

Walking
THE WAY
Together



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Phillips

Pleasant Word

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*We are walking THE WAY together,
for by grace we have been saved
through faith in Jesus Christ,
and now we are living by faith,
depending upon Christ
as a risen new creation
and denying self
as a crucified old creation,
to be filled with the Spirit,
to love the Lord and others as self,
to count the cost,
to be healed healers,
and to take the basic steps of
baptism,
church,
prayer,
Word,
worship,
witnessing,
and discipleship,
until we complete our faith,
experiencing fully our position in Christ
and being found faithful to him.*

The Way is the plan and purpose of God for our lives. It is salvation. It is life, abundant life, eternal life. We must learn the Way. And even more importantly, we must walk the Way.

To whom would he teach knowledge? And to whom would he expound the message? They who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little.

—Isaiah 28.9-10

And we need to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the Way to us, precept upon precept, line upon line, each one building upon the one before, until the Way stretches out in front of us and beckons us to follow.

Letting the Spirit reveal the Way to us is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle of a beautiful scene. We put together piece after piece of the puzzle until the whole picture falls into place and may be enjoyed. We must keep letting the Holy Spirit reveal each truth of the Way to us, even if for a time the overall Way may not be understood, for when he is done the Way will most wondrously fall together and may then be set out upon.

This process also is like building a house. One does not finish the roof first. No, first the foundation, next the structure, and then the roof is completed. The Spirit will teach the Way to us in this fashion. We must let him set firm the foundation in our spirits and hearts and then allow him to continue to build, brick upon brick, truth upon truth, precept upon precept.

“And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto your seed all these countries. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

—Genesis 26.4

God chose the nation of Israel and blessed them. And then he wanted them to be the means of blessing to all the nations of the earth. God provides the Way for us and wills for us to walk it. But then he wants us to be avenues through which he may bring the Way to others so that they may walk along too. How eternally important this is!

This is like becoming the parent of a newborn baby. This is thrilling and exciting and joyous. But at the same time there is a sense of incredible responsibility for the new life that has been entrusted to one’s care. What grace to be given the Way! But also what responsibility!

*Perceive! Now is the well-accepted right time.
Perceive! Now is the day of salvation.*

—2 Corinthians 6.2

As a young boy, I was on the front porch of Grandma Phillips’ house with my brother, Steve. Our mother opened the front door and informed us that Grandma said we could have a piece of candy. She asked if we wanted the piece of candy now or if we wanted to save it until later. My brother, in typical prudent fashion, said he would wait till later. I quickly thought over the prospects of each choice. I concluded that if I waited

until later to get the candy, then I was assured of only one piece. But if I took the candy now, then maybe I could get another piece later too. I enjoyed my piece of candy, and then waited. And sure enough, when my brother got his candy, I was offered another piece. I have been a front porch person ever since. And certainly concerning the Way, we all need to be front porch persons.

But heed two stern words of caution at the outset. First, guard fiercely against making the Way solely a mental exercise, thus becoming deceived into believing that the Way is being walked when it is not. And second, be warned of assault and hardship that will seek to keep you from the Way.

Let us walk the Way together.

The Way

*Jesus is saying to him,
“I myself am being the way
and the truth and the life.”
—John 14.6*

*“Come in through the narrow gate,
because wide is the gate
and wide-spaced the way
which is leading away unto destruction,
and many are being
those who are coming in through it.
How narrow the gate
and having been crushed the way
which is leading away unto the life,
and few are being
those who are finding it!”
—Matthew 7.13-14*

*“And I am confessing this to you,
that according to the Way,
which they are calling a sect,
in this way
I am serving in worship the God of the fathers,
having faith in all those things
which have been written throughout the law
and in the prophets.”
—Acts 24.14*

The Way
is a path
with three gates.



Gate One



The first gate is at the beginning of the Way.

It is the gate of Faith.

It is the gate of “position”.

It has been called justification.

*“For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
in order that
everyone who is having faith into him
should not perish
but should have eternal life.”*

—John 3.16



Entrance



“Amen, amen, I am saying to you, the one who is having faith is having eternal life.”

—John 6.47

IN ORDER TO pass through gate one, we must come to the end of our own efforts to save ourselves and we must put our faith in Jesus Christ to save us.

God gave me the great inheritance of being raised by Christian parents, Norman and Rose Ann Phillips, and of being brought up in the church. Sometimes at night as a child, I would close my eyes and find myself lying upon one of the steps leading up to the throne of God with my back nestled against the next step up. The golden glow of the glory and love and peace of God enveloped me and comforted me until I drifted off to sleep. One Sunday night when I was eight years old, after

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the evening worship service of the First Baptist Church of Clinton, I asked my dad what I needed to do to be saved and to go to heaven. He told me the wonderful story of the beloved Son of God and the salvation that he had made possible. That night I stepped through gate one.

May you too make certain that you have passed through this first gate and are now on the Way, the path of salvation, the road to heaven. There is no more important decision you will ever make.

Three Key Words



For by grace you are saved through faith. And this is not out of you. It is the gift of God. Not out of works, in order that someone should not boast.

—Ephesians 2.8-9

There are three key words of stepping through gate one.

I. Saved

There is not being a righteous one, not even one.

—Romans 3.10

For all have sinned, and are falling short of the glory of God.

—Romans 3.23

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Envision that we are on the beach in California and have to swim the Pacific Ocean in order to escape some natural disaster behind us. We all set out swimming. Some of us would be able to swim out farther than others. The best swimmer of the world might make it the farthest. But all of us would fall far short of swimming across the ocean.

In a similar manner, imagine that we are on the edge of a bottomless chasm that is one hundred feet across and behind us a fire is raging so that our only hope of survival is to jump across to safety on the other side. We all jump. Again, some of us would be able to jump out farther than others. And the best long jumper in the world might go out the farthest. But we all would fall short of being able to reach the other side.

Each of us has sinned. And no matter how good we try to live, we all fall short of the glory of God and of his perfection and holiness. Not one of us is righteous, that is, no one has a right relationship with God and does right all the time. All our righteous acts, all our best efforts to be good enough on our own, are as filthy rags in the sight of God. (*Isaiah 64.6*)

For the wages of sin is death.

—*Romans 6.23*

Certain ones who (did not accept the salvation of Jesus Christ) will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

—*2 Thessalonians 1.9*

When working, a person receives on payday a wage that has been earned. The wage that we earn for our sin and shortcomings is death, that is, eternal separation from God. For death in the scriptures is separation, not extinction. On judgment day, we will receive the punishment of hell and eventually the lake of fire for our sinfulness.

What is the worst thing about sinning? For instance, what is the worst thing about stealing? The bad feeling? No. The enjoyment of having something for which we did not have to work may overpower our bad feeling. Getting caught? No. We may not get caught. Being punished? In some countries a person caught stealing has his hand chopped off. But no, this is still not the worst thing. The worst thing about stealing is that it makes a person a thief. It makes one a criminal. And how many crimes does it take to make a person a criminal? One. It does no good for a thief to tell the judge not to sentence him for robbing the bank on the basis that he did not kill anyone. The worse thing about committing a sin is that it makes us a sinner, and as a sinner, we are cut off forever from God.

We need to be saved.

II. Grace

For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Romans 6.23

But God is commending his own love unto us, because as we are still being sinners, Christ died for us.

—Romans 5.8

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For I gave over to you in first things, what also I received alongside, that the Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he has been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.

—1 Corinthians 15.3-4

If someone gives you a gift, by definition you have done nothing to earn it. Otherwise, it would not be a gift at all. Salvation is a gift from God. God loves us so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, to save us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, loves us so much that he left heaven and came to earth as one of us in order to save us. He lived a life without sin. He then went to the cross and shed his innocent blood to pay the price for the sins of the whole world, including ours, past, present, and future. Then he rose from the dead and ascended back to heaven. God offers us salvation as a gift of his Son and what he has done for us.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

—Isaiah 53.6

Visualize one hand with palm turned upward holding a book. Say that hand represents us and the book contains a record of all our sins, everything we have ever thought or done that was wrong. We bear that book of our sin and thus we are separated from God. But picture the other hand with an empty palm turned upward. Say

that hand pictures Jesus Christ with no sin of his own to bear or to pay for. Now see the book of our sin being taken from the hand that is us and being placed upon the hand that is Christ. In this way, Christ on the cross bore our sin and the price of it, shedding his precious blood in death for us.

Salvation is a gift. It is grace.

I attended Lynchburg Baptist College, founded by Dr. Jerry Falwell, and played wide receiver on the football team. When I got there, I discovered there were a lot of rules, most of which I seemed to have a natural ability to break.

Some student housing was on Treasure Island in the middle of the James River, accessible solely by a one way metal bridge, an island upon which was a guard shack by the bridge, the stately wooden white house of the warden, a building turned into a cafeteria, an old gym in which Arthur Ashe practiced as a youth, some old pale green wooden buildings around a courtyard which housed the boys in bunks in military fashion, a large field the team used for practice, and another housing area at the far end of the island for the girls of which I have no knowledge as any male found on that end was shot on site no questions asked. A former infirmary was converted into a special dorm for eight of us hardened inmates, and a hand-picked former golden gloves champion from Louisiana, who was pretty sure that we all were demon possessed, was assigned as our guard.

One night as we were having fun running through the other dorms tossing in lit firecrackers, I ran through

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the far dorm, which unlike the others was divided into rooms, and threw some into the monitor's room, thinking as I passed and seeing the books and papers spread out for study, "Now that is how a college room is supposed to look!"

Later I was awakened to the sound of fire trucks and emergency vehicles. I rushed outside to see the other building engulfed in flames on the end where the monitor stayed. No one was hurt but the building was pretty much destroyed. My heart sank and I confessed what I had done to the warden who had been out to get me for a long time. A gleam of satisfaction flickered in his eyes, as he said, "We got you this time. You will not only be kicked out of school but most likely you will go to jail as well!" He later summoned me to the big house and smirked, "You are to report to Dr. Falwell's office in the morning."

Following a troubled night, the next day I went and was ushered into the head man's office. He motioned for me to sit down in a chair in front of his wooden desk. He asked me what had happened and I told him everything. I sat there, staring at the carpet, weighed down with my guilt. Then I heard him laugh softly to himself and I looked up. "Sounds like something I would have done when I was your age," he said to me, "Don't worry about a thing, Mark. I will take care of everything." And he did. I never heard another word about it. That was grace.

III. Faith

This is being the flowing of the faith which we are preaching, that if you should confess with your

mouth the Lord Jesus and should have faith in your heart that God raised him out of the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one is having faith unto righteousness. And with the mouth he is confessing unto salvation.... For everyone who should call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

—Romans 10.9-10, 13

When a gift is offered you, in order to possess that gift you must reach out and take it. Then it is yours. We must reach out with our heart in faith and accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and then his gift of salvation is ours. But we must do more than believe about Jesus with our mind, which is like believing a gift is being offered but never actually accepting it. We must accept Jesus with our heart through faith, putting our complete trust in him to save us.

A tightrope walker walks upon a rope across Niagara Falls and back, pushing a wheelbarrow full of heavy rocks. He then asks the gathered crowd, “Who believes I can push a person in this wheelbarrow across the Falls and back?” All raise their hands. Then the man asks, “Who will be the first to get in?” All hands go down. Faith is getting in the wheelbarrow.

We may see a chair and need to sit down to rest. We may think the chair will support our weight, but faith is sitting down and putting our whole weight unto it.

At seminary, I took a course entitled, Psychology of Religion. During one class discussion, a fellow student spoke through his tears, “Fifteen years ago something happened to me that changed my life forever. I was

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mowing my grandmother's yard. All of a sudden, I could no longer see the ground. I had to stop mowing because I was afraid I would cut off my foot. I saw before me a huge wall. I intuitively knew that the wall was too big to climb over or to go around. I could not get past it. And I knew that this was the wall of heaven. In the wall was a small door. It was closed. I saw my mom and dad walking towards it. I was following my dad, hanging on to his coattails. As my mother got to the door, a voice from within the walls asked, 'Who are you?' She replied, 'Jane Smith.' The voice answered, 'I know you. You may enter.' The small door opened and she went inside. The door shut behind her. Next my dad approached the door. Again the voice from inside asked, 'Who are you?' My dad answered, 'Robert Smith.' The voice replied, 'I know you. You may enter.' The door opened again. As my father began to enter, I clutched even tighter onto his coattails. But the door began to shut before I could get inside. I cried out, 'Wait! Wait! I am Steve Smith. This is my mom and dad. Let me in! Let me in!' But the door continued to shut and the voice from inside said, 'I do not know you.' I stood there in my grandmother's yard and wept. Now able to see, I went inside the house into a room all by myself. I got down on my knees and asked Jesus to come into my heart and to save me. And he did. A great peace swept through my entire being. Now I knew that when the day came and I approached the door of heaven, I would hear Jesus say to me, 'I know you. You may enter.'"

Assurance



NOT LONG AFTER I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, I had doubts about my salvation which I voiced to my dad after church one Sunday morning. He dropped off the rest of the family at Wiley's Restaurant, downtown on the north side of the square. And then he drove me around, reassuring me that God promises those who have trusted in Jesus that they have eternal life with him, no matter if they feel like it or not, no matter what Satan might whisper in the ear.

It is good to record the date that one trusts in Christ and beside it to write down the verse, *John 3.16*, as the guarantee of God himself that one is saved, regardless of feelings or doubts.

Now my dad by occupation was a lineman for the county, for REA, a rural electric company. During

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devastating Midwestern thunderstorms and snowstorms, he often had to venture out in the midst of the severe weather to repair impaired and downed electrical lines, lines upon which farmers depended not only for their livelihoods but also for their lives. However, his stated goal in life was to be remembered as a good Christian. He said, “Some strive to be known as great race car drivers or sport figures, but I desire to be a servant of Christ and to be known as a Christian.” He accomplished his goal.

I was home from college for the summer and working at a greenhouse down the street. It was a pretty Saturday morning, when I glanced up from my work and was surprised to see my oldest brother walking towards me through the rows of flowers. His ashen face told me that something was terribly wrong.

After we got into the car, my brother quietly explained that our dad had suffered a heart attack. He had been mowing the yard, when he had to be rushed to the emergency room with chest pains. I remembered how dad had asked me to mow the yard the day before.

I was allowed to visit my dad in the intensive care unit of Golden Valley Hospital. I held his hand. His hands were tough as leather but gentle and loving. The hours of working two jobs in order to provide for our family were revealed in those hands. Those hands that played catch with me in the backyard day after day. Those hands that I had seen holding the Word of God for hours in study. My heart ached. He struggled to get out the last words I ever heard him say, “I wish I had been a better father.” And I wondered how he could ever have been better.

On the fourth day, I was asleep on a couch in the lobby outside the waiting room of the intensive care unit. I was startled awake by the words “Code Blue” blasting from the intercom. Rushing to one of the two small square windows in the swinging doors of the intensive care unit, I peered in. I saw the doctors putting the apparatus on dad that was designed to shock his heart into beating. His body jerked up. But I knew he was no longer there.

The night before his funeral, I was sitting in a chair on our front porch. For the first time since his death I began to weep. Through my tears and broken heart, I pleaded with God to let me hear my dad tell me just once more that God was God and that his Son, Jesus, was who he claimed to be. I wanted to hear him tell me once more that through my belief and trust in Jesus there was a heaven for which I was bound where I would be with God and him again.

God’s answer suddenly sobered me. Lightning illuminated across the entire sky, flashing repeatedly throughout the dark clouds, filling them with brilliant bursts of dazzling light. Deafening thunder followed one after the other, rattling the windows of our house. Again and again, the blazing lightning and fierce thunder manifested the glory and greatness of God. During that awesome display, I heard deep within me God saying quietly to me with a voice more real than any physical ear could detect, “I am God. I am who I say I am. And my Son is who he said he was. And your dad is safe with me forever.” My tears of sorrow turned into tears of joy. Peace filled my heart.

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Later that night, as the storm became distant, I was gently put to sleep by comforting rumbles of far away thunder. My dad would no longer have to brave the storms of the night. He was safe with God. And I slept. I have never doubted my salvation again. I know for certain that I have passed through gate one of the Way, just as my father before me.

The Children



After that children were brought to him in order that he should put the hands upon them and should pray forth. And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let go the children. And stop preventing them to come to me. For of such ones is being the kingdom of the heavens."

—Matthew 19.13-14

THE BEST TIME in life to enter through gate one is as a child. For all, no matter the age, must come to Christ with child-like faith in him. And the best time to lead someone else to Christ is when that person is still a child. For the older a person gets the harder it is to respond to Christ in faith.

A seminary professor, who had made a study of children and conversion, concluded that children could

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not come to Christ before the age range of twelve to fifteen years. As I sat in class hearing his claim, I raised my hand and said, “I was saved when I was eight years old. I did not understand then all that Jesus Christ had done to save me, and I still don’t. But there is one thing of which I am sure, and that is when I placed my faith in him to save me, he did.” Then wondering, I asked the class how many had accepted Christ at about the same age. Almost everyone raised a hand.

For each of our children, it was emphasized that God loved them and wanted them to believe into his Son, Jesus, and to become saved, and that they would know in their heart when the right time would be to make that all-important decision. And when that time came, they should place their faith into him.

Jonathan is the oldest. He is extremely intelligent and insightful and has a quiet, sensitive heart. He has brown hair, which is a bit curly, and blue-green eyes that glisten brightly with life and intelligence. He has a dry sense of humor, which he uses quite often, and speaks softly and tends to be quiet. He is a graceful and cerebral athlete. He is of humble nature, earning many academic awards and recognitions but not bothering to collect them or even to acknowledge them. He drew back from being the top student of his class in high school, though he never brought a book home to read or to study, so that he would not have to give a speech at the graduation ceremony. “After all,” he said, “the other guy works so hard and devotes so much time and effort to his school work.”

Once as a child, we were walking together through the train station in St. Louis to meet his incoming grandmother Rose. An elderly dark-skinned, dignified gentleman with white hair framing his statesman-like face, sat resting his hands on a cane like a king on a scepter. He watched us as we walked past. He looked at me and then at Jonathan, at Jonathan and then at me, and said, "Man, you must have spit him out of your mouth!"

We have a shared fondness for Tolkien's, "Lord of the Rings." He gave me a nice set of the books as a gift that I can see now as I write. He has been robbed twice at gunpoint. And once he wrecked the car, coming out of the road which ran between a car dealership and the Blockbuster store where he worked. He called. I could hear the shakiness of emotion in his voice. I was able to go and throw my arms around him and tell him how glad I was that he was all right. He has since attended North Carolina State University on academic scholarship, was awarded a Fellow position at Auburn University where he earned his Masters degree, and now works as a CPA, passing the test which he said was not all that everyone made it out to be.

Little Richmond Baptist Church was down a small winding highway in the foothills of North Carolina, a place passed on the way to somewhere else. But for a time this little church was having weekly youth evangelistic meetings. When Jonathan was still young, I took him to see what one of these evening services was like. There was a lot of singing and an emphasis upon believing in Christ, but it was not driven by high emotion, which suited Jonathan well, for he has always shied away from

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excessive sentiment. Afterwards, he simply told me that he was ready to be saved. On that Friday night, August 16, 1991, he knelt with me and prayed and, in his own quiet, sincere way, accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Whoever led those meetings may never know this side of heaven what eternal effect that meeting has had, but on that night my oldest son stepped through gate one, passing from death into life.

Matthew is a strong, emerald green-eyed version of John Travolta in the movie, "Michael," but with the heart of a Sylvester Stallone in "Rocky." He is fun, honest, tender-hearted, transparent, loyal, and loving. Children are drawn to him, and he to them. In this case, children are good judges of character.

Matthew is strong-willed. And when he was young, I had to make a choice. I could either discipline him every 10 minutes, or I could love him and hold him and nurture him all the more. I chose to lavish him with love. He flourished under this warmth of affection. And now he is the lavisher of love upon all who are fortunate enough to be in his life.

From the time he was born throughout the early years of his life, I used to hold him for hours, as I did all the children, and to tell him how special he was, how special he was to the Lord, how special he was to me. Oh course, he does not remember those times. But I do.

Matthew likes to have fun and loves to laugh. And he has a great laugh. I still can see him laughing and dancing with his little league baseball buddies, Kevin, Sam, and David, on top of the bench in the dugout, as

the PA system blared music between innings of a baseball game. Matthew is a good athlete, who loves to compete all out. He scored a record 42 goals in one season of soccer in high school.

And Matthew always looks out for the underdog, for those who need someone to look out for them. When his team was playing another town in soccer, there sometimes would be a certain player on the opposing team who played rough and would knock around some of Matthew's teammates, usually the smaller ones. Inevitably at some point in the game, without noticing how it happened, there would be the bully lying on the ground. And if you knew what to look for, you would see Matthew walking nonchalantly away. His teammates would have no more trouble that day.

On Sunday morning, July 3, 1994, young Matthew was sitting in the second pew from the left in North Lumberton Baptist Church, as I faced the congregation. The moment the song of invitation started to be song, Matthew stepped out and walked over to me and told me he wanted to be saved. We sat down together on the front right pew and I led him in a prayer, as he reached out with his oh so genuine heart and accepted Jesus Christ and took that most wonderful step through the entrance of the Way.

Andrew is acutely sensitive of heart and spirit, with brown eyes and originally blond hair that has changed colors over the years many times, not missing many shades of the spectrum. He has always had a heart for the Lord and those things spiritual. As a child, he was

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called the “little preacher man.” And even now, many years later, he is still known to his friends as the “Rev.” He is real and demands others be real with him. He is loyal and requires others to be loyal to him. He has always been loyal to his father, and sees the best in his dad which has meant more to me than he could know.

Andrew is most daring. Still a tiny tot, he sat astride his tricycle at the top of the numerous wooden steps that stretched down to the cement floor of an unfinished full basement. I saw the gleam in his eyes but could not get to him before he pushed off and headed down, bouncing and tumbling. Well, I know he survived, because he is still around, but I am not really sure how.

Andrew is most creative. An artist. Beautifully he draws fluid and meticulously detailed drawings of the most imaginative figures and scenes. Quoting Albert Einstein, he contends, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.”

He has never really liked school, that is, for the reasons that it is intended, and school has never really liked him. He can do advanced math in his head and give the answer, but when some math teachers have required that he write down the steps, he wonders why that is necessary. One English teacher demanded that I met with her at the office of the Vice Principal. She said that Andrew never caused a problem in class and was always respectful, but that he finished all the work that she could think to give him in the first few minutes of class and then would draw when he had nothing else to do, and she didn’t think he should. Another time, I was called into the office of another Vice Principal who was

getting ready to expel Andrew from school for having a pirate with a sword on his T-Shirt, yet as we sat there, right outside the office there was a life-sized wooden statute of the school's mascot, a six-foot pirate holding a sword. But through it all, and through three high schools due to moves, he graduated from Clinton Senior High School, the same high school as his dad.

Andrew, on Sunday, August 4, 1996, sat with me in a bedroom of the parsonage in Lumberton, North Carolina, bowed his head, and accepted Jesus Christ into his heart. And though Andrew is fatally allergic to bee stings, the far worse sting of death, which is the sin that separates from God, he will never know for Jesus through his death on the cross took that sting away from him forever.



Gate Two



The second gate is encountered along the Way.
It is the gate of Living by Faith.
It is the gate of “experience”.
It has been called sanctification.

*“I have been crucified with Christ.
And I myself am living no longer,
but Christ is living in me.
And what now I am living in flesh,
I am living by faith,
that one of the Son of God,
who loved me
and who gave over himself for me.”
—Galatians 2.20*



Entrance



With fear and trembling work out your own salvation.

—*Philippians 2.12*

IN ORDER TO pass through gate two, we must once again come to the end of our own efforts, this time our own efforts to live saved as Christ and as the Bible commands, and then we must live by depending upon Christ Jesus in faith.

Many of us beat against this second door for years. With bloodied fists of exhausting self-effort we fall to our knees in failure again and again and again. We have to reach the point where we admit wholeheartedly that we are powerless to live like Christ. There are no if's, no and's, no but's. There are no qualifications, no conditions. Powerless. Hopeless. We must come to know this

more than a mental confession. It must come from our entire being, from our heart and the depths of our soul. For as long as we think somewhere on the back burners of our mind that we are able to live like Christ on our own—if only we make just one more rededication, if only we have just one more spiritual high at some revival or conference or singing, if only we try just a little harder, pray a little longer, read the Bible a little more—we will try. And in the end, we will fail. Once again. We must finally cry out to God in utter frustration, “I cannot live as Christ!” Only then, at last, in that moment for which he has been waiting and working, God will say to us, “I know. I know. But Christ can. Live by faith in him.”

For we perceive that the law is being of the spirit. But I myself am being of the flesh, one who has been sold under sin. For what I am working I am not knowing. For what I am willing this I am not practicing. But what I am hating this I am doing. And if what I am not willing this I am doing, I am stating with the law that it is a thing of beauty. And now no longer I am working it, but the sin which is dwelling in me. For I perceive that a good thing is not dwelling in me, that is being in my flesh. For to will is lying alongside me, but to work the thing of beauty is not. For what good thing I am willing I am not doing. But what bad thing I am not willing this I am practicing. But if what I myself am not willing this I am doing, I myself no longer am working it, but the sin which is dwelling in me. Thus I am finding this law, as I am willing

to do the thing of beauty, that the bad thing is lying alongside me. For I am having pleasure in the law of God according to the inner human. But I am seeing an other law in my members, fighting as a soldier opposite to the law of my mind and capturing me in the law of sin which is being in my members. I myself am a miserable human. Who will rescue me out of this body of death? But grace be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Therefore then I myself indeed am serving with the mind the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin.

—Romans 7.14-25

The Lord has to allow us to be broken before we may pass through gate two. For only when we are utterly shattered of our self effort and of our confidence in our own selves are we able to step through. We cannot stride upright through this gate in arrogance or self-assurance, but must crawl through on our hands and knees in abject humility and self-denial.

After accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior at age eight, I tried for the next fifteen years to live up to how the Bible and an inner urging directed. I would seemingly succeed for a time. But then I would fall short. Frustration built. I kept thinking I would be successful the next time I rededicated myself to the Lord, but each time I would eventually fail. Fifteen years of rededications followed by fifteen years of failures. It had to stop.

“God!” I silently screamed, “I know that you are God. And I know that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

But I cannot live how you want me to live. I cannot be like you have commanded me in the scriptures. I cannot live as Christ!”

Frustration came to a head late one night while I sat alone at my mother’s kitchen table. I had to be free of my failings, but my words sounded empty as I once again begged God, “Please somehow deliver me from myself. Show me how to be like Christ.” But the hollowness and disillusionment remained, and I woke up the next morning, lying on the couch, my dad’s pistol still in my hand.

A few days later, my mother and I were driving up to Nebraska to visit my oldest brother and his family. Driving down the highway, a question gently entered my mind. What was the difference between my spirit and my soul? I did not know the answer. And nor did my mom when I asked her. The question lingered.

Touring us through the church where he served as minister, my brother showed us the church library. While browsing through some of the books, I asked him about the question of spirit and soul and the difference between them. He pointed to a three volume set of pinkish covered books entitled, “The Spiritual Man,” by Watchman Nee. Each volume’s back cover had an outline of the books’ contents, which included headings dealing with spirit, soul, and body. My brother let me borrow the books.

Great relief and joy engulfed me as I read. The Lord began to reveal the different aspects of my spirit and my soul and how to distinguish between them. Like the flicking on of a light will instantly illumine objects previously

shrouded in darkness, this initial revelation allowed me to begin to see the Way. I began to see how to satisfy my inner longing to live as Christ and for Christ.

Because I had been trying to live like Christ and to serve him on my own in my own strength, God had to allow me to fail again and again. I had to understand that I was helpless to be like Christ apart from Christ. It was only when I had reached the point of frustration and exclaimed, "I cannot live as Christ," that I was finally ready to hear that only as a new creation who lives in total dependence upon Christ could I ever be like Christ.

As a rescuer is able to save a panicked drowning person only after that person has exhausted himself, I had to come to the end of myself in order to traverse the second gate of the Way. The light was on. I finally saw the truth. It was similar to passing through the first gate, when I realized that no amount of self-effort could save me and I had to trust in Jesus, for now I had to come to the end of myself all over again and had to depend further still upon Jesus in order to live saved. In the past I had criticized God for my inability to live like he wanted, for there not being a way. After God revealed this second gate, I intuitively heard him say to me, "Here is the Way! Now what are you going to do?" I knew I had no more excuses.

Having gone through gate one, all else in your life pales in significance to getting past this second gate and living beyond it. "The Spiritual Man" should be read, as this writing seeks simply to be a companion to it.

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There are two great distinctions that help unlock the second gate of the Way:

***** The distinction between our spirit, our soul, and our body as played out in the Way.**

***** The distinction between our position in Christ and our experience of that position.**

The first distinction deals more with our position that is granted through gate one. And the second distinction moves more into our experience of that position as we pass through gate two. But the latter rests upon the former.

Spirit, Soul, and Body



MAKING A DISTINCTION between spirit, soul, and body is the first most important truth of the second gate of the Way.

And may the God of peace set you apart unto God wholly complete. And may your spirit and soul and body be kept without fault as complete in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—1 Thessalonians 5.23

We are comprised of spirit, soul, and body.

I. Creation of Humans

In the creation of us as humans, God formed us in the following manner:

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Our body was made of dust, of the earth.

“By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, until you return unto the ground out of which you were taken. For dust you are, and unto dust you will return.”

—Genesis 3.19

Our spirit came as the breath of God.

But there is a spirit in people, and the breath of the Almighty is being the one who is teaching.

—Job 32.8

Our soul was formed as the spirit came into the body.

And the Lord God formed the human taking dust of the ground, and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became unto a living soul.

—Genesis 2.7

Spirit

Our spirit was created to be joined with the Spirit of God and to rule us in accordance to God.

And the one who is being glued to the Lord is being one spirit.

—1 Corinthians 6.17

Our spirit is our inmost part.

The lamp of the Lord is the spirit of humans, which is searching all the innermost parts of his being.
—Proverbs 20.27

By our spirit we are able to sense God, as our physical senses allow us to be aware of the world around us. By our spirit we are able to perceive the thoughts, the will, and the heart of God and to commune and interact with him. We may thus know God through our spiritual connection with his Spirit.

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, should give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.
—Ephesians 1.17

I am saying the truth in Christ, I am not lying, as my conscience is witnessing with me in the Holy Spirit.
—Romans 9.1

God is Spirit. And it is binding for those who are worshiping him to worship in spirit and in truth.”
—John. 4.24

Through our spirit we are able to be united to God and to know him through the Spirit of God.

Soul

Our soul was created to depend upon God and to appropriate God from our spirit being joined with the Holy Spirit.

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

—Romans 8.14

The soul is the outer covering of the spirit.

Our soul gives us self-consciousness. It is the seat of our personality.

The soul is what we call, “I”.

Our soul was created to serve under our spirit. Nevertheless our soul was created sovereign. We choose for ourselves whether we will serve God or our own selves or our body or even Satan.

*And if it seems evil unto you to serve the Lord,
choose you this day whom you will serve, whether
the gods which your fathers served that were on the
other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites,
in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my
house, we will serve the Lord.*

—Joshua 24.15

The soul is our “control center.” It mediates between the spirit and the body, being joined to the spiritual realm through the spirit and to the physical realm through the body.

The soul has three main functions:

- (1) Will—our ability to choose.
Without our will, we are an automation, a puppet or robot.
We were created to will in union with the will of God.
- (2) Mind—our ability to think.
Without our mind, we are dull and senseless.
We were created to think in union with the thoughts of God.
- (3) Emotion—our ability to feel.
Without our emotion, we are as unfeeling as wood or stone.
We were created to feel in union with the feelings of God.

Body

Our body was created to be ruled by our soul in accordance to what our soul has appropriated of God from our spirit being joined with the Holy Spirit.

For you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

—1 Corinthians 6.20

But I am disciplining my body and am leading it into being a servant, lest in some way, having

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preached to others, I myself might become unapproved.

—1 Corinthians 9.27

The body is the outer covering of the soul.

The Bible calls it the “outward man”.

It is the least noble part of us, but it is not evil.

Our body allows us to be conscious of the physical world and to be connected with it through its five functions of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

Summary

In summary, God’s Spirit dwells in our spirit, self dwells in our soul, and physical senses dwell in our body.

You perceive that you are being the temple of God and the Spirit of God is dwelling in you, do you not?

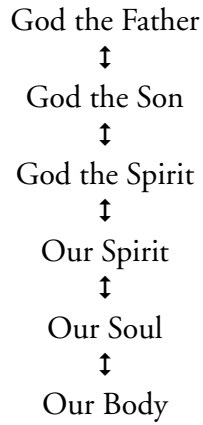
—1 Corinthians 3.16

We are like the Temple. God within the Holy of Holies ruled the priests in the Holy Place, and the priests then ruled the people in the Outer Court. God by the Holy Spirit within our spirit rules us, our soul, and then we rule our body.

We are like a target with three circles. The inner circle, the bull’s-eye, represents the spirit. The next circle out would be the soul. And the outermost circle the body.

We are like a Russian stacking doll. This painted wooden doll may be pulled apart in the middle and opened and inside there is another, smaller painted wooden doll. This one too may be pulled open, and inside there is another, even smaller wooden doll. Our innermost part is our spirit, the only part capable of being joined to God's Spirit. Our soul encases our spirit. And our body, our outermost part, encases our soul.

Creation...



II. The Fall

Two Trees

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden to the rising of the sun, and placed there the human, whom he molded. And God rose up out further out

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of the earth every beautiful tree for perceiving and a thing of beauty for eating. And the tree of the life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were in the middle in the garden.... And the Lord God commanded Adam (human), saying, "From every tree in the garden, you will freely eat. But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you should not eat of it. But in whatever day you should eat from it, you will surely die."

—Genesis 2.8-9, 16-17

The tree of life represented dependence upon God. By eating its fruit, Adam and Eve would be relying upon God and would be obedient to him, as he had said they could freely eat of its fruit. Their spirit would be strengthened so that they might draw from the Spirit of God.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil represented independence from God and rebellion against him. By eating its fruit, they would be relying upon their own selves and would be disobedient to God, as he had forbidden them to eat of its fruit. Their soul would be strengthened over their spirit, thus casting their spirit from its ruling position. Their spirit would be suppressed under their soul, causing instant death, separation from God, as later physical death would bring separation of soul from body.

The result of eating the forbidden fruit would be that Adam and Eve, who had known only good, would also know evil. By knowing contrasting evil, they would know how good life had been. God did not want them to experience evil, but only good. But if God only

wanted humans to experience good, why did he place both trees in the garden? The answer lies in the ability of choice, which God had created in us. If God did not provide a choice, then we would have no option but to choose God and to obey him. There would have been no alternative. But God desires us to come willingly to him, as children to a loving father, and to enter into a relationship of love with him. So he gave a choice.

Imagine standing with your arms to your side and then being wrapped with duck tape, beginning from your feet and continuing to the top of your head. How horrible that would be! You were created to move about but you would not be able to. We also were created to make choices for our selves and God gave us that opportunity. To not do so would have been cruel and lessened what we were created to be.

The Choice

And the snake was more thinking than all the wild beasts which the Lord God made. And the snake said to the woman, "Because why said God, 'You should never ever eat from every tree in the garden?'" And the woman said to the snake, "From fruit of the tree of the garden we will eat. But from fruit of the tree, which is being in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You will not eat from it and nor should you touch it, in order that you should not die.'" And the snake said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God perceived that in whatever day you should eat from it, your eyes will be thoroughly opened up, and you will be as gods, knowing a thing of beauty and an

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evil thing.” And the woman perceived that a thing of beauty is the tree for eating and that it is pleasing to the eyes to perceive and it is being a beautiful thing for the purpose to be wise. And having taken of its fruit, she ate. And she gave also to her husband with her. And they ate. And the eyes of the two were thoroughly opened up. And they knew that they were being naked. And they stitched leaves of a fig tree and made for themselves articles of clothing which fastened around.

—Genesis 3.1-7

For their own individual reasons, Adam and Eve each chose their souls, their selves, over their spirits, and thus they became fallen creations.

Eve was deceived.

Previous to this tragedy, a splendid angel, desiring to be his own god, believing that on his own, apart from God, he could be like God, rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. (*Isaiah 14.12-14; Ezekiel 28.12-14*). This fallen being, now known as Satan, came as a serpent to Eve, seeking her fall like that of his own. He first suggested a lie to Eve in the form of a question, asking if God had said she could not eat from any of the trees in garden, prodding Eve to think badly of God, to reason that God was unfair for forbidding the eating of the fruit of one tree. Eve’s reply, adding her own words to God’s, saying that God had said she was not to touch the forbidden tree, shows that Eve was succumbing to the serpent’s poison. Then Satan openly lied to Eve, saying that what God said would happen if she ate the fruit

would not happen. And then he climaxed his case by hissing to Eve that the real reason God did not want her to eat of the forbidden tree was because, when she did, she herself would become as a god, being just as smart as God on her own. Satan deceived Eve by the same lie that he had made himself believe and that caused his fall, the lie that a created being, whether angel or human, could on its own, apart from God, be like God.

Then Eve, lusting with her eyes, saw how the fruit looked beautiful and pleasing to eat, and, believing the fruit would make her as wise as God, took and ate. The soul of Eve overthrew her spirit, inflicting death, spiritual separation from God. Her spirit did not cease to exist but became cut off from the Spirit of God. She did become her own god, resulting in the life of her soul becoming her only energizing force rather than the life of God, and she was left with her own feeble reasoning instead of the wisdom of God.

The other tree, the tree of life, would have given the life of God to her spirit, allowing Eve, by her spirit being joined to the Spirit of God, to be like God and to receive the wisdom of God but through dependence upon God. God was not threatened by Eve having his wisdom, but rather had provided the very way for that to happen.

Adam was not deceived. (*1 Timothy 2.14*)

Instead, he apparently chose his emotional attachment for Eve or his physical attraction to her over his spiritual relationship with God. Thus the soul of Adam, acting independently of God, overthrew his spirit and

his spirit became separated from God. Adam allowed his soul to become lord of him and the life of his soul, the same life animating the animals around him, to become his only energizing force. Death eventually spread throughout his entire being, separating his spirit and soul from his body in physical death. Adam had fallen.

The tree of life would have enlivened the spirit of Adam with the very life of God, the life which empowers God to be God. Adam would have been enabled to receive God and the love of God through dependence upon God. But Adam chose his own selfish love or lust instead of the pure love of God. Would God have let him be without a mate if he had chosen to live in reliance upon God and thus kept his spirit ruling over his soul? Perhaps if he had, Adam would have been able to restore Eve, his mate. Only as we remain in right relationship with God are we able to love others with the altruistic love of God.

The Consequences.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as he is walking around in the garden in the breezy time of the day. And both Adam and his wife hid from the face of the Lord God in the middle of the trees of the garden.

—Genesis 3.8

The effect of sin is evidenced at once. Adam and Eve hid from God. They began to experience the estrangement from God that God had warned would take place. Whenever we are distant from God, it is because we have moved not him.

And the Lord God called Adam and said to him, "Adam, where are you?" And he said to him, "I heard your voice, as you are walking around in the garden. And I feared, because I am being naked. And I hid." And he said to him, "Who told to you that you are naked? You ate not from the tree, which I commanded to you not to eat, did you?" And Adam said, "The woman herself, whom you gave with me, gave to me from the tree. And I ate." And the Lord the God said to the woman, "Why did you this thing?" And the woman said, "The snake deceived me. And I ate."

—Genesis 3.9-13

Adam and Eve both tried to pass the buck for their disobedient decisions, though Eve seems closer to taking responsibility than Adam. No matter the push or pull upon us, for in this life there will always be one or the other, we are responsible for our own choices, not as victims but rather as perpetrators.

And the Lord God said to the snake, "Because you did this thing, you are cursed above all the animals and all the wild beasts of the earth. Upon your stomach you will go and earth you will eat all the days of your life. And I will put hatred between you and between the woman and between your seed and between her seed. He himself will strike your head. And you yourself will strike his heel."

—Genesis 3.14-15

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Satan was cursed to crawl on his belly in the dirt, as he would continue to hate the human race that had been created from it. It may be no coincidence that Satan, who had once been so favored by God with beauty and high position in heaven, shows up as a fallen creature at the creation of humans, who now have become the center of God's attention. Satan would continue to strike at the heel of humans, but one day a human would come and strike his head, inflicting upon him his ultimate defeat.

And to the woman he said, "I will increase more your griefs and groaning in childbearing. In griefs you will bear children. And to your husband will be your desire (submission). And he himself will be lord of you."

—Genesis 3.16

Eve would now have more sorrow in childbirth, perhaps because now she would bear forth children into a cruel, fallen world, or because now a baby would have to be born further developed in order to survive in such a diseased world. And in order to establish order in the resulting selfish, chaotic state of the human race, she is placed in a submissive role to her husband.

And to Adam he said, "Because you heard the voice of your wife and ate from the tree, which I commanded to you, 'You should not eat of it,' cursed will be the earth because of you. In griefs you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it will rise up to you. And you will eat the

grass of the field. By the sweat of your face you will eat your bread until that you turn forth unto the earth, out of which you were taken, because earth you are being and unto earth you will return.” And Adam called the name of his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all those who are living.

—Genesis 3.17-20

Adam brought a curse upon the earth, whose care had been entrusted to him. Now he would know many griefs and would have to work hard in order to survive. But he still found comfort in the companion whom the Lord had given him.

And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife inner clothes worn next to the skin of skins of leather and sunk them in them.

—Genesis 3.21

God still loved Adam and Eve and covered their nakedness, not with inadequate leaves but with leather. God remains full of love for us no matter what and always wants to care and to provide for us.

And God said, “Perceive! The man has become as one out of us with the result to know a thing of beauty and an evil thing. And now lest at any time he should stretch out the hand and should take of the tree of the life and should eat and he will live unto the enduring age.” And the Lord God sent forth him out from the garden to work

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the earth, out of which he was taken. And he cast out the man. And east of the garden he placed in order the cherubim and the flaming large sword, that one turning itself, to guard the way of the tree of the life.

—Genesis 3.22-24

Eden itself had to be vacated. The garden was full of the goodness of God and was meant for the enjoyment of humans as they lived in spiritual union with God. But now paradise had become a place of indulgence for the soul and for the body that would lead to the further break down of both. Hopefully, hardship would lead them to seek God and to rely upon him rather than upon themselves. This still remains a reason why God often must limit the amount of ease and comfort in our lives.

The Inheritance

Because of this, as indeed through one human the sin came in into the world, and through the sin the death, in this way also death came through unto all humans, because all sinned.

—Romans 5.12

As descendants of Adam, we all have inherited the fallen condition from him, being “in Adam” when Adam sinned and fell. And furthermore, we all have sinned ourselves and have chosen for ourselves the fallen condition. Thus the damning consequence and eternal result of the Fall is that we are born as a fallen,

old creation, and then we willingly choose for ourselves to be an old creation.

We were born in a place through no choice of our own, but rather because we had an ancestor who at some point made the decision to move to that location. But if we remain all our lives in the place where we were born, it is because we ourselves have chosen to stay there.

III. Old Creation

Now the ones who are being in the flesh are not able to please God.”

—Romans 8.8

The old, fallen creation, or the flesh, is a person...
who is ruled by his soul, or
who is ruled by his body, and
whose spirit is eternally separated from God.

Our Spirit

Our spirit, the noblest part of our being and the part capable of knowing and being united with God, is overruled, separating us from God. And our spirit has no way on its own to overthrow our soul. Thus we are separated from God now and forever.

And a human of the soul is not accepting the things of the Spirit of God. For they are being foolishness to him and he is not having power to know them, because they are being examined with the spirit.

—1 Corinthians 2.14

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Certain ones who will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

—2 Thessalonians 1.9

Our Soul

We allow our soul to rule us. We are our own lord. The life of our soul, our natural life, is our source of energy. We live of ourselves for ourselves. What a selfish life this is!

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way.

—Isaiah 53.6

We, that is, our soul as an old creation, make our choices according to our own will, considering ourselves quite capable of running our own lives and not wanting to be told what to do. But we end up shipwrecking what God created us to be.

For those ones who are being according to flesh are thinking those things of the flesh, but those ones according to spirit (Spirit) those things of the spirit (Spirit). For the way of thinking of the flesh is death, but the way of thinking of the spirit (Spirit) is life and peace, because the way of thinking of the flesh is hatred unto God. For it is not being placed under authority to the law of God. For not even is it having power. And those ones who are being in the flesh are not having power to please God.

—Romans 8.5-8

We think according to our own mind, deeming ourselves to be so very wise and intelligent. But all our fleshly reasoning is actually folly in the eyes of God. In our own wisdom we become fools.

But you yourselves learned not in this way the Christ, if indeed you heard him and in him you were taught, just as truth is being in Jesus, that you place away from yourselves, according to the former conduct, the old human which is being made to decay according to the intense feelings of the deception...

—Ephesians 4.20-22

We feel according to our own emotions, being controlled by our selfish, erratic feelings, riding the waves of emotional highs and then plummeting to corresponding lows. How good it is to have emotions in their proper position of being subject to the rule of the spirit, but how miserable it is to be jerked around by the tyrannical whims of emotions that were never meant to be in charge!

Our Body

We can even allow our body with its desires and cravings to rise up and be lord. Our body demands, “Satisfy me!” And we rush to fulfill its lusts. We subject our soul to our body’s cravings, suppressing our spirit even further down underneath our soul, and thus we slip into having our lowest, basest part rule us.

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For when we were being in the flesh, the passions of sins, those ones through the law, were being at work in our members, to bear fruit to death.

—Romans 7.5

The Old Creation...



