

Life in the Son

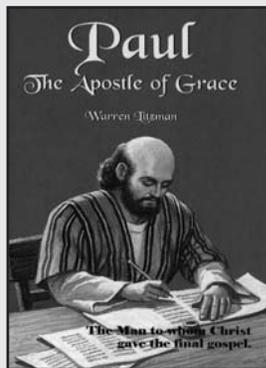
A Journal of Grace and the In-Christ Message

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EDITORIAL

So, You Hate Christmas?

I really love Christmas! I am a strange one among many of my friends. Many people really hate Christmas. They have as many reasons for hating it as others have for liking it. I talked to an elderly lady who hated Christmas because it came at the wrong time of the year. She lived up north where the weather is usually bad at Christmas time. I told her if she wanted good weather at Christmas, she should move to South Africa where it is summertime in December. She laughed and said she would bear the bad weather rather than move.

I talked to a minister who did not like Christmas because it had become too commercialized. I told him it was his choice as to how much money he spent. Our conversation ended with him still complaining about the money.

Then, I talked to a college student who complained that the real purpose in celebrating Christmas had long ago ceased and had been forgotten by most people. I told him he alone should determine what Christmas should be in his heart. I talked to several others about Christmas, and very

few realized that Christmas, or any other day of celebration, was determined by they, themselves, and how they handled it in their minds. Christmas has changed in today's world. It is not the same as it was fifty years ago. It is overly commercialized, too expensive and gaudy. It is almost non-Christian, trying to please the whole secular world. It is unscriptural in many regards, and, as a result, has lost all spiritual purpose and meaning. However, with these and any other complaint anyone might have, it is still a celebration of Christ's birthday and the entrance of Christ, our Savior, into this sinful world.

There was a time when almost all the things that are a part of the celebration of Christmas pointed to some part of the gospel of Christ's birth. The giving of gifts pointed to God's greatest gift of Christ to be the life of every human who accepted Him as their Savior. The evergreen Christmas tree pointed to the fact that every believer would have everlasting life through the babe in Bethlehem. The star on top of the tree pointed toward Heaven and the Father who

is in charge of it all. The bright lights pointed to the stars and the heavenly host that gathered above the manger. The angels provided the thrill of it all with their declaration of His arrival.

These are just a few of the things I see that constitute a Christian Christmas. I won't let some foreign, un-scriptural, manmade religion take away any part of my celebration. Governments are already telling people around the world to stop worshiping and honoring Christ as Christians. This will probably continue, but what they cannot take away is what the Scriptures say about the birth of Christ. These ideas are fixed in my heart, and I will celebrate them accordingly. Daily, I have to see through the filth, shame and ungodliness on television, in books and newspapers and almost in everything else mankind has to do with. Yet, I see through it all because I am a "see-through-er." I try to see through everything to Jesus. He is my life, and I won't be denied Christ in any way, shape or form. Have a wonderful Christmas! † (WL)

WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN AM I STRONG

DEFINING THE CARNAL MAN

By Mike Scott

The Apostle Paul stated at the end of 2 Corinthians 12:10, “*For when I am weak, then am I strong.*” The Lord addressed him in the previous verse saying, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” What was the weakness and the strength that Paul had found through his experience in Christ, and how would this be manifested?

To answer this question we must first understand what is the cause and the source of our weakness. We can explain the cause of our weakness by attributing it to the inequality between our strength (the flesh) and our desires (the mind). This is to say that we become weak when we wish for something and are unable to obtain it by our own strength. As a result of these limitations found in the flesh, our weakness brings us to act or behave in a certain way because there is a goal or a desire sought after which is not being met by our present situation. The desire to overcome this weakness is what will dictate our actions. What are the goals or desires that would bring us to want to act in a certain

way? The answer would depend on the source of our desires and the perception or the reality created by these desires.

Desires are the wishes brought forth in our minds. For the human experience and the carnal man, they are created through soulish events such as physical, emotional, financial or aesthetical dealings. These desires may also be found in the search for knowledge. The carnal man experiences these desires through the reality created by his flesh, a reality that is interpreted through the five senses. In order to fulfill or realize these desires, the carnal man is driven by his own self-effort. Unfortunately, even with as much effort as the carnal man puts forth in his quest to achieve his needs, his desires are never completely satisfied. The carnal man in his pursuit for happiness will always seem to find a better way once he obtains what he once desired. Today, we live as kings compared to people who lived a thousand years ago, yet we continue to strive to improve and achieve a better lifestyle. Everything is always met

with the need for more. So, what is it that creates this problem of never becoming content?

The answer lies in the adamic consciousness. In God’s plan, the carnal man was made incomplete and will never be satisfied by his own self-efforts. By examining human behavior, we can see that today’s society is on an ongoing quest to improve itself. This pursuit is demonstrated by the evidence of a world of ever-increasing sales of physical fitness equipment, self-help books, cosmetic surgeries, endless diet plans, get rich strategies, and so on. Do we now live in a society of weak and inadequate beings who continuously require the need for self-improvement? Or, do we live in a world of distorted perceptions where people believe they need self-improvement and, therefore, these perceptions create the desires that motivate us to improve ourselves? The carnal man, with his adamic consciousness, resides in a world of darkness, which is corrupt and incomplete. It is this endless loop of darkness and corruption, found in the adamic consciousness, that produces our weakness.

However, that's okay. It's the Father's plan. It was created to bring us to Christ.

The Apostle Paul shared in his letter to the Philippians how he had discovered the way to be content in all situations (Phil. 4:11-13). He had come to discover the reality of the spiritual man: the Christ-consciousness. This mindset came from a man who had encountered innumerable hardships and difficult conditions (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Even after his endless encounters with tribulations, he would declare himself content in all his situations. So, what brought the apostle to discover the ability to be content? Paul's quest to know Christ had brought him to denounce all things that he once thought brought him value. By terms of human experiences, prior to his revelation of Jesus Christ, he would have considered himself a great achiever (as a carnal man). However, in his letter to the Philippians, he declares all of his accomplishments but dung in order to come to a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:4-10). Did the denying of Paul's past experiences bring him to a point where he did not possess any perceptions or desires? Of course not. His journey brought him to a point where he would draw his desires from another source. Jesus Christ stated that he himself could do nothing except what the Father showed him (John 5:19, 30). As Christ drew His

source and strength from His Father, the Apostle Paul came to draw his strength from the life of Christ. Being content would not be found in Paul's carnal mind and self-effort. His strength would be found through Christ. Paul would declare, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The problem in the adamic consciousness is that it takes its desires from another father. The father of the adamic man is the father of lies. Jesus says in John 8:44:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

This consciousness of lies and deceptions was brought forth at the Garden of Eden during the fall of man. It would be a consciousness that would base its reality on the knowledge of good and evil. Incomplete in its creation, it would drive the individual in a world of darkness and death.

So, what is the solution to ridding our minds from this knowledge of good and evil and finding contentment in our desires? Unfortunately, we cannot rid ourselves from this knowledge of good and evil through our own self-effort. The renewing of the mind can only be transformed by

the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 16:13:

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come."

It is only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we can come to the reality and the knowledge of the living Christ. When we are not content, it is because we are not seeing Christ in our situation. The key to contentment does not depend on our situation; it depends on the source of our desires and from where we draw life. As we draw our life from Christ, His desires will become our desires. Through His will we can do all things.

So, how do we know if our desires are from our heavenly Father? We know that our desires are drawn from our heavenly Father as we abide in Christ and come to the reality that there is no life outside of Christ. It is only by the Father and through the Holy Spirit that we can be lead into His will and to the life of His Son. It is said in Galatians 2:20 that we no longer live, but Christ lives in us. Only through this life in Christ do we obtain contentment in our desires. The Word of God declares that our needs (our desires) are met as we draw our life from Christ. Jesus said in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall

(WEAK CONTINUED ON P. 28)

WHEN WE ARE NOT CONTENT, IT IS BECAUSE WE ARE NOT SEEING CHRIST IN OUR SITUATION. THE KEY TO CONTENTMENT DOES NOT DEPEND ON OUR SITUATION; IT DEPENDS ON THE SOURCE OF OUR DESIRES AND FROM WHERE WE DRAW LIFE.

FREE TO LIVE

By Dexter Byrd

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2).

The hardest adjustment any believer will ever have is to accept the finished work God has done in Christ. Living a life of grace and faith isn't easy, especially when we were all programmed wrong. But God has provided a means whereby we can come to understand His finished work. He controls all knowledge and understanding, and the means He uses to enable us to see our freedom comes by the revelation of the life He birthed in us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

The Revelation of Jesus

The revelation of Jesus Christ is powerful and will reveal what God has finished and given to every believer in Christ. I think, aside from the life God placed in us, the revelation of this new life is the most powerful force in the universe. We need to know of this life, and that is what revelation does. The revela-

tion is not the life; it doesn't tell you how to live His life, and God is not putting more of His life in us. He is revealing what is already there.

What we see through revelation doesn't change our life, but it results in a big change in our lives as it declares our freedom from a dead life and allows us to take our liberty to be who we are as the birthed sons of God. We are free to live a peaceful life without religious displays of the flesh. I run into believers who are not aware of this. As a matter of fact, I became really aware of it after twenty years in this message.

