baptism  
+ (4) Receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost = Conversion**

But spiritual growth must be viewed as a **circle**, a lifetime process -- **repeated cycles of continuous change and growth**. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to a life of constant renewal, revival, change and growth as we assume more of the nature and character of the Master Teacher.

Refer to the following charts in Appendix 1 that summarize concepts for the Spiritual Maturity Cycle:

Chart C-16 “Man and Plant Life Cycle and Balance”.

Chart C-17 “Spiritual Growth Life Cycle and Balance”.

Chart C-18 “Imbalance Stops Spiritual Growth”.

Refer to Charts A-10, A-10a, and C-1 through C- 20 in the Addendum Volume.

### **Spiritual Growth and the Supernatural**

An **encounter** and **engagement** with the opposing forces of satan, and sickness, **releases power** for the supernatural.

**Impartation + Encounter and Engagement  
= Release of Power for Miracles**

This is addressed in Volume IV:

**Unlimited Partnership With a Supernatural God**



**II.**  
**Transformation -**  
**Domínion Over Sin and Self**

---

***1 Corinthians 6:19***

***What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?***

***2 Corinthians 6:16***

***For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

---

# 1. *The Tabernacle of God*

The first tabernacle where God chose to dwell among His people was Moses' Tabernacle in the wilderness. God commanded Moses to place the tabernacle in the very center of the camp, with every tent door facing it. When their tent flaps were lifted every morning, the first thing they saw was the Pillar of Cloud hovering over the tabernacle. God desired to be near to His chosen people, occupying the very center of their lives. He desires the same today.

This tabernacle consisted of three rooms -- the outer court, the holy place and the most holy place. The most holy place was separated and protected by a large, thick veil which was torn away (rent into) the very moment Jesus Christ died on the cross.

- **With Christ's death and shed blood, man's sins could be forgiven and humanity could now approach deity beyond the veil.**

*Heb. 10:19, 20*

*19 Therefore, brethren, we have full freedom and confidence to enter into the [Holy of] Holies [by the power and virtue] in the blood of Jesus,*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*20 By this fresh (new) and living way which He initiated and dedicated and opened for us through the separating curtain (veil of the Holy of Holies), that is, through His flesh. AMP*

### **God's Tabernacle or Dwelling Place Today**

After Calvary, God has chosen to dwell in the tabernacle of man. Like the Tabernacle of Moses, the tabernacle of man has three rooms or parts, the body (outer court), the soul (inner court or holy place), and the spirit (most holy place).

Refer to the following charts in Appendix 1:

- D-1 The Tabernacle Plan - Old Testament / New Testament
- D-4 The Body / Soul / Spirit Model

*2 Cor. 6:16, 17*

*16 For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,*

*1 Cor. 6:19, 20*

*19 What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.***

- **The complete man is comprised of three parts: spirit, soul, and body.**

*1 Thess. 5:23*

*23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly (completely); and I pray God your whole **spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*



## **1.1 The Body (Outer Court)**

The body, with its five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, connects us with the earth, making us **world conscious**. This physical structure is comprised of bone, fiber of flesh and sinew, and vital organs: brain, heart, lungs, etc. It is that which begins to deteriorate as we grow older. Apostle Paul gives us this hope that, *“Though the outer man perishes the inner man is renewed day by day.”*

The body is the outer shell, the tabernacle of the soul. It is compared to the outer court of the Old Testament Tabernacle.

## **1.2 The Soul (Holy Place)**

The soul, the organ of our personality, is made up of the **will, mind, and emotions**; it makes us **self conscious**.

- The emotions are what we feel.
- The intellect is where we think.
- The will is what we desire and will do.

Your soul is the real you. It is who you are -- your individuality, personality, influence, intellect, natural talents, abilities and giftings.

The soul gives physical life (the body) its use. The word “soul” in the Greek language is rendered “life”. In Latin, it is rendered “anima,” -- that which animates the body. The soul, then, is that which gives life to this physical body:

- The brain is useless without intellect.
- The heart is cold and a mere muscular blood pump if there is no affection and love. Love makes the heart beat faster in the presence of a loved one.

*Gen. 2:7*

*7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground (body), And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit); And man became a **living soul** (soul).*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

As soon as the breath of life (which created man's spirit) came into contact with man's body, **the soul was produced**. Therefore, the soul is the combination of man's body and spirit. Scripture calls man a living soul. Jesus said it is the spirit that gives life. The breath of life comes from the Lord of creation. The inbreathing of God produced a two-part natural man (body and soul), and the spiritual man (spirit).

With the **second birth**, the breath of God causes a spiritual birth. Man becomes a new creature in Christ with God's Spirit dwelling in his spirit. With the born-again experience, man receives a new Spirit, but he will not get his new, glorified body, until the rapture or the resurrection.

The soul is the outer sheath of the spirit. It is compared to the inner court or holy place of the tabernacle. The soul is still part of the carnal man. Placed between two worlds; the natural and the spiritual, the soul is a part of both. Connected to the natural through the body; it is connected to the spiritual through the spirit of man.

Man was created with a soul that possesses a **free will**. If man's soul wills to obey God, it allows the spirit to rule over the man. It can suppress the spirit and allow the fleshly desires to rule. The soul binds the body and spirit together. If one allows the Spirit of God to rule, it can influence the soul to subdue the body into obedience to God.

Refer to Chart C-4, "The Fleshly Appetite Vs. the Spiritual Appetite", in Appendix 1.

- **The soul with its will, intellect and emotions is the pilot of our entire being. For the Spirit of God to lead our life, the soul (the will) must give its consent.**

Man, with his own willpower, can conquer some sins of the flesh - giving up drugs, alcohol and other bad habits. But on his own, he cannot make significant changes to his soul -- his will, mind and

## *The Tabernacle of God*

emotions. The composition of the soul is like software burned in a computer chip -- impossible to change.

- **The same transforming power of God that delivered us from the sins of the flesh is needed to deliver us from self.**

God gives us His Spirit to provide the power to change our soul. ***“He must increase but I must decrease.”***

- More of His will and less of mine.
- More of His ways and less of mine.
- More of His mind and less of mine.
- More of His love and compassion and less of mine.

Any improvement in this area will deal with your hunger, desire, and discipline to allow the Spirit to change “the real you” (your soul) to be like Christ. This requires death to self.

### **Sins of the Soul**

It is not sin, as we often define sin (violation of the Ten Commandments) or works of the flesh (defined in Galatians 5:19-21), that hinders the mature Christian’s progress in the Kingdom of God. After we have dealt death to the flesh, another step remains. That is **death to self** (our will, mind, and emotions) in order to fulfill the purpose of God.

- **Selfishness, self-righteousness and other self-centered traits are the greatest sins of the soul.**

-- **From Webster’s New World College Dictionary**

**Selfish** - Obsessed with self, too much concerned with one’s own welfare or interest and having little or no concern for others.

**Self-righteous** - Filled with or showing a conviction of being morally superior, or more righteous than others; smugly virtuous.<sup>1</sup>

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*Isa. 64:6*

*6 All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*

*6 When we put on our prized robes of righteousness, we find they are but filthy rags. TLB*

*Matt. 5:20*

*20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

- **Breakthrough change, and spiritual growth will only occur through dominion over self:**

**Self-advancement, Self-centered,  
Self-complacent, Self-indulgence,  
Self-interest, Self-love, Self-reliant,  
Self-satisfied, Self-serving, Self-will.**

The natural man is born with a **selfish nature** and one or more of these self-centered evils will beset us every day. Therefore, we must die daily -- die to self.

As we die more to self and live more for Christ, we will become increasingly more involved in ministering to the needs of others, fulfilling the **unselfish** "one commandment" and the highest law - the "royal law".

*Gal. 5:14*

*14 For the whole Law can be summed up in this **one command**:  
"Love others as you love yourself." TLB*

*James 2:8*

*8 If ye fulfil the **royal law** according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

**The Challenge to Spiritual Growth is Dominion Over Self**

<b>Self-advancement</b>	Promoting one's own interest
<b>Self-aggrandizement</b>	Making one's self more powerful
<b>Self-assertion</b>	Demanding recognition for one's self, or insisting upon one's rights
<b>Self-assurance</b>	Confidence in one's ability, talent (vs. confidence in God)
<b>Self-centered</b>	Occupied or concerned with only one's affairs, egocentric
<b>Self-complacent</b>	Self-satisfied especially in a smug way
<b>Self-conceit</b>	Too high opinion of one's self, vanity
<b>Self-deception</b>	Deceiving of one's self as to one's true feelings and motives
<b>Self-defense</b>	Defense of one's rights and actions
<b>Self-importance</b>	Having or showing an exaggerated opinion of one's own importance
<b>Self-indulgence</b>	Indulgence in one's desires, impulses, etc.
<b>Self-interest</b>	Exaggerated regard for self at the expense of others
<b>Self-opinionated</b>	Stubbornly holding to one's own opinions, conceited
<b>Self-pity</b>	Pity that is self indulgent or exaggerated
<b>Self-proclaimed</b>	Proclaimed or announced by one's self
<b>Self-reliant</b>	Reliant on one's own judgment and abilities

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

### The Challenge to Spiritual Growth is Dominion Over Self

<b>Self-satisfied</b>	Feeling or showing an often smug satisfaction with one's self or one's accomplishments
<b>Self-seeker</b>	Seeks to further his or her own interest
<b>Self-serving</b>	Serving one's own selfish interest, especially at the expense of others
<b>Self-sufficient</b>	Independent, able to get along without help
<b>Self-will</b>	Persistent in carrying out of one's own will or wishes especially when in conflict with others, stubbornness, abstinence

#### **The Holy Ghost gives us power for dominion over self:**

- God gives us His Spirit on the basis of giving up sins of the flesh.
- The Holy Ghost is given for power to subdue and die to self.
- The Holy Ghost is not just a ticket to heaven, but a powerful change agent to change us from:
  - Selfish (us) to service (others).
  - Self-centered to Christ-centered.
  - Self-righteous to Christ's righteousness.

*Acts 1:8*

*8 But ye shall receive **power**, after that **the Holy Ghost** is come upon you:*

*Rom. 8:14*

*14 For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God**, they are the sons of God.*

**God's Spirit will lead us to:**

<b>Self-abasement</b>	Humility
<b>Self-denial</b>	Sacrifice our desires
<b>Self-discipline</b>	Discipline to control our desires, actions, and habits
<b>Selflessness</b>	Devoted to the welfare or interest of others
<b>Self-renunciation</b>	Renouncing our own interests, especially for the benefit of others
<b>Self-respect</b>	Proper respect for ourselves and our worth as a person
<b>Self-restraint</b>	Self-control
<b>Self-surrender</b>	Surrender of self, our will

**Israel - A Generation Focused on Self**

Israel, God's chosen people, exited Egypt through the Red Sea (delivered from sin), but was unwilling to step into His will and purpose for them -- to conquer the land of Canaan. God gave them His blessings and supplied their physical needs of food, water, shelter and clothes; but He was **grieved with them for 40 years**. They received His provision to sustain the natural man, but lacked His favor. He was provoked with them.

*Heb. 3:10, 17*

*10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*

*17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.*

We should desire His favor, not just His provision, to sustain the outer man.

## Jesus Christ Our Example of Self-surrender

*Matt. 26:38, 39, 42, 44*

*38 Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

*39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless **not as I will, but as thou wilt.***

*42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, o my father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, **thy will be done.***

*44 And he left them, and went away again, and **prayed the third time, saying the same words.***

- **If Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, struggled with His will, certainly our greatest struggle will be submitting our will to the Father's will.**

### 1.3 The Spirit (The Most Holy Place)

The spirit is the part of man that is immortal and undying. The spirit lies beyond man's self-consciousness and above the senses of the human mind. Here man unites and communes with God. It is our spirit which links us to God's Spirit, allowing us to commune with Him. It is by God's Spirit dwelling in our spirit that we discern and receive revelation of the truth.

The **spirit of man** is comprised of **conscience, communion** and **intuition**. The spirit of man makes us **God-conscious**.

#### -- From "The Spiritual Man" by Watchman Nee

**Conscience** is the discerning organ which distinguishes right and wrong; not through the influence of knowledge stored in the mind but rather by a spontaneous direct judgment. Often reasoning will justify things which our conscience judges to be wrong. The work of the conscience is independent and direct; it does not bend to outside



## *The Tabernacle of God*

opinions. If man should do wrong it will raise its voice of accusation.

**Intuition** is the sensing organ of the human spirit. It is so diametrically different from physical sense and soulical sense that it is called intuition. Intuition involves a direct sensing independent of any outside influence. That knowledge which comes to us without any help from the mind, emotion or volition comes intuitively. We really “know” through our intuition; our mind merely, helps us to “understand.”

**Communion** is worshiping God. The organs of the soul are incompetent. to worship God. God is not apprehended by our thoughts, feelings or intentions, for He can only be known directly in our spirits. Our worship of God and God’s communications with us are directly in the spirit. They take place in “the inner man,” not in the soul or outward man.

Before the believer is born again his spirit becomes so sunken and surrounded by his soul that it is impossible for him to distinguish whether something is emanating from the soul or from the spirit. The functions of the latter have become mixed up with those of the former. Furthermore, the spirit has lost its primary function towards God; for it is dead to God.

All that this life possesses and all that it may become are in the realm of the soul. If we distinctly recognize what is soulical it will then be easier for us later on to recognize what is spiritual. It will be possible to divide the spiritual from the soulish.<sup>2</sup>

It is the Spirit that is ever warring against the flesh and the flesh against the Spirit -- both striving for full mastery and control.

*Gal. 5:16-18*

*16 But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*[responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).*

*17 For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do. AMP*

*18 Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence? MSG*

### **The Missing Element**

The body has five functions, the soul three functions and the spirit three functions for a total of 11. Although some numbers are significant in the Bible, the number 11 is not. Something is missing in man to make him complete.

What is missing? It is the Spirit of God coming into man's spirit. Apostle Paul says in *Col. 2:10* "***And ye are complete in him.***" **Without God's Spirit, man is incomplete, forever seeking something to fill the emptiness in his spirit.**

When the Spirit of God comes into man's spirit, light shines into man's dark tabernacle. The missing element, God's Spirit, makes him complete (the number 11 changes to 12, representing completeness). Twelve, a significant number, is mentioned in the Bible 187 times: 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles, 12 foundations and gates to the New Jerusalem, etc.

*Prov. 20:27*

*27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*

*Ps. 18:28*

*28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.*

- **The Holy Ghost will affect the entire soul of man -- his will, mind and emotions:**
  - **Righteousness** - right direction and actions for the **will**.
  - **Peace** for the **mind**.
  - **Joy** for the **emotions**.

*Rom. 14:17*

*17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; (not things that appeal to the body) but **righteousness** (for the **will**), **peace** (for the **mind**), and **joy** (for the **emotions**) in the Holy Ghost.*

*2 Cor. 4:7*

*7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Do not confuse man's spirit with God's Holy Spirit. When the Scripture refers to God's Spirit, a capital "S" is used; when referring to man's spirit, a lowercase "s" is used.

*Rom. 8:16*

*16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

## **1.4 Three Levels of Living**

God desires the spirit of man (filled with the Spirit of God) to become dominant and control his whole being. Yet the will, the crucial element, belongs to the soul.

The **first dimension** of God's work is **deliverance from sin**. God gives us His Spirit based on this first step. The Spirit of God dwelling in our spirit then gives power for the **second dimension** of God's work in our lives -- **deliverance from self** (our will, mind and emotions).

- **There are three levels of living for those born again of the water and Spirit -- fleshly, soulish and spiritual.**

## 1. The flesh ruling as the dominant member.

At this level there is minimal permanent victory in the Christian's life. Often the renewal of God's Spirit in one's life is soon lost due to carnal living. Like the five foolish virgins whom Jesus described in Matthew chapter 25, the oil (Spirit of God) that once resided in their lives had leaked out. Like the children of Israel, they are out of Egypt (the world) but not all of Egypt (the world) is out of them.

*1 Cor. 3:1-3*

*1 However, brethren, I could not talk to you as to spiritual [men], but as to non-spiritual [men of the flesh, in whom the carnal nature predominates], as to mere infants [in the new life] in Christ [unable to talk yet!]*

*2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not yet strong enough [to be ready for it]; but even yet you are not strong enough [to be ready for it],*

*3 For you are still [unspiritual, having the nature] of the flesh [under the control of ordinary impulses]. For as long as [there are] envying and jealousy and wrangling and factions among you, **are you not unspiritual and of the flesh, behaving yourselves after a human standard and like mere (unchanged) men?** AMP*

## 2. The soul (will, mind, or emotions) ruling as the dominant member.

At this level people love to go to God's house, and often donate their time and energy to the church. But in working for Him, they are still struggling with God's perfect will. While doing good and needed things in the church, they are often limiting themselves to only their abilities or talents.

Living at this level:

- With the **will** ruling they are pursuing their will vs. God's will.
- With the **emotions** ruling their spiritual high is an emotional feeling rather than a deeper move of the Spirit.
- With the **mind** ruling, working for God is motivated with their thoughts and ways rather than God's thoughts and ways.

-- **From “The Spiritual Man” by Watchman Nee**

Soulish believers are not behind others in the matter of works. They are very active, zealous, and willing. However, this is not to say that they labor this way because of God’s command. Rather, they do so as they like and according to their own enthusiasm. They think that it is always good to do God’s work, but they do not know that it is really good only when they do the work which God gives them. They work according to their own ideas, schemes and abilities. They have not sincerely sought the **will of God**.

Most soulish believers have a great deal of spiritual knowledge, but their experiences can never match what they know. Because they know much, they also condemn much. Thus, criticizing others becomes a common characteristic of soulish believers. They receive grace to have knowledge, but unlike spiritual believers, they do not receive grace to have humility.<sup>2</sup>

**3. The Spirit ruling as the dominant member.**

- **For the Spirit to rule in our life, it must be separated from, and then elevated to rule the soul (will, mind and emotions).**

The Word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, will separate the soul (natural man) from the spirit (spiritual man).

*Heb. 4:12*

*12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the **dividing asunder** of soul and **spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

*12 . . . It penetrates even to **dividing soul and spirit**. NIV*

*12 . . . It **cuts** all the way through, to **where soul and spirit meet** together. GNT*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

Refer to Chart D-5, “The Word Divides the Soul and Spirit”, in Appendix 1.

He who allows the Spirit to be elevated above the soul will reach for the spiritual and will have an insatiable hunger for the things of God. Our hunger drives our pursuit; what we pursue, we will become addicted to. One may wish for wealth and remain poor; one may wish for health and remain sick; but the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness shall be filled.

The final test of spiritual life is neither what we think (our mind) or feel (our emotions), but what we do (our will) to pursue God’s will. When we are in the center of His will, He is in us and we are in Him. We have His Spirit and His Spirit has us.

Apostle Paul’s prayer in 1 Thess. 5:23 should be ours today:

*“May the very God of peace sanctify us wholly; and I pray God that our whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved **blameless** unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

### **Blameless in Body:**

- No desire or leaning toward carnal pleasures.
- Eyes that see no evil, ears that hear no evil, lips that speak no evil and hands that touch no evil.

### **Blameless in Soul:**

- **Emotions** that can love our enemies and a lost world. A love driving us to sacrifice for the Kingdom of God.
- A **mind** desiring to emulate our heavenly Father, desiring to know His ways. Hungering not just for more knowledge, but for more revelation of Him.
- A submissive **will**, obedient to His will.
- A pure appetite of the soul, reaching for eternal things.
- A desire for anointing (divine ability) vs. our ability to do God’s will and work.

**Blameless in Spirit:**

- Awe and reverence for the sacred things of God -- careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:30)*
- Craving a higher level of spiritual life, with access to the Gifts of the Spirit, to fulfill the burden of the Lord -- seeking and saving the lost.
- By faith, looking beyond the temporal, seeing the invisible, hearing the inaudible and believing for the impossible.
- Having a conscience void of offense toward God and man. *To have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. (Acts 24:16)*
- Having a conscience refusing to be enticed to compromise with a carnal mind.
- Praying for the deeper things of God -- for the infinite, the supernatural.
- Having an ever increasing ability for our spirit to hear the voice of the Spirit and to commune with God in fervent prayer.
- **As a Christian becomes more spiritual, he becomes less tolerant of worldly things. Conversely, as a Christian becomes more carnal, he becomes less tolerant of the things of the Spirit.**

Refer to Chart C-21, “The Tolerance of the Carnal Man Vs. the Spiritual Man”, in Appendix 1.

- 
- *God's complete access to our lives, for His perfect will to be done, must come through the veil of self (our soul) -- will, mind and emotions:*
    - *Our will is what we do.*
    - *Our mind is what we think.*
    - *Our emotions are what we feel.*

\* \* \* \* \*

- *The will of man is very powerful; it is the pilot of the entire being:*
    - *God won't override it.*
    - *Satan can't override it.*
-



## 2. *Rending of the Veil*

### 2.1 **The Veil of the Tabernacle**

To appreciate the significance of the **torn veil**, we need to first understand the significance of the veil itself. The veil was a very thick woven linen curtain that separated the holy place in the tabernacle from the most holy place. No one was allowed to enter the most holy place except Israel's high priest. He could enter only once a year with the blood of a sacrifice for the sins of the people.

The plain significance of the linen curtain was that the old covenant did not allow for man's approach to God. While the first tabernacle stood and the old covenant remained in force, the way into God's holy presence by man was not possible -- humanity could not approach deity. Their sins had not been forgiven -- only rolled ahead each year.

-- **From Author Unknown**

#### **The Significance of the Torn Veil**

The tearing of the temple veil is full of significance for the new covenant people of God. The radical shaking that accompanied this event (Heb.12:25-29), as well as the event itself, is a wonderful message that the redemptive work of Christ effected far more than a mere change of administration of the priesthood within an overarching

covenant of grace. His redemptive word was a divine intervention in history that inaugurated a new age; a new creation. Those who belong to this new creation are heirs of better promises that are granted by a new and better covenant. The old order has passed away, and the new order has come to stay.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 The Veil of Sin

**There must be a rending of the veil of sin, which denies man's access to God. Repentance and turning from sin can happen in one day.**

*Rom. 6:6* Death to sin.

*6 Knowing this, that our **old man is crucified** with him, that the body of **sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

This rending of the veil removes the separating barrier of sin. Sin is, after all, the great divider between God and man. That veil of blue and purple and fine twined linen could not really separate man from God, for He is omnipresent -- not far from any of us. Sin is a wall separating the sinner from his God. Sin shuts out prayer, praise and every form of worship. Sin causes God to oppose us because our ways are contrary to His. A holy God cannot have fellowship with unholy man.

But with the Crucifixion of Jesus and His shed blood, it is now possible for the sin barrier to be removed. Those who have availed themselves of the new birth experience are now kings and priests with access to the Spirit of God in the most holy place -- God dwelling in man's spirit. We have the privilege of sweet communion with a holy God. God's Spirit dwelling in man's spirit in fellowship affords a wonderful relationship -- man and God communing together in the most Holy Place.

## **2.3 The Veil of Self**

**There must be a rending of the veil of self, which limits God's access to the born-again believer. This is a lifetime process.**

This concept addresses the mature Christian who should be a veteran warrior against the sins of the flesh described in the Ten Commandments and the works of the flesh. It focuses on the veil of **self** that prevents God from working through a Christian's life to do His perfect will.

*Joel 2:13, 15, 17*

***13 Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God:***

*15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:*

*17 Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar,*

The Spirit of God residing in our spirit affords us communion, comfort and peace. But the purpose of God's Spirit in the believer's life is to accomplish a much deeper work. And that work is for the Spirit's transforming power to change the soul of man -- his will, his mind and his emotions to be like those of Christ.

**As that change occurs, God's Spirit will have more access and control:**

- **Less of our will and more of His.**
- **Less of our mind and ways and more of His.**
- **Less of our human love and emotions and more of His love and compassion -- to love our enemies and our lost world.**

How does that happen? When the veil is torn away, Christ can have complete access to reign as King and Lord in our lives. Paul states that being crucified with Him brings death to the carnal man -- not just death to sin, **but death to self**. This requires more than saying "no" to satan and sin, but **"yes" to the will of God**.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

- **There must be death to self so that Christ can live His will through my life** -- all of me for all of Him.

*Gal. 2:20*

*20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

*2 Cor. 4:10*

*10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the **life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.***

*10 Through suffering, these bodies of ours constantly share in the death of Jesus so that **the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.** NLT*

Why must we be crucified with Him? The veil of the soul hinders God from having control of our will, and it must be torn away. Then His Spirit can flow through our spirit to stir and change our soul -- enabling us to effectively pursue His will and His ways.

### **God Works from the Inside Out**

God works from the inside out -- satan works from the outside in. God desires to fill us completely with His Spirit, but we must first empty ourselves of self.

*2 Cor. 7:1*

*1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the **flesh and spirit**, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

*1 With promises like this to pull us on, dear friends, let's make a clean break with everything that defiles or distracts us, both **within and without**. Let's make our entire lives fit and holy temples for the worship of God. MSG*

## *Rending of the Veil*

*1 John 3:3*

*3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

*2 Tim. 2:21*

*21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

God greatly desires for His Spirit to fill our spirit and **overflow into our soul** changing our will, mind, and emotions:

- We receive His mind - His wisdom.
- We receive His will - His direction.
- We receive His emotions -- compassion for people with spiritual and physical needs.