IV. Salvation

Jesus is saying to him, "I myself am being the way and the truth and the life. Not even one person is coming to the Father if not through me."

—John 14.6

His Life

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since a man I am not knowing?" And having

answered, the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come over upon you. And the power of the Highest will cast a shadow upon you. Therefore also that holy one who is being born will be called the Son of God.

—Luke 1.34-35

But you are he that took me out of the womb. You made me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon you from the womb. You are my God from my mother's belly.

—Psalm 22.9-10

Therefore Jesus said, "When you should lift high the Son of Man, after that you will know that I myself am being, and from myself I am doing not even one thing. But just as the Father taught me, these things I am speaking. And the one who sent me is being with me. He let go me not alone, because I myself am doing at all times those pleasing things to him."

—John 8.28-29

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came as one of us, as a human, being different only in that he was born of Mary and the Holy Spirit in order not to be born in the fallen condition passed down from Adam, for he would be the new head of a redeemed humanity. Jesus then lived a life without sin, never once allowing his soul or his body to rise up and sever his spirit from the Holy Spirit, but rather lived always in dependence upon his Father in order to do always what was pleasing to him, as his spirit was filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus modeled for

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us the life of faith and demonstrated how such a life is possible, showing what it is like to be a human being as God created us all to be.

His Death

For as we are still being ones without strength, still according to a right time Christ died for ungodly ones. For with toiling someone will die for a righteous one. For with quickness someone is even being bold to die for the good one. But God is commending his own love unto us, because as we are still being sinners, Christ died for us.

—Romans 5.6-8

Our complete being of spirit, soul, and body had come under the death penalty because of sin. On the cross Jesus paid the penalty for all our sin and the ransom for our separation from God in his body, soul, and spirit.

Jesus paid in his body.

(Christ) who himself bore our sins in his body upon the tree, in order that, having become away from the sins, we might live to righteousness, by whose wound you were cured.

—1 Peter 2.24

As many were astonished at you. His visage was so marred more than any human, and his form more than the sons of humans.

—Isaiah 52.14

He suffered indescribable physical torture and execution, being beaten, whipped, crowned with thorns, and crucified, so much so that his appearance no longer resembled that of a human being.

Jesus paid in his soul.

After that he is saying to them, "My soul is being encompassed by grief until death. Remain here and be awake with me."

—Matthew 26.38

He suffered mental and emotional trauma to the point of death.

After that all the disciples, having let go him, fled.

—Matthew 26.56

He suffered the abandonment of even his closest followers and friends.

After that the soldiers of the governor, having taken alongside Jesus into the praetorium, gathered together upon him the whole band of soldiers. And having sunk him out of his clothing, they put around him a scarlet cloak. And having twisted together a crown out of thorns, they placed it upon his head and a reed in his right hand. And having fallen on a knee in front of him, they played at him, saying, "Rejoice, King of the Jews!" And having spit on him, they took the reed and were striking on his

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head. And when they played at him, they sunk him out of the scarlet cloak and sunk him in his own outer clothes and led him away for the purpose to crucify him.

—Matthew 27.27-31

He bore the shame and humiliation due us for our sins.

Jesus paid in his spirit.

And from the sixth hour darkness took place upon all the land until the ninth hour. And around the ninth hour Jesus shouted up with a great voice, saying, "Eli, eli, lema savachthani?" This is being, "My God, my God, why did you forsake me?"

—Matthew 27.45-46

He suffered the most in his spirit, as he was separated from his loving Father for the only time in eternity.

After this, Jesus, perceiving that already all things have been completed, in order that should be completed the Writing, is saying, "I am thirsting." A vessel was lying full of sharp wine. Therefore having placed a sponge full of sharp wine around on hyssop, they brought forth to his mouth. Therefore when he took the sharp wine, Jesus said, "It has been completed!" And having bowed the head, he gave over the spirit.

—John 19.28-30

His Resurrection

And late day of the sabbath, as it is dawning unto the first day of the week, came Mary the woman of Magdala and the other Mary to observe the burial place. And perceive! A great shaking took place. For an angel of the Lord, having stepped down out of heaven and having come forward, rolled away the stone and was sitting down up over it. And the perception of him was being as lightning and his clothing white as snow. And from the fear of him those who are keeping guard were shaken and became as dead ones. And having judged forth, the angel said to the women, "Stop you fearing. For I perceive that you are seeking Jesus the one who has been crucified. He is not being here. For he was raised just as he said. Come perceive the place where he was lying. And quickly, having gone, say to his disciples that he was raised from the dead. And perceive! He is leading before you unto Galilee. There you will perceive him. Perceive! I said to you." And having come away quickly from the place of remembrance with fear and great joy, they ran to tell forth a message to his disciples. And perceive! Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" And those ones, having come forward, took by might his feet and worshiped him. After that Jesus is saying to them, "Stop fearing. Go under way. Tell forth a message to my brothers in order that they should come forth unto Galilee, and there they will perceive me."... And the eleven disciples went unto Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus himself placed in order to them. And

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having seen him, they worshiped him. But some were of two minds. And having come forward, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All authority was given to me in heaven and upon earth. Therefore, having gone, make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all as much as I commanded you. And perceive! I myself am being with you all the days until the completion of the age."

—Matthew 28.1-20

To these ones he also stood alongside, as one who is living, after that he suffered, by many sure proofs, through forty days being visible to them and saying these things about the kingdom of God.... And having said these things, as they are looking, he was lifted up. And a cloud took him up from their eyes. And as they were being ones who are looking intently into the heaven as he is going, and perceive! Two men had stood alongside them in white clothes. And those ones said, "Men, ones of Galilee, why have you stood looking into the heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into the heaven in this way will come in what manner as you observed him going into the heaven."

—Acts 1.3, 9-11

Jesus rose from the dead to restore our position with God, to make us new, as ones joined spiritually with God now and forever through his Spirit.

“In Christ”

*So that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old things came aside. Perceive! Things have
become new.*

—2 Corinthians 5.17

As soon as we step through gate one by believing into Jesus Christ to save us, we are placed “in Christ” by God.

A bookmark is placed within a book, so that whatever happens to the book happens to the bookmark. If the book is cast into the fire, the bookmark is consumed along with it, or if the book is placed in a treasured spot upon the shelf, the bookmark is placed there within it, because the bookmark is “in” the book.

Being “in Christ” means two overwhelmingly significant facts of salvation, two fundamental truths of the Way. The importance of these two essentials of the Way cannot be underscored enough. They should be underlined and highlighted. They are the two underpinnings of gate two. Thus this gate is distinguished by the number two. It is the second gate. It is understood by two great distinctions. And now it is marked by these two fundamentally crucial facts:

***** When Christ was crucified and buried, we, as an old creation, were crucified and buried with him.**

*Therefore what will we say? Should we remain on
in sin in order that grace should increase more?
May it not take place! We certain ones who died*

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away to sin, how will we still live in it? Or are you not understanding that we as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? Therefore we were buried together with him through the immersion into the death, in order that as indeed Christ was raised out of dead ones through the glory of the Father, in this way also we ourselves should walk around in newness of life. For if we have become ones growing together in the likeness of his death, but also we will be of the resurrection. Knowing this, that our old human was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin should be made not to work throughout, that we no longer serve sin. For the one who died has been made righteous from the wrongdoing. And if we died away with Christ, we are having faith that also we will live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised out of the dead, no longer is dying. Death is no longer being lord of him. For what he died, he died to sin once for all. And what he is living, he is living to God. In this way also reason you yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but ones who are living to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore stop letting sin reign as king in your body of death to obey its lusts. And stop setting your members alongside as instruments of injustice to sin. But set yourselves alongside to God as ones who are living out of the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin will not be lord of you. For you are not being under law but under grace.

—Romans 6.1-14

***** When Christ arose and ascended back to heaven, we, as a new creation, arose and ascended with him.**

But the God who is being rich in mercy, through his much love which he loved us, and as we are being dead in fallings aside, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are being ones who have been saved—and raised us together and sat us down together in the places of heaven in Christ Jesus, in order that he might show in the ages, which are coming, the casting beyond riches of his grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus.

—Ephesians 2.4-7

V. New Creation

The new creation is a believer in Christ Jesus...

who is ruled by his spirit as it is joined to the Holy Spirit,

who depends in his soul completely upon Christ in order to appropriate Christ from his spirit being joined with the Holy Spirit, and

who then orders his body to act in accordance to what his soul has appropriated of Christ.

Our Spirit

Our spirit is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and rules us in accordance to Christ.

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And the one who is being glued to the Lord is being one spirit.

—1 Corinthians 6.17

That which has been brought into being out of the flesh is being flesh. That which has been brought into being out of the Spirit is being spirit.

—John 3.6

For the Spirit is searching all things, even the depths of God. For who of humans has perceived the things of the human if not the spirit of the human, that one in him? In this way also the things of God not even one person knew if not the Spirit of God. And we ourselves received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, that one out of God, in order that we might perceive those things which have been given grace by God to us, what things also we are speaking not in taught words of human wisdom, but in taught ones of spirit (Spirit), judging together things of the spirit with things of the spirit. And a human of the soul is not accepting the things of the Spirit of the God. For they are being foolishness to him and he is not having power to know them, because they are being examined with the spirit. And the one of the spirit is examining all things. And he himself is being examined by not even one person. For who knew the mind of the Lord who will instruct him? But we ourselves are having the mind of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 2.10b-16

By our spirit being joined to the Holy Spirit, we sense and know Christ, we are able have a life relationship with him, and we are energized with his very life and power.

Our Soul

We in our soul live in total reliance upon Christ in order to appropriate Christ through our spirit being joined with his Spirit.

I have been crucified with Christ. And I myself am living no longer, but Christ is living in me. And what now I am living in flesh, I am living by faith, that one of the Son of the God, who loved me and who gave over himself for me.

—Galatians 2.20

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

—Romans 8.14

As Christ has been imparted to our spirit by the indwelling Holy Spirit, this makes it possible for us, that is, our soul, to take Christ for ourselves from our spirit in order that we may live like Christ. The soul of the new creation is characterized by dependence upon Christ. In this way, we appropriate Christ into the will, mind, and emotions of our soul.

(1) Our Will.

As we depend upon Christ, we are able to take for our own the very will of Christ from the

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Holy Spirit in our spirit. In this way, we are able to will the will of Christ, to will as he wills. It is not that Christ wills for us, but that we will, we make our own choices, but we will the will of Christ that we have gained from our spiritual union with his Spirit.

For God is being the one who is being at work in you both to will and to work for his supposing well.

—*Philippians 2.13*

(2) Our Mind.

As we depend upon Christ, we are able to take for our own the very mind of Christ from the Holy Spirit in our spirit. In this way, we are able to think the lofty thoughts of Christ, to think as he thinks. Again it is not that Christ thinks for us, but that we think, we use our mind, but we think the thoughts of Christ that we have gained from our spiritual union with his Spirit.

For those ones who are being according to flesh are thinking those things of the flesh, but those ones according to spirit (Spirit) those things of the spirit (Spirit). For the way of thinking of the flesh is death, but the way of thinking of the spirit (Spirit) is life and peace, because the way of thinking of the flesh is hatred unto God.

—*Romans 8.5-7*

(3) Our Emotion.

As we depend upon Christ, we are able to take for our own the very emotions of Christ from the Holy Spirit in our spirit. In this way we are able to feel the actual feelings of Christ, to feel as he feels, to love as he loves. Once again it is not that Christ feels for us, but that we feel, we use our emotions, but we feel the feelings of Christ that we have gained from our spiritual union with his Spirit.

By reason of this I am bending my knees to the Father, out of whom every family in heavens and upon earth is being named, in order that he should give to you according to the riches of his glory to become mighty with power through his Spirit into the inside human, that Christ dwell down in your hearts through the faith, who have been rooted and have been founded in love, in order that you should be all out strong to take over to yourselves with all the holy ones what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of the Christ which is casting beyond the knowledge, in order that you should be filled into all the fullness of God.

—Ephesians 3.14-19

Just think of it! We trade in our selfish and shallow thoughts, feelings, and will, and we receive in return the very thoughts, feelings, and will of the Lord himself

to experience for our selves. What a great salvation this is!

Our Body

According to what our soul has appropriated of Christ through our spirit being united with his Spirit, we order our body to manifest Christ.

Ones who are bringing around at all times the putting to death of Jesus in the body, in order that also the life of Jesus might be brought to light in our body.

—2 Corinthians 4.10

For I perceive that this will step forth to me unto salvation through your pleading and supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ according to my watching forth with outstretched head and hope, that in not even one thing I will be shamed, but in all full flowing as at all times also now Christ will be made great in my body, if even through life or if through death. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

—Philippians 1.19-21

Therefore I am calling alongside you, brothers, through the compassions of God to set alongside your bodies as a living, set apart unto God, well-pleasing sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service.

—Romans 12.1

Being governed by our spirit, we, our soul, are in charge of our body and control it, fulfilling its legitimate needs in line with the leading of the Spirit and the guidelines of the scripture.

Summary

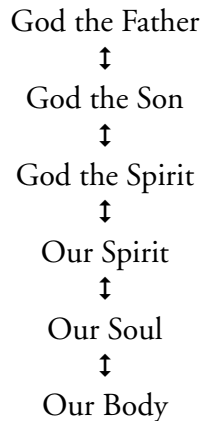
The Holy Spirit imparts Christ to our spirit.

As we depend upon Christ, we in our soul appropriate Christ from our spirit being joined with the Holy Spirit.

According to what we in our soul have appropriated of Christ from our spirit being joined with the Holy Spirit, we direct our body to manifest Christ.

Thus the new creation is one who through faith in Christ Jesus has been restored to our intended created position.

The New Creation...



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However, the question is: If God says that we died with Christ as an old creation and were raised with him as a new creation, why then are we still being confronted so much with ourselves as an old creation instead of enjoying ourselves as a new creation?

This leads us to the second great distinction in understanding the Way.

Position & Experience



MAKING A DISTINCTION between our position in Christ and our experience of that position is the second great truth of the second gate of the Way, the gate of Living by Faith.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone is willing to come after me, let him deny himself and lift up his cross and follow me."

—Matthew 16.24

But you yourselves learned not in this way the Christ, if indeed you heard him and in him you were taught, just as truth is being in Jesus, that you place away from yourselves, according to the former conduct, the old human which is being made to decay according to the intense feelings of the

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deception, and be made young again in the spirit of your mind and sink yourselves in the new human who was created according to God in righteousness and sacredness of the truth.

—Ephesians 4.20-24

But without faith it is impossible to please him.

—Hebrews 11.6

We must experience our position in Christ.

I. Faith!

The moment we walk through gate one God gives us our position in Christ of having died with him as an old creation and having been raised with him as a new creation. What remains is for us to experience our position in Christ.

But how? How do we experience our position in Christ? How do we experience being a new creation who is like Christ and no longer experience being an old creation who is not? What should we do when our old selfish thoughts, feelings, and desires of the old creation surface in our daily lives? How are we able to bring our experience around to agree with our position?

God's answer: Have faith!

For faith is relying upon the Lord
and then taking him at his word
and acting upon it.

We must believe in our God-given position in Christ, that we as an old creation died with Christ and that we as a new creation arose with him, and then we will experience the reality of that position.

Position is punctiliar. Experience is process.

Poor Person, Rich Person

Picture a poor person, who lives in a country where there is no chance to improve one's station in life, and who exists by handouts and whatever else he is able to scrounge. No matter how he might desire otherwise, he cannot escape being poor. His position is that of a poor person, and therefore he experiences being poor. His experience agrees with his position.

But one day he is informed that his rich uncle died and left him over a billion dollars, which has already been deposited in the bank in his name. Now the person's position has instantly changed from being a poor person to being a rich one. For the first time in his life, he has a choice how he will live. He may now decide what he will experience.

He may continue to experience being poor, existing by handouts and discarded items, because he is used to being poor or because he lacks faith in his new wealthy position. If he chooses this way, his experience will be different from his new position. He will be experiencing being a poor person, when actually he is in position a very wealthy one.

Or he may begin to experience his new position, by believing that he is now a rich man and starting to live as the affluent person he is, and by believing that he no

longer is a poor man and refusing to live as the poor person he used to be. Thus his experience will match his position.

He most likely will alternate between acting as if still poor and acting like the rich person he has become until he learns how to conduct himself as the man of means that he is.

We are an old creation. This is our position and this is our experience. But when we trust into Christ Jesus and are placed “in Christ,” our position at once changes from being an old creation to being a new creation. For the first time in our lives we may choose how to live. We may now decide what we will experience. We may continue to experience being an old creation, living of our selves and for our selves or being driven by the appetites of our body, because we are used to being an old creation, or because we lack faith in our new position as a new creation. If we choose this way, our experience will be different from our new position. We will be experiencing being an old creation, when actually we are in position a new creation. Or we may begin to experience our new position, by having faith that we are now a new creation and starting to live as the new creation we are, and by believing that we no longer are an old creation and refusing to live as the old creation we used to be. In this way our experience will match our position. We will alternate between the two experiences until we learn to continually rely upon Christ as a new creation and to deny ourselves as a dead old creation.

Single Person, Married Person

A single person is single in position and in experience. But the moment the person exchanges vows of marriage, that person immediately moves in position from being single to being married. The person may still act in ways as if still single, liking running around with friends or even flirting with others, and if so, the person will be experiencing being single when in fact the person is married. Or the person may learn more and more how to be a good spouse and refuse to act like being single, and thus the person will be experiencing more and more being the married person that one is. After twenty years of marriage, the person is no more married in position than on the day of the wedding ceremony, but hopefully that person has grown much in the experience of being married.

We as an old creation are an old creation in position and in experience. But the moment we accept the Lord Jesus, we straightway move in position from being an old creation to being a new creation. We may still act in ways that we did as an old creation, sinning and living selfishly, and if so, we will be experiencing being an old creation when in fact we are now a new creation. Or we may learn more and more how to be a new creation and refuse to act like being an old creation, and thus we will be experiencing more and more being the new creation that we are in Christ. After twenty years of our position in Christ, we are no more a new creation and dead as an old creation than on the day we accepted Christ, but hopefully we have grown much in our experience of that position.

Children of Israel & Canaan

And these things were happening to those ones as an example. And they were written for our putting to mind, unto whom the completions of the ages has come.

—1 Corinthians 10.11

The Way was foreshadowed in the children of Israel and the promised land of Canaan.

Being in bondage to the Egyptians, God led Israel through Moses to freedom, parting the Red Sea and drowning the Egyptian army. Being in bondage to sin, God leads us to freedom through faith in Jesus Christ, crossing the Red Sea of gate one, while all who try to be saved apart from Christ perish. Israel went from being slaves in their position to being freed ones. In Christ we go from being an old, lost creation in our position to being a new, saved one.

Israel then had the choice to go on and to experience the promised land of Canaan, believing God that he had given it to them and so conquering it, or to wander in the wilderness in unbelief. They wandered for forty years before beginning to experience God's promise of Canaan, crossing through the stopped up Jordan River. In Christ we have the choice to go on and to experience our position in Christ through living by faith or to wander in the wilderness of the experience of our old, fallen condition through a lack of faith. May we step across the Jordan River of gate two and begin to experience more and more of our position in Christ.

Depend & Deny.

Living by faith means we will depend and deny. We will depend upon Christ as the new creation we are, and we will deny ourselves as the dead old creation we used to be. This is living by faith. This is the second gate.

Living by faith is depending and denying.

If we are trusting God when he tells us that we are a new creation based upon the fact that we have been raised with Christ as a new creation, we will depend upon Christ every moment of every day in order to live like him for him. For this is what the new creation does. Anything, whether work, play, or Bible reading, if done with a reliance upon Christ, causes us to grow spiritually, that is, to experience more of our position in Christ. For us to believe that we are a new creation is to naturally depend upon Christ to live as Christ, as described in the Bible and spiritually learned and sensed.

And if we are believing God when he tells us that we are dead as an old creation based upon the fact that we as an old creation died with Christ, we will deny everything that is out of self and the flesh and not of Christ. Anything, whether work, play, or Bible reading, if done independently of Christ, causes us not to grow spiritually, that is, not to experience our position in Christ. For us to believe that we are dead as an old creation is to continuously deny as dead anything that is different and contrary to Christ, as described in the Bible and spiritually learned and sensed.

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Having faith is taking off and placing away from ourselves the old garment of the old creation and refusing to put it back on, because God says we are no longer clothed this way. And having faith is sinking ourselves into the new garment of the new creation and wearing it at all times, because God says this is how we are clothed now.

Working for a rural electric company, my dad often had to climb tall wooden poles in order to ensure that electricity was carried to the rural community. As a young man, I decided to try to climb a pole like my dad. I put on some boots and strapped my dad's climbing spikes to my legs and feet so that a pointed metal spike protruded past the inward side of each foot. I buckled his climbing belt around my waist. I fastened one end of a wide strap to one side of the belt, took it around the pole, and then fastened the other end of the strap to the other side of the belt, just as I had seen my dad do.

I hugged the pole and tried to climb. I struggled to dig the spikes into the pole, but they kept slipping down the sides. The more the spikes slipped, the tighter I squeezed the pole. The rough splintery wood scratched and scraped my arms and stomach. Splinters dug into my skin. I became more and more frustrated. Dad's equipment was more of a hindrance than a help. Yet dad had always made climbing power line poles look so easy.

After struggling like this for some time, I finally was ready to try something different. Despite my natural instinct to embrace the pole, I leaned back, allowing the strap, which was wrapped around the pole and fastened to the climbing belt around my waist, to support my

weight. As I leaned away from the pole and shifted my weight unto the belt, I suddenly had the leverage necessary to dig the spikes firmly into the pole. Now I climbed with much ease and with no scrapes or splinters.

But toward the top of the pole, many feet above the ground, I became nervous about trusting my weight on the belt, so I grasped the pole once again. But as soon as I did, my feet began to slip, and I was rewarded with fresh scrapes. I quickly trusted my weight back upon the belt and returned to my earlier success.

If we try to live up to how God wants us to live on our own in our own strength, we will experience only failure after failure. Scraped and bloodied, we must come to the certain understanding that we will progress in the Christian life only as we let go and push away from trying to be like Christ on our own and learn to rest the entire weight of our faith upon Christ Jesus, relying upon him and his strength to live like him as God wants. In this Way we experience our position.

The Question

The walk of faith comes down to a question, a question that we must ask ourselves continuously. It is the question of gate two. The question is:

“Am I living by faith right now?”

In asking this question, we are asking ourselves:

“At this moment
am I depending upon Christ

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to live for Christ
because I believe
that I have been raised with him
as a new creation,
and am I denying my self and my flesh
because I believe
that I have died with him
as an old creation?"

If the answer is, "Yes," then we are living by faith. If the answer is, "No," then we are not.

In asking this question, we are asking ourselves:

"Am I living right now
as a new creation
or
as an old creation?"

If the answer is, "New creation," then we must continue to live by faith. If the answer is, "Old creation," then we must refuse at once to live in this manner and straightway begin to live by faith.

Living by faith moment by moment is like driving a car. When we are first learning, it is a struggle because we have to concentrate hard on all that we must do in order to drive properly. But after some time, driving becomes more natural and easier, as the fundamentals of operating an automobile have become instilled within us. At first, living by faith takes great concentration, making sure that we are depending and denying as

we should each moment of every day. But over time, living by faith becomes more natural and easier, as the fundamentals of depending and denying have become ingrained within us.

At any given moment, we may hear our flesh as well as Satan yelling in one ear of our soul for us to live for our own selves or for our bodies as if still an old creation, and we may hear in the other ear the spirit with the Spirit reminding us to live for Christ as the new creation that we are. We in our soul choose which we will listen to, which we will act upon. We make the choice each moment whether we will live by faith or not.

An old farmer had two dogs, one white and one black, fighting in the yard. A passerby asked, "Which one usually wins?" The farmer replied, "The one I feed the most."

We are to milk the moment. Every instance becomes an opportunity to grow spiritually, to experience more and more of Christ. This gives meaning and purpose to each point in time. At every juncture, we may rest in reliance upon Christ and deny the flesh, and milk that moment for all its eternal worth.

"This is what the Lord says, 'See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death.'"

—Jeremiah 21.8

Whereas the Way is a choice of faith in gate one, it is a constant choosing of living by faith in gate two. May we constantly ask ourselves the question and answer it

with a resounding Yes. What peace and excitement and meaning there is in this! What an adventure this moment to moment living by faith is!

II. Matters of Faith

Having now established the essentials of living by faith, there are further significant matters of faith that will help us walk.

God Grants Experience.

Through him (Jesus Christ) you are believers in God, who raised up him from the dead and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

—1 Peter 1.21

The Lord Jesus did his part by going to the cross, and then confidently left his rising from the dead to his Father.

It is our challenge and responsibility to live by faith in Christ and in our position in him. It is the business of the Lord to grant us the experience of that position. If we do our part, the Lord through his Spirit will do his.

Experience Follows Faith.

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

—2 Corinthians 5.7

And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go under way. As you had faith, let it take place to you."

—Matthew 8.13

Experience follows faith. When God sees our faith in our position in Christ, he will accordingly grant the experience. Experience follows faith. It is believing from fact and not towards fact. This is most important.

Faith does not follow experience. We do not experience being dead as an old creation and alive as a new creation and then believe it to be true. No. We must first believe in our position in Christ and then we will experience more and more of the reality of that position, as the Lord through his Spirit deems best to grant it.

If we are faithful in the believing of our position, God will be faithful in the giving of the experience of it.

Picture a wall and walking in line on top of the wall, as in a game of “follow the leader,” are three figures named Fact, Faith, and Experience. Fact marches straight and true on top of the wall. And as Faith stays focused upon and follows Fact, Experience follows along behind. But if Faith takes its eyes off Fact and shifts its focus back upon Experience, then Faith loses its balance and falls off the wall, and Experience follows.

“And why are you calling me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and are not doing what things I am saying?”

—*Luke 6.46*

Why must experience be based upon faith? Why did not God give us our full experience of being in Christ the moment we accepted him at gate one? Why must experience follow faith? Having provided the Way, God wants to see whether or not we are willing to follow the

Way, whether or not we really want to live like Christ and for Christ. If we want to, we will walk the Way in faith.

Resurrection Follows Crucifixion

Now the ones of Christ crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires.

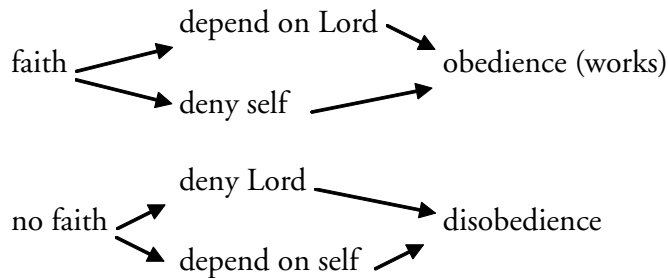
—Galatians 5.24

There is a tendency for us to want to experience being a new creation without wanting to experience being dead as an old creation. In history, as in our position and in our experience, the cross comes before the resurrection. We must be willing to experience our death as an old creation if we want to experience our life as a new creation.

Obedience Follows Faith

Show to me your faith without the works, and I myself will show to you the faith out of my works.

—James 2.18



Good Side of Bad Self

But we are all as one who is unclean. And all our righteous acts are as filthy rags.

—Isaiah 64.6

For I perceive that a good thing is not dwelling in me, that is, in my flesh.

—Romans 7.18

The evil lusts and sinful acts of the old creation are easily recognized. But our independent desires and selfish motives of the old creation while doing good are harder to detect. Yet no matter how good we try to be in the flesh of the old creation, it is all centered ultimately on self and therefore contemptible to God.

As we seek to live by faith in Christ as a new creation, blind spots of the old creation may still exist. The Holy Spirit will seek to reveal these to us in the light of Christ. Here some questions aimed at unmasking the old creation:

- Am I neglecting to live by faith right now?
- Do I want to be recognized and praised for what I do?
- Do I worry about how I appear in the eyes of others?
- Am I afraid of failure, especially before others?
- Do I crave or thrive on attention?
- Do I like to be the central character in great drama?

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- Does it bother me when someone speaks badly of me?
- Do I ask what is in it for me?
- Am I concerned most about my needs being met?
- Am I more consumed with doing things for Christ than I am with relying upon Christ in what I am doing?
- Am I serving the Lord as a trade off for holding on to some selfishness or secret sin?
- Is the peace of Christ absent from my life?
- Am I unconcerned about denying the old creation?
- Am I envious of those whom the Lord is using more than me?
- Am I governed by fear?
- Am I consumed with the pursuit of pleasure?
- Do I spend more time being concerned about what I will wear or what I will eat than about living by faith?
- Do I rarely read the Bible?
- Do I scarcely pray?
- Do I worry a lot?
- Do I often feel sorry for myself, or see myself as a victim?
- Do I want others to feel sorry for me?
- Does my checkbook reveal a life of selfishness or faith?

Brothers, indeed the desire of my own heart and the pleading to God for them is unto salvation.

For I am witnessing to them that they are having a boiling with zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For not understanding the righteousness of God and seeking to set their own, they were not placed in order under authority to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the completion of the law unto righteousness to everyone who is having faith.

—Romans 10.1-4

As an old creation, we will do anything, even good, even serving God with great zeal, if only we will allow ourselves to continue to experience the old creation. As we grow spiritually, we will deal more and more with denying the selfish motives of the old creation in doing good or while serving Christ. We must faithfully ask ourselves, even while doing good or while boiling with enthusiasm for God, if we are acting on our own for some selfish reason as an old creation or in reliance upon Christ for Christ as a new creation.

Furthermore, Satan knows well that if he can get us to do something good without depending upon Christ as a new creation that we are allowing our old creation to remain in our experience. He then knows he is able to work through that foothold of the old creation to get us to do something bad.

For the word of God is living and being at work within and more slashing beyond every two-edged sword, even piercing through until the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and

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able to judge of inner intense feelings and inner thoughts of the heart.

—Hebrews 4.12

One of the chief ways the motives and the intents of our hearts may be revealed is through the enlightenment by the Spirit of the scriptures. The scriptures strengthen the spirit and its ability to sense what is of the new creation and what is of the old creation. And the scriptures illuminate Christ so that we may see either the agreement of ourselves as a new creation with him or the contrast of ourselves as an old creation.

III. More Matters of Faith

Here are additional important matters of faith.

Grace Opposite Law.

Having perceived that a human is not being made righteous out of works of law but through faith of Jesus Christ, even we ourselves had faith into Christ Jesus, in order that we should be made righteous out of faith of Christ and not out of works of law, because out of works of law all flesh will not be made righteous.

—Galatians 2.16

There are two approaches to be righteous with God, two ways to be right with God and to do right.

Keeping the law of God
through works.

Accepting the grace of God
through faith.

One way is the Law and the performing of works to keep the Law and in this way to be made righteous. The problem with this approach is that not even one person has ever completely kept the Law, none that is except one, Jesus Christ. Therefore to follow the way of the Law and the attempt to keep it through good works is to fail, to fall short of God, and to end up being eternally separated from him.

The other avenue is the receiving of grace through faith. God offers his Son and our position in him as a gift, as grace, and all we must do is to respond in faith, accepting Christ and then living by faith in him. In this way we become righteous in Christ.

And he said also to certain ones, those who had persuaded to themselves that they are being righteous and who are setting out as being not even one thing those other ones, this illustration, "Two humans stepped up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, having stood, was praying to himself these things, 'God, I am giving thanks to you because I am not being just as those other ones of humans, ones taking by force, unjust ones, ones committing adultery, or even as this tax-collector. I am fasting twice in the week. I am giving forth a tenth of all as much as I am acquiring.' But the tax-collector, having stood far off, was not willing even to lift up the eyes unto the heaven. But he was striking

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his breast, saying, 'God, be reconciled to me the sinner.' I am saying to you, this one, having been made righteous, stepped down into his dwelling beside that one, because every one who is lifting high himself will be made low, and the one who is making low himself will be lifted high."

—Luke 18.9-14

In the parable, the Pharisee personifies the arrogance of trying to be righteous by our own efforts to keep the Law, and the tax-collector stands for the humbleness of accepting the Way of grace through faith.

Let us contrast law and works with grace and faith:

Law & Works:	Grace & Faith:
Pharisee	Tax-collector
Old creation	New creation
Righteous in self	Righteous in Christ
Reliance upon self	Reliance upon Christ
Judgmental	Loving
Hard	Soft
Letter of the Law	Spirit of the Law
Unforgiving	Forgiving
Inhospitable	Hospitable
Proud	Humble
Outward appearance	Inward reality
Hypocrite	Real
Unforgiven	Forgiven
Legalistic	Gracious
Simon (<i>Luke 7.36-47</i>)	Woman (<i>Luke 7.36-47</i>)
Javert	Valjean

Let it be confessed that the law is perfect and good. For the law reveals how the Lord wants us to live and then convicts us of the many ways in which we in our own selves fail and fall short. So the law drives us to grace, to the gift of God of the Way in Christ Jesus, so that through dependence upon Christ we may then live to please God according to the spirit of the law out of love for him and others. (*Romans 3.19-20; Galatians 3.24; 5.14*)

Imagine Law and Grace on the face of a watch. Law is at twelve o'clock and Grace is at six. We are the hand of the clock. The hand begins at twelve and moves to six, just as Law drives us to Grace. Then the hand continues around to twelve once again, as Grace flows us back to the Law of doing what is pleasing to God in love through faith.

Reasons to Live by Faith.

Why should we live by faith? Here are a few of many reasons:

Because whom he (God) knew before time, he also set a boundary before time to be ones having a form together of the image of his Son, for the purpose that he be the first-borne among many brothers.

—*Romans 8.29*

To live like God created us to live, to carry out his purpose for us.

For it is binding for us all to be brought to light in front of the step of judging of the Christ, in order

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that each one should carry to himself for those things which he practiced through the body, if even a good thing or if a worthless thing.

—2 Corinthians 5.10

To be ready to give a good account of our lives to Christ.

For if the word, which was spoken through angels, became firm, and every stepping over and disobedience received a just giving forth of payment, how will we ourselves escape, having cared not for such a great salvation?

—Hebrews 2.2-3

To care enough about the great salvation that Christ died to give us that we walk in it.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If someone should love me, my word he will keep. And my Father will love him. And we will come to him and will make our abiding place alongside to him. The one who is not loving me is not keeping my words."

—John 14.23-24

To express our love to the one who loves us so much.

Suffer bad together as a beautiful soldier of Christ Jesus.

—2 Timothy 2.3

To suffer and to fight for Christ.

To the one who is winning the victory I will give to him to eat out of the tree of the life, which is being in the garden of the God.... The one who is winning the victory should never ever be treated unjustly out of the death, the second one.... To the one who is winning the victory I will give to him of the manna, which has been hidden. And I will give to him a white pebble, and upon the pebble a new name which has been written, which not even one person is perceiving if not the one who is receiving it.... And the one who is winning the victory and who is keeping my works until completion, I will give to you authority over the nations. And he will shepherd them with a rod of iron, as the vessels, those ones made of clay, are being shattered together, as also I have received from my Father. I also will give to him the star, the early morning one.... The one who is winning the victory in this way will cast around himself in white outer-clothes. And I will never ever rub out his name out of the scroll of the life. And I will confess his name in sight of my Father and in sight of his angels.... The one who is winning the victory, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. And he should never ever come out outside any longer. And I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is stepping down out of the heaven from my God, and my name, the new one.... The one who is winning the

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victory, I will give to him to sit down with me on my throne, as also I won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne. Let the one who is having an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the called out assemblies.”

—Revelation 2 & 3

To win the victory of experiencing our position in Christ so that we may enjoy a special relationship with Christ and possess privileges in him.

For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting, or are not even you, in front of our Lord Jesus at his being alongside? For you yourselves are being our glory and joy.

—1 Thessalonians 2.19-20

To help others find and follow the Way.

For I myself already am being poured out as a drink offering. And the time of my departure has stood upon. I have contended the beautiful contest. I have completed the running course. I have kept the faith. A remaining thing, the crown of righteousness is being laid away for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give forth to me in that day, and not only to me but also to all those who have loved his appearing.

—2 Timothy 4.6-8

To keep the faith and complete the course laid out before us and receive the crown of having lived a life of being right with God and doing right.

A fortunate one is a man who is remaining under testing, because, having become one approved by testing, he will receive the crown of life, which he promised to those who are loving him.

—James 1.12

To remain under testing by continuing to live by faith in order to be approved as ones who have passed the test.

Therefore I, the fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of the Christ, the one sharing also of the glory which is being about to have the cover taken away from, am calling alongside elder ones among you. Shepherd the flock of God among you, not with aching within but of the free will according to God, and not with desire for having shameful gain but with intense feelings for, and not as being lord down upon the ones allotted for care but becoming examples of the flock. And when the First Shepherd is brought to light, you will carry to yourselves the without withering crown of glory.

—1 Peter 5.1-4

To become leaders in the church to make sure that the church is staying upon the Way and thus receive the crown of glory.

Three Conditions

There are three conditions of people:

Unbeliever: an old creation in position and experience.

Fleshly/carnal Believer: a new creation in position but an old creation in experience.

And I myself, brothers, had not power to speak to you as ones of the spirit, but as ones of the flesh, as to infants in Christ.

—1 Corinthians 3.1

Spiritual Believer: a new creation in position and experience.

Which are you right now? Which am I?

The Key

King David, whom God declared was a person after his own heart, wrote:

“I have set the Lord always before me.”

—Psalm 16.8

This is the key to life. This is the Way.

Walking the Way is not as easy as it may seem at times, but neither is it as hard as it may seem at other times.

Here is a written testimony of my brother Steve:

“The most important decision of my life was made at the age of eight years old. It was at that time and under

the leadership of my mother that I placed my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. Because of that decision to trust him and his completed work on the cross I now have eternal life.

Following my commitment to Christ, I set about trying my best to please him and to obey his commands, not fully realizing that because of him and through him I already was pleasing to the Father and that I really wasn't capable of being obedient to his commands in my own strength.

Nonetheless, for 17 years I strove to be a 'good Christian' and to live 'for Christ' while for the most part experiencing great frustration along with many worries, doubts, and fears. Yes, I knew I was born again and had eternal life as a gift from God and was going to heaven when I died. All those things were sure, but how do I live the Christian life, the abundant life, practically, experientially, day in and day out? Believe me, I tried! I was doing all the right things and not doing all the wrong things. But something was wrong in my experience and I began to pray and 'seek God's face.' God show me the reality of my life in Christ. What's the bottom line here? Who am I? What is my responsibility as a Christian?

Well, God answered my prayers by beginning to tear my life apart. He allowed Satan to 'sift me as wheat' as Satan desired to do and I went through a period of intense confusion followed by a reckless drive in my car which landed me in jail for the night—in solitary confinement. My first reaction was the total sense of being right where my Father wanted me—in the very center of his will. I hadn't really sensed that much before

in my life. Before the night was over, as my Father allowed the enemy into my life, there in that little isolated jail cell and for the Father's purposes I became convinced (absolutely and completely convinced) that I was dead and in hell. It was torture and I was never getting out. After I had taken all of that that I could, I began to beat on the door of the cell (beating my hands till they were bruised) but I had to get out. I did get out—at the hands of six deputy sheriffs who forcibly took me to a car and transported me to a local hospital where they carried me kicking and screaming to a room and strapped me to a bed—hands and feet. The tortures of the jail cell were more intensified as another night was spent 'in hell.'

Well, I wasn't in hell. I was in a mental ward of a hospital, where I spent three weeks, finally realizing I wasn't in hell. Believe me, that was a life-changing experience. For the next several years long periods of time were spent in deep depression and sometimes the old fear of being in hell. Twice more I spent time in mental wards and eventually my wife, considering me sick and dangerous to her and our two boys, took the boys and left, later obtaining a divorce and remarrying.

Why God? Why, why, why? All I wanted was to know the reality of life in Christ. Hey, if we want to experience the reality of Christ in our lives we're going to suffer. Christ suffered rejection. Christ went to the cross and there he suffered as he bore the sins of the world and as his own Father could not look on him as he carried those sins and Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—such agony. That same Jesus

called upon us to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow him. If we follow him, we will suffer.

My Father brought me to the end of my self. He took everything away that I held dear and he showed me the complete sufficiency of his Son and my Lord, Jesus Christ. He taught me in my experience that I can do nothing for him, but I can do all things through Christ. He is my life. 'For me to live is Christ. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.' He is my life and my life is his, for I have been bought with a price and I am no longer my own. The old self tries continually to regain the rule in my life and my Father chastens me perfectly and breaks me again and again. There is much comfort in loving discipline.

God has taught me the rest that comes in not living the Christian life through self effort, but self denial. I have nothing to offer my Father but a simple child-like trust in who I am in his dear Son. Christ is my life and I wait on the Lord for all things, and one day when I see him, I will be like him for I will see him as he is. Praise God. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."



Holy Spirit & the Way



*“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says
the Lord of hosts.”*

—Zechariah 4.6

OH MAY WE grasp what the Lord is saying to us! How we need the Spirit to work within us!

The Way is of God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. Walking the Way opens the door for the Holy Spirit to operate in our lives.

I. Gates & the Spirit

The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to pass through each of the three gates of the Way.

Spirit & Gate 1

The Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Christ, convicting us of our sin and drawing us to Christ, and delivers us reborn from within and from above into our position in Christ.

Jesus answered, "Amen, amen I am saying to you, unless someone should be brought into being out of water and of Spirit, he is not having power to come in into the kingdom of God. That which has been brought into being out of the flesh is being flesh. That which has been brought into being out of the Spirit is being spirit.

—John 3.5-6

Spirit & Gate 2

The Holy Spirit enables and empowers us, as we walk by faith in Christ, to experience our position in Christ.

And I am saying, walk around in the Spirit, and you should never ever complete an intense feeling of flesh.... If we are living in the Spirit, we also should walk in the Spirit.

—Galatians 5.16, 25

Spirit & Gate 3

The Holy Spirit seals us and is the down payment of God that guarantees we will experience fully our position in Christ.

And the one who is making us firm with you into Christ and who anointed us is God, who also set us with a seal and who gave the earnest money of the Spirit in our hearts.

—2 Corinthians 1.21-22

In whom (Christ) also you yourselves, having heard the word of the truth, which is the well message of your salvation, in whom also, having had faith, you were set with a seal in the Holy Spirit of the promise, which is being the earnest money of our inheritance, unto the loosing forth by payment of ransom of the possession, unto the praise of his glory.

—Ephesians 1.13-14

II. Filling of the Spirit

But be filled with the Spirit.

—Ephesians 5.18

As we live by faith in Christ, this opens the way for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As we follow the Way, we should look for the Spirit to fill us and not settle for anything less. As we walk the path, we should continually pray:

“Holy Spirit, please fill me
as a new creation.”

We may take a sponge in our hand and squeeze it into a tight ball and then plunge it into a bucket of water. The sponge is indeed submerged in the water. But as we slowly open our hand, more and more water fills the sponge until, having let loose our grip all together, the water fills entirely all the pores of the sponge. When we receive Christ Jesus into our hearts, we are immersed into Christ and into his Holy Spirit. But when we slowly open our selves to experiencing Christ, more and more of the Holy Spirit fills us until, having let loose relying upon our own selves all together, the Holy Spirit fills us fully.

Filled for a Purpose

The Holy Spirit fills us for a purpose.

And the primary purpose is to empower us so that we may walk the Way and experience our position in Christ.

He then fills us so that we may serve the Lord in whatever way the Lord leads.

We see this played out frequently in the scriptures. The Holy Spirit fills Samson so that he might be judge. He fills Saul so that he might be king, and stops filling him when he disqualifies himself. He fills the Lord Jesus himself, as he is baptized and steps forward to do the work for which the Father has sent him. (*Judges 14.19; 1 Samuel 10.10; 11.6; 16.14; Matthew 3.16*)

The Holy Spirit filling us is like putting gas into our car. We put gas in our car in order to drive somewhere. If the car is to sit in the garage, there is no need for the

fuel. The Holy Spirit fills us so that we may walk the Way and experience our position and so that we may then serve the Lord. If we are not going to do this, there is no reason for the Spirit to fill us.

III. Flow of the Spirit

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon dry ground. I will pour out my Spirit upon your children, and my blessing upon your offspring.”

—Isaiah 44.3

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. 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. The waters were to the waists. Again 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.

—Ezekiel 47.3-5

There is a flow of the Spirit. We must immerse ourselves in this powerful current and allow ourselves to be carried along by it, as we are living by faith as new creations risen with Christ and abandoning ourselves as old creations crucified with him.

Bennett Spring is a forceful flow of crystal-clear, bone-chilling cold water that gushes downstream with breathtaking power and beauty. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate reality of which such a spring is only a very faint physical shadow. The Holy Spirit is truly the awesome, refreshing, healing, thirst-quenching, pure, spectacular, all-powerful stream that flows forth from Christ unto our spirit with overwhelming splendor and glory.

Stepping out into the flow of the Spirit, as we walk by faith, is like stepping out into the waters of Bennett Spring. Immediately the waters are cold and refreshing, as it rushes over our feet. Venturing out a little further, the flow of the water is briskly vitalizing, as we feel it tugging strongly at our knees to move in its direction. Daring to step out toward the middle of the spring, we gather our selves because we know that the next step will sink us waist deep. We lift our foot and set it down, gasping abruptly as we drop into its chilling waters. We struggle to dig our feet into the smooth rocks on the bottom to maintain our balance. After we adjust to the cold, we are drawn to the dark, deep waters of the center of the current. We inch out. The waters rise upon us. And suddenly, the bottom falls away and we are in over our head and the mighty current sweeps us along wherever it wills. We have become swimmers in the flow of the current. Oh how we need to be such swimmers in the Spirit!