Mistaken Identity

Many believers live like this. They have a tremendous head knowledge of the Christ-life and live as though this message is a jigsaw puzzle that they are trying to put together. They have mistaken their true identity to be what they know. We are who we are and possess every quality and virtue of God by our birth through Christ. What's wrong with living that way? If God were to cut off all revelation right now from the Holy Spirit, it wouldn't change who we are or the quality of our birthing.

The Birthing

Years ago, I was talking to my son about the birthing. I could tell that he was confused in certain areas, so I put it on another order. I ask him, “What did you do to become my son.” His answer was that he had done nothing. I told him that this was right because he didn't have any say so in the matter. Then looking at him and seeing certain traits of myself in him, I asked, “Do you believe that you are my son?” His answer was a quick “Yes.” I asked, “What can you do to remain being my son?” His answer was “nothing.” I asked, “Why not?” His reply was, “Because I was born that way.” I could see the changed expression on his face as the truth of the birthing set in. I explained that this was exactly what God did. He is our Father by birth, and we had nothing to do with it except to believe (Acts 16:31).

The revelation of Christ tells you the truth of who you are by birth. You are a child of the Father, and nothing you'll ever do can change your true identity. If you want to join a denominational church, go ahead; but it won't change who you are. The problem is that you won't learn who you are by

denominationalism. The truth comes by revelation from the Holy Spirit and His message that Christ lives in you as your life. We are all learning who we are from day to day. Sometimes I forget who I am; I believe this is because of the teaching I receive in childhood. Being raised in a holiness church, we all had in our mind-set doctrines and programs, codes of conduct and morals of life that we were to live by. All of these were good. (Rom. 7:12) But none of these could ever lead us into the freedom of being who we really are in Christ, even if we were able to keep them. Our filthy rags of righteousness couldn't take away the condemnation of the law in our mind. Of course, we kept it hid from the brothers and sisters, but it was there.

Flowing with the Wind

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Freedom is not earned by what we do. The life we now live is a life of grace. Jesus made it plain that there is no certain way we learn to go or do in this verse. The wind can't be seen, only the effects of it in the trees and other natural things. But the subject here is not the wind. It is, *“every one that is born of the Spirit.”* The believer is the subject, and the freedom of his life by birth is seen to be like the wind.

The Law of the Spirit

The wind is one thing men can't control. They may tell us when hurricanes and storms will come, but they can't control them and send them another way. There are no restrictions or limitations in the Christ-life. God is the only one who has set the boundaries of the natural wind on Earth. It is controlled by ordinances (God's laws, Rom. 13). Storms are going to come and go according to the ordinances set by God. Our salvation is complete because we are in Christ. There are no ordinances or guidelines of a life of freedom.

In past wars, America fought for our freedom. Thousands of lives were lost. We are now free because America defeated every threat to our freedom. Our freedom is based on the actions of someone else who fought and died in those wars. In Christ, our freedom to live is based on His actions and not our own. We wouldn't think of going back to Japan and dropping another bomb on it. Just as we accept the fact that World War II is over, so do we accept God's finished work, and we live by the grace of that finished work in Christ.

Death

There is one law that every born-again Christian should know, and it is found in Romans 8:2 and John 12:24. It is the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. This law says that wherever He lives, the fruit of His life

will come forth. When He died on the cross, death could not hold Him. John 12:24 teaches that when Jesus died He came out of the body that was prepared for Him (Heb. 10:5). His life is birthed in all who believe on His name. Out of His death comes His life; and from His life, fruit is produced through the believer (John 15:4-5, 8, 16). The beauty of the work of the Cross is that we don't have to die. We were in Him when He died. According to God's plan, we are already dead in Christ and now are free to live by Him. Paul says we are saved by His life (Rom. 5:10). We're set free from death and from the pressure of religious obligation through what God has done in Christ. What a joy!

The Fruit of His Life

The child of the Father can't produce fruit. No father in his right mind would put this heavy load on his child. Every father knows what he wants his child to be like when they are infants growing up, and he pushes the child in this direction. But his wisdom tells him that the child will live according to his character from the birthing. He has birthed in him the character of the father. Of course, in the natural birthing, this truth has been abused because of materialism. Now, most parents push their children beyond who they are by birth. Sometimes mental problems arise from this

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST TELLS YOU THE TRUTH OF WHO YOU ARE BY BIRTH. YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE FATHER, AND NOTHING YOU'LL EVER DO CAN CHANGE YOUR TRUE IDENTITY.

(FREE CONTINUED ON P. 27)

*We are only here by the grace of God
and your faithful support. Thank you for being
an intricate part of this ministry. We wish you
a beautiful, Christ-centered Christmas!
Love, Warren and Robbie*



PEACE ON EARTH

By Gregg Bing

During the Christmas holidays, we often hear the expressions “peace on Earth” and “good will toward men.” Many think of this holiday season as a time of peace, but there is very little peace on Earth. Politically, we see nations, races, even religions at war with one another. Economically, we see turmoil and uncertainty day after day. Even in our personal lives, many have such hectic schedules that peace and rest is only a dream. This is especially true during the holidays with family gatherings, school and office parties, and the madness of Christmas shopping at the malls.

When the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, some 2,009 years ago, the angels announced His birth to the shepherds. A multitude of the heavenly host praised God saying, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*” (Luke 2:14).

Jesus’ birth was the coming of Israel’s long awaited Messiah; the one whom God anointed to be Israel’s King; the one whom Isaiah called the “*Prince of peace*” (Isa. 9:6); the one whose government and peace would be unending (Isa. 9:7).

Peace on earth was certainly what God’s chosen

people, Israel, longed for. At the time of Jesus’ birth, they had been under Gentile dominion for over 600 years, beginning with the Babylonians, who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and their temple, and continuing to the day of Christ’s birth with the cruel Romans (Luke 2:1). Israel longed to be free from Roman taxes, Roman governors, Roman soldiers and Roman laws; they longed for peace.

When the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Israel’s Savior and deliverer, it must have seemed that peace was about to be a reality in their lives. But the birth of Jesus did not bring peace on Earth. We read in John 1:11 that, “*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*” How could this have happened? The many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah’s coming were all fulfilled in the Lord Jesus (Micah 5:2; Isa. 7:14; etc.), and the proofs of His identity and His authority as their King were clearly demonstrated through His teaching (Matt. 5–7) and His miracles (Matt. 8–9), yet the Jewish leaders plotted against Him, “*how they might destroy Him*” (Matt. 12:14).

Israel’s own expecta-



tions had blinded their minds to what God’s Word taught concerning the Messiah (Christ). The problem began with Israel’s leaders. They had corrupted God’s Word by their traditions and interpretations of the law (Matt. 15), and when God spoke to them “*by His Son*” (Heb. 1:1–2), they did not hear Him (John 8:47). These men honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him (Matt. 15:8). They were “*blind leaders of the blind*” (Matt. 15:14), and so Israel rejected the one who was their peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, He said of them:

“*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy*

JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS SATISFIED GOD'S HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENT. THIS ONE, WHO KNEW NO SIN, BECAME "SIN FOR US, ... THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM" (2 COR. 5:21).

day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:42).

The prophet Isaiah said of Israel, "*The way of peace they know not*" (Isa. 59:8).

Jesus' coming into this world did not result in peace, but in division (Luke 12:51-53). The people were divided over Him and who He was. A small remnant, including the apostles, believed He was "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matt. 16:16), but the majority of Israel saw Him only as a teacher or prophet. To those who believed, He was precious, but to the rest, the Lord Jesus was "*a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient*" (1 Peter 2:7-8). They rejected the "*Prince of peace,*" declaring, "*We will not have this man to reign over us*" (Luke 19:14), and they delivered Him to the Romans to be crucified.

While those who put Jesus to death certainly had no idea what they were doing, we read in Acts 2:23 that all this was according to God's determined purpose. This was exactly why the Son of God came into this world, to give His life on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world (1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

Isaiah prophesied of the great sacrifice that He would make for us:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

Through His death, Jesus brought peace. Romans 3:23 tells us, "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" Our sin separates us from God, for He is holy, and we were under the penalty of death (Rom. 6:23). But even in this terrible condition, God loved us so much that He was willing to send His only begotten Son into the world to become the propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:24-26; 1 John 2:2). Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's holy and righteous requirement. This one, who knew no sin, became "*sin for us, ... that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*" (2 Cor. 5:21). When we simply believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, God justifies us; He declares us to be righteous in His sight. The result of being justified is described in Romans 5:1:

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We, who once were enemies of God, are reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10).

Many today are longing for peace on Earth between men and nations, but, sadly,

there is no peace. Wars and threats of wars continue with no peace in sight. The Scriptures teach that there will be peace on Earth one day, but only when the Lord Jesus Christ, our risen and ascended Savior, returns to Earth to fulfill the promises made to the nation of Israel. The Prince of Peace will establish His kingdom on Earth and His people, Israel, will rule and reign with Him. This is a peace man can never hope to achieve through his own efforts.

Others are longing for peace in their own hearts and lives. This peace is possible, but, once again, not by our own efforts. This peace only comes when we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. When we trust in Christ as our Savior, not only do we have peace with God, we are also filled with "*joy and peace in believing*" "*through the power of the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 15:13; Gal. 5:22). This wonderful peace of God, which is beyond our understanding, then keeps or guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7).

