

The Way to Eternal Life

{Chapter 1, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

...By the one man's offense many died... (Rom. 5:15)

...I have come that they may have life... (John 10:10)

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 1:2)

The Word of God, when carefully examined, reveals some amazing promises. A study of the Bible will reveal how Jesus Christ has promised to provide a heavenly form of spiritual life that is seldom even acknowledged in the church today. We have therefore written to open up the truth and build up Christians in their faith so they will be prepared to enter into the fullness of this life of promise.

The first thing we will notice is that God makes covenants with His people. He promises to do certain things if we will respond to His conditions. While many detest hearing anything that sounds like legalism, we need to correlate the low spiritual state now existing in the church with the fact that individual believers are not responding to God's requirements.

The Lord is always faithful to do what He has promised. If we do not enter into the reality of the promise, the problem is not on His side. We must learn to accept and acknowledge some form of disobedience on our part.

As an example, Jesus said, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."* (John 14:23) The Bible is full of God's "ifs." We cannot ignore them and also expect to enter into the fullness of His promises. And we are not referring to a small thing when we speak of the need to do what is required so that the Father and Son can reveal their heavenly life within our inner being.

Our intent is to explain how the Son has come to enable every believer to share with Him in the eternal life that He shares with His

Father. We are not speaking of heaven some day. The special quality of life that is in Jesus is to be received into our eternal soul today and then go on forever. If we are to truly reveal His “light of life” in this world, we will need to receive His heavenly life today.

In Him was life {the eternal life}, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

...I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, *but have the light of life.* (John 8:12)

Jesus revealed the eternal life that Adam lost. “The life was manifested {made visible in bodily form}, 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 1:2) And this is the life that we need to receive from Him by faith.

The Greek word “zoe” is used when referring to the unique form of life that Jesus gives to His followers. Because there are other Greek words used to represent other forms of “life” in the English version of the Bible, we will be inserting the term “zoe” when this special designation is used by the inspired writers. We will speak more on this in a moment. But let us now consider the implications of sharing with Christ in His eternal life.

A. B. Simpson reminds us: “The word ‘eternal’ here [1 John 1:2] does not merely convey the idea of existence that has neither beginning nor ending, but speaks of a higher sphere of life. It is life that belongs to a loftier plane than the things that are seen and temporal.” It is a heavenly form of spiritual life that can now be imparted to the soul of a believer through a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

The eternal life is an expansive life that has infinite upward mobility. Because God is infinite, there will always be more of His life to receive. Our eternal souls are like vessels, and these vessels can be enlarged as we yield in faith to increasing light.

We fight the “good fight of faith” by yielding to the “light of life” that was revealed through Jesus. It is simply by fully surrendering the vessel to the light of truth, and looking to Christ in faith to fulfill

in us His exceedingly great and precious promises, that we are enabled to become partakers with Him in His divine nature and walk in holy love as He walked. (2 Pet. 1:3-4; 1 John 2:5-6) The more we yield, in faith, to the light that He revealed through His mortal body, the more we can share with Him in the spiritual blessings residing in His eternal life.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. {We now have access to the spiritual life residing in Him.} (Eph. 1:3)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

And this is the promise that He has promised us— eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

We are reconciled to God by trusting in the Son's shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins. But this is not the full salvation of the Lord. He has come to save us from the fallen form of life that everyone receives from Adam by enabling us to share with Him in His eternal life. The apostle Paul refers to this greater work as the "much more" of salvation. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son {a past event}, *much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*" (Rom. 5:10)

By pressing into the fullness of this life of promise we can become filled with Christ's Spirit. He possesses the overcoming life that we need. And so the way to victory over the old fallen form of life is gained by receiving His life into our soul through a yielded and dependent faith.

For if by the one man's offense death {spiritual death and sin} reigned through the one {Adam}, *much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness*

will reign in {"zoe"} life through the One, Jesus Christ.
(Rom. 5:17)

For the law of the Spirit of {"zoe"} life in Christ Jesus
has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom.
8:2)

The Greek word "zoe" is used to express the form of "life" that Jesus gives to His followers. "I have come that they may have {"zoe"} life." (John 10:10) This heavenly form of life needs to begin within our soul today. We gain access to this life by being raised spiritually with the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit into the heavenly realms with Christ. "But God...because of His great love...made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4-6)

While words tend to have various meanings and uses, we intend to keep our discussion as simple as possible. Spiros Zodhiates in his *Greek Word Study* defines "zoe" as follows: "life; referring to the principle of life in the spirit and soul. Distinguished from bios, physical life...of which zoe is the nobler word, expressing all of the highest and best which Christ is and which He gives to the saints. The highest blessedness of the creature."

We sometimes miss the deeper meaning of our Lord's teachings when we are limited to our English versions of the Bible. For example, there are various types of love that can be expressed in the Greek by using different words. We tend to lose the original meaning by grouping them all together using one term.

Similarly, there are different Greek words representing different forms of life. In contrast to the "zoe" life that comes from above, the original New Testament Greek uses the word "psuche" to express the lower form of life that comes from the flesh. For example, Jesus said, "My Father loves Me, because I lay down My {"psuche"} life." (John 10:17) If we do not look at the Greek in this case, we cannot fully understand what Jesus chose to lay down in order to please His Father.

Most people think that Jesus was referring to laying down His “bios,” the Greek word representing physical life, at the cross in dying for our sins. However, He specifically speaks in this case of laying down His “psuche.” While this word also has several different variations in meaning, sometimes translated soul, we will be using it when referring to the lower form of life that is developed through the works of the flesh.

The Greek word “sarx” is translated flesh. The Bible reveals how fallen man uses the “sarx” to develop a “psuche” form of life. This “psuche” life is what separates people from the eternal “zoe” life that God intended for man to possess. The “psuche” life comes from the world and its things. Because this lower form of life is dependent upon temporal circumstances for its support, it is very unstable. It is that up and down life that the people of this world, including many who attend church on a regular basis, just naturally experience. This is what Jesus chose to lay down in order to share with His Father in the eternal “zoe” life.