Obstruct Not

Quench not the Spirit.

—1 Thessalonians 5.19

We must not dam up the flow of the Spirit from gushing forth from within us and reaching those downstream who are in such acute need of it.

Working for REA, my dad had to clear obstructions on power lines that were blocking the electricity from getting to the farmers who needed the source of power. We must rely upon Christ and clear away any obstruction of the old creation that would impede the Spirit from surging in us, through us, and around us. For his power is needed not only in our lives but in our families, our churches, our communities, our country, our world.

IV. Power of the Spirit

And may the God of the hope fill you of all joy and peace in the believing, for the purpose that you have more in the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Romans 15.13

And I myself became to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my word and my preached message not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in a showing forth of Spirit and power, in order that your faith should not be in wisdom of humans, but in the power of God.

—1 Corinthians 2.3-5

For our well message became not unto you in word alone but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance...

—1 Thessalonians 1.5

The Holy Spirit is our source of power as a new creation. We may serve the Lord as an old creation in our own might and produce only what we are having the power to produce. Surely we are tired of that, are we not? We desperately need the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit! We need what the Holy Spirit can do!

The Holy Spirit is the power source that sprung our entire universe into existence with such force that it is still expanding at the speed of light. This power of the Spirit is available to us, if we will only live by faith as the new creations we are and stop living by means of our own selves and our own strength as the old creations we long ago ceased to be in Christ.

If the electricity of lightning hits our dwelling, it will destroy it. But if we have wired our dwelling for electricity and then electricity is brought in, we may enjoy the great benefits of this powerful source of energy. If the Lord would unleash his Spirit upon us while we are still living as old creations, then we would be critically damaged. But if we are living by faith in Christ Jesus as new creations and then the power of the Spirit is unleashed, we may move in the boundless possibilities of his awe-inspiring power.

A man came down from the woods for a rare visit to the general store in town. The store owner sold him on a devise that he said would be a tremendous help in cutting wood, something called a chain saw. But the man returned two weeks later and complained that the devise only made it harder to cut trees. The owner took the man out back and pulled the cord and V-A-A-R-O-O-M the chain saw sprang to life. The man jumped back and

cried out, “What’s that noise!” Too often we are that man. We have the power of the Spirit and do not pull the string of our faith to utilize it.

V. Gifts of the Spirit

And there are being dividings of gifts of grace, but the same Spirit.

—1 Corinthians 12.1,4

The Holy Spirit grants gifts to us along the Way. Spiritual gifts are given to us in order to build up one another with those gifts in the church, and also that we may model the areas of those gifts for one another so that we all may know better how to live out those areas in Christ too. We thus should know and use our gift or gifts.

Here is an accumulated, non exclusive list of spiritual gifts:

Word of wisdom
Word of knowledge
Faith
Gifts of grace of cures
Workings of powers
Speaking before *time and others* (prophecy)
Thoroughly judging of spirits
Other kinds of tongues
Interpretation of tongues
Ordered forth ones (apostles)
Ones speaking before *time and others* (prophets)
Teachers

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Powers

Taking holds opposite (helps)

Steerings (administrations)

Kinds of tongues

Ministry

One who is teaching

One who is calling alongside (encourager)

One who is giving

One who is standing before (leader)

One who is showing mercy

Ones telling the well message (evangelists)

Shepherds and teachers

(1 Corinthians 12.4-31, 27-31;

Romans 12.4-8; Ephesians 4.7-12)

Love & the Way



“Just as the Father loved me, I myself also loved you. Remain in my love. If my commands you should keep, you will remain in my love, just as I myself have kept the commands of my Father and am remaining in his love. These things I have spoken to you in order that my joy should be in you, and your joy should be full. This is being my command that you should love one another, just as I loved you. Greater love than this not even one person is having, that someone should lay down his life for his friends. You yourselves are being my friends if you should do what I myself am commanding to you.

—John 15.9-14

LOVE IS THE Way. Love led the Lord to provide the Way. And love beckons us to follow.

I. Two Greatest Commandments

Jesus judged forth, "The first (commandment) is, 'Hear, Israel! The Lord our God is being one, and you will love the Lord your God out of your whole heart and out of your whole soul, and out of your whole thorough thinking and out your whole strength.' And second is this, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself.' Greater than these another commandment is not being."

—Mark 12.29-31

The Way makes it possible for us to know the love of God, and then with his love to love the Lord and others as self and thus to fulfill all of scripture.

As we walk the Way, experiencing our position in Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we are flooded with the love of God. For God is love. The love of God is the unconditional love of the perfect parent, the treasured love of the ideal friend, the dear love of the closest companion, and much more, all wrapped up in a love that infinitely encompasses and surpasses them all. Only the tiniest taste of his love leaves us with the certain knowledge that we may never ever know love like this of our own selves. As we live by faith as new creations in Christ, appropriating into our souls the love of God from his Spirit in our spirit, we experience his love for ourselves and subsequently we are able to love him and others and even our selves with that love.

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul, and with all
your might.*

—Deuteronomy 6.5

Why did God create us if he knew that we would fall and his Son would have to be sacrificed in order to redeem us? God is love, and therein is the answer. As from the beginning in the garden, God created us so that he might love us and so that we might share in his love and love him in return. The Way makes this possible.

I totaled the family car when I was a teenager. My cousin Randy and I had been swimming at an abandoned strip pit a few miles south of Clinton. In trying to turn around on the narrow dirt road, the antenna caught on a limb and broke off. I was worried what my parents would say about it as we were not supposed to have the car down such a road. Back on Highway 13, traveling north toward town, I passed a car and pulled back into the right lane. But just as I did, the car up ahead suddenly slowed to make a left hand turn. Another car was coming south in the other lane. To avoid a head on collision I slammed on the brakes, knowing we did not have time to stop before hitting the car in front. The police brought me home and I sat down in the living room. I was shaken from the accident and scared about what my dad was going to do to me. He stood at the door, listening to the account of the accident from the officer. Then he came and sat down in front of me. He asked, "Are you all right, Son?" I told him that I was. Then he said with a slight tremble in his voice, "That's all that matters to me." And he got up and left.

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“You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

—*Leviticus 19.18*

If we love others with our own love, we are loving them selfishly, for our love is of self and for self, and we wind up using them for our own pleasures and pursuits and hurting them when they do not deliver or dare to interfere.

And who is our neighbor? By translation, our neighbor is the one near to us. Therefore, we are to love with the love of Christ everyone whom the Lord has arranged to be near to us at any given time. We are to love the one into whose face we are looking at any given moment. (*Luke 10.25-37*)

How wonderful is the Way which allows us to possess for ourselves the very love of God with which we may love the Lord and others as our self!

II. Four Loves

There are four kinds of love in the language of the New Testament. They are arranged here from the highest to lowest.

Agape

“Agape” means “to choose to love in action.”

In this is being the choosing to love in action, not that we ourselves have chosen to love in action God but that he himself chose to love in action us and

ordered forth his Son as a means of reconciliation about our wrongdoings... God is choosing to love in action. And the one who is remaining in the choosing to love in action is remaining in God and God is remaining in him.

—1 John 4.10, 16

This is the love that is most often used to refer to the love of God and the love from which he wants us to draw in order to love him and others as our self. It is the highest love. It is pure love, not polluted by the worry of getting anything for self in return or by being dependent upon feelings. It is solely a matter of the will, of choice, and it is confirmed in the concreteness of action. But we must remember that we may love like this ultimately only through reliance upon Christ and drawing upon his love.

“Agape” is like the center and uppermost basin of a fountain of love. Love must flow through it, and then it may overflow down into the basin of love below it, as then that basin may spill over into the basin beneath it, and in turn that basin may wash over into the lowest basin.

The following passage from *1 Corinthians 13* discloses much about the “agape” kind of love:

If in tongues of humans and of angels I should speak, but should not have choosing to love in action, I have become a copper which is making noise or a cymbal which is wailing. And if I should have prophecy and should perceive all the mysteries and all the knowledge, and if I should have all the

faith so that to set aside mountains, but should not have choosing to love in action, I am being not even one thing. And if I should feed morsels to the poor of all the things which are belonging to me, and if I should give over my body in order that I should boast, but should not have choosing to love in action, I am being profited not even one thing.

The choosing to love in action is taking a long time before having intense feelings. The choosing to love in action is being fitting, is not boiling with zeal, is not bragging about oneself, is not being puffed up (being made natural), is not being unseemly in appearance of behavior, is not seeking the things of her own, is not being made sharp (irritable), is not reasoning (counting) the bad, is not rejoicing upon the injustice, but is rejoicing together with the truth, is covering all things, is having faith in all things, is hoping all things, is remaining under all things. The choosing to love in action is not even once falling. ...

And now is remaining faith, hope, choosing to love in action, these three. And the greatest of these is the choosing to love in action.

Phile

“Phile” means “to love like a friend.”

Therefore the Jews were saying, “Perceive how he was loving him like a friend!”

—John 11.36

It is a hybrid-love that draws from the choosing to love in action from above and runs over into the feeling of love below. Thus it is choosing to love as a friend and feeling love like friend.

Terry was such a friend to me. He was unselfish. Transparent. Loyal. Do anything to help. Without hidden agendas or motives. Wholly a friend. In word. In deed.

We are to love others in this way.

A person who has friends must show himself friendly. And there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

—Proverbs 18.24

Moreover, the Lord wants to love us as a friend, if we would only let him. And even more amazingly, the Lord wants us to love him as a friend, but how few of us ever aspire to that.

And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a person speaks unto his friend.

—Exodus 33.11

And was fulfilled the scripture which is saying, "And Abraham had faith in God, and it was reasoned to him unto righteousness." And he was called a friend of God.

—James 2.23

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Listen to the following interchange between the recently risen Lord and the distraught Peter who had freshly denied not only his Savior and Lord but also his friend that involves these first two kinds of love:

Therefore when they ate breakfast, Jesus is saying to Simon Peter, "Simon of John, are you choosing to love in action me more than these?" He is saying to him, "Yes, Lord. You yourself perceive that I am loving you like a friend." He is saying to him, "Feed my lambs."

He is saying to him again a second time, "Simon of John, are you choosing to love in action me?" He is saying to him, "Yes, Lord. You yourself perceive that I am loving you like a friend." He is saying to him, "Shepherd my sheep."

He is saying to him a third time, "Simon of John, are you loving me like a friend?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Are you loving me like a friend?" And he is saying to him, "Lord, all things you yourself perceive. You yourself are knowing that I am loving you like a friend." He is saying to him, "Feed my sheep."

—John 21.15-17

Sterge

"Sterge" means "to feel love."

*...ones without understanding, ones not dependable,
ones without feeling love, ones not merciful...*

—Romans 1.31

This love is only spoken of in the negative sense in the New Testament, as in the above verse. Unlike “agape” which involves the will, this feeling love comes and goes pretty much on its own. We cannot make someone feel love for us, nor can we make ourselves feel love for someone else. However, if we choose to love in action, most often feelings of love will follow. And yet, we must always remember that feelings of love are fickle. To build any relationship upon this love is to build upon sand rather than upon the rock of the love that chooses to love in action.

Eros

“Eros” means “to have romantic love.”

Song of Songs

This is the love that is to be fulfilled in the marriage relationship.

Kale and Colos are soulmates. Love for each other flows from choosing to love in action each other to loving one another as friends, from feeling love for one another to romantic love. Kale is a most beautiful woman with dark brown eyes and hair, olive colored skin, and a stunning, enchanting smile. Yet her outward beauty is only an expression of a far greater beauty that radiates from within her, as the moon is only a reflection of the brilliance of the sun. Kale belongs to her beloved Colos. And Colos belongs to his beloved Kale. Theirs is not until death do them part, but theirs is for forever. Why? Because they want it to be. Kale and me.

Rose Ann wrote to her grandchildren on October 23, 1984:

“Once upon a time... That’s how fairy tales begin. And how do fairy tales end? And they lived happily ever after... This once upon a time story is not a fairy tale. It’s a real story about real people. It is among other things, a love story. This love story has two parts, one making the other more special. The first part concerns the love between a man and his Lord, the second part concerns the love between a ‘guy’ and his ‘gal.’

October 21, 1923, a baby boy was born in the rural area east of Clinton, Missouri. He was the 5th son and 7th child of E.C. and Belle Smith Phillips. Later, a little sister, who died, and a little brother completed the Phillips family. The baby in our story was born at home, the doctor coming to the house. The doctor left before the baby was named, so Ivan Phillips was the name he picked to have recorded on the birth certificate. But this was not the name given this small son by his parents. Norman E.C. Phillips was the new addition. Many moons later the official record was changed to reflect this.

Times were hard for the large family. There were many times when there was not any food in the house to put on the table. A pop gun one Christmas was the only gift remembered during childhood days. Norman’s father was a little too familiar with ‘the bottle’ and so what income he made did not always make its way home. Too many times he shared his bounty with ‘the boys’ at the local bar.

The Bible talks about Timothy’s godly mother. The mother in this home was a godly mother. Every night,

no matter how many hours she cooked over a wood burning range and cared for the children, she would set down by the old kerosene lamp and read aloud from the Bible and pray for the salvation of her children and also for her husband.

The family moved many times during Norman's boyhood. As in the case of many people during these lean years, when the rent was due you had to move on.

He tells of sitting in the movie when he was about twelve years old and realizing for the first time that he was lost. He tells of how scared he was. He hurriedly left the show and ran all the way home, bursting into the house, asking his mother how to be saved. He recounts that she did not know how to explain the way, except to tell him that he needed to pray. He became a Christian about three years later at a revival meeting at Good Hope Baptist Church. This was the beginning of a love story of a man for his God.

High school years were good years for this young man. You know in fairy tales, the prince is always very handsome, and so it was with Norman Phillips. He turned the heads of many a young lady, but he did not date in high school. He later said it was because he did not have a car, but I'm sure he was just waiting for me. He was a star basketball player for Coal High School, playing on an outside court. That's right, no fancy gyms with hardwood floors for this team. The plays put on by the school also included Norman as one of the star actors.

When Norman graduated from high school in 1943, his only graduation gift was a fountain pen from his brother Alfred, which is still a treasure in the family.

1943 was a war year. World War II was in progress. Like most young men of that day, Norman answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the Navy. Most of his navy years were spent on a small island in the Pacific, Palmyra. He reported that you could stand in the middle and throw a rock off either side. He related tales of life on the ship, of how he acquired privileges by trading pies from the kitchen where he worked in refrigeration, to the time the sea was so rough that they 'took water' down the smoke stack. But barracks life and waiting in chow lines was not to his liking, so when enlistment time was up he headed back Missouri way, leaving the boot camp experiences in Faragout, Idaho, the Shore Patrol in San Paulo, Brazil, the times on Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janiero, and other places behind.

Down the street and around the corner from where the Phillips' family lived on Water Street there was a family of three little girls, a mother and a father, living on Gravel Street, even though these two families did not know each other at the time. I was the middle girl.

Here is how Prince Charming met the Princess. No, it wasn't in the green forest or at a large castle. It was at a roller skating rink. The navy years behind him, this handsome Prince Charming was back home, and on this particular night he strolled into the local roller rink. When I say strolled—I can see him now—he came in with that exaggerated swagger popular at that time, twirling an imaginary key chain. He was greeted from the floor by a cousin who thought 'her cousin Norman' was about IT. She had confided to this writer that whoever 'got' Norman Phillips would really be lucky. And guess

what? He asked to take ME home. I'm sure I wasn't the one Betty Alma would have picked out for her favorite cousin, but I'm sure glad that he did the picking.

After dating about a year (lots of skating round and round) the knot was tied and Rose Ann Hite became Mrs. Norman Phillips. We had a BIG wedding. Norman, in a suit borrowed from his brother Gene, and I were wed by the preacher in his home, with two attendants completing the wedding party. You know what? It must have 'took' because it lasted twenty eight years 'til dead did us part!

We set up housekeeping in a one room cabin at the service station where Norman worked for Bo Hood. This continued to be our home until our first born son was about one year old. After living in a rental house, we bought our first home to the tune of \$4,000 and moved to 319 North Fourth Street. Two new 'bundles of joy' joined our family.

During these years, a change came about in our household. Three men, Calvin Downing, Bill Lionberger, and Norman, decided that they needed to get their families into church. This began an era in our lives which continued and grew as the years went by. Your Grandma became a Christian, when she was led to the Lord by your Grandpa, as we knelt beside the bed in the back bedroom of our home. God had been dealing with me for a number of years with the repeated dream that *there were two women working in the field, one was taken and the other was left*. I was always left.

Life for the Phillips' family continued at their newly built home at 112 West Leona Street, where they moved in 1956.

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Mind pictures flash
of
Norman studying his Bible night after night in the den
of
family dinners
of
practicing baseball and football in the back yard
of
quail hunting
of
plastic swimming pools
of
building the carport
of
our boxer dogs
of
baseball and football games
of
stories of the White Wolf
of
fishing and hunting
of
target practicing
of
graduations
of
college
of
home movies
of
managing ball teams.

So see this is a love story. Of a love of a man for his God, of a love of a man for his family, and the first made the second more special.

So we lived happily ever after!!!!

Even though in different places for a little while!!!

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

III. ABC's of Love

We should choose to love in action by practicing our ABC's of love.

A — Acceptance

For this reason take to yourself (accept) one another, just as also Christ took to himself (accepted) us unto the glory of God.

—Romans 15.7

"Stop judging, in order that you should not be judged. For by what judgment you are judging, you will be judged. And by what measure you are measuring, it will be measured to you. And why are you seeing the small splinter in the eye of your brother, but the beam of wood in your eye you are not considering? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let go that I might cast out the small

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splinter out of your eye, and perceive, the beam of wood in your eye? Hypocrite, cast out first from your eye the beam of wood, and after that you will see clearly to cast out the small splinter from the eye of your brother.”

—Matthew 7.1-5

To choose to love in action another is to be accepting.

We must accept others, trying not to change them, and avoiding criticism of them like the cancer that it is. Criticism puts us at odds with Christ and directly contradicts the second great commandment.

If we genuinely care about some shortcoming of another, we should pray for that person and leave the changing to God. For the Lord will work from the inside out, as he does with us. And we must not be arrogant in the presence of God, ignoring how much mercy and grace we have needed from him, for he surely knows.

If some flaw needs to be pointed out for the good of the other person, we must do it humbly, being acutely aware of our own weaknesses and the planks that we ourselves have had.

In order to accept one another, we do well to bear in mind that God has made us all unique with different personalities.

As a string of different colored Christmas tree lights has the same light flowing through them, we of different colors of personality express in our own unique way the same light of Christ. One believer, wearing her favorite red outfit, may express Christ with a big smile and an

arm around the shoulder, while another believer, wearing her favorite blue outfit, may express Christ with a caring look and a gentle touch. In fact, too much outward conformity may be contrary to the light of Christ shining through us in the unique way that he has created and fashioned us to be.

Personalities may be different compositions of the following types:

The “Captain” is an achiever, control-oriented, action-oriented, goal-oriented, dynamic, decisive, strong-willed, unemotional, confident, competitive, good in emergencies, and born to lead.

(But as an old creation, this person is bossy, possessive, impatient, a user of people, overbearing, a know-it-all, inflexible, argumentative, intolerant, and a workaholic.)

The “Charismatic” is full of life, fun, appealing, people loving, sincere, giving, a good communicator, a storyteller, animated, charming, inspiring, spontaneous, enthusiastic, forgiving, and born to enjoy life.

(But as an old creation, this person is a compulsive talker, a credit seeker, interrupting, undisciplined, run by feelings, hating to be alone, wanting credit, spotlight hogging, a repeater of stories, and forever a child.)

The “Poet” is deep in thought and feeling, artistic, analytical, detail-conscious, a good listener, talented, a perfectionist, sensitive, serious, orderly, creative,

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faithful, devoted, a cautious friend maker, deeply concerned for people, and born to explore the depths of life.

(But as an old creation, this person is moody, depressed, unforgiving, hard to please, craving approval, self-deprecating, insecure, unsociable, and withdrawn.)

The “Peacemaker” is diplomatic, a stabilizer, easygoing, low-keyed, well-balanced, possessed with a dry sense of humor, patient, sympathetic, kind, good under pressure, mediator of problems, pleasant, easy to get along with, enjoyable, a friend with many friends, and born to keep the peace.

(But as an old creation, this person is indecisive, bitingly sarcastic, lazy, fearful, worried, uninvolved, an avoider of responsibility, self-righteous, unmotivated, unenthusiastic, and unmovable to change.)

In order to accept one another, we also might consider that we may not think in the same way. For instance, people may be dominated by the left side of their brain or their right side or may have a balance between the two.

Left Brained:

linear

detail conscious

sees the parts or details

logical

likes rules

Right Brained:

holistic

big picture oriented

sees the whole

intuitive

shuns rules

reads the instructions	wings it
objective	subjective
sequential	simultaneous
present and past time	present and future time
right bodied	left bodied
likes to read	shows relationships
reminiscent	dreamer
structured and orderly	spontaneous
thinks best sitting	thinks best lying down
quiet to study	music, TV to study
good at math	good at art or sports

B — Building

For this reason call alongside one another and build up, one the one, just as even you are doing.

—1 Thessalonians 5.11

To choose to love in action another is to build up and not to tear down.

Relationships are like a banking account. With every word or act, we are either making a deposit into the relationship or making a withdrawal from it. We need to make many more deposits than withdrawals in order to make the relationship wealthier and to never run the risk of bankrupting it.

See a beautiful rose. My dad used to grow roses in the backyard for his Rose. Think of the time and effort it takes to plant a rose, to water it, and to care for it until it blooms into the loveliest of flowers. Now think of how quick and easy it would be to reach out and to crush it.

It takes much time and work to build a relationship, and so little time and effort in comparison to tear it down.

Furthermore, we should keep in mind a natural rule of relationships, which is: over time it becomes easier and easier to tear down than to build up. We must make a conscious decision to reverse this inclination, a deliberate effort to encourage and to build up rather than to tear down, to hold on to the good in others and to let go the bad. If not, we will fall victim to this rule.

A couple was having grave difficulty. Seeing a counselor, the wife poured out an example of her frustration, saying, "All these years when I have asked him for a piece of bread he has always given me the end piece! It looks like that if he loved me or cared anything about me that he would not have given me the worst slice of the loaf all the time!" The husband looked at her and said quietly, "But for me the end piece is the best piece."

One husband always checked the windows and the doors of the house to make sure they were secured before he went to bed. Once in a while the wife would check them but her husband would still go through his nightly routine. This began to irritate the wife, so she started making sure that she checked the doors and windows before he did and to tell him that she had. But still he went around checking. One night she expressed her annoyance, "Don't you think I am capable of checking the doors and windows? Do you always have to go around behind me yourself?" The husband explained, "It is not that I don't trust you, it is just before I can sleep I have to make sure myself that you and the kids are safe." Now each night as he goes through his routine, the wife

leans back on her pillow and relishes this expression of love for her and her children.

C—Confession & Confidentiality

Therefore confess the wrongdoings to one another, and pray for one another so that you might be cured.

—James 5.16

And do not reveal the secret of another.

—Proverbs 25.9

To choose to love in action another is to confess feelings and thoughts and not to suppress them.

“To confess” is “to say together.” That is, it is to express what is being thought and felt in words that agree with what is being thought and felt.

Confession is not stuffing feelings of hurt or offense, but talking them through. Because if not talked about, these feelings will gnaw away at the relationship like flesh-eating bacteria.

Confession is cultivated by:

Creating a safe environment for each other, where both may share and be listened to without fear of attack and without ever having to worry about their words being used as a weapon against them.

Being real with one another.

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Choose to love in action one another stretched out (earnestly) out of a pure heart.

—1 Peter 1.22

Using illustrations or points of interest that the other person understands in order to effectively communicate how one is feeling.

Andrew, wanting a shy, new kid to open up, kept suggesting different subjects to talk about but got little response. And then, bingo! He mentioned computer games. The kid's eyes lit up. He liked games. And soon he was talking away.

Lovingly putting one's self in the other person's place, as if the situation was reversed, and allowing the other person to do the same, saying, "What if you were in my place in this situation, how would you feel?"

Remaining open and vulnerable.

Confidentiality is crucial. Without it confession is catastrophic. We must never ever divulge what has been shared with us in confidence. Confidentiality is one of the most important means by which we may create the safety in which we may share with one another.

I was attending the United States Army Chaplain Training School in Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. A certain class was dealing with the legal issues involving what was told to clergy members and chaplains in confidence. It was pointed out what the law stated was mandatory to be reported. A discussion over these issues went on for

some time. Then a Catholic priest quietly made this assertion, “I will not disclose anything that is said to me in confession and in confidence.” Several others promptly chided him that he could go to jail if he did not. The priest listened for a while longer, and then softly replied, “I would die before I would betray a confidence.”

D—Devotion

Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you. Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart.

—Proverbs 3.3

To choose to love in action another is to be devoted.

We must be loyal and faithful. We must be the one whom the other person may always trust and upon whom he or she may always depend.

E—Encouragement

But call alongside (encourage) one another throughout each day...

—Hebrews 3.13

To choose to love in action another is to encourage, to call alongside.

We are to be an encourager to others, calling others alongside and saying affirming, uplifting words to them.

“And I myself will ask the Father and another one called alongside he will give to you, in order that he

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should be with you unto the age, who is the Spirit of truth, which the world is not having power to receive, because it is not observing him and nor is knowing him. You yourselves are knowing him, because he is remaining alongside to you and will be in you.”

—John 14.16-17

The Holy Spirit is our great Encourager, the one who calls alongside us, staying at our side, encouraging us to walk with Christ and to choose to love in action him and others.

F—Forgiveness

“And let go to us our things owed, as also we ourselves have let go our ones owing... For if you should let go to people their fallings aside, your heavenly Father also will let go to you. But if you should not let go to people, not even your Father will let go your fallings aside.”

—Matthew 6.12-15

To choose to love in action another is to forgive, that is, to let go.

For “to forgive” means “to let go.”

Visualize each offense against you as a large rock. A person may well give you such a rock through no choice of your own. But once it has been given, you yourself have a choice. You can carry around that rock, and keep carrying it for the rest of your life, but you will only be weighing down and hurting yourself. Or you can set it

down and let it go and never go back to pick it up again. Forgiveness is to let go and to leave forever every offense. Then we may truthfully agree with the one who said, "I have forgiven and set a prisoner free and now I know that the prisoner was me."

And in comparison to how much the Lord has let go to us, we should be quick to always let go to others.

After that, having come forward, Peter said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother do wrong unto me and I will let go to him? Until seven times?" Jesus is saying to him, "I am not saying to you until seven times but until seventy times seven. Because of this, the kingdom of the heavens was made like to a human, a king, who willed to take up together a word with his servants. And when he began to take up together, one owing ten thousand (countless) talents (Greek-coins-each-worth-about-6000-denarii) was brought to him. And because he is not having to give forth, the lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all as much as he is having, and to be given forth. Therefore, having fallen, the servant was worshiping to him, saying, 'Take a long time before having intense feelings upon me, and I will give forth all things to you.' And having been moved in the inward parts, the lord of that servant loosed forth him and let go that what was lent to him. But having come out, that servant found one of his fellow servants who owed to him a hundred denarii-(Roman-silver-coins-each-worth-the-daily-wage-of-a-common-laborer). And

having taken him by force, he was strangling him, saying, 'Give forth if something you are owing.' Therefore, having fallen, his fellow servant was calling alongside him, saying, 'Take a long time before having intense feelings upon me, and I will give forth to you.' But that one was not willing. But having come away, he cast him into a prison until he should give forth that which is being owed. Therefore having perceived those things which took place, his fellow servants were grieved exceedingly. And having come, they thoroughly made clear to their own lord all those things which took place. After that, having called forth him, his lord is saying to him, "Evil servant, all that thing owed I let go to you, since you called alongside me. It was binding also that you showed mercy unto your fellow servant, as I myself also showed mercy unto you, was it not?" And having become angry, his lord gave over him to the torturers until when he should give forth all that which is being owed. In this way also my heavenly Father will do to you, if you each should not let go to his brother from your hearts."

—Matthew 18.21-35

It is a question of forgiveness or justice. Concerning the debt of offense and hurt that others owe us, we may let it go or we may demand justice, seeking to have others pay for the hurt that they have inflicted upon us. Whichever option we choose, forgiveness or justice, we

should remember that it determines the option that God chooses toward us.

Like two large globes that may only be held one at a time, we cannot hold on to both forgiveness and the demand for justice. We either hold on to forgiveness and drop the demand for justice, or we hold on to the demand for justice and drop forgiveness.

Years after her harrowing imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp, Corrie Ten Boom tells of meeting face to face one of the most cruel and heartless guards who had humiliated and tormented her sister and her. Now he stood before her with hand outstretched, saying, "Will you forgive me?" Corrie writes: "I stood there with coldness clutching at my heart, but I know that the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. I prayed, 'Jesus help me!' Woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me, and I experienced an incredible thing. The current started in my shoulder, raced down into my arms, and sprang into our clasped hands. Then this warm reconciliation seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. 'I forgive you, brother,' I cried with my whole heart. For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard, the former prisoner. I have never known the love of God so intensely as I did in that moment!"

If we should confess (say together) our sins, he is faithful and just, in order that he should let go to us the sins and should make us clean from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1.9

Confession is a prelude and prerequisite for forgiveness, for letting go. “To confess” is “to say together,” that is, in regards to forgiveness it is to speak of the offense in a manner that accurately corresponds to the offense itself. We should not ask God or others to forgive us of an offense unless we first acknowledge precisely what our offense is for which we are asking forgiveness. And nor may we let go an offense done to us by an other without the equivalent confession, or else we are letting go less than what has been done to us and leaving much offense left over to be held on to and to not be released in forgiveness.

If we owe a thousand dollar debt of offense and confess that we only owe ten cents, this confession does not agree with the debt owed. No, we must confess that we owe a thousand dollar debt of offense and ask to be let go the total amount. We must not give a ten cent confession for thousand dollar debt. And if someone owes us a thousand dollar debt of offense, they should not give us a ten cent confession. But whether they confess it all, we must confess to ourselves that it was a thousand dollar debt so that we may let go the total debt, or else we are minimizing the true amount and not accurately dealing with the offense. We must not try to let go a thousand dollar debt of offense with a ten cent confession. Jesus knew the overwhelming offense of our nailing him to a cross, even though we did not, and so he prayed for forgiveness for us, saying, *“Father, let go to them. For they know not what they are doing.”* (Luke 23.33-34)

Whereas confession is a prelude to forgiveness, there are two postludes. One of which is to make up for the

transgression and to make restitution for the wrong, but only when doing so will not cause further pain or harm. The other is to endeavor never to do the offense again.

To be forgiven and to forgive is to be free.

G—Giving

And everyone is a friend to him who gives gifts.

—Proverbs 19.6

To choose to love in action another is to give.

God is the great Giver of all good gifts and he wants us to be like him. We should give gifts that are meaningful to the other person, not necessarily gifts that we ourselves would like to receive. We should give gifts that have value to the other person, not automatically gifts of monetary value or ones that may be bought but also gifts of sentimental value that may be far more valuable.

What kind of giver of gifts should we be?

- We should be a fun giver.

Each one should do just as he has chosen before time in the heart, not out of grief or out of aching within.

For God loves a cheerful (hilarious) giver.

—2 Corinthians 9.7

- We should be a faceless giver.

“Hold to your righteousness not to do in front of humans for the purpose to be observed by them.

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But if not, indeed you are not having a payment from your Father, that one in the heavens. Therefore when you should do a showing of mercy, you should not sound a trumpet in front of you, just as the hypocrites are doing in the marketplaces and in the alleys so that they might be glorified by humans. Amen I am saying to you, they are having back their payment. But as you are doing a showing of mercy, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your showing of mercy should be in the hidden place. And your Father who is seeing in the hidden place will give forth to you.”

—Matthew 6.1-4

- We should be a formulaic giver.

Cast your bread upon the face of the water, because after many days you will find it. Give a portion to seven, indeed even to eight, because you are not knowing what evil will be upon the earth.

—Ecclesiastes 11.1-2

“Give, and it will be given to you. Beautiful measure, having been pressed down, having been shaken, being poured out over, they will give into your lap. For by what measure you are measuring it will be measured back to you.”

—Luke 6.38

- We should be a forward giver.

Now he also was saying to the one who had called him, "When you should make a breakfast meal or a main (evening) meal, call not your friends not even your brothers not even your relatives not even your rich neighbors, lest at any time they also should call you back and a giving forth back should become to you. But when you should give a reception, call the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind. And a fortunate one you will be, because they are not having to give forth back to you. For it will be given forth back to you in the resurrection of the righteous."

—Luke 14.12-14

Milton is the "charismatic." He works hard as owner and operator of a concrete company. Milton loves people and people love Milton. He is a big man and leaves a big wake of joy and lightening of spirit wherever he goes. And he is a great giver. He gives of himself, his time, his loving concern, his prayers, and his possessions. He remembers birthdays and always calls, no matter where he is. He says he will pray for you and he does. He quietly slips envelopes into pockets, containing much needed help. He cooks for the enjoyment of sharing grand feasts with family and friends and soon to be friends and serves large amounts of warm, cozy fellowship afterwards. He radiates joy in giving, like a child with a load of toys under the Christmas tree and yet his delight is in being the Santa Claus. He gives with no thought of getting back and without the slightest whimper of a trumpet. May the

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Lord, the giver of all givers, the one who placed such a giving heart into Milton, give back to him in ways those who have been blessed through him cannot. And in case the pattern was missed in Milton, God cut his brother Jim out of the same piece of cloth.

H—Helping

But through choosing to love in action serve one another.

—Galatians 5.13

To choose to love in action another is to help, to serve.

This is doing practical acts of service for another, doing for that person what needs to be done. Even the Lord Jesus himself came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many, for us. (Mark 10.45)

Therefore when he washed their feet and took his outer clothes and fell up at table again, he said to them, "Are you knowing what I have done to you? You yourselves are calling me the Teacher and the Lord. And with beauty you are saying, For I myself am being. Therefore if I myself, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, also you yourselves are owing to wash the feet of one another. For a showing by example I gave to you, in order that just as I myself did to you also you yourselves should do."

—John 13.12-15

I—Intimacy

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
And we observed his glory, glory as the only begotten
from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

—John 1.14

*And when he stepped down from the mountain,
many crowds followed him. And perceive! A leper,
having come forward, was worshiping him, saying,
“Lord, if you should will, you are having power
to make clean me.” And having stretched out the
hand, he touched him, saying, “I will. Be made
clean.” And straightway his leprosy was made
clean.*

—Matthew 8.1-3

To choose to love in action another is to be intimate.

This is to be close to one another. A couple of avenues may help.

One avenue is time and attention. We should spend time together, sharing meaningful moments, getting to know each other better, and enjoying one another's company. This is quality time and quantity of time. Not either or, but both.

Another avenue may be physical touch, but solely when appropriate and welcomed. Something about the human touch may be very comforting and loving and healing. But we must be careful not to cause discomfort or hurt or to act inappropriately. Time and time again the Lord encountered the untouchables of this world and reached out and touched them and made them well.

We will skip ahead in our alphabet.

T—Thanksgiving

And it took place, while he is going unto Jerusalem, and he himself was coming through throughout the middle of Samaria and Galilee. And as he is coming into a certain village, there met him ten men, ones with a skin disease, who stood from far away. And they themselves lifted up a voice, saying, "Jesus, Master, show mercy unto us." And having perceived, he said to them, "Having gone, show yourselves to the priests." And it took place, while they were in the way, they were made clean. And one out of them, having perceived that he was cured, turned back, glorifying God with a great voice. And he fell upon the face alongside his feet, giving thanks to him. And he himself was being a one of Samaria. And having judged forth, Jesus said, "The ten were made clean, were they not? And where are the nine? Was not found those who turned back to give glory to God if not this one of another kindred?" And he said to him, "Having stood up, go. Your faith has saved you."

—Luke 17.11-19

To choose to love in action another is to be thankful and to say, "Thank you."

Let us be the one out of the ten.

Helps for the Way



Straightway, having cried out, the father of the small child was saying, "I am having faith! Help my not having faith!"

—Mark 9.24

THERE ARE HELPS that aid us in walking the Way.

I. Dealing with the Mind

There are certain aspects of the Way that center on the mind.

Renewing the Mind

And stop being conformed together to the behavior to this age. But be made to change in essence by the making new of the mind, for the purpose that

you approve by testing what is the will of God, that good and well pleasing and complete one.

—Romans 12.2

But we ourselves are having the mind of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 2.16

For all existence before trusting in the Lord Jesus and unfortunately for much time afterwards, our mind is consumed with self-centered thoughts. Satan also seeks to control our mind and interrupt its normal functions by causing forgetfulness, injecting evil flash thoughts, and encouraging a lazy mind, the passivity of not being actively engaged mentally. In Christ, we must deny the self-centered thoughts of the old creation and stand against Satan's attacks, reclaiming any ground already infected by him. And we must depend upon Christ to think as a new creation, remembering to rely upon him at all times, concentrating upon Christ and drawing from him his thoughts through our spiritual connection with him so that we may think as he thinks. In this way, our mind is renewed.

Five Deceptions

One deception is extensive self-examination and criticism of others.

For we are not being bold to judge among or to judge with ourselves to certain ones who are standing with themselves. But they themselves, measuring

themselves by themselves and judging with themselves to themselves, are not understanding.
—2 Corinthians 10.12

In this way speak and in this way do as those who are being about to be judged through the law of freedom. For the judging will be without mercy to the one who did not show mercy. Mercy is boasting against (triumphing over) judging.
—James 2.12-13

Either extensive self-examination or criticism of others is fatal to spiritual growth, causing us to divert our eyes off Christ, leading us to become lost within our selves or to focus arrogantly upon others. As we keep our eyes upon Christ, our true condition and the condition of others is revealed in his light.

A second deception is mental understanding alone.

You yourself are having faith that God is being one. With beauty you are doing. The demons also are having faith and are bristling like having the hair stand on end.

—James 2.19

We must not merely grasp the truths of the Way with our mind while not living them, becoming convinced that these truths are being experienced when they are only exercises of the mind. This is a most dangerous mistake.

Having been discipled in the Way, I was excited about sharing this revelation with others. I was encouraged to speak to a well-known religious figure in the city. But while talking to him, I was able to see in his eyes that we were not connecting spiritually. Oh, I could tell that he was well aware of the information about which I was talking, but there was no spiritual light of the experience of it. I left the office feeling disillusioned and discouraged. Doubt began to slither in.

Some time later I was walking down the hall of the church where my oldest brother was serving as minister. I was about to pass the church office, when Dale stepped out down the hall and called for me to tell the guest speaker that it was about time for the service to begin. I cracked open the door. There sat Ray Hilderbrand, strumming his guitar. He was a pioneer in contemporary Christian music, who once had a hit song entitled, “Hey Paul, Hey Paula.” He was wiry and wore a beard. He glanced up and looked into my eyes, and I knew that he knew. He simply said, “Keep the faith.” And he looked down and began strumming again, as the revelation of the Way was confirmed within me.

A third deception is passivity.

For you were being once darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk around as children of light.

—Ephesians 5.8

We are actively to live by faith, to walk the Way dynamically. The spiritual person does not sit around waiting for

Christ to think, feel, or choose for him, as if some sort of puppet, but aggressively relies upon Christ to think, feel, and choose in his own soul in accordance to Christ, as gained through the spiritual connection of his spirit with the Holy Spirit. Even though as a new creation we do not allow our soul to control us, our soul and our personality nevertheless still exist. It is just that they do not operate outside of Christ.

Consider a parent. The parent does not want her child to sit around passively, staring at the wall all day, but instead wants the child to be active in line with what she knows is best for the child. Nor does the Heavenly Father want his children to be passive like marionettes but active with faith in Christ according to his will that is best for us.

A fourth deception is spiritual sensations or supernatural occurrences.

Beloved, stop having faith in every spirit. But approve by testing the spirits if they are being out of God, because many lying prophets have come out into the world. In this you are knowing the Spirit of God. Every spirit which is confessing Jesus Christ having come in the flesh is being out of God. And every spirit which is not confessing Jesus is not being out of God. And this is that spirit of the one opposite of the Christ, which you have heard that it is coming, and now in the world is being already.

—1 John 4.1-3

All spiritual experiences must be tested to see if they are from God. For some may be from the satanic spiritual world, which seeks to imitate God for its own evil purposes. This deception is especially a threat to spiritual believers who maturing as new creations, as they are more open and susceptible to the spiritual world.

On May 10, 2003, the day before Mother's Day, Deanna Laney, 38, was accused of leading her two older sons, Joshua, 8, and Luke, 6, one at a time, into their yard and beating them to death with a rock. The two boys were found dead in the grass, wearing only their underwear with large rocks atop their bodies. The youngest son, a 14-month-old, was found alive in his crib, bleeding from an open skull fracture with a pillow over his face. Laney called 911 and said she had killed her children. Wearing bloodstained pajamas, she told the first deputy on the scene, "I had to." Some reports say that she claimed God had told her to kill her children. Investigators who interviewed her said she occasionally started singing spiritual hymns and muttered about God.

A fifth deception is pride.

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit
before a fall.*

—*Proverbs 16.18*

It is so easy, having experienced for ourselves some of Christ and his grace and goodness, to get puffed up, thinking that somehow we ourselves have become better

on our own, and thus to look down our noses at others who have not scaled the great heights of spirituality that we have! Beware of pride of the old creation at every turn. Beware the worms of *Acts 12.21-23*.

And we must be careful not to feed the pride of the old creations of others, through such acts as heaping praise upon them even in their service to the Lord.

II. Dealing with Sin

Some concerns revolve around the problem of sin as we walk the Way.

Dealing with temptation

But each one is being tempted by his own desire, being drawn out and being caught by bait. Then the desire, having conceived, is bearing sin. And the sin, having been completed, is bringing forth from pregnancy death.

—James 1.14-15

We will not sin if we do not give in to temptation.

And temptation may be prevailed over more easily through the assistances found in the acronym STOP:

S—Spirit

We must not try to fight temptation in our own strength but we need draw upon the Holy Spirit and the strength of Christ. And we may strengthen our spirit by such spiritual exercises as praying, studying the scripture, and fasting to withstand temptation when it comes.

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T—Tired & Time

We must guard against becoming too tired or having too much idle time on our hands, because this may make us more susceptible to temptation.

It was at the time when kings go forth to battle that King David tarried at the palace, lying around on his royal couch. It was then that he lusted after the wife of another man and orchestrated the death of one of his most loyal soldiers. (*2 Samuel 11*)

O—Opportunity & Others

If we are vulnerable to a certain temptation, then we must do all that we can not to give ourselves the opportunity to act upon it. For example, if the temptation is alcohol, then we should stay out of bars and even avoid driving past them. We also should look to others who are trustworthy for support and accountability, not allowing ourselves to become isolated and thus more at risk to temptation.

P—Ponder not

We must not keep thinking about the temptation. Every split second that we contemplate the temptation greatly increases the likelihood of our justifying it and yielding to it.

Temptation, if pondered, leads to desire. Desire, given time and opportunity, leads to sin. And sin, having been carried out, leads to death, the experience of being separated from God.

Instead, we must immediately turn our thoughts from the temptation and focus upon Christ and upon those things that are good and acceptable to him.

“The lamp of the body is being the eye. Therefore if your eye should be single, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye should be evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore if the light, that one in you, is being darkness, how much the darkness.”

—Matthew 6.22-23

There is a physical and spiritual precept known as the “single-eyed” rule, which stands for the fact that we can clearly focus upon only one thing at a time.

Test it. Stretch out your arm in front of you and stick up your thumb. Line up your thumb with an object some distance away. Now try to focus upon both. It cannot be done. You will either focus upon the thumb and the object will become blurry, or you will focus on the object and your thumb will become blurry.

We must invoke this rule immediately when tempted. For every fraction of a second we focus upon the temptation, the object of the temptation grows more clear and Christ becomes blurry. But rather we must at once focus upon Christ, and he will become more clear and the object of temptation a blur.

Dealing with Individual & Besetting Sin.

Therefore what will we say? Should we remain on in sin in order that grace should increase more?

May it not take place! We certain ones who died away to sin, how will we still live in it? Or are you not understanding that we as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? Therefore we were buried together with him through the immersion into the death, in order that as indeed Christ was raised out of dead ones through the glory of the Father, in this way also we ourselves should walk around in newness of life. For if we have become ones growing together in the likeness of his death, but also we will be of the resurrection. Knowing this, that our old human was crucified with him, in order that the body of sin should be made not to work throughout, that we no longer serve sin.

—Romans 6.1-6

Trying to gain victory over one sin at a time is futile. While striving to control one sin, another pops up. Different sins are just fruits of the same tree. The tree is the old creation with its sinful nature to commit sins. In Christ, this tree of the old creation has been cut down and destroyed and all its fruits of sin with it. Therefore, as we wield the axe of faith, we gain victory over every sin by believing that we as the old creation who commits such sin died with Christ.

We should keep in mind that the alternative to fighting this battle of faith over a beleaguering sin is not good. For the more we try to satisfy the fleshly desire, though being gratified for a short time, the more the desire demands. This sends us in downward spiral, sinking us deeper and deeper into the perversion of that sin. What starts as a seemingly insignificant sin leads us in the end to do terribly

disturbing things to ourselves and to others that we would never have thought we were capable of doing.

Dealing with Addiction

Keep back your servant also from arrogant sins. Let them not have rule over me. Then will I be upright, and I will be innocent from much transgression.

—Psalms 19.13

Ruts of behavior form in our lives. We need to stay in the good ones, most of all in the rudimentary rut of living each moment by faith. We need to get out of the bad ones and be careful not to slip back into them. And we need to form new, good ones that flow from our walk of faith.