Refer to the following Charts in Appendix 1:

- C-7 The Rending of the Veil -- Less of Self and More of God
- F-7 What Hinders the Supernatural -- Flow to Vs. Flow Through

As His Spirit flows to the outer man, it becomes exciting because He controls our complete being -- spirit, soul and body. When **God's divine nature is flowing through our lives:**

- Our hands become His hands - healing the sick.
  - Our voice becomes His voice - speaking His Word.
  - Our feet become His feet - walking His paths.
  - Our eyes see the harvest field and the needs of man.
  - Our ears hear the cries of our hurting generation and what the Spirit is saying to the church.
- **Our mind is what we think. Our emotions are what we feel. Our will is what we do.**
  - **The will of man is the powerful pilot of the entire being. God won't override it -- satan can't override it.**

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

- **When we are completely one with Him in body, soul, and spirit, we are in the center of His will. He is in us and we are in Him. We have access to His Spirit and His Spirit has access to our lives.**

If Jesus, as Son of man, struggled in the garden with His will, that will also be our greatest struggle; because God's will is often different than mans'. We must pray like He did in the garden of Gethsemane: "*Not my will, but thine be done.*"

## *Rending of the Veil*

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Doing the Will of God</b>
Mark 3:35	For whosoever shall <b>do the will of God</b> , the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. (Jesus speaking)
Rom. 8:28	And we know that all things work together . . . to them who are the called according to <b>His purpose</b> .
Rom. 12:2	Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed . . . that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and <b>perfect will of God</b> .
Eph. 6: 6	As the servants of Christ, <b>doing the will of God</b> from the heart.
2 Tim. 1:9	Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling . . . according to <b>His own purpose</b> .
Col. 4:12	That ye may stand perfect and <b>complete in all the will of God</b> .
Heb. 10:36	After ye have done <b>the will of God</b> , ye might receive the promise.
Heb. 13:21	Make you perfect in every good work <b>to do his will</b> , working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight.
1 Peter 4:2	Live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions, <b>but for the will of God</b> . ESV
I John 2:17	And the world passeth away . . . But he <b>that doeth the will of God abideth forever</b> .
1 Cor. 6:19, 20	Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . and <b>ye are not your own?</b> . . . For ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

### **2.4 Born to Die - Die to Live**

The outer shell of man, the body, was born to die. The inner man of the soul must die to live. If the outer shell of corn does not die, it remains unchanged. Life depends upon death.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

We are on this earth for only a few years before we start dying. Before we are 70 years old, the unfriendly hand of Father Time and Mother Nature affect our hearing and vision. But in the Kingdom of God, this order can be reversed; instead of living to die, we can die to live -- live for Christ.

Self must be broken and permanently handicapped, like Jacob after his night of wrestling with the angel, to enable God's Spirit to reign in our life.

**“Dear God, let us hunger for a breakthrough change, from an encounter with You of the changing kind, where there is a rending of the veil of self (the will, mind, and emotions).”**

The same transforming power of God that saved us from a world of sin will be required for breakthrough changes in our soul. It will take a wrestling with God in prayer, possibly in the midst of fiery trial. And we will not be praying, “Lord change my situation but, **Lord change me.**”

When a sinner seeks God, he must first die to sins of the flesh. This can happen in one day. But the breaking of the inner man, the soul, is a lifetime process. **I must decrease and He must increase:**

- Decreasing my will and increasing His will.
- Decreasing my love and increasing His love.
- Decreasing my thoughts and increasing His thoughts.

Refer to Chart F-3, “The Path to the Supernatural -- He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease”, in Appendix 1.

That is what Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary of all times, is referring to in 1 Cor. 15:31, where he declares -- **“I die daily.”** He was not struggling with dying to sin; he was struggling with dying to self.



*Rending of the Veil*

- **It is a daily choice -- part of me for part of Him or all of me for all of Him**

*2 Cor. 4:10*

*10 Always bearing about in the body the **dying** of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

*2 Tim. 2:11*

*11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be **dead with him**, we shall also live with him.*

*Phil. 3:10*

*10 [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and **that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed** [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death. AMP*

---

*The calling of God and the will of God will always  
lead us beyond where we are in our  
spiritual experience.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*The will of God will never take you where the grace of  
God will not protect you.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Are you willing to change? God is calling you to  
move further into the depths of His Kingdom.*

---

### *3. Changed or Chained*

**If there is not significant change in our life periodically, perhaps we need some chains to be broken and once again be set free to be changed.**

- **As born-again Christians we are either changed or chained.**

We are either changed to fulfill God's purpose for the future or chained to the limitations of our past. The choice is ours to remain chained to the past or to experience an encounter of the changing kind, freeing us to experience spiritual growth and victory.

- The first message of change was to us as sinners to make the required changes for the salvation experience. The chains of satan and sin had to be broken by the transforming power of God.
- The second message of change is now to us as believers to continue experiencing change in our lives to fulfill God's will. Chains of self must also be broken by the transforming power of God:
  - Self-will vs. the will of God.
  - Self-love vs. the love of God.
  - Our ways vs. God's ways.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

The will of a natural father is for his son to move from stage to stage in his physical life and progress from grade to grade in his knowledge. Likewise, our heavenly Father wills for us, as sons of God, to continue in the process of being transformed into His image.

God miraculously broke the chains of Pharaoh (a type of satan) and Egypt (a type of the world) that kept Israel in bondage for hundreds of years. But, because they could not believe God and were unwilling to follow Him into the Promised Land, they were bound with **self-imposed chains**. These chains disqualified them from God's favor. This resulted in defeat -- going in circles for 40 years.

*Ps. 78:40-43*

*40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*

*41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy one of Israel.*

*42 They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.*

*43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:*

### **3.1 Initial Change - From a Sinner to a Christian**

The **first level** of change occurs when a sinner is freed from bondage to sin, severing relationship with **sin and the devil**.

*2 Cor. 5:17*

*17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

*Eph. 4:22-24*

*22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

*23 And be **renewed in** the spirit of your mind;*

*24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

When we became willing to repent, to make a change of heart, mind, and direction, God miraculously changed us with His transforming power.

### **3.2 Transformation - Continuous Change of a Christian**

The next level of change (continuous change) is for the child of God. This comes through being crucified with Him -- death of the carnal man. Here we surrender to God and His perfect will. No longer concentrating on combating sin, we focus on denying self, the only approach that will bring the real peace and joy of the Lord into our lives.

*Rom. 12:2*

*2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

*2 Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be **changed from the inside out**. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. MSG*

- **Transformation is a process of continuous change -- not a one time change.**

### **Changed from Glory to Glory**

*2 Cor. 3:18*

*18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

-- **From Barnes' Notes**

[From glory to glory] From one degree of glory to another. "The more we behold this brilliant and glorious light, the more do we reflect back its rays; that is, the more we contemplate the great truths of the Christian, the more do our minds become imbued with its spirit." The idea in the phrase is; that there is a continual **increase of moral purity and holiness** under the Gospel until it results in the perfect glory of heaven. The "doctrine" is, that **Christians advance in their piety (loyalty and devotion to God).**<sup>1</sup>

God is forever moving "from glory to glory". He wants us to move forward, never remaining stationary. Even in their 40 years of wandering, He did not allow the children of Israel to remain in one place. The pillars of cloud and fire kept moving, forcing them to travel.

**God's Message to Israel at Mount Horeb -- "You have dwelt here long enough."**

*Deut. 1:5-8*

*5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,*

*6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, **Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:***

*7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the . . . . .*

*8 **Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land** which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.*

The children of Israel were at Mount Horeb, called the mount of God, or Mount Sinai. Wonderful things happened there:

- On this mount of revelation, God gave the Law.
- Moses spent two 40 day periods here, his face shining so brightly that he wore a veil to address the people.
- God spoke audibly to Israel.

Afterward, God instructed, “**You have been here long enough, you must move on.**”

This was a wonderful place of blessing, but it was not God’s will for them to remain. Future blessings would be experienced further in their journey. Although a place of great revelation and blessing, it was merely a **milepost** on their journey to the real goal, the Promised Land. As discussed in Volume II, physical things in the Old Testament symbolize spiritual things in the New Testament.

- **The calling of God and the will of God will always lead us beyond where we are in our spiritual experience. God loves us too much to leave us unchanged.**
- **The will of God is revelatory, changing as we continue in our Christian walk. He will reveal His will for our next assignment as we continue faithfully in our current one.**
- **Are you ready to progress? God is calling you to move further into the depths of His Kingdom.**

**If we are led by the Spirit, we will follow Him into new experiences.**

*Rom. 8:14*

*14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

**Where will the Spirit lead us as sons of God? It will lead into:**

- Godly actions and conversation.
- Daily devotion of prayer and the Word.
- Faithfulness to the house of God.
- A life of sacrifice and service.
- A spiritual walk, away from the carnal.
- Deeper relationship with the Father.
- The battlefield to defeat the works of the devil.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

- Greater dominion role of doing the Father's will.
- The harvest field, seeking the lost, ministering to their needs.

Apostle Paul encourages the saints in *Hebrews 6*: ***“Let us go on to perfection.”*** Then he declares to the church at Ephesus that the fivefold ministry is to perfect the saints:

*Eph. 4:11-13*

*11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

*12 For the **perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

*13 **Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:***

### **3.3 Self-Imposed Chains of the Christian**

There are many self-imposed chains preventing progress in our Christian walk -- going in circles like the children of Israel. Some of these are:

- Living in a comfort zone -- not doing anything wrong.
- Limiting ourselves to natural talents (our ability vs. His).
- Doubt and unbelief.
- Self-survival prayer instead of revival prayer.
- Unwilling to follow His direction.
- Too deeply rooted in the world's prosperity.
- Unbalanced in the use of our time - our kingdom vs. God's.
- Limitations of our past, clouding a vision of the future.
- Accepting the status quo, satisfied with little change.
- Crowding out the best -- with the good things in life.



## **Lukewarm - Comfortable Too Long – Asleep Spiritually**

*Rev. 3:15-19*

*15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

*16 So then because thou art **lukewarm**, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

*17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

*18 And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. (see your condition)*

*19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

To change as a saint of God we must be dissatisfied with where we are. We must repent for being unchanged too long. We made a complete and sweeping (180 degree) change from the world to the church when we first came to Christ. Likewise, we must be willing to embrace God's calling for a significant change in becoming a partaker of His divine nature.

### **Change is difficult and often impossible to effect on our own:**

- The human soul is like the burned-in software of a computer chip -- impossible to change.
- It is human nature to resist change. As creatures of habit, most people make few major changes in their lives.
- Since we alone cannot make needed changes, we must pray for and submit to the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

Significant change will only come as we allow God to reveal where we are compared to where He desires for us to be:

- Job crying, "*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*"
- Isaiah in the temple, "*Woe is me for I am undone!*"
- King David pleading, "*Create in me a clean heart, cast me*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*not away from thy presence.”*

- Apostle Peter on the shore of Galilee, “*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*”

### **3.4 Power of Attachments Impede Change**

*Matt. 24:37-39*

*37 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be.*

*38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,*

*39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of man be.*

There were two groups of people in Noah’s day -- each was deeply involved and committed. A gravitational pull kept them attached to the confines of their own world.

- **One of the most spectacular and miraculous signs that God has shown to any generation was when His Spirit caused the animals to march into the ark.**

Vicious and carnivorous animals evidently became docile. It would have been impossible for Noah to capture every animal -- seven pairs (male and female) of the clean and one pair of the unclean. God displayed one last warning sign to that wicked generation. He directed thousands of animals to come methodically from every direction, entering orderly into the ark before He closed the door.

But despite this miraculous sign, not one person made a change. Righteous Noah was locked into the plan of God and the ark. The wicked were locked into their plans and their world.

- **The Spirit is calling us to break attachments to the old world and get attached to the new world (heaven):**

**\* \* \* Do Our Banking There \* \* \***

*Matt. 6:19-21*

*19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

*20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

*21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

**\* \* \* Do Our Home Building There \* \* \***

*John 14:2, 3*

*2 In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

*3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

**\* \* \* Have Our Citizenship Papers There \* \* \***

*Phil. 3:20, 21*

*20 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.*

*21 He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own. NLT*

**\* \* \* Keep Our Name on the Books There \* \* \***

*Luke 10:20*

*20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

**\* \* \* Set Our Affections There \* \* \***

*Col. 3:2, 3*

*2 Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here.*

*3 You should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does. Your real life is in heaven with Christ in God. TLB*

### 3.5 Significant Changes for Supernatural Results

There are those described in Scripture who made unprecedented, drastic changes to become an instrument in the hands of God to save their generation. They loved the cause of God more than their own convenience, comfort, safety, and even their lives.

1. **Noah** - Moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.
  2. **Moses** - Answered God's call, willing to risk his life to be the leader of God's people as they were miraculously delivered from Egypt.
  3. **Abraham** - Obeyed the call to leave without knowing his destination. He obeyed God in the great test when instructed to sacrifice his son, not knowing if or how God would save him. He became the father of the faithful and the nation of Israel.
  4. **Rahab** - Risked her life to hide the spies. She turned to the God of Israel and became the great, great, great . . . great-grandmother of Jesus Christ.
  5. **Gideon** - Changed occupations from farmer to army captain and led Israel to a great victory.
  6. **King David** - From shepherd to giant killer, he led God's people to many great victories and became the king of Israel; a man after God's own heart.
  7. **Queen Esther** - Risked her life and miraculously saved a nation.
  8. **Apostle Paul** - Made a radical change in one day (from anti-Christian to intense Christian). He authored a large portion of the New Testament and shook his world for Jesus Christ.
- **Significant change in our lives will cause significant change in our lost world.**

## *Changed or Chained*

Making drastic changes like these men and women in the Bible may not be a heaven or hell issue for us -- but it is for our lost world. Because only this kind of breakthrough change can thrust us into the supernatural level required to meet the needs of desperately lost people and their impossible problems.

---

*The Refiner's fire is a necessary part of God's  
plan to perfect those living a godly life.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*The only way to detect the spirit of offense  
in one's heart, is to have it revealed  
by the heat of the Refiner's fire.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*When self (self-will, self-righteousness, self-love, self-  
confidence) is crushed, the hammer will be in  
the hands of our Maker -- not just to break  
us, but to make us more like Him.*

---

## 4. *God's Change Agents*

### *- The Refiner's Fire and the Cross*

God's two chief change agents in Scripture are the Refiner's fire and the cross. The Refiner's fire is referenced in the Old Testament and the cross is described in the New Testament. Both represent suffering and pain that God uses to purify and change our lives.

What breaks a father's heart the most is when he uses a loving hand of correction on his children and there is no proper response.

That which breaks our heavenly Father's heart is when He allows trials into the life of His children to remove impurities to perfect them and there is not an appropriate response.

The Potter's hand on the clay is effective when there is pliability and humility in submission to His will. The Potter's wheel is effective only when we willingly yield and respond to the pressure and presence of the Master's hand on our lives.

After a vessel is molded on the potter's wheel two firings occur in the furnace. Likewise, there are two furnaces for the Christian. The first one removes sin and the second removes self (self-will, self-love, self-righteousness, self-ways vs. those of Christ).

- **There is a clear and profound message in God's Word that no one will enter heaven's portals without having been tested and tried.**

#### **4.1 God's Balance - Trial and Peace**

God is a God of balance -- He uses trials to initiate change. God's purpose is to bring:

- The Refiner's fire to reveal and remove impurities.
- Death by the cross -- death to self to enable life in Christ.
- Alignment with His eternal will -- removes us from our rut of routine and thrusts us into our destiny.
- Eternal life.

The will of God brings the storm, the trial and the fire:

- But His balance is His peace and purpose.
- The antidote during the process of trial is the peace of God. His supernatural peace can be tested in the storms of life only when natural peace is absent.

A deep refreshing well is not found on the mountaintop. The mountaintop is where we celebrate victories and reflect on God's mighty hand of deliverance and the lessons learned. Rather, these refreshing wells are found in the valley where self dies and God lives. More of Him and less of me is the axiom of spiritual growth. Refer to Chart F-3, "Path to the Supernatural -- He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease" in Appendix 1.

The subject of the peace of God is dealt with in greater detail in Section III, Chapter 3, "Prayer and the Peace of God in the Storm".

Refer to the following page for the summary chart that describes God's hand of balance and comfort during trial.



<p><b>The Refiner's Fire and the Cross of Suffering</b></p>	<p><b>The Peace of God and the Purpose of God</b></p>
<p><b>Apostle Paul's testimony of trial and suffering:</b> (2 Cor. 4:7-11).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Troubled on every side. . . . .</li> <li>- Perplexed. . . . .</li> <li>- Persecuted. . . . .</li> <li>- Cast down. . . . .</li> </ul> <p>Suffering in a Roman prison.</p> <p>Suffering in beatings, shipwreck, perils, and imprisonment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yet not distressed.</li> <li>- But not in despair.</li> <li>- But not forsaken.</li> <li>- But not destroyed.</li> </ul> <p>He writes from prison, "Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice." "The peace of God will keep (guard) your heart and mind."</p> <p>These things happened unto me for the furtherance of the Gospel. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:12, 19)</p>
<p><b>Job's testimony of trial and suffering:</b> (Job 5:17-24).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- He maketh sore. . . . .</li> <li>- He woundeth. . . . .</li> <li>- He sends troubles. . . . .</li> <li>- He sends famine. . . . .</li> <li>- He sends war. . . . .</li> </ul> <p>Job 23:10 When he hath tried me. . . . .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- He bindeth up.</li> <li>- His hands make whole.</li> <li>- He delivers.</li> <li>- He saves us from starvation.</li> <li>- He saves thee from death.</li> </ul> <p>I shall come forth as gold.</p>
<p><b>Joseph's testimony of trial and suffering:</b> (Gen. 50:20).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You meant it for evil. . . . .</li> </ul> <p>Gen. 49:23 He has been severely injured by those who shot at him and persecuted him. Ps. 105:18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- God meant it for good!</li> </ul> <p>Gen. 49:24 But their weapons were shattered by the mighty one of Jacob. 25 May the God of your fathers, the Almighty, bless you with blessings of heaven above and of the earth beneath. . . . upon the head of Joseph.</p>

## 4.2 Purpose of God's Change Agents

The ultimate purpose of the Refiner's fire is to bring us to glory (get us to heaven) and to make us more effective in the Father's business -- helping someone else get to heaven.

### **\* \* \* Who Wants to Enter the Kingdom of God? \* \* \***

*Acts 14:22*

*22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through **much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

### **\* \* \* Who Wants to be Loved By God? \* \* \***

*Heb. 12:2, 6, 10*

*2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;*

*6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

*10 For they (others) chastened us after their own pleasure; but he (chastens us) for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

### **\* \* \* Who Wants to be Perfected? \* \* \***

*1Peter 5:10*

*10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

### **\* \* \* Who Wants to Go to Heaven? \* \* \***

*1Peter 1:7*

*7 That the **trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, Though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and **glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:***

Rev. 7:13, 14

13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?*

14 *And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **these are they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

**\* \* \* Who Wants to Reign with Jesus Christ? \* \* \***

2 Tim. 2:12

12 *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.*

**\* \* \* Who Wants to Share His glory? \* \* \***

Rom. 8:17, 18

17 *And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.*

18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the **glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us!** AMP*

1 Peter 4:12, 13

12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:*

13 *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

**\* \* \* Who Wants to Receive a Crown of Life? \* \* \***

James 1:12

12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: **for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life**, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

*Rev. 2:10*

*10 Fear none of those **things which thou shalt suffer**: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee **a crown of life**.*

### **4.3 The Refiner's Fire**

The refiner's fire heats a valuable metal like gold to a melting point, not to destroy it, but to reveal and remove the impurities. The Refiner's fire of trial and suffering is God's process to purify His chosen people. Job testifies that there is purifying power in affliction: "***When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.***"

#### **-- From Barnes' Notes**

As gold that is tried in the crucible, and that comes forth the more pure, the more intense is the heat. The application of fire to it serves to separate every particle of impurity or alloy, and leaves only the pure metal. So it is with trials applied to the friend of God.

(1) That all real piety will bear "any" test that may be applied to it, as gold will bear any degree of heat without being injured or destroyed.

(2) That the effect of all trials is to purify piety, and make it more bright and valuable, as is the effect of applying intense heat to gold.

(3) There is often much alloy in the piety of a Christian, as there is in gold that needs to be removed by the fiery trial of affliction. Nothing else will remove it but trial, as nothing will be so effectual a purifier of gold as intense heat.

(4) A true Christian should not dread trial. It will not hurt him. He will be the more valuable for his trials, as gold is for the application of heat. There is no danger of destroying true piety. It will live in the flames, and will survive the raging heat that shall yet consume the world.<sup>1</sup>

God's Change Agents - The Refiner's Fire and the Cross

*Zech. 13:9*

*9 And I will bring the third part through the **fire**, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

*Ps. 66:10, 12*

*10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast **tried us, as silver is tried.***

*12 We went through **fire** and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*

*Isa. 48:10*

*10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have **chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.***

*1 Peter 1:7*

*7 That the **trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

*Mal. 3:2, 3*

*2 . . . **He is like a refiner's fire**, and like fullers' soap:*

*3 And **he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver**: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and **purge them as gold and silver**, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.*

**-- From Author Unknown**

***Malachi 3:3 "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."***

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says, "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy -- **when I see my image in it.**"

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.<sup>2</sup>

### **Fire Reveals Sins of the Spirit**

Some trials, like sickness, battle our flesh (our bodies). But, there are some that assault our spirits as people hurt us. Trials of the spirit are often more difficult.

The fruit of the Spirit is grown more beautifully in a life when the demand for them is caused by unfairness and hurts. The test is often sent to reveal impurities in our spirit.

Fire alone can expose impurities in gold. God has made us as precious metal (gold) but impurities must be identified and removed. So when the Refiner's fire comes, we should not get angry at the person God uses to build the fire; instead, we should thank God for revealing the spirit of offense in us.

The wrong done to us did not cause us to be offended. The spirit of offense, already in our life was fed by someone's offending actions. The embers of offense (pride) was merely fueled by the fire God sent through someone else.

If we do not have the spirit of offense in our life, we cannot be offended. Instead, we will keep an excellent spirit toward the offender and strive to be a peacemaker:

- **Perfect peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them.**
- I forgive you today for the wrong you may do to me tomorrow.
- I understand it is God's will for people to hurt me – to test my reaction.
- I want to be Christlike -- more interested in reconciliation than placing blame.
- I am willing to take the blame (like Jesus) in order to initiate reconciliation.

*Prov. 16:7*

*7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

It may take a few days, months or years but if we please Him with an excellent spirit -- God will take care of our enemies.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*Rom. 12:19*

*19 Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it. [Don't take the law into your own hands.] TLB*

If people are easily offended, possibly the offense is not real. It may be imagined or exaggerated out of proportion by their own spirit of offense. When we become offended by another's wrongful actions, we take ourselves outside the reach of God's healing and comfort. God cannot heal these hurts unless we humble ourselves. He forgives us as we forgive others; He grants mercy as we give mercy to others.

Then His healing touch can calm the storm or calm us in the storm. There can be a vicious cycle of hurt without cure until humility, love, and forgiveness are present. Worse than the original act of offense is the spirit of unforgiveness and bitterness.

To better understand this truth, let us study Joseph and Job who submitted to the Refiner's fire.

### **4.4 Joseph's Fiery Trial and Promotion**

Joseph's life portrays a beautiful story of forgiveness. He was subjected to more **long-term suffering** than any other Old Testament character. It began when he was a young boy and ended many years later.

- Hated by his brothers.
- Pitched into a deep pit.
- Sold to an Ishmeelite caravan en route to Egypt.
- Sold as a common slave.
- Rewarded by his master for his excellent work.
- Falsely accused by his master's wife of attempted rape.
- Thrown into a horrible dungeon with no hope of escape -- in a foreign country far from home.
- No one who cared knew his whereabouts.



*God's Change Agents - The Refiner's Fire and the Cross*

- Lost in the prison system, without intercessors or advocates.
- Probably wondered why his father did not rescue him.
- Forgotten by the king's cup bearer for many months after Joseph interpreted his dream in prison.
- Served 13 years as a slave and a prisoner.
- Forty years old (22 years later) before reunion with his family.

How much can a man suffer through such trial and affliction? This concerned more than just Joseph and his family or preserving life through a seven year famine. But this was about selecting a man who would be a type of Jesus Christ. This trial was so long and difficult that it became an all-time benchmark of human suffering -- an example for others experiencing the Refiner's fire in their lives.

This testimony is a challenging example of someone who chose to serve his God regardless of fiery trial. Joseph made a choice to maintain an excellent spirit in response to terrible wrongdoing against him. This was about a witness standing at the judgment, proving we can face hurts without being offended.

No one in the Bible, other than Jesus Christ, was called on to forgive more than Joseph. He never let bitterness into his life because he had a great relationship with his God. He forgave each evil deed and did not harbor bitterness. He kept a good spirit while a slave and a prisoner for 13 years then, for another nine years before reuniting with his family. His excellent and forgiving spirit tempered his life because he remained the same, whether a slave or a ruler.

When his brothers came to Egypt, Joseph refused revenge for his lost years. Rather, he forgave, imparting undeserved mercy and love for their wrongdoing. The only story in the Bible that exceeds this story of forgiveness, is how God came to earth to experience life as a human. God, in human shoes, came to provide His mercy, grace and forgiveness regardless of mankind's actions.

