

Lessons Compiled and Developed  
From:

## **Authentic Christianity**

by  
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### **Preface**

This is the book I have wanted to write above all others. It deals with the heart of the gospel, the most important truth contained in the pages of Scripture.

To understand the full implications of the new covenant is to discover the most liberating secret in the word of God. It is, as Paul put it, "Christ in you." All of our hopes for manifesting God's glory in this world are dependent on our willingness to receive the fullness of Christ's indwelling life.

It is my hope and prayer that God will use this book to open the eyes of many to this central truth and lead them to experience, in this present life, the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

These lessons are based on a study taken from chapters two through six in the book of Second Corinthians.

### **Two Splendors**

When Adam came from the hand of God, he was a man with the divine nature of God indwelling him, as God intended for man to live. He was, therefore, acting by the power of God. Everything he did was accomplished by the indwelling "Spirit of life." (Rom. 8:2) We know this from the comparison that refers to Jesus as the Second or Last Adam. (1 Cor. 15:45-47)

Jesus, as the second or last Adam, when He was living on this earth and was demonstrating how the first Adam was intended to live, has described how He did not do anything out of His own power, but as He plainly put it, "the Father {through the power of the Holy Spirit} who dwells in me, does his works." (John 14:10) He was living by the new covenant way of life with everything coming from the Spirit of God and nothing coming from Himself. In fact, He said, "The Son by Himself can do nothing." (John 5:19)

This is also how the first Adam was created to live before the Fall. Of course, the new was not "new" then, for at that time this participation in the life, work and glory of God was the only arrangement for living.

Adam's only purpose in life was to carry out the preordained work that God had planned for Him to do as a son of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10 NKJV) Adam brought to each task God's Divine resources, available in sufficient amount to do whatever God had planned for him to do.

This is, of course, what man was intended to be – the instrument or vessel of God's life and work in the world. Adam was the "house" of God. As a vessel of God's life, all that he did was a manifestation of God's work.

While Adam lived as a true son by walking in the will of the Father, he was able to receive a supernatural spiritual life from the Tree of Life. It was this spiritual life from heaven that sustained his eternal soul.

As the Second Adam, Jesus also ate from this same tree of divine life. "My food {or spiritual sustenance}," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) The Father continued to feed His Son

with eternal life while Jesus was doing the will of the Father in heaven.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us (1 John 1:1-2)

Although Jesus Christ had access to His own power and glory, He could not use it without entering into sin while living as the Second Adam. Satan tempted Jesus to use His own powers, but He did not use them as a man because it would have resulted in an act of self-will. Exercising His own power and will for His own glory while living as a man would have resulted in sin. If He had done this, He would also have forfeited His right to be the sin bearer for fallen mankind.

Only those who live through God's power and in His will are entitled to eat the heavenly food from the tree of divine life. And to do so, they must continue to walk under the control and power of the Holy Spirit.

The instant Adam rebelled against God's plan by choosing to use his own power to supply himself with a spiritual life, an act of self-will, God's "Spirit of life" ceased to be active in his body. After this fall and separation from the "Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2), man was left darkened, restless and empty. He was filled with guilt, worry and fear. Because he was now living in a self-directed life through the power of the flesh, he was no longer in a condition to live in the presence of God. The flesh-life, with its willful nature, is barred from entering into the presence of God within His garden of delight.

Adam, after the Spirit had departed and left his soul empty, was instantly invaded by another ruler who took over the task of supplying the spiritual energy that was now needed to sustain his new self-directed way of life. Satan's pride, with its motivation of self-exaltation and self-glory provided the spiritual sustenance to feed and sustain his fallen life of disobedience. He began to feed his empty soul through "the lust {desires} of the flesh, the lust {desires} of the eyes, and the {self-elevating and self-exalting} pride of life." (1 John 2:16)

The apostle Paul has described Satan's control over fallen man. He influences their lives through what the Bible calls "the flesh." "Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of the body and mind, and so we were by nature, children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." (Eph. 2:3)

Fallen man has been twisted and tainted by the devil. That inwardly focused life that seeks to exalt self is called "the flesh." This, then, is the primary characteristic of the fallen flesh life – it is self-serving. It can have all the outward appearances of a "good" life – human love, hard working, serving, etc., but with an inward motive that is aimed at the advancement of self. It thus becomes the rival of God – another god!