If you are longing for true peace in your own heart and life, you can have it this very day, even this very moment, by simply believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross of Calvary, that He died for your sins and rose again the third day (Acts 16:31; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). It's not by any

(PEACE CONTINUED ON P. 29)

ROMANS 7

By Don Byrd

3 Prominent Characters Of Romans 7

1. Woman (soul/mind)
2. First Husband (old nature/spirit)
3. Another Man (new Son nature)

Romans 7 is an explanation of Romans 5 and 6.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” (Rom. 7:1).

It becomes immediately apparent that Paul is writing to born-again believers who have no understanding of the grace that is theirs in Christ. These believers only knew the law with all its commands, statutes and precepts. Attempting to live a Christian life on Earth with no understanding of grace is one of the most difficult things a born-again believer could possibly attempt. Being removed from under the law and being placed under grace without any knowledge of grace is what Romans 7 is about. Paul is writing to those who have been joined to the law to the point that they were in unison with the law. One of the key words in this verse is the

word *dominion*, which indicates bondage. Romans 5 and 6 tell us the facts, and then Romans 7 tells us why believers need to be under grace. One of the prime points of Romans 7 deals with the old nature and how that nature was dealt with in Romans 5 and 6.

Bound by the Law

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband” (Rom. 7:2).

This verse brings out the fact that a marriage (union) exists. It is also obvious that the union between this woman and man is held together by dominion of the law under which they both live. The married woman does not die, but her first husband does, which frees her from the law that bound her to her first husband. She then marries another man. Verse 4 likens this to believers being married to Christ, *“who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”* Raised from the dead has to do with the body because neither soul or spirit is

raised from the dead. This means the woman’s new union is to someone who has undergone death and is now resurrected. At this point the woman is joined to someone who has died and is now alive again through resurrection. The old body now has a new life source. The new source of life to the body is a quickening spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord!

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom. 8:10). The Spirit of Christ is now life to the body. Resurrection deals with a dead body coming back to life by rejoining the body with spirit. *“...the body without the spirit is dead...”* (James 2:26). This is a spiritual principle known as resurrection.

Important Points

- The law of union is fulfilled through death of the old nature.
- The first union is also called the body of sin of Romans 6:6.
- The body of sin also contained what is called the old man:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with

THE JEWS HAD TO LIVE BY THE LAW, BUT JESUS DID NOT LIVE BY THE LAW. HE LIVED BY HIS NATURE, WHICH WAS IN TOTAL HARMONY WITH THE LAW AND ALL ITS STATUTES.

him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

• *“Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36).*

The woman represents one of two things. Either she is soul/mind or spirit. She does not represent the body because she does not die, and she is not spirit because it is the spirit that is rejoined to the body to resurrect it from the dead. Being raised from the dead constitutes a body that has undergone death and has been given new life by a spirit rejoining the body. So she must represent the soul/mind.

The first marriage represents the soul/mind (wife) and an old nature/spirit (first husband) sharing the same body. The body is the only thing they had in common, but it was the law that held them together through marriage. The soul/mind (wife) is in bondage because the old nature/spirit (first husband) has control of her through the body they share. He manipulates the body they both need and share.

The body was the only thing crucified with Christ. The soul/mind was not crucified, and the spirit was not crucified, leaving only the body. When the body was crucified, the spirit left the body and the body became dead (inoperative).

Romans chapter 7 deals with the old nature. Look at these verses, and it should be obvious that this is what

is being dealt with. Paul is writing to the born-again believer, but he is not describing the new creation; he is describing the old creation so that he can explain what happened in Romans chapters 5 and 6.

Old Nature

First, Paul uses the principle of law showing that only death can legally dissolve a marriage. We have in this scenario a woman who is held in bondage (the law) to her first husband because of the legality of the law. If she loved her first husband, the word *bound* would not have been used. Standing in contrast to this is, *“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17).* Notice that this verse does not use the word *bound* but uses the word *joined* which indicates love rather than law. If she loved her first husband, the fact that the law would not allow them to be separate individuals would never be a source of bondage. As long as they love each other, the legality of the law was not a problem. But in this scenario, we have a woman who is legally bound to her first husband. In other words, it is the law holding their marriage together, even though they are incompatible.

Jesus was under the law, but He was never in bondage! Everyone else was in bondage, so why wasn't Jesus in bondage while under the law?

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God

sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4–5).

Jesus was under the law just as was every other Jew. They had no choice in the matter; they were born under the law. They had to live by the law, but Jesus did not live by the law. He lived by His nature, which was in total harmony with the law and all its statutes.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21).

In essence, this declares that those under the law needed a new life (nature). At this point, we must define righteousness. Most born-again believers think doing things right is righteousness. Doing things right is not righteousness by any stretch of the imagination. Righteousness is simply possessing the right life, Christ!

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

When the born-again believer possesses the right life, then and only then can our Father see him as righteous. Jesus did, by His nature, what everyone else under the law had to do by willpower or by using the mind to resist his/her nature. I use the term

willpower because of the pronouns *I, me, my,* and *myself* in Romans 7. The pronouns are indicative of the individual in the first person. In Romans 7, the pronoun *I* is used 30 times, *me* is used 5 times, *my* is used 5 times and *myself* is found 1 time for a total of 41 times. *God, Christ* or a similar reference is found 9 times. Weight of Scripture tells us the predominant character of Romans 7 is *I*. The *I* of Romans 7 is totally dependent on the will (soul/mind) to comply with the law.

Legal Freedom

The first three verses of Romans 7 show what it takes to legally dissolve a marriage (union) for those under the law—death. After the first husband's death, the woman is free from the law that had bound her to the first man. Now she can be legally married to another man and not be an adulteress. Death to the first husband was the only way the woman would legally ever have freedom!

No Adulteress

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law" (Rom. 7:4). If you had not become dead, then both you and Christ would be adulterers when joined together. Christ is not joined to anyone whose first husband is still alive. In essence, this means there has never been, and there will never be, two natures in the born-again believer.

Christ could not legally be joined to the believer until death has separated the believer from his/her former spouse (old nature). Christ legally fulfilled the law of marriage through His death as the last Adam.

Our Members

The soul/mind is a resident of the body. *"Another man"* means that it is a totally separate and different man from the first man. Where is the first man after Romans 7:25? He is not mentioned again except as something that belongs to time past!

Old Nature Dominance

In Romans 2, Paul writes about doing things by nature.

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14).

Those who were not under the law would ultimately reach the place where their minds were totally corrupted (reprobate mind) due to the dominance of this old nature over their minds.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:28).

Paul then shows that the whole world, including Jews, had this old nature that will ultimately corrupt the mind.

"What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Rom. 3:9).

He then uses chapters 5 and 6 to explain how this happened and what happened to the old nature. In chapter 7, he continues explaining why these things of chapters 5 and 6 were necessary. Paul includes the urgency of understanding, why the born-again believer needs to learn to live by the new nature within him/her. Every human being had the old nature, so why did not the Jews also reach the place where their minds were ultimately corrupted? This was the purpose of the law—to keep their minds from being corrupted by the old nature. Using the mind to obey the law would prevent the old nature from totally engulfing the individual's mind. In other words, the mind was so pre-occupied with the law—to the point that the old nature could not gain control of it. This was the value of the law to those under the law. But this, by no means, is related to the new birth. At this point, the soul/mind is in a constant struggle to prevent the old nature from gaining control of the mind. The law was the vehicle the mind used in this scenario. The problem with this is that the law could not change the old nature; it could only suppress the old nature. The ideal scenario would be to

THE LAW COULD NOT CHANGE THE OLD NATURE; IT COULD ONLY SUPPRESS THE OLD NATURE.

have a soul/mind that is totally compatible with the nature of the creature (grace).

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Or the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Rom. 7:15–25).

This is written to show the power of the old nature over all else; It is not descriptive of a born-again

believer since it includes the phrase *sold under sin* (v. 14). The old mind and old nature were sold under sin but certainly not the new nature of the born-again believer. It mattered not what the law demanded; the law was weak because of the nature of those under the law. Those under the law had to use the soul/mind to comply with the law and all its demands. They could not comply with the law according to the nature in them because that old nature was incompatible with the law. Life under the law had to be lived by the soul/mind because their nature would not allow them to do otherwise. The point that Paul makes in Romans 7 is that life should be lived by a nature and not by a set of rules and commandments. He said all of this so that he could then say that the same is true in the born-again believer’s life. The born-again believer should live life by a nature (Son nature) and not by any other method. This was God’s intention from before the foundation of the world. His intention was to put His nature in every born-again believer and that the believer should live life by, and through, that nature.

Paul is describing to the born-again believer why the law is so difficult to obey. He writes, *“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good”* (Rom. 7:12). All the time they were attempting to keep the law, there was

within them a nature that was totally defiant to the law and all that it stood for. In their minds, they wanted to comply with every facet of the law but:

“Now, then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not, or the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

If ever there was a vivid description of the old nature, this is it. The old nature dominated the soul/mind of those under the law. They could not do what their nature told them to do so that they would be in compliance with the law. This principle is analogous to:

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10).