If we will follow Jesus by laying down the old “psuche” life that originates in the flesh, we too can enter into His eternal “zoe” life. This should help us to better understand what Jesus expects when He instructs us to follow Him. Here is where we find one of those “ifs” that has separated many of God’s called-out people from His life of promise.

...If anyone desires to come after Me {into the heavenly realms to share in the eternal “zoe” life}, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his {“psuche”} life will lose it, but whoever loses his {“psuche”} life will find it {the eternal “zoe” life}. (Matt. 16:24-25)

Those who seek to develop their own “psuche” through the flesh are living in the lower form of life that man developed after Adam lost the eternal life. The Scriptures clearly distinguish between these two different forms of life. In this age of fulfillment, we are to follow Jesus by laying down the lower form of life that man develops

through his own fleshly activities so we may live by the Spirit and share with God in His eternal life.

For if you live according to the flesh {the “sarx”} you will die {you will experience a dying spiritual life}; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body {the self-originated form of life}, you will live {you will receive the eternal life}. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom. 8:13-14)

The Scriptures are constantly contrasting these two different ways of walking. We will either walk by the flesh according to our own desires or we will permit the Spirit to lead us as He pleases. The first way leads to an ever dying form of life. Yes, it can be built up and provide some pleasure for a season, but it is constantly dying. That is why people are always looking for something else or something new to do. They are constantly searching for a means to support their spiritual life.

Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph. 2:3)

For when we were in the flesh {living by the lower order of life}, the sinful passions...were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered {from the lower order of life}...that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit... (Rom. 7:5-6)

For the law of the Spirit of {“zoe”} life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled {fully met} in us who *do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*. For those who *live according to the flesh* {the lower and carnal form of life} set their minds on the things of the flesh {temporal things}, but those who *live according to the Spirit*, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death {resulting in an ever-dying form

of spiritual life}, but to be spiritually minded is {"zoe"} life and peace. Because the carnal mind {which naturally seeks to develop the "psuche" life through the flesh} is enmity against God... So then, those who are in the flesh {those who direct their steps in order to please their own fleshly desires} cannot please God. (Rom. 8:3-8)

Many think they can be forgiven for their sins and someday go to heaven to share with Christ in His eternal "zoe" life even while they continue to live by the flesh. But God's Word clearly reveals how they are sadly mistaken. Those who live by the flesh already have a dying spiritual life, and they know it from experience. God does not leave anyone deceived.

In contrast, those who consistently walk by the Spirit experience an ever-flowing supply of Christ's Living Water welling up into *everlasting life*. "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting {"zoe"} life." (John 4:14)

The Greek word for *eternal* is "aionios." It has the meaning of "constant, abiding and everlasting." In other words, the "aionios zoe" life that Jesus gives to His true followers is constant and abiding. It is not like the up and down "psuche" life that remains dependent upon what is taking place in the world around us. Those who experience a dying spiritual life whenever their outward circumstances are in disarray can know they are still relying on what they can work up through their own fleshly efforts. They are still finding their spiritual life from the temporal realm.

Jesus came to reveal how God originally intended for man to walk. He did not waste His time trying to find life from the world. He received His spiritual sustenance from above as He permitted His Father to live through Him. He said, "My food {the means for receiving spiritual sustenance from heaven} is to do the will of Him who sent Me..." (John 4:34) And then He instructed us to follow Him along the same course. We can only expect to be raised up into His

heavenly spiritual life “if” we have truly died to the lower order of “psuche” life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {dying to the “psuche” life that is developed through the “sarx”}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection {sharing with Him in His eternal “zoe” life}. (Rom. 6:5)

Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal {“zoe”} life...” (John 10:27-28) Jesus is not referring to a hypothetical theory. Many claim to have “eternal life,” and they make this claim without ever choosing to follow Jesus in His way of life. But it becomes obvious they have been deceived by the devil as they daily reveal how they have never lost their constantly dying “psuche” life.

A life devoted to the interests and enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, will result in the loss of God’s eternal life and everything else. While this self-originated form of life can support the soul for a season, when the soul is cut off from the temporal pleasures of this world it will find itself empty and void. In contrast to the eternal “zoe” life, which is constant and abiding, the “psuche” life does not abide forever.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. {Notice the absence of placing the things of the world into good and bad categories. This whole world’s system is opposed to God’s Kingdom.} If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father {His life} is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust {desires} of the flesh, the lust {desires} of the eyes, and the pride of life {the source of the “psuche” life}—is not of the Father {this form of life does not have its source in Him} but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides {lives in the eternal “zoe” life} forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Many people seem to think they can live by their own desires and for their own purposes as long as they do not commit gross sin. But God's definition of living by the desires of the flesh entails everything that turns man to the temporal {natural, of this world} realm in search of fulfillment. It is not possible to serve God and serve self at the same time. "No one can serve two masters." (Matt. 6:24) We cannot simultaneously walk by our own will according to our own desires and pursuits, no matter how innocent they may appear, and also walk by the Spirit of God.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. For you died {to the old self-originated form of life}, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

Brethren, join in following my example, *and note those who so walk*, as you have us for a pattern. For many {in the church} walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ {they are unwilling to follow Jesus in His way of the cross}: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly...who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship {our place of life} is in heaven... (Phil. 3:17-20, Emphasis added)

God planned to have a universe where everything had its source in Him. His purpose was to display His nature of love in everything He created. Man was to be His means for displaying this divine love in its highest form. But man separated himself from God's life of holy love—the "zoe" life—when he chose to have an independent "psuche" life of his own. We now have a world filled with self-centered and self-seeking people spreading their carnal darkness wherever they go. "This wisdom {that seeks to live for self} does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic {of the devil}. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:15-16)

There is a blessed simplicity in the true Christian walk. It is not a complex list of things that we must do in order to be “right.” The way of the Pharisees has never made anyone “right” in their heart. While God insists that we fulfill the righteous requirements found in His laws, those who attempt to produce their own righteousness will never truly sense that their inner nature is right.