Jesus Christ has come to set us free from this sinful nature. He has the power to cut off the flesh-life so that we can once again enter into the presence of God and enjoy His life within His garden of delight, the paradise of God! "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature {the flesh}, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ." (Col. 2:11) Because of His redemptive work, we now have the opportunity to turn from the life of the flesh and return to the life of God in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3)

## **Spiritual Death versus Spiritual Life**

Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly {or "to the full" – NIV}." (John 10:10) Our redeemer has the power and authority to enable His "called out" disciples to participate with Him in His life and nature. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) "Because I live, you also will live" in the same life. (John 14:19) This imparted life from heaven is truly "life to the full."

The fruit of Christ's Spirit "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Gal. 5:22-23) This heavenly fruit is to flow like a "river of life" from within our inner being. "As the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:38) Because it flows like an endless river from a supernatural source, it is intended to lift us spiritually above all the circumstances of this fallen world.

In contrast then, what does it mean to be without the presence of Christ's spiritual life? It is the absence of those qualities that come from the supernatural fruit of His Spirit. What is the absence of the agape type love that enables a believer to lay down his own life for the good of others according to his Father's will? A self-seeking and self-directed way of life. What is the absence of joy? Emptiness and weariness of spirit. In effect, frustration, boredom, worry, fear, hostility, loneliness, depression, and self-pity are all marks of the absence of divine life.

Jesus said, "By their fruit you will recognize them...every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit..." (Matt. 7:16-17) We think those negative qualities in our life come from passing moods or changing circumstances. But both Jesus and Paul say, no! Human moods arise from the flesh – the bad tree.

These negative feelings, then, reveal the flesh in action.

Not the flesh in the blatant display that we typically consider evil – such as drunkenness, rioting or adultery – but the covetous flesh in those subtler displays which we often approve and promote: self-confidence, self-pity, self-assertion, and selfish ambition. This is the evil of Satan's character, which is the self-life asserting itself from within.

The church has refused to accept the seriousness of this condition. Scripture is very clear on this matter: No one with a "selfish ambition," which is the innate covetousness that comes from an empty soul in the fallen nature, will ever enter the kingdom of God.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you...that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21 Emphasis added)

Selfish ambition comes from the flesh, and the flesh-life will never enter into the presence of God. In effect, this ongoing covetousness, which is the idolatry that attempts to fill an empty soul with the temporal things of this world, is judged by God in the Scripture to be in the same category as continuing to commit murder, fornication, homosexual acts, and witchcraft.

The amazing thing is that we prefer the temporary and fleeting pleasures of this world to the glory that accompanies the divine life "in Christ." *Often we naively assume that we can have both.* But if we insist on having the temporal and momentary pleasures that come from the ways of this self-seeking world, which remains under the control of the fallen nature, then we cannot have the lasting pleasure that comes from the new covenant life in the Spirit.

Like Israel of old, we cannot enter the promised land of Canaan, with its spiritual milk and honey, if we insist on turning back to spiritual Egypt. Remember, "No man can serve two masters." (Matt. 6:24) *We cannot serve God in the power of the Spirit while we are serving ourselves in the power of the flesh.*

"Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the Lord. "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, {by turning to the self-seeking ways of the world} and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water {experienced by a returning sense of emptiness within}. (Jer. 2:13)

Remember Lot's wife {who looked back to the world}. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. (Luke 17:32-33)

There is a certain glory about the activities of the flesh that naturally attracts "the many." "For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." (Matt. 7:13) The broad way of living in the flesh can supply us with a certain kind of fulfillment. It produces a kind of self-approval that is very pleasant to experience – for awhile. There is, says Paul, a "splendor in the dispensation of condemnation." But this evil splendor from the self-life is far surpassed by the splendor that is now available through Christ's life in the New Testament dispensation of "true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:24) In fact, the apostle enlarges on this. He says, "Indeed, in this case, what once had {fleshly} splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the {Spirit-imparted} splendor that surpasses it." (2 Cor. 3:10)

The pleasure that Paul had derived from the pride of his

ancestry, his orthodoxy, his self-directed morality, and his self-produced works, which were all directed toward pleasing God, soon came "to have no splendor at all because of the splendor that surpasses it."

By trusting in Jesus Christ for all of his spiritual sustenance, Paul was supplied with a divine life that was infinitely beyond anything he had ever experienced while living by the fleshly ways of human effort. He was set free from the bondage of the old carnal nature by the "Spirit of life." (Rom. 8:2)

Challenging people to rely on their natural resources and abilities can often whip up a tremendous wave of fleshly excitement and enthusiasm for the Lord. From such a meeting everyone goes home saying, "Wow, what a tremendous meeting!" But anyone who has been a leader very long knows what will happen. Soon the enthusiasm will begin to die away as their cracked cistern runs dry.