Now then, as Paul says in this verse, *It is no more I that do it, but grace that dwells in me*. Paul is declaring that he now lives life according to a new nature (*“Yet not I,”* Gal. 2:20) therefore he gets no credit for the works that are done through him. When the born-again believer commits sin, he/she must defy

the Son-nature that is within them; he has to revert to the soul/mind to be able to sin, for it is the soul/mind that overrides the new nature! This same principle is how the law worked also. The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Even though their minds were in total agreement with the law, they had to defy the old nature in them to comply with the law. This is why Paul states, *“Do by nature the things contained in the law”* (Rom. 2:14). Would this not be the optimum method of living life under the law? Paul is telling born-again believers that life can and should be lived by a nature and not by the soul/mind process. This gives an explanation of the last verse of chapter 7.

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin” (Rom. 7:25).

Romans 8 begins with a born-again believer who has a new, different nature but still has a mind that fits the old nature. The born-again believer now needs a mind filled with an understanding of grace, for a grace-filled mind fits the new nature within the born-again believer!

As long as the soul/mind of the believer does not know that a new nature now occupies the place of the old nature, there will be total chaos at all times. The old soul/mind without reve-

lation will attempt to get the new nature to respond using old nature input. It becomes immediately obvious that the soul/mind needs to learn about the nature now residing within the born-again believer. The old mind needs to be introduced to what Paul calls *“revelation knowledge.”* This is the only knowledge compatible with the new Son-nature now resident within every born-again believer. The born-again believer should live life according to the new nature resident within; but without revelation knowledge for the old soul/mind, it will never happen.

The failure to come to revelation knowledge after the new birth is the reason most born-again believers remain in a state of discontentment. They were in a state of discontentment

prior to the new birth and remain in a state of discontentment because the old soul/mind does not fit their new nature. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the new nature; the problem is the old soul/mind only has knowledge that pertains to the old nature and cannot function in oneness of accord with the new nature. Therefore, the dilemma for the born-again believer continues, and they remain discontent with Christianity, knowing that something is wrong but not knowing what or why. Because most born-again believers never come to revelation knowledge, they allow the soul/mind to dwell on carnal things. Carnal things do not fit the new nature, therefore the new nature is deprived of its real strength and life. †

WHEN THE BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER COMMITS SIN, HE/SHE MUST DEFEY THE SON-NATURE THAT IS WITHIN THEM; HE HAS TO REVERT TO THE SOUL/MIND TO BE ABLE TO SIN, FOR IT IS THE SOUL/MIND THAT OVERRIDES THE NEW NATURE!

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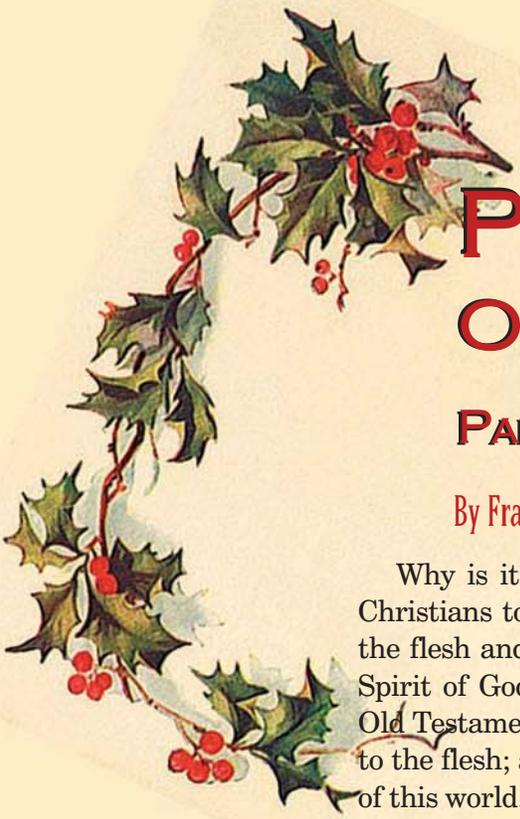
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PIERCING WORDS OF TRUTH

PART 2

By Frank Gonzales

Why is it so difficult for Christians to see what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit of God? Many of the Old Testament lessons refer to the flesh; all they did was of this world. By this I mean that it was done here on Earth and anything earthly is temporary. We Christians are eternal; we passed from death to eternal life in Christ Jesus. I am spirit; I am eternal; there is nothing of the flesh in Christ.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).

My brother and sister, did you see the qualification to be in the Spirit and not in the flesh? *"...if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."* God is spirit (John 4:24), and all He does is of the spirit. He is *"the Father of spirits..."* (Heb. 12:9). There is nothing spiritual about earthly water, nada, nothing! Yes, I was persecuted in prison because I followed Paul, but only because he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

We can excuse Peter for not knowing, but we have the truth today and have no excuses.

Today the preaching has to do with Jesus coming to give us life. We quote John 10:10 all the time, but it takes revelation to see that Christ came not only to give us life, but to be our life. The enemy makes sure we miss those Scriptures that point to Jesus as our life. *"When Christ who is our life..."* (Col. 3:4). *"For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God"* (Col. 3:3). *"For to me to live is Christ..."* (Phil. 1:21). *"Nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me..."* (Gal. 2:20).

These and many others declare Christ is our life. Today we have meetings for men only, meetings for women only, some for teens only, and so on. We ought to have meetings for those who don't see Jesus as their life. These messages fit everyone!

So the Father sent His Son to die for our sins and be our life. He is the only one on Earth who has life. The containers have death

dwelling in them, but they don't know this. They move; they speak; they breathe the air; they reason and think. How can they be dead? Tell an unbeliever he/she is dead and watch them stare at you like your not dealing with a full deck. But ask a Christian to tell you something about their life and listen. They'll tell you the things they do in the flesh, the same as the world will tell you, then add "go to church." Sad to say that most Christians don't know Jesus as their life. I thank God for brother Warren and the Christ-life ministry.

Jesus came to be the Lamb of God by taking up residence in Mary's body. Today, Jesus resides in every Christian. Our union with His death and resurrection makes it possible. If our teaching would focus more on this union, I think it would be easier to see Him as our life. We were united with His death; we were united with Him in His resurrection. Our union with Him is very important to understand and must be taught over and over until the revela-

tion comes by the Holy Spirit.

It dawned on me—If I am one with Him, then it stands to reason that if you talk with me you are actually talking with Him. If I teach the Word of God and say we are to walk in love, agape love, then He in us will agree because God is love. But if I teach that one must follow certain steps in order to be acceptable to God, then the truth is not in me. I am already acceptable in the beloved (Eph. 1:6). Teachers of the Word must understand our union with Christ because most of the teachings of today have to do with us lacking something while the Scriptures plainly state that we are complete (Col. 2:10). He is also our wisdom, our righteousness and so on. The word *until* means “up to,” meaning something else will take place of. For instance, in Galatians 4:2, we are children until the time appointed of the Father. We were also under the law until faith came (Gal. 3:23–25).

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:13–14).

Seems to me from these Scriptures that the five-fold ministry mentioned in verse 11 has a time limit: *“till we all come to the unity of the faith....”*

The way faith is taught these days from Old Testament perspective (everything before the Cross is Old Testament) with some having no faith, others little faith, others great faith, we will have trouble coming to the unity of faith. But if we teach Christ and His faith alone, then we will see the unity. We are already in the unity, but so many don’t see this because of the teachings. These Scriptures, Ephesians 4:11–13, go together with Galatians 4:1–6. We need to get out from under the tutors and governors, out of bondage under the elements of the world. We need to grow up to the fullness of Christ. This is another teaching, but faith needs to be taught correctly. I understand that it says until time appointed of the Father, but even then the Father will use us to clear the path. I know it takes time for the Father to work, but once one has the revelation, one can teach nothing but the revelation.

We were teaching on spirit, soul and body and have used the Word to explain. My spirit is united with the spirit of Christ; my soul is being renewed by the Holy Spirit concerning Christ in me, and my body is the container of both spirit and soul. I wish to touch on the other part of

Hebrews 10:7. *“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”*

Jesus came to do the will of God. He is the only one who can say:

“And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29).

“I do always...” Can any Christian claim this? Compare this with:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do” (Rom. 7:18–19).

Our brother Paul then finds where the trouble lies:

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom 7:23).

The law of sin is in my members.

Our Lord could do always those things that pleased the Father because the law of sin had no place in Him. Our Lord always operated by the law of the spirit of life. Jesus and His Cross did away with the law of sin, and death followed (Rom. 5:12).

I am going to quote a Scripture here and I wish religious Christians would take notice and pray God to deliver and give revelation:

“the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:56). The law gives sin its strength, its power. Let’s reason this out. I am talking about religious laws, those do’s and don’ts given in church. If religious laws give strength to sin, then it stands to reason that the fewer laws, the less strength sin has. No laws, no strength. *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2).

IT’S HARD TO HEAR FROM GOD WHEN YOU ARE SO BUSY TRYING TO FIX THE UNFIXABLE (OLD MAN) AND TRYING TO OBEY ALL THOSE RELIGIOUS LAWS THAT AWAKENS SIN IN US—BUSY, BUSY, BUSY! WHY NOT WALK IN LOVE AND ENTER THE REST OF GOD?