### **God's Will for Joseph to Suffer**

It was **God's plan** and will for Joseph to experience the pain of the Refiner's fire and to suffer through a long, difficult trial.

*Gen. 45:5*

*5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for **God did send me before you to preserve life.***

*Gen. 50:20*

*20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but **God meant it unto good**, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

When God determined that more strength was needed in Joseph's character to support a promotion to world ruler, He sent him through the long, fiery trial.

- **Joseph's response to the Refiner's fire is an excellent testimony, chiseled in the stone of eternity, as a shining example for us to follow.**

### **The Loving and Bountiful Blessings of the Father**

It is God's will for people to mistreat us. God allows this hurt to test our reactions. The impurities in gold are revealed when the fire is applied -- the fires of trial, hurt, and wrongs done against us. Our heavenly Father imparts His **love, favor and blessings** to those who emulate a Christlike attitude and reaction.

*Gen. 49:22-26*

*22 Joseph is a fruitful tree beside a fountain. His branches shade the wall.*

*23 He has been severely injured by those who shot at him and persecuted him,*

*24 But their weapons were shattered by the mighty one of Jacob, the shepherd, the rock of Israel.*

*25 May the God of your fathers, the Almighty, bless you with blessings of heaven above and of the earth beneath blessings,*

*26 Blessings of the grain and flowers, blessings reaching to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. These shall be the blessings upon the head of Joseph who was exiled from his brothers. TLB*

**-- From Barnes' Notes**

Verse 25, 26. These two thoughts - the peaceful abundance of his old age, which he owed to Joseph, and the persecutions his beloved son had endured-stir the fountains of his affections until they overflow with blessings. "From the God of thy father" - the Eternal One who is the source of all blessing. "And the Almighty," who is able to control all adverse influences. "Blessings of heaven above" - the air, the rain, and the sun. "Blessings of the deep" - the springs and streams, as well as the fertile soil. "Blessings of the breasts and the womb" - the children of the home and the young of the flocks and herds.

The benedictions of Jacob pronounced upon Joseph exceed those that came upon Jacob himself from his fathers. To Joseph is given a double portion, with a double measure of affection from a father's heart. "Unto the bound of the perpetual hills." Like an overflowing flood they have risen to the very summits of the perpetual hills in the conceptions of the venerable patriarch. "Of him who was distinguished from his brethren;" not only by a long period of persecution and humiliation, but by a subsequent elevation to extraordinary dignity and pre-eminence.

It is to be noted that this benediction, when fairly interpreted, though it breathes all the fondness of a father's heart, yet contains no intimation that the supremacy or the priesthood were to belong to Joseph, or that the Messiah was to spring from him. At the same time Joseph was in many events of his history a remarkable type of the Messiah, and was no doubt among the ancestors of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

### The Key Message of Joseph's Trial

- **Joseph's childhood dream sustained him in fiery trial, causing him to embrace the plan of God, that led him through the fire.**
- **When the trial ended, Joseph stood as pure gold in body, soul and spirit; not damaged, but refined by the fire.**
- **One of the harshest trials in history produced one of the greatest products of the Refiner's fire, and one of the greatest miracles of deliverance -- promotion from the pit to the palace in one day.**
- **When God says it is enough, the storm will end in deliverance and sweet victory.**

### Joseph Was Broken and Changed by Being Squeezed and Released

Squeezed and Broken	Released and Blessed
Joseph was mistreated by his brothers and thrown in the pit.	Then he was released from the pit.
Joseph was sold to an Ishmeelite caravan going to Egypt.	Then he was released to serve in Potiphar's house.
Joseph was accused of crime; hopelessly imprisoned without intercessors or advocates.	Then he was released from prison and promoted to the palace to rule the world.

The process of brokenness is being squeezed and released. Held tightly in the hand, a sponge will not absorb liquid. It holds more only as it is released more. He can fill only what we release to Him. If we hold onto rooms in our heart and soul, we are refusing His control.

*Ps. 34:18, 19*

*18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

*19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.*

#### **4.5 Job's Fiery Trial and Restoration**

Before Job's trial, it seemed he was perfect, with one exception by his own admission; he may have had a spirit of self-confidence or self-righteousness. Everyone spoke well of him. Jesus warned, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!", because we must seek the favor of God more than the favor of man.

#### **Job's Life Before His Trial**

*Job 29:7-25*

*7 When I walked downtown and sat with my friends in the public square,*

*8 Young and old greeted me with respect; I was honored by everyone in town.*

*9 When I spoke, everyone listened;*

*10 They hung on my every word.*

*11 People who knew me spoke well of me; my reputation went ahead of me.*

*12 I was known for helping people in trouble and standing up for those who were down on their luck.*

*13 The dying blessed me, and the bereaved were cheered by my visits.*

*14 All my dealings with people were good. I was known for being fair to everyone I met.*

*15 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame,*

*16 Father to the needy, and champion of abused aliens.*

*17 I grabbed street thieves by the scruff of the neck and made them give back what they'd stolen.*

*18 I thought, I'll die peacefully in my own bed, grateful for a long and full life,*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*19 A life deep-rooted and well-watered, a life limber and dew-fresh,*

*20 My soul suffused with glory and my body robust until the day I die.*

*21 Men and women listened when I spoke, hung expectantly on my every word.*

*22 After I spoke, they'd be quiet, taking it all in.*

*23 They welcomed my counsel like spring rain, drinking it all in.*

*24 When I smiled at them, they could hardly believe it; their faces lit up, their troubles took wing!*

*25 I was their leader, establishing the mood and setting the pace by which they lived. Where I led, they followed. MSG*

*Job 29:18*

*18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.*

### -- **From Barnes' Notes**

So prosperous was I, and so permanent seemed my sources of happiness. I saw no reason why all this should not continue, and why the same respect and honor should not attend me to the grave. [I shall die in my nest] I shall remain where I am, and in my present comforts, while I live. I shall then die surrounded by my family and friends, and encompassed with honors. A "nest" is an image of quietness, harmlessness, and comfort.<sup>1</sup>

### -- **From Matthew Henry's Commentary**

*Job 29:18-25*

See here what his thoughts were in his prosperity -- I shall die in my nest. Having made himself a warm and easy nest, he hoped nothing would disturb him in it, nor remove him out of it, till death removed him; and therefore concluded, tomorrow shall be as this day; as David (Ps 30:6), My mountain stands strong, and shall not be moved.

That he should live long, should multiply his days as the sand. He means as the sand on the sea-shore; whereas we should rather reckon our days by the sand in the hourglass, which will have run out in a little time. See how apt even good people are to think of death as a thing at a distance, and to put far from them that evil day, which will really be to them a good day.<sup>3</sup>

*Job 16:12*

*12 I was **at ease**, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces . . .*

**At ease**

OT:7961 shalev (shaw-lave'); from OT:7951; tranquil; (in a bad sense) careless; abstractly, security.<sup>4</sup>

**Job's Trial**

Job's first test, in his disastrous, fiery trial was **physical loss**:

- Loss of family -- ten children.
- Loss of wealth -- all possessions.
- Loss of health -- painful boils covering his body.

Job expresses his overwhelming grief:

- I am in so much pain and despair that I wish I had never been born.
- I don't know where God is, but I am sure He still knows where I am.
- When God finishes His fiery refining process, I shall come forth as pure gold.

*Job 3:3*

*3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived.*

*Job 23:9, 10*

*9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that **I cannot see him**:*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

But Job's final test came as a **test of his spirit**, when his comforting "friends" accused him of great wrongdoing and sin. For many days they took turns slandering him.

*Job 2:13*

*13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*

**The trial now goes beyond the physical loss, as the Refiner's fire gets hotter, testing Job's spirit for any trace of offense, as his friends continue their verbal assault.**

The following is a sample of the accusations of Job's friends:

**Job's Friend, Eliphaz:**

*Job 4:7, 8*

*7 Stop and think! Does the innocent person perish? When has the upright person been destroyed?*

*8 My experience shows that those who plant trouble and cultivate evil will harvest the same. NLT*

*Job 15:5, 6*

*5 It's your sin that taught you to talk this way. You chose an education in fraud.*

*6 Your own words have exposed your guilt. It's nothing I've said - you've incriminated yourself! MSG*

*Job 22:23, 24*

*23 Come back to God Almighty and he'll rebuild your life. Clean house of everything evil.*

*24 Relax your grip on your money and abandon your gold-plated luxury. MSG*



**Job's Friend, Bildad:**

*Job 8:4*

*4 Your children obviously sinned against him, so their punishment was well deserved. NLT*

*Job 18:5, 7*

*5 Yes, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the flame of his fire shall not shine.*

*7 The steps of his strength shall be shortened, and his own counsel and the plans in which he trusted shall bring about his downfall. AMP*

**Job's Friend, Zophar:**

*Job 11:6*

*6 I wish he'd show you how wisdom looks from the inside, for true wisdom is mostly 'inside.' But you can be sure of this, you haven't gotten half of what you deserve. MSG*

*Job 20:20*

*20 Such God-denying people are never content with what they have or who they are; their greed drives them relentlessly. MSG*

*Job 20:27, 28*

*27 God will strip them of their sin-soaked clothes and hang their dirty laundry out for all to see.*

*28 Life is a complete wipeout for them, nothing surviving God's wrath. MSG*

**Job's Friend, Elihu:**

*Job 32:2, 3*

*2 Then Elihu lost his temper. He blazed out in anger against Job for pitting his righteousness against God's.*

*3 He was also angry with the three friends because they had neither come up with an answer nor proved Job wrong. MSG*

## **The Conclusion of Job's Trial**

The Refiner's fire has now exposed a wrong response or reaction by Job to his painful trial. God begins to talk to Job and he begins to repent.

*Job 38:1-6, 8-12*

*1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,  
2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

*3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

*4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.*

*5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

*6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;*

*8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?*

*9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,*

*10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,*

*11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?*

*12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;*

### **-- From The Pulpit Commentary**

**Verse 2. - *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?***

It is very noticeable that God entirely ignores the reasoning's of Elihu, and addresses himself, in the first instance, wholly to Job, with whom he begins by remonstrating. Job has not been without fault. He has spoken many "words without knowledge" or with insufficient knowledge, and has thus trenched on

irreverence, and given the enemies of God occasion to blaspheme.

Moreover, he has “darkened counsel.” Instead of making the ways of God clear to his friends and companions, he has cast doubts upon God’s moral government (Job 21:7-26), upon his mercy and loving-kindness (Job 16:7-14), almost upon his justice (Job 19:7; 31:1-35). He is thus open to censure, and receives censure, and owns himself “vile” (Job 40:4).

Verse 3. - Gird up now thy loins like a man. Job had desired to contend with God, to plead with him, and argue out his case (Job 9:32-35; 13:3,18-22; 23: 4-7; 31:35). God now offers to grant his request, and bids him stand forth “as a man“ and “gird himself” for the contest, which he has challenged. For I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

He will begin with interrogatories which Job must answer; then Job will be entitled to put questions to him. Job, however, on the opportunity being given him, shrinks back, and says, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken: but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further” (Job 40:4, 5).<sup>5</sup>

*Job 42:5, 6*

*5 I have **heard of thee** by the hearing of the ear: but **now mine eye seeth thee**.*

*6 Wherefore **I abhor myself, and repent** in dust and ashes.*

*5 I had heard of You [only] by the hearing of the ear, but **now my [spiritual] eye sees You**.*

*6 Therefore I loathe [my words] and **abhor myself and repent** in dust and ashes. AMP*

-- **From The Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 5.- I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear. Hitherto, I have had nothing but hearsay knowledge of thee; I have not known thee in any true sense; but now - now that thou hast revealed thyself - mine eye seeth thee; my spiritual eye is opened, and I begin to see thee in thy true might, thy true greatness, thy true inscrutableness. Now I recognize the distance which separates us, and feel how unreasonable it is that I should contend with thee, argue with thee, assume myself to be competent to pass judgment on thy doings. "Wherefore I abhor myself."<sup>5</sup>

-- **From Adam Clarke's Commentary**

Verse 5 [I have heard of thee] I have now such a discovery of thee as I have never had before. I have only heard of thee by tradition, or from imperfect information; now the eye of my mind clearly perceives thee; and in seeing thee, I see myself; for the light that discovers thy glory and excellence, discovers my meanness and vileness.

Verse 6 [Repent] I am deeply distressed on account of the imaginations of my heart, the words of my tongue, and the acts of my life. I roll myself in the dust, and sprinkle ashes upon my head. Job is now sufficiently humbled at the feet of Yahweh; and having earnestly and piously prayed.<sup>6</sup>

-- **From Matthew Henry's Commentary**

He owns himself to be guilty of that which God had charged him with in the beginning of his discourse, v. 3. "Lord, the first word thou saidst was, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? There needed no more; that word convinced me. I am the man that has been so foolish. That word reached my conscience, and set my sin in order before me. It is too plain to be denied, too bad to be excused. I have hidden counsel without knowledge. I have ignorantly overlooked the counsels and designs of God in

afflicting me, and therefore have quarreled with God, and insisted too much upon my own justification: Therefore I uttered that which I understood not," that is, "I have passed a judgment upon the dispensations of Providence, though I was utterly a stranger to the reasons of them."<sup>3</sup>

**-- From The Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 6. - Wherefore I abhor myself; or, I loathe my words (see the Revised Version). And repent in dust and ashes. Job was still sitting on the ash-heap on which he had thrown himself when his disease first smote him (Job 2:8). He had thrown himself on it in grief and despair; he will remain seated on it in compunction and penitence. His self-humiliation is now complete. He does not retract what he has said concerning his essential integrity, but he admits that his words have been overbold, and his attitude towards God one unbecoming a creature. God accepts his submission, and proceeds to vindicate him to his "friends," and to visit them with condemnation.<sup>5</sup>

**After Job repents, God defended him to his friends and told them they had wrongfully accused Job; now they must offer a sacrifice and repent.**

*Job 42:7, 8*

*7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*

*8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.*

**-- From The Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 7. - God heard Job's confession in silence, and, without further speech to him, addressed Eliphaz and his "friends." The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends. The superior position of Eliphaz is here very strongly recognized - he alone is mentioned by name, he alone addressed directly. For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. The "comforters," consciously or unconsciously, had spoken what was false. Even if they said what they believed, they ought to have known better.<sup>5</sup>

**After Job humbly repented and prayed for his friends who treated him wrongly, God restored:**

- **His family -- Seven sons and three daughters.**
- **His health -- 140 more years to live.**
- **His wealth -- Doubled what he had before.**

*Job 42:10-13, 15, 16*

*10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

*11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*

*12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.*

*13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.*

*15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among*

*their brethren.*

*16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.*

### **The Key Message of Job's Trial**

- **The Refiner's fire is a necessary part of God's plan to perfect those living a godly life, doing no wrong and are generously helping others. The only way to detect hidden impurities in our heart is to experience our own reaction to the Refiner's fire.**
- **Regardless of the tremendous suffering and seemingly unfairness of a trial, God is displeased with anything less than total humility and submission to His loving hand of correction.**
- **Not one of us will ever suffer greater trial, suffering and loss than Job. This is one of the highest benchmarks in the history of human suffering and trial that is chiseled in the stone of eternity, as a shining witness and example for us to follow.**

## **4.6 The Cross**

The greatest paradox in the Christian walk is the principle of rejoicing in the cross that brings trial and suffering. To understand this, we must examine the glory of the cross described by Apostles Paul and Peter.

*2 Cor. 12:9, 10*

*9 Most gladly therefore will I rather **glory in my infirmities**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

*10 Therefore I take **pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***

George Matheson wrote: "My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorns. I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my *roses*, but

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

not once for my *thorns*. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross: but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross: teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.”

- **When we have revelation of the purpose and glory of the cross, we will like the apostles embrace it, knowing this will change us to be more like Christ -- it is the bridge to eternal life.**

*1 Peter 4:12, 13*

*12 Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you.*

*13 Instead, be really glad - because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory in that coming day when it will be displayed. TLB*

### **-- From Matthew Henry's Commentary**

His advice to them, relating to their sufferings, is that they should not think them strange, nor be surprised at them, as if some unexpected event befell them. For, though they be sharp and fiery, yet they are designed only to try, not to ruin them, to try their sincerity, strength, patience, and trust in God. On the contrary, they ought rather to rejoice under their sufferings, because theirs may properly be called Christ's sufferings. They are of the same kind, and for the same cause, that Christ suffered; they make us conformable to him; he suffers in them, and feels in our infirmities; and, if we be partakers of his sufferings, we shall also be make partakers of his glory, and shall meet him with exceeding joy at his great appearing to crown his faithful servants.



*God's Change Agents - The Refiner's Fire and the Cross*

Christians ought not only to be patient, but to rejoice, in their sharpest sorest sufferings for Christ, because they are tokens of divine favour; they promote the Gospel and prepare for glory. Those who rejoice in their sufferings for Christ shall eternally triumph and rejoice with him in glory.

All the sufferings that befall good people come upon them according to the will of God. And it is the duty of Christians, in all their distresses, to look more to the keeping of their souls than to the preserving of their bodies. The only way to keep the soul well is to commit it to God, in well-doing. Commit your souls to God by solemn dedication, prayer, and patient perseverance in well-doing.<sup>3</sup>

The cross is something painful that comes against the Christian. It is one thing to carry our cross, but Christ desires us to be *crucified* with Him. Being crucified with Him brings death to the flesh, to destroy sin; and death to self, to align our will with the will of God.

*Matt. 10:38*

*38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

*Luke 9:23*

*23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

*Luke 14:27*

*27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

*Phil. 3:10*

*10 All I want is to know Christ and to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death. TEV*

*1 Peter 4:1, 2*

*1 Since Christ suffered in the flesh for us, arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God],*

*2 So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites and desires, but [he lives] for what God wills. AMP*

- **Our Christian walk started at the cross. It will continue as long as we embrace the cross, allowing it to change our lives, keeping us consecrated and committed. At the end of life's road we will exchange our cross for a crown.**

“And I will trade the old cross for a crown,  
When the burdens of life I lay down,  
When those pearly gates for me shall swing open,  
I will trade the old cross for a crown.”<sup>7</sup>

### **4.7 Apostle Paul's Cross of Suffering**

Apostle Paul's great suffering equaled his great accomplishments in the Gospel:

- Shaking his world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Writing 85% of the New Testament pertaining to living a Christian life.

*2 Cor. 11:23-27*

*23 In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

*24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

*25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

*26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

*27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

- **Apostle Paul's conversion to Christianity was accomplished in an instant:**
  - Proud and en route to Damascus to persecute the Christians one minute.
  - The next minute, being humbled and lying on the road, after being blinded by a great light of revelation.
  - There Apostle Paul experienced an **instant conversion as a believer in Jesus Christ**. Three days later he received the salvation experience -- being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost.

*Acts 9:17, 18*

*17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

*18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

- **Becoming Christlike was a lifetime experience of trial and suffering (rending the veil of self).**

Suffering was the first message given to Paul by the man of God; **“Shew him how great things he must suffer.”** Later Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: **“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”**

*Acts 9:15, 16*

*15 But the Lord said unto him, go thy way: for he is a **chosen vessel unto me**, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

*16 For I will shew him how **great things he must suffer** for my name's sake.*

Apostle Paul's Christian walk began in the wilderness. Secluded in the desert of Arabia, he lived for three years. Unlike the

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

disciples, Paul had not personally walked with Jesus for three years. He voluntarily exiled himself to the solitude of the wilderness to experience the revelation of Jesus Christ.

*Gal. 1:16-18*

*16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

*17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*

*18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*

With full knowledge of the cost, Paul examined who he was and what he had, and gave it all up in one day. He gave up who he was, to become what Christ wanted him to be. What he sacrificed, he deemed worthless:

- His position as a Pharisee and an understudy of Gamaliel.
- His power and influence among the religious community.
- The respect and esteem from Israel and religious leaders as a Doctor of the Law.

*Phil. 3:5-10*

*5 Circumcised when I was eight days old, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew [and the son] of Hebrews; as to the observance of the Law I was of [the party of] the Pharisees,*

*6 As to my zeal, I was a persecutor of the church, and by the Law's standard of righteousness (supposed justice, uprightness, and right standing with God) I was proven to be blameless and no fault was found with me.*

*7 But **whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as [one combined] loss for Christ's sake.***

*8 Yes, furthermore, **I count everything as loss** compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of*

*knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. **For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish** (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One),*

*9 And that I may [actually] be found and known as in Him, not having any [self-achieved] righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands (ritualistic uprightness and supposed right standing with God thus acquired), but possessing that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ (the Anointed One), the [truly] right standing with God, which comes from God by [saving] faith.*

*10 [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]. AMP*

## **The End of Paul's Life in Prison**

### **-- Broken in Body but not in Spirit**

Condemned to die for the sake of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy. Writing his last request from a damp, dark, gloomy Roman prison cell, he urges Timothy to come quickly and visit one last time before his imminent execution.

*2 Tim. 4:9-11, 13, 21*

*9 Do your best to come to me quickly,*

*10 For Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.*

*11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.*

*21 Do your best to get here before winter. NIV*

His last written request was for a few basic needs -- all of them urgent: "Timothy, bring my coat. The bitter winter is coming and I need it to keep me warm. Bring my books; I especially need the parchments, my most prized possessions. I need the comfort and solace of the Psalms and the assurance from the prophets. Timothy, I need you to come -- the time for my departure is drawing near. I need the warmth of your encouraging words to strengthen and uphold me in this time. Also, bring Mark, whom I have forgiven for his past unfaithfulness. He is my valuable friend and I want to see him one last time. Make every effort to get here before winter!"

At the end of his life Paul was still standing strong in the Spirit, not complaining that his prayers for deliverance had not been answered. His only request was for his old coat to keep his **body** warm and the parchments to keep his **soul** and **spirit** warm. He was not complaining of the discomforts and pain of a Roman prison. But he was standing in the glow and glory of the favor of God on a life totally dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What an anointed life! Even in his death we see victory and glory, not defeat.

### **Paul's Last Testimony**

*2 Tim. 4:6-8*

*6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*

*7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

*8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

*6 As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed. GNT*

*6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering. NIV*

Apostle Paul's entire life had been poured out for the sake of Christ, now with a little left, he is giving the rest -- giving it all. After all of His love, sacrifice and suffering for Jesus Christ, it would only seem fair that he should live out his last days as a respected apostle in peace and retirement. But God had another plan for Apostle Paul -- one of more suffering, imprisonment and a martyr's death. Paul graciously accepted this as the will of God and spoke of this as the time of his home going, the receiving of his heavenly reward -- a crown of righteousness.

Paul's environment may have been the gloom of a terrible Roman prison cell, but oh, the glory that was shining through him and around him, creating its own environment -- releasing the soul, not bound like the body. He was surrounded by and immersed in the light of the glory of God that can come shining through any dark dungeon of trial and despair -- bringing hope and rejoicing.

- **Apostle Paul's life and response to the cross of suffering and trial, is an excellent testimony, chiseled in the stone of eternity, as a shining witness and example for us to follow.**

#### **4.8 Apostle Peter in Nero's Fire**

Apostle Peter was the spokesman for the New Testament Church. Clearly the leader among the twelve disciples, Jesus gave Peter the keys to the Kingdom to unlock the new birth experience to the Jews, the Gentiles and the Samaritans. Jesus renamed him Peter or Cephas (both words meaning "rock or stone", previously known as Simon).

Apostle Peter describes a time when the Emperor Nero greatly persecuted the church. When the city of Rome burned, the Romans believed their emperor was responsible, probably because of his incredible lust to build. In order to build, he had to destroy existing

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

buildings. To redirect the blame he chose the Christians, who were already hated, as the scapegoats. Since the believers were suffering escalating persecution, the purpose of Peter's letter was to encourage them to live victoriously in the midst of fiery persecution without losing hope.

*1 Peter 1:7*

*7 That the **trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

*1 Peter 4:12-14, 16, 19*

*12 Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you.*

*13 Instead, be really glad-because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory in that coming day when it will be displayed.*

*14 Be happy if you are cursed and insulted for being a Christian, for when that happens the Spirit of God will come upon you with great glory.*

*16 It is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being in Christ's family and being called by his wonderful name!*

*19 So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right and trust yourself to the God who made you, for he will never fail you. TLB*

*1 Peter 2:20, 21*

*20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*

*21 For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example**, that ye should follow his steps:*



Peter eventually gave his life for the Gospel. History records that both he and his wife were crucified. He witnessed her crucifixion and encouraged her as she suffered and died. Then, he requested to be crucified upside down, declaring himself unworthy to be crucified like his Lord.

-- **From The MacArthur Study Bible**

Since the believers addressed were suffering escalating persecution (1 Peter 1:6; 2:12; 3:9,13-18; 4:1,12-16,19), the purpose of this letter was to teach them how to live victoriously in the midst of that hostility:1) without losing hope; 2) without becoming bitter; 3) while trusting in their Lord; and 4) while looking for His second coming. Peter wished to impress on his readers that by living an obedient, victorious life under duress, a Christian can actually evangelize his hostile world

Believers are constantly exposed to a world system energized by satan and his demons. Their effort is to discredit the church and to destroy its credulity and integrity. One way these spirits work is by finding Christians whose lives are not consistent with the Word of God, and then parading them before the unbelievers to show what a sham the church is. Christians, however, must stand against the enemy and silence the critics by the power of holy lives.