Here are some maneuvers for getting out of a rut of addiction so that we may be controlled solely by Christ and his Spirit within us:

Realize addiction is:

- (a) progressive - it gets worse and worse;
- (b) painful - it hurts not only one's self but also God and others;
- (c) pretentious - it pretends as if it is all right to do it;
- (d) possessive - it becomes more and more controlling and consuming; and
- (e) problematic - it causes more and more problems.

Repent by bottoming out to the point of being willing to turn from the addiction to the Lord.

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Rely upon the Lord for his strength, because addiction may never ever be overcome in one's own.

Reveal the addiction, confessing it, bringing it to light.

Read the Bible and pray to be spiritual nourished.

Relate with others for support and accountability.

Reach out to help others, getting eyes off self.

Reason properly, establishing personal boundaries, centering upon what is in one's control, and focusing upon what is good and uplifting.

Right wrongs and make restitution whenever possible without causing further hurt or harm.

Dealing with Guilt.

Closely aligned with sin is guilt. There are four conditions concerning guilt and feelings of guilt.

1. Clean conscience: no guilt and no feelings of guilt.

And Paul, having looked intently at the council, said, "Men, brothers, I myself in all good conscience have acted as a citizen to God until this day."

—Acts 23.1

There is no sin that we are guilty of and therefore we feel no guilt.

2. Overactive or weak conscience: no guilt but feelings of guilt.

For what reason is my freedom being judged by the conscience of another one?

—1 Corinthians 10.29

This is the feeling of false guilt. If we are subjected to long lists of made up rules and dead traditions and then are strong armed into keeping them and made to feel guilty if we do not, then we are operating under condition two.

Jesus declared, “Woe to you experts in the law as well! For you weigh down men with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.” (*Luke 11.46*)

Such feelings of false guilt are not imposed by God but by others or even ourselves. Legalistic religious people, such as the Pharisees of old, and legalistic settings, such as some churches today, are the worst for inflicting false guilt. A person laboring under false guilt has trouble standing up for themselves or confronting those who hurt them. They feel guilty nearly all the time, without justification, imagining wrongs they have not done, trying to take responsibility for the wrongs of others, and allowing feelings of guilt to incapacitate them so that they have difficulty relating to others.

Jane was raised by strict, legalistic parents who insisted that all cosmetics were bad and that girls should never wear pants. Now she feels guilt when she tries a little blush or wears blue jeans even around the house.

Someone has put it this way, “How big is your dance floor?” That is, how much freedom do you feel you have in Christ? Our dance floor should be no bigger but also no smaller than the one God has provided for us through his Son, Jesus Christ. And no one should be allowed to cut in on Christ.

3. Seared conscience: guilt but no feelings of guilt.

This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, “I have done no wrong.”

—Proverbs 30.20

This is a person who is guilty of violating the law of God but does not feel the guilt.

Some choose evil over good so often that they no longer feel guilt. Such ones can cause pain to others and do not feel bad about it. They have little sense of right and wrong and have contempt for law and order. The prophet Isaiah warned, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness...” (*Isaiah 5.20*)

Some have had their conscience scarred by trauma, abuse, or atrocities, and consequently their feelings of guilt are numbed even concerning their own evil.

Some simply blame others for the wrong they do and thus avoid feeling guilt. Many justify their wrongdoing by claiming to be some sort of victim.

And some are truly ignorant of their sin and thus do not feel their guilt. The law says, “Now if a person sins and does any of the things which are forbidden by the commandments of the Lord, though he was unaware, still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment.” (*Leviticus 5.17*)

The story is told of Forest Ranger, John Elliot, who was caught in a blizzard high in the Rockies. He wearily made it back to his cabin where he collapsed on the floor, slowly freezing to death. But his trusted St. Bernard dog would not stop whining until he finally snapped out of his stupor and sought warmth. “If my dog hadn’t been with me,” says John, “I’d be dead today, because when you’re freezing to death you actually feel warm all over and don’t wake up because it feels so good.”

Sin lulls us into a spiritual sleep, when in reality we are dying in guilt, being separated from God. Feelings of guilt are intended to rouse us so that we might come to our senses and come to Christ and the warmth of his love and forgiveness.

4. Healthy conscience: guilt and feelings of guilt.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “If a person acts unfaithfully and sins unwittingly (by easily wandering away) against the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord.”

—*Leviticus 5.14-15*

When we are guilty of sin, we should feel guilt. And we all have sinned and are guilty. But the good news is that through faith in Jesus Christ we are set free not only from our sin but also from our guilt. For Christ is both our sin offering and our guilt offering. Isaiah wrote of him: *Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many and he will bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53.10-11)*

If feelings of guilt linger after we have accepted Christ and his forgiveness, then this is false guilt and must be eliminated. Letting false guilt remain is harmful to us and insulting to God, for his Son has already paid the price for our sin and our guilt on the cross and it is an offense to suppose that we may add anything to it ourselves. God says, "Enough! The blood of my Son is enough!" The cross leaves no room for guilt or feelings of guilt.

Say a person is being held hostage for a million dollars. This person nor his family has the means to pay for his release. But then someone with wealth voluntarily pays the full price of the ransom and for the freedom of the person. Yet the hostage refuses to be released until he himself has paid a penny. How ridiculous and affronting this would be to his benefactor!

And yet, some of us still wallow in our feelings of guilt. Why? One possible reason may be our flesh. Something about coddling our feelings of guilt appeals to our flesh and keeps our flesh in control. Clinging to

our feelings of guilt, we leave the place of the condemned and mount the lofty bench of judge and then feel good about judging ourselves more severely and more rightly than God did. How we tread the blood of his Son under our feet! Another possible reason may be our sense of worthlessness. "I don't see how God could love or forgive someone like me." Persistent feelings of guilt may cause us to see our selves as having little worth, but all the while we are focusing upon our selves and feeling sorry for our selves. Instead, we must see our worth through the eyes of God who loves us and values us so much that he gave his Son for us. A further possible reason may be our fear of punishment. "I feel like the sword of God is hanging over my head by a fraying thread." But we must surrender to the truth that there is no more punishment for those who are in Christ.

There is the story of a man who was stumbling along the road with a heavy pack on his back. Soon a pickup truck stopped and the driver offered to give him a ride. The weary traveler gladly accepted. But when he climbed into the back of the truck, he continued to wear his pack. The driver called back, "Why don't you take off your pack and rest?" But the beleaguered traveler replied, "Oh, I couldn't do that! It would be too much to ask you to carry me and my load!" That traveler is us still carrying our feelings of guilt after the Lord has already born our sin and our guilt on the cross.

And the story is told of a young boy who had a pet bird, and one day the bird died. The boy was broken-hearted, so his father and mother had a funeral for the bird. They put the bird in a box, dug a little hole in the backyard, and

buried it with a ceremony. But the next day, the boy went out and dug up the bird to see how it was doing. His father insisted that he bury it again. But a few days later, the boy went out and dug up the bird again, and his father once again made him bury it. After several cycles of this, the father finally told him, "Now look, Son, you have to leave that bird in the ground and never dig it up again!"

After King David agonized over his horrible sin, he at last confessed to his Lord, "*Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity... and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.*" (Psalm 32.5)

The Apostle Paul, having been guilty of zealously sending not only men but also women into prison to be tortured and likely killed for being believers in Christ, accepted the forgiveness and freedom from guilt that Christ offered to him. Clutching pen tightly in his hand, setting his jaw, daring not for an instant to try to bear up under that crushing ton of guilt and feelings of guilt, he writes to us: "*Brothers, I myself am not reasoning to have taken over. But one thing, forgetting those things behind and stretching out for those things in front, I am pursuing as my goal the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 3.13-14)

III. More Helps

Here are more helps for walking the Way.

Three Driving Forces.

We may be driven by one of three tremendous forces: (a) pleasure; (b) pain; or (c) principle. God wants us to

choose the third, which is actually the best way ultimately to experience the first and to avoid the second.

Pleasure is the first driving force.

He that loves pleasure shall be a poor man.

—Proverbs 21.17

I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself." And behold, it too was futility.

—Ecclesiastes 2.1

...the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

—Ecclesiastes 7.4

But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.

—1 Timothy 5.6

...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

—2 Timothy 3.4

We must rise above being driven by pleasure.

We must not be like Esau who sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup. (*Genesis 25.29-34*)

Supports:

Reason out what pleasure, whether physical or emotional, is being derived from the action. Ask, "What am I getting out of this?"

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Remove or refuse pleasure that is sinful.

Regulate pleasure that is not sinful.

Let your moderation be known unto all men.

—*Philippians 4.5*

Recognize bells, like Pavlov's salivating dog, that trigger the drive to be controlled by pleasure, such as, stress, deadlines, pressures, pain, times of the day, television, social events, or certain friends or family members.

Reorganize your environment, like redecorating a house for a toddler, removing provisions for troubling types of pleasure.

Raze bridges to cut off any retreat back to the pleasure.

Replace sinful pleasures with pleasures that are in line with Christ and the principles of scripture, such as, listening to good music, reading enjoyable books, finding a meaningful hobby, doing satisfying work, going for walks, or enjoying nature.

Pain is the second driving force.

*And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.
And death will be no more. And nor mourning and
nor shouting and nor pain will be any more. The
former things passed away.*

—*Revelation 21.4*

Fear is not being in love. But complete love is casting outside fear, because fear is having punishment, and the one who is fearing has not been completed in love.

—1 John 4.18

Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and act. Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you."

—1 Chronicles 28.20

We must refuse to be driven by pain, including fear which is the dread of potential pain.

Damaging behaviors from an improper drive of pain are:

Callousness - putting up walls to keep pain out.

Compulsive behavior - seeking to control the pain through obsessive actions that give the sense of control.

Denial - suppressing the pain.

Depression - giving up and giving in to the pain.

Selfishness - wallowing in self-pity or self-punishment.

Anger - lashing out at the pain or its perceived source.

Fear - dreading possible pain.

Jealousy - fearing the loss of what one supposes to have.

Envy - feeling the pain of not having what someone else has that we want.

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Completed love casts out fear. A tip of the iceberg of meaning of this scripture is that love drives out fear because love focuses upon loving the Lord and others rather than upon fearing so much what might happen to us.

Linda writes:

“I wouldn’t have described myself as a fearful person or a person that was driven by the fear of pain. That is until He began to tell me to stop fearing, to stop being so afraid. Only then did I realize how fearful I was. Very soon after I received Christ into my heart, He began to very carefully and patiently show me things that needed changing in my life in order for me to begin to trust Him for all my needs.

One of the first areas he began to meticulously work on was my fearfulness. For so long I went through life so full of fear that I didn’t even know there was any other way to be. I was afraid of the dark at 24 years old. I had so many habits connected with the dark that I did them almost unconsciously, instinctively. I always left at least one light on in the house every night, usually the one over the stove in the kitchen. If I woke up in the middle of the night thirsty, I would first turn on the bedroom light, pass the restroom and turn on that light, reach the hall and turn on that light, all in a very short distance. I would reach the kitchen and the stove light was on, but I still would walk over and turn another light on in there.

I used to have nightmares and wake up in bed frozen by fear, unable to move, scared to breathe, unable to make myself get out of the bed.

I had a terrible fear that someone would be in the house or get in. I had a fear of someone trying to get in the windows. I had alarms on the two bedroom windows and on the two doors. I was so afraid of coming home to a dark house that I would leave the front and back door lights on almost all the time. Once in the house I would tell my then young daughter to wait at the front door until I went around and turned on all the lights and checked closets, under beds, behind shower curtains, sometimes even checking under the kitchen sink to make sure no one was there.

Speaking of the shower curtain, I had the habit of always, night or day, checking behind it to make sure no one was hiding there. The act of checking it was torture in itself, waiting for someone to jump out at me every time! You may be wondering if maybe I had watched one too many horror movies. But I was very careful not to watch anything frightening.

Shortly after receiving Christ, He began to open my eyes to these fears. He wanted to free me from the fears that bound me. He began to show me scripture about not being able to please God without faith. He began to wake me up in the middle of the night and ask me to do things by having faith in Him, trusting Him.

Anytime I woke up and got up I checked on my daughter, checking her room and windows. There were times I would wake up and He would tell me she was fine, that He was taking care of her, that I needed to trust Him for her safety. I was so torn and would start to go and check on her and He would ask me if I thought I could protect her better than He could.

Little by little, step by step he taught me to trust in Him, not the lights or my efforts of feeling safe. Sometimes my feelings of fear were so strong I would get up and ignore Him, turn on all the lights, check the alarms, and all the rooms, all in my own strength. Then I would lay back down and feel like He wasn't there with me, like if I didn't need Him and didn't trust Him to take care of me, then He would step back, for we couldn't both do it. He began to tell me that I could let Him take care of me or I could take care of myself, but not both. He would ask over and over, "Fear or faith, which one will you choose?"

Little by little, one light and one room at a time, I learned how to trust Him. It was not easy, but I learned that the fear of something happening was much worse and more powerful than the reality of anything ever happening.

He took so much time and care to remind me over and over again to trust Him that there was no one hiding behind the shower curtain waiting to jump out at me until slowly and painfully I was able to believe Him. Fear, I learned is from the enemy.

He loves us so much. He doesn't want us to live in fear, to be bound by it. Fear only works to come between Him and us. We cannot walk in fear and faith at the same time. Anything that hinders us from completely trusting in Him should be cast aside.

Eventually, after so much love, patience, and time, my daughter and I ended up being out later than usual. It was dark when we got home with a couple bags of groceries. We got in the house and I was putting the

few things away when I noticed her still standing at the front door. She had a small bag in her arms. I asked her what she was doing. "Aren't you going to check the house Mommy?" she asked. My heart sank as I realized how I had allowed my fears to affect her. I went over to her and sat on the floor in front of her, took both her little hands in mine, and explained to her how Jesus was going to take care of us now. He would keep His eyes on the house while we were gone and would protect us if we would only trust Him to do it.

My favorite scripture has become:

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not unto to your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he shall direct your paths."*

—Proverbs 3.5-6

Principle is the third driving force.

The righteous will live by faith.

—Romans 1.17

*If we are living in the Spirit, we also should walk
in the Spirit.*

—Galatians 5.25

*"This is my commandment, that you love one
another, as I have loved you."*

—John 15.12

*Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light
unto my path.*

—*Psalm 119.105*

We are to be driven by the principles of the Way and the Word.

No matter the pain of the present or the past or the fear of the future, and no matter the pleasure of the present or the past or the hope of the future, we must walk daily according to the principles of the Way and the Word.

Male-Female Attraction

*To an elder male you should not strike to mold
upon, but call alongside as a father, young males
as brothers, elder females as mothers, young females
as sisters in all purity.*

—*1 Timothy 5.1-2*

We must guard against and avoid male-female attraction and interaction with ones of the opposite sex. Instead, we must see all others as brothers or sisters, mothers or fathers, with the exception of one's spouse if one is married. This is a powerful attraction that will quickly sidetrack us off the path and will slip insidiously into our interactions with others in subtle and seemingly innocent ways unless one is diligently guarding against it as a new creation. We must not let this be a blind-spot of our old creation that we allow to remain in our experience.

Some questions that reveal male-female interaction:

- “Do I seek out male-female interactions with others?”
- “If married, do I get male-female attention from any person other than my spouse?”
- “Do I act differently whenever the opposite sex is around?”
- “Do I enjoy being around the opposite sex more than my own?”
- “Does my energy level go up whenever the opposite sex is around?”
- “Do I find pleasure in male-female interaction?”
- “Do I enjoy flirting?”
- “Do I look for chances for physical contact with the opposite sex, such as in playing around or even consoling?”

Solutions:

- Rely upon Christ as a new creation when interacting with others.
- Deny the old creation and its intense feelings of attraction for the opposite sex.
Remember how David lusted after Bathsheba and what followed. (*2 Samuel 11*).
- Adhere to the single-eyed rule in regards to temptation and immediately get eyes off the attraction and onto Christ.
- Must always keep guard up.
This is like a boxer who must ward off fatigue and body punches and never lower his guard.

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- Limit exposure to the dangers of male-female attraction and interaction.
- Avoid compromising situations.
- Never play around with flirting or physical contact with the opposite sex.
- Operate by the brother-sister rule in every encounter.
- Flee male-female attraction and interaction immediately.
Follow the example of Joseph who refused and then fled from the male-female advances of his boss's wife. (*Genesis 39.6-13*)

Care of the Body.

The body exercises a great deal of influence upon our whole being. So we do well to take care of ourselves physically, so that our body does not make it unduly difficult to live by faith. And failure to care for the body may shorten the time we have been given here to serve the Lord. Moreover, we must be extremely careful about any medicine or drug or other physically altering substance that we let enter into our bodies.

There are “3 rights” of caring for our body: (a) eat right; (b) sleep right; and (c) exercise right.

Shadow versus Eternal.

Certain ones who are serving in worship as an example and a shadow of those things upon heaven, just as Moses had been warned as he was being about to bring to completion the tabernacle.

—*Hebrews 8.5*

This present world is the land of shadows. The greater reality is that one of God in the far greater dimension of heaven. We are to live for the greater reality.

Imagine a group of people stationed so that they may only see the wall of a cave before them. Behind and unseen to them is a large fire. Between that fire and their backs a lot of activity takes place, as other people come and go, performing various actions and tasks, and as a whole range of animals also pass by. The situated group only sees the shadows dancing upon the wall. Now most in the group contend that the shadows are all the reality that there is. But a few dare to suggest that the shadows are only pale reflections of greater realities.

As an old creation, we view situations and events according to temporary benefits. But as a new creation, we see them according to eternal gains, bringing eternity to bear upon the temporal, living by faith and affecting eternity while in the temporary.

We need to live here and now in a faithful and pleasing manner to the Lord, in order to show him that he may trust us in the hereafter. (*Matthew 25.14-30*)

No matter what we may have to endure in our service to our King now, it will pale in comparison to an eternity of living in his presence and enjoying his rewards. (*Luke 18.28-30; Romans 8.18*)

Talents & Gifts

Natural talents, such as, singing and speaking, are useless in a spiritual way when used independently of Christ. Only when we depend upon Christ may an ability

be used for eternal benefit. Using an ability or talent will differ in motive and method for a believer who is experiencing being a new creation from a believer who is experiencing being an old creation. An ability used apart from Christ, even in service to him, has selfish motives behind its use and glorifies self.

Two men of the New Testament had very different backgrounds. Peter was a fisherman and probably had little formal education. Yet God sent him to teach the highly educated Jews. Paul, on the other hand, was one of the most highly educated Jews of his day. Yet God sent him to teach the biblically uneducated non-Jewish or Gentile people. The highly learned Jews were amazed and convicted by the persuasiveness of Peter, and the scripturally unlearned Gentiles were won to the Lord by the common speech of Paul. Why did God work in this way? By switching what would seem to be the natural use of their talents and abilities, the Lord was helping them both to depend upon him and not upon their own selves. What was accomplished was what Christ was able to do through them. (*Galatians 2.7*)

G.R.A.C.E. of Being Single.

G—Gift of singleness should be seized from the Lord in order to serve him more fully and with fewer worldly worries than if married.

R—Realization should be embraced that though being single has its difficult challenges, so too does marriage. All problems are not solved by getting married. It is infinitely better to wait for the right person to marry in

the Lord than to rush into marriage with someone who is not. For the Lord wants you to marry someone with whom you may be equally yoked, someone with whom you share a spiritual walk of faith, someone whom you enjoy being around as a friend and companion, someone who comforts and encourages you, someone who is kind and full of character, and then someone to whom you are attracted.

A—Action should be taken now to develop your spiritual life, walking the path and keeping clean of sin, including sexual sin, so that you may be the person you are supposed to be and the spouse you need to be if you do get married.

C—Contentment should be chosen in your state of singleness. Surrender completely to the will of the Lord for you. There is nothing wrong in praying for a spouse as long as it does not interfere with resting in the Lord and in his will and timing for your life. Confess your pain, such as loneliness, but still hold to your faith in the Lord, knowing that he loves you and is working out his will for your good. And this attitude of contentment will guard you from appearing desperate in seeking a spouse, as this is one of the biggest turn offs to anyone you would ever want to marry. Stop trying so hard, be content, and trust the Lord to work out all areas of your life, including marriage.

E—Experience now being the bride of Christ, loving him with all your heart, loving him first and foremost. For love for anyone else must flow forth from his love within you.

Overcoming

“He who overcomes will inherit all things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

—Revelation 21.7

To overcome is to walk the Way and to do what the Lord leads us to do as we go. Four procedures help.

1. Plan.

We must plan each day to live by faith and then to carry out whatever he gives us to do.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

—Proverbs 29.18

2. Adapt.

Because the unexpected takes place and no task ever goes exactly as planned, we must adapt to these changes. Every morsel of time and emotion that we exert bemoaning unwanted change is completely wasted at best. No, we must immediately adapt to the change and keep walking with Christ and working for him. For the Lord will often use change to guide our steps.

3. Improvise.

As the Lord leads, we must always rely upon him and be ready to improvise and change and go with the movement of his Spirit, demonstrating that we are following him.

4. Overcome.

No matter what happens, we must keep living by faith in Christ and must accomplish what he wants us to do.

The apostle Paul planned to share the Way in Asia. But as he set out, the door was slammed shut by the Holy Spirit. Yet he quickly adapted to the change without complaint or questioning. In a vision of a man of Macedonia pleading for help, he was called to Europe instead. Paul improvised and changed course. He then overcame in his mission, just in a different place from where he had originally planned. And many of us may trace salvation coming to us because he did. (*Acts 16*)

One of Andrew's favorite stories is the one told of Roy and his brother-in-law, Larry. One Christmas while he was still in college, Larry's mother gave him a pair of moleskin pants. Then one year he sent them to Roy for Christmas. The next Christmas, Roy wrapped them up and gave them back to Larry. This exchange went on for several years until one year Roy twisted the pants and stuffed them into a narrow tube and sent them back to Larry. The next Christmas, Larry compressed the pants into a 7-inch square, wrapped them with wire, and gave them to Roy. Not to be outdone, the next year Roy put the pants into a 2-foot-square crate filled with stones, nailed it shut, banded it with steel and gave the pants back to Larry. The next Christmas, Larry had the pants mounted inside an insulated window that had a 20-year warranty and shipped them off to Roy. Roy recovered the pants, stuffed them into a 5-inch coffee can, soldered it shut, put the can in a 5-gallon container along with some reinforcing rods, filled it with

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concrete, and gave it to Larry the following Christmas. The next year, Larry installed the pants in a 225-pound homemade steel ashtray and etched Roy's name on the side. Roy had trouble retrieving the treasured trousers, but succeeded and then put them into a 600-pound safe, had it welded shut and painted it with red and green strips, and shipped it to Larry for Christmas. Having somehow rescued the pants, Larry sent a green 1974 Gremlin that had been compressed into a 2,000-pound, 3-foot cube with this note attached, "The pants are in the glove compartment."

Cost of the Way



Because grace was given to you that for Christ not only to have faith into him but also to suffer for him.

—*Philippians 1.29*

BY THE GRACE of God, may we count the cost and be willing to pay the price to follow Christ in the Way.

I. Satan's Attacks

"Simon, Simon, perceive! The Adversary (Satan) asked out you all for the purpose to sift as wheat."

—*Luke 22.31*

Be sober. Be awake. Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, is walking around, seeking someone to devour, to whom stand opposite, as firm ones in the faith, perceiving that the same kinds of sufferings are being brought to completion by your brotherhood in the world. And the God of all grace, the one who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you suffer a little, will himself equip you throughout, will set firm you, will strengthen you, will found you. To him be the might unto the ages. Amen.

—1 Peter 5.8-11

We must beware of Satan's attacks.

Almost immediately after being disciplined in the Way, I heard the Spirit say firmly to me, "Beware of Satan." I did not know how strong and devious the attacks of Satan would be. I thought I was ready. I was not. He did not attack me directly at first. Instead, having shared the Way with a dear brother, Satan ravaged his life. "If this is the cost," I thought, "I don't know if I want to pay it."

Satan will assault us, for the purpose to force us from the path. He will employ:

spiritual forces, or
cooperating humans, or
physical circumstances.

We must be prepared for these brutal attacks, for they will surely come.

Satan will almost concede a person passing through gate one. For if he then is able to keep that believer living as if still an old creation, he may not only torment that believer but he also may use him to turn others from Christ. But let that believer pass through gate two and begin living as a new creation and suddenly Satan is confronted with a believer who is operating in the power of Christ and Satan knows all too well that he is no match for Christ. So Satan will do all within his power to keep us from gate two and from walking the path beyond. There is nothing too low or devious for him to try. It is not a game. Satan hates gate one, but he fears gate two.

Know the Enemy.

We need to know who Satan is and what he is like so that we may be prepared for how he will assail us.

- First and foremost, Satan is a liar, and the father of lies. (*John 8.44*)

Since Satan is chiefly a liar, his primary attacks against us are lies. His power is in our buying into his lies. To resist, we must hold to the truth and stand firm in the faith. If we resolutely rely upon Christ as new creations and deny ourselves as old creations, all the lies and attacks of Satan will fail. (*Ephesians 6.14, 16*)

Satan has two leading lies. First, we should be our own god, living our own lives for our own selves. And second, the consequences of sin that God has said will happen will not happen to us. Against these lies, we must

hold to the truth in faith that we were created to live in reliance upon the Lord, and that what God tells us in his Word is for our well being and that we only bring harm upon ourselves when we go against what he says.

And the primary purpose of Satan's lies is to cause estrangement: estrangement between us and God; estrangement between us and who we were created to be; and estrangement between us and others. If we are experiencing estrangement in any one of these areas, we have bought into the lies of Satan.

- Satan, as figured in the King of Tyre, has become a monstrosity of what he was created to be. (*Ezekiel 28.12ff*)

He was created as the perfection of wisdom and beauty but his pride has made him a perversion. He no longer is wise but cunning and crafty. He no longer is beautiful but deceptively and perversely attractive. If such a high created being should become a revulsion of what he was created to be, how much will we too if we live in rebellion against God.

- Satan was once called "Lucifer," which means the "Morning Star," but he fell from heaven because of his rebellion against God, and now he only is able to muster up a pale pretense of his former glory. (*Isaiah 14.12ff; 2 Corinthians 11.13-15*)

Satan comes to us as if he is still an angel of light, but we must hold to the truth that he has fallen into darkness

and stand in faith against him and his lies. Like Satan, if we are living full of darkness as fallen, old creations, we are forfeiting our glory in Christ as new creations. We may fool some people some of the time but never God.

- Satan also is known as the Devil, which means the “Slanderer,” who by definition spreads the seeds of untruth that yield the fruit of hurt and harm. (*Matthew 4.1*)

Whenever we engage in slander or gossip, we are working side by side with Satan. One of the greatest hindrances to the Way and to the witness of Christ is the untamed tongue. In fact, the scriptures tell us that if we do not offend with our words then we are well on the way to being complete. (*Exodus 16.1-12; James 1.26; 3.1-12*)

- Satan is a tempter. (*Matthew 4.3*)

He tempts us to sin, to indulge the flesh, to live as an old creation for our own selves, to do good works on our own, to quit relying upon Christ. In faith, we must adamantly say No to every temptation of Satan.

- Satan is Beelzebul, which may be translated, “Lord of the Flies,” and infers much about him. (*Matthew 12.24*)

Flies are carriers of disease. Satan will make us sick or even try to take our life in order to keep us from walking

with the Lord and serving him. Through faith, we must resist sickness and even death until we complete our walk in this life.

Flies distract and harass. Satan will pester us in order to distract us from relying upon Christ and living for him. We must continually shoo him away.

Flies infect open wounds. Satan will seek to infect any hurt or trauma that we are experiencing with bitterness, unforgiveness, unbelief, anger, and depression. We must apply the balm of Christ and experience the healing that we have in him.

Flies are attracted to spoilage and excrement. Satan longs to ruin us. We must love and be loyal to Christ who only wants what is best for us and who works all things together for our good.

Flies bite and cause pain. Satan takes great pleasure in causing us discomfort. We should cling to Christ who cares so much for us.

Flies find the smallest of openings and come in. Satan will seek any opening of the old creation through which to enter. We must be diligent in resisting him and in denying the old self.

- Satan and those fallen beings who operate under his umbrella are evil. (*Matthew 13.19*)

Satan wants to sow evil into our lives and wishes to recruit us to inflict evil upon others. We must refuse him.

- Satan is the enemy, the adversary, the prosecuting attorney. (*Matthew 13.39; John 13.27; 1 Peter 5.8-9*)

Whether we are aware of it or not, we have an enemy who is opposed to us and who is out to devour us, a prosecuting attorney who is prowling around, seeking evidence against us in order to convict us before God. We must stand firm in our faith in our Advocate, our defense attorney, Jesus Christ, in whom we are saved and sanctified by his grace through faith.

- Satan is a murderer and liar. (*John 8.44*)

Satan seeks to kill and devalue life. Instead, we must uphold life. We must not even hate, because our Lord equates hate to murder in our hearts, and because hate gives place in us to Satan the murderer. And we must be careful not to tell lies and thus open the door to the father of lies.

- Satan is a thief and destroyer. (*John 10.10; Revelation 9.11*)

He wants to steal and ransack all that is good in our lives. We must guard against letting him in, and not cause damage to others.

- Satan is the current ruler of this world. (*John 12.31*)

Satan has led this world in a rebellion against the Lord. We must be loyal to Christ, the true King, until he comes and punishes all who have opposed him.

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- Satan is Belial, which means “Worthless.” (2 *Corinthians 6.15*)

We have seen how lofty Satan was created, but he has become worthless as a result of his revolt against God. One word for hell in the New Testament is the word “gehenna,” referring to the Valley of Hinnom which became the garbage dump of Jerusalem. Apart from Christ the garbage is where we end up.

- Satan is the accuser of the brethren. (*Revelation 12.10*)

Satan is constantly making indictments against us and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Whenever we do the same, we are in league with him. Instead, the Lord wants us to be intercessors on behalf of others.

- Satan is the ruler of his fellow angels who followed him in his heavenly uprising and were cast from heaven with him. (*Matthew 12.24*)

Here are some biblical examples of these spirits, also known as demons, and some of the specific ways they try to attack us.

Spirit of adultery and harlotry and fornication.
(*Hosea 4.12*)

This spirit seeks to lead us from being faithful and loyal to our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and from

keeping him as our first love, often using the drive for sex to turn us from the path.

Spirit of the antichrist. (*1 John 4.3*)

While the first spirit seeks to turn our love away from Christ, this spirit wants to turn us against the Lord. We insist that we would never do this, and yet, every time we give in to sin or to living for our own selves as an old creation, we do.

Spirit of deep sleep and spirit of stupor and severe sorrow and extreme grief. (*Isaiah 29.10; Romans 11.8*)

This spirit strives to keep us asleep spiritually, keeping us insensitive to the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit, weighing down our spiritual eyes with the heaviness of our flesh, the worries of the world, or depression. And it seeks, through the crushing of our spirit under intense grief and sorrow, to leave us barely able to function on almost any level.

Spirit of disobedience. (*Ephesians 2.2*)

This spirit stirs up and takes advantage of any attitude of rebellion against authority, any resistance to rules or to being told what to do, any anger at being told No, knowing this eventually turns into disobedience and rebellion against God.

Spirit of divination. (*Acts 16.16*)

There is a growing interest in psychics, the occult, and witchcraft, which throws wide open the door

to this spirit of divination. This spirit is subtle and slowly ensnares people in its satanic grasp. It seeks an opening through seemingly innocent entertainment, such as television shows or movies that center upon witchcraft, magic, spiritual powers, or ghosts. It encourages an interest in the four elements of creation – air, water, fire, and earth – and emphasizes the need to save the environment to the point of neglecting the Creator. It promotes prayers to the sun and the moon, the casting of spells, the use of magic, and the call for psychic links. This spirit promises power, having been historically alluring to women, stirring the curiosity over secret rituals and secret knowledge of the past, present, or future.

Enticing and deceiving and lying spirit and spirit of distortion and perversion and deceitful and wandering and misleading spirit. (*1 Kings 22.21-22; Isaiah 19.14; 1 Timothy 4.1*)

This spirit lures us, like prey to a trap. It lies to us, blinding us with deception to the point that we refuse to see the truth no matter who tries to show us.

Spirit of envy and jealousy and passion. (*Numbers 5.14*)

Envy is craving what others have, such as more money, better children, nicer cars or homes, more popularity, possessions, or position. We open the floodgates to envy if we compare ourselves with others. King Saul felt satisfied with the thousands he

had conquered and the praise he got from the people, until the women began singing about David and his ten thousands. Jealousy is the fear of losing what we have or think we have, selfishly strangling the life out of who or what is closest to us. Two dogs are friends, until one is petted and the other ignored. Envy and jealousy fuel tremendous passion, but passion that is most often selfish and highly destructive. We must beware of unbridled intense feelings.

Evil spirit and unclean spirit. (*Judges 9.23; Matthew 12.43*)

This spirit is not so subtle, but thrusts evil directly at us and urges us to commit blatant acts of evil too. We may watch for the infection of evil by observing how we treat those who are vulnerable to us when we think no one else is looking. And the unclean spirit seeks to get us to violate the will and word of God.

Spirit of sickness and weakness, and mute and convulsing spirit, and deaf and mute spirit. (*Luke 13.11; Mark 9.17; Mark 9.25*)

These spirits desire to saddle us with sickness and handicaps in order to stop us from living by faith and serving the Lord. They must be defied and overcome.

Spirit of slavery and fear. (*Romans 8.15*)

This spirit wants to keep us enslaved to sin and to self and to fear rather than for us to live free by faith.

Having worked in the Way for some time, I was under increased attack of the enemy. Times were hard. All seemed threatened. But my mind went back to my freshman year playing football at Missouri Southern State College. Outside of town there was a large two-story, white wooden house that had been converted into a restaurant of sorts. A woman with white hair who looked like the ideal grandmother fixed meals for the patrons. Some of us on the team would go and eat our fill and then lounge around in big wooden chairs painted white alongside the nearby river, smoking cigars and telling tall tales.

Remembering those times, I took what money I had left and bought a twenty-five dollar cigar. I proceeded to blow smoke into the face of Satan for a couple of hours, declaring with each puff, "You can take it all, even my life, but I will still trust in the Lord and seek to live for him." A sense of the peace and strength and assurance of Christ grew within me. That was a good day.

II. Spiritual War

Suffer bad together as a beautiful soldier of Christ Jesus.

—2 Timothy 2.3

This message I am putting alongside to you, child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before upon you, in order that in them you should fight as a soldier the beautiful campaign, having faith and a good conscience, which some ones,

having shoved away, were shipwrecked about the faith.

—1 Timothy 1.18-19

For though walking around in flesh, we are not fighting as soldiers according to flesh. For the weapons of our campaign are not ones of the flesh, but ones having power in God for the lifting down of strongholds...

—2 Corinthians 10.3-4

Behind all the headlines of the day and all the events of our subsistence, there is a war taking place. It is the cosmic war of the ages, the spiritual war between God and his heavenly forces and Satan and his fallen forces for the souls of humans, for our souls. When we step through gate one of the Way, we cross over from the side of Satan to the side of God. And then when we journey through gate two, we move from the back lines to the front of that war.

I remember a scene from a movie in which some newly enlisted soldiers were loudly and proudly singing patriotic songs with visions of the glory of battle and welcoming home parades being given in their honor. There were a couple of veteran soldiers in the room who with restraint acknowledged the salute to their country. The new soldiers belittled the veterans for their lack of patriotic enthusiasm. But the veterans, having done much more than sing songs and dream dreams, had already fought many battles for their country, knowing well the realities of war, the horrors, the brutality, the

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fierce violence, the life and death struggle solely to survive, the death of buddies, the gruesome injuries, the trauma, and had come home not to cheers and parades but to jeers and scorn. May we sing our hymns to Christ as veterans of the Way, scarred and broken, having fought many battles for him.

Many known and many unknown warriors for Christ have fought great battles and undergone tremendous hardship and forfeited much, even their lives, to make sure the Way has been passed on to us. Supremely, Christ himself suffered untold agonies so that we may have the Way. The Apostle Paul became a living sacrifice as he was divinely inspired to write of the Way for us. Watchman Nee became sick unto death while writing the book that the Lord used to disciple me and many others and ended up spending the last years of his life in prison for his faith. Now it is our turn to fight. We must ensure that the Way is handed down to others.

We are like the children of Israel in this war. Israel was enslaved in Egypt, delivered by God, pursued by Pharaoh and his army, learned to lean on God in the wilderness, and then crossed into Canaan to fight for the land that the Lord had promised them, fighting within to keep the faith and fighting without to dispose the enemy. We are enslaved to sin and self, saved by Christ, pursued by Satan and his forces, taught to live by faith, and now called upon to fight for all that the Lord has promised us, waging the war within to keep living by faith and the war without against the enemy.

The War Within

“I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, in order that through them I might test Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk in it, as their fathers did, or not.”

—Judges 2.21-22

We must engage in the war within of walking the Way, by driving out of our experience the enemy of our old fallen selves that was crucified with Christ and by depending on the Lord in order to experience more and more having been raised with him as new creations.

Like a snake caught by a pitchfork, we as an old creation will thrash wildly about, seeking to escape the experience of having been crucified with Christ. But we must hold firmly to the handle of our faith and not be disconcerted about the flaying about of ourselves as an old creation as we experience our death with Christ.

We as an old creation are like a spoiled child. We are all right as long as we are getting our way. But once we start saying No to ourselves as an old creation, we as an old creation throw tantrums, kicking and screaming. Like with the coddled child, we must never soften our strong stance against ourselves as an old creation, or we will lose much ground in our experience.

We must win this war within in our bodies, our souls, and our spirits.

In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off

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the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

—Colossians 2.11

In freedom Christ freed us. Therefore stand firm. And be not held in again in a joining with a yoke of servanthood.... For you yourselves were called onto freedom, brothers. Only use not that freedom for a rushing forth to the flesh.

—Galatians 5.1, 13

The will of our soul is like the flag of our country. It must never be surrendered. In doing ceremonies as part of the Presidential Honor Guard, several other countries were sometimes included. As the anthem of a particular country was played, the flags of the other countries were dipped. Only one flag was never lowered, the flag of the United States of America. For this flag has been fought for and defended with the blood of many. God created us with the flag of our will and Christ shed his blood to free it. Our own flesh, Satan, or others may ask us to surrender the flag of our will, but God never does. Instead, we must defend this flag at all costs so that we may freely choose to depend upon Christ and to live according to his will.

For the weapons of our campaign are not ones of the flesh, but ones having power in God for the lifting down of strongholds, lifting down reasonings and every height which is lifting itself up against the

knowledge of God, and capturing at spear point every thought unto the obedience of Christ...

—2 Corinthians 10.4-5

The remaining thing, brothers, as much as is being true, as much as is worshipful, as much as is righteous, as much as is pure, as much as is loving toward like a friend, as much as is well stated, if there is some virtue and if some giving over of praise, reason on these things.

—Philippians 4.8

And those ones of the Christ crucified the flesh with the passions and the intense feelings.

—Galatians 5.24

Beloved, stop having faith in every spirit. But approve by testing the spirits if they are being out of God, because many lying prophets have come out into the world.

—1 John 4.1

The War Without

Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan. It was only that the generations of the children of Israel might know war, to teach them war, at the least such ones as had not known it before.

—Judges 3.1-2

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We also must wage the war without against Satan and his spiritual forces and drive them out of our lives.

To fight the spiritual war we must have the armor of the King, as described in *Ephesians 6.10-18*:

- *Of the remaining thing, be endowed with power in the Lord and in the might of his strength.*

We must always fight the war in the strength of the Lord and never ever in our own.

- *Sink yourselves in all weapons of God for the purpose that you have power to stand toward the methods of the devil, because the wrestling to us is not being toward blood and flesh but toward the rulers, toward the authorities, toward the mights (ones of might) of the world of this darkness, toward the things of the spirit of the evil in the places upon heaven.*

If one should ever doubt this enemy is real, one has only to start living for Christ by faith.

- *Because of this, take up all weapons of God, in order that you should have power to stand opposite in the day, that evil one, and, having worked throughout all things, to stand. Therefore stand...*

Therefore submit to God. Stand opposite to the devil, and he will flee from you.

—James 4.7

But grace be to God who is giving to us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

—1 Corinthians 15.57

You yourselves are being out of God, little children, and have won the victory over them, because greater is being that one in you than that one in the world.

—1 John 4.4

And do not give the devil a foothold.

—Ephesians 4.27

In the heat of the assaults by the enemy, we may be tempted to pull back from following the narrow path. And if we do, the intensity of the attacks may well ease and we may think that we are now safer than before. But in actuality, the safest place for us to be is in the center of the path fighting for Christ, knowing that in him the victory has already been won.

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, "In such and such a place shall be my camp." And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you pass not such a place, for there the Syrians are come down." And the king of Israel sent to the place where the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing. And he called his servants,

and said unto them, "Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel?" And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king. But Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedchamber." And he said, "Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him." And it was told him, saying, "Behold, he is in Dothan." Therefore he sent there horses, and chariots, and a great host. And they came by night, and compassed about the city. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early and gone forth, behold, an host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" And he answered, "Fear not. For they who are with us are more than they who are with them." And Elisha prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray you, open his eyes, that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

—2 Kings 6.8-17

If we choose to be governed by our flesh, we open up ourselves to fallen spirits who etch out strongholds within us through our flesh.

King Saul gave in to the flesh in his envy of David, but surely it is evident how much the fallen spiritual forces entered into his life and took control. Only for brief moments after this did he ever breathe the fresh air of freedom again.

If ground is lost to the enemy, we must come to Jesus and let him reclaim it, for Satan and his forces must bow to the authority of the King. And then we must immerse ourselves into Christ and be filled with his Spirit. For our Lord warned, *“When the unclean spirit should go out from a human, it is coming through waterless places, seeking rest, and not finding any, it is saying, ‘I will turn back unto my dwelling from which I came out.’ And having come, it is finding it, having been swept and having been put in order. After that it is going and is taking alongside seven other spirits more evil than itself. And having come in, they are dwelling down in there. And the last state of that human is becoming worse than the first.”* (Luke 11.24-26)

- *...having fastened around your waist with truth...*

Truth is the antidote for the poison of Satan’s lies.

- *...and having sunk yourself in the breastplate of righteousness...*

Satan often attacks our hearts, trying to turn our hearts from the Lord, or working to discourage us, or exciting our emotions so that we will be driven by how we feel, or inflicting emotional pain until our hearts are turned to stone. We must protect our hearts by remaining in right relationship with God and then doing what is right.

- *...and having bound under the feet with preparedness of the well message of the peace...*

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Soldiers are trained in the Army to always take care of their feet, as we are always to be prepared to go and share the well message of the Way with others.

- *...in all things having taken up the shield of the faith, with which you are having power to quench all the cast items of the evil one which have been set on fire.*

We may block all attacks by Satan by taking up the shield of faith in Christ and in our position in him.

“Praise the Lord,” words and music by Brown Bannister and Mike Hudson:

When you're up against a struggle
that shatters all your dreams,
When your hopes have been crushed
by Satan's manifested schemes,
And you feel the urge within
to submit to earthly fears,
Don't let the faith you're standing on
simply disappear.

Praise the Lord.
He can work through those
who praise him.
Praise the Lord.
For our God inhabits praise.
Praise the Lord.
For the chains that seem to bind you
serve only to remind you

that they drop powerless behind you
when you praise him.

Now Satan is a liar
and he wants to make us think,
That we are paupers
when we're children of the King.
So lift up the mighty shield of faith
for the battle must be won.
We know that Jesus Christ is risen
so the work's already done.

Praise the Lord.

- *And accept the helmet of the salvation...*

We must protect our minds, taking every thought captive to Christ, giving no place to anxiety, lust, fear, worry, or doubt.

- *...and the sword of the spirit (Spirit) which is being the word of God.*

In the Presidential Honor Guard, we passed through Washington D.C. and walked into the White House with weapon in hand, not on the basis of our word but on the authority of the word of the President of the United States.

If we want to see Satan turn tail and run, we may draw out the sword of the scripture as wielded by the Spirit.

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- *Through all praying and pleading be ones who are praying in every time in the spirit (Spirit).*

We are to live at all times with an attitude of prayer and bathe all our comings and goings in prayer.

Fighting for Others

And from there, having stood up, he (Jesus) came forth unto the set boundaries of Tyre. And having come into a dwelling, he willed not even one person to know. And he was not having power to escape notice. But straightway a woman, having heard about him, whose small daughter was having an unclean spirit, having come, fell forward at his feet. And the woman was being Greek, a female of Syrophenicia by nation. And she was asking him in order that the demon he should cast out of her daughter. And he was saying to her, "Let go the children first to be satisfied with food. For it is not a thing of beauty to take the bread of the children and to cast to the small dogs." But that one answered and is saying to him, "Lord, even the small dogs down under the table are eating from the small crumbs of the small children." And he said to her, "Because of this word, go under way. The demon has come out from your daughter." And having come forth into her dwelling, she found the small child having been cast upon the bed and the demon having come out.

—Mark 7.24-30

It is said that flies placed in a jar with air holes in the lid will fly around frantically, banging into the lid, desperately trying to escape from their prison. If left there long enough, however, they eventually stop. And later, even when the lid is removed, they will not try to escape. Others who have lost ground to the enemy and have been imprisoned on some level, may need someone to go to Lord on their behalf and ask him to deliver them so that they may realize that through Christ Jesus the lid has been taken off and they can fly away free in him.