The Word says we have been delivered already from the law of sin and death. It’s a done deal, nothing more to do about sin and death. Jesus and His Cross have taken care of the sin, that one sin that entered into the world and death by sin. We are free from this law of sin. But do you know what the church is doing? The same thing they are doing with the old man of Romans 6:6. The old man was crucified with Christ, and according to God, the old man is dead so that we might live in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). But instead of the church leaving the old man in the grave and allowing the Christ in us to do the living, we have resurrected (figuratively) the old man and have tried to straighten him out with our do’s and don’ts. We have done all we can to fix the old man, including tapes, videos, books, seminars, meetings, television and well, you name it. It’s there in the Bible written for us to see; the old man is

dead and stinking. Leave it alone! Jesus is you life!

It’s the same thing with the law of sin and death. It’s been done away with, no more. Jesus and His Cross fixed the sin problem. Why put all these laws on the church? Can’t you see that laws will awaken sin in the people? Can’t you see that what Jesus and His Cross destroyed, religious people have made alive? No wonder so many drop out of church. We need to throw away all those laws and teach love, agape love, for love is the fulfillment of any law (Rom. 13:8–10). God has *“made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life”* (2 Cor. 3:6).

But getting back to our study of Hebrews 10:7, it was Jesus who did the will of God then, and it is Jesus who does the will of God today through the believer. Of course, because of the union, when Jesus does the will of God, so do we. I have already mentioned two great errors the church is doing. Paul said he couldn’t do good, but, man, he should see the church today! We do a lot of doing. Anyway, one error is trying to fix the old man, the same one God crucified! The other error is all those laws in the church and sin going wild because of them, but ministers don’t see it. I saw a person trying to stop a child from crying while hitting him. How will he stop? Same in church. They are

trying to stop sin in the church by giving them more laws. And they both go together. The old man is fed laws to straighten him out, and he gets worse. Blessed be our Lord and Savior for revelation. Praise God.

If we would only see the waste of time, I think we would hear the Lord better and wouldn’t have to fast and pray in order to hear from God. It’s hard to hear from God when you are so busy trying to fix the unfixable (old man) and trying to obey all those religious laws that awakens sin in us—busy, busy, busy! Why not walk in love and enter the rest of God? The just shall live by faith, and the law is not of faith (Gal. 3:11–12).

The Body of Christ—the Church, with its many members—needs the manifestation of Christ and the Father. The manifestation is so important. It is the revealing of both Christ and the Father in our lives; it will bring us the Father’s will for each of us. We are so law-minded that when we read the Bible, we read it with a law-mind. Jesus always obeyed the Father, but the Father’s will was not the same all the time. He healed the blind in different ways. Some He raised from the dead; others He didn’t. He healed only one and left the others as they were. The will of God is not always the same. When we read the Bible with a law-mind, we could miss His will.

Jesus said where we walk by love, He and the

Father would manifest, reveal, themselves to us.

“Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (John 14:22).

He reveals Himself to us because the head and the body are one. He reveals Himself through His Body, the Church, because we are one.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20). When Paul was persecuting the Church, Jesus said, Why are you persecuting me? (Acts 9:4–5) Our union with the Lord is so important to understand because He manifests Himself to the Church. What He wants from me might not be what He wants from you. When churches are law-minded, things can go wrong because, like with Moses and his laws, there was no two ways about it. If law says right, then all go right. If law says left, then all go left. The law has become “the controller.” The Lord should have the right to be the controller of His people. I’m sure, at times, He has spoken to some concerning His will for them, but because the “controller” said something different, they didn’t listen and obey God. If we were to obey the voice of God instead of obeying the law, we would probably be rebuked.

I know by personal experience that one does not need to be a Christian very long for the Lord to speak to you. Some people don’t like

this; they think God has to have their permission before He can speak with His children. Not so! When I first became a Christian in a county jail, I reasoned and thought, *“Since I love the Lord so much, I’ll seek out those who have been Christians for a long time and learn from them.”* Wow! What a mistake this turned out to be!

I think I speak for many. When I first came to Jesus, I had the joy of the Lord. It just simply blessed me to hear preachers, read gospel books, hear tapes and so on. But somewhere down the road, the joy began to fade away. To this day, I don’t know what, where or when all this started, but I have seen this with others, too. Today, I just don’t enjoy going to church. I see so clearly the error, the “just a

routine” thing, the bondage, the tired look on their faces and because this should not be, they put on a mask. I see how God’s people are condemned. If they are having a hard time, it’s because “you don’t have faith,” “you’re not walking in love,” or “you haven’t paid your dues.” Something you did or didn’t do always is the problem. They don’t give answers, but boy, will they name a number of things why it’s your fault. It never occurred to them that maybe it’s the teaching of the wrong gospel. Jesus is rarely in the message, but you can bet His name will be in their “give me, give me.”

Jesus as life for the believer is the only message that will keep joy in the church. *“If I be lifted up,”* He said, *“If I be lifted up”* (John 12:32). †

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for His
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EXCHANGING A RELATIONSHIP FOR WORKS

By Teresa Ferraro

Through the grace of our Father and the instruction of the Holy Spirit, after an exhaustive conversation with Frank Blakeman, I came to an epiphany at the Kansas Weekend in the Word.

I'd had trouble recognizing law in general, anything outside of Moses' Law. I wondered: *Why should a Christian not try to live a good, clean life according to the Bible? It is the least one could do in appreciation of Christ's sacrifice. James endorses works as a vital testament of one's faith. Why is there such a discrepancy between what most churches teach and the Christ-life message?*

What a wonderful blessing when a veil is lifted and you suddenly understand a concept you previously hadn't been able to wrap your mind around!

Back in the Garden, what did Adam have before he disobeyed God? What did he exchange? He had a personal relationship with God; God visited and talked with Adam until sin separated them. What did Satan tell Eve?

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof,

then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

This is Sunday School stuff. But people don't connect this exchange with what happens in religion.

Many Christians live out their faith through introspection, naval-gazing! Some people just have a penchant for self-analysis, even me; I admit it. But many study the Old Testament to learn lessons of Christian character and try to apply it to their lives—how to be a man of faith like Abraham or Moses, or how to be a woman of God like Esther. But, you see, the forbidden tree in the Garden was not of evil; it was of the knowledge of both good and evil. When we work the knowledge of good and evil (this includes trying to be good), we are truly acting as gods, just as Satan promised. We are acting on our own power, as a child looks to his parent and says, "I don't need your help; I can do it myself." And then he proceeds to fall flat on his face.

But what does God want? Did He create the world so He could watch us

be good? No. He wanted a relationship! From the beginning of time, God yearned for a loving relationship. God gave Adam and Eve options because love is a choice. He wants us to eventually fall in love with Him, not to be independent beings.

But, how can we have a relationship with Him if we pass our days studying ourselves and trying to perfect our flaws? *"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"* (Gal. 3:3).

After years of trying to perfect the flesh, many Christians get burned out or find that no matter how good they were, they still ran into bad circumstances beyond their control. You see, law-givers hold out the promise that bad behavior reaps bad consequences. I do believe this law is built into God's universe, just as the law of gravity; but, following that reason, one would conclude that good behavior will reap good consequences. This simply is not so in this third-dimension life. No matter how you give yourself to being faithful, honest, responsible, decent, kind and sinless,

you are still going to find heartache, trouble and despair in this life. When a Christian finally realizes—some after decades of trying—that no matter how hard he tries, everything he touches turns to dust, then he can come to understand what it is to die to oneself. Paul says, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Gal. 2:19). This is another concept I couldn’t understand—reckoning yourself dead. Another piece of the puzzle just snapped together in this latest revelation.

When you find that all your efforts to perfect the flesh are fruitless, then you finally give up; and that is when you are ready to draw closer to God, curled up in a fetal position and say, *It’s useless, God. Nothing I do, not even my best effort, is any good. I have nothing to offer you.* Then God finally gets what He has wanted all along—a relationship with you. God wants you, each of us, to talk to Him, to hunger to really know Him (not just know facts about Him), read His Word and really listen to Him. When we focus on Him, seek Him, ask Him to make Himself known to us, talk to Him throughout the day like we talk to the people we live with, we will find that He talks back. It’s true! This world would have people believe that those who think they hear God talking to them are delusional. He really does talk to us!

What about living a Christian life? It is still there, but it has a different source, a different focus and a completely different life.

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:16–18).

Do we not trust that if we are in constant communication with our Father, He will lead us into a Christian lifestyle? When we fall in love, we tend to be distracted from all other areas of life. When we fall in love with our Father, we are then able to set everything else aside and just focus on Him. He will put life together. He will provide. He will guide us through relationships. He will see us through the hard times. The ways of the flesh will fall away, especially as the Holy Spirit convicts us and teaches us Christ. Then Christ can truly start living through us.