In this epistle, Peter is rather effusive in reciting two categories of truth. The first category is positive and includes a long list of blessings bestowed on Christians. As he speaks about the identity of Christians and what it means to know Christ, Peter mentions one privilege and blessing after another. Interwoven into this list of privileges is the catalog of suffering. Christians, though most greatly privileged, should also know that the world will treat them unjustly.

Their citizenship is in heaven and they are strangers in a hostile, satan-energized world. Thus the Christian life can be

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

summed up as a call to victory and glory through the path of suffering. So, the basic question that Peter answers in this epistle is: how are Christians to deal with animosity? The answer features practical truths and focuses on Jesus Christ as the model of one who maintained a triumphant attitude in the midst of hostility.<sup>8</sup>

### **4.9 God is Working on Our Eternal Life**

Although God is interested in our temporal life, He places more emphasis on our eternal one. The value of eternal life is incalculable; it is worth more than the whole world.

We cannot enter the Promised Land without experiencing the Refiner's fire. The route to the Promised Land winds through the wilderness of trial and testing. Even Jesus subjected Himself to 40 days of testing in the wilderness before He began His miracle ministry.

It is God's will for us to progress in His Kingdom from one level to the next, from glory to glory. With each level, there will be a test. Testing will always precede promotion. When more strength is needed in our character to support what God wants to do through us, the Refiner's fire will be applied to temper our lives -- making us stronger.

- **A fiery trial is a learning event that significantly alters our lives as we humbly submit to the Master's hand.**
- **Trial and testing come into our lives to make us willing to move out of our comfort zones. Spiritual growth is stunted when we stay in our comfort zones.**

Grain is crushed into flour to make bread and sustain life. Self must be crushed to be used in God's Kingdom to bring life to lost and dying souls.

- **When self (self-will, self-righteousness, self-confidence, self-love) is crushed, the hammer will be in the hands of our Maker -- not just to break us but to make us more like Him.**

*Jer. 23:29*

*29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

We should pray for “*an understanding of the times*” -- the times of trial, and what God desires to change in our lives and how we should respond. We can either embrace the cross and let God complete His work in our life or reject it, remaining unchanged. For those responsive to the Master's hand, it will not be a negative time, but a positive one that prepares them for a deeper move of His Spirit.

-- **From an Interview with Rick Warren by Paul Bradshaw**

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is that:

**God is more interested in your character than your comfort. God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy.**

We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness.<sup>9</sup>

---

***Seeking First the Kingdom of God Means:***

- *Submitting every area of our life to His authority*
- *What we submit to Him, He blesses*

\* \* \* \* \*

***Discipline is the key to ensure that we properly manage our  
God-given gifts (time, health and wealth) to  
achieve His eternal purpose -- having no  
regrets at the end of our life.***

---

## *5. Discipline Drives Change*

**Discipline is the glad surrender of a life to a higher purpose. It is saying, “no” to many things so that we may say, “yes” to a few excellent pursuits.**

-- **From Webster’s New World College Dictionary**

Discipline is training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency strict control to enforce obedience, submission to authority and control, self-control.<sup>1</sup>

What hinders us from growing spiritually? What keeps us from pursuing real priorities in our lives? What causes the gap between what we know we should do and what we actually do? The answer usually is **the lack of discipline**. Refer to Chart H-21, “Self-Discipline Drives Change”, in Appendix 1.

### **5.1 The Discipline of an Olympian**

Excellent examples of discipline are athletes training to compete in the Olympic Games. They arise very early every morning to train, punishing their bodies with grueling exercises to qualify. Disciplined in their eating, they refuse good tasting food for food that will enhance their physical strength and endurance. They

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

sacrifice their entire lives for many years to win a gold medal -- one-half ounce of gold.

Of the five games in the ancient Olympics, Apostle Paul refers to three: running, wrestling, and boxing.

*1 Cor. 9:24-27*

*24 Know ye not that they which **run in a race** run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*25 And every man that **striveth for the mastery** is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

*26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; **so fight I**, not as one that beateth the air:*

*27 But I **keep under my body**, and **bring it into subjection**: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

### 1. Running - **run in a race**

**stadion** - a certain measure of distance; by implication, a stadium or race-course.<sup>2</sup>

The winner must observe the laws of racing, staying within the white boundary, or be disqualified by the judge.

### 2. Wrestling - **striveth for the mastery**

**agonizomai** - to struggle, literally (to compete for a prize), figuratively (to contend with an adversary), labor fervently.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Boxing - **so fight I, not as one that beateth the air**

**pukteo** - to box (with the fist), i.e. contend (as a boxer) at the games.<sup>2</sup>

*I **keep under my body**.*

**hupopiazo** - to hit under the eye (buffet or disable an antagonist as a pugilist), i.e. (figuratively) to annoy (into compliance), subdue (one's passions).<sup>2</sup>

-- **From Barnes' Notes**

[But I keep under my body] hupoopiazoo. The word is derived probably from [hupoopion], the part of the face "under the eye" (Passow), and means properly, to strike under the eye, either with the fist or the cestus, so as to render the part livid, or as we say, "black and blue"; or as is commonly termed, "to give anyone a black eye." The word is derived, of course, from the athletic exercises of the Greeks. It then comes to mean, "to treat anyone with harshness, severity, or cruelty;" and thence also, so to treat any evil inclinations or dispositions; or to subject one's self to mortification or self-denial, or to a severe and rigid discipline, that all the corrupt passions might be removed. The word here means, that Paul made use of all possible means to subdue his corrupt and carnal inclinations; to show that he was not under the dominion of evil passions, but was wholly under the dominion of the Gospel.

[And bring it into subjection] doulagoogoo. This word properly means, to reduce to servitude or slavery; and probably was usually applied to the act of subduing an enemy, and leading him captive from the field of battle; as the captives in war were regarded as slaves. It then means, effectually and totally to subdue, to conquer, to reduce to bondage and subjection. Paul means by it, the purpose to obtain a complete victory over his corrupt passions and propensities, and a design to gain the mastery over all his natural and evil inclinations.

[Lest that by any means] Paul designed to make every possible effort to be saved. He felt that there was danger of being deceived and lost; and he meant by some means to have evidence of piety that would abide the trial of the Day of Judgment.<sup>3</sup>

-- **From Matthew Henry's Commentary**

They take pains, and undergo all those hardships, to obtain a corruptible crown (v. 25), but we an incorruptible. Those who conquered in these games were crowned only with the withering leaves or boughs of trees, of olive, bays, or laurel. But Christians have an incorruptible crown in view, a crown of glory that never fadeth away, an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for them. And would they yet suffer themselves to be outdone by these racers or wrestlers? Can they use abstinence in diet, exert themselves in racing, expose their bodies to so much hardship in a combat, who have no more in view than the trifling huzzas of a giddy multitude, or a crown of leaves? And shall not Christians, who hope for the approbation of the sovereign Judge, and a crown of glory from his hands, stretch forward in the heavenly race, and exert themselves in beating down their fleshly inclinations?<sup>4</sup>

- **Who will be a spiritual Olympian? Who is going for the gold -- not merely an ounce of gold, but where streets are paved with pure gold? Meanwhile, we must maintain a disciplined life while running the Christian race.**
- **The prize is eternal life -- the value of which cannot be calculated.**

## **5.2 A Disciple -- The Disciplined One**

The spiritual man will always be striving to live a sacrificial and temperate life, for in so doing, he is laying up treasures in a far better world. The key to victory, power and accomplishment is personal self-discipline.

“Discipleship” is synonymous with the word “discipline”. Jesus called us all to be His disciples, His students. Discipline and commitment are required to put into practice the example of the



## *Discipline Drives Change*

Master Teacher. Therefore, we please our Lord and Master by living a disciplined life.

*Matt. 16:24*

*24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests] and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also]. AMP*

*Luke 14:27*

*27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

*Luke 14:33*

*33 So then, any of you who does not forsake (renounce, surrender claim to, give up, say good-bye to) all that he has cannot be My disciple. AMP*

There are two concepts to become a disciple of Jesus Christ -- **priorities** and **discipline**. We must set our priorities, through being **led by the Spirit** and then discipline ourselves to maintain them.

- **Discipline is the key to ensure that we properly manage our God-given gifts (time, health and wealth) to achieve His eternal purpose -- having no regrets at the end of our life.**

### **5.3 Submitting Everything to the Authority of Christ**

Self-discipline is a great need of our day. We must practice self-discipline if we are to be obedient to the Lord and experience spiritual growth.

The key to victory, power and abundant living is personal discipline. People make changes and improvements in their personal lives, academic lives, careers and spiritual lives through discipline. Good discipline leads to good habits; good habits lead to good lives.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

Personal discipline is rigorous with difficult challenges, while it also rewards with accomplishment. As we embrace discipline and accept the demands that it makes upon us, our dreams and visions will be realized, and the life that God has called us to fulfill will be balanced.

Self-discipline does not immediately happen. With a continuous struggle and being consistent, self-discipline can become automatic. It will result much faster **when our calling consumes us**. Our first calling is to be saints -- ***“Called to be saints”*** (Rom. 1:7). When the calling of God exceeds the urgency of physical desires, these distractions will not hinder us.

Jesus clearly described the discipline He requires from His followers:

- **Love Me** more than you love anyone or anything in this world. (Matt. 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27)
- **Put Me first** as your highest priority, then I will take care of you and all your needs.

*Matt. 6:31-33*

*31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

*32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

*33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

To, ***“Seek first the kingdom of God”***, is to:

- Submit every area to His authority.
- Process every decision and plan (large or small) through the filter of His Lordship.
- ***“All these things shall be added to you”***, simply means -- what we submit to Christ, He blesses.

## *Discipline Drives Change*

With this mindset of living under the love and Lordship of Jesus Christ, we should **set our priorities** and goals:

- How often will I fast?
- How often will I go to church?
- How often and long will I pray?
- How often will I minister to the needs of others?
- How much of my resources (time and money) will I give?
- How often and how much will I read and study God's Word?

Then we must apply the necessary **discipline** to ensure we live by these priorities and meet our goals.

Occasionally, it is useful to get in a quiet place and write down what we are doing in the important areas of life, compared to what we should be doing. The following charts in the Addendum Volume may be helpful in reviewing such priorities:

H-18 - Mission, Vision, Goals -- Managing Time

H-19 - How Am I Currently Managing God-given Resources?

H-20 - How Should I Wisely Manage God-given Resources?

With the help of God, we should reconcile the differences. No one else can do this for us. It is called, ***“Working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”***

*Phil. 2:12, 13*

*12 Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, **work out** (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) **your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling** (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).*

*13 [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. AMP*

Our priorities should not be set to accommodate what is convenient or comfortable. They should be driven by the Word of God, the man of God, and the Spirit of God:

- The written Word.
- The preached Word.
- The still small voice of God (God speaking into our spirit).

Some of these important areas of discipline are summarized below.

### **5.3.1 Discipline in Our Prayer Life**

Our relationship with God will not thrive without talking to Him often and for quality periods of time. God speaks to us in many ways: the written Word, the preached Word, prophecy, dreams, and His still, small voice speaking into our spirits.

**We communicate with God only through prayer.** Prayer tunes our spiritual ear to hear what the Spirit is speaking to us. Remaining in personal contact with God on a daily basis is accomplished only through prayer:

- *Pray without ceasing. (1 Thess. 5:17)*
- *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Rom. 12:12) NIV*

*Matt. 6:6*

*6 But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you. TLB*

Deep relationships are impossible without spending time together. It is not possible to develop an intimate relationship with God by giving Him a few minutes a day and a few hours on Sunday. We must include God in our everyday activities -- walking and talking with Him. Growing in the knowledge of God is allowing His Spirit to change self (the soul):

## *Discipline Drives Change*

- Our will to do His will.
- Our mind to think His thoughts.
- Our emotions to experience and share His love and compassion.

As this process continues, we will become part of the “**greater works**” that Jesus challenged us to accomplish. (*John 14:12*)

- **Consistent, persistent prayer is the greatest discipline and challenge of the born-again Christian.**

Refer to Section III, chapter 1, “Prayer - The Last Frontier of a Mature Christian”.

### **5.3.2 Discipline in Our Reading Habits**

Read God’s Word every day. Read and study the Word, seeking revelation along with knowledge. Jesus said, “*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* (*John 6:63*)

*Ps. 119:11, 105*

*11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

*105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

General Harrison was a model soldier who led a busy, ultra-kinetic life, but he had a high regard for the Word of God. Every year, this West Point graduate read through the Old Testament once and the New Testament four times. Even in wartime, he maintained his commitment by catching up during the two and three day respites for replacement and refitting which followed battles. When the war ended, he was still on schedule.

At the age of ninety, his failing eyesight prohibited fulfilling his discipline. But he had read the Old Testament 70 times and the New Testament 280 times.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

Even the busiest man can discipline himself to systematically feed on the Word of God. **To have a life filled with the Word of God is to be profoundly influenced and blessed.**

Reading inspiring Christian books should be included in our reading discipline. This provides current day application to challenge and encourage us. What we meditate on greatly influences our mind, determining what we will become. Food for thought feeds either the carnal appetite or the spiritual appetite, depending on our choice of reading material.

### -- From Author Unknown

No more than a faithful wife can neglect a letter just received from her long absent husband can a true Christian neglect to read the love letter that Christ has written to us - - His bride. The new convert reads his Bible -- reads and loves -- reads and weeps, and still looks through his tears to read more. He finds so many loving promises, so many fond utterances of love. No one will ever receive anything so rich and comforting from a companion or friend as this love letter, the Bible, written by God and sent to each of us with unconditional love.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.3.3 Discipline in Our Church Attendance

We develop inner strength through the atmosphere of a spiritual church service. The purpose of our church attendance should be more than to receive a blessing for ourselves. It should be for worshipping God in harmony with our spiritual family and for ministering to those in need of salvation, healing or deliverance.

- **When we put God first in our lives, we will be as faithful to His house as we are to our jobs and other commitments.**

I pray that we would love and long for the house of God, like King David's expression of desire for the house of God:

*Ps. 84:1, 2*

*1 How I love your Temple, LORD Almighty!*

## *Discipline Drives Change*

*2 How I want to be there! I long to be in the LORD's Temple. With my whole being I sing for joy to the living God. GNT*

*Ps. 84:10*

*10 A single day spent in your Temple is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a doorman of the Temple of my God than live in palaces of wickedness. TLB*

Apostle Paul warned the Christian -- don't neglect faithfulness to the house of God, especially in the last days, as you see the signs of the endtime being fulfilled.

*Heb. 10:24, 25*

*24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities,*

*25 Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching. AMP*

Jesus encouraged us to congregate in a common place of worship, promising to meet with us.

*Matt. 18:20*

*20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

### **-- From Author Unknown**

There are many Christians on the church-rolls and not so many who are consistently faithful in their worship at the house of God. At the same time, Jesus himself reminds us that the way is straight, the gate is narrow, and those who enter upon it and continue in it are few indeed.

When someone is devoted to their spouse, that they truly love, they will be devoted to pleasing them and going to the places that they love to frequent. Jesus is our loving

bridegroom and it is **His desire and pleasure** for us to meet with the family of God in worship, praise and adoration to Him, together in His house.<sup>5</sup>

### **5.3.4 Discipline in Our Fasting**

Fasting is taking food from the carnal man and giving it to the spiritual man, thus weakening the carnal and strengthening the spiritual. Fasting means having greater hunger for God than for natural food.

Fasting has many spiritual and physical benefits but is a most difficult discipline.

The spirit and the body are so interrelated in God's creative design that observing a fast includes spiritual, mental and physical benefits. Fasting is a very valuable way to experience the divine design for total health:

- Health for the spirit.
- Health for the soul (mental and emotional).
- Health for the body.

- **When we control our physical appetite, we develop strength to control our spiritual appetite.**

### **5.3.5 Discipline in Our Entertainment**

The eye is the window of the soul. What we see influences us more than what we read or hear -- **a picture is worth a thousand words.**

Incredible advancements in technology have created a visual generation. Our generation is greatly influenced and, in some cases, adversely affected by images from the internet, television, video, personal computer, and other sources. These images are used in every aspect of our society from advertising every imaginable business to every kind of entertainment.

We must be disciplined in what we set daily before our eyes. This Discipline should filter out all that is unrighteous or causes us to



## *Discipline Drives Change*

be unbalanced in the use of our time.

*Ps. 101:2, 3*

*2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*

*3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.*

Discipline starts with the mind. The Epistles contain many exhortations about our mind being controlled by the Spirit of God. From Philippians 4:8, we understand this is a choice; our selections for filling our mind are very important. What we hear and see affect our thoughts, and is an integral part of spiritual discipline.

Apostle Paul establishes guidelines to filter what we **think**, which is also applicable to what we **hear and see**. The words in the following passage, “**think on these things**” can be changed to “**listen to these things**” or “**look on these things.**” What we hear and see directly affect our thoughts.

*Phil. 4:8, 9*

*8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are **true**, whatsoever things are **honest**, whatsoever things are **just**, whatsoever things are **pure**, whatsoever things are **lovely**, whatsoever things are of **good report**; if there be any **virtue**, and if there be any **praise**, think on these things*

*8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is **true** and **honorable** and **right**. Think about things that are **pure** and **lovely** and **admirable**. Think about things that are **excellent** and **worthy of praise**.*

*9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me -- everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you. NLT*

Listening to or watching images of anything violating this filter is carnal and will adversely influence and affect the spiritual man.

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

- **Viewing images or text or listening to voices that portray or glamorize sin as a part of our entertainment (enjoyment) is sin. And if this is continued over a period of time it will dull the voice of the conscience and the voice of the Spirit, because the carnal mind can justify anything that the conscience or the Spirit of God condemns.**

A simple definition of sin (although not all inclusive) is sufficient to identify what should be avoided in what we see and hear, and is defined in the:

- **Ten Commandments in the Old Testament:**

Taking the Lord's name in vain, dishonoring parents, adultery, killing, stealing, lying, covetousness, etc. (Ex. 20:1-17)

- **Works of the flesh described in the New Testament:**

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like. (Gal. 5:19-21)

Summarizing the discipline in what we see and hear, we read admonitions from Apostle Paul, Jesus, King David and Job.

### **The Words of Apostle Paul**

The question, “**Is viewing a sin, a sin?**” is addressed in Apostle Paul's writings and two related commentaries.

*Rom. 1:29-32*

*29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*

*30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

*31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

*32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but **have pleasure in them that do them.***

-- **From Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary**

**But have pleasure in** (or consent to) **them that do them**, [suneudokousin]. The word conveys the idea of positive satisfaction in a person or thing.<sup>6</sup>

-- **From Matthew Henry's Commentary**

They not only do the same, **but have pleasure in those that do them.** The violence of some present temptation may hurry a man into the commission of such sins himself in which the vitiated appetite may take a pleasure; but to be pleased with other people's sins is to love sin for sin's sake: it is joining in a confederacy for the devil's kingdom and interest. Our own sins are much aggravated by our concurrence with, and complacency in, the sins of others.<sup>4</sup>

**The Words of Jesus**

*Matt. 5:28, 29*

*28 But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

*28 But I say to you that everyone who so much as looks at a woman with evil desire for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

*29 If your right eye serves as a trap to ensnare you or is an occasion for you to stumble and sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be cast into hell. AMP*

-- **From The Wycliffe Bible Commentary**

Jesus indicated that the sin described in Ex. 20:14 lies deeper than the overt act. Every one that looketh characterizes the man whose glance is not checked by holy restraint, and who forms the impure purpose of lusting after her. The act will follow when opportunity occurs.

To the man who blames the sin on his eye, Jesus shows the logical procedure to follow. As we amputate diseased organs to save lives, so an eye (or a hand) so hopelessly affected needs drastic treatment. Of course, Jesus wanted his hearers to see that the real source of sin lies not in the physical organ but in the heart. A man's evil heart must be changed if he would escape final ruin in hell.<sup>7</sup>

**The Words of King David**

*Ps. 119:37*

*37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.*

-- **From Barnes' Notes**

[Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity] Vain things; wicked things; things which would be likely to lead me astray from what is real and true. Make my eyes to pass rapidly from such objects, that I may not look at them, may not contemplate them, may not dwell upon them. There is danger in looking on sin steadily; in surveying its features; in returning to contemplate it. An ugly object loses much of its deformity when we look often upon it. Sin follows this general law, and is to be avoided altogether, even in its contemplation, if we would be safe. A man should be thankful in this world that he has eyelids; and as he can close his eyes, so he should often do it.<sup>3</sup>

## **Job's Writings**

*Job 31:1*

*I I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*

### **-- From Barnes' Notes**

There is much emphasis in the expression used here by Job. He does not merely say that he had not thought in that manner, but that the thing was morally impossible that he should have done it. Any charge of that kind, or any suspicion of it, he would repel with indignation. His purpose to lead a pure life, and to keep a pure heart, had been so settled, that it was impossible that he could have offended in that respect.

His purpose, also, not to think on this subject, showed the extent of the restriction imposed on himself. **It was not merely his intention to lead a chaste life, and to avoid open sin, but it was to maintain a pure heart, and not to suffer the mind to become corrupted by dwelling on impure images**, or indulging in unholy desires. This strongly shows Job's piety and purity of heart, and is a beautiful illustration of patriarchal religion.

We may remark here, that if a man wishes to maintain purity of life, he must make just such a covenant as this with himself - one so sacred, so solemn, so firm, that he will not suffer his mind to harbor an improper thought. "The very passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it;" and the out breaking crimes of life are just the result of allowing the imagination to dwell on impure images.

As the eye is the great source of danger, there should be a solemn purpose that should be pure, and that any sacrifice should be made rather than allow **indulgence to a wanton gaze**. No man was ever too much guarded on this subject;

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

no one ever yet made too solemn a covenant with his eyes,  
and with his whole soul to be chaste.<sup>3</sup>

### 5.3.6 Discipline in Our Conversation

The tongue is the most uncontrollable member of our body according to James 3:2-8. This is why God takes control of the tongue when He fills us with His Spirit.

*James 3:2*

*2 . . . If anyone does not offend in speech [never says the wrong things], he is a fully developed character and a perfect man, able to control his whole body and to curb his entire nature. AMP*

*1 Tim. 4:12*

*12 . . . Be thou an **example of the believers**, in word, and in conversation,*

*Matt. 12:36*

*36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall **give account** thereof in the day of judgment.*

Our conversation should speak in positive terms from a position of faith. Avoid negative words, such as “I can’t...I’m weak...I always fail.” Instead say, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (Phil. 4:13)

### 5.3.7 Discipline in Our Friendships

Choose your friends carefully. “*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed*” (Prov. 13:20).

Balanced Christians should have godly friends who will encourage and challenge them to excel. At the same time, they should reach as a friend to sinners, showing them the way to salvation. We will not be affected by their sin; but we will influence them as the, “**salt of the earth**” and as a light in a dark world.

- **A balanced Christian will reach down to help someone in need of God while reaching up to a person of godly influence as a counterbalance.**

Jesus, reaching out to sinners, ate meals with them. The religious leaders criticized Him as, “*a friend of sinners.*”

### **5.3.8 Discipline in Our Accountability**

Everyone needs to be accountable to someone. We need each other. We are accountable to:

- God.
- The man of God.
- One another.

#### **Accountable to God**

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of our actions. To make sure we will pass God’s final test at judgment, we should be accountable to Him every day:

*2 Cor. 5:10*

*10 For we must **all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

#### **Accountable to the Man of God**

It is God’s plan for there to be a man of God, a pastor, to provide us spiritual direction and guidance. **Just as they are accountable to God for us, we should be accountable to them.**

*Eph. 4:11, 12*

*11 And he gave . . . pastors . . . for the **perfecting of the saints**. . .*

*Heb. 13:17*

*17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for **they watch for your souls, as they that must give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*Ezek. 3:17*

*17 Son of man, I have made thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and **give them warning from me.***

### **Accountable to One Another**

Everyone needs to be accountable to someone -- a spouse, a parent, a friend, etc. We should have mentors and we should mentor others.

*Heb. 10:24*

*24 And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to **watching over one another**, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, AMP*

*1 Tim. 4:12*

*12 . . .Be thou an **example of the believers**, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

### **5.3.9 Discipline in Our Business Dealings**

*1 Tim. 2:1-3*

*1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

*2 **For kings, and for all that are in authority**; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **godliness and honesty.***

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

*2 Cor. 8:21*

*21 Our purpose is to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of others. GNT*

Honesty is required in all of our business dealings with governments and companies -- even when it costs money or hurts in other ways. At times, it will cost to be honest in business transactions such as filing income taxes (reporting cash income, etc.). We must be completely honest when we sign a tax return stating that it records all of our income. God will make up the



difference when we adhere to the principles in His Word. Otherwise, His blessings will be withheld. King David addresses this in *Psalms 15:4* “***He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not . . . He that doeth these things shall never be moved.***”

-- **From Barnes’ Notes**

Ps. 15:4 [He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not] Who has made a promise, or entered into a contract, that is likely to turn out contrary to his expectations, to his own disadvantage; but who still adheres to his engagement. He is not at liberty to violate an agreement simply because it will be a loss to him, or because he ascertains that it will not be, as he supposed, to his advantage. The principles here laid down will extend to all contracts or agreements, pecuniary or otherwise, and should be a general principle regulating all our transactions with our fellow-men. The only limitation in the rule is when the promise or the contract would involve that which is morally wrong.<sup>3</sup>

**5.3.10 Discipline in Our Career**

It is honorable to be motivated by a career. The Bible teaches that it is our duty to support our families.