We may reclaim ground from demons after depending upon Christ to bind Satan. (*Matthew 12.25-29*)

We must drive out demons in the name of Jesus Christ when they seek to interfere with his work, as when we are leading others through gate one or gate two. (*Acts 16.16-18*)

We must remain securely in Christ when reclaiming ground from demons, because demons are real and powerful. (*Acts 19.11-16*)

A 300-pound lineman was working at a youth retreat along with several other players of our football team. He told of a 10 year-old little girl who had become violent and out of control and needed to be held down on the ground to protect her and those around her. He felt the demonic influence within her. As he was holding down her head, she looked up at him and lifted her head as if he was nothing. He said that he had never felt fear like that in his whole life.

In Christ, we must fight for those who are not able to fight for themselves.

III. Suffering for Christ

“After that they will give over you unto crushing and will kill you. And you will be ones who are being hated by all the nations because of my name.”

—Matthew 24.9

And also all ones who are willing to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

—2 Timothy 3.12

To walk the Way is to suffer for Christ. The Way is the hard-pressed path. Christ suffered. And if we follow him, so too will we. Now there is suffering generally in this world, but those who are walking the Way suffer particularly, becoming the selected target of trouble because they are in conflict with the rest of the rebellious world and with its present ruler.

Our Christ

Wherefore he (Christ) was owing according to all things to be made like to the brothers, in order that he should become a merciful and faithful high priest about those things toward God for the purpose to reconcile the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, having been tested, he is having power to help those who are being tested.

—Hebrews 2.17-18

For we are not having a high priest who is not having power to suffer with our weaknesses, but who has been tested according to all things according to likeness as us yet without sin. Therefore we should come forward with boldness to the throne of grace, in order that we might receive mercy and might find grace for a well-timed help.

—Hebrews 4.15-16

The Lord Jesus is a compassionate King, a loving Savior, and an understanding High Priest.

Andrew, as a young child, went to the dentist complaining of a toothache. He climbed up in the big green recliner. The dentist entered and informed Andrew that he would have to give him a shot in his mouth. And the thought terrified Andrew. When the dentist pulled out a long needle, Andrew's eyes widened even further with fear and he refused to open his mouth. The dentist told him that he would have to open his mouth and allow him to give the shot if he was to fix his tooth. But Andrew still refused. The dentist proceeded to poke fun at Andrew, trying to shame him into opening his mouth. But the dentist only succeeded in making Andrew close his mouth even tighter and making Andrew's dad angry.

I walked over and held Andrew's hand and tried to comfort and reassure him, but he just could not make himself open his mouth whenever he saw that needle. The dentist kept on demeaning him and I kept trying to coax him, but all to no avail.

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Finally, Andrew with tears in his eyes said that if I would get him Bongo, his little stuffed monkey, out of the car and let him hold him, then he would take the shot. Andrew loved Bongo like a friend. He made clothes for him and constructed places in which he might live and even bought him Christmas presents, making sure he had as many as he did.

As I walked past the dentist, I whispered to him that Andrew was just scared, hoping it would cause him to lighten up a little and keep me from causing him to need a little dental work of his own. I went to the car, got Bongo, and brought him to Andrew. Andrew grabbed him and held him close to his chest. True to his word, he then bravely opened his mouth and allowed the dentist to administer the shot and to proceed to fix his tooth.

When he was done, I picked up Andrew and carried him out. Later, I asked him why he had needed Bongo before he would open his mouth even though I was in the room with him. He looked up at me and said, "But Dad, Bongo was in the chair with me."

We live in fear, caught in the web of our own sin and the senselessness and hollowness of our self-absorbed existence. Satan is harassing us, accusing us, mocking us. We can become so horribly afraid, so awfully alone, even though God is telling us that he loves us. But the Lord Jesus climbed into the chair with us. He is Immanuel. He is God with us.

From 1981 to 1984, I served in the United States Coast Guard Presidential Honor Guard under President Ronald Regan. One of the beginning duties was to form

cordons along the driveway leading to the north entrance of the White House in order to welcome the president and other dignitaries. While most in the cars passed by without giving much attention, President Regan always pushed his face to the window, like a kid in front of a candy store, waving in recognition and appreciation.

One day as troops from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard were lined up in formation on the south lawn of the White House awaiting the president and dignitaries for a full honor ceremony, it started to rain. As soon as the President got there, he commanded, "Get my troops out of that rain!"

At another full honor ceremony at the White House, the President was leading a particular world leader in front of the troops for a ceremonial inspection, as he loved to do. As the President passed by, he accidentally scuffed one of the soldier's well-polished shoes. The President and the world leader walked on a couple of steps. Then our Commander and Chief stopped, making the world leader wait, and walked back and stood before the soldier and apologized for scuffing his shoe.

But what is inconceivably more amazing is that the King of kings and the Lord of lords cares about our "scuffed shoes!"

Our Privilege

Therefore indeed they were going from the face of the council, rejoicing, because they were considered worthy throughout to suffer shame for the name.

—Acts 5.41

And Thomas, one out of the twelve, who is being said Didymus (Twin), was not being with them when Jesus came. Therefore the other disciples were saying to him, "We have perceived the Lord." But that one said to them, "If not I should perceive in his hands the struck image of the nails and should cast my finger into the struck image of the nails and should cast my hand into his side of the body, I will never ever have faith." And after eight days, his disciples again were being inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus is coming, though the doors have been closed, and stood into the midst and said, "Peace to you." Therefore he is saying to Thomas, "Bring your finger here and perceive my hands. And bring your hand and cast into my side of the body. And stop becoming a one not having faith but a one having faith." Thomas judged forth and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

—John 20.24-28

Why does Jesus still bear the scars from the nails in his hands and feet and from the spear in his side? They are the eternal, external evidence of how much he loves us and of how much he was willing to suffer for us. May we not stand before our Savior and our King unscathed, bearing no scars of love for him.

A middle-aged woman with a soft British accent shared the following account about her life in a service that I attended while in college.

She and her fiancée were called as missionaries to Africa. But when departure drew near, her fiancée decided that he could serve God just as well in his own way at home. He tried his best to convince her to remain with him. She knew in her heart that this was the man for her and she had always dreamed of having a family, but she also knew that her Lord wanted her to go to Africa. After an inner bitter struggle, she announced she was going to do what her Lord wanted her to do, whether or not her fiancée did. He pleaded with her to stay. Her family and friends also tried to talk her out of going. But she boarded a ship and set sail for the mission field amidst many tears.

She arrived in Africa and worked in a school, teaching children about math and science but also about Jesus. She became friends with a doctor, who had come to Africa to treat the physical needs of the natives as well as their spiritual needs.

Then reports began circulating that a new government was about to seize power, a government hostile towards Jesus Christ and those who believed in him. Along with other Christians, she and the doctor were warned to get out of the country. Again she had a tough choice to make. But she decided that she would not leave those to whom they had been ministering.

Late one night her door crashed open. Soldiers dragged her out of her bed and forced her into the compound. Soldiers were everywhere. Just as they were shoving her into a vehicle, she saw them drag one of her favorite students into the compound and looked on with horror as they broke both his legs.

The soldiers then took her to a place where they repeatedly beat her and raped her. She kept crying out within her, “Lord, take away the pain! Take away the horror! The shame!” But she felt every blow, every disgrace. She cried out again, “Lord, why don’t you take away the pain?” Then she felt something that she never imagined she would have felt, a sense of privilege. She inwardly heard her Lord say to her, “It is not you they are hating but me. Thank you for suffering for me.” The pain and humiliation did not go away, but deeper than both was the peace of her Lord.

Close to death she was rescued and flown out of the country. She hung between life and death for several days, and then it took months to heal. The man she was to marry and her family and friends remained at her side.

But while still in the hospital, news came from Africa that yet another government had come into power, a government hospitable to missionaries. Bruised and scared, she called her loved ones together and announced that she was going back to Africa. Her fiancée and loved ones all begged her to stay home this time. But she would not change her mind.

Inwardly terrified, she flew back to Africa. Her friend the doctor greeted her at the airport and welcomed her return. They chatted as they drove in his jeep to the mission. As they pulled into the compound, a multitude of joyful natives surrounded them, shouting, “The missionary lady is back! The missionary lady is back!” Then from one of the nearby buildings a young boy limped slowly towards her. Tears flowed, as she ran and threw her arms around her favorite student.

But that night, alone in her room, terror overwhelmed her. She awoke screaming. She sprang from her bed and crouched down in a corner of the room. A gentle knock sounded on the door and the doctor entered. He said that he thought she might be having trouble sleeping and that there was something he wanted to show her. He led her out of the room, through the compound, and for about a hundred yards beyond. There, seated on the ground, facing outward, arm in arm, were the natives. They had formed a large human barrier around the whole compound. The doctor explained to her, “The natives told me, ‘If the soldiers come to get the missionary lady, this time they will have to go through us.’”

Our Good.

And we perceive that to those who are loving God, he is working together all things unto the good, to those who are being ones called according to purpose.

—Romans 8.28

As we are walking the Way out of love for the Lord and thus are fulfilling the purpose for which he called us, God works all things for our good, even those things which are bad and hurtful and meant for our harm.

Marvin is a retired teacher who now works his farm and cattle in central Missouri. For the last year he has dedicated himself to walking the Way.

But in those months, he has had to place his dad, a World War II combat veteran, in a VA hospital on a permanent basis. His deaf son dropped out of college,

forgoing the higher education that Marvin had been convinced was the key to his future, and thus lost his medical benefits as well, and then had his brand new truck stolen. But worst of all, Marvin's wife was diagnosed with life-threatening cancer. Yet he kept walking the Way together with his wife, trusting in the Lord.

And now, his dad is doing well in the VA hospital, receiving the care worthy of his service. His son has found a trade that he enjoys, and Marvin learned of a program of health care that will cover him for the rest of his life, and the police located his truck undamaged. And with much thanksgiving to the Lord, his wife is experiencing healing of her cancer and is returning to her own career as a teacher.

Not long ago, he was asked, "Through all that has happened to you and your wife and family, are you closer to God and to your wife now than before?" With tears of the struggle in his eyes he replied, "Yes. Yes I am."

For this reason, in order that I should not be lifted up beyond, was given to me a stake in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, in order that it should hit me with the fist, in order that I should not be lifted up beyond. For this three times I called alongside the Lord in order that it should be stood away from me. And he has flowed out to me, "My grace is being enough for you. For power is being completed in weakness." Therefore I will boast more in my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ should dwell upon me. For this reason I am supposing well in weaknesses, in insults, in aches within, in

*persecutions and being in narrow spaces for Christ.
For when I should be without strength, then I am
being one having power.*

—2 Corinthians 12.7-10

Our weaknesses and the assaults of Satan both should drive us to depend upon Christ and draw upon his strength at all times, and thus those weaknesses become our strengths and those assaults our advantage. His power therefore is complete in our weakness, and we learn well that his grace is enough for us.

Worst Yet to Come.

And Jesus, having come out from the temple, was going. And his disciples came forward to show to him the building of the temple. And that one, having answered, said to them, "You are seeing all these things, are you not? Amen I am saying to you, should never ever be let go here stone upon stone which will not be torn down." And as he is sitting down upon the Mountain of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Say to us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your being alongside and the completing together of the age?" And having answered, Jesus said to them, "See that someone should not lead you astray. For many ones will come on my name, saying, 'I myself am the Christ.' And many ones they will lead astray. And you are being about to hear of wars and hearings of wars. Perceive. Stop being troubled. For it is binding to take place, but not yet is being the

completion. For will be raised nation upon nation and kingdom upon kingdom. And will be famines and shakings throughout places. And all these things are first of birth pains. After that they will give over you unto crushing and will kill you. And you will be ones who are being hated by all the nations because of my name. And after that many ones will be made to stumble and will give over one another and will hate one another. And many lying prophets will be raised and will lead astray many ones. And because the lawlessness increased, the love of many ones will grow cold. But the one who endured unto completion, this one will be saved. And this well message of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world unto a witness to all the nations. And after that the completion will come. Therefore when you should perceive the nauseatingly stinking thing of the desolation, which was said through Daniel the prophet, having stood in the holy place—let the one who is reading think—after that let those ones in Judea flee unto the mountains. Let that one upon the roof not step down to lift up those things out of his dwelling. And let that one in the field not turn back behind to lift up his outer clothing. And woe to those who are having in the belly and to those who are giving the nipple in those days. And pray in order that your flight should not be in the bad weather of winter and nor on a sabbath. For there will be after that a great crushing such as has not taken place from the first of the world until now and nor should never ever take place. And if not

those days were cut short, all flesh would not be saved. But for the sake of the called out ones those days will be cut short. After that if a certain one should say to you, 'Perceive! Here is the Christ,' or 'Here,' you should not have faith. For lying christs and lying prophets will be raised. And they will give great signs and wonders for the purpose to lead astray, if a thing having power, even the called out ones. Perceive! I have said before to you. Therefore if they should say to you, 'Perceive in the desolate place he is being,' you should not come out. 'Perceive in the storerooms,' you should not have faith. For just as the lightning is coming out from the east and is being shone with light until the west, in this way will be the being alongside of the Son of Man. Wherever should be the fallen corpse, there will be gathered together the eagles (vultures). And straightway after the crushing of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And after that will be shone with light the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And after that all the tribes of the earth will cut themselves, and will perceive the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and much glory. And he will order forth his angels with a great trumpet. And they will gather together onto him his called out ones out of the four winds, from the extremities of heavens until the extremities of them.

—Matthew 24.1-31

Suffering is going to get worse before it gets better. Labor is the hardest right before the baby is born. Tribulation will become the worst ever just before Christ returns.

Several years ago I landed in Moscow, Russia, as part of a mission trip. The capital was oppressive, a once majestic city like Washington D.C. with great monuments and statues, but it had been left to degenerate, with the notable exceptions of the Red Square and the new McDonalds Restaurant with its long row of cash registers. Armed soldiers manned the floors of the five-star Kosmos Hotel where we stayed, cats lounged on top of the counters of stores where the meat was sold, waiters at restaurants had to be convinced to serve a meal, and drivers drove however they wanted or dared.

Our ministry was to be in a church that met in a house in a town about sixty miles south of Moscow. We traveled there by train. On the first trip, we boarded a crowded railway car. We were already packed in, everyone standing up. The doors were about to close with a few more waiting to board. Everyone looked resigned to being left, except for one very stout woman with gray hair who looked as if she could play middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears. She had a steely, determined glare in her eyes, and I thought, "Oh no, she is going to try to get on." She lowered her shoulders and moved forward, and we all began to move back little by little until there was just enough room for the doors to shut and for us to breathe, barely.

The church was unforgettable, made up of humble believers who removed their shoes before entering

the home and who shared the best of their food and provisions with us. When we were asked to speak of Christ in the schools and we told them that we were not allowed to do this anymore in the United States, a look of grave concern came upon their faces, disclosing that they knew where we were going and that we would not like the trip.

One day a distinguished gray-haired man in a black suit with a black brimmed hat arrived and had only one question for me, “The rider on the white horse in the sixth chapter of the Revelation, who is he?”

The end time of suffering was real to these people. For from this church, soldiers had repeatedly stormed in the house and taken at gunpoint mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, never to be heard of again. As I taught from that last book of the final days, I looked into the faces of ones who had undergone something of the suffering described within those pages.

Remaining Under

“And you will be ones who are being hated by all ones because of my name. But the one who has remained under unto completion will be saved.”

—Matthew 10.22

And not only this, but also we are boasting in crushings, perceiving that crushing is working remaining under, and the remaining under approval by testing, and the approval by testing hope. And the hope is not putting to shame, because the love of

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God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given to us.

—Romans 5.3-5

Whatever suffering we are asked to bear for Christ, we should remain under it, becoming approved by testing, proving our love and devotion to him by continuing to live by faith even though we are being crushed. Then we will have the hope that, when Christ comes and we look him in the eyes, it will all be worth it, no matter what we have endured for him.

I was driving through the valley of the shadow of death on a frozen wintry night along random small highways that looked like shiny, icy ribbons winding throughout a white wonderland. The light of the full moon glistened off the smooth covering of snow lying over the countryside, transforming familiar scenery into a world of fantasy. Playing over and over was the song, “May It Be,” written and performed by Enya:

“May it be an evening star
Shines down upon you
May it be when darkness falls
Your heart will be true
You walk a lonely road
Oh, how far you are from home

Mornië utúlië (Darkness has come)
Believe and you will find your way
Mornië alantië (Darkness has fallen)

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A promise lives within you now

May it be the shadow's call

Will fly away

May it be your journey on

To light the day

When the night is overcome

You may rise to find the sun

Mornië utúlië (Darkness has come)

Believe and you will find your way

Mornië alantië (Darkness has fallen)

A promise lives within you now

A promise lives within you now.”



Healing & the Way



But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon him. And by his wounds we are healed.

—Isaiah 53.5

THE WAY IS healing. And healing is the Way.

Position & Experience of Healing.

Our position in Christ includes the healing of our spirit, soul, and body.

Our experience of that healing is focused upon as follows...

Gate 1 - the healing of the spirit.

Gate 2 - the healing of the soul.

Gate 3 - the healing of the body.

In Christ we have the immediate position of healing. Then he will lead us to experience that healing, as we walk the Way and as he deems best for us in this life. But if we step off the path, then we stray from the experience of our position of healing in Christ.

Naaman was a leper who was told by the Lord through the prophet Elisha, “*Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will come again to you, and you will be clean.*” At first, he was arrogant and angry and refused. But at the urging of his servants, he did what he had been told and was healed. The Lord had given him the position of healing, but he had to wash in the Jordan seven times in order to experience it. If he had not done it or quit after a couple of dips, he would not have experienced his healing. (*2 Kings 5.9-14*)

But even if we are walking the Way and for now the Lord withholds the experience of our healing in some area, we still must continue to hike that narrow trail of faith.

Healed to Heal

And he ordered forth them to preach the kingdom of God and to cure... And as they are coming out, they themselves were coming through according to the villages, telling the well message and healing everywhere.

—*Luke 9.2, 6*

Christ the King is a loving Savior and Healer. And once he has healed us, he sends us out as emissaries of his healing unto others so that they too may be healed, spirit, soul, and body. To be healed healers is a principle

commission that Christ assigns us to carry out. In every action to every one we encounter, we are being either a healer in Christ or a hurter in our selves.

A drowning person cannot save another drowning person. Only one who has already been rescued is able to reach back for others. It is the same way in healing. We must be healed by Christ in order to be used by him to help others be healed.

Why Experience of Healing Is Granted.

The experience of healing is granted for:

1. A closer relationship to God.

And leading along, he (Jesus) perceived a blind man out of birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, "Master, who sinned, this one or his parents, in order that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Not even this one sinned and nor his parents, but in order that should be brought to light the works of God in him..." Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay out of the spittle. And he anointed the clay upon his eyes and said to him, "Go under way. Wash yourself into the pool of Siloam"—which is being interpreted, Sent. Therefore he came away and washed. And he came, seeing... Jesus heard that they cast him outside. And having found him, he said, "Are you yourself having faith in the Son of Man?" That one answered and said, "And who is he, Lord, in order that I might have faith in him?" Jesus said to him, "And you have perceived

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him. And the one who is speaking with you is being that one.” And that one was stating, “I am having faith, Lord.” And he worshiped him.

—John 9.1-7, 35-38

2. A sign.

“Men, ones of Israel, hear these words. Jesus the one of Nazareth, a man who has been shown forth from God unto you by powers and wonders and signs which God did through him in the midst of you just as you yourselves perceive.”

—Acts 2.22

And fear was taking place in every soul. And many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

—Acts 2.43

Healings may be a sign that marks a notable movement in the plan and purpose of God, something that God does not want us to miss.

3. Service to God.

And having stood up from the synagogue, he (Jesus) came into the dwelling of Simon. And the mother-in-law of Simon was ill with a great fever. And they asked him about her. And having stood over her, he set a value upon the fever. And

it let go her. And at once, having stood up, she was ministering to them.

—Luke 4.38-39

4. Self.

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Set your house in order, for you will die, and not live.'" Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord, saying, "I beseech you, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And before Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Turn again, and tell Hezekiah, the captain of my people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you will go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto your days fifteen years.'"

—2 Kings 20.1-6

5. An equipping to help others heal.

I. Healing of the Spirit.

And the one who is being glued to the Lord is being one spirit.

—1 Corinthians 6.17

The most damning feature of the diseased old creation is the fallen position of our spirit, which is suppressed under our soul and cut off from the Spirit of God. Jesus Christ suffered our separation from God in order to heal our spirit. In Christ our spirit is healed and is restored to its correct, created position and joined to the Holy Spirit.

And then exercising our faith, daily depending and denying, strengthens our spirit.

And additional spiritual exercises, such as church participation, prayer, Bible study, worship, witnessing, and discipleship tones the health of our spirit.

II. Healing of the Body

Not all flesh is the same flesh, but one indeed of humans, and another flesh of animals, and another flesh of flying creatures, and another one of fish. And there are bodies upon heaven, and bodies upon earth. But an other indeed is the glory of the ones upon heaven, and an other that one of the ones upon earth. There is another glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For a star is differing of a star in glory. In this way also is the resurrection of the dead. It is being scattered in decay, it is being raised in without decay. It is being scattered in without value, it is being raised in glory. It is being scattered in being without strength, it is being raised in power. It is being scattered a body of the soul, it is being raised a body of the spirit. If there is being a body of the soul, there is being also a one of the spirit.

—1 Corinthians 15.39-44

“And God will anoint out every tear out of their eyes. And death will not be still. And mourning and shouting and pain will not be still.”

—*Revelation 21.4*

Our position in Christ as a new creation includes a spiritual body, a body made for us as we are ruled by the spirit instead of our present body which is suited to be ruled by the soul. But in regards to our body, the entire experience of our position of healing in Christ must wait, as we continue to be clothed in the body of the old creation so that we may remain in this world and serve the Lord here, making any suffering a sacrifice for the sake of Christ. When we go to be with Christ on the other side of the third gate, then the experience of our new body is given for eternity.

However along the Way, we should resist any illness and even the pull of death that tries to hinder our walk of faith or stop our work for the Lord, as we claim our position of physical healing that we do have in him. Having done this, any illness or physical weakness that remains should be used as a reminder for us to deny the old creation and to depend upon Christ as a new creation.

After wrestling with the Lord, Jacob walked with a limp the rest of his days, but each hobbled step reminded him to lean upon the Lord instead of upon his own craftiness. Even after beseeching the Lord three times to remove it, Paul endured a thorn in his flesh the balance of his life, but that stake helped him to remain utterly reliant upon Christ instead of becoming puffed up

from all the revelation that he had been given. (*Genesis 32.24-32; Galatians 6.11*)

III. Healing of the Soul

The Lord is near unto them who are of a broken heart, and saves such as be of a crushed spirit.

—*Psalm 34.18*

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

—*Isaiah 61.1-3*

Jesus provides us the position of the healing of our soul, especially of emotional trauma, and works through his Spirit to bring to us the experience of that healing, as we live by faith in him.

Diagnostic Questions

Here are questions that may help uncover the need for healing of emotional pain or trauma:

1. “Do I often wear a mask, pretending rather than ‘being’ who I am?”
2. “Do I have a problem with behavior(s) that I feel a strong compulsion to do?”
3. “Do I have intense, disturbing dreams?”
4. “Do I often use ‘blocking’ techniques to protect my true feelings?”
5. “Do I experience inappropriate or exaggerated feelings (i.e. anger, sadness) that do not fit the present situation?”
6. “Do I feel there are unanswered questions in my life or periods of time that I cannot remember?”
7. “Am I troubled by invasive thoughts?”
8. “Do I feel emotionally distant from ones who express love toward me?”
9. “Do I find myself trying to escape or to numb the reality of pain in my life?”
10. “Do I unrealistically idealize or gloss over times of my life or live in a fantasy world?”
11. “Does an emotional trauma come to mind that feels unresolved?”
12. “Do I feel a strong stirring within me being asked these questions?”

If we answer “Yes” to many of these questions, then we may need to experience the healing of our soul. And if we do, then we need to pass through the seasons of emotional healing.

Seasons of Emotional Healing

A man had just been to the front door and was walking away down the sidewalk, having informed my dad of the death of someone whom he knew. Closing the door, my dad looked down at me and said, “Son, life is full of goodbyes.”

The experience of the emotional healing of our soul from hurt and trauma may be compared to the seasons of the year. We must let the Lord take us through all four.

Fall:

Acknowledging the Trauma.

Someone has told of a woman who became very ill. After a time of hospitalization, she returned home but was confined to bed. Her eight-year-old daughter stood outside the room and overheard the doctor say, “I will be frank with you. The time is not far off. Before the first leaves have gone from the trees you will die.” Later, the father came looking for the daughter, but he could not find her in the house. Then he saw her out in the front yard, picking up leaves that had begun to fall and tying them back on the limbs with thread.

Some causes of emotional trauma include:

Separation from someone who is loved through death or moving or some other cause.

Traumatic event that is experienced or witnessed.

Abuse or assault that is physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual.

Shattering of one's sense of peace or wholeness or safety.

Damage to the image of one's self, either in one's own eyes, or in the eyes of others, or both.

End of a role that one loves to fill, such as parent or spouse or a particular occupation.

Impairment or loss of physical function that one loves to have through illness or accident or age or another reason.

Loss of possession(s) that are loved through fire or theft or some other cause.

The trauma, whatever it is, must be emotionally acknowledged, or the process of healing will never begin. This is emotional confession, saying together with the heart what is equal to the hurt.

A fellow student in a class in seminary dealing with death and dying, dressed in her clown outfit that she used to entertain children and spoke of having cancer and having been told that she did not have long to live. We all felt sympathy for her. But as she looked around the class, she said, "Don't feel sorry for me. You are no different than I am. You are going to die too. The only difference is I know when."

It is the horse on the dining room table, an adaptation of the story by Richard Kalish (1985).

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“I climbed the mountain to ask a wise sage about how to deal with the cause of grief. He said to me, ‘It is the horse on the dining room table.’

Many years later I was invited to a small dinner party. As we were shown into the dining room, I was shocked to see a small horse sitting on the table. I quickly looked at the host and the other guests, but they all looked as surprised as me. But no one said a word about the beast on the table. We tried to eat and talk to one another, bending around the horse, but it was all very awkward and strained. I was glad to take my leave.

Some time afterwards I visited the sage and once again asked about how to deal with the cause of grief. He said, ‘It is the horse on the dining room table. It is a horse that visits every one. If you are willing to speak of it, then others may as well.’ He then led me into another room. There inside was a low table, and sitting upon it was a small horse. We acknowledged the horse and spoke of it, and then sat down and enjoyed a meal together, talking far into the night.”

We must not resist acknowledging the trauma in any fashion such as these:

- Shutting down feelings.
- Denying the presence of pain and avoiding painful thoughts.
- Stimulating only pleasant thoughts or living in a world of fantasy.

- Idealizing life, glossing over and avoiding anything that might be a reminder of the trauma.
- Exhibiting addictive or compulsive behavior.
- Staying overly busy.

Linda relates:

“Today,’ He said, ‘I make you new!’ And then she woke up. She had been dreaming.

She was running late, and the kids weren’t even up for school yet. Rushing through the morning, ‘Hurry up kids, we should have left ten minutes ago.’ ‘But Mom, I’m starving!’ ‘O.K. We’ll make a quick run in the store, grab a little snack and some milk, but make it quick!!’

Sitting in the car waiting for the kids, the dream of the night before came flooding back to her. She was drowning, sinking slowly to the bottom, screaming out, the water filling her lungs, and she screamed out into the darkness. Her stomach began to turn as the dream came flooding into her daylight. She felt panicky. She felt afraid.

The door slammed and the kids were jabbering on about the cashier in the store looking like some sort of escaped convict. She tried to shake off the fear of dread that had settled in her stomach. ‘Seat belts, everyone. Quiet down! The cashier did not escape from prison last night. He is not the same man you saw on “Most Wanted” the other night. You are not gonna get the reward money for turning him in.’

Rushing through traffic to the first school, she was telling herself that it was only a dream, that she was awake now. Shaking the dread off, she kissed the oldest and told her to have a good day. Off to the next school, she wondered why she has had the reoccurring dream of drowning all these years. The little one was in the middle of a conversation with her about the upcoming spelling bee at school, ‘Do I, Mom?’ ‘Do you what?’ she said. ‘Do I have to be in the spelling bee this year? Remember what happened last year, don’t you? I got a brain ache after it was all over, remember?’ Yes, she remembered. She told him if he didn’t want to participate this year he didn’t have to, but his class would be counting on him. Out he goes, no kiss from him, just a quick, ‘See you later.’

With both kids off to school, and thankfully neither of them had to be signed in, just a few minutes late. She had a full fifteen minutes to herself before she had to be at work. She felt the knot in her stomach and decided some music would be good. She flipped through stations until she found a familiar song and turned it all the way up. Singing along with the song, she often felt the louder the music was the harder it would be to feel the dark dread from last night’s dream.

She ran in to get a coffee at the gas station right across from work. ‘Better make it a large cappuccino this morning, how about an English Toffee?’ she thought.

Walking into work with a third of the thick sugary coffee down and her ears ringing from the songs on the radio, she was confident of being able to shake off this morning’s uneasiness.”

- Wearing masks instead of being real with ourselves and others.

Again Linda writes:

“This is a young lady’s story. She was always aware of something not being ‘right’ with her, like important pieces of her were missing. She didn’t like herself or understand why she made the decisions that she did, or behaved the way she did.

As a young child she always wanted to be seen as the ‘good girl.’ She wanted people around her to think that she was good, for them to like her. She always felt that she was pretending though. Most times she was desperately trying to prove to herself that she was good by never getting into trouble, always doing what she was told, always trying to be helpful, doing things to gain approval. Always, though, there was a nagging feeling that she was not good, that something was not right! Soon it was not enough that the people around her thought she was good, the pervading thoughts of something being wrong with her began to become louder and louder. Pleasing this one or that one no longer helped her feel better.

Early in her teenage years, she moved to a different state. She made a conscious decision to be ‘different’ there. She no longer wanted to be known as the quiet, shy girl. Still, she sought to be the good girl at home and at school. She wanted her peers to like her and not laugh at her in this new place. She sought to be the ‘fun’ girl. More pretending, a different role was taken on, a fun and outgoing one. She wanted approval from the people in her new surroundings. They were rougher than the

kids she had been used to. Her survival instincts began to kick in, and she knew to survive in this place she must not only fit in but must excel among them. The more she was able to fit and to adapt to her new surroundings the more she realized that it was not enough. More and more the feelings of not fitting in and something not being right with her came to the surface.

She began to exhibit self-destructive tendencies, sneaking out the window, skipping school, hanging out with older kids, and drinking. All through her teenage years, one bad decision after another was made. All were aimed at her own demise.

Trying to balance the two persons of good girl with some, family, teachers, or anyone in authority, and the fun girl with her peers became easy for her. She began to learn how to play different roles at any given moment to please whoever she was around at the time. The skill of interacting with people in order to gain approval from them and being what they wanted quickly became simple for her. She knew she felt different from everyone else. She knew she had 'issues' that she avoided dealing with. She knew the feelings of sadness that could creep in. She knew the overwhelming sense that something was terribly wrong that could invade her in moments. She knew that no one really knew anything about her, even though she had people that called her a friend, people that she interacted with on a daily basis that would say they knew her. She knew there were times when she wouldn't let herself sit still for a minute, because she didn't want any darkness to seep in unexpectedly. She knew she hardly ever stayed home, she was always on

the run. All this she knew. But it was what she didn't know, what she fought hard and strong all her life to keep pushed down, to keep continually burying, to keep hidden from others and more importantly and more damaging from herself, what was buried beneath that happy, look-on-the-bright-side-of-things persona, that would eventually need healing if she was to survive.

As she got older, she got tired. Tired of the pretending, tired of the burying, tired of the fake smile she could see in the mirror, tired of all the running, tired of trying to please everyone in the whole world!!! She was sick to death of it all. Sick of coming home and feeling like a fake. Sick of being nice to people that mistreated her. Sick of having to do more to please the same old people. Sick of hearing people go on and on about what a nice person she was, knowing that if they really knew her they wouldn't give her the time of day. Sick of always being 'on.' Sick of people expecting so much from her. Sick of late at night just before falling asleep, hearing herself say, 'Why did you do that? Why did you let that person treat you that way? Why don't you stick up for yourself? You are such a Wuss!'

One time she heard a man of God discussing masks. He explained how people hid behind masks in order to feel safe. He talked about how people would put on different masks to feel accepted because they didn't trust themselves or others enough just to be themselves. He said people wore them and didn't even know it. He asked everyone to think about if they wore masks, if they were being real with themselves and others. Before then, she would never have guessed that she

wore masks. He talked about taking the masks off, and spoke about just 'being,' just being ourselves with each other. Immediately she knew that she was an expert at wearing different masks.

Recognizing that she wore masks was the first step. Being able to do something about it, laying the masks down, that was an entirely different situation. It was most difficult. It took years of being disgusted with her self, of unsuccessfully being determined time and time again to be 'real' with people, of trying not to need others' approval, of not trying so hard to please others, of trying to accept herself. All these failures only led her to the realization of just how 'off' she was. Again, she was tired. She just wanted to be. She wanted to be normal. To not have to think so much about interacting with people.

So after years of struggling, juggling, and fighting, and from sheer exhaustion, she began to practice just being. She would put herself in situations where she was sure she would not run into anyone she knew and would just BE!! She found reasons to be in other cities. She would just sit and drink coffee. Just sit and look out a window. Just sit and read a book. Just do whatever she wanted!! And it felt great!! She didn't worry about who she would see and what mask she would put on. When she did run into strangers she practiced not smiling at them, not being so pleasing. She practiced not saying 'Hello' back when some stranger would interrupt her new found world of just being.

She began to isolate herself from her other world, the old world, where she had formed so many unhealthy

relationships, where people liked her with her mask on and wanted, even demanded, she wear her fun-loving or pleasing mask for them. She attempted to take her masks off with people who had grown accustomed to them but it never worked out. They wanted to know what was wrong. Why was she acting so strange. So she stopped answering her phone, she stopped opening her door. She quit her job. She stayed out of town a lot on the weekends. Little by little people forgot. They got tired of calling and never getting a response. They got tired of knocking and never getting an answer. Her family figured she was just staying busy like always, but felt snubbed at not seeing her or hearing from her for long periods of time. All along she was practicing just being, trying to make her self leave the masks at home, forcing herself to just be.

None of this would have been possible had it not been for a deep healing love that gently nudged her along, telling her that she was known, deep down, in secret dark places, and that she was loved.”

Winter:

Feeling the Trauma.

This is the hard work of emotional healing, this is the valley of the shadow of death of grief. To be healed, this valley of pain may not be walked around or avoided but must be walked through with the Lord at our side.

Unresolved emotional pain does not fade or go away. The longer it remains buried inside the more intense and more monstrous it grows. It festers inside from an oozing

infection to an open wound and eventually to gangrene, threatening life itself. We must allow the Great Physician to treat the trauma and to bring healing.

However, as we are allowing ourselves to feel the hurt of winter, we must not wallow in the pain and grief. We must not lie down in the valley but keep walking through it.

Trapped emotional pain is like a pressure cooker which has trapped steam that increases in pressure under a high heat. The longer it is heated the more the pressure. In order to release this pressurized steam, the lid may not be taken off all at once, or there will be an explosion and the high risk of serious injury. Instead, there is a valve that is used to let out a little of the steam at a time, until the pressure decreases to the point that the lid may be safely removed. Emotional trauma produces great amounts of inward pain. This inward pain increases within us over time. The longer we wait to relieve it, the more intense it becomes. But the pain is too great and cannot be released all at once. Rather it must be released a little at a time, until the hurt is gone and healing takes place.

Unresolved emotional trauma also may be likened to holding a gigantic beach ball under the surface of the water. This is a most difficult undertaking, demanding a lot of energy and concentration. It is not long before one tires of the task. Keeping two submerged is likely unworkable, and more than two is certainly impossible. How good it feels to let go the beach ball and let it pop to the surface! Holding down emotional hurt takes vast amounts of our energy and attention. We grow weary of

the process over time and exhaust ourselves, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Attempting to suppress too much of such pain becomes unachievable, and eventually causes break down of mind and body and leads likely to an early funeral. Letting go the hurt is painful, but how good it finally feels when that pain pops to the surface and floats away! How freeing this is!

Important idioms of winter:

“Revealing is healing.”

“Hurt now or pay later.”

“To hurt is to heal.”

“To not hurt is to not feel.”

“You have to feel bad before you can feel better.”

Methods for releasing unresolved emotional pain:

- Confessing.

Therefore confess the wrongdoings to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

—James 5.16

To confess, to “say together,” is to talk about the pain to the same degree of the pain. The more the pain, the more we need to talk about it. We must speak of its horribleness to same degree of its horribleness. We must share equal to the pain. We may have to describe aspects of the trauma over and over in order to fully confess it and to be healed. We should talk, talk, and talk some

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more. This is the most effective way of releasing the pressurized steam of pain.

- Writing.

Putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, relating about the pain, may bring release, keeping a journal or diary, or writing letters or a whole book.

- Questioning.

Many questions may be asked during winter, but most of the time it is not answers that are being sought. Instead, this is the venting of the suffering of the trauma and of the disturbing uncertainty that it has caused.

- Weeping.

- Laughing.

As one cannot look continuously at the sun without going blind, we cannot continuously deal with pain without some relieve.

Even in the most severe emotional trauma, we should give ourselves permission to laugh. There is relief in laughter. There is healing in laughter.

- Finding expression through music, books, movies, etc.

Spring:
Adapting from the Trauma.

While still youngsters, my cousin Randy and I often went exploring far back into caves in the heart of Missouri. And when the lanterns or flashlights were extinguished, blackness would envelope us like a thick blanket, invalidating all ability of sight. Making the journey out, how welcoming to see up ahead the sunlight filling the entrance! And emerging, the full force of the light of the sun was overwhelming, causing us to shield our eyes and blink until we could adjust.

As we acknowledge the trauma and sufficiently discharge its hurt, we may once again see up ahead the light of healing and hope streaming in. And as we move more and more from the darkness of grief into that light of healing, our emotions adjust and we begin to feel once again. How good this feels! How welcome it is to be in the light again!

Adapting from the trauma involves:

- Moving from a feeling that there is no future to a breaking feeling of a future after all.
- Coming to an understanding that letting go of the pain is not letting go of the love.
- Settling “unfinished business” about the trauma.

This is business that goes on after the trauma, such as, expressing words that should have been said or actions that should have been taken. One may address this unfinished business by such means as writing a

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letter, or speaking to an imagined loved one sitting in an empty chair.

- Searching for answers to those important questions that have arisen because of the trauma, such as how an all loving and all powerful God would allow this to happen and then hearing how it was we humans who brought evil into our world and how God only wants good for us.

Summer:

Reinvesting from the Trauma.

Having worked through three seasons of emotional healing, we come to summer. This is taking the emotion that had been locked inside from the trauma and investing it in new ways and in new relationships.

This is like a large amount of money that has been tied up in escrow but now is available to be spent.

A teenager wrote this insight after the death of her father:

“There are other people to be loved, and it doesn’t mean that I love dad any less.”

Summer brings:

- Restored supplies of emotion, stores of love, to be shared.
- Fresh vulnerability for love, knowing one cannot have the love without the risk of hurt.
- New beginnings.
- Love of life.

- Peace.
- Joy.

Rather than the imagery of the seasons, emotional healing also may be understood in terms of a broken arm:

- (a) one must realize the arm is broken;
- (b) one must go through the pain of it being set and of letting it heal;
- (c) one must adjust to an arm that has been broken and learn to use it again; and
- (d) one may then enjoy using the restored arm.

In the healing of an emotional trauma, there is a sense of completion when one has walked through the seasons with the Lord, even if several journeys have been required. But there also is a sense that the healing will never be entirely completed.

Like the arm with a compound fracture that has been healed but still aches on cold, rainy days, old emotional wounds may ache and have a lasting effect long after they have been healed.

Linda shares:

“God wants to heal us mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. His Son died so we can be made whole, spirit, soul, and body. So much of healing comes from just giving Him what we can’t fix. Allowing Him to shed His light on the darkness that haunts us, trusting Him with all our hurts and pains and weaknesses.

When small children cling to certain toys, dolls, or blankets for long periods of time, they grow to depend on them for security. After so long the natural wear and tear of use begins to show and the objects break or tear. The child still clings to the objects even though the objects no longer bring the child pleasure. They may even become more protective or possessive of them. At some point someone that loves them very much may ask about fixing the broken objects for them. The child must then trust that person enough to let go of the objects, relinquishing care and protection of them long enough to allow them to be repaired.

Over time we collect along our journey objects of emotions that have been broken. We lug them around. They slow us down and hinder us from enjoying life and the people around us. God wants us to give Him our hurts and our broken stuff. He wants to heal all that is hindering us from truly living fully for Him. We have to trust Him enough to allow Him to bring them out into His light and heal them.

Colos and I talked, after watching the movie 'Skeleton Key,' about some of us having a secret room all locked up with objects of broken feelings of past hurts and pains, and allowing God to unlock the door and one by one bring each object out of the darkness and into His light and love and healing.

I always had a dark, hidden, and secret room full of things I didn't really want to look at, broken things that continually caused me pain. It wasn't until He said that He wanted in there, that He wanted to go in there and clean up and repair that room, that I realized just how

much I avoided and dreaded that place. I continually avoided that area by staying too busy. I blocked out the fact that I even had a room like that most of the time. I had put so many locks, bolts, chains, and bars on the door until the dread of the threat of what was in the room made the room seem far worse.

The Lord used Colos in a miraculous way to be His hands, feet, voice, and heart during my healing. I had been having nightmares again and telling him about them. He asked if I would think about three questions that he felt the Lord would have me consider and see how I felt about them. First, did I wear masks around other people? Second, did I think it was possible that I idealized my childhood memories? And third, did I have 'blank periods' where I didn't remember what had happened when I was younger? I knew as soon as he asked me that it was big. It felt almost as if the Earth shook under me for a minute. Later on I realized it was years and years of applying brick and cement and anything else I could find to block up the door of that room that shuddered and quaked and rumbled as I made the first steps toward it. My stomach hurt in the same exact place it always hurt when I was stressed or upset. I figured out years earlier that all the Pepto and Mylanta in the world couldn't help the ache of that one spot.

A couple of days later Colos asked me had I thought about the three questions. 'Yes,' I told him, and, 'Yes to all three.' I began to weep, my stomach hurt so bad that I clutched it. I felt like I was unraveling inside. I cried and cried from the pain. It was much deeper than just my stomach. My whole body and mind had

been accustomed to protecting that room from *any* disturbance—even I had never been in there awake! Looking back after that first unraveling, after I calmed down, after the dust began to settle, when I was able to sit up, I realized that the door was exposed! And He said loud and clear, ‘I want in that room!! You and Colos must take me in there to clean it out!’ I was not able to go to work that day, or for some time after that. Day in and day out the Lord and Colos worked together to help me take the first steps in. So many buried hurts, so many ugly memories that I had completely blocked out!

I was an artist at wearing masks by this time in my life. I could change masks in a split second. I could switch two or three masks instantly sitting at a table with four people! I could pick up on what each person wanted or expected from me and be that. And as far as blocking techniques, I was the ‘master blocker.’ I could not only block a bad memory but I could plug in a good one in its place!

To begin with I had to admit to myself that my childhood was traumatic. I knew and would admit to a very small part of it before this. That small part was my excuse when at different times in life I was overwhelmed by the feeling that something was terribly wrong with me. I would point to the fact that at a young age I had witnessed a terrible crime. I was in an apartment while a man was being stabbed to death. Then I watched as the naked man was dragged in front of me across the floor. Bleeding to death, he then was placed in a bathtub being filled with water to try and stop the bleeding. So, I would reassure myself that anyone would have problems

after seeing something like that. But that incident only served as a door to that room, a door that hid far worse things that happened to that little girl who had witnessed the murder. It didn't take long after opening the door to figure out that the little helpless girl had been locked in that room all those years, locked in there with all the horrible memories that I wasn't able to remember.

So, it became a rescue mission for the little girl. That is how I was convinced to go in. A mission to take out all the old boxes of stored up pain and walk them out into God's loving, healing light. Once there, where His light shined on them, they began to disintegrate. It was only for the little girl that I agreed to go in. I didn't want to go in bad enough for me, now an adult, thinking I would be all right. It was when I began having nightmares with this little girl in them that I realized she needed saving. She would attack me, biting me, yelling at me. She was like some horror movie, screaming at me, chasing me.

Colos helped me to see it was me—at a young age—the little girl, screaming for me to help her. She was so distorted and terrifying because she had been buried alive in that hellish room all these years with only the horrible memories stuffed in there with her to look at. I had sealed her off. I had buried her alive. I made her the monster she was in my reoccurring nightmares.

So, it became about rescuing her and then I found the courage to go in after her. Just the memory of her and those nightmares unnerves me now, makes that old sore spot ache. Like Frodo, some wounds heal but the scars never leave us and still ache at times.

One by one I would just remember things. I'd have a flashback, or a dream, or would be just sitting on the couch, or riding in the car, and have a full memory of things that I had buried so deep as a child that until that moment I was consciously unaware of them ever happening.

With much prayer and guidance, Colos was there, holding my hand and helping me through. Sometimes when I got so overwhelmed in that room, only his voice, calling me back out of there, would bring me back to the present, and he would gently take my hand and help me back out into His light. Then he would help me look at and sift through whatever new box I had come out of there with. Each box had its polaroids in it, full of scenes of the little girl being abused in horrible ways, all to prove the truth of the memories, vivid and clear sounds, smells, and sights drowning my senses with pain.