This may be a huge learning curve, and every one of us is on that learning curve. We can be understanding and empathetic toward others knowing that we are all learning Christ. We can stop judging others, scrutinizing their Christian walks. We will not see perfection in those who are born again because they still have the tendencies of

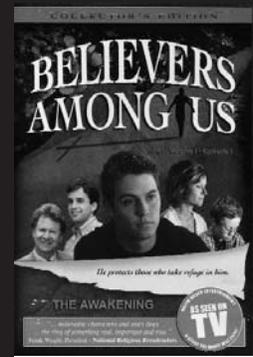
the flesh in their minds, but teaching the Christian life is done best by the Holy Spirit in God’s time. The book knowledge just leads the new believer to try to perform as expected. The best Christian teaching humans can do is first to have an intimate Father-son relationship of their own. That will be a testimony in itself. Then we can point others to God and say, “Seek Him; He is real! Talk to Him and listen. Fall in love with Him, and He will take care of the rest.” †

WHEN YOU FIND THAT ALL YOUR EFFORTS TO PERFECT THE FLESH ARE FRUITLESS, THEN YOU FINALLY GIVE UP; AND THAT IS WHEN YOU ARE READY TO DRAW CLOSER TO GOD, CURLED UP IN A FETAL POSITION AND SAY, *IT’S USELESS, GOD. NOTHING I DO, NOT EVEN MY BEST EFFORT, IS ANY GOOD. I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER YOU.*

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31.

SEARCH FOR A TRUE IDENTITY

By Linda Schultz

My life has been a profound search for my true identity. Early on I was one who loved to explore the world of the intellect. Approaching life from an innate curiosity and love of life, I ventured into marriage at the tender age of 18, thinking I was made to be a mother and a wife. Interestingly enough, I loved married life, having two beautiful sons early on, but my husband was not so content, and so at the age of 24, I found myself divorced.

I think it was then that God really began to woo me. I had no man in my life to fill the void deep within for a loving relationship. Free-spirited and in the '60's, I began to investigate the free-love movement and started experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Before I knew it my new identity became that of sex, drugs, rock-and-roll and motherhood, unfortunately in that order. For years, it was "fun," discovering a world of "if it feels good do it" mentality, so young and so desirous of feeling free. It was then the spiritual bondage really began. I had been raised as a Catholic and found no loving God there. I grew up believing God was waiting to send me to Hell. Guilt and shame

were always somehow connected to the things of God. Therefore, I had no desire to have anything to do with any belief system even vaguely connected to Jesus Christ.

Deep inside began a hunger to know why I was here. Drugs served to induce deep, stirring experiences of love and a sense that there was a dimension beyond this Earth and time. First, I ventured into the world of the occult, astrology, eastern religion and metaphysics. Even then my Father was working in me, drawing me ever nearer to Him. Getting into ESP in the late '70's, I began to believe I was God; that was a heady experience! I became tired of the bar scene, the revolving door through which passed men and more men. Not knowing where to turn, I met a "backslidden" Christian at a bar who spoke to me of a personal God, and Jesus, His Son. Part of me laughed at what I thought to be a cosmic joke. Part of me listened intently as I had met for the first time a man who had something bigger in his life than his ego. Then slowly, the Spirit drew. I began studying the Bible, going to church, crying throughout the entire service as the Holy Spirit softened my hardened heart

and conviction set in. Gently, the Father wooed me, and I came broken and humbled, a sweet surrender at last to my loving Father as I asked Christ into my life while home alone one night. I woke up the next morning feeling as if my heart was bursting out of my chest, a confirmation that He had truly come into my life and that He was real, a precious memory that sweetly and clearly lives in my heart and mind to this very day.

I fervently immersed myself in church, Bible studies and any and all Christian activities I could find. I became a "doer," not knowing anything else at the time. But again gently, the Spirit began to teach me and placed in me the deepest hunger to know God. This Jesus I'd shunned for so long became my greatest desire. Mercifully, the Father placed Warren and Robbie Litzman in my path and introduced me to the message of Christ in me. I began an intense monthly study called Christ-life Institute. I realize now it was only "head knowledge" that kept rolling around inside my intellect; a deeper journey was still before me. God was so faithful as I took

(IDENTITY CONT'D ON P. 30)

THIRD AND FOURTH DIMENSIONAL LIVING

By Cliff Gardner

Unless the inhabitants of the world have been birthed by our heavenly Father, “born again,” they are limited to third-dimensional (terrestrial, earth-bound, materialistic) thinking and living. All human-originated knowledge has to do with life in the third dimension.

Fourth dimensional knowledge, spirit knowledge, comes only by revelation. Humans can contemplate the fourth dimension, but can only speculate on it. No concrete meaning can be derived from it except by revelation from an entity that resides in the fourth dimension.

The spirit world is divided between good and evil—the good being from the one true God, and the evil from the rebel, false and self-appointed god, Satan.

The rebel spirit reveals deception to the fallen human race. This revelation knowledge comes in a form that appeals to and feeds the original lie of Eden that “*ye shall be as gods.*” It says man has independence and is basically self-existent, that he is his own source of good, that he is the highest order of evolution, and that, given enough information and education, he can progress to express the deity

he is. He believes he has life in himself and if any outside help is needed, it is merely for assistance. Also, the deception says the human race will take control of the universe as man is refined by the evolutionary process.

In the lie, there is a sort of caste system with the elite ruling over the ignorant masses. The appeal to those at the upper level is for control and manipulation, while to those at the bottom it is for the gratification of all the base animal passions.

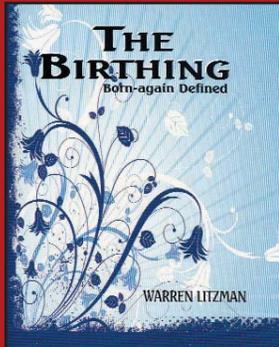
Caught in the deception, the fallen human race pursues the fulfillment it longs for but can never achieve. The opiates of temporary pleasure and gratification become the reason for existence. The lie out of the darkness poses as true light, and so man is caught in the loop of deception.

There is only one source of pure light with no shadows or shades of darkness. There is only one source of pure, unadulterated truth, no shadowy shades of meaning or half-truths. It comes from the one, true God and is made manifest (knowable) by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God has a plan whereby He purposes to make Himself

known to “*whosoever will*” respond to His drawing by the Holy Spirit.

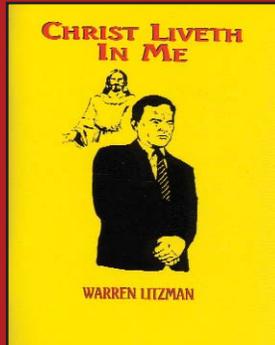
God (the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ), too, works in the realm of fourth-dimensional revelation, but His activity is all true. He uses no deception, half-truths or coercion that marks the operation of the Evil One. His plan encompasses the whole human race, with no exceptions; again it is for “*whosoever will.*” His source of communicable truth is the living Word—His Son, Jesus Christ. In His Son, there is no place for so-called religious practice whereby man, by himself, improves himself. He did not merely bring newer and better information. He brought life because He is life, the only true life. He did not give us a better doctrinal statement or other belief systems. In fact, He is all truth in person. Outside of Him, as truth in person, all statements of truth are flawed and are held to be invalid by the Father. In other words, we are not of the truth because of our doctrinal statement; we are of the truth if we are partakers of Him who is the Truth and He is our only true life! †

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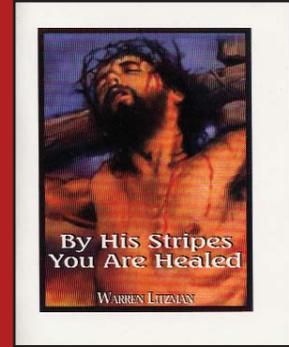
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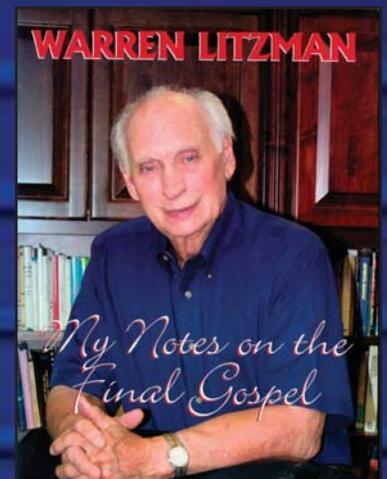
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IS THE CHRIST-LIFE THE ONLY CHRISTIAN LIFE?

PART 2

By Warren Litzman

Go with me on a little adventure for a moment, and see how God keenly wanted us to have *one Life*. Not only is it Bethlehem, and not only did Mary bring forth Christ there, but the circumstances surrounding His birth are just as miraculous as God choosing David to be the promised seed from the backside of the desert.

Mary was living in the wrong place, so in order for her to bring forth the promised seed she must get to Bethlehem Ephratah. She must be moved there to have that baby if God's plan was to be perfect, for several hundred years before Christ's day, God said He would be born in Bethlehem, born of a virgin. It had to happen like that or there would not be one true gospel, and the hodgepodge of religion we have today in America with a church on every corner with different interpretations would be permissible. But if Jesus is born in Bethlehem, then you mark it down; there is one true gospel; there is only *one Life*; there is one true Church, the Body of Christ. It's all Jesus. There cannot be a church on every corner with a different interpreta-

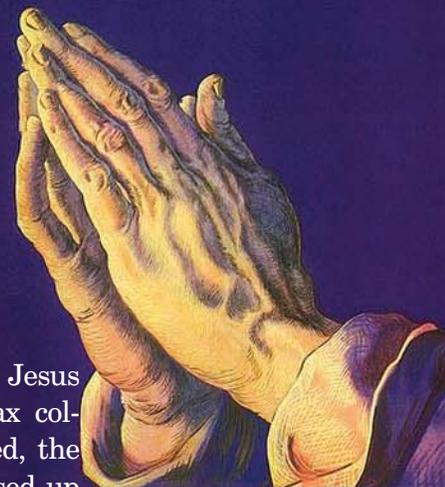
tion any more than there could have been many different christs. God's plan points to one Christ, one way, one interpretation. So Mary has to get to Bethlehem.