"But," someone argues, "that is just human nature. We humans are just made that way." This statement is true enough – it is human nature. But it is fallen human nature – in other words, the flesh! *When we are living in the power of the flesh we cannot live in the presence of the Lord and be empowered by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.*

It is the energy of the flesh versus the power of the Spirit of divine life in Christ Jesus as Paul puts it in Romans 8. If, as a Christian, you are seeking to live by your own resources rather than living through the power of the Holy Spirit, you are like a man who buys a car and doesn't know that it comes equipped with a motor. Naturally, a man buying a car on that basis would have to use his own human effort to push it home. You will never find any real joy in this kind of possession.

In effect, when we are working for the Lord in the power

of the flesh, we will find ourselves becoming "worried and upset about many things." (Luke 10:41) This kind of activity continually exposes the carnal nature. It is also what leaves the worker drained of spiritual energy. Can we begin to understand how being positionally right with the Lord, but still living by the power of the flesh, could also be likened to owning a car without having any fuel for the motor?

This is how the church is functioning today. We spend many hours teaching people how to mobilize their fleshly efforts so they can try harder to change their nature and begin to do a better job for God. But all we are mobilizing is the works of the flesh. And everything produced by the flesh is in the realm of spiritual death. Without the continual flow of Christ's Living Water of divine life, it will soon atrophy and pass away.

This "is not" what authentic Christianity is all about. God knew that we human beings are not adequate in ourselves so he supplied a power plant – the divine life of Christ Himself. His abundantly full life is now available and is able to flow ceaselessly through our soul into all eternity. "This all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Cor. 4:7)

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me. (Col. 1:28-29)

## **Pots, Pressure and Power**

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." (2 Cor. 4:7) Perhaps you have never thought of yourself as a vessel, but it is a fundamental and essential concept of the biblical view of man.

What are vessels for? They are essentially containers made to hold something. When nothing is in them, they are, of course, empty vessels. That is the significance in this verse of Scripture. It describes how we human beings were intended to contain something that transcends all human understanding. *The startling answer of the Bible is that we are made to contain the spiritual life of God!*

*The glory of our humanity is that it was intended to hold the Spirit of the Almighty.* Our humanity is designed to contain the spiritual image of Deity, the fruit of God's Spirit. "The dwelling of God is with men..." (Rev. 21:3) God created mankind to be a vessel of His life and glory. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given {access to that} fullness in Christ." (Col. 2:9-10)

We must not limit God's plan of salvation to something we can conceive with our own human wisdom and work out with our own strength. The human intellect cannot comprehend the reality of this heavenly life "in Christ." Unbelief will inevitably limit God and permit carnal darkness to remain in our Christian life.

God's true redemption will produce an "all-surpassing" glory that is beyond anything the human mind can possibly conceive. God is able to reveal His life as an experiential reality, by the power of His Spirit from within our inner being, when the flesh-life has been cut off through a supernatural circumcision of the heart. It is "the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but the circumcision done by Christ." (Col. 2:11)

It is accurate to describe lives without the living presence of God as "empty lives." That is exactly what they are; they are missing the divine life of God. But Christ is now able to fill the temple of our body with the glory of His life. He said to the Father, "I have given them the glory that you gave

me, that they may be one {in life and nature} as we are one" I in them and you in me." (John 17:22-23)

Dr. Carl Jung has described the world today as suffering from "a neurosis of emptiness." It does not require a psychiatrist to recognize these empty lives. All around us live men and women who can only display an outward shell of busyness. While they may have many interests, there is nothing but an echoing emptiness within their inner being. It is missing the divine presence of Christ's life.

*But the "spiritual" Christian is more than an empty vessel. He has something within – or rather, Someone within. We have a treasure in the earthen vessel. And not only a treasure – a transcendent power! The vessel is not much in itself, but it holds an inconceivable treasure, beyond price, and a transcendent power, greater than any other power known to men.*

God has designed even ordinary people, like us, so that we may be the bearers of the most remarkable riches and power ever known. It must be apparent to all, however, that the treasure and power are not from us, but from God. It is not a power to do mighty things, but a power to walk as Jesus did in the life of God. He intended that His heavenly life of love should become visible to the world in very ordinary and otherwise inconsequential people.