*1 Tim. 5:8*

*8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

*1 Thess. 4:11*

*11 Make it your aim to live a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to earn your own living. GNT*

But there are two sides to the coin concerning discipline in pursuing a career.

- First, is someone who will not work and make a reasonable living; this type is not motivated for spiritual growth.
- Secondly, one who is out of balance regarding the amount of

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

time spent working on a job compared to that spent on other important things. We must balance time spent for pursuing a career, devotion to God and our families, and other responsibilities.

This is particularly difficult to manage for ministers and other professional people whose job is ongoing -- never completed. There is not a clear distinction between work and personal time because the issues are integral to the thought process and cannot be left at the office. Another issue, prevalent in today's workplace, is **management's unreasonable demands for the professional to produce**. Many times the product is intangible and difficult to measure progress toward completion.

Everyone must assess the amount of time that should be properly allocated to the many demands of life. We must submit this issue to the authority of Jesus Christ and pray that He will help balance our time in a way that pleases Him.

*Matt. 6:33*

*33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

When we submit our career to God's authority, He will bless our work, making us more productive -- working fewer hours.

*Deut. 28:1, 8*

*1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day . . .*

*8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and **in all that thou settest thine hand unto** . . .*

It has been said, "At the end of your life, you will not wish you had spent more time on your job." This assessment is common from persons who are terminally ill. In every case when they received the doctor's report, two priorities emerged -- their relationship with God and with their family. Nothing else seemed important.

### **5.3.11 Discipline in Our Time**

Time is the most valuable resource God has given to man. Every day He deposits 1,440 minutes into our account, and we are accountable as to how we use them. Wasted time is like water spilled on the ground; it is lost forever. God will forgive us of sin, but He will not give us back time that we have wasted.

- **One of life's greatest challenges is to wisely manage and spend our time (our most precious resource) with wholesome activities adding value to our life and others.**
- **Don't make a common mistake that many people make -  
- misjudging the brevity of life and the length of eternity.**

Scripture teaches that time is valuable and we should use it wisely. King David, King Solomon, and Job address the brevity and frailty of life:

*Ps. 39:4*

*4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*

*Eccl. 12:5-7*

*5 Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:*

*6 Or ever the **silver cord be loosed**, or the **golden bowl be broken**, or the **pitcher be broken** at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.*

*7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

*Job 7:6, 22*

*6 My days **are swifter** than a weaver's shuttle.*

*22 When a **few years** are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*

-- **From Author Unknown**

If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest sin, since lost time is never found again. What we call time enough always proves little enough. Let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity.<sup>5</sup>

-- **From Author Unknown**

Spend your time in nothing which you:

- Must repent of.
- Might not pray for the blessing of God.
- Could not review with a quiet conscience on your dying bed.
- Might not safely and properly be found doing if death should surprise you in the act.<sup>5</sup>

Psalms 90, a prayer of Moses, speaks of the brevity of life: *“We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”*

We think in terms of a lifetime, but God thinks in terms of eternity.

- We are living in time -- working in a temporal life.
- God is living in eternity -- preparing our eternal life.

Life is brief, a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. It is a passing shadow, a thin footprint upon the shores of time. Since God gives the rocks a million years, trees a thousand years, elephants a hundred years, and man only threescore and ten, illustrates that man’s life is very brief.

-- **From “The Tyranny of Time” by Melody Ringo**

After losing a number of loved ones in a short period of time, I learned a life-altering truth in the midst of terrible grief: time waits for no man, woman or child. The life we live today can be gone in an instant. We sorely delude ourselves if we think that we can take for granted the next moment of time. Often we erroneously think that we have all the time in the world to live, to breathe, to love and to dream. No longer will I take time for granted.

I am determined to spend my time living out my dreams and using the gifts I have been given to help, motivate and inspire others instead of just thinking about doing so. Procrastination, indifference and foolishness have stolen way too much time from me that can never be returned -- but no more. I will redeem every moment of my life from this day forward, fully aware that each day is a special gift, each experience has a purpose, each life that intersects with mine is something rare, unique and to be treasured. Ultimately, time is what we make of it. Spend it wisely.<sup>8</sup>

*Job 14:1, 2*

*1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*

*2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

*Ps. 103:15, 16*

*15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*

*16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

• **The more time we give God, the more He will return to us.**

*Luke 6:38*

*38 If you give, you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. **Whatever measure you use in giving** — large*

## TRANSFORMATION - DOMINION OVER SIN AND SELF

*or small -- it will be used to measure what is given back to you.*  
*NLT*

This Scripture is generally used to support giving finances to God and Him multiplying the rest. But more valuable and important than money is our time.

- **More valuable than our gift of money to God and others is our gift of time.**

As we give God more time in daily personal devotion, faithfulness to His house, and Christian service, God will multiply and give time back in numerous ways, including these:

- Eliminating problems in our life that would cost us hundreds of hours.
- Making us more productive in the use of time in our daily responsibilities.

### **The End of Time**

Recorded in Revelation, chapter 10, an angel will set his right foot upon the sea, his left foot on the earth and will proclaim that **time shall be no more**. We will be ushered into the vast expanse of a measureless eternity.

- **We are living in the endtime; it is too late to risk choices affecting our eternal life. We must not be careless in our walk with God; there may not be sufficient time to correct them before we stand at the judgment seat of Christ.**

Let our goal and determination be to live without regrets, wisely using time, our most precious resource.

*Eph. 5:15-17*

*15 Look carefully then how you walk! **Live purposefully and worthily and accurately**, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people),*

*Discipline Drives Change*

*16 Making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil.*

*17 Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understanding and firmly grasping **what the will of the Lord is.***  
*AMP*

Let our prayer be that of the prophet Balaam: ***“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!”***





**III.**  
**Spiritual Growth -**  
**The Necessity of Prayer**

---

***The trailblazer on the frontier of God's Kingdom will be:***

- ***Seeking new heights and depths in the Spirit.***
  - ***Set on fire by a passion to pursue the purpose and will of God.***
  - ***Disciplined and driven to consistent and persistent prayer.***
-

## *1. Prayer - The Last Frontier of a Mature Christian*

An exciting time in American history was when America was being settled by pioneers. Brave people left the comforts of home and headed West in covered wagons for the promise of a better life. They were daring, courageous and desperate. These pioneers envisioned going to new places; they were tired of the ordinary.

Another word describes this era. It concerns their destination -- **the frontier**. A frontier refers to an undeveloped area. A frontier means new, **uncharted territory where** no one has ever been.

### **-- From Webster's New World College Dictionary**

A frontier is that part of a country that is unexplored or undeveloped. Any new field of learning, thought, etc. or any part of a field that is incompletely investigated, e.g. a frontier of medicine, aviation or technology.<sup>1</sup>

A frontier can apply to other areas such as medicine. Doctors are constantly exploring the frontier of medicine. A frontier can involve other disciplines such as aviation and computer technology.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

A spiritual frontier refers to:

- New territory -- places you have never been in the Spirit and in your relationship with God.
- Experiencing the battlefield and harvest field beyond your prior involvement.

The last frontier to be conquered by the mature Christian is not the world, the flesh or the devil; these allude to defending ourselves against their forces. The frontier concept requires moving on the offense. It is pushing to the edge, experiencing the **bleeding edge of sacrifice and self-denial**, moving where we have never been in God's Kingdom to effectively reach the lost.

- **The mature Christian conquers the last frontier by following the unbeaten path into new territory (the supernatural) through the doorway of prayer.**

We must consciously choose to spend time with God every day. We have to persist in finding time to talk with Him. Unlimited distractions such as hobbies, entertainment, education, career, material possessions, friends, family, and overcrowded secular schedules cause prayer to be neglected.

While by themselves, they may not be sin; they become sin when crowding prayer out of our lives. This may include being too involved in the Martha ministry vs. the Mary ministry -- doing good things, including Christian service, to the exclusion of the best things, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Special blessings result when we retreat to a solitary place, like Jesus, for a time of daily prayer. It is a sacrifice of the will, an act of discipline; it is work.

*Mark 1:35* Jesus, our example in prayer.

*35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

*Luke 6:12*

*12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

-- **From E. M. Bounds**

The people who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and its freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, he will be in the last place the remainder of the day.<sup>2</sup>

Satan assaults us daily in our prayer closet. He challenges our decision to spend good quality time talking to God in prayer. He will convince you that you do not have time. But God will give you back that time, and more, if you seek Him first. As discussed in the prior chapter, **when we give time to God, He will bless and multiply the rest.**

The story is told about Napoleon and his generals on one of their expeditions. From the maps, they disagreed on where they were located. Finally, Napoleon announced, "Gentlemen we have just marched off the maps, we are somewhere we have never been, we are in uncharted territory."

We must leave our comfort zones and march off the maps into God's Kingdom where we have never been before. It is time to cross Jordan into God's promises of the supernatural, leaving behind unproductive efforts in the wilderness. The challenge is new territory, new victories, and more anointing in our lives (divine ability vs. our ability).

A **natural frontier** denotes sacrifice -- giving up the familiar with its ease and comfort, traveling difficult trails, and often death. A **spiritual frontier** also requires sacrifice -- prayer, fasting, purity, service, and death of the carnal man. This will take us to new levels in our relationship with God, giving new anointing to do His work.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

The best thing we can do for our companion, children, friends, church and ourselves is to pray. Prayer fuels the engine of our relationship with God. Without it, our spiritual man will die.

If someone is not meeting our expectations or causing problems, we must pray for them, according to the instructions of Jesus.

*Matt. 5:44*

*44 But I say unto you, love your **enemies**, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and **pray for them** which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

We face impossible problems, pressures, and predicaments. But, on our knees we find wisdom for difficult decisions, power for challenging situations and love for people that are mistreating us. The greatest source of internal power is prayer.

Prayer is work. Prayer is sometimes intense and difficult -- fighting through the hindrances of satan and self. Effective prayer brings submission of our will to His. Prayer changes things as well as the heart of the person who prays.

Before Jesus, as Son of man, touched the sick and lonely, He first touched the throne of God. Before He displayed power, He received it. A private victory, alone in prayer precedes a public victory. There must be a private anointing before there is a public anointing. When we pray in private, we will have power in public.

What was true for Jesus is especially true for us. There are no "secrets" to power. The "secret" is found in a solitary place alone with God. If we invest in prayer, we will reap the dividend in power.

What was the most difficult time for Jesus at the end of His ministry? Was it His praying in the garden of Gethsemane, or was it His suffering on the cross? Studying the various Gospel accounts, we see Him struggling in prayer in the garden, fighting through His human fear and will. Praying was difficult; His sweat

was like great drops of blood. He spent the night in prayer on Mount Olivet. He fell on His face, praying with strong crying and tears.

*Heb. 5:7*

*7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with **strong crying and tears** unto him that was able to save him from death.*

Jesus set the example for prayer. Prayer was His life; His life was prayer. Prayer was the source of power and guidance for Jesus, as the Son of man, to fulfill His mission. More than 20 times the Gospels call attention to Jesus in prayer.

Jesus won the victory in the garden. He received strength to endure that most cruel and painful death on the cross. He calmly spoke peace to those around Him. When the most difficult test came, He had already gained the victory through prayer.

If Jesus needed this kind of praying to face His hour of trial, how much more we need to pray. Jesus knew He must finish His work; to do so, He prayed fervently, diligently, consistently, and persistently.

If we are to finish the work that He has entrusted to us, we must pray like Jesus prayed. Others in Scripture who won the battle in prayer, before the battle, were Daniel and the three Hebrew children.

Jesus clearly emphasized that prayer was important and mandatory for the Christian when He said in, *Matt. 6:7*, *Mark 11:25*, and *Luke 11:2*, “*When ye pray . . .*”, not “*if you pray.*”

We can use prayer like a checking account -- hurrying to make a deposit to cover the check. Or, we can use prayer like a savings account, making systematic, regular deposits assuring a positive balance to draw from in times of need. Consistent prayer in time of peace builds a shelter for protection from the storm.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

We can remain at the first level of prayer -- seeking God's hands. This is praying only when we are in trouble. If that is the only time we will pray, God may continue sending desperate problems just to keep us talking to Him. A preferred way is to move to a higher level of prayer, voluntarily seeking God, during peaceful times.

The highest calling is the call to prayer - regardless of our ministry in God's Kingdom, our efforts will only be successful with prayer.

The transition between Law and Grace was accomplished by prayer -- Jesus' prayer alone in the garden. His request to His disciples was, "**Could you not watch (pray) with me one hour**"? Today in the transition between Grace and Millennia, Jesus repeats the same question, "**Could you not watch (pray) with me for one hour**"?

One reason we may struggle so much with prayer is that results are not always immediate. David said, "*I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined his ear.*" Isaiah wrote, "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*"

Rev. T. F. Tenney said, "We live in a microwave society. We want instant results, but we have a crock pot God." Sometimes it seems that God moves slowly, but His answer always comes on time.

Prayer compares to a chemist adding **one drop** of a chemical to a solution without results. Then he adds another drop and another . . . and finally one last drop. Suddenly everything immediately changes -- a chemical reaction takes place. Was it the last drop that caused the change? No, it was a culmination of all the drops.

In Acts chapter 10, Cornelius prayed day 1, day 2, day 100, day 200, day 999, then suddenly an angel appeared with instructions to send for Apostle Peter, who would reveal the salvation plan. Was it his last prayer? Again, it was a culmination of them all.



The angel said, “*Your prayers have come up as a memorial*”, God could not ignore his prayers.

In the Old Testament, we see this concept in the two prayers of Elijah. At Mount Carmel, when Elijah concluded praying a sixty-four word prayer, there came an immediate and miraculous answer from God:

*1 Kings 18:38*

*38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

But on Mount Carmel, when Elijah was praying for rain, the answer did not come immediately. Before this answer came, he prayed seven times and sent his servant to go up and look toward the sea seven times. Elijah just kept praying because he knew it was God’s time for it to rain. He prayed for hours until the answer came.

Do not be discouraged when prayers are not answered immediately. Keep building a memorial of prayers to God until the answer comes.

### **Breakthrough in a Natural Frontier**

As a team working on a breakthrough in technology, medicine, etc. senses they are close to a solution, something happens to them. They become more intense losing interest in everything else. With only one thing on their mind, they cancel all other plans and work longer hours. As they get closer to the solution, a synergy and unity forms within the team members. This intensity propels them beyond their own individual abilities. They persist until the breakthrough has been accomplished.

The endtime church is near to a breakthrough in the spiritual frontier. A breakthrough into restoration of apostolic ministry recorded in Acts, is possible if we will match the dedication and

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

unity of the teams working on the frontiers of medicine and technology. We must become more intense until nothing else is on our mind except achieving a breakthrough that will deliver and save many souls. At stake, is deliverance to those bound in prisons of sin, abuse, drugs, alcohol, despair, and hopelessness.

*Jer. 8:20, 22*

*20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.*

*22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*

Enough blood was shed at Calvary to save the whole world. The great Physician needs us to minister to the sick and the dying -- flowing His love to those who have never felt real love.

### **A Frontier - Walking on the Moon**

In 1960, President J. F. Kennedy made the famous statement, "We choose to go to the moon, not because it is easy, but because it is hard." There were numerous difficulties to overcome, including difficult technical problems to solve because no one had ever done this before.

Amazingly, this project team caught the vision of putting a rocket into space and landing on the moon. An incredible amount of synergy developed within the team because they were all focused on one thing -- putting a man on the moon.

Working late one night, one of the men said, "Have you noticed the change in the whole team working on this project? Something has happened to us; look how we figured out a process to improve the spaceship hatch. Our team has accomplished things they never dreamed would be possible. What do you think has caused this?" Bill, pointing to the sky remarked, "See that moon up there? Men have wondered about it for years, but we are getting ready to go there. That is what has changed us. We believe we can go to a place where no one has been before -- conquering a new frontier."

God, give us that kind of passion and vision to go in the Spirit where we have never been. Catching that kind of vision and praying fervently will change us as we approach a breakthrough in this frontier of the Spirit.

What moon do we want to walk on in the Spirit? What do we want to experience for the first time -- what frontier? "Oh God, let us catch a vision of the frontier where You are calling us -- to experience a breakthrough that will make a difference in our world."

- **A trailblazer on the frontier of God's Kingdom will be a:**
  - **Discoverer of new heights and depths in the Spirit.**
  - **Seeker of greater revelation of God and His ways.**
  - **Passionate man driven by the purpose and will of God.**
  - **Disciplined man driven to a consistent Christian life of prayer and service.**

---

*When God takes something from our grasp, He's not  
punishing us, but merely opening our  
hands to receive something better.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Sometimes God chooses to change us  
rather than change our situation.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*When God doesn't move a mountain,  
He will give us strength to climb it.*

---

## *2. When Answer to Prayer is “No” or “Wait”*

If God has purpose in affliction in dealing with man, then there is surely His will, conditions, and timing for healing and deliverance from the trouble, trial, or affliction.

Thank God for the provision of healing and deliverance that is very evident in His plan in both the Old and New Testaments. But the very provision for healing confirms there will be sickness that requires healing. The provision for deliverance alerts us to the troubles that will require it. The assurance of the available, awesome peace of God signifies there will be storms:

- Battle precedes victory,
- Sickness precedes healing,
- Troubles precedes deliverance.

There are times when prayers are immediately and miraculously granted. But the provision of healing and deliverance, invoked in sincere and urgent prayer, does not ensure immediate deliverance. Our trust in God is tested in trouble and trial. Delays in answer to our prayers develops patience and maturity.

This is a difficult subject to address because it is often the hardest

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH – THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

concept for us to embrace -- that it is God's plan for us to suffer awhile -- "*After you have suffered a little while . . . our God will give you his eternal glory.*" TLB

*1 Peter 5:10*

*10 And **after you have suffered a little while**, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favor], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you. AMP*

*Rom. 5:3, 4*

*3 Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that **pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance.***

*4 And endurance (fortitude) **develops maturity** of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. AMP*

So, there is a time of trusting God, searching our hearts and humbling ourselves. Our attitude should mirror Job's:

*Job 13:15*

*15 **Although he slay me, yet will I trust in him:** but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*

*Job 13:20, 21*

*20 O God, there are two things I beg you not to do to me;*

*21 **Don't abandon me** and don't terrify me with your awesome presence. TLB*

*Job 23:10*

*10 But he knoweth the way that I take: **when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.***

- **Misunderstanding this concept sometimes causes Christians to become discouraged or lose faith when the answer to their petition is delayed.**

We must trust God even when we don't understand; confident He is working on our eternal life. We are often blind to the eternal purpose of God, looking only at the temporal. The Refiner's fire and the way of the cross is often God's plan to bring change to our lives (Section II, Chapter 4, “God's Change Agents - The Refiner's Fire and the Cross”).

To understand affliction, we must rise above the temporal:

- To heights with God and see from His perspective.
- Looking beyond natural circumstances to eternal life.

The writings of Apostle Paul in the New Testament and Habakkuk from the Old Testament reflect this concept.

Apostle Paul is in a Roman prison and will be beheaded and not delivered. He is not focusing on the terrible circumstances but on eternal life -- and he writes, “**Rejoice in the Lord always.**”

*Phil. 4:4, 6, 7*

*4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

*6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

*7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Habakkuk records a bankrupt situation where everything was lost. He gives the same admonition as Paul -- **rejoice in the Lord** (not in the problem).

*Hab. 3:17-19*

*17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*

*18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

*19 The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*

In this chapter we examine God's Word to better understand when some prayers are answered and others are delayed or denied. When things do not work out the way we prayed, we can confidently know He has purposes and plans beyond our understanding.

- **Sometimes God chooses to change us rather than change our situation.**

God is sovereign. He has all authority, power, and dominion; He is without limitation and does all things well. God has all wisdom and knows the future. He knows what is best and has never made a mistake with one life. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours.

*Isa. 55:9*

*9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

*Isa. 40:13, 14, 18, 22, 23, 25-28*

*13 Who can advise the Spirit of the Lord or be his teacher or give him counsel?*

*14 Has he ever needed anyone's advice? Did he need instruction as to what is right and best?*

*18 How can we describe God? With what can we compare him?*

*22 It is God who sits above the circle of the earth. (The people below must seem to him like grasshoppers!) He is the one who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and makes his tent from them.*

*23 He dooms the great men of the world and brings them all to naught.*



25 *“With whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One.*

26 *Look up into the heavens! Who created all these stars? As a shepherd leads his sheep, calling each by its pet name, and counts them to see that none are lost or strayed, so God does with stars and planets!*

27 *O Jacob, O Israel, how can you say that the Lord doesn’t see your troubles and isn’t being fair?*

28 *Don’t you yet understand? Don’t you know by now that the everlasting God, the Creator of the farthest parts of the earth, never grows faint or weary? No one can fathom the depths of his understanding. TLB*

- **Sometimes a person’s faith in God is damaged when they are told if they had enough faith, God would heal them or change their situation -- but the answer did not come.**

Healing and deliverance are specific promises in God’s Word, but He is sovereign; His purpose and timing is superior to ours. We are just called to serve Him and trust Him, submitting to the process of trial and fire.

God can do anything and all things. This is not a doctrine that matches the results of all unanswered prayers. But the purpose here is to assert that we can maintain our trust in God when the answers are delayed or denied.

If our love for God is pure, we will unconditionally trust Him, making no demands for deliverance. When we love and trust God, we will be willing to pray: “God, I really want this need met, but I want Your will more -- Thy will be done.”

This attitude removes fear and releases faith, enabling God to work on our behalf.

- **We need to give God permission to do whatever it takes (trial or deliverance) to bring us to eternal life.**

## 2.1 No Human Reasoning for Unanswered Prayers

### Jesus predicts the future suffering of James:

*Matt. 20:23*

*23 And he saith unto them, **ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.***

### Jesus predicts the long life of Peter:

*John 21:18*

*18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but **when thou shalt be old**, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*

### When Peter asks about what will happen to John, Jesus replies that is none of your concern.

*John 21:22*

*22 Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, **what is that to thee?** Follow thou me.*

**James** was imprisoned by King Herod and then executed with the sword. Herod then arrested Peter with the same intention to be carried out after the Passover. The church prayed fervently for Peter and God sent an angel for a miraculous deliverance. James did not receive his deliverance, but it was not attributed to a lack of faith or the church's failure to pray. There is no human reasoning to explain deliverance for one and death for the other; all we know is that it was within the plan of God.

**John** was banished in exile to the Isle of Patmos. He was in the will of God, but he was not delivered.

**Paul**, the greatest missionary, was in prison in the will of God. He was beheaded -- not delivered.

**Joseph** was tested in the will of God for many years; he was delivered and promoted to become a ruler in Egypt.

**King David** was threatened, and he had to escape for his life, during the interim between his anointing and ruling on the throne. After a time of testing, he too, received his promotion.

**Job** experienced terrible loss and heartbreak in the will of God. Later, he was restored -- receiving twice the amount of his loss.

**John the Baptist**, forerunner of Jesus Christ, was imprisoned and beheaded -- not delivered.

*Matt. 11:11*

*11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

John's wonderful ministry paved the way for the Messiah; he was referred to by Jesus as "great". But when Jesus' ministry began, instead of John being selected as one of the disciples he was beheaded in prison. God's plan for John brought death -- not deliverance.

*Matt. 11:3-6*

*3 And said unto him, art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

*4 Jesus answered and said unto them, go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:*

*5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*

*6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

**-- From The Pulpit Commentary**

Verse 6 - And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me: shall find none occasion of stumbling in me, but **exhibits perfect trust under delay and disappointment.**<sup>1</sup>

## 2.2 Faith and Deliverance Vs. Faith without Deliverance

The key to deliverance is faith in God. Hebrews chapter 11 is the faith chapter. There are two parts to it:

- In the **first part**, they experienced victory and deliverance.
- In the **second part**, they did not receive deliverance, however they obtained a good report through faith.

More faith is required in our Christian walk when we do not receive the answer to our prayers for deliverance.

There is the general vs. the specific will of God. While the Bible gives a general promise of healing to the church, it may not be the will of God to heal instantly in a specific case. Our prayers and our will must be subject to the will of God.

Jesus instructs us to pray: *“Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**”*

The answer to prayer for sickness or trouble may be:

- **Instant.** Paul and Silas were miraculously delivered within 12 hours of their imprisonment.
- **Answered**, with a gradual process of healing.
- **Denied.** God’s grace will provide strength to endure, like Apostle Paul’s request for God to remove the thorn in his flesh.
- **Denied**, dying in the faith and receiving the answer in the resurrection. Apostle Paul, the disciples and others died as martyrs.

2 Cor. 12:7-10

*7 But to keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw, I was given a painful physical ailment, which acts as Satan’s messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud.*

*8 Three times I prayed to the Lord about this and asked him to take it away.*

9 But his answer was: **“My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak.”** I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ’s power over me.

10 I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. GNT

**Heb. 11:1-35 ( Part 1 - Received Their Deliverance)**

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

4-32 By faith Abel . . . By faith Enoch . . . By faith Noah . . . By faith Abraham . . . By faith Sara . . . By faith Isaac . . . By faith Jacob . . . By faith Joseph . . . By faith Moses . . . By faith the harlot Rahab . . . Gideon . . . Barak . . . Samson . . . David . . .