Notice how God manipulates this. During the reign of Caesar Augustus, God did a lot of political manipulating. You may think God is not interested in politics, but He is. Now, He is not interested in us being interested in politics, but God, Himself, is interested in politics. He has His eye on all nations; He is controlling the wars in different parts of the world and making sure we do not do anything that does not fit into His plan. He is keenly aware of every political maneuver among the nations. God has His hand on all of it. He has always been a political manipulator so He could work out His plans. He did it with Pharoah; He has done it all the way through history. And so God began His political manipulations to get Mary to Bethlehem.

During the reign of Caesar Augustus, there were three great tax collections. We are most interested in the second great tax collection of Caesar, which was announced four years

before the birth of Jesus Christ. When that tax collection was announced, the Jews in Palestine raised up in arms and said they did not want to pay any more money to Caesar. So the Roman government, being fairly democratic for a dictatorship, allowed the Jews to elect a commission to argue the tax problem at the Senate in Rome. That took a period of time, and it took more time to orientate them to the need and a long time for them to travel to Rome, after which they had to await their turn in court. They finally presented their petition only to have Ceasar completely reject it. In the process of all this, four years had passed. Now the Jews were happy to have this period of relaxation from taxes, but that was not why it happened at all. It was my Father manipulating. When the commission failed, they were turned back, and Caesar began his collection.

It took a long time for the tax collection to get down to Bethlehem, Judea. They went, province by province, city by city. The tax collectors had a lot of trouble with sabotaging Jews, and everywhere they went there was static. Nobody was in a



hurry to pay taxes, but it was God who allowed that tax collection to be held up for four years. God was waiting for little Mary, who was only nine or ten years of age when Caesar announced the tax collection, to become old enough to bear a child and to get her over to Bethlehem so Jesus could be born according to Micah's prophecy. He was born right on time, by the right woman, and in the right place. There could be no duplicator. There could be no impostor.

In the fullness of time, God brought forth His Son. Not only was the infant Jesus born at the right time, but when He was born, the Son of God had to come forth as Him. When he comes forth, He must not be a man of men; He must be the Son of God. He must be the direct seed of God. That is the great difference!

So now we have everybody before Jesus eliminated, and we have everybody after Mary brings forth her child disqualified because they do not come out of the household of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jessie and Judah.

There are at least two general predictions about time given in the Scriptures which will help us know God's timing in bringing forth *our Life*. The first is in Genesis 49:10:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

This really states that before the tribe of Judah loses its identity, Jesus must be born. Now the record shows that prior to the birth of Jesus Christ all the other tribes, except Judah, dissolved and lost their identity.

The word *scepter* refers to tribal identity, and the Scripture reads that the tribal identity shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes, meaning all the other tribes of Israel may dissolve, but one of them must still be in existence for this baby to be born in Bethlehem, or He is an impostor. We do not sing about Ephraim, Joseph, Dan or Naphtali; we sing about the lion of the tribe of Judah because when He came, everyone could see He was the lion spoken about in Genesis. He came out of Judah. Praise God! We know that the tribe of Judah was still alive because it had a king, Herod, king of Judah, king of the Jews. Also, the tribe of Judah still had its governor and the Sanhedrin.

In time, Jesus stood before Herod. He met with members of the Sanhedrin. He preached to them on hillsides. It is interesting to note that the tribe of Judah was dissolved when Jesus was twelve years old, after which they only kept a form of government. God did not recognize them once Jesus brought forth a message. There was old King Herod, but what was he? An impostor. There was a government of the Sanhedrin, but

it was a bunch of evil men who had dissolved the tribe as far as His blessing being upon them.

There was a second prediction made in Malachi 3:1: *"Behold, I will send my messenger; and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."*

What is the second prediction? He would come to His temple, and does He not do so? We see Him ministering in and about the temple of Solomon. We see Him about the pool of Bethesda, so He does come to His temple. That had to be fulfilled while the temple was standing. In A.D. 70, the temple is destroyed, God alone manipulating in the time element.

My friends, the evidence is clear and astounding that God has not left the life of the Lord Jesus Christ for us to figure out according to our own ideas. I must call upon you as Christians to search the Scriptures as never before. Perhaps one of the greatest faults we have in this day is that we often depend upon our religious experiences to carry us through when we can take the Word of God and really know something. The life I now live is not an interpretation of Jesus' life. I ran into a man who said, "I am not a Christian. I'm not religious at all. You know, I believe in certain truths in

WHEN I WANT TO KNOW HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, I LOOK AT MY LIFE, WHO IS JESUS. IT IS CLEARLY PRINTED IN THE WORD. IT IS DOCUMENTED; IT IS TRUTH. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ARGUE ABOUT WHAT JESUS WILL DO; WE KNOW. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SPECULATE ON HOW TO LIVE; WE KNOW.

the Bible,” he said, then he picked out things like the golden rule and said, “I try to live by this.” I thought, *This man represents so many.* Multitudes of born-again believers have picked through God’s Word and hold to certain truths that compliment their personality and their makeup. People come to me and say, “I don’t think God wants everybody to give his life to Him.” But the question is, Are we sons of God? Have we been born into the family of God? If so, our history is very clear-cut and distinctive. It comes right down to the point that God has one Son, and He is the life of every child who is birthed by God.

In his third chapter, John declares that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. It was a choice God made centuries ago before He laid the foundation of the world. It was not an idea that exploded at the last minute, after which God decided to use the Virgin Mary. Centuries, generations and civilizations ago, God’s Son lovingly agreed to one single act. The Holy Spirit would breathe upon a virgin, who would go to Bethlehem and bring forth a man child whose name would be called Jesus. But, more than that, He would be called Emmanuel, God with us, God in us. There would be no room for doubt; there would be only one Savior, one life God provided to complete the human.

My Father has not written a book so that in the end

we could say, *I am going to live like Abraham.* My Father has not written a book so that we can take the good out of Moses’ life and live it. Moses is not our life. Moses is just a tool in God’s hand. My life is Jesus. I am not to be like Moses; I am not to be like Paul, Peter, James or John. God narrowed it down so that no human flesh or blood could be my Life. When I want to know how to live the Christian life, I look at my Life, who is Jesus. It is clearly printed in the Word. It is documented; it is truth. You do not have to argue about what Jesus will do; we know. You do not have to speculate on how to live; we know. God did not throw it out there and say, *Now you do what you please with Jesus.* He gave us one Christ, one Lord, one hope, and by virtue of His life in us, He made it possible for us to live His Life. Of course, you will not live all of it, but with faith and hope you strive to. His grace makes up the lacking and that is the beauty of the Christ-life. Mary, herself, was not perfect, but she brought forth the Son. She, herself, needed the grace of God to make it through. You can travel all over this world, but if you find one single contradiction, one single reason why we should not live the life of Jesus Christ today, then the gospel is the biggest farce that was ever written. But God did not fail one single time in bringing us a Son

supernaturally; neither will He fail in bringing us forth as sons. He gave to Apostle Paul alone the message of how we should live as the Father’s birthed sons and daughters. He is going to bring forth the Son in us the very same way. He is leading and manipulating in our lives the very same way. The issue is before you. God called many, but He chose few. What is the difference? It is Jesus—His Life as us. †

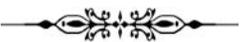
(FREE CONT'D FROM P. 7)

action. A child can’t be forced (law) to conform to the image in a parent’s mind. The circumstances and situations of life will eventually bring the child to a state of maturity, and only then will he bear the fruit of his nature.

This present world is filled with children who refuse to heed the advice and knowledge of an older generation. Because of this, we have several generations of troubled and rebellious children. They have lost the freedom to be who they are because of a world system and parents who say that you have to achieve materialism to be somebody; if you don’t have it, you’re a failure in life. *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”* (Matt. 16:25). Eternal life and freedom is in knowing who you are in Christ. There is no separation of Christ in you and who you are in Christ. †

MY FATHER HAS NOT WRITTEN A BOOK SO THAT WE CAN TAKE THE GOOD OUT OF MOSES’ LIFE AND LIVE IT. MOSES IS NOT OUR LIFE. MOSES IS JUST A TOOL IN GOD’S HAND. MY LIFE IS JESUS.

The
born-again
believer
has no
past.



The
Father
only sees
Christ!

(WEAK CONT'D FROM P. 5)

ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

Through Christ, who is the living Word, we can find contentment and eternal life. We can find His will by abiding in Him.

Unfortunately, this verse in John 15:7 is also commonly used by people as what I like to call their “Santa Clause List.” They present this verse as a contract with God. They say, *If I do this, then God will do that.* Jesus also said in John 5:38–40:

“And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Here we see that eternal life comes from the presence of Christ and not from reading the Scriptures.