We must receive the “gift of righteousness” that enables us to “reign in {“zoe”} life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Rom 5:17) He is the One who has a life of “true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24) It is by putting on His life and living through His Spirit that we can have the inner witness of being partakers with Him in His divine nature.

The one thing we must do is choose whether we are going to be led by our own desires or by the Spirit. If we will simply live by Christ’s Spirit, He will lead us into all truth and reveal His eternal “zoe” life within us.

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor. 11:3)

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh {do not live by the “psuche” life}, to fulfill its lusts. (Rom. 13:14)

I say then: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. (Gal. 5:16, 18)

It is by dying to the complex strugglings of the flesh, which includes trying to make ourselves righteous under law {by human effort}, and learning to receive life from Christ in the heavenly realms *by faith*, as a branch receives life from the vine, that we can begin naturally producing the divine fruit of His Spirit. Our highest glory will be found in living as mere vessels that the Spirit uses to express the Son’s life of righteousness in our daily walk. We are to be vessels of His Kingdom-life of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

Every Christian has had thoughts of meeting with Christ in heaven. And these thoughts are helpful while struggling through the wilderness testing period. But there is something better. There is a life of promise that needs to be received today. “And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.” (1 John 2:25) As A. B. Simpson has said, “That is the other heaven, that is the heaven brought down and put into your heart. The first thought is Christ up yonder. This is Christ descending out of heaven like the New Jerusalem, and making His dwelling in your inmost being.”

We have written to help needy souls find the abundant fullness of Christ’s heavenly “zoe” life. Since Jesus has specifically come to give this life to each of His followers—a life that overcomes the dying spiritual life that everyone receives from Adam—those who truly believe in Him should be prepared to do whatever is necessary to enter into the fullness of this promise. We pray that you do not turn away from His heavenly life simply to gain a few more years of living by your feeble “psuche” life—the life that continually dies and will be lost forever when the soul leaves this current world.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature {the sarx or the flesh-life}, from that {lower} nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal {“zoe”} life. (Gal. 6:7-8 NIV)

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal {“zoe”} life, and this life is in His Son. (1 John 5:11)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal {“zoe”} life, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away... How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (Heb. 2:1, 3)

Life In The Trinity

{Chapter 2, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

Someone once wrote a book entitled *How to Live the Victorious Christian Life*. The author is listed as “an unknown Christian.” Whoever he was, he has provided spiritual insight into truth that every Christian should hear. Some of that truth will be expressed in the following pages.

It may seem strange to hear of a writer choosing not to list his name in a world where people naturally seek prominence through self-expression. But it is not unusual for the followers of Jesus Christ to act radically different than natural man.

Jesus said, “I do not receive honor from men.” (John 5:41) He actually made Himself of “no reputation” by choosing to be nothing in Himself. (Phil. 2:7) He chose to live for the sole purpose of making His Father known. He lived quite differently than those who live for themselves. His “light” of truth has clearly exposed the carnal darkness that is displayed by people who exalt themselves in “the pride of life” so they may have their own honor and glory.

God has established a way of life in His kingdom that is diametrically opposed to how fallen man naturally lives. “God has chosen...the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” (1 Cor. 1:27-29) While fallen man has a dying spiritual life because he tries to exalt himself, the followers of Jesus are lifted spiritually into the highest places of the Son’s eternal “zoe” life as they choose to live as a mere vessel for the display of God’s glory. We find that the deeper we sink, by conforming to the mind that was in Christ, the higher we are lifted into the spiritual life of heaven.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men {by living as God originally intended for man to live}. And

being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. {He was willing to sink down to the least honored place.} Therefore God also has highly exalted Him... (Phil. 2:5-9)

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {choosing to be nothing in ourselves so that God may be all in all}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom. 6:5)

The Lord expects His disciples to follow in His steps. He said, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:35) "For he who is least among you all will be great." (Luke 9:48) Those who are willing to become the least and the last as they live to be an expression of God's glory alone, will find themselves being lifted the highest into His eternal "zoe" life. And it is impossible to find the life of heaven while ignoring these spiritual truths.

If you still find yourself trying to develop your own "psuche" through the pride of life, do not be surprised when you find yourself with a dying spiritual life. You cannot be holy to God while you are still trying to exalt yourself. As Jesus has said, if there is something that separates you from His life and nature, you need to cut it off so it does not separate you from His Presence forever. (Matt. 18:8)

If we are to walk as Jesus did and have His mind in us, we will need to share with Him in His life of holiness. In reality, we cannot make our own heart holy. However, as believers in Christ, we can choose to lay down our "psuche" life so that we may find His eternal "zoe" life. (Matt. 16:24-25) It is His Presence within us, revealing the same life in us that was in Him that makes our heart holy like He is holy.

Jesus said, "He who speaks *from himself* seeks his own glory." (John 7:18) He is referring to the self-exalting form of life that was fostered on the world by the devil. That form of life may be holy to self, but it cannot be holy to God. Satan and his followers have

chosen to live independently of God so they may have freedom to live “out from” themselves in order to exalt themselves. This is the form of life that has been separating the soul of man from God’s heavenly Presence ever since the Fall.

Self-expression has become so common in this fallen world that it is now thought to be normal and acceptable behavior. But Jesus was not referring to acceptable behavior when He said, “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory.” This is where we must remember that “what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (Luke 16:15) When we compare fallen man’s self-originated form of life to how Jesus lived, we can see this great contrast. There was nothing self-originated in the Son’s way of life. Even the things He spoke had their source in the Father.

Jesus set the example of true righteousness and holiness. He is the one we must follow. This is what He said of Himself: “*I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.*” (John 8:28) “Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” (John 12:50)

Jesus never yielded to the devil’s temptation to live by the pride of life. He never sought His own prominence or His own glory. (John 8:50) Because He lived to be an expression of His Father’s life and will, He only said and did what came from His Father through the Holy Spirit.