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: . . .

**Heb. 11:35-39 ( Part 2 - Did Not Receive Their Deliverance)**

35 . . . And others were **tortured**, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36 And others had **trial of cruel mockings and scourgings**, yea, moreover of **bonds and imprisonment**:

37 They were **stoned**, they were **sawn asunder**, were **tempted**, were **slain with the sword**: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being **destitute, afflicted, tormented**;

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:*

They all had faith, but God's plan was for promotion to eternal life. Greater faith and trust in God is required to continue walking when deliverance is delayed or denied.

### **2.3 Twelve Apostles’ Final Testimony Written in Blood**

Doubtless, these great men and the churches of their day prayed for deliverance and protection. But they embraced the will of God and their final testimonies were written in blood.

	Apostle	Summary	Death
1	Andrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduced Peter to Jesus.</li><li>- Brought the lad with 5 loaves and fishes to Jesus</li><li>- Brother of Peter.</li></ul>	Martyr - Crucified at Patrae, Achaia (southern Greece). <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hung alive on the cross two days, exhorting spectators.</li></ul>
2	Bartholomew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Jesus saw him under a fig tree.</li></ul>	Martyr - Crucified by the idolaters of India. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Preached the Gospel in Mesopotamia (Iraq), Persia (Iran) and India.</li></ul>
3	James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A fisherman.</li><li>- With Jesus in Gethsemane.</li></ul>	Martyr - Killed 10 years after the first martyr, Stephen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- His accuser was converted by James’ courage and both were beheaded.</li></ul>
4	James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Called James, the less, (younger).</li><li>- First Bishop of Jerusalem.</li></ul>	Martyr – At age 90, stoned by Jews.
5	John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Known as the “beloved disciple”.</li><li>- James and John “sons of thunder”.</li><li>- At foot of cross with Jesus’ mother.</li><li>- Brother of James.</li></ul>	Natural Death - The only apostle who did not die a martyr’s death. Banished by Roman Emperor Domitian to Isle of Patmos where he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

### Twelve Apostles' Final Testimony Written in Blood

	Apostle	Summary	Death
6	Judas Iscaiot  Matthias	- Treasurer of the apostolic group. - He betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.  Took Judas' place.	Suicide - Judas cast down the 30 pieces of silver in the temple, and went out and hanged himself.  Martyr - Stoned at Jerusalem.
7	Jude	- Writer, Book of Jude.	Martyr - Crucified 72AD at city of Edessa (Turkey).
8	Matthew	- Also called Levi. - Tax collector for the Romans.	Martyr - Killed with a sword about 60AD.
9	Peter	- A fisherman whom Jesus called the Rock. - First Bishop of Rome.	Martyr - Crucified at Rome under Nero. - Crucified up-side-down; did not consider himself worthy to be crucified like Jesus.
10	Phillip	- Brought Bartholomew (Nathaniel) to Jesus.	Martyr - Crucified about 54AD. - Preached the Gospel in Phrygia, the Roman Province of Asia near Ephesus (Turkey).
11	Simon	- Called "The Zealot" because he was associated with that sect.	Martyr - Crucified in Britain in 74AD. - Also preached in Africa.
12	Thomas	- A fisherman on the same crew as Peter and Andrew. - Called the "doubter".	Martyr - Killed with a spear in India. - Preached the Gospel in Parthia (Iran) and in Kerala (southern India).



In addition to the 12 apostles the following were also martyrs:

- Mark was dragged to death.
- Luke was hanged on an olive tree.
- Paul was beheaded by the Emperor Nero at Rome.
- **If we are willing to give our lives for the Gospel’s sake, we will embrace the cross and more easily accept fiery trials as God’s will.**

## **2.4 Revelation of God to Unbelievers Through Miracles**

Jesus ministered healing and deliverance to the physical needs of individuals because He loved them. He first addressed their physical needs, to **reveal Himself to them**; He then ministered to their spiritual needs.

The miracles of Jesus:

- Attracted the attention of the multitudes.
- Facilitated reaching the most people in the least amount of time (much to do in the short period of His ministry).
- Caused people to abandon traditions held for many generations.
- Confirmed His teachings.
- Affirmed He was the Messiah.

Jesus’ prayer at the tomb of Lazarus indicates this revelatory purpose, ***“That they may believe that thou hast sent me.”***

*John 11:41-45*

*41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

*42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: **but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.***

*43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

*45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had **seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.***

The following are many Scriptures concerning Jesus' healing ministry. Many times He healed them **all, revealing** His identity as the Messiah.

*Matt. 4:24*

*24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him **all sick people** that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and **he healed them.***

*Matt. 8:16*

*16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and **healed all that were sick:***

*Matt. 12:15*

*15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and **great multitudes** followed him, and **he healed them all;***

*Matt. 14:14*

*14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a **great multitude**, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he **healed their sick.***

*Mark 3:10, 11*

*10 For he had **healed many;** insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.*

*11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, **Thou art the Son of God.***

*Luke 4:40*

*40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and **he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.***

*Matt. 15:31*

*31 **Insomuch that the multitude wondered,** when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and **they glorified the God of Israel.***

*Mark 6:2*

*2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such **mighty works are wrought by his hands?***

*Mark 7:37*

*37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, **He hath done all things well:** he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.*

*Luke 7:16*

*16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That **God hath visited his people.***

*John 9:33*

*33 **If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.***

### **The Goodness of God Leads Men to Repentance**

We must not expect that because Jesus healed everyone in many Scripture settings during His ministry, that it is His will to heal everyone, every time. Scripture supports that it may be the will of God for the Christian to endure adversity for a season of testing.

Apostles Peter and Paul experienced and taught this concept; we

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

must embrace the cross (suffering and trial) and even rejoice that God is working to change us. This is covered in more detail in Section II, Chapter 4, “God’s Change Agents - The Refiner’s Fire and the Cross”.

*1 Peter 4:13*

*13 But **rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s **sufferings***

...

*2 Cor. 12:9*

*9 I will all the **more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities**, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me! AMP*

If a sinner is honestly seeking to know God, He will often **reveal Himself to them through a miracle**. This concept should elevate our faith, thrusting us further into the harvest field to reach sinners, like Jesus, with a ministry of miracles and salvation.

*Rom. 2:4*

*4 Knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

- **The true love of God, flowing through our lives as Christians, should allow us to be more concerned about the sinner’s need of a miracle than our own (loving our neighbor as ourselves). This attitude is imperative if we are to become a harvest-driven vs. a maintenance-driven Christian.**
- **Although we may be suffering an affliction, we can still pray the prayer of faith for a sinner having the same affliction.**
- **Sometimes when we connect with God and unselfishly pray the prayer of faith for someone else, the healing virtue that flows to heal them will also heal us.**

## 2.5 Afflictions of the Righteous - A Pruning Process

*Ps. 34:19*

*19 Many are the **afflictions of the righteous**: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*

*Acts 14:22*

*22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through **much tribulation enter** into the kingdom of God.*

Suffering is a part of God’s plan that sometimes may include an affliction or sickness. This may be a pruning process, not because of sin, but for us to bear more fruit. Or, the purpose may be to propel us into the next step of God’s purpose for our lives.

*John 15:2*

*2 He cleanses and **repeatedly prunes** every branch that continues to bear fruit, to **make it bear more and richer and more excellent fruit**. AMP*

God referred to Job as a perfect man who feared God and despised evil. Job acknowledges that God allows trials in our life for our good.

*Job 5:17-20*

*17 Behold, happy is the man whom **God correcteth**: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

*18 For **he maketh sore**, and bindeth up: **he woundeth**, and his hands make whole.*

*19 He shall deliver thee in **six troubles**: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

*20 In **famine** he shall redeem thee from death: and in **war** from the power of the sword.*

*James 1:12*

*12 Blessed is the man that endureth **temptation**: (**adversity, discipline**) for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*Heb. 12:5-11*

*5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

*6 **For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.***

*7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

*8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

*9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits, and live?*

*10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he **for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.***

*11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable **fruit of righteousness** unto them which are exercised thereby.*

King David observes that the right response for affliction is a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

*Ps. 34:17, 18*

*17 The **righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.***

*18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; And saveth such as be of a contrite spirit (crushed spirit).*

### **2.6 Answers Delayed Because of Sin**

Sometimes we have a narrow definition of sin and become self-righteous when we live above the sins of the flesh. However, there are many types of sin:

- The flesh (works of the flesh).

*When Answer to Prayer is “No” or “Wait”*

- The soul (my will and ways conflicting with God’s will and ways).
- The spirit (resisting the Spirit, or overriding the conscience).

Any kind of disobedience is sin. Obedience is not only saying, “no” to the devil, but saying, “yes” to God’s will. Failing to do God’s will is disobedience, which is sin. Sometimes trial and affliction is the only thing that will bring our will into alignment with His will.

*Ps. 119:67-69, 71*

*67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*

*68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.*

*69 The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.*

*71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

*Ps. 103:3*

*3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

*Ps. 66:18*

*18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*

- **James connects repentance to the promise for healing.**

*James 5:15, 16*

*15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and **if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.***

*16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, **that ye may be healed.** The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

*Ps. 25:17, 18*

*17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

*Ps. 119:135, 136, 153*

*135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.*

*136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*

*153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.*

*Ex. 15:26*

*26 And said, **if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God**, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.*

*Rev. 3:19*

*19 As many as I love, I **rebuke and chasten**: be zealous therefore, and **repent**.*

### **2.7 Trials Become Testimonies to Others**

Victories over difficulties become our greatest testimonies and are examples of strength to others. How can we testify of the healing, delivering, and keeping power of God until we have experienced tribulations?

- **There will be no testimony without a test.**

*2 Cor. 1:4-7*

*4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

*5 You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.*

*6 So when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we,*



*in turn, can be an **encouragement to you**. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer.*

*7 We are confident that as you share in suffering, you will also share God’s comfort. NLT*

## **2.8 Sickness Unto Death - Promotion to a Better World**

There is a sickness unto death, thus no healing or deliverance -- until it is received in eternal life. Jesus cited this when Lazarus died, “*This sickness is not unto death*”-- because Lazarus would soon live again when Jesus summoned him out of the tomb.

*John 11:4*

*4 When Jesus heard that, he said, **this sickness is not unto death**, but for the glory of God, that the son of God might be glorified thereby.*

**Elderly Saints** - There is a sickness unto death when elderly people, who have lived a full life, are called home.

*P.s. 90:10*

*10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

**Death for Salvation** - In some terminally ill situations, God took them home, perhaps because they failed to live for Him when in good health. God alone can see the future.

**Untimely Death** - A sickness unto death results for those who have completed their work on earth and God promotes them to a better place, where there is no sickness and no crying. Untimely death refers to age, but God sees from a different perspective -- “***Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.***”

*Rev. 21:4*

*4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death**, neither **sorrow**, nor **crying**, neither shall there be any more **pain**: for the former things are passed away.*

---

*The peace of God is not the absence of trouble and trial, but the absence of fear.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*The presence of trials is not the absence of God working for our good. When troubles come our way, it is most likely God working on our eternal life.*

---

### 3. *Prayer and the Peace of God in the Storm*

Regardless of situations (described in the prior chapter) that you may find yourself in, it is God's will for you to have His peace in the storm. This peace comes as we humbly submit to God in **prayer**. Apostle Paul, imprisoned and sentenced to die, writes about this to the Philippians:

*Phil. 4:6, 7*

*6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by **prayer** and **supplication** with thanksgiving let your **requests** be made known unto God.*

*7 And the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

*6 Don't worry about anything; instead, **pray** about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers.*

*7 If you do this, you will experience **God's peace**, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. **His peace** will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus. TLB*

In the early stages of our walk with God, we may experience immediate and miraculous deliverance from the storm. But as we

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

continue in our walk with God, He will often take us through the storm to test and strengthen our trust in Him. The song, “**Sometimes He Calms Me**”, sums up this concept:

**“Sometimes He calms the storm, sometimes He calms me,  
Sometimes the storm rages on, but I feel the sweetest peace;  
It’s such a joy to know that my Lord knows just what I need,  
Sometimes He calms the storm, sometimes He calms me.”<sup>1</sup>**

Natural peace occurs when everything is going good. This peace is merely the absence of problems in our life. However, the peace of God is independent of natural circumstances, and is activated in the storms of life.

The greatest revelation of the peace of God is against the backdrop of a raging storm:

- **The peace of God is not the absence of the storm, but the absence of fear.**
- **The absence of fear is the presence of faith -- faith that our God is greater than our problem.**

### 3.1 Why Was Jesus Asleep in the Storm?

Jesus with His disciples, was traveling on the Sea of Galilee when a great tempest arose. When the disciples, fearing for their lives, called to Jesus, He immediately spoke two commands:

**Peace** - He calmed the winds (cause of the storm).

**Be still** - He calmed the waves (result of the storm).

*Mark 4:38-40*

*38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, **asleep** on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?*

*39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, **Peace, be still**. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

*40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so **fearful**? how is it that ye have **no faith**?*

Jesus was asleep in the boat to illustrate that if we have the peace of God in our lives, we can relax and even sleep through a storm. Apostle Peter was probably one of the disciples running around the ship, shouting commands and bailing water -- fearful for his life. Then the words of Jesus took them out of the storm.

### **3.2 Peter Sleeping Through a Storm**

Many years later, Peter was in prison chained between two soldiers, waiting to be executed the next day. What was Peter doing? Just like Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, he was **sleeping**.

He was sleeping so soundly that the angel of deliverance smote him on the side to awaken him.

- What was the more life-threatening of the two events?
- In which event was Jesus physically closest to Peter?
- What was the difference in Peter's life?

Somewhere between the storm on the Sea of Galilee and the prison, Peter had experienced the peace of God, learning to completely trust Him. This complete trust provided peace to sleep through a life-threatening storm.

### **3.3 Three Hebrew Children in the Firestorm**

The three Hebrew children, facing the decision to bow to the king's image or be thrown in the fiery furnace, undoubtedly prayed for deliverance. But God chose not to keep them from the fiery furnace, but rather, to accompany them through it.

These three experienced indescribable peace when the fourth Man appeared, walking with them through the fire. It was an incredible experience walking in the firestorm, unhurt -- sheltered by the hand of God. They emerged with a miraculous testimony that greatly affected a powerful king and his entire nation.

The king and his subjects immediately acknowledged the hand of God that had power over the most intense flames of the furnace.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH – THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*Dan. 3:25, 27-29*

*25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.*

*27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.*

*28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.*

*29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.*

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego literally experienced what the prophet Isaiah wrote about:

*Isa. 43:2*

*2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

### **3.4 Daniel Sleeping Through the Storm with Lions**

Daniel prayed every day for protection from harm, particularly in the strange land of Babylon, far from his homeland. But when commanded to stop praying to his God or to be thrown into the lions' den; he chose the lions' den.

*Prayer and the Peace of God in the Storm*

*Dan. 6:16*

*16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.*

God did not deliver him from the lions' den, but delivered him in the den of lions. An angel shut the mouth of the lions and protected him.

What an amazing experience to be locked into a den of hungry lions that could not harm him. Daniel had a peaceful night sleeping with the lions -- sleeping through the storm.

*Dan. 6:20-23*

*20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?*

*21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.*

*22 **My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me:** forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.*

*23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.*

A mighty victory was won for the Kingdom of God when the king testified of the power of Daniel's God. He decreed that everyone in his kingdom recognize the one true God.

*Dan. 6:24-28*

*24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH – THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.*

*26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.*

*27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*

*28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

### **3.5 The Prince of Peace -- Shelter in the Storm**

There had been 400 years of silence between the Old Testament and the New Testament. There had not been one prophetic word. It was not going well for the nation of Israel. They were under the rule and occupation of Rome. They were paying heavy taxes levied by the Roman emperor. It was a time of fear and uncertainty.

Suddenly, Jesus Christ burst onto the scene totally and dramatically changing the world and the religious scene forever. The two messages heralded at His birth were, “*fear not*” and “*peace on earth and good will to men.*”

- **The first message at Bethlehem was, “*fear not.*”**

***Luke 1:30 The message of the angel to Mary.***

*30 And the angel said unto her, **fear not**, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.*

***Matt. 1:20 The message of the angel to Joseph.***

*20 The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, **fear not** to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

***Luke 1:13 The message of the angel to Zechariahs.***



*13 But the angel said unto him, **fear not**, Zechariahs: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.*

*Luke 2:9, 10 **The message of the angel to the shepherds.***

*9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

*10 And the angel said unto them, **fear not**: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

In a day when terrorist attacks come close to home, there is fear. When there are wars and rumors of wars, there is more fear. The “**fear not**” message of long ago still applies today. This reassuring message of faith is for everyone facing the storms and trials of life.

*Luke 12:32*

*32 **Fear not**, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear is like sand in machinery -- faith is like oil.

- **The second message at Bethlehem was peace. The only way to have peace, in a fearful world, is to maintain the peace of God in our hearts.**

*Isa. 9:6 **Isaiah prophesying of Jesus’ birth.***

*6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called: Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, **The Prince of Peace.***

The most wonderful, glorious, soothing word **peace (shalom)**, was heralded at His birth. The angels announced His birth to the shepherds: “*Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace, good will toward men.***”

*Luke 1:79 **Luke speaking of Jesus’ coming into the world.***

*79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of*

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH – THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

*death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*John 14:27* **Jesus’ reassuring message of peace.**

*27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

*John 16:33*

*33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

Born in unfamiliar, unfavorable, unfriendly, unusual, untimely circumstances -- born on a journey far from home -- born in a cold, dirty stable; the birth of that baby, the Christ child, forever changed our:

- Fear to faith.
  - Turmoil to peace.
  - Hopelessness to hope.
  - Eternal death to eternal life.
- **The messages “fear not” and “peace on earth” were comforting for prior generations. But, like all of God’s wonderful promises, they are for this and future generations, as well.**

### **3.6 I Know the Anchor Holds in the Storm**

I hesitate to use a personal example, but it is the only way to describe this concept. I welcome the opportunity to testify of the peace of God and His miraculous power available in the storms of life.

In 1991, I experienced a difficult trial that lasted three and one-half years. Thankfully, God doesn’t inform us how long a trial will last; He wants us to live one day at a time.

Six weeks into this trial, I asked God, “When is this going to be

over?” He answered, “I am burning some things out of your life.” I understood it would last awhile. After some time I realized it was not about sin, but about self (self-will vs. His will).

During this time, I talked to God a lot more and He talked to me. You don’t have to be a super spiritual, special person to hear God’s voice -- you just have to talk to Him. The more you talk to Him, the more He will talk to you.

Two years later, while driving to work early in the morning, I was talking to God; I was talking to Him more often now. I repeated my earlier question, “When will this trial be over. I think I have learned the lesson You are trying to teach me -- and it has been good for me.” God immediately spoke into my spirit the words that are etched in my memory forever, **“This trial will be over when you learn to have peace in the storm.”**

The trial was causing me a lot of fear; faith and fear cannot co-exist. Apostle John wrote: ***“Fear hath torment.”***

A year later, on a business trip to Birmingham, Alabama, at an altitude of 33,000 feet, I was neither focusing on my trial nor on the business environment pressure awaiting at my destination. I was reading my Bible and meditating on my great God. Suddenly I felt the manifest presence of God enter the airplane and come to where I was seated. I experienced a feeling like warm oil being poured from my head to my feet and I felt the wonderful peace of God settle over me, unlike I had ever experienced. That feeling has lingered and remains with me even now.

The trial did not end with that experience. In fact, it did not end for quite some time. But oh, the peace of God; I was not delivered from the storm, but sheltered in it.

Sometime later, the darkness of the long trial began to subside and the sun came shining through. A miraculous victory was given to me. As the trial ended, I did not initially accept it, believing it to

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

be only a temporary relief. But the trial, indeed, was over and I have never experienced such a physical, mental and spiritual high. If I had designed the ending to this trial, it would have fallen far short of the miracles that God worked in this situation. And as I look back today, I continue to be amazed and in awe of the hand of God in the events at the conclusion of that trial.

If I had the option to go back and choose between the path of this trial or another one of victory, I would choose the trial because:

- I was changed forever.
- I had thrust my soul's anchor deeply into the secure Rock of Ages. I found that everything in God's Word, regarding His keeping power through the storms of life, is true.
- I had developed a more consistent prayer life.
- I had established a much closer relationship with my heavenly Father.

Another wonderful thing that happened in the midst of this trial, was an encounter with God that I call, a "burning bush experience." In my reaching for a deeper prayer life, I had been reading and studying a number of books on prayer. One morning, about 2:00 a.m., I was awakened with the presence of God in the room more powerful than I had ever experienced.

God is omnipresent. He is so vast that the universe, billions of light-years wide and deep cannot contain Him; *heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool*. But there are times when God reveals Himself to His children in a special way; it is the **manifest presence of God**, holy ground. Moses experienced it at the burning bush, as God's manifest presence appeared in the burning bush, commanding Moses to remove his shoes while standing on holy ground. This is what I had felt on the jet as the powerful, presence of God poured over me.

It is what I felt early that morning in my room -- the awesome **manifest presence** of God, as He spoke to me, "Prayer is

important, but I want you to know about a complete relationship with Me.” God continued speaking into my mind and spirit for the remainder of the night and for several weeks. My Bible became a new Book.

On a business trip to Florida, my hotel was the Ritz Carlton on the Atlantic Ocean, but my leisure time was spent with the Bible and reference books. I did not want to get away from the Word of God and the still small voice of the Spirit. I wanted to take advantage of this awesome move of His Spirit. Much of the content in Volume I, about relationship with God, was imparted to me during that time.

I thank God often for this “burning bush” encounter. But I must now become the burning bush, consumed with the will and purpose of God -- the Father’s business.

This trial did not make me everything that I should be for God, but it was a transition, a passage, to another level in God’s plan for my life. It created a hunger for **more of**:

- **His Word** (I have since spent several thousand hours studying His Word and have only touched the tip of the depths of His riches).
- **His Spirit** to work in my life, changing me to be more effective in ministering to the needs of others.

More trials may be needed in my life to effect change. I am currently dealing with a “spiritual” vs. a “physical” trial. But with the knowledge of the peace of God and His purpose, it is wonderful to know that I am in the palm of His hand and He is still working on me.

**My prayer is not for God to remove the trial, but give me grace to embrace the cross until His desired change is effected.**

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

There are wonderful, inspired songs written by people who have experienced storms and felt the peace of God. I pray that we sing and apply them as testimonies and prayers:

**“Great is Thy Faithfulness”**

**“’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”**

**“Peace, Peace, Wonderful Peace”**

**“Don’t Take My Burden or My Cross Away”**

## *4. My Prayer*

Dear God, don't let me be satisfied with what and where I am in Your Kingdom. Let there always be a hunger and thirst for more of Your righteousness. Don't let me be satisfied with an outer circle of relationship, but help me to always be reaching for that inner circle, closer to You.

Give me the grace to embrace the cross when that is Your plan for my life. Change me to enable Your resurrection power to work in me and through me. Help me to endure the Refiner's fire when it is needed to reveal and burn out the impurities in my life. Let the veil of self be torn away to reflect more of Your love, Your will and Your ways.

Let me pursue an encounter of the changing kind that will not only affect me but my desperately lost world. Let me be more like You, with a mind that believes for the impossible; eyes that see the invisible; and ears that hear the inaudible. Let there be less of me and more of You.

Help me to submit every area of my life to Your authority, allowing You to reign as Lord in my life. Help me to set the right priorities and be disciplined to live by them.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH - THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

Don't let me be satisfied with the usual, the routine, or the status quo. Help me reach for the Spirit's frontier where I have never been before. Help me discover new heights and depths in the Spirit and greater revelation of You and Your ways.

Let this song be my prayer, **“Change Me, Lord”**:

**“Change me Lord, change me Lord, don't let me stay the same  
For I want to be more like you  
Take my life, make my life, just what you want it to be  
Lord, please change me, change me, dear Lord”<sup>2</sup>**

Thank you for Your bountiful blessings and Your faithfulness to me. Help me to be more faithful to You. Thank you for giving Your all for me. Help me to be willing to give my all for You.

Thank you for the “burning bush” experiences when Your awesome manifest presence touched my life. But let me now become the burning bush -- set on fire with passion driven by Your will and Your purpose.



## Isaiah 43

1 But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; **thou art mine.**

2 When thou passest through the waters, **I will be with thee**; and through the rivers, they **shall not overflow thee**: when thou walkest through the fire, thou **shalt not be burned**; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Where He Leads Me

Where He leads me, I will follow.

Where He leads me, I will follow.

Where He leads me, I will follow.

I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way.

Though none go with me, still I will follow.

Though none go with me, still I will follow.

Though none go with me, still I will follow.

I'll go with Him, with Him, all the way.<sup>1</sup>



# **IV.**

# **Appendices**



# *Appendix 1 - Charts*

Only a few charts are included here since the Addendum Volume contains the full size 8.5 X 11 copies of the PowerPoint charts for Volumes I, II, III, IV and V. This is being published as a separate volume since:

- Many of these charts become less useful (distorted and hard to read) when they are reduced to a book size.
- Many charts are applicable to multiple volumes.
- These charts can be revised and distributed without reprinting the volumes that refer to them.

The full color charts are available on CD in PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat formats.