So many times I wanted to quit and give up. But a miraculous thing happened. I continued to have dreams with the little girl in them, only the more boxes of pain that I carried out of that room for Him to heal and to shine His wonderful light on the better the little girl got. She was being healed! She was being set free!! I could feel my stomach loosen each step of the way. It was working! The more boxes I went through and carried out of there the less dark and horrifying it was. I could actually see the Lord cleaning out in there, healing all my hurts and pains, hurts I was not even aware of, pain so buried I couldn't even see them.

He wants to heal us all—spirit, soul, and body. He wants us to trust Him enough with our pains and hurts,

the ones we don't believe we can live through looking at, never mind carrying them out into His light! I can testify to this: if we trust Him to take us into the darkest places of our mind and soul and trust Him enough to clean those places out and heal them with His healing power, He will do it!!

I still don't like the dark. I still can't watch scary movies. I still feel the ache of the scars. I still battle and struggle against the darkness that still tries to gather in that room. BUT!! I am healed!! He heals what we let Him!!

As I was writing this, some of the old darkness began to weigh me down, and I wondered if it was worth it. I began to doubt why I was doing it. Then an astonishing thing happened. The little girl showed up. I could almost see her leaning on my left arm, looking up at me. She was all cleaned up, her hair was pulled back neatly in a ponytail. She had on a cute little dress, and she was smiling at me, smiling just like a little child would if she walked up and saw her name in a book and would say, 'Hey, you're writing about me!' She looked so happy and content. She was FREE. She is all better now. That's when the old darkness began to lift. It was all about her to start with, and it's all about her now in the end, her healing."

Dreams.

Dreams may be an important instrument that the Lord uses to help us work through the pain of trauma. Dreams may be categorized in three types.

1. Highlight Dreams.

And the riches of all the nations as much as wage war upon Ariel, even all who wage war upon her and her stronghold, and who distress her, will be like a dream, a vision of the night. It will be as when a hungry man dreams and behold he is eating but when he rises up his hunger is not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams and behold he is drinking but when he rises up behold he is faint and his thirst is not quenched.

—Isaiah 29.7-8

Highlight dreams reflect or carry over that into which we have been investing our emotional energy.

If we have had a wonderful day at the beach, we may relive its delights in our dreams. If we have watched a scary movie, we may have nightmares. If we are focusing upon lust and sex, we may have erotic dreams. If we are concentrating upon wealth, we may dream of what it feels like to be rich and powerful and living in luxury. If we are longing to be liked or popular, we may dream of how it feels to be a rock star or leading actor or professional athlete.

Therefore, we may let highlight dreams reveal to us whether our investment of emotional energy is being spent upon that which is good or upon that which is bad. And if upon the bad, then we may invest instead upon the good in Christ.

2. Healing Dreams.

Then Solomon awoke. And behold it had been a dream. He came to Jerusalem where he stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. He offered up burnt offerings and offerings of well-being, and provided a feast for all his servants.

—1 Kings 3.15

Healing dreams are aimed at making us aware of unresolved emotional pain so that we will release that pain and be healed.

Healing dreams are often full of symbols, for symbols are the language of emotion. These symbols all point to the emotional hurt that needs to be healed. And the one who holds the key to unlocking the meaning of these symbols is the dreamer himself. The dreamer must don his Sherlock Holmes hat and investigate what each symbol is saying to him. He then must piece together each clue from the symbols in order to solve the mystery of the inward trauma that desperately needs healing.

Here are three useful dream detective techniques:

- (a) Ask what the overall feeling is during the dream and right after.
- (b) Ask what each element or symbol of the dream means.
- (c) Analyze these clues to solve the emotional hurt that needs healing.

3. Heavenly Dreams.

But when he had inner intense feelings about these things, perceive! An angel of the Lord was shone with light to him according to a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, you should not fear to take alongside Mary, your wife. For that which was brought into being in her is being out of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son. And you will call his name Jesus. For he himself will save his people from their wrongdoings."

—Matthew 1.20-21

Heavenly dreams are God talking to us, like the joy of holding children while they sleep. They are a message from God for us to do something once we are awake. They also are aimed at drawing us closer to God (*Deuteronomy 13.1-3*) and are in line with scripture (*Psalms 33.4*). They may be straightforward (*Genesis 31.24*) or full of symbols, but this time it is God himself who holds the key to their meaning (*Genesis 40.8-9*).

Two Potential Tragedies

Depression

The first potential tragedy of not being healed emotionally is depression.

*Why am I so depressed, Soul?
Why are you stirring up together me?
Hope upon God.*

*For I still will confess out to him,
My God, the salvation of my countenance.*

—*Psalm 42.5*

Like Elijah sitting under the juniper tree, we may become depressed to the point of death. (*1 Kings 19.1-4*)

Depression is characterized by such symptoms as, a lack of energy or motivation, excessive worry about such things as one's health, finances, or relationships, loss of appetite or binging on junk food, irritableness, feelings of sadness, darkness, gloom, helplessness, or hopelessness, too little sleep or too much, finding it hard to work, crying a lot or an inability to cry, feeling like a failure, self-pity, or self-loathing.

Depression is often the result of being out of fellowship with God, or trying to live for God in one's own strength, or not finding healing of emotional trauma, or repressing anger at one's self, others, or God, or loneliness, or major changes, or unresolved conflicts, or having the "poet" personality which feels pain deeply and seeks perfection in a hurtful and imperfect world, or fatigue, or too much idle time, or a physical imbalance, or onslaughts of Satan.

Remedies include entering into a relationship with God through faith in Christ and then walking the Way, being emotionally healed, loving the Lord and others as self, accepting and offering forgiveness of all, praying rather than worrying, seizing the flag of one's free will to move out of depression, reducing stress, finding fresh solutions for conflicts, managing the amount of change in one's life at any given time, working, eating, sleeping, and exercising right, seeking medical help as needed, and standing against Satan.

Suicide

The second potential tragedy of not being healed of emotional wounds is suicide.

Suicide is a sin, with the exception of giving one's life for another, but it does not alone send someone to hell. The sole qualification for heaven is faith in Jesus Christ, who paid for all sin upon the cross, including the sin of suicide. But once saved, we all will give an account to our Lord for how we lived and died for him.

The biblical accounts of suicide are: Abimelech (*Judges 9.50-55*); Samson (*Judges 16.23-31*); Saul and his armor bearer (*1 Samuel 31.1-6*, noting in *2 Chronicles 10.13-14* that Saul is said to have died because he was unfaithful to the Lord); Ahithophel (*2 Samuel 17.23*); Zimri (*1 Kings 16.8-20*); and Judas (*Matthew 27.5*, who was condemned for having betrayed the Lord not for his manner of death).

Myths about suicide include: people who talk about killing themselves never do; improvement in a suicidal person means the danger has passed (in fact, the person may feel a sense of release after deciding to end it all), all persons who attempt suicide are intent on dying (instead, many do not think it through that they will actually be dead); one should never talk about suicide with someone who is acutely depressed (rather, this is the horse on the dining room table); and a note is always left in a suicide (some just do it, liking driving one's car into a bridge or an oncoming truck).

Reasons for suicide: "no future," where everything fades to black, like the ending of the old cartoons

where blackness encircles the picture and then increases until the screen goes dark; unhealed emotional trauma; loneliness; escape from pain; tunnel vision, not seeing other options, but thinking in terms of either/or; anger towards self, others, or God; romantic death; rest from problems; reunion with loved one(s); retaliation, getting even, making someone pay; failure to live up to the expectations of others or one's own; mental illness; and heroism, the giving of one's life for another, which is not a sin but rather the highest expression of love.

Helps to avoid suicide involve passing through gate one and gate two of the way (*John 1.12; John 10.10*), looking to the Lord for emotional healing, talking openly and frankly to the Lord and others who are trustworthy, finding options not yet considered, taking control of one's life in Christ and letting all others do the same in their lives, refusing to play the victim, refusing thoughts of suicide, resisting the enemy, Satan and his forces who would delight in the taking of one's life, keeping from becoming isolated and cut off from people, and getting to the hospital or calling the police if necessary.

Comforted to Comfort

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Christ, the Father of compassions and God of every comfort, who is comforting us in every crushing of us for the purpose that we have power to comfort those in every crushing through the comfort which we ourselves are being comforted by God.

—2 Corinthians 1.3-4

Thank God for comforting us when we have been crushed by emotional trauma, lovingly leading us through the seasons of healing. And thank God that he then wants to use us to help bring his comfort and healing to others. To the extent that we have experienced his healing and comfort is the extent to which he may use us to help comfort others undergoing healing of similar trauma. This is part of the good that the Lord wants to bring from our suffering.

Richard grew up being battered, physically, mentally, and emotionally. On just one occasion, after getting off the school bus, he was beaten badly with a belt by his father as his classmates looked on, being shamed in front of his friends.

The one person he could count on for any kindness was his grandfather. But he died when Richard was still a boy, leaving him defenseless and alone. He never forgave God for that.

He served two tours in Viet Nam, his face transforming from a wide-eyed youth to the cold, empty eyes of a walking dead man. He witnessed unspeakable horrors, deaths, mutilations, and atrocities, and lived under the constant fear and threat of his own. In order to survive, he was forced to shut down emotionally, to quit feeling. There are still some months of those years that are too terrible for him to remember.

When he finally did make it back home, he was welcomed with jeers, being spit upon by those for whom he had given so much. He sought to drown his inner demons through addiction to alcohol and to deaden them

through drugs. He became a threat to himself and to others. But his wife stayed at his side, praying for him.

He agreed to go to a VA hospital in Virginia where a man and a group were doing ground-breaking work in a new area known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He went through one group of sessions, but not much took place. Nor did a second. But on the third visit, he participated in three psycho-dramas in which he had to relive some of those harrowing nightmares of Viet Nam. That ironclad door to his suppressed emotional wounds finally cracked open and a rush of all that trapped pain and anger and fear burst forth. He collapsed to the floor as though dead. But in that moment something wonderful happened. He felt the peace of God. He did not care if he ever got up.

Now Richard walks with God. And because he has been healed and comforted by the Lord of so much, he is capable of comforting almost anyone he happens to meet with the healing and comfort of Christ.

“APPLES of Comfort” may be offered to others:

A—Action... choose to love in action.

P—Practical... take care of practical needs.

P—Positive... be positive, without offering false hope.

L—Listen... listen much, guarding confidentiality.

E—Empathize... weep or laugh with the person.

S—Speak ... speak briefly, spiritually.

Joe Bayly in his book, *View from a Hearse*, tells of the death of three of his children in the course of several years:

“I was sitting there torn by grief. Someone came and talked of God’s dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly. He said things I knew were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he’d go away. He finally did. Another came and sat beside me. He didn’t talk. He didn’t ask me leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour or more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply, and left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.”

My uncle, E.M., a successful pastor of several large churches, offered me such meaningful comfort in the darkest time of my life, calling and coming alongside in heart, listening, and sharing words of encouragement.

The Talis

The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and tell them that throughout their generations they are to make tassels for the corners of their garments, and put a blue (red, or purple) cord on the tassel at [each] corner. These will serve as tassels for you to look at, so that you may remember all the Lord’s commands and obey them and not become unfaithful by following your own heart and your own eyes. This way you will remember and obey all my commands and be holy to your God. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord your God.”

—Numbers 15.37-41

Make tassels on the four corners of the outer garment with which you cover yourself.

—Deuteronomy 22.12

The scriptural article of clothing with four corners is called in Hebrew a “talis” (“tallis”) or “tallit,” and the tassels to be worn on its four corners “tzit tzit,” which means twisted coils. The Talis may be a garment of the Way, for it may symbolize the following:

- Faith.

There is nothing magical in a talis, no more than in the communion bread and wine or the water of baptism, but all are expressions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Healing.

But for you who fear my name, the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings, and you will go forth and playfully leap like calves from the stall.

—Malachi 4.2

The Hebrew word which is here translated “wings” is the same word that elsewhere is translated “corners.” Wings of the garment are formed when the arms are held out. And according to the scriptures, healing may be found in those wings of the Son of righteousness.

And they were calling him alongside in order that they might touch the edge (tassel) of his

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outer clothing. And as many as touched it were thoroughly saved.

—Matthew 14.36

And wherever he was going in into villages or into cities or into fields, in the marketplaces they were putting those who are being without strength. And they were calling him alongside in order that if even the edge (tassel) of his outer clothing they might touch. And as many as touched it were being saved.

—Mark 6.56

But as he was leading under way, the crowds were choking together him. And a woman, being with a flow of blood from twelve years, who (having spent forth the whole livelihood on ones who cure) was not strong to be healed from not even one person. And having come forward from behind, she touched the edge (tassel) of his outer clothing. And at once stood her flow of the blood. And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched me?" And as all are denying, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are having together you and are crushing forth." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me. For I myself knew power had come out from me." And the woman, having perceived that she did not escape notice, trembling, came and, having fallen to him, told forth a message in sight of all the people for what cause she touched him and how she was cured at

once. And that one said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

—Luke 8.42-48

- Prayer.

"Even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer... for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."

—Isaiah 56.7

"Talis" means "little tent," and as the house of God was originally a tabernacle or tent and a place of prayer, so too is the "little tent" or "little tabernacle," as it is pulled up over the head.

- Protection.

The one who lives under the protection of the Most High dwells in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." He himself will deliver you from the snare of the trapper, from the destructive plague. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will take refuge. His faithfulness will be a protective shield.

—Psalm 91.1-4

I heard a leading South Vietnamese general who led hundreds of soldiers in the Vietnam War against the

communist forces from the north tell of unsettling, unreported incidents. He told of finding a friend who was a preacher hanging from a tree, having been skinned alive with a pair of pliers by invading soldiers. The general claimed the war could have been won in two weeks if America had been willing. Instead, he recalled, while fleeing his country as U.S. troops were withdrawn, flying in a helicopter over a major river and seeing hundreds of bodies lining both banks.

But an earlier incident changed his eternal destiny. He described the people in his country being grouped in a similar manner as past Indian tribes of our country. One day a missionary entered his village and told them of Jesus. His whole village turned to Christ including himself and his father the chief. When the communists learned of this, they sent soldiers to destroy his people. But they stopped short of entering the village. The general later obtained a copy of the official report which the enemy soldiers submitted to their superiors detailing why they had not carried out their orders. The report stated that when they approached the village they were prevented from entering by a circle of fire and by ones wielding flaming swords.

- Power.

Elisha picked up the mantle that had fallen off Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle that Elijah had dropped and struck the waters. "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" he asked. He struck the waters

himself. And they parted here and there. And Elisha crossed over.

—2 Kings 2.13-14

The prophet Elijah passed on his mantle to Elisha, the mantle likely being his talis, the mantle he wore when he called fire down from heaven.

Moreover, the following may be further expressions of power represented by this covering with the corner of garment:

- (a) the hovering or brooding of the Spirit of God over the face of the waters (*Genesis 1.2*);
 - (b) the hovering over and spreading out of the wings of the eagle (*Deuteronomy 32.11*);
 - (c) the overshadowing of the power of the Most High when Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (*Luke 1.35*);
 - (d) the overshadowing that came upon Peter, James, and John as they went with Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration (*Luke 9*); and
 - (e) the shadow of Peter, filled with the overshadowing presence of the Lord, healing those upon whom it fell (*Acts 5.15*).
- Prestige.

And I perceived the heaven which has been opened up. And perceive! A white horse. And the one who is sitting down upon it is being called Faithful and True. And in righteousness he is judging and is waging war. And his eyes are as a flame of

fire, and upon his head many thoroughly bound royal headdresses. He is one who is having a name which has been written which not even one person perceived except he, and who has cast around himself outer clothing which has been dipped in blood. And his name has been called the Word of God. And the armies of soldiers, those ones in the heaven, were following him upon white horses, who have sunk themselves in clean, white material of fine byssus flax linen. And out of his mouth is going out a sharp large sword, in order that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will shepherd them with a staff of iron. And he himself is walking the winepress of the wine of the intense feeling of the anger of God the All-mighty. And he is having upon the outer clothing and upon his thigh a name which has been written, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

—Revelation 19.11-16

The hem of a biblical garment was decorative and signified the status and importance of the wearer.

David once spared the life of King Saul in a cave, but secretly cut off the corner of his robe, not only taking away evidence that he had him in his power but also taking the fringe of his robe that identified him as king.

And so, in the above passage, we may have a description of the talis of none other than the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- Marriage.

So he (Boaz) asked, "Who are you?" "I am Ruth, your maidservant," she replied. "Spread the corner (wing) of your garment over your maidservant, for you are a family redeemer."

—Ruth 3.9

"Then I passed by you and looked upon you, and behold your time was the time of love. So I spread the corner (wing) of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I pledged myself to you, and entered into a covenant with you, and you became mine," declares the Lord God.

—Ezekiel 16.8

"We should rejoice and should leap much and should give the glory to him, because came the marriage feast of the Lamb and his wife prepared herself and it was given to her in order that she might cast around herself clean, shining material of fine byssus flax linen."

—Revelation 19.7-8

In biblical culture, the corner of the talis was cast over one being claimed for marriage. We are the bride of Christ, for he has spread his garment over us.

- Evangelism.

The talis may be used to lead others to Christ, hopefully even those who are so familiar with it.



7 Basic Steps along the Way



As we walk the Way, there are seven basic steps we should take.

I. Baptism

Or are you not understanding that we as many as were immersed into Christ Jesus were immersed into his death? Therefore we were buried together with him through the immersion into the death, in order that as indeed Christ was raised out of the dead through the glory of the Father, in this way also we ourselves should walk around in newness of life.

—Romans 6.3-4

The biblical word “baptism” means “immersion.” We are immersed in water to reflect the fact that we have

been immersed into Christ Jesus through faith in him. Baptism is a picture of how we have died with Christ as an old creation and have been raised with him as a new creation.

Baptism is an outward expression of the inward reality of what has happened to us through our faith in Christ Jesus.

Baptism does not make one a Christian, but it does mark one as a Christian.

Baptism is Commanded

And having come forward, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All authority was given to me in heaven and upon earth. Therefore, having gone, make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

—Matthew 28.18-19

And he (Peter) commanded them to be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ.

—Acts 10.48

The Lord and the scriptures command those who have placed their faith into Jesus Christ to be baptized.

Baptism is Commended

After that Jesus is coming alongside from Galilee to the Jordan to John for the purpose to be immersed by him. But John was thoroughly preventing him,

saying, "I myself am having a need to be immersed by you. And you yourself are coming to me?" But having answered, Jesus said to him, "Let go now. For in this way it is being fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." After that he is letting go him. And having been immersed, Jesus straightway stepped up from the water. And perceive! The heavens were opened up. And he perceived the Spirit of God stepping down as a dove and coming upon him. And perceive! A voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

—Matthew 3.13-17

Baptism is commended by the example of our Lord himself.

Baptism is Confession

"Therefore every one who is confessing in me in front of the humans, I myself also will confess in him in front of my Father, that one in the heavens. But a one who would deny me in front of the humans, I myself also will deny him in front of my Father, that one in the heavens."

—Matthew 10.32-33

Baptism is confession, announcing our faith in Christ to the whole world and declaring that we now belong to him. Refusal to be baptized is a denial of him before others.

Baptism is Common Practice

Therefore indeed those who were accepting forth his word were immersed. And about three thousand souls were added on that day.

—Acts 2.41

But when they had faith in Philip telling the well message about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were being immersed.

—Acts 8.12

And Philip, having opened up his mouth and having begun from this Writing, told the well message of Jesus to him. And as they were going down the way, they came upon some water. And the eunuch is stating, “Perceive! Water! What is preventing me to be immersed?” And he commanded the chariot to stand. And both ones stepped down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch. And he immersed him.

—Acts 8.12, 35-38)

Baptism is common practice for believers today as it was for those who first believed.

Baptism is Challenge.

Baptism is a challenge for us to live out our position in Christ which it symbolizes.

II. Church

The church is where we walk the Way together with other believers. In fact, we will not travel far on the path alone.

Embodiment of Christ.

For just as the body is being one and is having many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are being one body, in this way also is the Christ.... And you yourselves are being the body of Christ and members out of a part, and whom indeed God placed in the called out assembly (church)...

—1 Corinthians 12.12,27-28

The Spirit itself is witnessing with our spirit that we are being children of God...

—Romans 8.16

Coming forward toward this one (the Lord), who is a living stone which has indeed been rejected by testing by humans, but who is alongside to God one called out, one being held in value, you yourselves also, as living stones, are being built a dwelling of the spirit unto a set apart unto God priesthood to bring up of the spirit, well pleasing sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

—1 Peter 2.4-5

The church is the body of Christ. It is the family of God. It is the spiritual house of the Lord. As the Lord has returned to heaven, the church is to be his physical representative in the world today. People should come to the church and find his spiritual presence, his love, his grace, his peace, his healing, his guidance. In this world of rebellion and rejection of Christ, the church is his embassy, where people may find refuge in a haven of his coming kingdom.

There are two sides of Christianity. There is the personal side of our individual walk along the Way. And there is the corporate side of our walking with others in the church. The corporate side of Christianity is the church. God never calls a believer to be a lone ranger, but always as a part of his church.

In my hometown of Clinton, the high school football team had been terrible. Then a new coach, an ex-Marine, was hired. The town, looking at the prospects of the upcoming season, saw only one bright spot. Clinton had a star quarterback. At least they could glory in that one player. But the new coach set down some strict rules and warned that if anyone broke them they would be put off the team. One of the rules was that during the strenuous two-a-day practices in August the players could not attend a dance that was to be held during the week. And none of the players did, except one, the quarterback.

The next day the new coach kicked the star off the team. The quarterback was enraged and stormed off the field, prophesying the doom of the team and the end

of the coach's career. The news spread quickly through our small town and most people felt the same way as the ex-player.

But that day at practice, the coach pulled a fourteen year old boy off the sidelines, my brother Steve, and thrust him in as quarterback. And on that day Clinton Senior High School began to have a football team. They lost only two games that year and went undefeated the following season.

Edification & Accountability

In a world that beats us down, the church should uplift, encourage, and refresh us. The church is for edification.

Let all things be done for edification.

—1 Corinthians 14.26

One night I sat in my car in a parking lot outside a little combination grocery store and gas station on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. I watched a man pump gas into an old beat up light blue van. He had long straggly hair and a bushy unkempt beard. He wore a mismatch of Army clothes and blue jeans and tennis shoes. A new red pick-up truck pulled in behind the van. Another man emerged, wearing nice, neat clothes, looking different but yet somehow very much the same as the first. Without a word, the man from the pickup walked up and threw his arms around the man I had been watching. I do not know if they had ever seen each other before, but they shared a kindred spirit. They had served in the same war. They were friends, friends

beyond words. The church is to be the same for us as fellow warriors of the Way.

And in harmony with edification, the church is for loving accountability. We are continually to call upon and to challenge one another to remain in the Way and to live for the Lord.

Bride

The wives be to their own husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is being head of the wife as also the Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. But as the church is being put in order under authority to the Christ, in this way also the wives be to the husbands in everything. The husbands, love the wives, just as also the Christ loved the church and gave over himself for her, in order that he might set her apart unto God, having made clean in the bathing of the water in the word, in order that he himself should stand alongside to himself the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or anything of those so many things, but in order that she should be a one set apart unto God and one without blemish. In this way the husbands also are owing to love their own wives as their own bodies. The one who is loving his own wife is loving himself. For not even one person once hated his own flesh but is nourishing and cherishing it, just as also the Christ the church because members we are being of his body. Opposite of this a human will leave throughout the father and the mother

and will be glued to his wife, and the two will be unto one flesh. This mystery is being a great one. And I myself am speaking concerning the Christ and concerning the church. Yet also you yourselves, those ones according to one, let each one love his own wife as himself, and the wife in order that she should fear the husband.

—Ephesians 5.22-33

The church is the bride of Christ. Christ most certainly loves us, and we are to submit to him and revere him. Through the Way we are to live out being one with him, his Spirit being joined with our spirit. We must leave all to follow him.

The Fellowship

And we should consider one another unto the stimulation of love and beautiful works, not forsaking the gathering together of ourselves, just as the custom in certain ones is, but calling alongside, and in so much more as much as you are seeing the day coming near.

—Hebrews 10.24-25

And they were being ones who are being steadfast to the teaching of the apostles and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers.

—Acts 2.42

And if in the light we should walk around as he himself is being in the light, we are having

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*fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus
his Son is making us clean from all wrongdoing.*

—1 John 1.7

Fellowship is the sharing of our selves, our gifts, and our possessions in order to help one another walk the Way.

God is faithful, through whom you were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ. And I am calling alongside you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order that you all should say the same thing, and that splits should not be among you, and you should be ones who have been equipped throughout in the same mind and in the purpose.... For still you are being ones of the flesh. For where is in you boiling with zeal and strife, you are being ones of the flesh and you are walking around according to a human, are you not?

—1 Corinthians 1.9-10; 3.3

We must not have divisions in the church. We must center upon our walk with Christ together. All else is of secondary importance. We must leave room for differences of scriptural interpretations, spiritual gifts, personalities, backgrounds, and cultures.

*“Woe to the world because of its causes of stumbling!
For it is inevitable that causes of stumbling come.
But woe to that person through whom the cause of
stumbling is coming!”*

—Matthew 18.7

Unlike ourselves, what a challenge other people may be! In truth, we must rely upon Christ and do all that we can to avoid being a stumbling block to others. And subsequently, we also must rely upon him to avoid letting others be a stumbling block to us.

And as he was being in Jerusalem at the Passover at the feast, many ones had faith into his name, observing his signs which he was doing. But Jesus himself was not having faith in (entrusting) himself to them on account that he knows all ones, and because he was not having a need that anyone should witness about the human. For he himself was knowing what was being in the human.

—John 2.23-25

Like our Lord, we must reach out to people but also be careful in entrusting ourselves to them, of making ourselves overly vulnerable, for often people will act out of the old creation, as we ourselves often do, and hurt us and discourage us from walking the Way. In Christ, the door of our heart going out must remain propped wide open, but the door leading in must be guarded wisely and vigilantly. Here are a few suggestions on how to relate to certain ones:

- “backstabbers” – keep cards close to the vest.
- “bullies” – do not be forced off the Way.
- “cold shoulders” – keeping on walking.
- “competitors” – concede without compromising walk.

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- “control freaks” – defend flag of one’s free will.
- “critics” – take the good, tune out the bad.
- “drama queens” – do not become a fellow actor.
- “flirts” – avoid like the plague.
- “gossips” – never listen.
- “green-eyed monsters” – reassure.
- “victims” – do not enable.
- “sponges” – help without getting drained dry.
- “time bombs” – be shielded.
- “wet blankets” – shrug off.
- “workaholics” – keep priorities without false guilt.

The Front

We might assume that the front lines of the spiritual war would be in Walmart, that is, in the world. But that is not the case. The front lines are in the church. We are safer in Walmart than in the church. The enemy already has the world. It is the church where the battle is raging. For if we of the church walk the Way together, we may storm the gates of hell itself and lead captives free. (*Matthew 16.18*) But if we fail in the church, there is no other embassy of the kingdom of Christ in the world to which people may flee.

Therefore, when we enter the doors of the church, we must be suited in the armor of the King and be prepared to fight for him and for his church.

The Failures

The church often falls short of being what Christ would have her to be. This is because time and again we who comprise the church do not walk with the Lord or do his will like we should. Instead the Lord is calling upon us to single-mindedly walk the Way as part of his church and to help carry out what he wants her to be.

Stephen has been a most loyal and faithful friend since I was a youth. If I could count on no one else, I could count on him to be there for me. He was raised in the church. But having faced a divorce that he did not want, I heard him sadly conclude, "I can find more human kindness, more simple compassion of one human being for another, in a bar than in the church." I thank the Lord that after many years he is now devoting himself to the church as a minister to make a difference within her.

A small rural church was maintaining the status quo and was quite content in doing so. But the Lord started to work through his Spirit in the church. In a couple of months fifty new members were sitting in its pews. Their presence and the working of the Lord compelled change and demanded that some things be done differently in order that more people might be reached for Christ. But some of the long-standing members complained that they did not recognize all the faces any longer when they came to church and they did not like seeing so many visitors each Sunday. In fact, one Sunday, as the pastor was coming out of his office to go to the morning service, the chairman of deacons and his wife were sitting scowling in the hallway outside

his door. The pastor asked them what was wrong. The chairman spoke up, "I just want you to know that we are very upset. My wife and I had to change seats three times this morning in order to make room for visitors!" The status quo members banded together and resisted what was taking place. They were willing at all cost to protect the way things had been before. New members were told they had no voice in the church and they were to remain quite in official meetings. Change did take place once again. The new members drifted away. The fire of the Spirit dwindled.

The Future

While still a young man, I became disillusioned with church, not attending anywhere and always quick with some critical potshot at her. But the Lord got my attention and softly but sternly said to me, "Excuse me. I didn't know that you knew better than me. But I have chosen the church. And if you think the church needs to be different, then get in there and do something about it from the inside and quit running her down from the outside."

Christ let a friend named Keith share in some of his burden for his church. Keith carried that weight every day, struggling under the load, being effected in every aspect of his life, demonstrating something of Christ's concern for his called-out people, his bride.

We should care for the church and as a new creation in Christ do all that he leads to do in order to make her what he wants her to be.

III. Prayer

Model Prayer

“Therefore pray you in this way, Our Father, that one in the heavens, let your name be set apart unto God. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven also upon earth. Give to us this day our bread, the one for today. And let go to us our things owed, as also we ourselves have let go our ones owing. And may you not bring us into testing. But rescue us from the evil (evil one).”

—Matthew 6.9-13

Prayer, the Voice of Faith

Pray without ceasing.

—1 Thessalonians 5.17

Pray always as the expression of living by faith.

And having answered, Jesus said to them, “Amen I am saying to you, if you should have faith and should not doubt, not only that of the fig tree you will do, but if also to this mountain you should say, ‘Be lifted up and be cast into the sea,’ it will take place.”

—Matthew 21.21

Pray with expectation as the evidence of faith.

It is praying for the Lord to send rain during a drought and leaving the house with an umbrella.

The account is given of a minister who often went to the hospital to pray for the sick. One day he entered the room of a woman and asked if he could pray for her. Having received permission, he prayed, "Lord, please heal this woman." Suddenly the woman jumped up and shouted, "Thank God I'm healed!" The shaken minister made it out to his car. Fumbling for his keys with trembling hands, he looked up to heaven and said, "Lord, don't ever do that to me again!"

Church members had gathered in the house of the mother of John Mark to pray for Peter to be released from prison. And when the Lord sent an angel and freed him, Peter came to the door and knocked. And as Rhoda went to the door and heard the voice of Peter, she was so excited that she didn't even open the door but ran to tell the others. But they responded, "You're crazy! It can't be Peter, because we're in here praying for the Lord to release him from prison!" (*Acts 12*)

Prayer Is.

According to the scripture, prayer is...

Faith. (*John 11.41-42*)

For God to hear. (*Psalms 54.2*)

Knowing that God hears. (*Psalms 145.18*)

Knowing that God is good. (*Luke 18.19*)

Knowing that God cares. (*Daniel 9.18*)

For God's will to be done, not ours. (*Luke 22.42*)

Out of grace. (*Galatians 2.21*)

Out of the heart. (*Psalms 130.1*)

Power. (*Matthew 17.21; James 5.16*)

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Healing. (*James 5.13-15*)
Praise. (*Psalms 150*)
Thanksgiving. (*1 Thessalonians 5.18; Psalm 100.4*)
Continual. (*Psalms 86.3*)
Sincere and real. (*Matthew 6.5-7*)
Without pride. (*Luke 18.10-12*)
Humble. (*Luke 18.11-14*)
In the Spirit. (*Ephesians 6.18*)
Helped by the Spirit. (*Romans 8.26*)
Without anger or argument. (*1 Timothy 2.8*)
Taking place in the house of God. (*Matthew 21.13*)
Toward Jerusalem. (*1 Kings 8.27-30; Daniel 6.10*)
For peace of Jerusalem. (*Psalms 122.6*)
For enemies. (*Matthew 5.44*)
For others. (*Exodus 32.11; Ephesians 6.18*)
Done three times a day. (*Psalms 55.17; Daniel 6.10*)
With lifted hands. (*1 Timothy 2.8*)
While standing. (*Mark 11.25*)
While kneeling. (*1 Kings 8.54; Psalms 95.6; Daniel 6.10*)
While prostrate. (*Deuteronomy 9.25-26*)
With singing. (*James 5.13*)

ABC's of Prayer.

A—Ask.

You have not because you ask not.

—*James 4.2*

Ask, knowing that the Lord is all powerful and good and loving and always wants what is best for us.

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O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man who trusts in him.

—Psalm 34.8

Ask, but wanting the Lord's will to be done rather than our own.

And having placed on the knees, he (Jesus) was praying forth, saying, "Father, if you are wanting, bring aside this cup from me. Yet let not my will but yours be done."

—Luke 22.41-42

Ask, inquiring a word from the Lord and then acting in faith and thanksgiving and praise according to that word.

And it took place after this, David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And the Lord said unto him, "Go up." And David said, "Where shall I go?" And the Lord said, "To Hebron."

—1 Samuel 2.1

Ask, but not amiss.

You are asking and are not receiving, because you are asking badly, in order that you should pay the cost for it on your pleasures.

—James 4.3

We may ask badly by asking...

Selfishly. (*James 4.3*)

Beyond our need, like a six year old asking for a new car. (*Philippians 4.19*)

Outside the will of God. (*1 John 5.14-15*)

Big prayers when we are still immature spiritually, being ones of little faith. (*Matthew 20.20-23*)

B—Believe

“And all things whatever as much as you should ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive.”

—*Matthew 21.22*

Believe that the Lord is able to do all things, that he is having power to grant your request even if he should choose not to do so.

Best yet is to pray with promise. Having been revealed what the will of the Lord is, having received his word, then pray in full faith in accordance to his word, believing utterly that the Lord will always fulfill his word. This is the most powerful prayer. This is the most confident prayer, for otherwise the Lord is under no obligation to act in accordance with a prayer for which he has not given his word no matter how hard we pray or how much faith we think we are having. We must remember that faith is an attitude of complete reliance upon the Lord from which we then take God at his word and act upon it, and not that we ask him

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to take us at our word and act as we want. God is not a heavenly Santa Claus.

After the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites did not go to whatever country they chose and claim it by faith in the Lord. No, they went to Canaan and claimed that land by faith because God had said that he had given it to them.

C—Confess

The Psalms

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

—*Psalms 66.18*

Confess your heart to the Lord, telling him of your hopes and dreams, of your hurts and joys, of your days and nights, of your victories of walking the Way and failures. *The Psalms* is a prayer book of model prayers, showing us how we may communicate and confess all to the Lord.

Confess sin and shortcomings to the Lord.

D—Diligence

And he was saying an illustration to them for the purpose that it is binding for them at all times to pray forth and not to give in to the bad, saying, "A certain judge was being in a certain city, who is not fearing God and who is not being turned at a

human. And a widow was being in that city. And she was coming to him, saying, 'Give out justice to me from that one opposite in a case of justice of me.' And he was not willing for a time. But after these things he said in himself, 'Even if I am not fearing God, and nor am being turned at a human, yet because this widow is holding wearying labor alongside to me, I will give out justice to her, in order that, coming, she should not make me visible (black and blue) under the eye unto completion.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the judge of the injustice is saying. And should God never ever do the giving out of justice of his called out ones who are shouting to him of day and of night? And will he take a long time before having intense feelings for them? I am saying to you that he will do the giving out of justice of them in quickness. Yet will the Son of Man, having come, thus find faith upon the earth?"

—Luke 18.1-8

Keep seeking to know the will of the Lord in a matter. And when he reveals his will and gives his word, then keep believing, keep claiming, keep praising and thanking him for the certainty that he will do it in his timing.

Fasting.

So I set my face unto the Lord God to seek him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

—Daniel 9.3

“To fast” is “to not eat food.” It is an act of denial of the flesh, of the old creation.

Fasting and praying go well together in the Way. For fasting is the denial of the old creation while praying is the dependence upon Christ as the new creation.

Worry.

“And that which was scattered into the thorns, this one is the one who is hearing the word. And the worry of the enduring age and the deception of riches is choking together the word and it is becoming without fruit.”

—Matthew 13.22

And having twisted together a wreathed crown out of thorns, they put it upon his head.

—Matthew 27.29

Therefore be made low by the mighty hand of God, in order that he might lift you high in a right time, having thrown upon him all your worry, because he is caring for you.

—1 Peter 5.6-7

Worry should be turned into prayer. For Christ bore all our worry on the cross. Worry is trying to handle situations on our own. Prayer is casting all to the Lord and depending upon him. How liberating turning every worry into pray is!

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Using thorns as a symbol of worry, the scriptures have much to teach us:

As a result of the fall, thorns of worry fill this world.
(*Genesis 3.17-18*)

The inhabitants that the Israelites left in Canaan became as thorns of worry in their sides, as does whatever of the old creation we allow to remain in our experience. (*Numbers 33.55*)

Thorns of worry plague the way of the perverse, as well as our way whenever we disobey the Lord and go against his word. (*Proverbs 22.5*)

A whole hedge of thorns of worry trouble those who are lazy. (*Proverbs 15.19*)

Like the ground which yields thorns, if we bring forth thorns of worry then we are worthless to God and to others. (*Hebrews 6.7-8*)

As the Lord spoke to Moses from the midst of the thorn bush, he may speak to us from the midst of the thorns of worry. (*Exodus 3.4*)

And as with Paul, the Lord may leave a thorn of worry to constantly compel us to turn to him in prayer and trust. (*2 Corinthians 12.7-9*)

Grandmother Phillips.

Laura Bell Phillips was the spiritual matriarch of the Phillips family, a humble woman of deep faith. She had a cleft palate and her speech was hard to understand,

even if you were around her for a long time. It was like hearing someone speak with a mouth full of marbles or peanut butter. She brushed back her gray hair and wore simple cotton dresses and wire-rimmed glasses. She lived in an old, white wooden house in Deepwater, Missouri, that had a porch extending across the front, a living room with two bedrooms leading off, one to the left and the other to the right, and a kitchen straight through to the back. In the living room there was a coal stove in the far corner and an eclectic collection of a sofa and two arm chairs all covered with rough but comforting cloth. She shared lemon drops that she kept in a cabinet in the kitchen. Family members would sit on the porch, visiting with one another, or gather in the living room. I remember sitting at my dad's knee as he sat in an arm chair, listening to him talk quietly with those gathered there at the time and hearing him laugh.

Years before, when her children were small and her husband an alcoholic, all she knew to do was to sit at her kitchen table each night and read her Bible and pray out loud. My dad would come in from running wild and get into his bed as fast as he could and put a pillow over his head, trying to muffle out her voice. But the words of the scriptures and her prayers got through, and my dad came to faith in Jesus Christ, as did his brothers and sisters. And at last when her husband was 73 years old, as my dad went with a visiting evangelist to talk to him about salvation one last time, he finally was ready to be saved too, lamenting afterwards, "Why did I wait so long?" And as her husband at long last

stepped through gate one, her prayers for her family were all answered.

When all ones of faith stand before the Lord seated upon his throne, there will be many notable people gathered round. But I believe he will motion to the back of the throng for a little lady dressed in a faded cotton dress to come forward, a lady embarrassed at all the attention as the people part for her to pass until she stands humbly before his throne, and he will say to her, "Well done my good and faithful servant." For the King said of that day, "Many first ones will be last and last ones first."

IV. Word

The Word of God, the Bible, is God's inspired message of love to us, a wondrous story of the Way that flows from creation and the fall of the human race to the flood and the choosing of a people, from redemption through his Son, Jesus Christ, and the outpouring of his Spirit in the church to a glimpse of eternity and heaven. The Word is a principal means through which the Lord speaks to us, as through his Spirit he lifts words from its pages and talks directly to us through them, addressing our present lives, needs, and circumstances. The Word is living and relevant and authoritative for us today.

God graced me with a love for the Word since I was a child. My oldest brother observed that when other children would be out playing I would be reading my Bible. I held it to my chest, slept with it at night, and read it for the warmth of love and light it gives.

We need the Word for our spirit and soul, as we need water for our body. What if there was a severe drought and there was no water? We take water for granted unless there is none and then we realize just how precious it is. What if all the Bibles were confiscated and burned and there was none to read? We may easily take the Word for granted because there are so many copies around us and may fail to appreciate how valuable a book it really is. What is more, in drinking water, we may not have a taste for it at first, but we will if we keep drinking, because our bodies so need water for life and health. It is similar with the Word. The more we read and study, the more we develop a thirst for the Word, because our spirit and soul need it for life and health.

An unknown writer penned these words:

“This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ, yes, to glory itself, for eternity.”

The Word Is.

According to the Word itself, the Word of God is...

Jesus. (*John 1.14*)

Spending time with the Written Word is like spending time with the Living Word. Scriptures are the main way we learn more of Christ and therefore ourselves as new creations.

Sword. (*Hebrews 4.12*)

It divides the soul and the spirit, so that we may know what is of the one and what is of the other.

Inspired by God. (*2 Timothy 3.16*)

Profitable. (*2 Timothy 3.16-17*)

It is beneficial for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Spiritual food. (*1 Peter 2.2-3*)

Right. (*Psalms 33.4*)

Worthy of praise. (*Psalms 56.10*)

Eternal. (*Psalms 105.8*)

Healing. (*Psalms 107.20*)

Guardian against sin. (*Psalms 119.11*)

Salvation. (*Psalms 119.41*)

Comfort. (*Psalms 119.50*)

Hope. (*Psalms 119.81*)

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Light. (*Psalm 119.105*)

Life. (*Psalm 119.116*)

Pure. (*Psalm 119.140*)

Treasure. (*Psalm 119.162*)

The Spirit

But when should come that one, the Spirit of the truth, he will lead the way for you in all truth.

—*John 16.13*

We must look to the Spirit to teach and to reveal the Word to us.

The scriptures are like an iceberg. Below the surface there are great depths of truth that only the Spirit may make known to us.

Dr. Fred Cherry was a tall, slender evangelist from Edmond, Oklahoma, whose eyes blazed with the love and grace and power of Christ when he preached and taught the Word of God. He had played end on the football team at the University of Oklahoma, worked as a petroleum engineer, served as an Army chaplain during the War, spending 13 months in Europe, and worked for the state of Oklahoma on the planning and resources board. Then he started preaching at different churches and was increasingly asked to do so. His wife, Virginia, asked him what he would do when he had more calls than he had time to fill. He said, "I'll quit my job." And he did. Using no advertising or any other method to secure engagements, he said, "When the church

people are revived, the Holy Spirit automatically uses their witness and the lost are drawn to the services.” He also said, “The Lord promised to take care of me as long as I followed his will. I have and he never has failed to keep his promise. Why should I worry about where I’ll preach or how much I’ll make? The Lord knows best so I leave it to him.” It was said of him, “Above all, as he preaches the Word, one can feel the presence of the Spirit of God.” I did. And I wanted to be like him.

Treasure Hunters

I rejoice at your word, as one who finds great spoil.

—*Psalm 119.162*

The scriptures are comprised of innumerable and inestimable treasures of truth. And we are to be seekers of such treasure. We may find many gems lying upon the surface or just below the ground, but so many others lie hidden or buried so that we must diligently search and dig and explore until we find them. Some of the most precious jewels of truth of the scripture may be found only in this manner.

There is a legend in Missouri that Blackbeard the “river pirate” buried forty pack-mule loads of gold in or around Bruce Cave. What would we do if we came into possession of a book that he wrote which contained clues as to where that treasure was? How would we read and study that book in comparison to how we read and study the book of eternal treasures?

Inspiration & Interpretation

All scripture is inspired by God...

—1 Timothy 3.16

For now we are seeing through a reflection in a mirror in an enigma, but after that face to face. Now I am knowing out of a part, but after that I will come to know just as also I was come to be known.

—1 Corinthians 13.12

...knowing this first, that every prophecy of the scripture is not taking place of one's own interpretation.

—2 Peter 1.20

The scriptures are the inspired Word of God and are thus always true. But our interpretation of his Word may or may not be correct. We must guard against arrogantly supposing that we alone always have the only proper understanding of the Bible and then attacking those who understand some portions differently, as we only see in mystery and in part, and as we all read the Word through the different colored lenses of our particular personalities, backgrounds, presuppositions, and experiences.

There are essentials of understanding of the scriptures, most of which center around the Way of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Savior and the Lord. But as for the understanding of other portions

of scripture, we must give space to one another for different interpretations. In other words, if we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and are walking by faith and living for him, then we must walk together in unity, discussing and letting stand if necessary auxiliary differences along the Way.

Slogan of the 19th century early Disciples of Christ Church: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity (love)."

Teeter-totter Truths

There are some truths of scripture that must be held in balance or in tension with one another in order for the whole truth to be known. They may seem to be contradictory and may well be beyond our ability to fully comprehend, but both are true none the less. Some of the greatest truths are this way.

This is like a teeter-totter that works only as one side is occupied by someone who is cooperating with the person on the other side.

It is like two people standing toe to toe, grasping hands, and then leaning back from one another. Both stand as long as both keep hold of each other. But if either one should let go, then both fall.

It is like two people seeing a coin, each one looking at an opposite side. If asked to describe the coin, each would give a description contrary to other. But as both people put their observations together, then the coin would be more fully described.

Here are some examples of teeter-totter truths:

The Way is paved with such truth, as the scripture speaks of our position in Christ as an accomplished fact but also of our need to still experience it. We have seen how both are possible and how this drives us to faith and living by faith.

The scripture tells us that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, but it also says that whosoever believes in his Son is saved. (*Ephesians 1.4; John 3.16*) We may not be able to grasp this fully, but each of us who has stepped through gate one is able to testify, “Yes I am saved because God chose me and led me to believe in Christ, and yes I am saved because I chose God by believing in his Son.