If we are to walk as Jesus did and find His “zoe” life from above, we must learn to walk by the Spirit in the same way. We must choose to listen to the Spirit and make our judgments based on what God is leading us to do. This is how Jesus lived. “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear {from the Spirit}, I judge {make decisions}; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30)

There are many people in the church who insist they are unable to live as Jesus did because He was God and they are only human beings. But if our faith is to ever receive the life of promise, we must realize that Jesus lived as a man in a human body. He did not live by

His own power. He became the Second or Last Adam and lived as God originally intended for man to live. He lived through the power of the Spirit in the same way He expects His followers to live by the Spirit. That is why He can insist that we follow Him and walk as He did. (John 8:12; 1 John 2:6)

When we make a similar choice not to live by our own will but to live for His will alone, we can expect His Spirit to direct our steps and lead us into “all truth.” (John 16:13) He provides guidance to those who follow Him by laying down their “psuche” life so they may live through His eternal life. “My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me. And I give them eternal {“zoe”} life...” (John 10:27-28) The reason why many Christians do not hear His voice and have not entered into an enjoyment of His eternal life is because they have not yet chosen to live for His will alone.

We are trying to describe how people walk in the eternal kingdom of God. It enables all of His true followers to live “as one,” both with Him and with each other. Because there is only one Spirit, He is able to keep each of God’s Spirit-directed children in harmony with each other in the same way the Father and the Son live “as one” with each other. (John 17:22-23)

God is the source of everything that takes place in His eternal kingdom. No one does anything out from themselves. For example, when Paul reported what he and Barnabas had been doing, he “reported all that God had done with them.” (Acts 14:27) They were not the original actors. As they yielded to God, they were acted upon and moved by His Spirit.

If you are still living out from yourself and doing things for the Lord in your own strength, you will naturally desire to be recognized and honored for what you have been doing. The flesh loves to glory in the things it originates. *You can therefore test yourself to see if you are still living partly by the flesh in the pride of life by determining if you are still looking for praise, honor, or recognition for what you have been doing.*

We can better understand these spiritual principles by looking more closely at life in the Trinity. God intends for each of us to live

through the Son in the same way the Son lives through the Father. He has planned to be the original source of both our life and our activities so that He may manifest His image of holy love in everything we do.

The Father, the Son and the Spirit remain in perfect harmony with each other because they share in the same life. The eternal life has one Source. The Father is the original source. The Son receives everything from the Father. The Holy Spirit, after He receives the “zoe” life from the Son, is then able to reveal the life within God’s human children.

The prerequisite to being a partaker of this heavenly life—the life that is shared within the Trinity—is that each individual is required to choose to live as a receptive vessel. God never intended for His human children to be the source of their own life. We were designed and created to live as vessels that He could use to display His Glory. It was when man chose to develop an independent “psuche” life that he lost the Glory that has its source in God.

“...But My people have changed their Glory {the eternal “zoe” life that has its source in God} for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord. “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns {trying to support their “psuche” life through temporal means}—broken cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jer 2:11-13)

Fortunately, our glorified Lord has given every believer access to the Glory that was lost at the Fall. We do not need to live independently of God. By choosing to live through the Spirit as Jesus did, we can receive the same Glory from Him that He received from His Father. The Spirit is now prepared to take of the life that is residing within the Son and begin manifesting that same life through each of us.

And the glory {the eternal “zoe” life} which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them {a life that

flows from the Father to the Son and to each believer by the Spirit}, that they may be one *just as We are one*: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one... (John 17:22-23)

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine {by taking from the eternal “zoe” life} and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. {There is one shared life in the Trinity.} That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:14-15 NIV)

At that day you will know that I am in My Father {receiving life from Him}, and you in Me, and I in you {sharing in the same life}. (John 14:20)

We can now begin to see what life in the Trinity is like. We find that the Son lives for the glory of the Father, and the Spirit lives to bring glory to the Son. The Spirit actually hides Himself so that the Son—as the Lamb of God—may be honored with all glory. Similarly, if we hope to share in this same life, we must hide ourselves so that the Lamb may receive the glory. “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” (Rev. 5:13)

The Father has set up an eternal world where each of His children are to remain “one” with Him and “one” with each other by receiving everything from Him. Everyone is to share in the same life of love and be led by the same Holy Spirit so there can always be a heavenly harmony. “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul.” (Acts 4:32) It is a oneness that can only be maintained while everyone is living by the Spirit.

We are speaking of a form of life where everything starts with God and returns to God. A. W. Tozer speaks of this truth in his book *Divine Conquest*: “All life [the “zoe” life] is in Him and out of Him, flowing from Him and returning to Him again, a moving indivisible sea of which He is the Fountainhead. That eternal life which was with the Father is now the possession of believing men...”

God has given each individual a free will that He intended for us to give back to Him out of love. But fallen man has chosen to use that free will to develop a form of life that is independent of God. This is the essence of sin. "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven." (John 3:27) In other words, there was to be nothing self-originated in man.

While fallen man has certainly become self-seeking and has been able to acquire and achieve many things for himself and his own glory, God did not intend for him to live in this sin. We were to live as our heavenly Father's children by depending on Him for everything. We can therefore say that everyone who desires to enter into His eternal kingdom must choose to live as dependent little children.

...Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent} little children {trusting in God for everything}, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3)

Jesus was not permitted to come out of His wilderness testing period until He had consciously rejected Satan's temptation to live independently of the Father. Jesus was given opportunities to enter into Satan's self-seeking and self-exalting form of life. The devil did his best to turn Jesus to self-will and convince Him to live for His own pleasures—to find life from this world. But Jesus knew that He was not permitted to receive anything unless it came to Him from His Father in heaven. While He certainly could have used His power to acquire all the kingdoms of this world, it would have turned Him into a sinner like other worldly minded people who live for themselves. "For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and *Him only you shall serve.*' " (Matt. 4:10)

It is by choosing to die to the old self-originated form of life and entering into this shared life within the Trinity {that is, living through the Son by His Spirit} that we gain access to the eternal kingdom that Christ will eventually return to the Father. The holy followers of Jesus have been separated from self-rule and have learned to live in

complete subjection to His Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) Everything they do has its source in God. They find their life from God in heaven and they live for Him alone. Again, everything is from Him and returns to Him so that He may be "all in all."