Refer to the following pages for these charts:

- C-2 Spiritual Growth – Vision
- C-4 The Fleshly Appetite Vs. the Spiritual Appetite
- C-7 Rending of the Veil -- Less of Self and More of God
- C-14 Moving from a Maintenance Driven Christian to a Harvest Driven Christian
- C-15 Charity -- the Bridge to Spiritual Growth
- C-16 Man and Plant Life Cycle and Balance
- C-17 Spiritual Growth Life Cycle and Balance
- C-18 Imbalance Stops Spiritual Growth
- C-21 The Tolerance of the Carnal Man Vs. the Spiritual Man
- D-1 The Tabernacle Plan -- Old Testament / New Testament
- D-4 The Body / Soul / Spirit Model
- D-5 The Word Divides the Soul and Spirit
- F-3 Path to the Supernatural -- He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease
- F-4 Leading the Inner Circle Into the Supernatural
- F-7 What Hinders the Supernatural -- Flow To Vs. Flow Through
- H-21 Self Discipline Drives Change
- H-22 Life Cycle of a Vision



## Chart C-2

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH STARTS WITH VISION

GOD'S VISION Vs YOUR VISION  
GOD'S MIND Vs YOUR MIND  
GOD'S WILL Vs YOUR WILL

#### GOD'S VISION:

GOD'S ETERNAL WILL  
AND PURPOSE FOR  
YOUR LIFE.

Vs

#### YOUR VISION:

A PICTURE OF WHAT  
YOU ARE GOING TO  
BE AND DO IN GOD'S  
KINGDOM.

*Acts 2:17*

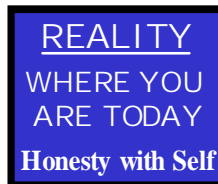
*17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see **visions**, and your old men shall dream **dreams**:*

Apostle Paul's  
Testimony

*Acts 26:19 I was not disobedient unto the heavenly **vision**:*



**F  
a  
i  
t  
h**



**VERBAL FAITH  
AND  
ACTIVE FAITH**

APPENDICES

Chart C-4

BECOMING A SPIRITUAL MAN

Spiritual Vs. Carnal



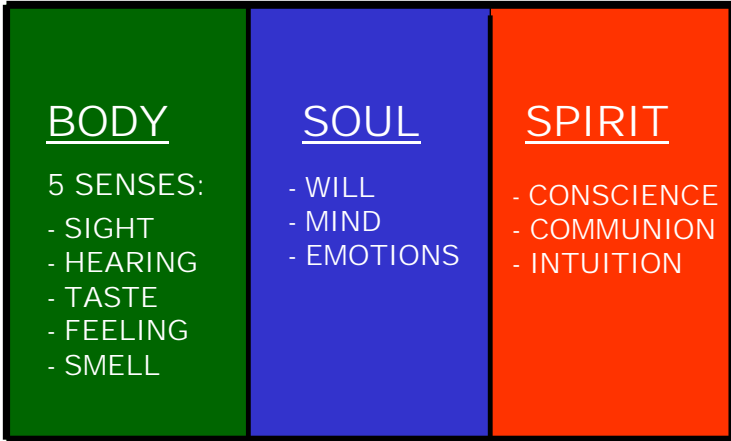
**CARNAL MAN**

FLESHLY APPETITE



*GOD WORKS FROM THE INSIDE OUT*

F  
A  
T  
A  
L  
  
A  
T  
T  
R  
A  
C  
T  
I  
O  
N



*SATAN WORKS FROM THE OUTSIDE IN*  
*YOU WORK ON YOURSELF FROM THE OUTSIDE IN*



**SPIRITUAL MAN**

SPIRITUAL APPETITE

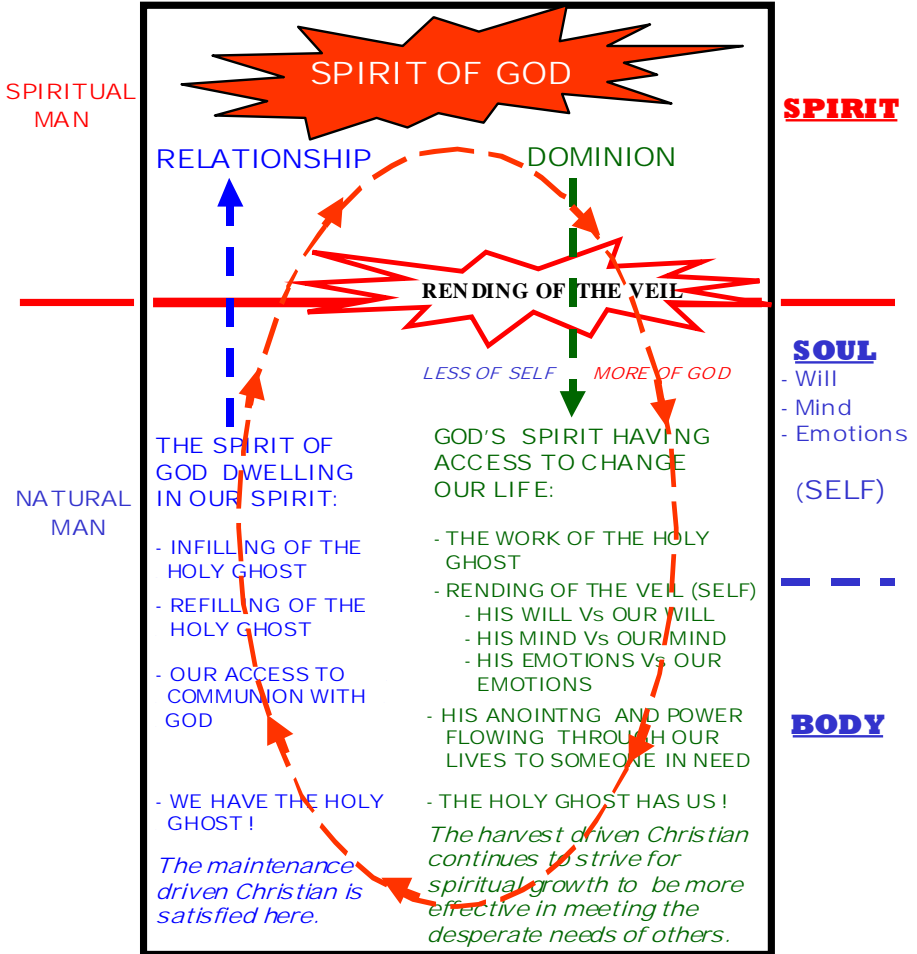
*WE ARE PARTAKERS  
OF HIS DIVINE NATURE*





## Chart C-7

**THE CYCLE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH  
ALLOWING THE SPIRIT TO WORK IN OUR LIFE TO CHANGE SELF**

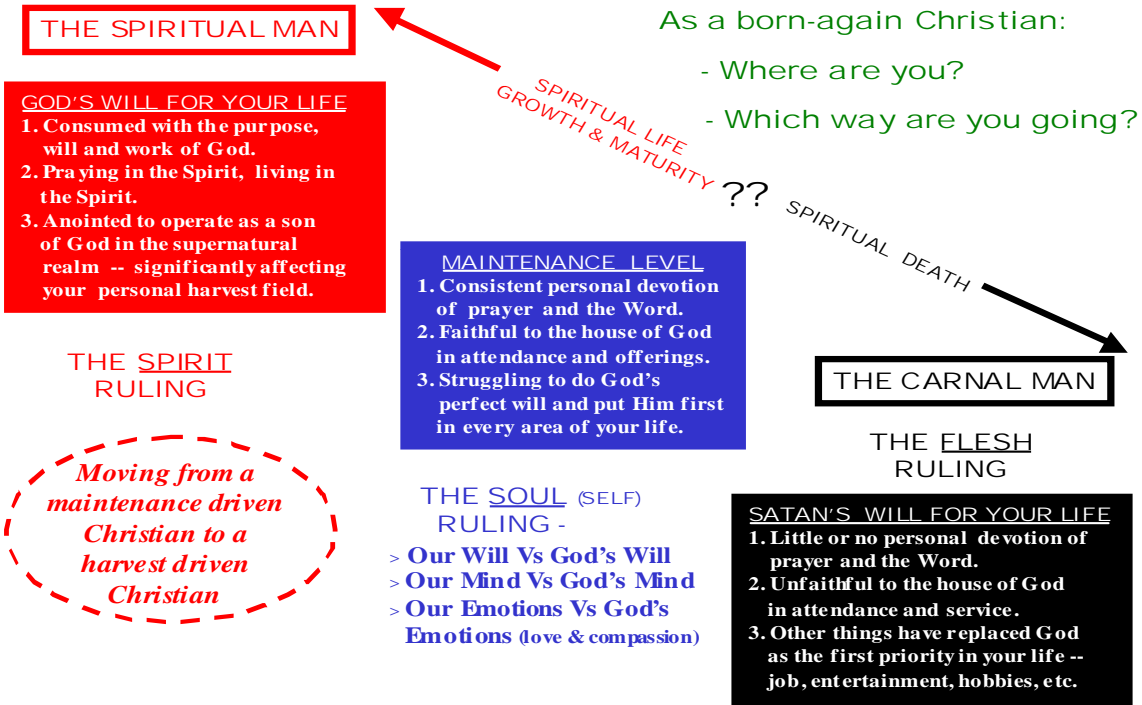


**1 Tim 1:6 Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.**

**Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you. ESV**

APPENDICES

Chart C-14



BACKSLIDDEN

# Chart C-15

**Our Motive for Spiritual Growth Must be to fulfill God's Purpose  
-- Ministering to People's Needs -- Driven by Charity**

1 Cor 13

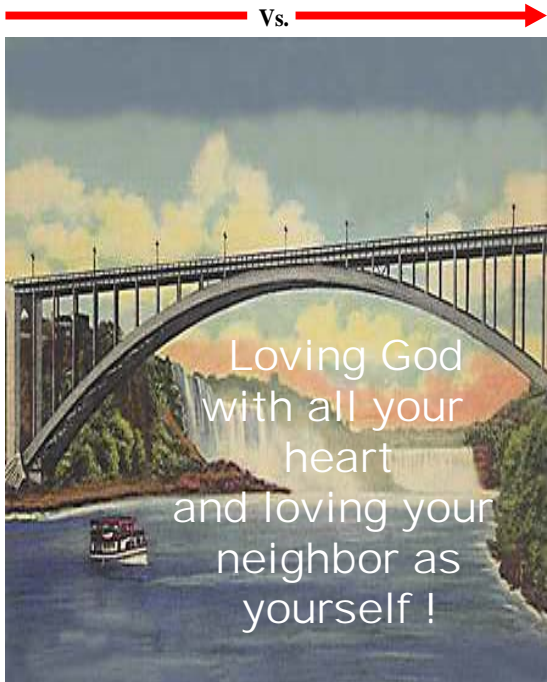
1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3-13 . . . . charity . . . charity . . . . charity . . . . charity . . . . charity

**RELIGIOUS:**

- Faithful to:
- House of God
  - Word of God
  - Prayer
  - Fasting
  - Tithes & Offerings

Luke 18:11-12  
 11 The Pharisee stood and **prayed** thus with himself, . . . .  
 12 I **fast** twice in the week, I give **tithes** of all that I possess.

Delivered from Egypt (world), but living in the routine of the wilderness brings spiritual stagnation.



**Vs.**

**SPIRITUAL:**

- Love for:
- The God of the house
  - The God of the Word
  - God's lost children in need

Your true **love** for God is measured by your **love** to your brother – anyone in need.

Living in Canaan, partnering with God in the supernatural brings spiritual growth!

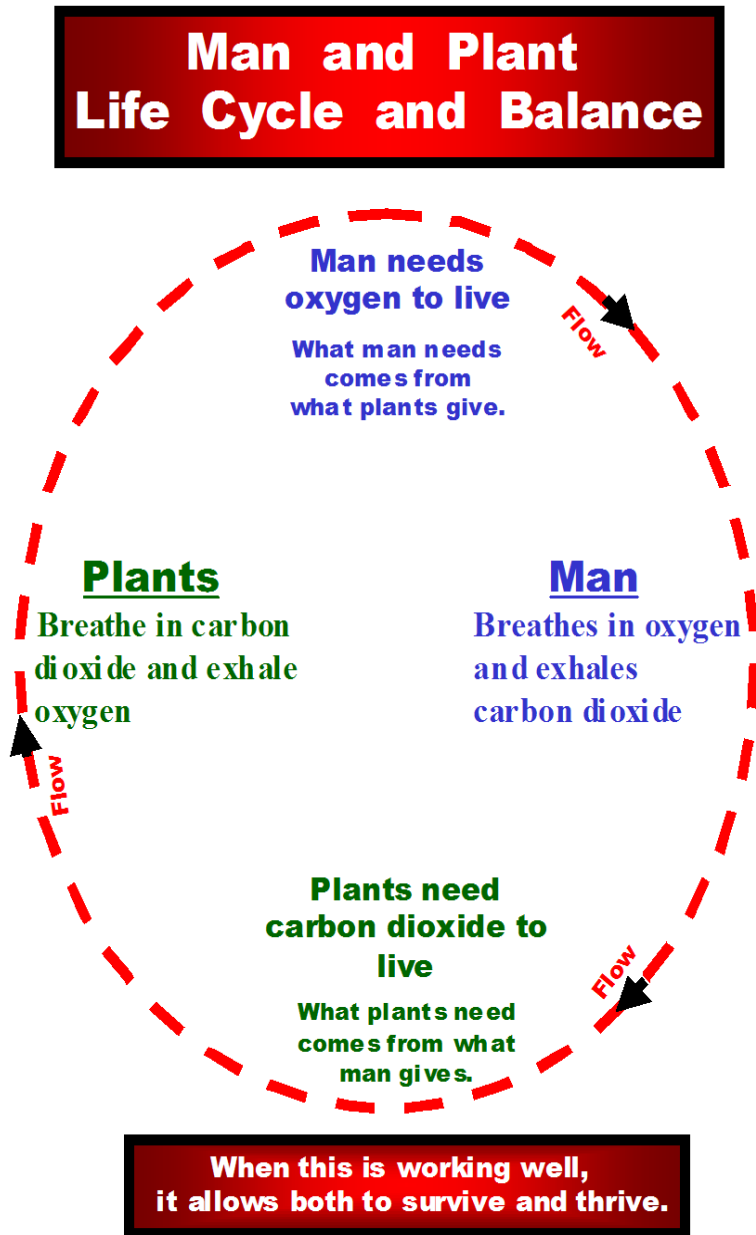
Gal 5:14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." NLT

James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ESV

Matt 25:37-40 The final test at the judgment. The only way to love God is to minister to someone in need.  
 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, . . . thirsty . . . stranger . . . naked . . . sick . . . in prison?  
 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

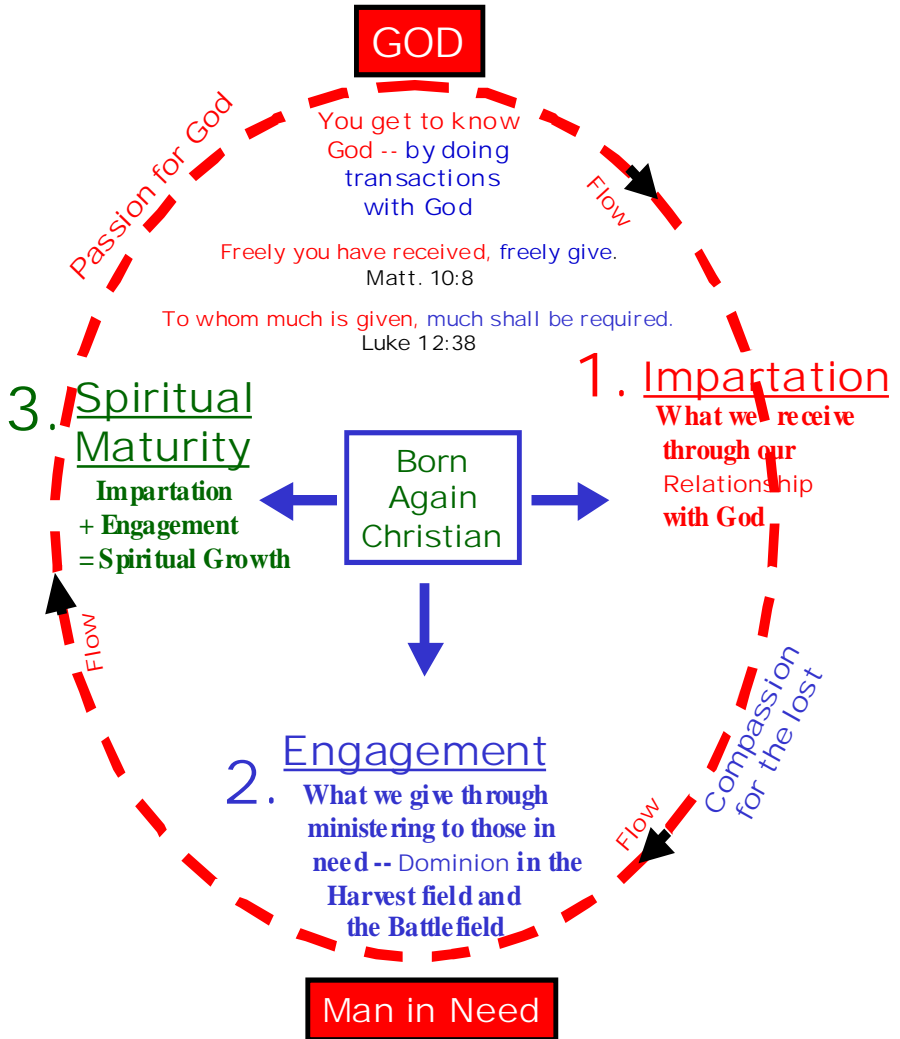
APPENDICES

Chart C-16



## Chart C-17

# Spiritual Maturity Life Cycle & Balance (Driven by Love for God and Others)



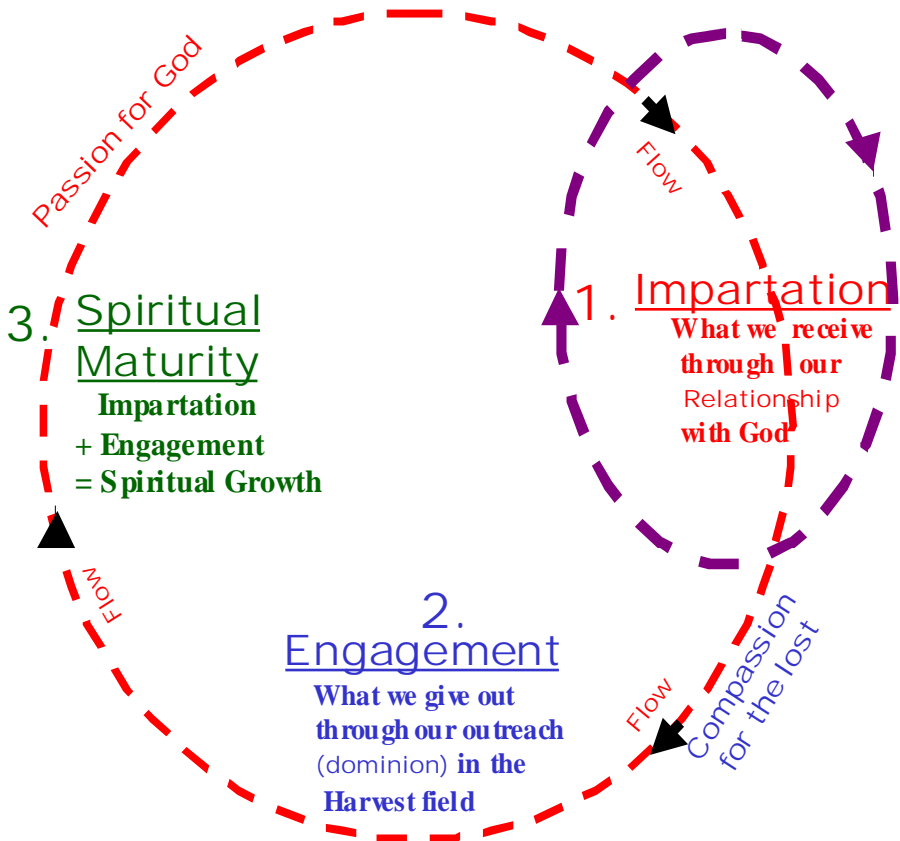
Ministering to someone in need benefits them - and in turn benefits you.

APPENDICES

Chart C-18

Imbalance Stops Spiritual Growth

The Christian that receives and never gives out is imbalanced and never reaches Spiritual Maturity.



The children of Israel that came out of Egypt limited God by being unwilling to fulfill God's purpose and will. They had God's blessings, but not His favor.

Ps 78:41 Again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. NLT

Heb 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.

### Chart C-21



*Driven by a passion for the Father's Business*



## THE BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN:

Spiritual Vs. Carnal

As one becomes more spiritual they become less tolerant of carnal things and more tolerant of the things of the Spirit:

They are stable and dependable and their mind is made up to be 110% for the Kingdom of God in: prayer, fasting, faithfulness to God's house, study of God's Word, frequent renewal of the Holy Ghost, working in the Father's business to reach lost souls.

Influenced by the pull of two worlds (Double-Minded)

As one becomes more carnal they become less tolerant of spiritual things, and more tolerant of carnal things:

The pull of two worlds makes them unstable and unpredictable -- will they pray today, will they go to church this time? There is little or no renewal of the Holy Ghost in their life, etc. A disproportionate portion of their spare time is spent on recreation, entertainment, careers, etc., (justified because there is no open sin involved). The things of the Spirit have taken a lesser priority in their life. There is a lacking in their pursuit of spiritual things -- prayer, fasting, study of God's Word, faithfulness to God's house, working in the Father's business to reach lost souls.