In Genesis chapter 3, we see that the serpent also used God’s Word to get what he wanted:

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the

woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:1–5).

The serpent used God’s Word to tempt Adam and Eve. Wanting to be as God, they ate and received an awareness of good and evil. As we can see, just because believers in Christ get what they desire, it does not necessarily mean that it was given to them from their heavenly Father.

Since we now know our desires come from one of two sources—one driven from the carnal man and the other from the spiritual man—should we dwell on the issue of which is the source of our desires? Not necessarily; what we should dwell on is the desire to know Christ and to have His presence in our lives. I believe our circumstances and situations, guided by our heavenly Father, are designed to lead us to the reality of His Son regardless of our selfish choices. Paul says in Romans 8:28, *“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* He also said in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Knowing this, I can trust that my Father is in control. I trust that He will use all of our choices to either draw us closer to Christ in order to reveal the Father’s heart or to purge out and remove

from our hearts those desires that separate us from His love.

Through the revelation given by the Holy Spirit and by the grace of God, we can come to experience the strength and the truth found in Christ. By revelation, we can see the light and witness the reality of our own weakness. Then we know we can no longer trust in our flesh, regardless of whether we believe our flesh is very good or very evil. When we are weak, then Christ is strong. As we turn away from the carnal man and his adamic consciousness, then we can turn towards Christ so that He can be manifested through us.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

The carnal man says his flesh struggles and is limited. Christ in us says all things He places in our life are possible in the will of our Father.

The carnal mind says cancer and disease is killing him. Christ in us says our Father can heal us or He will use the illness to call us home.

The carnal man says he wishes he could learn more about the Scriptures and God. Christ in us says we are complete and that we know all things in our Father’s will.

(WEAK CONTINUED ON P. 29)

I TRUST THAT HE WILL USE ALL OF OUR CHOICES TO EITHER DRAW US CLOSER TO CHRIST IN ORDER TO REVEAL THE FATHER’S HEART OR TO PURGE OUT AND REMOVE FROM OUR HEARTS THOSE DESIRES THAT SEPARATE US FROM HIS LOVE.

MODERN PRISON EPISTLE

Dear Brother and Sister Litzman,

I would like to just quickly share a little of the testimony of Christ as my life.

I've been here in prison for well since 1993. I grew up in church; my natural dad was an evangelist. I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ at the tender, early ages in my childhood. Of course, growing up, I was in and out of church, not knowing the Christ within me. I strived and struggled to live holy and do good as I was taught by the church. I kept failing and failing being discouraged and depressed, and I would quit and not try for a while. This happened over and over again.

I am now 47 years old and locked up. This was all a part of God's plan, work-

ing, pushing me closer to Christ the Son. Anyhow, here recently, our heavenly Father was drawing me to Jesus again, and I was hungry and starving for Christ, thirsting for Him desperately. By no accident, one day I found an old copy of *Life in the Son* magazine and read it. I liked it a lot, so I wrote ya'll and asked to be on your subscription list. I didn't ask for nothing else. Praise God! One day, I came in to my wing here in prison from work, and I had a package. It was from you, Brother Litzman. Inside was *Jesus Lost in the Church and Revelation Knowledge and Fourth Dimensional Living*. The Lord Jesus by God's grace turned me upside down and out! Glory to God! The

fullness of time had come. The Jesus I had always been seeking for years and years was revealed to me by His Holy Spirit according to the eternal purpose of God my Father! Anyhow, I just wanted to share this wonderful miracle God our Father has done in my life, which is no more; it is now Christ's life! Hallelujah!

Salvation, who is a person, Christ Jesus, truly is the greatest miracle of all. No healing, no financial blessing, nothing in the natural realm can compare!

Jesse Gurno, a Christ-son, your brother in Christ!

P.S. I'm trying to use the term *Christ-son* now instead of *Christian* because of the misuse and seemingly meaningless term of *Christian*. †



(WEAK CONT'D FROM P. 28)

The carnal man says he must work diligently to improve himself. Christ in us says He paid the price, and we stand perfect as children of God with His Son's life in us. †

(PEACE CONT'D FROM P. 10)

works of righteousness on your part (Tit. 3:5), but all by God's grace, His gift of eternal life (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23).

Won't you trust Him today and experience this

wonderful peace? You can have peace with God and the peace of God in your heart and life. This is truly good will toward men. †

(Gregg Bing pastors of Grace Bible Church in Fort Worth, Texas.)

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him” (Col. 2:9-10).

(IDENTITY CONT'D FROM P. 22)

my baby steps toward my heavenly Father.

Not knowing then, I had never dealt with my alcoholism (a symptom of my unconscious reliance on myself), I isolated from men and dating for five years. Inside of me was a deep-rooted, ever-present fear and pain. I started drinking to push it down inside my soul (denial). But the disease (a life run on self-will) took over. Ashamed, I reached out to a man who told me of Alcoholics Anonymous. Embarrassed, I went to my first meeting. Considering myself a Christian, having pictured my identity as one, I thought I had learned all I'd ever need to know about God. But, my identity was still deeply rooted in being a "good self." I continued to run "my" own life. I just looked different on the outside! I made a decision to surrender myself to working the 12 steps, sensing the Father would use them to teach me. And well He did.

By then, I had been in the Christ-life for about three years. In the 4th and 5th steps of AA, I made a fearless moral inventory of my resentments, listed my fears, and looked into my sexual past. In this process, I was willing to see the truth of what I had denied for so long. As I read my 5th step to my sponsor, God did a mighty work. For the very first time, I saw my filthy rags; I saw the wreckage and pain I had caused my family and others over a lifetime of

chasing satisfaction and yet never being satisfied. I had a profound revelation of Christ in me as my only hope of glory. At last, I tasted freedom from the bondage of the independent self! Humbled by the truth, no longer in denial, I broke in such a way that it brought about an incredible release. Words cannot describe the deep sense of peace that followed. From that moment on, Christ has become my only life. *"I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!"* (Gal. 2:20). Not a theory, not a program, not a religion! His life manifested in me as me, a thought so profound its implications still baffle and amaze me. Yet the knowledge of this life is my only obsession. My only goal today is to know the power of His resurrection in me. I remain sober years later, and I have no intention to ever drink again. Not because I find my identity as an alcoholic, but because AA taught me that I have a physical allergy to alcohol. Remember, we are soul, body and Spirit. Warren taught me the body has pulls of its own!

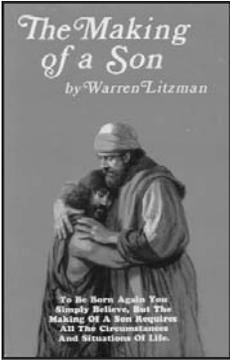
I wandered from my identity as a wife and mother to my identity as a free-spirited woman of the world; I was loved into surrendering to Christ and finally found true identity as a Christ-person, a Christian. Restless nevertheless to find my life hid in Him while in this "school house" we call Earth.

If you are reading this article of my life transformed by the power of this Christ-life message, it means that the Spirit is drawing you to know Him. And your heart will indeed be restless until you do. Don't wait, don't resist. You will never know true freedom or peace until you do. Now, no matter where I go, no matter what I do on the outside, it is His life manifesting His love into the world through me. I now rest in knowing that His Spirit will guide me to touch the lost and the hungry with this life-affirming message. Circumstances and situations remain my teachers. I still have my times of struggle and slip into my false identity, but those times have become fewer as I rest in His finished work. I wonder sometimes why the Father chose me to reveal His eternal plan, and my heart breaks for those still lost or caught up in "doer" religion.

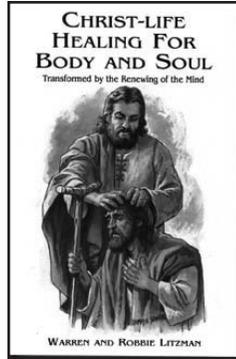
But, He is faithful. I am now free to let His love, His peace and His life shine through me to a lost and hurting world. In the process, I have found my true and only identity! What a glorious Father we have! I look forward to the day with great anticipation when my Father comes to take me home to the place He has prepared for me in His Heaven where I will continue to learn of the depths of His wondrous love eternally. Remember, "he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).†

NOW, NO MATTER WHERE I GO, NO MATTER WHAT I DO ON THE OUTSIDE, IT IS HIS LIFE MANIFESTING HIS LOVE INTO THE WORLD THROUGH ME. I NOW REST IN KNOWING THAT HIS SPIRIT WILL GUIDE ME TO TOUCH THE LOST AND THE HUNGRY WITH THIS LIFE-AFFIRMING MESSAGE.

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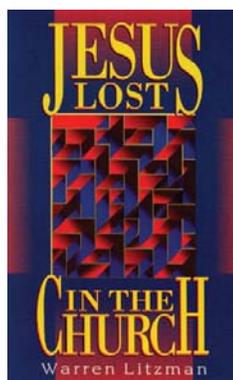
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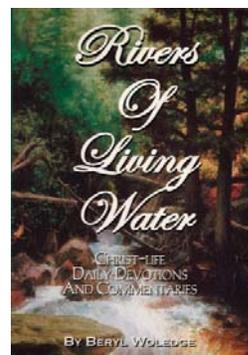
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