Then comes the end, when He {the Son} delivers the kingdom {everyone who has chosen to live by His Spirit} to God the Father, when He puts an end to all {independent} rule and all authority and power. {This is when everyone will be living through Christ's Spirit under His absolute reign.} For He must reign till He has put all enemies {those who live independently of God} under His feet... Now when all things are made subject to Him {when everyone is receiving their life and guidance from Him}, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him {the Father} who put all things under Him, *that God may be all in all.* (1 Cor. 15:24-25, 27-28)

God has established an eternal way of life where He is to be the source of everything that takes place. This is how He maintains a heavenly harmony in His eternal world. We are not to do anything apart from Him. "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) *And we must choose to enter into this shared life within His heavenly kingdom before we leave this world.*

With these facts before you, can you now say that you are a part of the eternal kingdom of God? Are you living in a way that permits God to be "all in all" in your life? Are you living by the Spirit alone or are you still directing some of your own steps?

Today is the day when we must submit to the Son's absolute reign. Those who will listen to Him and follow His voice will be taken into His heavenly life of promise. "My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life..." (John 10:27-28) The pure rivers of Living Water that flow from under His throne will begin to flow out of our heart and display His eternal life when He is reigning without rival. (Rev. 22:1; John 4:14)

...For without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me {if he does not yield to be a vessel of this life that originates in the Father and flows through the Son by the Spirit}, he is cast out as a branch and is withered... (John 15:5-6)

The only way to avoid being cut off from the everlasting life that now flows from the Son is to learn to do everything through His Spirit. If the Son was not able to do anything on His own without entering into sin, we obviously cannot do anything on our own.

It will now be easier to understand why the devil has been a liar from the beginning. When Satan chose to live independently of God and exist in a self-originated form of life, he entered into a lie. All of life becomes a lie when it has a false source—a source other than God.

...He...does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. {Nothing he does has its source in the Father.} When he speaks a lie, *he speaks from his own resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Satan knew that he could not live for his own glory while sharing in the life of the Trinity. He therefore separated himself from God for the purpose of possessing an independent and self-exalting form of life.

The contrast between Satan and Jesus is directly related to the source of their life. Jesus remained full of grace and truth because He received His life from the Father. Satan is nothing but a lie because everything he does is self-originated. “He speaks from his own resources” so he may have his own glory. Jesus did not do or say anything from Himself because He lived for the glory of His Father.

And the Word {the Son} became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory {the spiritual image of the eternal God}, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father {the source of His life was in the Father}, *full of grace and truth*. (John 1:14)

...But He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. (John 7:18)

We now have a clear choice to make. It would obviously be an understatement to say it is not wise to follow the self-originated form of life that Satan fostered on the world. The devil, as a self-directed being, is able to clean up his act and make himself look like an “angel of light.” But there is no righteousness in him because he does not receive his life from God.

We can similarly say there are people who live by very high religious standards without having true righteousness in them because they live “out from” themselves. The Pharisees in Jesus’ day are examples. They actually searched the Scriptures for the purpose of trying to make themselves holy. And while it is good to study the Scriptures to learn about God and His ways, the real purpose is to point us to Christ. He is the light of men and our one hope of living in true righteousness. Let us therefore be very cautious about being caught up in the self-originated form of righteousness that was displayed by the Pharisees.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal {“zoe”} life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have {“zoe”} life. (John 5:39-40)

Those who are still attempting to produce their own righteousness will inevitably fail in times of deep trial. Instead of experiencing a constant and abiding flow of Christ’s life of holy love, they will often become cranky and contentious when they do not like what is occurring in their own little kingdom. It reveals how they are still living by the flesh. “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are...contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions...” (Gal. 5:19-20)

There could not be anything more fearful than to come before the Lord on the Day of Judgment and be accused of walking as the devil did rather than as Jesus did. Those who have continued in a self-originated form of life so they may have their own glory, are in

serious trouble. They are walking “according to the course of this world.” (Eph. 2:2) They are still “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” in order to develop their own “psuche” life. (Eph. 2:3) This is what separates them from God’s life of holy love.

We can be thankful that our Lord has gained a complete victory over this fallen form of life. He is now in an exalted position of authority and power that permits Him to reveal His overcoming life through each of His disciples. He has specifically come to give His eternal “zoe” life to everyone who will walk by the Spirit as He did. (John 10:10; Rom. 8:14)

These words of truth will bring hope to those weary souls who have been trying to walk as Jesus did in their own strength. Everyone who will truly lay down their “psuche” life and look to Christ to come to their eternal soul in “the power of an endless life” will gain the victory. (Heb. 7:16) He has destroyed the devil’s self-originated form of life {sin} and has fully established the eternal Kingdom-life in bodily form.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, *just as He is righteous* {because they share in the same life.} He who sins {goes on living in a self-originated form of life} is of the devil, for the devil has sinned {lived out from himself} from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:7-8)

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity {the eternal “zoe” life} lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ {you have access to the same life through a yielded faith}, who is the head over every power and authority. (Col. 2:9-10 NIV)



New Testament Salvation

{Chapter 3, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

John (the Baptist) came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*... And he preached, saying “There comes One after me who is mightier than I... I indeed baptized you with water {for the remission of sins}, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:4, 7-8)

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, *having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life* {Gk.- *zoe*}. (Rom. 5:10)

God was able to forgive people for their sins prior to the New Testament dispensation. Beginning with Adam, God began reconciling fallen man with Himself by looking forward to the shed blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 13:8) But He could not fill human beings with His life—the eternal life that saves people from their sin nature—until the Son had actually paid the penalty for sin and was raised into a glorified state.