*The carnal mind can justify anything that the conscience or the Spirit of God condemns.*



*Driven by a passion for his own interests and business*



APPENDICES

Chart D-1

**THE TABERNACLE PLAN**

SUPER  
NATURAL  
  
HEAVENLY  
IMMORTAL



**3. HOLY OF HOLIES** (MOST HOLY PLACE)

----- BEYOND THE VEIL -----

SPIRIT  
  
- GLORY OF  
...GOD  
- SPIRIT OF..  
...GOD TAKES  
...OVER

NATURAL  
  
EARTHLY  
  
MORTAL



**2. HOLY PLACE**

SOUL  
  
- WILL  
- MIND  
- EMOTIONS



BRAZEN LAVER  
(PURITY)



BRAZEN ALTAR  
(SACRIFICE)

**1. OUTER COURT**

BODY  
  
- CARNAL  
...MAN

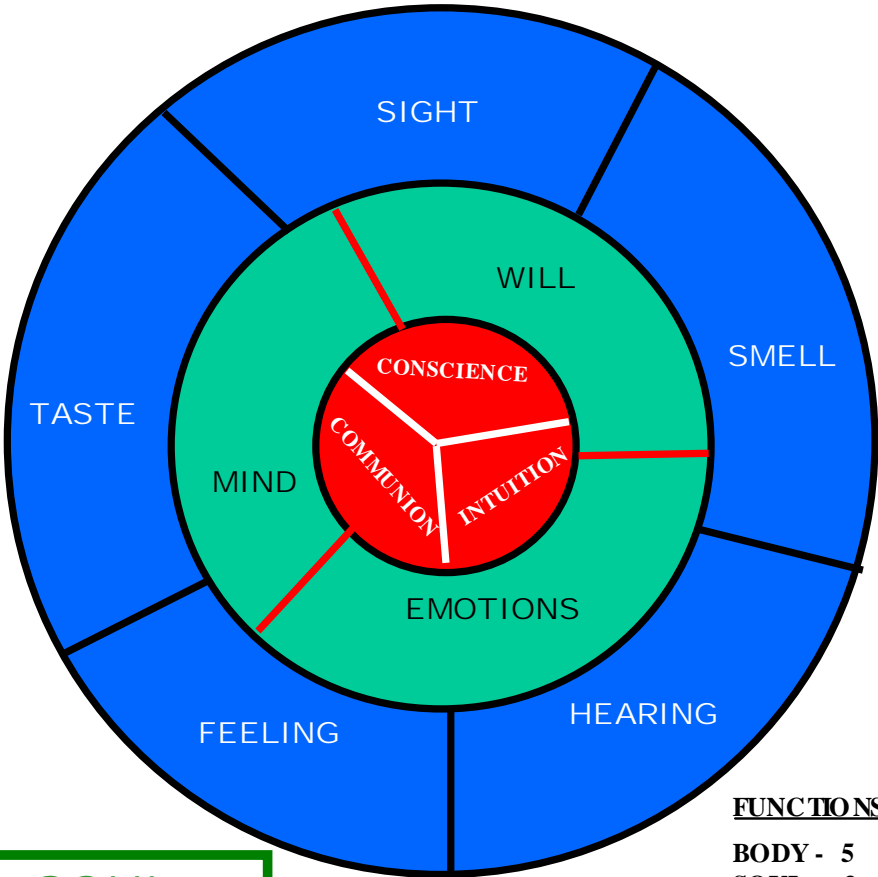
AREA AROUND THE TABERNACLE



### Chart D-4

**BODY**  
MAKES US WORLD  
CONSCIOUS

**SPIRIT**  
MAKES US GOD  
CONSCIOUS



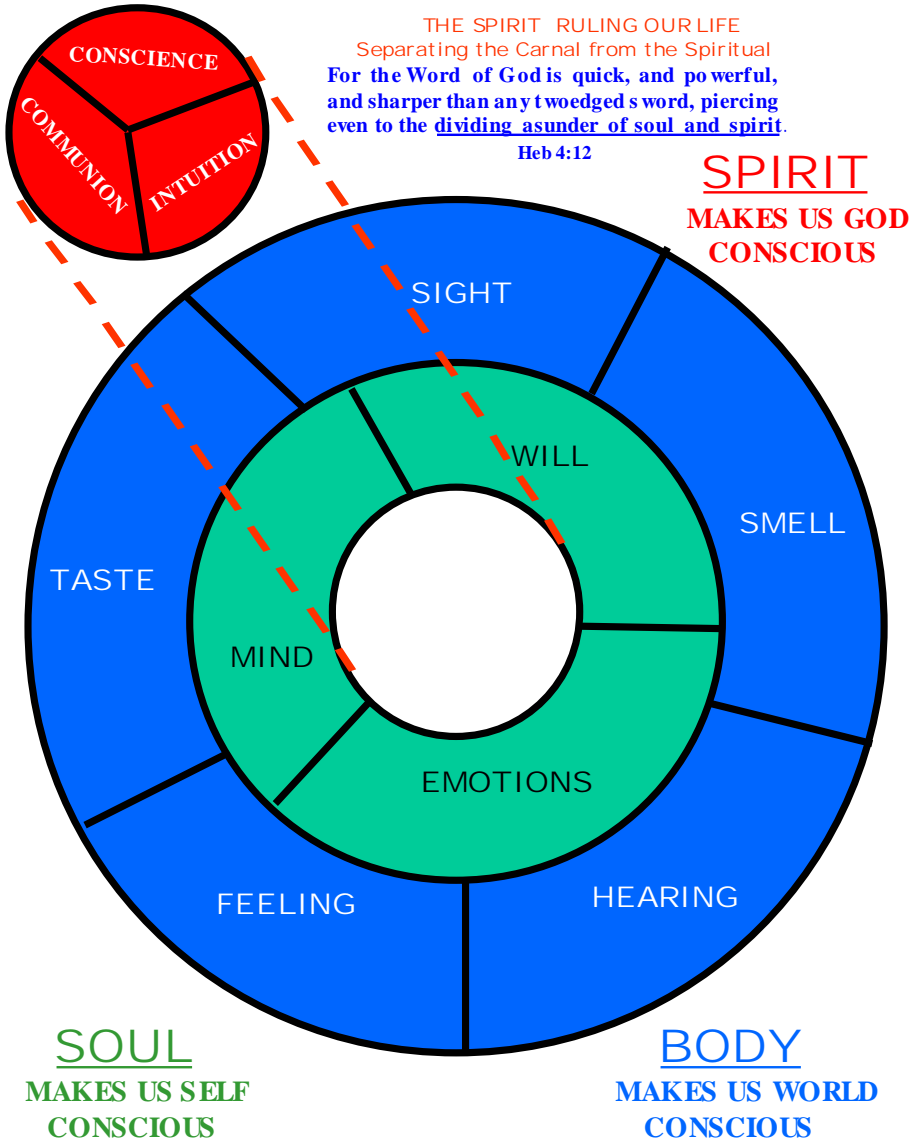
**SOUL**  
MAKES US SELF  
CONSCIOUS

**FUNCTIONS:**

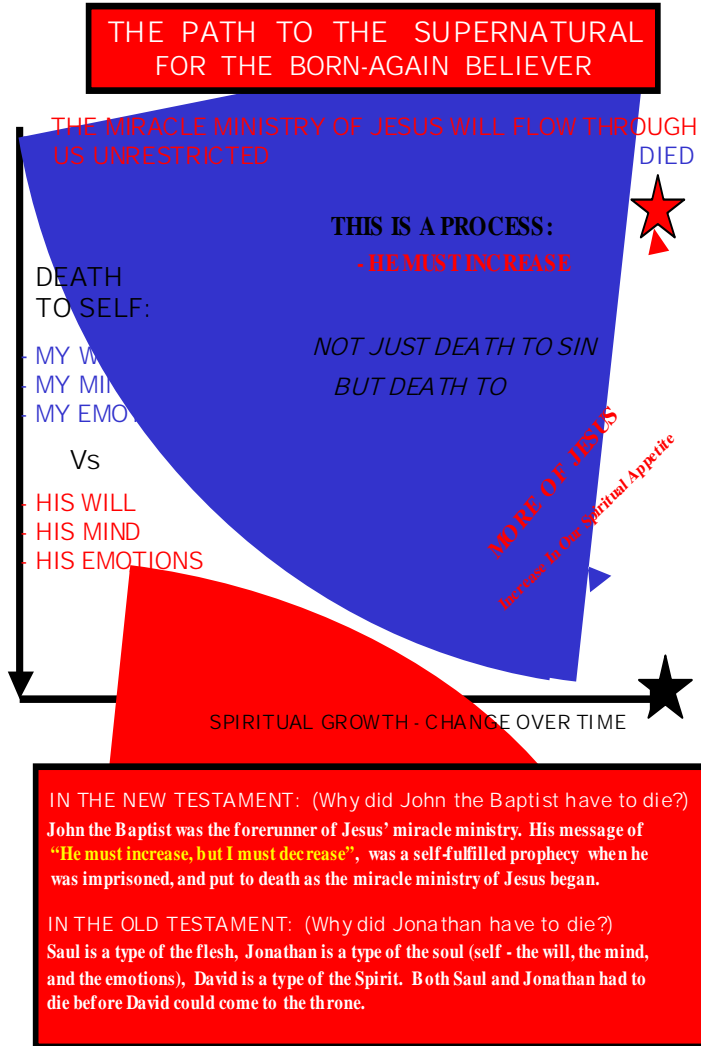
**BODY - 5**  
**SOUL - 3**  
**SPIRIT - 3**  
--  
**11**

APPENDICES

Chart D-5



## Chart F-3

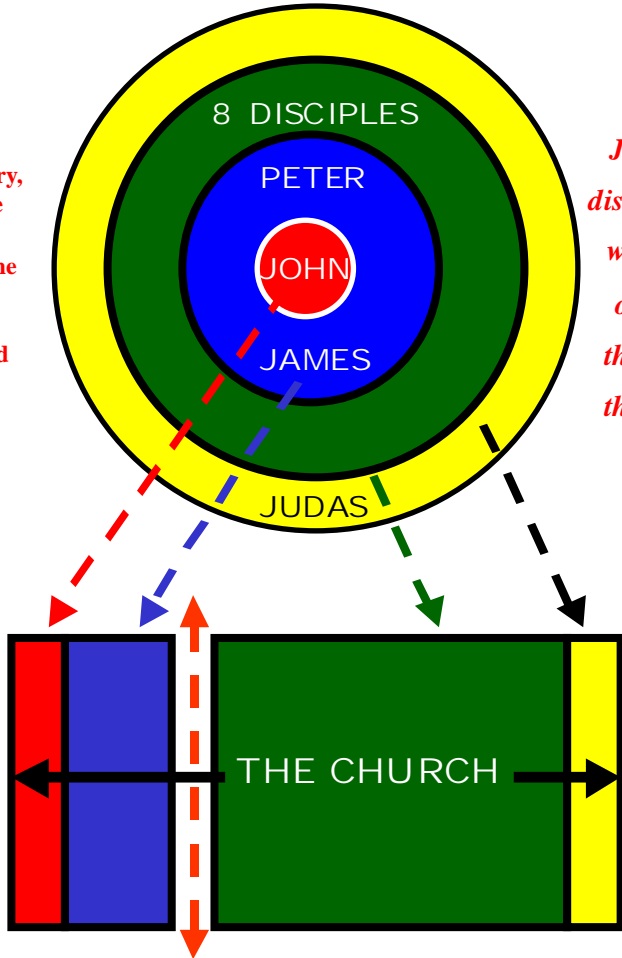


# APPENDICES

## Chart F-4

JESUS LEADS HIS INNER CIRCLE FIRST  
FURTHER INTO THE SUPERNATURAL

In His ministry, Jesus took the inner circle further into the supernatural. Most of the others reached that level at a later time.



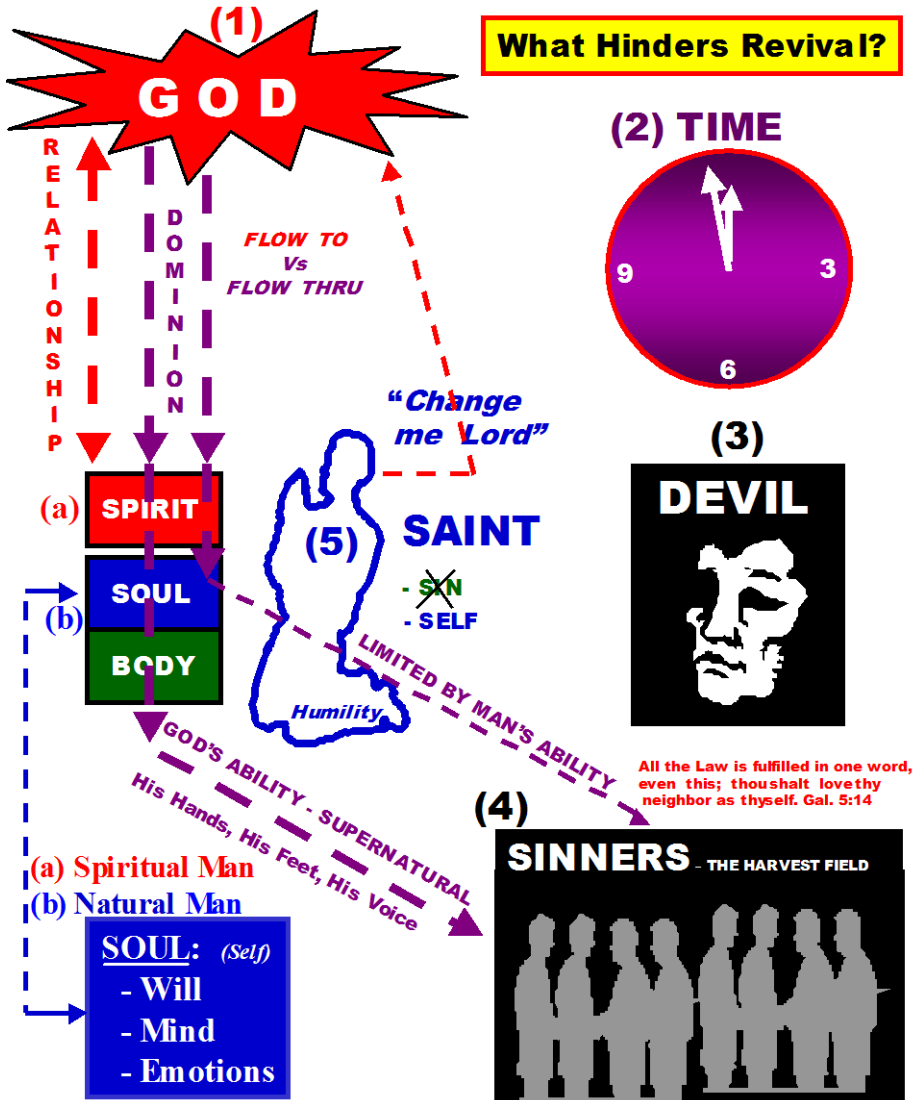
*1* Jesus chose 12 disciples and there were *2* levels of relationship that emerged in this handicapped *3* group.

**FOLLOWING JESUS' EXAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP INTO THE SUPERNATURAL:**

- There is an inner circle (20-30%) within the church that is ready to make the changes required for:
  - A greater **REVELATION** of Jesus (eg. Matt 17:1, Mark 9:2 Mt. Transfiguration experience)
  - A deeper move into **SUPERNATURAL ACTIONS** (eg. Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51 - Raising the dead)
  - A greater depth in **PRAYER - POWER** (eg. Luke 9:28, Mark 14:33 Gethsemane prayer - **NOT MY WILL**)
  - More challenging **TEACHING** (eg. Mark 13:3)

These are the those in the church that are a part of the inner circle and are ready **NOW** to make the radical change (paradigm change) necessary to move into the supernatural. As this group is led further into the supernatural, others will follow over time.

# Chart F-7



**Evangelism - Beyond the Book of Acts**  
**- The Path to the Supernatural**

## APPENDICES

### Chart H-21

**SELF-DISCIPLINE** - - Training that develops self-control to enforce obedience to what should be done. It is the glad surrender of a life to a higher purpose. It is saying "no" to many things so that we may say "yes" to a few excellent pursuits.

1 Cor 9

27 I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that . . . I myself should be a castaway.

27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. NLT

Prov 10:17

The road to life is a disciplined life. MSG

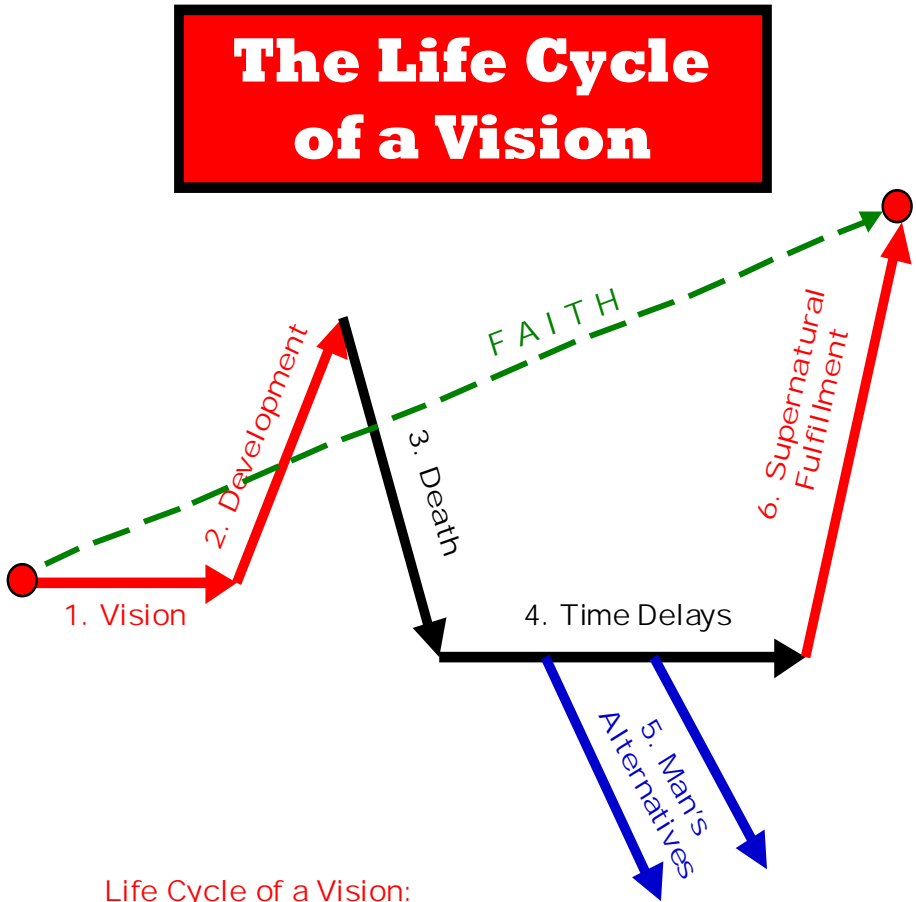
2 Tim 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-discipline. NLT



Heb 12:11 For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness - in conformity to God's will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God]. AMP

## Chart H-22



Life Cycle of a Vision:

1. Vision or Dream
2. Development of the Vision
3. Death of the Vision
4. Time delays
5. Alternatives (Man trying to make it happen)
6. Supernatural Fulfillment (God makes it happen)





## *Appendix 2 - Addendum Volume Chart Reference*

Refer to the Addendum Volume for the following charts related to the subject of **Spiritual Growth**.

### *Primary Subject Index for "Spiritual Growth"*

- C-1 Three Levels of Living
- C-2 Spiritual Growth -- Vision
- C-3 Father / Child Relationship
- C-4 The Fleshly Appetite Vs. the Spiritual Appetite
- C-5 Expanding Our Relationship and Dominion Role
- C-6 New Levels of Relationship and Dominion
  - Passion and Compassion
  
- C-7 Rending of the Veil -- Less of Self and More of God
- C-8 Egypt to Canaan Journey
- C-9 I'm Going North
- C-10 What Drives Change
- C-11 Breakthrough to New Levels of Relationship and Dominion
- C-12 Two Kingdoms -- Two Sons
- C-13 Anointing (Divine Ability)
- C-14 Moving from a Maintenance Driven Christian to a Harvest Driven Christian
- C-15 Charity -- the Bridge to Spiritual Growth
- C-16 Man and Plant Life Cycle and Balance
- C-17 Spiritual Growth Life Cycle and Balance
- C-18 Imbalance Stops Spiritual Growth
- C-19 Love -- Man's Kingdom Vs. God's Kingdom
- C-20 Spiritual Growth Vs. Spiritual Decline
- C-21 The Spiritual Man Vs. the Carnal Man

## APPENDICES

### ***Alternate Subject Index for "Spiritual Growth"***

These are charts that apply to multiple subjects including the subject of Spiritual Growth:

- A-1 A Balanced Relationship with God
- A-5 Disciple's Levels of Relationship with Jesus
- B-1 Restoration of Dominion Model
- B-2 Relationship and Dominion -- Spiritual Growth
- D-1 The Tabernacle Plan -- Old Testament / New Testament
- D-2 The Body Makes Us World Conscience
- D-3 The Soul Makes Us Self-Conscious
- D-4 The Body / Soul / Spirit Model
- D-5 The Word Divides the Soul and Spirit
- D-6 The Flesh, the Soul or the Spirit Ruling
- E-3 Levels of Burden, Prayer and Anointing
- F-3 Path to the Supernatural -- "He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease"
- F-6 Gifts of the Spirit Flow Through the Charity Channel
- G-14 Preparing For and Retaining the Harvest
- H-19 How Am I Currently Managing God Given Resources
- H-20 How Should I Wisely Manage God Given Resources
- H-21 Self-Discipline Drives Change
- H-22 The Life Cycle of a Vision

# *Appendix 3 - Notes*

## **Introduction**

- (1) Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2002, by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, p. 505, 513, 1052.
- (2) Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

## **Section I**

### **Chapter 1**

- (1) E. M. Bounds, *E. M. Bounds on Prayer*, Copyright © 1997 by Whitaker House, p. 11, 12.
- (2) John Piper, *A Hunger for God*, Copyright © 1997 by Crossway Books, Wheaton Illinois, p. 242. All rights reserved.
- (3) Shelly Hendricks, *Evangelism God's Heartbeat*, Copyright © 1999 by Harvest Ministries Inc., Madisonville, Kentucky, p. 49. All rights reserved.

### **Chapter 2**

- (1) Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, Copyright © 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (2) Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2002, by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland Ohio, p. 434, 1598.

Note: Some of the concepts in this chapter are from a sermon preached by Rev. Wayne Huntley.

## APPENDICES

### Chapter 3

- (1) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Copyright © 1968, by Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, Volume 2, Chapter 3, p. 35, 36.

### Chapter 4

- (1) John T. Benson, Jr., song: *Just A Closer Walk With Thee*, Copyright © 1950.

## Section II

### Chapter 1

- (1) Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2002, by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, p. 569.
- (2) Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, Copyright © 1968, by Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, Volume 1, Chapters 1, 3.

### Chapter 2

- (1) Author Unknown.

### Chapter 3

- (1) Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

### Chapter 4

- (1) Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (2) Author Unknown.
- (3) Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database, Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

### Appendix 3 - Notes

- (4) Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary, Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc. All rights reserved
- (5) The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 2001, 2003 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (6) Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (7) Johnson Oatman, Jr., song: *I'll Trade the Old Cross for a Crown.*
- (8) MacArthur Study Bible, Copyright © 1997, by Word Publishing, p. 1937.
- (9) Interview by Paul Bradshaw with Rick Warren.

### Chapter 5

- (1) Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2002, by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, p. 569.
- (2) Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (3) Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (4) Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database, Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.
- (5) Author Unknown.
- (6) Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

## APPENDICES

- (7) The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 1962 by Moody Press.
- (8) Melody Ringo, “The Tyranny of Time”, *Change Magazine*, June 2007, p. 54.

### **Section III**

#### **Chapter 1**

- (1) Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Copyright © 2002, by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, p. 569.
- (2) E. M. Bounds, reference unknown.

#### **Chapter 2**

- (1) The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, Copyright © 2001, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

#### **Chapter 3**

- (1) Randy Simpson, song: *Sometimes He Calms Me*.

#### **Chapter 4**

- (1) E. W. Blandy, song: *Where He Leads Me*.
- (2) Stan Shockley, song: *Change Me, Lord*.

## ***Appendix 4 - About the Author***

The author's background includes four different areas of experience:

(1) Working thirty-three years in the challenging and exciting field of computer technology, serving both as a technologist and a manager, witnessing and experiencing almost unbelievable accomplishments and advancements.



(2) Working 50 years in various ministries in three home churches, serving at the individual and leadership levels: Home Bible Study and Discipleship Ministry (40 years), Sunday School Bus Ministry (10) Years, Sunday School Ministry, Compassion and Care Ministry, Home Fellowship Ministry, Youth Ministry, Visitor Follow-up Ministry, Nursing Home Ministry, Singles Ministry, Alcohol / Drug Abuse Mentoring Ministry and Prison Ministry.

(3) Researching, writing and publishing nine books.

(4) Preaching and teaching in many churches in the U.S., foreign missions churches and Bible schools (ordained minister with the United Pentecostal Church International; associated minister with UPCI Global Missions approved for foreign missions support assignments).

His ministry emphasis includes revival and spiritual growth of the saint for the purpose of more effective evangelism of a lost world. Some of the key ministry themes include:

## APPENDICES

- Relationship with God (impartation from the Father).
- Spiritual Growth (continuous transformation).
- Dominion (engagement in the Father's business with dominion over satan and sickness).
- God's perfect love growing and flowing in our lives.
- Urgency of the Father's business (managing our priorities consistent with our knowledge of the times).

### Ministry Venues:

#### **Global Missions** (particularly Bible schools)

We have spent several months teaching in Bible schools in: Manila, Philippines; Barcelona, Spain; and Madrid, Spain. We plan to continue this ministry in the future.

#### **Home Missions**

**(Pioneer works and small churches that are not self supporting)**

Every year a portion of our time is dedicated to this area. This is done on a volunteer basis with no expense to the pastor or the church.

#### **Established Churches**

### Special Services and Seminars

When needed, special services and seminars provide preaching, teaching and training for putting practical revival and evangelism principles into practice. Some of these services and seminars, summarized on the following page, apply to the entire church and some to selected groups in the church. Multimedia is used in the teaching and training presentations.



## Special Services and Seminars

### (1) Deeper Life Ministry

#### **(Doctrine – preaching and teaching the Word, three levels)**

- New Converts: Discipleship curriculum and classes.
- Entire Church: Teaching and preaching regarding the commitment and actions required to pursue spiritual maturity -- becoming a partaker of His divine nature.
- Inner Circle: Jesus modeled this special ministry by choosing a small inner circle of three out of the twelve disciples (Peter, James and John) whom He taught, prayed with and worked with separate from the other nine disciples. Jesus recognized that these were ready to move further into the supernatural and He accommodated that (e.g. Mount of Transfiguration, raising the dead, Gethsemane).

**Promote the pursuit of a greater hunger  
and reverence for the Word of God!**

### (2) Compassion and Care Ministry

#### **(Actions – fellowship and ministering to needs)**

- Planning and developing a more organized and effective Compassion and Care Ministry (Attracting, Winning, Retaining and making disciples).
- Teaching and training for a greater number of the laity to get involved in this ministry.
- Reaching sinners in our circle of influence (operating as both son of man and son of God).
- Caring for visitors and new converts (turning church greeters into caregivers):

Find a need and fill it! Find a hurt and heal it!

## APPENDICES

### Special Services and Seminars

#### (3) Prayer Ministry

##### **(Power – corporate and private prayer)**

- Planning and developing a more organized and powerful Prayer Ministry in the church.
- Involving a greater number of the laity in this ministry.
- Teaching and training regarding the development of a more balanced and effective prayer life (for children, new converts, and others struggling with their prayer life).

#### (4) Church Growth Vision and Planning

##### **(Direction)**

- Vision casting and planning to elevate and improve the organization structures and processes for the three key ministries of the church: Deeper Life Ministry (doctrine arm), Compassion and Care Ministry (actions arm), Prayer Ministry (power arm).
- Planning and preparation to reap and retain a greater harvest by mobilizing a greater number of trained laborers in the harvest.

Book of Acts Church Growth Foundational Principles

#### **(1) Doctrine (2) Fellowship / Breaking Bread (3) Prayers**

*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the **apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.** And the Lord **added to the church daily** such as should be saved. (Acts 2:41-43, 47)*

*Ministry Information*

Contact Information

**Telephone:** (281) 773-6534

**Email:** [jtwentier@peoplepc.com](mailto:jtwentier@peoplepc.com)

**Websites:** [My-Fathers-Business.net](http://My-Fathers-Business.net) (English)

[Negocios-De-Me-Padre.net](http://Negocios-De-Me-Padre.net) (Español)

**Home Church:** Greater Life Church, Webster, TX

Pastor: Rev. Mark Hughes

## APPENDICES