My Dad taught that on the outside of gate one there are the words: “Whosoever will.” But on the inside of the gate, once a person steps through and then looks back, there are the words: “Chosen before the foundation of the world.”

Paul is emphatic in emphasizing that we are saved by grace through faith apart from works of our own, but James says that faith without works is dead. (*Ephesians 2.8; James 2.26*) We learn from this that there are action nouns in the scripture, such as “faith” and “love,” which have action as part of their meaning; that is, true faith and love show themselves in what we do. Remember that “agape” love is choosing to love in action, and that faith may be defined as relying upon the Lord and then taking him at his word and acting upon it.

As we know the Israelites finally had faith that God had given them the promised land when they stopped

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wandering in the wilderness and went in and started claiming it, so we know that we are living by faith in our position in Christ when we rely upon him as a new creation and deny ourselves as an old creation.

The Bible states that God does not change but also that he does repent and change his mind. (*James 1.17; Exodus 32.14*) The truth of these seemingly conflicting truths is that because God never changes he changes; that is, because his love for us never changes, God is constantly changing in how he deals with us.

The scriptures speak of our resurrection to be with the Lord after we die as a future event but also as taking place immediately. (*John 11.24; Revelation 20.5; Luke 23.43; 2 Corinthians 5.8*) These truths may point us to the truth that time with God is radically different from time with us; that is, when we die, our resurrection may take place many years later according to the time here on earth but may happen at once according to the time or absence of time of heaven.

Scripture & Science.

A = scripture (the truth, always correct, never wrong).

B = our correct interpretation of scripture.

C = correct findings of science.

$$A = B$$

The truth of scripture equals our correct interpretation of scripture.

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Therefore, if our interpretation is different from the truth of scripture, then our interpretation must be wrong.

$$A = C$$

The truth of scripture equals the correct findings of science.

Therefore, if the findings of science are different from the truth of scripture, then the findings of science must be wrong.

$$B = C$$

Our correct interpretation of scripture equals the correct findings of science.

Therefore, if our interpretation of scripture is correct and the findings of science are different, then the findings of science must be wrong.

But if the findings of science are correct and our interpretation of scripture is different, then our interpretation of scripture must be wrong.

How to Study

Rely always upon the Spirit.

Read the whole book before honing in on the details.

Meditate on the Word, letting its truths seep from the spirit into the soul. (*Psalm 119.15, 23, 48, 78, 148*)

Keep notes of what is learned in a journal or in the margins.

Question. Ask questions about what is being read. And then let the Spirit and the Word raise questions to you. Questions are the shovels and pickaxes by which some of the infinitely vast buried treasure of scripture may be unearthed. Two basic questions always are: “What is the scripture saying?” And, “What is the scripture saying to me?”

Best Translation.

Translations have come to us in the following manner:

- (a) The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic.
- (b) About 250 years before the birth of Jesus, the Old Testament was translated into the Greek language and called the Septuagint (LXX).
- (c) The New Testament was originally written in Greek, the common language of the world at the time, not long after the life of Jesus upon the earth.
- (d) About 350 years after the death of Jesus, Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, the language of the world then, and it was called the Vulgate. It remained the official Bible in Western Europe for over 1,000 years, long after most people stopped speaking Latin.
- (e) By the year A.D. 1000, the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament was completed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes who wanted to establish the Hebrew text. Other than the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is the only existing representation

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of the Old Testament in Hebrew. It became the source of every major translation of the Old Testament.

- (f) In the late 1300's, John Wycliffe, translated the Bible into English. But copies had to be hand-written and so were in short supply.
- (g) About 140 years later (1526), William Tyndale printed his English translation of the New Testament from the original Greek. Printing of the scriptures allowed many more copies to be made available to readers.
- (h) About ten years later, Miles Coverdale printed his English translation of the entire Bible.
- (i) In 1611, King James I authorized a translation of the Bible known as the King James Version. This Bible has become the best known English Bible.
- (j) During the last 100 years, many translations of the Bible have been made in English.

The best translation for a reader is the one which the Spirit uses to be most meaningful to the reader. Here are some guidelines in finding that translation:

First and foremost, rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide the selection.

It should be kept in mind that translations exist in a tension between being as literal as possible to the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and being the most readable in English. Translations fall somewhere within the spectrum of this tension, some leaning toward being more literal and some leaning toward being more readable.

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(The “New Wine New Testament” was written so that the English reader might study the New Testament as though reading in the original language of Greek. It has been the source for the sections of the New Testament used in this book.)

The format of a translation does well to reflect the different styles of writing found within the Bible, such as narrative, letters, or poetry, rather than chopping up the sacred text into individual verses. The Bible was not written in this way and was not intended by God to read this way.

It would be well to read a translation with no headings.

For this is like someone who has already seen the movie you are watching telling you over and over what is going to happen next. Headings have been inserted into the inspired text instead of letting the story of the Bible speak for itself, and besides they are only someone’s personal summaries of that portion of scripture.

It also would be well to find a translation that at least minimizes chapter and verse numbers, as these too have been inserted into the holy writings.

Overview

Old Testament
Creation & Fall—Adam and Eve.
Flood—Noah.

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Fathers (of the faith)—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
and Joseph, who takes Jacob (Israel) to Egypt.

Exodus—freedom from slavery in Egypt - Moses.

Wilderness—wanderings.

Canaan—conquest of the promised land, exile, and
then return to the land; during this span there
are the...

Judges—repeatedly raised to deliver rebellious
Israel.

Kings—Saul, David, Solomon, and then the
kingdom divided into the 10 tribes of Israel
versus the tribe of Judah - Israel was taken cap-
tive by Assyria, and later Judah by Babylon.

Prophets—most prophesied during final kings
of Israel and Judah, some during the exile,
and the last three during and after the return
to the promised land.

—silence of about 430 years—

New Testament

Jesus Christ—his story told by Matthew, Mark,
Luke, and John.

Church—the early history and spread of.

Letters—how to live out the Way of Christ.

Revelation—the end of this age and the coming
King and his kingdom.

Scripture Summaries.

Tanakh—Old Testament

Torah—Law:

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Genesis—"Book of Beginnings" - beginning of creation - beginning again after flood - beginning of God's people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph ending in Egypt.

Exodus—exodus - tablets - tabernacle.

Leviticus—"Citizenship Manual of the Kingdom" - offerings - worship - holy days - holy walk.

Numbers—wandering in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy—"Second Law" - an adaptation and expansion of the original - given before entering Canaan.

Nevi' im—Prophets:

Joshua—leads conquest of Canaan.

Judges—deliverers of rebellious Israel.

I Samuel (I Kings)—Samuel - Saul - David - (I & II Samuel and I & II Kings also known as I-IV Kings).

II Samuel (II Kings)—David.

I Kings (III Kings)—Solomon - divided kingdom of Israel and Judah - Elijah.

II Kings (IV Kings)—two kingdoms continue - Elisha - captivity of Israel by Assyria - captivity of Judah by Babylon.

Isaiah—Messianic prophet to Judah.

Jeremiah—prophet to save Jerusalem during final kings of Judah.

Ezekiel—prophet during fall of Jerusalem and 70 year exile in Babylon.

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(more prophets during final kings of Israel and Judah and the return from exile:)

Hosea—prophet to Israel until its fall - Gomer.

Joel—prophet to Judah - locust plague.

Amos—prophet of Judah to Israel.

Obadiah—prophet to Edom.

Jonah—prophet to Nineveh.

Micah—prophet to Judah—ruler to come from Bethlehem.

Nahum—prophet to Nineveh 100 years after Jonah.

Habakkuk—prophet to Judah just before Babylonian captivity.

Zephaniah—prophet to Judah during King Josiah's revival.

Haggai—called for rebuilding of temple after Persian king Cyrus allowed many Jews to return.

Zechariah—inspired rebuilding of temple.

Malachi—prophesied after rebuilding of temple.

Kethuvim—Writings:

Psalms—"Praises" - 5 songbooks for worship and prayer.

Proverbs—practical godly wisdom - written mostly by Solomon.

Job—problem of suffering.

Song of Songs—celebration of love between a king and his wife.

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Ruth—story of devotion, love, and redemption—great grandmother of David.

Lamentations—sorrow over destruction of Jerusalem by Babylonians written likely by Jeremiah.

Ecclesiastes—“The Preacher” - all is vanity apart from living for God.

Esther—deliverance of Jews from genocide in Persia.

Daniel—prophesied during 70-year Babylonian captivity of God’s present and eternal plan.

Ezra—first return to Jerusalem led by Zerubbabel - second return led by Ezra - (Ezra and Nehemiah originally one book).

Nehemiah—third return led by Nehemiah to rebuild wall of Jerusalem.

I Chronicles—“Matters Omitted” - kings of Judah - (I-II Chronicles originally one book).

II Chronicles—kings of Judah continued.

New Testament

Gospels—the story of Jesus Christ:

Matthew	Luke
Mark	John

Early Church & Spread of Gospel:

Acts—second volume written by Luke following his gospel.

Letters—explaining the Way to live out the life of Christ:

Romans	Titus
I & II Corinthians	Philemon
Galatians	Hebrews
Ephesians	James
Philippians	I & II Peter
Colossians	I & II & III John
I & II Thessalonians	Jude
I & II Timothy	

Apocalypse:

Revelation—the revealing of Christ and his coming kingdom at the end times.

V. Worship

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

—*Psalm 96.9*

The word “worship” in the Hebrew of the Old Testament means to bow, to kneel, or to prostrate one’s self before God.

The word “worship” in the Greek of the New Testament means to pay homage to God like a dog to its master.

The scene of a faithful canine pet happily bounding around its master and being obedient to him is the beautiful imagery of the word for worship in the New Testament.

Worship Is.

According to the Bible, worship is...

Bowing, kneeling, and being face down before the Lord. (*Psalm 95.6*)

Paying homage to the Lord like a dog to its master. (*Matthew 8.1-2*)

For God alone. (*Exodus 34.14; Matthew 4.10*)

Christ-centered. (*John 12.32*)

Spirit led. (*John 15.26*)

Balance between spirit and truth, that is, we may genuinely worship only as new creations through our spirit functioning in unison with the Holy Spirit and only as prescribed by God. (*John 4.24*)

Heartfelt, not by rote. (*Isaiah 29.13*)

Singing. (*Psalm 47.6-7; 95.1*)

Shouting. (*Psalm 47.1; 95.1-2*)

Clapping hands. (*Psalm 47.1*)

Joyful. (*Psalm 95.1*)

Giving thanks. (*Psalm 95.2*)

Blessing the Lord, that is, speaking well of him, because focusing upon him rather than upon our own selves is what is best for us. (*Psalm 103.1-5*)

Saying, "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" (*Psalm 106.48*)

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Lifting up hands, showing that we are coming empty-handed in complete reliance upon the Lord and that we have let go of all else, all the old creation, all offenses of others, all worry of trying to handle matters our selves, all fear and pursuit of selfish pleasure. (*Psalm 134.1-2*)

Praise. (*Psalm 150.1-2*)

With instruments. (*Psalm 150.3-5*)

Dancing. (*Psalm 150.4*)

For edification. (*1 Corinthians 14.26*)

Orderly. (*1 Corinthians 14.40*)

Spirit filled. (*Ephesians 5.18*)

In heaven. (*Revelation 4.1-11*)

Toward God's dwelling in Jerusalem. (*Psalm 5.7; 138.2*)

Going to be earth-wide. (*Psalm 66.4; Isaiah 66.23*)

Where to Worship.

And now, Israel, what is the Lord asking from you but that to fear the Lord your God and to go in all his ways and to love him and to worship the Lord your God out of your whole heart and out of your whole soul?

—*Deuteronomy 10.12*

“But I myself and my house will worship the Lord.”

—*Joshua 24.15*

And all the church worshiped...

—*2 Chronicles 29.28*

We should worship the Lord in our hearts, in our families, and in our churches.

How to Worship.

If we should go to see a play, then we are the audience there to watch and to enjoy the actors, the action, and the setting of the play.

But when we worship, God alone is the audience and we are the actors. True worship is directed towards God and draws all people towards him. Otherwise, we are wasting our time, glorying in our old creation, drawing attention to our own selves, and being loathsome to God. All that we say and do is to be for the Lord, all the singing and the saying and the setting. He is the object of worship. Those upon the platform are not there to entertain those in the pews but are to lead all in worship of the Lord.

The thought of worship to many is that it is boring, and if heaven is an eternity of such tedium then it seems more like hell than heaven. Sad to say many times people are given cause to believe this to be true. We may literally bore people to death, spiritual death, by the way we go about worship.

We may go through the motions of worship, whatever those motions may be, being spiritually and emotionally

numb, motions that are meaningless to us, to God, or to anyone else, dutifully but lifelessly punching our time clock to worship because that is what we are suppose to do, while secretly planning what we are looking forward to doing the rest of the day, checking repeatedly our watch as the second hand jumps slowly from one mark of time to the next, as our only heartfelt prayer of the day is that we get out on time and God forbid that it should run past the allotted hour, wistfully longing to be out doing what the “heathen” are doing rather than being stuck in yet another worship service.

Drastically different, true worship is the pinnacle of our walk and relationship with the Lord, when we bathe ourselves in his love, joy, and peace, letting all else go, loving and paying homage to him, being filled with his Spirit and the excitement of his presence and power in our midst, as his life and healing and strength and glory radiate to us, as we offer our selves to him in total dependence.

As he led a procession to bring the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem, King David was so excited and enthusiastic about worshiping his God that he danced before the Lord, leaping and whirling about in full view of the whole nation of Israel, much to the disdain of his royal wife, Michal. How would we respond if David showed up and worshiped like that in our midst? How many of us would despise and rebuke him too? And yet, it was precisely such things as the sight of this red-headed king dancing about with all his might so fervently caught up in his love and devotion to his Lord and caring so little what anyone else thought about

it that moved God to declare, "Here is a man after my own heart!" (2 Samuel 6.12-16; Acts 13.22)

True worship is much less like a funeral service and much more like a favorite sporting event in which our team wins!

When to Worship.

Acts 2.46

1 Chronicles 23.31

2 Chronicles 2.4

Isaiah 66.23

Leviticus 23

We are to worship on every day.

We are to worship on every sabbath, that is, on every seventh day.

We are to worship on every feast, that is, on the Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.

We are to worship on every new moon, that is, on the darkest night of the month, being without the light of the moon.

After the apostle Paul cast out a demon from a woman who was bringing in much money to her owners by her divinations, these owners dragged both Paul and Silas to court. And the highest judges had their clothes torn off them and ordered them to be beaten with rods and to be cast into prison, having ordered the jailor to guard them securely. So the jailor cast them into the hole, the innermost cell of the prison, fastening

their feet into stocks, an instrument of torture which forced their legs far apart causing excruciating pain. Badly bruised and bloodied from their severe beating, legs intolerably aching from the stocks, Paul and Silas suffered in darkness.

Yet despite the pain, despite the darkness, despite the defeat, the faith of Paul stirred within him. *“For I have been persuaded that not even death, and nor life, and nor angles, and nor first ones, and nor things which have set in, and nor things which are being about to be, and nor powers, and nor height, and nor depth, and nor any other creation will have power to separate us from the love of God in the Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . And of which gospel I myself was placed as a preacher and apostle and teacher, for this cause also these things I am suffering. But I am not having shame at it. For I perceive in whom I have had faith and have been persuaded that he is one having power to guard what I have entrusted to him unto that day. . . . In not even one thing will I be shamed, but in all full flowing as at all times also now the Christ will be made great in my body, if even through life or if through death. For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

About midnight Paul could contain his faith no longer. Throughout the dark, cool cells echoed a faint but firm voice floating up from the bowels of the prison, as Paul sang something like the hymn:

“O victory in Jesus,
my Savior, forever.
He sought me and bo’t me
with his redeeming blood.

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He loved me ere I knew him,
and all my love is due him.
He plunged me to victory,
beneath the cleansing flood.”

By the time he made it to the second song Silas had joined in.

“There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds like music in mine ear,
the sweetest name on earth.
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
because he first loved me.”

And all of a sudden the earth quaked so violently that the very foundation of the prison was shaken and all the doors were opened and all the chains loosed. And the jailor, supposing that all the prisoners had fled, drew his sword to be his own executioner, when Paul shouted, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” How the worship from the darkness had moved the other prisoners! Having asked for lights, the jailor burst in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas and asked, “Sirs, what must I do in order that I might be saved?” And he and all those in his house were saved and baptized that very night. (*Acts 16.16-34*)

VI. Witnessing

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judah and Samaria and until the last of the earth.”

—Acts 1.8

We are to be witnesses for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit in order to lead others through gate one of the Way.

The Spirit

We must flow with the Spirit in reliance upon Christ in order to witness. In the flesh, we speak when we should be silent and are silent when we should speak. In the old creation, we hamper the work of the Spirit. Instead, as new creations, we must cooperate with the Spirit in his work of bringing others to Christ, being sensitive to his every movement, letting him guide our every word and action.

The Spirit goes before us, preparing the heart of the other person. He convicts the person of sin and of being lost to God. He steers our sharing of gate one with the person. He then draws, wooing and winning, the person to accept with the heart the gift of salvation. Witnessing is the work of the Spirit and we must flow with him. And as we are depending upon Christ to be his witnesses, we are flooded with the sense of the Holy Spirit being ready and eager to empower us.

Having had a burden to tell others about Jesus, I could not work up enough courage. If someone would have put a pistol to my head and told me to tell someone about Jesus or else, I would have had to say, "Go ahead and pull the trigger."

Finally in college, I forced myself past my fears enough to go looking for someone with whom to share. Downtown I picked out a man who was dirty and looked intoxicated. I felt less fearful in approaching him. After all, if I messed up, he probably was too drunk to remember! I stumbled through some words about Jesus and rushed away, embarrassed and disappointed. My witness had been forced, unnatural, and ineffective.

Semesters later I had a different experience. As a member of the football team at a Christian college, I was required to go witnessing with the team on Saturdays. A few of us usually found some place to pass the time until we were to return to campus, but I became increasingly convicted about this.

On one Saturday we took a team bus to a nearby neighborhood. As I sat watching the other players file down the aisle to exit the bus, I told the Lord that I was incapable of approaching anyone for him. I reminded him of the incident with the man downtown as proof. But I told him that I would depend upon him and try, no matter what. But if it was going to happen, he would have to make it happen.

Not sure what to do I rose from the seat and started down the aisle. I slowly stepped down the few stairs of the bus. But as my foot touched the ground, peace and

confidence instantly filled me. I was quite aware that it was the Lord within me, giving me his courage and strength to use as mine own. There was no fear. No timidity. How amazed I was! How different this was!

I anxiously looked around for someone with whom I might talk. In a nearby vacant lot, I helped a boy fly his kite, but sensed no spiritual urging to share with him. Walking a few blocks away, I came upon several young men playing basketball on an outdoor court of a school. I saw several of my teammates watching along the side. As I walked to where they were playing, the ball rolled towards me. I picked it up and stepped into the midst of the players and asked if I might speak briefly to them. After they agreed, I told them about what Jesus had done for us all. It was easy, natural, and unforced. I thanked them for listening, tossed the ball back, and walked away, sensing more than seeing the astonishment of my teammates. I myself was astonished. The Lord had given me a foretaste of what life was like living in union with him as a new creation and being a witness for him.

Credible & Willing

Being a witness is double-sided:

- (a) we must be a credible witness; and
- (b) we must be willing to bear witness.

It is like a court of law. Once the credibility of a witness is established, then the witness is called upon to bear witness. How pointless it would be to have the

credibility of the witness established and then for that witness not to speak! To be a good witness for Christ, we need both to walk the Way in order to be credible and then to open our mouths in order to bear witness for him.

As a young man, there was an explosion and fire in my hometown. Just off the downtown square in an old two-story clothing store, different ones kept complaining of smelling gas fumes. The odor was traced to the basement. A man went to investigate, stopped at the bottom of the stairs, and flicked on the light switch. The building exploded, the sound echoing for miles.

Screams could be heard coming from people trapped inside the burning debris. The voice of one woman rose above the rest, as again and again she screamed, "Help me! Help me! Please God, somebody help me!" A handful of people, including a high school student who played basketball with my older brother, rushed into the inferno. A moment later there was another explosion and most of what was left of the inside of the building collapsed. There were no more screams, only the roar of the blaze and an occasional rumbling deep inside the ruins.

As I walked from my house up Main Street toward town, I thought how white and peaceful the snow looked falling through the night sky, illuminated by the street lights, and how it was in such stark contrast to the red hue and devastation that I could see in the distance.

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We need to be the handful who are willing to help rescue others from the eternal flames of separation from God.

Four Conditions.

Concerning witnessing, there are the four conditions of people and a fitting approach to each:

- | | |
|---|---|
| #1 - Unknowing &
Unwilling
(Law of 7 & 3) | #2 - Knowing &
Unwilling
(Love & pray) |
| #3 - Unknowing &
Willing
(Share gospel) | #4 - Knowing &
Willing
(Lead to Christ) |

The “Unknowing” person does not know that he or she is lost or what Jesus has done as Savior.

The “Knowing” person realizes that they are a sinner and that God’s Son died to save them.

The “Unwilling” person is choosing not to accept Jesus Christ.

The “Willing” person is ready to be saved.

The “Law of 7 & 3” indicates that as a rule in dealing with the unknowing and unwilling person it often takes an average of seven contacts of sharing the gospel in an indirect way (as through gospel music, a movie with a Christian theme, or special services or programs at church) and three direct accounts of the gospel before the person is moved from this condition.

“Lead to Christ” refers to leading the person in prayer as he or she accepts Christ as Savior.

Acronym

This acronym may direct a conversation to the gospel:

FORM—family - occupation - religion - message

Begin by talking about the family of the person. Then talk about his or her occupation or interests. Next, speak about that person's religious beliefs, such as, if he or she goes to church and where, or if the person did as a child, and so on. And then seek permission to share the message of gate one.

Diagnostic Questions

Two diagnostic questions help determine what a person is relying upon to be right with God and to go to heaven:

1. "If you were to die today and God should ask you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' what would you say?"
(The only correct answer is faith in Jesus Christ. If not given, ask to be allowed to share some wonderful news of what God says in the Bible about how we may go to heaven. The most common wrong answer is one's own good works.)
2. "Have you ever come to the point in your life when you entered into a relationship with God by accepting His Son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior and Lord?"
(If the answer is No, then ask for permission to share how that person may do so.)

Driving Forces

The gospel may be presented with an emphasis that most effectively reaches those who are being driven by different forces.

Those being driven by pain and the fear of potential pain may accept the gospel as the way to escape hell and the eternal punishment of being separated from God forever.

Those being driven by pleasure may believe the gospel as an expression of the love of God and the means to enter heaven and enjoy all the wonders of being with God eternally.

The Lord wants to lead all of us to be ones of principle, standing upon the gospel by faith in him and his Word, knowing that we are saved because God has told us that since we have faith in his Son, Jesus, then we have eternal life with him.

Basic Responses.

And having heard of a resurrection of the dead, indeed those ones were mocking. But other ones said, "We will hear you about this also again." In this way Paul came out from their midst. But certain men, having been glued to him, had faith.

—Acts 17.32-34

Basic responses to the gospel:

Mock. (v.32)

Put off. (v.32)

Believe. (v.34)

Imagine a filled passenger plane making an emergency landing in the middle of a vast desert. The majority of the survivors follow the reasonable advice of the pilot and stay near the plane, attempting to exist as best they can until hopefully rescuers come. These people die of thirst in the horrid desert.

But several others, having discovered an area map in the cockpit, locate an oasis within walking distance. This group sets out toward this fountain of hope despite the pilot's warning that the map was too old to be reliable and that only an expert could correctly read it. Some survivors do misread the map and go in the wrong direction and eventually collapse and die, having wandered in the ocean of sand.

The ones who correctly interpret the map come to a seemingly bottomless ravine. Fortunately, there is one narrow rope bridge spanning the great divide. There is no other means by which to cross. Most of the people in this group do not believe that the bridge will hold their weight, and besides, they do not really think there is an oasis on the other side. So they turn and go back to the fallen plane and die there.

Some at the bridge think that the bridge will probably support their weight—it looks strong enough—but for individual reasons they will not step out upon it. They perish there by the bridge. A few believe and trust enough in the bridge to put their whole weight upon it. They cross over the ravine to the other side. Even after seeing these ones cross over, the others still refuse.

Those who cross over discover a beautiful oasis that supplies all their needs. Most stay there and relish the

splendor of the garden, but a fraction go to tell the ones who are still perishing. Despite their greatest efforts, only a few other survivors will leave the plane and even fewer still cross over with them. Most chalk up their talk of paradise to sunstroke.

Handling Objections

Keep in mind that the goal is to witness for Christ and objections are obstacles that are to be dispatched as quickly as possible in order to carry out the goal.

Never argue. People are not won to Christ as a result of an argument. For even if an argument is won, the person is only pushed further away from Christ. It is not about proving the person wrong but about praying the person becomes willing to hear.

Determine whether the objection is a sincere hindrance to the gospel or an expression of unwillingness to turn from sin and self to God through faith in Christ.

If the objection is sincere, it may be addressed according to the guidelines in this section.

If the objection is insincere, let it go as it is not about an answer but an unwillingness towards the gospel.

Have a positive attitude, saying such as, “That’s a good question.” Or, “It is good that you have been thinking about such matters.” A person who raises a genuine objection with you considers you trustworthy enough to be vulnerable to you.

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Compliment, saying such as, “You are a thoughtful person.” Or, “You are obviously well read.” A sincere compliment often melts the ice of resistance or even hostility.

Postpone giving answers if not essential. Many objections fade away on the other side of gate one.

Answer briefly if essential.

If cannot answer, promise to research and to return with an answer but with the person’s permission precede to witness, saying such as, “That is a good question. Let me look into it and get back to you, but for now may I continue to tell you about how to have a relationship with God and to go to heaven?”

Common objections and some apologetic answers:

“What about the heathen?”

If a prospect becomes uncomfortable about talking about “the heathen” in the living room, that person may want to talk about the heathen in other parts of the world instead.

The heathen must be left in the hands of a loving, merciful, and just God who has revealed himself to all people through his creation (*Romans 1.19-20; Psalm 19.1-3*), through the conscience (*Romans 2.1-3; 15-16*), and through drawing the willing towards Jesus Christ.

“God is love and would not send anyone to hell.”

But God also is just, that is, he cannot let sin and wrongdoing go unpunished. Furthermore, in a real sense God does not send anyone to hell, but has

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always provided a way of salvation. If a person rejects salvation, then that person is choosing to go to hell. Like Satan, many people would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven.

“Jesus did not rise from the dead.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best established fact of all history.

Here is just some of the evidence:

- His body did not remain in the tomb.
- The soldiers would have prevented his disciples from taking his body.
- Even if they could have taken it, the disciples were hiding in fear.
- Hear the silence of the critics of that day, none of whom could refute the claim that Jesus rose from the dead at the time his disciples were making that assertion.
- Over 500 witnesses saw Jesus after his resurrection. (*1 Corinthians 15.3-8*)
- Having seen him resurrected, those who had once been huddled in fear suddenly spoke out boldly that he had been raised and were willing to die for their risen Savior.
- Millions today testify that they have become spiritually joined with the resurrected Christ and are living for him right now, singing, “I serve a risen Savior.”

“I don’t believe in God.”

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God nor his Word lend or lower themselves to having to be proved. There is no need to defend God. God can take care of himself. The person must want to be saved. If the person does not, even absolute proof will not matter. A person who does not believe in God does not want to believe. (*See Psalm 14.1*)

It is like trying to prove the sun is shining in the sky to someone who insists that it is not. After Jesus rose from the dead, he only appeared to those who had already believed in him because the ones who had been unwilling to believe in him before would not believe even if he stood before them resurrected.

“I don’t believe in the Bible.”

The obstacle may be sidestepped, saying something like, “Even if you don’t believe in the Bible, may I share with you what the most widely read book of human history says about how to have a relationship with God?”

If the person really needs some sort of evidence about the Bible before hearing the gospel, we may offer the following facts. As literature, the Bible is more reliable than any other book that we have. Moreover, within the pages of the Word of God there are over two thousand prophecies that have been fulfilled. Here are a few, as fulfilled by Jesus Christ:

- Preceded by a messenger.
(*Malachi 3.1* —> *Luke 1.17*)
- Ministry in Galilee.
(*Isaiah 9.1-2* —> *Matthew 4.12, 16, 23*)

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- Public entrance into Jerusalem.
(*Zechariah 9.9* —> *Matthew 21.5*)
- Working miracles.
(*Isaiah 35.5-6* —> *Matthew 11.4-6*)
- Rejected by his own people.
(*Psalms 69.8* —> *John 1.11*)
- Betrayed by a friend.
(*Psalms 41.9* —> *John 13.18-21*)
- Sold for thirty pieces of silver.
(*Zechariah 11.12* —> *Matthew 26.15*)
- This price given for the potter's field.
(*Zechariah 11.13* —> *Matthew 27.3,7*)
- Mocked.
(*Psalms 22.7-8* —> *Matthew 27.39-44*)
- Spit upon and scourged.
(*Isaiah 50.6* —> *Mark 14.65; John 19.1*)
- Nailed to the cross.
(*Psalms 22.16* —> *John 19.18*)
- Forsaken by God.
(*Psalms 22.1* —> *Matthew 27.46*)
- Patience and silence under suffering.
(*Isaiah 53.7* —> *Matthew 26.63; 27.12-14*)
- Garments parted and lots cast.
(*Psalms 22.18* —> *Matthew 27.35*)
- Numbered with transgressors.
(*Isaiah 53.12* —> *Mark 15.27-28*)
- No bones broken.
(*Exodus 12.46; Psalms 34.20* —> *John 19.33, 36*)
- Pierced.
(*Zechariah 12.10* —> *John 19.34, 37*)
- Buried with the rich.
(*Isaiah 53.9* —> *Matthew 27.57-60*)

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- Resurrected.
(*Psalm 16.10* —> *Luke 24.6,31, 34; Acts 1.1-3*)
- Ascended.
(*Psalm 68.18* —> *Luke 24.51*)
- Sitting at the right hand of God.
(*Psalm 110.1* —> *Hebrews 1.3*)

“There is no hell.” “There is no heaven.”

We may point the person to the Bible which declares there are both. (*Luke 12.5; 16.19-31; Revelation 20.13-14; Matthew 6.9; John 3.12-13; Revelation 4*)

We ask the person to ponder these possibilities:

- If there is a heaven and a hell and we do not believe in Jesus Christ, then we will spend eternity in hell.
- If there is a heaven and a hell and we believe in Jesus Christ, then we enjoy being united with him forever in heaven.
- If there is no heaven and no hell and we do not believe in Jesus Christ and do not live for him, then all of this life is meaningless.
- If there is no heaven and no hell and we believe in Jesus Christ and live for him, then we still enjoy the greatest fulfillment in this life.

“Hell is on earth.”

In a way this is true. Hell is separation from God and without faith in Jesus Christ a person is separated from God here and now as well as forever.

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“I believe that everyone will be saved, that is, I believe in universalism.”

See *Matthew 25.41, 46; Revelation 20.11-15.*

“I believe in reincarnation.”

See *Hebrews 9.27.*

Reincarnation teaches that people will become better and better as they are reincarnated over and over, but is there any evidence of this happening?

“I will put it off until another day.”

See *2 Corinthians 6.2; Hebrews 3.15.*

The Opportunity

As we walk the Way, the Spirit will present to us opportunities to bear witness for Christ. We need to be ready and willing to speak for our Savior and Lord so that we may lead others through gate one unto him.

The Plan

Acts 1.8 lays down the strategy for witnessing, given by the Lord himself.

We are to begin in our home area.

After that we are to keep moving out to the surrounding regions.

And ultimately we are to go to the ends of the earth, whether we go ourselves or send others in our place.

The Avenues

Here are avenues through which to lead people to Christ:

- Friendship/Relationship. (*John 1.40-45*)
This is making friends and building relationships in order to lead others to the greatest Friend of all. This is the most effective way, as one study showed that 87% of people said they were primarily led to the Lord by a family member or friend.
- Neighborhood. (*Acts 8.40*)
This is adopting a neighborhood as a mission field.
- Ministry. (*Matthew 10.1*)
This is establishing ministries that meet particular needs of people which then become the means of sharing the gospel.
- Marketplace. (*Acts 17.16-17*)
This is going to where the crowds of people are gathered for the purpose of telling of the gospel.
- Servant. (*John 13.12-15*)
This is serving others in practical ways in order to prepare the way for the gospel.

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- Street. (*Luke 14.23*)

This is taking the story of salvation to the street through preaching, door-to-door visitation, or special worship services.

- Seed. (*Luke 8.5-15*)

This is broadly scattering the gospel through such means as tracts, the internet, or the media.

Brother Worley was a snow-white haired man with a profile like an angry bald eagle with a hawk nose, a short and stocky build, and speech of broken English, reflecting distant foreign origins. There was little that commended him to be able to reach others for Christ. But as an elderly retired man, he decided that he would dedicate the rest of his life to telling people about his Savior and Lord. He would stop anyone anywhere and tell that person about Jesus. At the beginning of one year, his pastor kept track of the number of people that he led to Christ. In only a couple of months, he had reached over three hundred souls. Overall, he has led thousands to Christ in his twilight years, years that have become the most brilliant of his life. Brother Worley invalidates all our alibis for not leading others to Christ.

A story is told of a woman who criticized D.L. Moody for his method of winning people to the Lord. Moody replied, "I agree with you. I don't like it either. Tell me, how do you do it?" The woman said, "I don't do it." Moody responded, "Then I like my way of doing it better than your way of not doing it."

VII. Discipleship

And having come forward, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All authority was given to me in heaven and upon earth. Therefore, having gone, make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all as much as I commanded to you. And perceive! I myself am being with you all the days until the completing together of the age."

—Matthew 28.18-20.

And he is saying to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishermen of humans."

—Matthew 4.19

"The one who is remaining in me and I in him, this one is bringing much fruit, because without me you are not having power to do not even one thing."

—John 15.5

"Disciples Making Disciples"

To be a "disciple" is to be a "learning one." Discipleship is learning to follow the Way ourselves, and then teaching others to follow too.

Discipleship is disciples making disciples.

Discipleship is following and fishing.

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Discipleship is clinging to the Vine and bearing fruit.

The main focus of witnessing is gate one and helping others step through. The main focus of discipleship is gate two and guiding others from one side to the other.

When coming on duty in the military, one makes sure to know the standing orders, the last orders still in effect given by the commanding officer, and to carry out those orders. The standing orders of our Lord are for us to be his witnesses (*Acts 1.7-9*) and to make disciples (*Matthew 28.16-18*).

Discipleship from the beginning was intended to take place from person to person. This is how the Lord worked, discipling the twelve as they walked with him for three years. And the apostle Paul wrote his letters as reminders and highlights of the Way to those whom he had already disciplined in person.

The Lord disciplined me in the Way through the book, "The Spiritual Man," by Watchman Nee, which is an explanation of the divinely inspired writings of the apostle Paul. I locked myself in a vacant apartment for three days, pouring over the pages of "The Spiritual Man," during which time the Lord spoke distinctly within me, saying, "I wish there was someone that I could use to disciple you personally, but there is not. So I am going to use these writings of Watchman. But then I want you to be there, so that I may send others to you so that you may disciple them face to face." This is the call of God for us all.

This is like going through medical school. One needs to learn all that is taught, because one day a patient may

well be sitting in an examination room needing that knowledge to live. The better disciple that we are, the better makers of disciples we will be.

Like going through basic training prepares one for military service, our being disciplined is going through spiritual basic training after which we are to live out this training for the rest of our lives. And then we are to help others undergo this basic training too, as we disciple them.

Discipleship Groups

*And he (Jesus) is stepping up into the mountain.
And he is calling toward himself whom he willed.
And they came forth to him. And he made twelve
in order that they should be with him and in order
that he should order forth them to preach and to
have authority to cast out the demons.*

—Mark 3.13-15

*And every day in the temple and dwelling to
dwelling they were not stopping teaching and telling
the well message of Christ Jesus.*

—Acts 5.42

We do well to learn and to walk the Way as a committed member of a small group, which allows for intimate instruction, for loving edification, and for caring accountability.

Groups, like cells in the body, may then divide into new groups, each of which being devoted to being disciplined and then to discipling others. Groups may

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continue to grow and divide in this way until the world is disciplined with the Way.

Groups, like any relationship, go through these stages:

Honeymoon stage: seeing only the positive characteristics of one another, and being full of feelings of love and closeness.

Hard stage: becoming aware of the negative aspects of one another, as feelings of love fade, and having to build relationships according to scriptural principles.

Happy stage: walking the Way together, focusing on the good and letting go and praying for the weak areas, and choosing to love in action one another.

Believer Buddies

And he (Jesus) is calling forward the twelve. And he began to order them forth two by two.

—Mark 6.7

Each disciple may have a “believer buddy.” The two may learn and walk the Way together, pray and care for one another, and do all possible to help one another keep walking the Way.

Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

—1 Samuel 18.1

Growing up, I enjoyed a faithful friendship with my cousin Randy, separated by only three months, the

difference between our births, as our mothers were close sisters who lived in the same town. He still bears the scar of gashing open his forearm with a hatchet, as he was cutting firewood on our first overnight outing as kids alongside Montrose Lake, and bandaging it up for the night and then wearing long sleeved shirts so that his mother would not find out.

Many of our exploits centered on spelunking, in which we explored unknown and uncharted passageways, climbed underground waterfalls, stood on the shore of a mammoth underground lake, confronted thousands of bats sounding like speeding semi-trucks passing overhead on bridges, passed through tunnels of various colors, marveled at colossal stalactites and stalagmites, and sat in rooms of pure, glistening white crystal, sparkling in pools of clear water.

Whenever I was in danger, he was always there with an outstretched hand. Without doubt I knew that he would have laid down his life for me, and I would have done the same for him. We were not such friends in spite of these adventures together but because of them and what we proved to one another in them.

Each One Make One.

As the Lord gave the grace, the church would ensure growth in numbers of people and depth of spirituality, if each member would rely upon the Lord in order to disciple others one person at a time and then if each new person discipled would do the same. How the church would grow!



Gate Three



**The third gate is at the end of the Way.
It is the gate of Completed Faith.
It is the gate of “position and experience”.
It has been called glorification.**

*“I have fought the good fight.
I have completed the running course.
I have kept the faith.”
—2 Timothy 4.7*



Entrance



For now our salvation is nearer than when we had faith.

—Romans 13.11

JESUS WILL COME and take us through the third gate to be with him forever in heaven.

“Stop letting your heart be stirred up. You are having faith in God, have faith also in me. In the dwelling of my Father are being many abiding places. And if not, I would have said to you, because I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I should go and should prepare a place for you, again I am coming and will take you alongside to myself, that where I am being you also should be. And where I am going under way you perceive the way.”

—John 14.1-4

Once while in seminary, it became necessary for me to leave Jonathan and Matthew with a neighbor so that I might attend an afternoon class. I simply explained the situation to Jonathan. He went to play with the neighbor's children. But Matthew was not old enough to understand, and he had never been left with anyone except family before. He was too young to know that I would soon return. At least for me it was soon, but maybe according to his time it was much longer. He cried and cried. I wished I could have eased his fears by telling him I would soon come and get him. But in the end I just had to leave. When I did return, I learned that he had cried the whole time I was gone. And when he saw me again, he ran and threw his little arms around my neck and would not let go.

Frederick Buechner, a favorite author, writes of dying as though taking off from a crowded, frantic airport with icy runways. The engines shrill as the jet picks up speed. The wings can hardly be seen through the gray turbulence. The clouds begin to thin a little. And then suddenly, in a rush of light, you break out of the clouds into the bluest sky you have ever seen and the most dazzling sun.

May my final prayer echo that of Jean Valjean in the musical, "Les Miserables," lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer:

"God on high,
Hear my prayer.
Take me now
To thy care.

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Where You are
Let me be.
Take me now,
Take me there.
Bring me home,
Bring me home.”

*The one who is witnessing of these things is saying,
“Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord
Jesus.*

—*Revelation 22.20*



Judgment



THERE ARE TWO judgments. One for gate one. The other for gate two. God is the judge of the first. Christ is the judge of the second.

I. Judgment of God

And I perceived a great white throne and the one who is sitting down upon it, from whose face fled the earth and the heaven. And a place was not found for them. And I perceived the dead ones, the great ones and the small ones, who have stood in sight of the throne. And scrolls were opened up. And another scroll was opened up, which is being of life. And were judged the dead ones out of those things which have been written in the scrolls according to their works. And the sea gave the dead ones, those

ones in her. And death and hades gave the dead ones, those ones in them. And they were judged, each one according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of the fire. This one is being the death, the second one, the lake of the fire. And if someone was not found who has been written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

—Revelation 20.11-15

The judgment of God is the judgment of gate one. Everyone who has not entered through this gate through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, will be cast from his presence into the lake of fire to remain forever separated from him.

But we who have walked through gate one must be ready for judgment too.

II. Judgment of Christ

For it is binding for us all to be brought to light in front of the step of judging of the Christ, in order that each one should carry to himself for those things which he practiced through the body, if even a good thing or if a worthless thing.

—2 Corinthians 5.10

For another foundation not even one person is having power to put beside that one which is being laid, who is being Jesus Christ. And if anyone is building over upon the foundation gold, silver,

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valuable stones, woods, grass, straw, the work of each one will become a thing being brought to light. For the day will make it clear, because it will have the cover taken away from by fire. And the fire will approve by testing of what sort is being the work of each one. If the work of someone is remaining which he built upon, he will receive payment. If the work of someone will be burned down, he will suffer loss. But he himself will be saved, and in this way as through fire.

—1 Corinthians 3.11-15

The judgment of Christ is the judgment of gate two. We will give an account to Christ of how we lived after having stepped through gate one. We will answer to him whether or not we proceeded to gate two and passed through it, whether or not we experienced much of our position in him by living by faith. All that we have done that flows from living by faith will be of value to Christ and will remain. All else will be consumed as by fire. May we not stand before Christ empty-handed.

“His lord was saying to him, ‘Well, good and faithful servant! Over a few things you were being faithful. Over many things I will set you down. Come in into the joy of your lord.’”

—Matthew 25.21



Heaven



And I perceived a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth came away. And the sea is not being still. And I perceived the city, the new holy Jerusalem, stepping down out of the heaven from God, which has been prepared as a bride who has been put in order for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne, saying, "Perceive! The shelter of God is with humans. And he will dwell in a shelter with them. And they themselves will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will anoint out every tear out of their eyes. And death will not be still. And mourning and shouting and pain will not be still. The first things came away." And the one who is sitting down upon the throne said, "Perceive! I am making all things new."

—Revelation 21.1-5

HEAVEN IS PARADISE with God forever.

The third gate here is the first gate there.

I. Unimaginable

The hard-pressed path stretches out before us until straightaway on the other side of gate three it turns into streets of translucent gold. The old melts away, like stepping out of the wardrobe, and all becomes new and good. There is no more sin and selfishness. No more old creation! We brush away our last tear and toss aside our watches never to be needed again. We step out of our wheelchairs and cast aside our canes and darkness falls from our eyes as we blink at the brilliant light of his glory. For the first time, we feel not even the twinge of pain. No more aching arthritis, sore backs, or splitting headaches, no more excruciating cancer, heart attacks, or diseases, no more sorrow, loneliness, or depression. And death melts away like snow on a hot, sunny day, and with it all mourning and grief. His perfect peace fills and enfolds us forever.

And the Lord will pitch his tent with us in the Holy City of the heavenly Jerusalem, which will be far more beautiful than words are presently able to convey. It will be radiant as crystal-like jasper with jasper walls. It will have twelve foundations adorned with every jewel and twelve gates of pearl. It will be paved with streets of gold as pure and transparent as glass. There will be no need of the sun nor the moon to shine because the glory of God will be its light and the Lamb its lamp. It will shine with the radiance of a heavenly rainbow and the brilliance of diamonds.

But best of all, we will see Jesus, the one who died for us. Hard to conceive of the Lord living a few doors down!

When the children were small, they used to ask what heaven was like. I would tell them to think of the best things they could ever imagine and that heaven was a million times better than that. Heaven is like an eternal, perfectly conceived Christmas, where God himself is the one giving out the gifts.

To know what heaven is like, we must imagine the unimaginable.

For my wife and I, our place in heaven is a small cabin in the woods by a quiet lake. There is a front porch and large window from which we may watch the seasons pass by, the brilliant colors of fall, the snow of winter, the green of spring, and the sunshine of summer. There are wooden steps that lead to an upstairs bedroom with a window centered between the slopes of the roof. Come by and see us. We will leave the door open, a candle burning in the window, and a fire glowing in the fireplace.

Sarah May Hay, my grandmother, penned this poem:

“I stand with the aid of my staff
And watch the sheep slowly pass
 Into the fold to rest
For they’ve wandered far
 And are tired.
I know how they feel
 Because all my life

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I've wandered until at last
I'm at peace with the world
At my journey's end
And will soon go home to rest.
I know what it takes to make happiness
A low brown roofed cottage with chimney red
The smoke curling from its top.
Small flowering gardens
And winding walks that lead to the door at last.
And in this small cottage a partner true
Your companion, who has stood the test
And who, with you, will indeed rest
Above the sky's deep blue."

II. New

A New Body

*For our acting as citizen is existing in the heavens,
out of which also we are awaiting forth for a
Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change
aside the appearance of the body of our making
low unto a one having a form together with the
body of his glory according to the working that he is
having power even to put all things in order under
authority to himself.*

—*Philippians 3.20-21*

Heaven will be a new body.