Jesus said to the Father: "I have made you known to them {by demonstrating divine love in a mortal body}, and will continue to make you known {through the power of the Holy Spirit} in order that the {divine} love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."  
(John 17:26)

Paul puts this in clear terms to the Colossians by describing his ministry: "God has chosen to make known

among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim him...so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:27-28)

That treasure and that power are a result of Christ living in you! "Christ in you," is the lost secret of true humanity. That is what sent Paul out declaring what he called "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Paul is describing a SPIRITUAL power and energy. It is not related to the physical power and energy of the mortal body. The body can be physically worn out and in much temporal pain while the spiritual energy of the soul remains strong and active. In other words, someone who is bedridden with sickness and completely incapacitated physically can be filled with an abundant and overcoming spiritual life.

*Most Christians now assume that God must improve their temporal circumstances in order to improve their spiritual life. The kind of happiness they are seeking is dependent on receiving something to feed their flesh-life. But this is an incorrect understanding of the spiritual life that comes from God.*

In contrast, God has tended to demonstrate the glory of His imparted spiritual life – the supernatural fruit from Christ's Spirit – by permitting His sons to suffer some of the most severe persecutions known to man. For example, it was in the midst of hardship that Paul was able to most notably demonstrate the reality of the inner manifestation of Christ's supernatural love, joy and peace. As Scripture testifies, God was able to demonstrate to the world how this minister of Jesus Christ was living through the energy of His Spirit.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and

been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one {forty was considered fatal}. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned {with the intent of death}, three times I was shipwrecked... {Each of these situations would have obviously left him physically weakened.} (2 Cor. 11:23-25)

I am not saying this because I am in need... I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry... I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (Phil. 4:11-13)

{The Lord had said to Paul}, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak {in self}, then I am strong {in the Lord}. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

We have this treasure in jars of clay {meaning our weak mortal bodies} to show that this all-surpassing {spiritual} power is from God and not from us. (2 Cor. 4:7)

By design, God entrusts this secret of divine life and power to failing, faulty, and weak mortal bodies so that it will be clear to all the world how the spiritual power does not originate from us. *Our new spiritual life isn't the result of a strong personality or a keen and finely honed mind or good breeding or training. No, it arises solely from the supernatural presence of God within our eternal soul. It must become apparent to all that the secret does not have*

*anything to do with us, but the source of this divine spiritual life is from God.*

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:21)

Our purpose for entering into the true Christian life is not to escape dangers and difficulties, or to enroll ourselves in a health and wealth club, but to demonstrate to the world how no circumstance is too much for the supernatural spiritual life that comes from the divine power of God. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) The treasure is displayed through weak mortal bodies to demonstrate the overcoming power of the spiritual life that comes from the heavenly realms.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)

God has permitted decay, hardship, suffering and death in this temporary world because He wants to draw His creation back to Himself. (Gen. 3:17-19) Then He uses His true sons to manifest His heavenly life, which is able to spiritually overcome the curse on the world, to draw others out of their spiritual bondage and into His glorious life.

This is why there must be trouble among the saints. Without this suffering and hardship there cannot be a true demonstration of the power and the glory that flows out of the indwelling life of Jesus Christ.

There must be a quality about us that can only be explained in terms of God at work. It must be evident for the sake of God's own glory that the power belongs to God and not to us. God receives all the glory when we are enabled to bear the supernatural fruit of Christ's life in the

most severe circumstances of this cursed world.

The life of Jesus Christ being manifested from our mortal bodies, right now, in time, is what we need in the church today. What is the secret? It is, first, "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus." We will not discover the glory of the treasure and the power of Christ's heavenly life until we are ready to accept in reality the terms and results of taking up our cross and dying to self.

We are always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus {which implies a death to the self-life}, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive {in Christ} are always being given over to death {to self} for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. (2 Cor. 4:10-11)

Those who were crucified did not have a life in the flesh beyond that point. And throughout the Scripture the order never varies – First death to self, and then resurrection life in the heavenly realms. Death to the flesh-life is intended to lead to life from Christ. "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:5)

God designed His creation in a way that would enable Him to use the vessel of our bodies to bring all glory to Himself. We were never intended to be vessels of our own self-glory. Man was to be God's primary instrument for manifesting "His glory" into the world. *What a mess we have been making of God's plan for His creation by clinging to a life in the flesh so we may receive our own praise and honor!*

### **The Glory of a Ministry In the Lord**

Only a few have the gift of faith which dares to challenge the accepted standards within the church – the ones that are

scripturally wrong. But when those few lead out and exemplify in their lives the consequent blessing of receiving the indwelling life of Jesus Christ, others are able to follow.