He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, *that He might fill all things*. (Eph. 4:10)

While it is a wonderful thing to be reconciled to God through Christ’s shed blood, it is “much more” wonderful to be a partaker with Him in His overcoming life. He has come to enable His followers to reign over the fallen nature received from Adam. “For if by the one man’s offense death {spiritual death and sin} reigned

through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in {zoe} life through the One, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17) How shall we escape if we neglect this “much more” of salvation? (Heb. 2:3)

The Messiah came specifically “to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies {everything that binds us to sin}, might serve Him without fear {of the carnal nature}, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:74-75) He did not come to save us in our sins, but rather from our sins. “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:21)

Our heavenly Father began promising in the Old Testament dispensation to send a Messiah to provide this greater work of salvation. When Jesus came into the world, He began preparing disciples to receive this long-awaited “Promise of the Father.” And then, just prior to His ascension into a glorified state, He said, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49) Once He was glorified, He could begin filling each of His fully yielded disciples with His eternal {zoe} life.

The Old Testament saints were expected to live for God and His purposes. But they could not become holy in nature like God is holy. This initial work of bringing people under the restraint of His laws is what prepares them to receive the much more glorious work of entering into His eternal {zoe} life. Jesus has only promised to manifest His life within those who obey His teaching. (John 14:21)

Adam’s choice to follow Satan’s self-directed and self-exalting form of life caused God to put up a barrier that prevented man from coming into His heavenly Presence. Before this barrier could be removed, the Son, as the Second or Last Adam, had to overcome sin in the flesh and reestablish how God had originally intended for man to walk. His death, to pay the penalty for sin, is what removed the barrier and has made it possible to come back into God’s heavenly Presence. But one must choose to follow Jesus and walk as He did

before they can come through the rent veil and begin sharing with God in His {zoe} life of holy love.

The only way to find Christ's eternal life is by losing the old life {Gk.- psuche}. (Matt. 16:24-25) It is in this sense that the temple of the body needs to be prepared according to God's specifications and fully consecrated to the Lord before it can be filled with His glory.

The saints of old were able to memorize the Scriptures and submit to God's word. But this way of conforming to certain laws does not make anyone like Him in His nature of "true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:24) This greater work of salvation was beyond their power. They had a fallen nature that prevented them from walking as God had originally planned for His human children. We can therefore find Him promising to send a Savior to change their inward nature so they would not profane His name among the nations.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts {by the Spirit}... No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they all shall know Me {by sharing in the same {zoe} life}, from the least of them to the greatest of them... (Jer 31:31, 33-34)

I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, *when I show myself holy through you before their eyes*... And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws... I will save you from all your uncleanness... (Ezk. 36:23, 27, 29 NIV)

Under this new covenant, each individual believer would have an opportunity to "know" the life of God within their inner being. In contrast to the Old Testament way of trying to memorize Scriptures, which never truly put the nature of the command within the heart, the Lord God Himself would reveal His life of holy love within the

inner being of His submissive children so they could do by nature what the law required.

This Promise of the Father was not received by any of the Old Testament saints while living in this world. They died in the faith not having received the Promise. They too had to wait for Christ to be glorified. Only then was He in a position to “fill” each individual with His life of perfect love who had chosen to respond to Him in faith.

And all these {the great saints of the Old Testament}, having obtained a good testimony through faith, *did not receive the promise* {the long awaited Promise of the Father}, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect {in the divine life of holy love} apart from us {in this age of fulfillment}. (Heb. 11:39-40)

Every Christian is to live through the life of the Son now that He is glorified. In contrast to living by law {trying to conform to the code of written commandments using human effort}, which could not make anyone perfect in holy love, the Hebrew writer speaks of this new way. He says, “there arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life...for the law made nothing perfect {in holy love}; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” (Heb. 7:15-16, 19)

Those who press forward in an obedient faith will be “filled” with Christ’s Spirit. He will manifest His divine life within them so they may “Know the Lord.” This is what makes it possible to “know the love of Christ which passes knowledge.” (Eph. 3:19) In other words, instead of trying to rely on what we can learn with our mind alone, which is what the Old Testament saints could do, we are to come to an experiential understanding of God’s heavenly life of love. It is only by becoming “one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6:17) that we can truly walk as Jesus did.

Once the Son—the Living Word—has made Himself known within our inner being, it is no longer necessary to depend on others to teach us how to live in righteousness. His indwelling Presence reveals true righteousness and holiness within our heart. We begin sharing with Him in His divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them...” (Jer. 31:34)

Everyone within the Lord’s church, regardless of their position in the body, can come to know Christ in the power of His endless life (Heb. 7:16). By choosing to live through Him and walk by His Spirit alone, we can depend on the Spirit to reveal within us everything we need to manifest His {zoe} life and godliness in this world. (2 Pet. 1:3)

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him... Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:9, 17)

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things...and just as it {the anointing} has taught you, you will abide in Him {live through Christ}. (1 John 2:27)

Not every church member enters into this New Covenant level of salvation. After trusting in Christ’s shed blood for the forgiveness of their sins and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, many of them end up trying to make themselves right. They are still trying to live by law through their own efforts. While law does have a limited glory in that it works well to help restrain the outbreak of sin, it cannot make God’s children like Him in holy love. The law does not change their nature. In other words, *we cannot “know God” by simply trying to conform ourselves to His teachings.*

The Galatian Christians had entered into this same error. They started out right by receiving the Spirit through faith. However, they

had turned back to the old way of living by law in an attempt to make themselves right. Because they were being deceived into living through a self-originated form of life, they were actually separating themselves from the righteousness that comes from God by faith. Christ could not be formed in them until they had lost this self-originated form of life. (Gal. 2:20)

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)

You have become estranged from Christ {you are separating yourselves from His Spirit}, you who attempt to be justified by law {trying to make yourself right}; you have fallen from grace. For we {as Christians in this age of fulfillment}...eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Gal. 5:4-5)

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! {The law is designed to constrain sin and turn people to Christ for a complete deliverance from their sin nature.} *For if there had been a law given which could have given life* {the heavenly life that comes from God by faith}, *truly righteousness would have been by the law.* (Gal. 3:21)

God does require His called-out children to submit to His teachings. After receiving the Spirit, we are expected to yield to all truth. But our hope is not in making ourselves right. We are expected to make every effort to respond to truth in the time of testing as a means for preparing the temple to be filled with God's glory. But in the end, once the consecration is complete, it is looking to God in faith that will enable the temple to be filled with God's glory.