Each gate of the Way requires death and resurrection.
As we finally journey through the third gate, we die

physically and are resurrected with a new body, a body in the likeness of the glorious body of Christ himself. Whereas our old fallen bodies were made to be ruled by our souls, our new bodies are fashioned for the rule of our spirits as the new creations we are. (*1 Corinthians 15.35-50*)

A New Address

John 14.1-4; Revelation 21.1-5.

Heaven will be a new residence.

All mail addressed to us will have the new city of Jerusalem on its label, the capital of the King. And we will dwell there with him for eternity.

Approaching the walls of Jerusalem for the first time, I had an overwhelming feeling that I was home, truly home. Later, I was taken below the present city and back in time two thousand years to the room where Roman soldiers once play the crucifixion game, following a diagram etched into one of the stone pillars. I then stepped onto a portion of the excavated street of slick, smooth stone, lined with groves to help keep horses from slipping, a street upon which my Lord carried his cross. I knelt down, feeling the hard stone on the palm of my hands, pressed the cheek of my face upon its cool surface, and worshiped him. But beyond the third gate, I will press my face to the street of Jerusalem once again, but this time in worship as my Lord passes by as the glorified King of kings and Lord of lords. And I will be home. Forever.

A New Time

But let not this one thing escape notice of you, beloved ones, that one day alongside to the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day... And grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and unto the day of the enduring age. (Amen).

—2 Peter 3.8,18

Heaven will be a new time.

Heaven is the eternal kingdom of God in which time will no longer exist as we know it. For God lives in a reality outside the limits of our present time. Heaven may not be an eternity of an endless amount of time, but it may be where time no longer exists at all.

Imagine a winding mountain road. One car is beginning up the road. Another car is near the top. Midways up the road there is a rock slide that has to be maneuvered around. You are in a helicopter above the mountain, looking down upon the scene. Now to the car at the bottom of the mountain, the rock slide is in the future. To the car at the top of the mountain, the slide is in the past. To you in the helicopter, both cars are in the present.

When we step through gate three, we may enter into the timelessness of eternity. No more rush or panic because there is not enough time. No longer anxiety that there is too much to do and too little time in which to do it. No more trepidation that time is running out.

No further fear that time will separate us from whom or what we love. Never again dreading to look into the mirror to see how much we have aged. No more time. All of time. Free of time. Unimaginable.

III. Stepping Over

One day as we are walking the Way, we will lift up our foot here on earth and will set it down in heaven.

A fellow student in seminary shared how he had decided the summer before to dress in old clothes and to stroll the streets of St. Louis to see how the outcasts were regarded. He was ignored, spit upon, and mistreated. He ended up in East St. Louis, across the Mississippi River on the Illinois side, which looks like a war zone with dilapidated buildings and houses either boarded up or garnished with iron bars on all the windows and doors, an area where even the police are not anxious to enter. There the student met Frank.

Frank was living in a home made from a hole in the ground and some cardboard boxes. But Frank befriended the student. He took him in and offered him a candy bar to eat. As they sat talking together, tears began running down Frank's dirty face, leaving tracks in the grim. He said, "Everyone is mean to me. Some have even shot at me trying to kill me just for the fun of it. But I want you to know something. Jesus loves me just like I am. He forgives me and accepts me without turning up his nose at what I have become.

He lives here in my heart. And one day I will live with him in his beautiful home. He loves you too. You can live there with me.” The student wept. He had come to try to help outcasts, but this outcast was helping him. He explained to Frank who he was and promised that he was going to return for him.

After some difficulty, the student made it back to his house, for no taxi would stop for him and the buses would not let him on. He got cleaned up and with some friends went back to find Frank. But when they got to the boxes, they were empty. Frank had died during the night. The one who loved him so much had come and taken him to live with him in his beautiful home.

Not long after my dad died, my usually composed mother called me, weeping uncontrollably. I asked her, “Mom, what’s wrong?” But all she could do was cry. “Mom, what is it?” I pleaded. Finally, she was able to whimper, “It’s Todd. Todd died last night.” Todd was the only child of my oldest brother, Dale, and his wife, Beth. Todd was eight weeks old. My mind flashed back to the last time I had held him, as he lay sleeping so sweetly upon my chest. Mom kept on asking, “How could God allow this to happen?” All I could do was listen. Before she hung up, she said she would drive up and we would go on up to Dale’s. I sat in shock, as I waited the few hours until she arrived. Another death. How? Why? First dad, and now little Todd.

My mother and I drove up to Nebraska, saying very little. We pulled in front of my brother’s house. Several cars were already there. We knocked on the front door

and went it. Dale and Beth embraced my mother, as my mother clung to them. They cried together. My brother sat mom down on the couch and it was he who consoled her. My dad had said of Dale that he had the gift of faith, and he confirmed it in that day. He told mom that he didn't have all the answers, but he said, "You know how dad loved children and how children loved him, but he never got the chance to spend time with his grandchildren. Maybe the Lord took Todd home so that dad would have a grandchild to spoil."

Early Graduates

And Enoch walked with God. And he was not, for God took him.

—Genesis 5.24

The untimely deaths of the most spiritual among us may haunt us. "Why?" we may ask, "Why are these ones sometimes ushered so quickly through gate three?" God's graduation may help us to understand.

Jonathan has recently earned his graduate degree from Auburn University, as a Fellow, and completed his CPA test. He now is launching out into a new phase of his life of work and career.

God also has a graduation. When we satisfy his requirements, we may graduate. His requirements are summed up in *Romans 8.29: Because whom he (God) knew before time, he also set a boundary before time to be ones having a form together of the image of his Son, for the purpose that he be the first-borne among many brothers.*

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God's requirement for his graduation is not primarily great deeds done in his name, but rather that we walk so closely with Christ that we are conformed to his image. This is God's graduation. And some graduate early.

Kingdom of God



But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be put to you.

—Matthew 6.33

THE KINGDOM OF God was foretold and foreshadowed from ancient days anticipating the coming Messiah, the coming King. The kingdom has come already in the hearts of those who have believed in King Jesus, and it will come fully at the return of the King, as he reclaims this world as its rightful ruler. We must be ready.

As we walk further down the path past gate two, the Spirit at some point begins to turn our hearts toward home, toward the kingdom of God, redirecting our attention from this world and its concerns contrary to Christ unto the kingdom where he is king.

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It is like a person who has lived her whole life away from her homeland and then is going to move back there. She reads about her native country, gathers information and pictures and books about it, and learns of its customs so that she may better fit in and get along when she arrives. She becomes increasingly less concerned about the country in which she is living now and progressively more interested in the country to which she is transferring her citizenship.

It is like Enoch who kept walking with God until they drew nearer to God's home than his own, so they just walked on there together. (*Genesis 5.24*)

I. Jesus Christ

The name "Jesus" means "Yahveh is salvation." The title "Christ" means "Anointed-one" which stands for the King. Jesus is the Savior and he is the King. He is the Lamb of God who came to save us and he is the Lion of Judah who is ruler over of all. He is the one of scarlet, the color of the Savior, and he is the one of purple, the color of the King.

On one hand, Jesus Christ is the King who came as the Savior, the Lion of Judah who came as the Lamb of God, the one of purple who came as the one of scarlet. Accepting the King as Savior ushers us through gate one and prepares us for gate two.

The Lord is our King. He will save us.

—*Isaiah 33.22*

When John the Baptist, who was chosen from before birth to be the forerunner and herald of the King, sees Jesus coming unto him, he says, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (*John 1.29*)

And the prophet Isaiah tells us that to save us he was so marred and disfigured that he no longer resembled a human being... he was despised and rejected... he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities... he was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth... and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.

—*Isaiah 52-53*

The apostle John, seeing this most dramatic scene being played out in heaven as God holds the scroll of salvation in his hand, writes: And I perceived upon the right hand of the one who is sitting down upon the throne a scroll, which has been written inside and from behind, which has been sealed throughout with seven seals. And I perceived a strong angel preaching in a great voice, “Who is a worthy one to open up the scroll and to loose its seals?” And not even one person was having the power in the heaven and nor upon the earth and nor down under the earth to open up the scroll and nor to see it. And I was weeping much, because not even one worthy one was found to open up the scroll and nor to see it. And one out of the elder ones is saying to me, “Stop weeping. Perceive! The Lion, that one out of the tribe

of Judah, the Root of David, won the victory to open up the scroll and its seven seals.” And I perceived in midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in midst of the elder ones a Lamb, which has stood, as one which has been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are being the Spirits of God, which have been ordered forth unto all the earth. And he came and has taken out of the right hand of the one who is sitting down upon the throne. And when he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty four elder ones fell in sight of the Lamb, having each one a harp and bowls of gold, which are being full of incenses, which are the prayers of the set apart unto God ones. And they are singing a new song, saying, “A worthy one you are being to take the scroll and to open up the seals of it, because you were slaughtered and redeemed for God with your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and made them for our God a kingdom and priests. And they will reign as kings upon the earth.”

—Revelation 5.1-10

On the other hand, Christ Jesus is the Savior who will come as the King, the Lamb of God who will come as the Lion of Judah, the one of scarlet who will come as the one of purple. Acknowledging the Savior as King guides us through gate two and grooms us for gate three.

At the end of this age, all the forces of the world which have rejected Christ Jesus will go up

against him. *These ones will wage war with the Lamb. And the Lamb will win the victory over them, because he is being Lord of lords and King of kings. And they who are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

—Revelation 17.14

“Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

—Isaiah 6.5

And John the apostle, in another vision, sees his precious Savior returning as King. The King is dressed *in a garment down to the foot and has fastened a belt of gold around himself to the breasts. His head and hairs are white as white wool, as snow. His eyes are as a flame of fire. His feet are like to copper like white frankincense, as that which has been on fire in a furnace. His voice is as a voice of many waters, a sharp, two-edged large sword going forth out of his mouth. His visible appearance is as the sun giving light in its power...* Upon his head are many thoroughly wound royal headdresses. He has cast around himself outer clothing which has been dipped in blood. And he is having upon his outer clothing a name which has been written, *“King of kings and Lord of lords.”*

—Revelation 1 & 19

And the prophet Isaiah promises us: *Your eyes will see the king in his beauty.*

—Isaiah 33.17

Jesus Christ is the King who came as the Savior, and he is the Savior who will come as the King.

II. Old & New

And the angel who talked with me came again. And he awakened me, as a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What are you seeing?" And I said, "I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps on it, and seven channels to the seven lamps, which are upon the top of it, and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side of it.

—Zechariah 4.1-3

The Lord is pouring out his Spirit making one people of the Jewish believers and of the Gentile believers, making one testament of the old and the new, in preparation for his coming kingdom.

Now there are those who hold to the foreshadowing of the Messiah of the Old Testament while denying that Jesus is the Christ of the New Testament. And there are those who hold to faith in Jesus as the Christ of the New Testament while ignoring the foreshadowing of the Messiah of the Old Testament. The Spirit in these times is working the two into one, as the newly found oldest symbol for Jesus, the Messiah of the Old Testament and

the Christ of the New Testament, depicts. The Spirit is calling the Jews who have the rich biblical tradition to righteousness based upon grace and faith in Jesus Christ so that they might be in the kingdom; and the Spirit is calling the Gentiles who believe in Jesus to the roots of their faith which all point to Christ and are expressions for their faith which will run throughout his kingdom.

III. Loving & Living Leviticus

Leviticus often may be identified as the only pristine pages of an otherwise well read Bible. But Leviticus provides the framework for much of the rest of scripture and for the life of Christ himself, containing all the major themes of the Bible, and thus conceivably should be the first book read rather than the last. Following the presence of the Lord filling the tabernacle at the end of Exodus, Leviticus is God's guidebook of how his people are to worship him and to live holy lives in light of his presence being in their midst. Leviticus is the citizenship manual for the kingdom of God.

The U.S. Constitution is not riveting reading, but it is the fundamental document of our country. So too is Leviticus a basic book for the kingdom of Christ.

Leviticus may be summarized in the following five sections.

Chapters 1-7: Five Offerings.

Olah, or Burnt Offering (*1.1-17; 6.8-13*) is...

- Eminent, being first, as Christ is the only way to God and is to be first in our lives.

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- Expiation, being the satisfaction for our sin, and entirety, being offered up wholly for the whole condition of sin, as Jesus gave his all to be the satisfaction for our entire state of sin and as we should offer him our all in response.
- Experience, by the laying on of hands, as we are to experience Christ for ourselves.
- Envelopment, being offered daily, morning and evening, and on the sabbath and other feasts, and with other offerings and occasions, as Christ is to saturate our whole lives.
- Equity, being given according to each person's means, as we are to lift up to Christ ourselves whether we have been graced with much or little to give unto him.

Minchah, or Grain Offering (*2.1-16; 6.14-23; 7.9-10*)

is...

- Stuff of life, as Christ is life and gave his life for us so that he may be our life and so that we may live by faith in him.
- Closely connected with burnt offering, being given together, as once we have been saved by Christ then we are to live for him.
- Remembrance portion, as we should remember the Lord and as we need him to remember us.
- By fire like the burnt offering, producing a pleasing aroma to God, as Christ passed through the fire of judgment for us and was pleasing to God the Father and so are we in him.

- Provision for the priests, as the means to tend to the things of God full time.
- Choice, fine flour fit for a king, being ground repeatedly until pulverized into powder, as Jesus was finely crushed for us and as we should allow ourselves to be finely broken as an old creation and ground for him.
- Oil, as we are to rely upon the Lord to pour out his Spirit upon us.
- Frankincense, producing a sweet smelling fragrance when heated, as will our lives as we sacrifice for the Lord.
- No leaven, as sin is to be removed from us.
- No honey, being sweet until breaking down when heated, as we must not be sweet only when there is no sacrifice.
- Salt, preserving and purifying and adding taste, as living as new creations we are enduring and tasteful to the Lord.

Shelamim, or Peace Offering (*3.1-17; 7.11-34*) is...

- “Peace,” as we have a peace beyond all understanding in Christ.
- “Wholeness,” “happiness,” and “health,” as we have all these in Christ.
- “Compensation,” as Christ will repay us for whatever suffering or sacrifice we endure for him.
- Thanksgiving, being well soaked with oil with leavened bread and eaten on the day it was

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offered, as we are well soaked in the Spirit to give thanks joyfully to the Lord without delay.

- Freewill, as we are to give of ourselves to Jesus freely out of love and grace.
- Completion of vow, eating the leftovers the next day, as we should take care about making a vow to the Lord but then should celebrate in keeping it.
- For clean ones, as we experience peace with God only through faith and living by faith in Christ.
- Participated in by many, as we are to rely upon the Lord to share his peace with others.

Chatat, or Sin Offering (*4.1-5.13, 6.24-30*) is...

- For sin of “wandering away,” as Jesus paid for all our sins, past, present, and future, and as we are to repent and confess our sin to him, ask his forgiveness, and then rely upon him not to do it again.
- Costly and bloody, as sin is enormously costly and had to be paid for by the precious blood of Christ, a cost we should never take lightly.
- Fat, being turned into smoke for a pleasing aroma, as our confession and asking for forgiveness of our sins through Christ is pleasing to God.

Aham, or Guilt Offering (*5.14 – 6.7; 7.1-10*) is...

- Closely connected with sin offering, as Christ not only died to take away our sins but also to remove our guilt and feelings of guilt.

- Guilt and feelings of guilt, as we are to experience the removal of both in Christ.
- Restitution, whenever possible and without causing further hurt to others.

Chapters 8-10: Priesthood.

Like Aaron who had failed the Lord in so many ways, we all are to be priests to the Lord by his grace. (8.1-5)

Sacrifices are to be offered for the priests themselves and then for others, as we are to experience the reality of the sacrifices in Christ and then minister them to others so that they may experience them too. (8.6-9.24)

Priests must not function on their own terms, as we are to serve the Lord in accordance to his will and not our own. (10.1-3)

My dad worked with power lines through which flowed vast amounts of electricity. He told me that he always had to be mindful to take the right precautions and the proper steps in handling those power lines because one mistake meant instant death. He said that every year some linemen were killed by coming into contact with that electricity. He explained that most of the time it was not the new linemen that were killed, but those who had been working around the lines a long time and just forgot or got careless for a moment and that was all it took to take their lives. We must take seriously living in the presence and power of the Lord. We must come to him on his terms and only with what we have drawn from him by faith.

If a wire is disconnected from electricity, we don't have to be careful in handling it. It is only when the

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wire is connected to a large voltage of electricity that we had best take care.

There must be no addiction, as we are to be controlled solely by Christ and the filling of his Spirit. (10.8-11)

Like Aaron, priests may grow into the position, as we grow in the experience of our position in Christ and into our role as priests for him. (10.19-20)

Chapters 11-15: Clean & Unclean

The priority is to be clean. The purpose for being clean is to be able to worship the Lord. (15.31) The sole provision for becoming clean is not given, for the only cure is Christ Jesus. (Mark 1.40-44; Psalm 51.1-13)

When visiting a small town in Russia, we observed the custom of removing one's shoes before entering a home. One was expected to have bathed before coming to visit, but still the shoes were removed in light of the dust or dirt accumulated along the way and out of respect for that home. In order to come to God's house to worship him, we are expected to have bathed ourselves in Christ, letting him cleanse us from the state and position of sin and the old creation. And then when we come to worship him, we are to let him cleanse us from any experience of sin or the old creation gathered along the Way. We must not track dirt into his house. (John 13.4-10)

Chapter 16: Day of Atonement.

Day of life or death before God, a day of blessing or cursing, of reward or punishment, as we must be

prepared for this day by being repentant and reliant upon Christ, living a life of self-denial and utter dependence upon him.

Chapters 17-27: Holiness Code.

Honor the blood, as we are to honor the blood of Christ.
(Chapter 17)

It was told of a young man, who was visiting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in our nation's capital with a group of fellow teenagers, and who thought it would be funny to crawl toward the Tomb with a can of spray paint. The soldier of the Army's Old Guard on duty commanded, "Halt." The youth paused, looked back at his friends, laughed, and continued crawling. Again the guard sternly warned, "Halt." The young man again glanced back at his friends, snickered, and kept crawling. Then a distinct click echoed off the white marble, as a round entered the chamber of the guard's rifle. The young man looked up into the end of the barrel, and the guard warned, "Halt or I will shoot." For the guard was not going to let anyone dishonor the blood of so many fellow soldiers who had died so that we all might be free. The smile vanished from the teenager's face as he quickly retreated. We should no less honor the blood of Christ.

Have safe sex, as a matter of life or death. *(Chapters 18 & 20)*

Hold to being holy, being set apart unto God, and to loving others as one's self. *(Chapter 19)*

From this core we should revere our parents and keep the sabbaths, not turn to idols, provide for the poor, not steal or lie or swear falsely by God's name, not oppress

others or mock the handicapped, not show favoritism or slander, not hate but love others as self, keep holy and unmixed with the unholy, no divination or marring the body, keep children from playing the harlot with the idols of this world, respect elders, be kind to strangers, and have integrity in business.

Holy commands for Lord's priests. (*Chapters 21-22*)

We are not to be defiled with the dead but are to focus upon the living and the life in Christ, to be careful whom we marry, to be flawless and clean in Christ, and to offer flawless sacrifices to Christ through our walk of faith with him.

Holy commands for the people of the Lord. (*Chapters 23-27*)

We are to proclaim the sacred calendar (see next section), have the olive oil of the Spirit for the twelve loaves that are his church, protect the name of the Lord, uphold justice, keep the sabbatical year of no greed and of having faith that the Lord will provide, keep the year of release as a fresh start, obey the Lord and be blessed, or disobey and be punished, and give vows and tithes.

IV. Sacred Calendar

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and you will flow out to them, 'These are my feasts (fixed times), the feasts of the Lord, which you will call them as sacred convocations.'"

—*Leviticus 23.1-2*

When you look at a calendar for the year, which dates do you mark as being most important to you so as not to miss them? Birthdays? Anniversaries? Holidays? Most likely they are dates that involve ones whom you love.

God also has a calendar, as summarized in *Leviticus 23*, with fixed times that he has marked as being most important to him because they are all about his Son.

The pagan world has done a much better job promoting the fixed times of Satan's idolatrous calendar, than the people of God have done upholding the fixed times of God's sacred calendar. Here are only a few examples:

- (a) The sabbath, or the Lord's Day, has come to be called Sunday after the idol worship of the sun (as each other day of the week has been named after idolatrous worship).
- (b) The Passover has been virtually forgotten by Christians altogether, not to mention the other feasts, most of which cannot even be named.
- (c) And Firstfruits, such a dear day to God, is called Easter after the Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, who was the pagan goddess of fertility; and its objects of fertility, the rabbit and the egg, are emphasized, and its custom of wearing new clothing on the day dedicated to its worship has been adopted.

God's sacred calendar is comprised of the sabbath and seven feasts.

Sabbath

“Six days you will do work. But the seventh day is a sabbath of rest, a holy convocation to the Lord. Any work you will not do. It will be a sabbath of the Lord throughout your dwellings.”

—*Leviticus 23.3*

In the Old Testament, the sabbath was observed beginning at sunset on Friday and lasted until sunset on Saturday (for a biblical day is measured from sundown to sundown rather than from sunrise to sunrise). In the New Testament, however, the observance of the sabbath shifted to Sunday, called “the Lord’s Day”, in celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The sabbath is set apart by God for us to:

- Recognize the sovereignty of God, as even the seven-day week is observed solely because God set it up that way. (*Exodus 20.8-11; Nehemiah 13.15*)
- Rest, refreshing ourselves from our weekly labors and remembering to cease from our self efforts to be right with God and to rest in Christ and what he has done for us instead, making sure that we are living by faith. (*Genesis 2.2-3; Deuteronomy 5.12-14; Matthew 11.28; Hebrews 4.9-10*)
- Worship. (*Numbers 28.9-10; Mark 6.2*)
- Be with family.

- Be a sign. (*Exodus 31.12-15*)

The Holy City, Jerusalem, is an extremely busy place full of bustling people, some scurrying about their daily lives, others bartering for merchandise, some armed with weapons watching for trouble, and others observing the holy sites and basking in the city's supreme spiritual significance. And yet on the sabbath the great city suddenly becomes absolutely and hauntingly still. One is struck with this sign of reverence for God. How do we keep the sabbath in comparison? Are we pointing people to God or rather to the restaurants and shopping centers?

- Be a blessing, as the more we guard the sabbath, the more the sabbath guards us. (*Isaiah 58.13-14; Exodus 31.14*)
- Be forever. (*Exodus 31.16-17*)

Let us now turn to the seven feasts. Christ Jesus has carried out the first three, he is carrying out the fourth, and he will carry out the last three. The first three feasts are fulfilled in gate one of the Way. The middle feast is fulfilled in gate two. And the final three feasts are fulfilled in gate three.

“These are the fixed times to the Lord, holy occasions, which you will call them in their right times.”

—*Leviticus 23.4*

Passover

“In the first month on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight (evening) is the Passover of the Lord.”

—*Leviticus 23.5*

The Passover is celebrated on the first full moon of spring. At the first, it facilitated the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt as the Lord smote with death the firstborn of every home but passed over all who had applied the blood of the sacrificial lamb upon the lintel and the doorposts.

The Lord fulfilled this feast by sacrificing his life as the true sacrificial Lamb of God to save us all from our enslavement to sin and self. (*John 1.29*)

For us, we must apply the blood of the Lamb to our hearts by faith so that we might be saved from sin and the old creation and have God’s judgment of death, separation from him, pass over us.

Drawing from the Spirit, the scripture, the tradition of those who first received and practiced the feast, and the teaching of Zola Levitt, we will look at the following features of the Passover (as in the same manner we will see the phases of biblical marriage in the succeeding section).

- Purging of Leaven. (*Exodus 12.18a; 2 Kings 23; Acts 3.19; 1 Corinthians 5.7-8*)

All leaven, a biblical symbol of sin, must be removed, as we must repent of our sin in order to be ready to partake

of the Passover, and then continue to purge sin and the old creation from our experience.

In Jewish custom, the father hides pieces of leavened bread throughout the house, and the children race through and find the forbidden bread in order to take it to the father to be burned.

- White Linen & Robe. (*Isaiah 61.10; Revelation 19.7-8*)

Special white linen is used and a pure white robe is worn by the father, as we need to adorn ourselves with the white linen of a right relationship with God and doing right, which is only possible through Christ.

- Candles. (*Isaiah 9.2; John 1.1-5*)

Candles are lit by the women, as the Passover brought the light of liberty to those who had lived so many years in the darkness of cruel slavery. And so, when the embodiment of the Passover came to bring his light to us who have suffered long in the darkness of our slavery to sin and self, he was brought forth of a woman, the virgin named Mary.

- Hidden Broken Bread. (*2 Corinthians 5.21; Isaiah 53.5; Psalm 22.16; John 19.34; John 19.18; Matthew 27.59-60*)

The father takes three pieces of unleavened bread and places them into three compartments of a white linen holder.

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This unleavened bread is flat, marked with stripes from the grill, and pierced with holes. Then the father removes the middle piece of unleavened bread, breaks it, wraps it up in a separate piece of white linen, and hides it away.

Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, is the One between God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He was scourged and by his stripes we are healed. His body was broken and he was nailed to a cross, the middle cross, and in death he was pierced with the spear of the soldier. Finally, his body was wrapped in white linen and hidden away in a tomb.

- Four Questions.

“Why is this night distinguished from all other nights? On this night we eat only unleavened bread.”

This night was special because the Lord would deliver Israel. And the night Jesus Christ was taken to be crucified on the Passover for our salvation is distinguishable from all other nights, as the moment we repent of our sin and place our faith in him to save us is distinct from all others of our lives.

“On all other nights we eat any kind of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs. Why?”

The bitter herbs reminded Israel of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt, as we should never forget the bitterness of our own enslavement to sin and self.”

“On all other nights we do not dip, but tonight we dip twice. Why?”

This dipping of parsley into salt water may have at least two meanings. One is the passing of Israel through

the Red Sea unharmed and then the Egyptian army being drowned, and so the parsley is immediately eaten after the second dip. Those of us who trust in the Lord Jesus cross over from slavery to sin unto life with God forever in heaven, but those who try to cross over without faith in the Lord perish. The other is, as the Israelites passed through the Red Sea to freedom from slavery and later through the Jordan River to experience the land promised to them by God, we pass through the first gate to our position in Christ and later through the second gate to our experience of that position.

“On this night we all recline at the table. Why?”

Having been delivered from slavery by resting in God, the Israelites now could rest in him as ones free to serve him fully. Having been delivered from the slavery of sin and self by resting in Christ Jesus, we may now rest in Christ as those free to wholly serve him.

- Passover Story. (*Exodus 12*)

The Passover story is told which so clearly depicts Christ and the salvation he provides. The lamb chosen for the Passover was set apart four days before the feast so that it might be examined carefully to be sure it was without blemish, as Jesus presented himself for examination as the Lamb of God those few days before the Passover and presents himself to us today as well. Then the lamb was slaughtered and its blood put on the lintel and doorposts in order for the Israelites to be delivered, as Jesus was crucified on the cross and his blood is to be applied to our hearts by faith so that we

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might be saved. When the angel of the Lord saw the blood he passed over that dwelling, as God passes over us, sparing us from death, when he sees the blood of the Lamb applied to our hearts.

- Passover Meal. (*John 13.2,4*)

The Passover supper is a festive meal, as our salvation truly brings us peace and joy and wondrous fellowship with God. And when we partake of this Passover supper with our Lord Jesus Christ himself, what a wonderful occasion that will be!

- Bread & Cup. (*Matthew 26.26-28*)

The Israelite father now brings forth that middle loaf of unleavened bread which had been broken and hidden away. He blesses the bread, breaks it into pieces, and offers a piece to each one at the table.

Jesus, the “Bread of Life,” was broken in his body for us and offers himself to each one of us so that we might be saved.

Then Jesus offers the cup, the cup of redemption, as his blood of the new covenant, the new testament, so that we may partake of it through faith in him. The cup mingles in meaning with the cup of biblical marriage.

- Elijah’s Cup. (*Malachi 4.5*)

Elijah’s cup is poured in anticipation of him coming and announcing the arrival of the Messiah. If he does

not come, the father hopefully says, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Elijah in the person of John the Baptist did come and announce the arrival of the Messiah, the Christ, who came as our Savior. And yet today we are anxiously awaiting his coming again, the coming of the Savior as our King. And if he delays, we should pray, “Next year in Jerusalem.”

- Joyous Singing. (*Matthew 26.30*)

Joyous singing of victory and freedom concludes the Passover, as we should sing such songs unto our Lord, our Redeemer and King.

Unleavened Bread

“And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord. Seven days you will eat unleavened bread. And the first day will be a holy convocation to you. Any occupational work you will not do. And you will bring forward an offering made by fire to the Lord seven days. And the seventh day will be a holy convocation. Any occupational work you will not do.”

—*Leviticus 23.6-8*

Unleavened Bread is commemorated the week following Passover. From the first, this feast was eaten over a period of seven days and represented a holy walk without sin and the old creation. The Israelites were delivered by God from slavery to the Egyptians so that they would freely choose to live for him.

The Lord himself fulfilled this feast by coming as a human into our world and always living without sin and never once acting as an old creation. (*Hebrews 4.14-15*)

For us, as a sinful and selfish old creation that does not walk in holiness, we have been crucified and buried with Christ in the Passover. Now we are free to live like him and for him in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (*Matthew 16.24*)

Over the centuries the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread became blended into one Feast in the minds of the people of God, sometimes being referred to by a single name of one or the other. And in fact, the salvation of Passover and the righteous living of Unleavened Bread are inseparably linked. If we are truly saved, we will want to live for Christ. And if we want to live for Christ, we must be saved. If we have little concern about living for Christ, then we may well never have been saved at all.

In order to live a holy life there is the second part of our position in Christ that is fulfilled in the next feast.

Firstfruits

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and you will flow out to them, 'When you should come in into the land which I am giving to you and should harvest its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf, the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. And he will bring up the sheaf before the Lord, for you to be accepted. On the day after the sabbath the priest shall bring up it.'"

—*Leviticus 23.9-11*

Firstfruits is observed on the Sunday during the week of Unleavened Bread. At first, it marked the early crops of the spring planting in the promised land that were brought to the Lord.

The Lord fulfilled this feast by his resurrection, as the firstfruits of all who believe in him. (*Luke 24.1-9*)

For us, we have been raised with him as new creations so that we may have the means through our spiritual union with him to live the holy life of Unleavened Bread. And the Lord also is the firstfruits of us all who will be resurrected unto God on the other side of gate three. (*Romans 6.3-4; 1 Corinthians 15.20-23*)

Weeks (Pentecost)

“And you will count to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day that you should bring forward the sheaf of the increase offering, seven whole periods of seven. Until the next day of the last period of seven you will count fifty days, and you will bring forward a new sacrifice (grain offering) to the Lord.”

—*Leviticus 23.15-16*

Pentecost (Weeks) is kept on the Sunday fifty days after Firstfruits. At first, it signified the summer harvest that was the second and greater harvest of the year.

Jesus is fulfilling this feast by sending the Holy Spirit to fill those who are trusting in him so that we might reach others so that they might be part of his people, the church, too. (*Acts 2*)

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For us, we are to live by faith (Unleavened Bread) in our position in Christ (Passover & Firstfruits) and then look to the Holy Spirit to fill us (Pentecost), and in doing so, to bring us the experience of our position in Christ in order that we may be empowered to live for him and to lead others to the Way as well.

“From your dwellings you will bring forward breads as an increase offering. They will be two breads out of two tenths of fine flour. They will be baked as ones being caused to rise with leaven of the first produce to the Lord.”

—Leviticus 23.17

There are two equal portions of this harvest, as both the Jews and the Gentiles who have trusted in Jesus as their Messiah and Redeemer comprise the church.

“And you will bring forward with the breads seven unblemished lambs, ones a year old, and one calf out of the herd, and two unblemished rams. And they will be a whole burnt offering to the Lord, and their sacrifices (grain offerings) and their libations, a sacrifice, a smell of a well aroma to the Lord. And they will bring forward a young he-goat out of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs, ones a year old, for a sacrifice of salvation (peace offering) with the breads of the first produce. And the priest will place them upon with the breads of the first produce as an increase offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They will be holy to the

*Lord. To the priest who is bringing them forward
it will be to him.”*

—*Leviticus 23.18-20*

Sacrifices and offerings were essential for the harvest of Pentecost, as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who fulfills all the sacrifices and offerings, was mandatory for the harvest of the church, and as we who are his priests are to live out the meaning of those sacrifices as fulfilled by him and administer their meaning to others, all through the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

*“And you will call an occasion this day. It will be
holy to you. Any occupational work you will not
do on it. It is an eternal law unto your generations
in every dwelling of yours.”*

—*Leviticus 23.21*

In his fixed times and feasts, God emphasizes over and over that work is strictly forbidden. This is because we can never ever work our way unto righteousness nor ever live righteously by our own efforts but must rest instead in the Lord Jesus Christ and the empowering of his Spirit.

*“When you should harvest the harvest of your
land, you will not complete together the remainder
(edges) of the harvest of your field as you harvest.
The portions which are falling away of your harvest
you will not collect together. You will leave them*

throughout for the poor and the foreigner. I am being the Lord your God.”

—*Leviticus 23.22*

We who are already part of the harvest of the church must be mindful of those who are still spiritually poor and be sure to make the Way available to them as well.

Trumpets

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘Of the seventh month, day one of the month will be to you a rest, a memorial of trumpets, a holy convocation. Any occupational work you will not do, and you will bring forward an offering made by fire to the Lord.’”

—*Leviticus 23.23-25*

Trumpets is set apart on the first day of the seventh sacred month, signifying completeness. From the first, this feast featured how trumpets have been significant to God from the sparing of Isaac by virtue of the ram being caught in the thicket by its horn (*Genesis 22*) to the blowing of trumpets in the felling of the wall of Jericho (*Joshua 6*), from the sounding of the trumpet in the Year of Jubilee (*Leviticus 25.8-10*) to the blowing of the trumpet as the signal for his people to come to the temple for worship, leaving all others behind.

The Lord will fulfill this feast by returning to gather his people unto himself. (*1 Thessalonians 4.16-17*)

For us, we are to be ready for his coming by being found walking the Way when he comes. (*1 Corinthians 15.51-52*)

My mother used to dream of being left when the Lord came. She would awaken terrified. But if we trust in the Lord to save us, we will not be left behind. And if we are trusting in him to live saved, we will be prepared for his coming.

Day of Atonement

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Also on the tenth day of this seventh month is a day of atonement. It will be a holy convocation to you. And you shall make low your souls, and will bring forward an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Any work you will not do in it, in this day. For this is being to you a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. Every soul who will not be made low in it, in this day, will be cut off out of his people. And any soul who will do work in it, in this day, that soul will be destroyed out of his people. Any work you will not do. It is an eternal law unto your generations in all your dwellings. It will be to you a Sabbath of Sabbaths (rest). And you will make low your souls from the ninth of the month. From evening until evening you will celebrated the Sabbath of your Sabbaths (rest)."

—*Leviticus 23.26-32*

The Day of Atonement, also called Yom Kippur, is observed on the tenth day of the seventh sacred month. From the first, this climatic feast underscored the urgency to be ready for the great and terrible Day of the Lord, when he rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. On this fearsome day, one either lives or dies, either enjoys salvation and eternal reward or suffers destruction and eternal punishment.

The Lord will fulfill this feast because in him we have already been made righteous before God. The word “atonement” is rich in significance. Its root meaning is “to cover up” or “to cancel out,” but it also means “to make at one with.” Thus the Day of Atonement will celebrate the fact that God through his Son has covered up and canceled out our sin so that we may be made at one with him.

For us, we must have our sins removed and be at one with God through faith in Jesus Christ and then live by faith in him so that he may reward us for the sacrifice of our lives for him.

Leviticus 16 details further significance of this feast:

- We are reminded that as sinners we cannot come into the presence of the Lord and live. (*vv. 1-2*)
- The two goats, a sin offering and a scapegoat, represent how the Savior was sacrificed for our sins and bore those sins away so as never to be accessible again. (*vv. 5-10, 21-22*)
- This most sacred day of atonement is soaked in blood, as our salvation was bathed in the blood of Christ. (*vv. 11-19*)
- The feast calls for our self-denial. (*vv. 29-31*)

Tabernacles

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. And the first day will be a holy convocation to you. Any occupational work you will not do. Seven days you will bring forward an offering made by fire to the Lord. And the eighth day will be a holy convocation to you. And you will bring forward an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is being a sacred occasion. Any occupational work you will not do. . . . And on the fifteenth day of this seventh month, when you should complete together the produce of the land, you will make a feast to the Lord for seven days, on the first day a rest, and on the eighth day a rest. And you will take to yourselves on the first day foliage of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, and tender branches of leafy trees, and willows of the brook. And you will rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And you will make it a feast to the Lord seven days of the year, an eternal law unto your generations. In the seventh month you will make it a feast. In tabernacles you will dwell seven days. All the native born in Israel will dwell in tabernacles, so that your generations should perceive that in tabernacles I made the children of Israel to dwell when I led them out from the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'" And Moses told to the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.

—Leviticus 23.33-44

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Tabernacles is celebrated the week beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh sacred month. From the first, this feast reminded Israel that the Lord made them dwell in shelters when he led them from Egypt to the promised land and anticipated the Lord pitching his tent with his people again one day.

The Lord will fulfill this feast by taking us to live with him in the place he has prepared just for us.

For us, we may cling to this hope of being with the Lord and our loved ones in him forever.

V. Sacred Marriage

“Opposite of this a man will leave throughout the father and the mother and will be glued to his wife, and the two will be unto one flesh.” This mystery is being a great one. And I myself am saying concerning Christ and the church.

—Ephesians 5.31-32

Another shadow of the Way is the biblical act of marriage with its seven phases. The first three phases center around gate one. The fourth phase focuses upon gate two. And the final three phases point to gate three.

The Covenant.

The bridegroom approached his chosen bride with a marriage covenant or contract, which spelled out the terms by which he was proposing marriage, as the Lord Jesus, the Beloved Bridegroom, approaches us with his covenant of marriage, which includes the forgiveness of

our sins, his purpose and power for living, and a home with him forever in heaven.

But now he has happened to obtain a more thoroughly differing ministry, in as much as also he is being a mediator of a better covenant, which has had the law placed upon better promises. For if that first one was being without fault, a place would not be sought for a second one. For finding fault with them, he is saying, "Perceive! Days are coming," is saying the Lord, 'and I will complete together upon the dwelling of Israel and upon the dwelling of Judah a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took hold upon them of the hand to lead out them from the land of Egypt, because they themselves remained not in my covenant and I myself cared not for them,' is saying the Lord. 'Because this is the covenant which I will thoroughly set with the dwelling of Israel after those days,' is saying the Lord, 'giving my laws into their thorough thinking, I also will write them upon their hearts. And I will be to them for God, and they themselves will be to me for a people. And they should never ever teach, each one his citizen and each one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because all ones will perceive me from the little one until the great one of them, because I will be favorable (merciful) to their injustices and I should never ever remember their wrongdoings any longer.'"

—Jeremiah 31.31-34 (Hebrews 8.6-12)

The Cup

The bridegroom, as a symbol of his willingness to carry out the covenant, offered a cup of wine to his chosen bride, who was free to reach out and receive the cup and thus to accept the marriage proposal and seal the covenant or to reject it, as the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, extends the cup of the covenant of salvation to us, who are free to accept it with our heart by faith and seal the covenant or to reject it.

And while they are eating, Jesus, having taken bread and having spoken well of it, broke it, and, having given to the learning ones, said, "Take. Eat. This is my body." And having taken a cup and having spoken well of it, he gave to them, saying, "Drink out of it, all you. For this is my blood of the covenant which is being poured out for many unto the letting go of wrongdoings."

—Matthew 26.26-28

The Price

Next the bridegroom paid the required price for his bride, which attested that he was in earnest and valued the bride, as Jesus Christ paid the price of his shed blood for us as our Bridegroom, which proves how much he loves and values us.

Because you perceive that not with decaying things, silver or gold, you were loosed by the paying of a ransom out of your futile conduct from your father,

but with valuable blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, that is of the Christ.

—1 Peter 1.18-19

The Departure

The bridegroom departed to his father's house in order to prepare a bridal chamber for his bride, who was to wait faithfully for him to return, as our Bridegroom, Jesus, has departed to his Father's house in order to prepare a place for us, who are to wait loyally for him to come again. (*Matthew 24.36; 25.1-13; Revelation 22.17*)

“Stop letting your heart be stirred up. Have faith in God. Have faith also in me. In the dwelling of my Father are being many abiding places. And if not, would I have said to you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I should go and should prepare a place for you, again I am coming and will take you alongside to myself, in order that where I myself am being you yourselves also should be.”

—John 14.1-3

The Return

Finally, when the chamber was ready, the anxious bridegroom assembled his groomsmen and went swiftly to claim his bride who showed her love and devotion for him by being ready when the shout is heard that her bridegroom is coming, as when our place in heaven is ready, our Bridegroom will come for us who will demonstrate our

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love and faithfulness for him by being prepared when the cry is heard, “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming!”

For the Lord himself with a command, with a voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God, will step down from heaven, and the dead in Christ themselves will stand up (again) first. Then after we ourselves who are living, who are being left around, at the same time with them will be taken by force in clouds unto a meeting of the Lord into the air. And in this way we will be at all times with the Lord.

—1 Thessalonians 4.16-17

“Now at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold the bridegroom!’”

—Matthew 25.6

The Chamber

The bridegroom and the bride entered the bridal chamber and the bride’s veils were removed, exposing all her secrets and whether or not she had been faithful to him, as once Christ comes for us, we will stand before him and all will be revealed of how we have lived in his absence and whether or not we have been faithful to him.

For it is binding for us all to be brought to light in front of the step of judging of the Christ, in order that each one should carry to himself for those things

which he practiced through the body, if even a good thing or if a worthless thing.

—2 Corinthians 5.10

The Supper

At the end of the week, the bridegroom and the bride emerged to enjoy a most joyful supper that was given in their honor, following which they set out to live their lives together, as with Christ we will partake of the much anticipated marriage supper of the Lamb, and then go out to live with him forever.

And a voice came out from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants (and) the ones who are fearing him, the small ones and the great ones." And I heard as a voice of a large crowd and as a voice of many waters and as a voice of strong thunders, saying, "Hallelujah, because reigned as king the Lord the God the All-mighty. We should rejoice and should leap much and should give the glory to him, because came the marriage feast of the Lamb and his wife prepared herself and it was given to her in order that she might cast around herself clean, shining linen." For that linen is being the righteous acts of the ones set apart unto God. And he is saying to me, "Write, 'Fortunate are those who have been called unto the main meal of the marriage feast of the Lamb.'"

—Revelation 19.5-9

*The one who is witnessing of these things is saying,
“Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord
Jesus.*

—Revelation 22.20

Let us live by faith until he comes.

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

—Robert Frost

Let us walk the Way together.

* * * * *

A two-part review concludes this discipleship of the Way. Part one stresses the fundamental truths of the first and second gates, the heart of the Way for this life. And then part two highlights basic truths for walking on the other side of gate two and for being prepared for gate three.

Review



Review: Part One

1. What is the summary commitment of walking the Way together given at the beginning?
2. What is the name of gate one and its summary verse?
3. What are the three key words of the gospel of gate one, and what are the key verses and illustrations for each?
4. What is the name of gate two and its summary verse?
5. What are the two great distinctions that help unlock the second gate?
6. How did God create our spirit, soul, and body to function?

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7. What are the three main functions of our soul?
8. Draw the diagram of how God created us to be, spirit, soul, and body, in relationship to God.
9. How did we inherit the fallen condition from Adam?
10. How do our spirit, soul, and body function as an old creation?
11. Draw the diagram of the old creation, spirit, soul, and body in relationship to God.
12. How did Jesus pay the penalty for us in his body, soul, and spirit?
13. What are the two fundamental facts of being “in Christ”?
14. How do our spirit, soul, and body function as a new creation?
15. Draw the diagram of the new creation, spirit, soul, and body in relationship to God.
16. How do we experience our position in Christ, and what is an illustration of this?
17. If we are living by faith, what two things will we do at all times?
18. What is “The Question”?
19. Why does experience follow faith?
20. What is the good side of the bad self?
21. How is grace opposite of law in being righteous?
22. What are the reasons to live by faith?
23. What are the three overall conditions of people?

Review: Part Two

1. How does the Holy Spirit make it possible for us to pass through each of the three gates?
2. How are we to be filled with the Spirit?
3. How are we to flow in the Spirit?
4. Why does the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts, and what are some examples of those gifts?
5. What are the four kinds of love in the New Testament?
6. What are the ABC's of love?
7. What does it mean to renew our thinking?
8. What five deceptions are we to avoid?
9. How do we not give in to temptation?
10. How do we gain victory over individual sin?
11. What are the four states of our conscience in regards to guilt and feelings of guilt?
12. What are the three driving forces?
13. What is the cost of the Way?
14. What are some characteristics of Satan and his forces?
15. What is the spiritual war?
16. What does it mean to suffer for Christ?
17. What is the focus of the experience of our position of healing in Christ in each of the three gates?
18. What are the seasons of emotional healing?
19. Describe the three types of dreams.
20. What does the "talis" symbolize?
21. Describe the seven basic steps along the Way.

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22. In witnessing, what are the four conditions of people and a fitting approach to each?
23. In witnessing, what are FORM and the two diagnostic questions?
24. What are the plan and the avenues for witnessing?
25. What does it mean to be a disciple making disciples?
26. What is the name of gate three and its summary verse?
27. Describe the two judgments.
28. What will heaven and the kingdom of God be like?
29. Describe the fixed times of God's sacred calendar.
30. Describe the seven phases of the sacred marriage.



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