The New Testament everywhere insists that the true Christian life is essentially and radically different from the life lived by a man or woman of the world. Although there are infant Christians in every church, the "spiritual" Christian is filled with a heavenly life that is far above human nature. But if we were to examine the church, wouldn't Paul still be saying today, "You are still carnal. For where there are envy {jealousy – NIV}, strife {quarreling – NIV}, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Cor. 3:3 NKJV) And wouldn't Jesus Christ still be asking, in the light of all of our heaping praise and honor on one another – "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another..." (John 5:44)

When we are no longer living as mere men, but Christ becomes our life, His nature and activity will become the center of everything we do. Life will revolve around the nature and work of Christ's Spirit as He manifests the Lord's life through the temple of our body.

"So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us." (2 Cor. 5:20) Ambassadors are the official spokesmen of a sovereign power in a foreign state. Their word is backed up by the power that sent them out. But this relationship remains true only if the ambassador's word truly represents the mind and will of the sovereign power who has sent him out. "God making his appeal through us," is only valid when believers are living authentically in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We must submit ourselves to live under the control and power of Christ's Spirit before we will ever qualify to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Our Lord is the light of the world, and if we want to be an ambassador of His kingdom,

we must manifest the light of His life. (John 8:12)

Jesus never attempted to force Himself on people. He offers Himself repeatedly to them; He invites them to respond; He warns them of the consequences of rejecting His way of life. But He doesn't harangue them or use emotional stories to sway them.

When people came to listen to Jesus He would offer a clear invitation to their will. If they were reluctant to respond, He neither prolonged the offer or made it any easier. In fact, He was forever sending men away and thinning the ranks of His true disciples. He had to do this because God's splendor can only be seen in those who are willing to present themselves to Him as a living sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1-2) This is the only way to become an instrument of His divine life, His perfect will, and His true glory.

Authentic Christians are willing to give up their life in the flesh in order to receive the life of Jesus Christ. Although everyone will go through a desert-testing period in which the Spirit will be stripping away the flesh-life, the goal of our faith must be to enter into a participation with Christ in His life and nature. "He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him." (1 Cor. 6:17)

The inevitable outcome of being filled with the life of Jesus Christ is true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matt. 5:6) He comes to provide freedom from our bondage to the carnal nature- the flesh. "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is {the firstfruits of Christ's} eternal life." (Rom. 6:22)

The righteous man is at rest; all his internal or spiritual tensions and problems are solved. "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36) He is not anxious

about anything in this world. And he is enabled to joyously lay down His life for the good of others as His Lord directs. He trusts and rests in God because he knows that his Lord is able to work out all things for his eternal good. (Rom. 8:28)

## **Open Up Your Lives**

Is it not fitting, then, that the apostle Paul should close his great discourse to the Corinthians with an earnest appeal rising out of the depths of his heart? "Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own {fleshly} affections..." (2 Cor. 6:11-12) Their present weakness was due only to one thing: a failure to respond to the light they had received – a reluctance to act on what they had been told. They were still feeding their flesh-life with the things of this world. They were refusing to go forward in their faith in order to enter into the Sabbath-rest of God where everyone lives wholly under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. (Heb. 4:1-11)

The present low state of the church is surely due to the same lack of responsive faith. Christians do not really believe what they sing about and profess with their lips. They talk about God's power, but they have lost their understanding of the greatness of God and His ability to act today in their own personal lives. They do not really believe in God's ability to set them free from their sinful nature by lifting their soul into a participation with Christ in His life and nature.

Some people have associated the "gift of tongues" with "spiritual maturity." But they should recognize how this gift did not help the worldly Corinthians. While they may have had all kinds of gifts, including the gift of tongues, they were still living in an unsanctified life {still carnal}, and it was bringing carnal darkness into the body of Christ. This is why Paul told them to examine their lives {and this does not

refer to their spiritual gifts} for the presence of Christ's life to determine if they had actually entered into the fullness of the promise that was available to them through faith. (2 Cor. 13:5)

What possibilities lie before every Christian if only they would offer themselves as a living sacrifice to live by faith under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. How little the world understands the treasure that lies in its midst within the true church of Jesus Christ. *But how little the church understands it, too.*

Will you bow your knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Name, cry: "Father, make me a qualified minister of the new covenant. Open my eyes to the full meaning of the truth. Make me to hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness, that according to your promise, I might be filled with His life of true righteousness and holiness and no longer the righteousness and holiness I have been trying to produce through my own religious efforts. Amen"

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)