There remains therefore a rest {of faith} for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works... Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest... (Heb. 4:9-11)

Admittedly, there have been people deceived by the devil because they tried to rest from their own works before they had properly prepared their body to be filled with God's life of true righteousness

and holiness. For example, there were people in the past who were classified as “Quietists.” Some were real Christians and some were totally deceived as is the case even among people today. The problem with many of the Quietists is that they attempted to enter into the rest of faith without ever coming under the law and acknowledging that God requires every righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled. They ended up living in gross sin.

On the other extreme, we must not remain under law. The way of law will never make anyone perfect in love. And without perfect love, it is impossible to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. *Our inability to truly conform to the law is what prepares us to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl—Christ’s Kingdom-life.* (Matt. 13:45-46) “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ...” (Gal. 3:23-24)

After we have responded to Christ’s teachings, *which will separate us from the ways of the world*, we will be prepared to look to God in faith to fill the temple of our body with His glory. Only then can we truly expect to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law.

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them...” Therefore “Come out from them {the self-seeking, self-sufficient and independent ways of the world} and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you...” Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 6:16-17, 7:1)

He who has My commandments and keeps them {in the time of testing}, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself {the Kingdom-life} to him. (John 14:21)

For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14:17)

...Put on the new man {the Christ-life} which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)

There is a need to keep coming back to the fact that God does not permit the self-originated works of the flesh to enter into His eternal kingdom. He will never permit anyone to glory in His Presence in what they have done. That is why we must deny ourselves and follow Christ through the cross before we can find His heavenly life. And, as Paul learned, we will eventually discover that we can only find the true righteousness that comes from God by faith after we have chosen to count everything, including our self-produced form of righteousness, as loss.

If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so...concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless... Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things {everything from the self-originated form of life}, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, *not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...* (Phil. 3:4, 6, 8-10)

True Christianity is quite simple in contrast to the religion of the Pharisees. Those who live by law naturally multiply their rules in an attempt to maintain certain behavior. They try to regulate righteousness through their manuals and denominational standards rather than leading people into a Spirit-directed way of life. If they would focus their attention on leading people into the fullness of Christ's Spirit, His anointing would reveal within them the true righteousness that comes from God by faith. The anointing would teach them to live through His life.

Christians will inevitably go astray in various matters until they have truly died to self-will. Jesus said there was no unrighteousness

in Him because He did not seek His own will. Choosing not to do anything out from Himself, He could be led by the Spirit of God in all matters. It kept Him in perfect harmony with His Father.

We too can be perfected in love and become one with each other by walking in the Spirit as Jesus did. He is now prepared to share with us the same glory He received from the Father. Only in this way can we all become “perfect in one.” (John 17:22-23)

The Word of God is constantly making statements that exceed what the human mind can comprehend. But that should not bother the children of faith. While “no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him...God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:9-10) With this in mind, it may be helpful to look more closely at how God changes our very nature when He fills our heart with His life of love. It will reveal how love is able to meet all the righteous requirements of the law. First Corinthians chapter thirteen describes this love that surpasses knowledge. Not only does it provide the positive traits of the divine nature, it also eliminates the negative traits of the carnal nature.

“Love suffers long” —it removes all impatience.

“Love is kind” —it leaves no room for unkindness.

“Love does not envy” —all jealousy and resentment is banished.

“Love does not parade itself” —boasting and self-assertion disappear.

“Is not puffed up” —the prideful desire for honor finds no place in the heart.

“Does not behave rudely” —disrespect and foolishness is eliminated.

“Does not seek its own” —all selfish sin dies when self dies.

“Is not provoked” —self-centered anger and fleshly wrath will not be seen.

“Thinks no evil” —brooding over wrongs and uncharitable feelings are gone.

“Bears all things” —it does away with a complaining spirit.

“Believes all things”—there is no mistrust within the heart to destroy fellowship.

“Hopes all things”—despair, anxiety and despondency vanish.

God’s life of love “never fails.” When “that which is perfect” fills the heart, we have everything we need for life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3) Even those good things we once depended upon for our spiritual support and understanding become less important and begin to fade away. “But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.” (1 Cor. 13:8 NIV)

This lesson was given to a group of Christians who had many spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, they did not have God’s life of holy love filling their souls. And their focus on these lesser gifts kept them blinded to this greater truth about becoming vessels of God’s life of love. After instructing them to desire the best gifts, Paul then went into the greater truth of chapter thirteen. “And yet I show you a more excellent way.” (1 Cor. 12:31)

How did Paul know that the Corinthians were not yet spiritual? For one, He was unable to speak to them about the deeper truths they needed to understand. They could not hear what he was saying.

The language of carnal Christians and the language of spiritual Christians are like two different languages. In effect, carnal Christians still think and act like “mere men.” They therefore speak in the language of this world. They have not yet learned the language of the heavenly world.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able {to hear the deeper things of God}; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1 Cor. 3:1-3)

Here is where we need to see the importance of receiving the “much more” of Christ’s New Testament salvation. Quite early in His

ministry we hear Jesus saying to His disciples, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) Even though they were still carnal and did not understand this heavenly language, He wanted them to realize that New Testament salvation takes people beyond the realm of human nature.

Jesus is the one who gave this command. *It must not be ignored.* Our Lord and Savior would never give a command that is beyond the realm of possibility. He definitely instructs us to possess some form of "perfection"—a perfection that somehow resembles the Father. And instead of simply rejecting His Word in unbelief, let us remember: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27) By living through the Son, we can become like our heavenly Father in love, in this world.

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them...that the love with which You loved Me {perfect love} may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22, 26)

Love has been perfected among us in this...because as he is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17)

The glory of God is revealed through His image of holy love. We were created in a way that permits Him to reveal His Glory through our mortal bodies. We are therefore expected, in this New Testament age of fulfillment, to reveal the same glorious life of holy love that Jesus revealed in bodily form.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels {weak human bodies}, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7, 10)

Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, gives a similar command: "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.' " (1 Pet. 1:15-16) Since God is holy, and He created us in a way that permits every believer to share with Him in His {zoe} life, we can become holy as He is holy by choosing to live through the Son. In effect, we must learn to live

through Him if we hope to avoid living in rebellion against these clearly stated commands.

God expects us to be like Him in holy love. And our heavenly Father would never give these commands if He had not made a provision to enable us to do what He requires. As previously quoted, this was His promise: “Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, *when I show myself holy through you before their eyes...* And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws... I will save you from all your uncleanness...” God’s divine Presence within our inner being is what enables us to do by nature what He requires.

The path into this heavenly life always begins with a complete submission to all revealed truth. The Lord examines our heart in the time of testing to determine if we are willing to yield to everything He commands. While we will inevitably fall short of this heavenly standard while passing through the wilderness testing period, it will prepare us to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl. When we have reached the point of choosing to “sell all” from the old self-originated form of life, Christ will manifest His eternal Kingdom-life within our inner being.

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. {Our likeness to Him in holy love reveals the source of our life.} He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6)

It will also be necessary to use much caution in how we interpret what it means to be “perfect” like our heavenly Father is perfect. We know that our infinite God is perfect in everything. And we are finite beings with very limited knowledge and capacity. Each one of us will also have individual infirmities until we have received our glorified bodies. He therefore does not expect us to be as perfect in all things as He is. Such “perfection” is not intended for human beings.

But Jesus stills say, “Therefore you shall be perfect.” That word “therefore” refers to something that was said before this command

was given. What does it mean? We will find that it refers to loving others with the same kind of holy love that God displays toward a sinful world.

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...* (Matt. 5:44-45)

We are to become sons of our Father in heaven by becoming vessels that He is able to use to display His life of holy love in this world. This command naturally takes away all hope of making ourselves “right.” It is a very high calling that leaves us without any choice but to learn how to live through Christ. As the anointing teaches us, we must abide in Him. It will entail walking in a way that permits Him to keep the vessel of our body filled with His {zoe} life from heaven.

For this reason I bow {in prayer, and I pray}...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts {with His life of holy love} *through faith; that you {may}...know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* (Eph. 3:14, 16-17, 19)

God’s life of love surpasses what can be grasped by the human mind. It is a supernatural love that needs to be revealed within our inner being by Christ Himself. It cannot be developed through our human thought processes. Even when it comes to having a life of holy love, God does not want anyone trying to produce it by following the devil in his self-originated form of life. The life must be received by faith through a work of God’s grace.

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Gal. 5:5)

God’s life of love is far above human love. The people of this world are capable of loving others. Even people who reject Christ can be found loving their families and friends. But God requires us to

love even those who treat us poorly. And He wants us to do it naturally—not with a forced love that comes from human effort under law.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; *as I have loved you.*” (John 13:34) “As I have loved you” is the standard. To conform to the New Testament standard requires a new form of life and a new nature that naturally lays itself down for the good of others, regardless of how they treat us. And since we do not have the ability to naturally display this kind of love in our own strength, we will need to have the Living Word—Jesus Christ—residing within our heart in the “power of an endless life.” (Heb. 7:16)

By this we know love, because He laid down His life
for us... (1 John 3:16)

Are you willing to share with Christ in His heavenly life of love and walk as He walked? Remember, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” (Mark 15:31) You cannot live for yourself and live for the good of others at the same time. And He has only promised to manifest His reigning life within your heart after you have chosen to deny, and die, to your life {psuche – the self-originated life we all are born with}. (Matt. 16:24-25; John 14:21)

There is only one Christian life. And that life needs to be received from the Son. God “chose us in Him {to live through the Son} before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” (Eph. 1:4) The life we must possess is to be found in Him. And it is the work of the Church to lead everyone into this same heavenly form of life before they depart from this world.

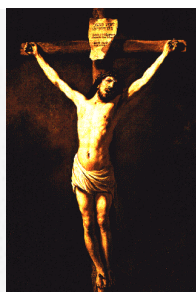
{This is} the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints {in the New Testament dispensation}. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory {the hope of revealing His image of holy love}. *Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every*

man in all wisdom, that we may present ever man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Col. 1:26-28)

This “love of God” that is “in Christ” is what truly sets us free from sin. Christ Himself cleanses us from all unrighteousness by showing Himself holy through us. “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” (Rom. 6:22)

Now, whatever we may think about these words from Scripture—whatever our past failures—however impossible it all seems—we cannot deny that the Bible offers a salvation that enables Christians, in this age of fulfillment, to walk as Jesus did in holy love. And if we reject the requirement and the provision, we are effectively rejecting Christ, regardless of what we may profess with our mouth. May we all choose to die to the old “psuche” life and begin living through Christ’s eternal “zoe” life. This is the essence of New Testament salvation.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, *as Christ also hath loved us*, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (Eph. 5:1-2 KJV Emphasis added)



The Way of Salvation Illustrated

{Chapter 5, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

The apostle Paul spoke of the experiences of the children of Israel in their deliverance from Egypt and their journey to the Land of Promise as being “examples” provided for our benefit. (1 Cor. 10:1-11) These examples, or spiritual types, provide lessons that can help New Testament Christians see where God has them in His work of salvation. Paul said “they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

The real life of promise is now available to every believer. But only a “few” ever receive what has been promised. “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14) Many of those who were once delivered out of Egypt by the power of God end up losing their first love while passing through the desert testing period. They turn away from Christ’s way of the cross and go back to living for earthly things. This is what led to Paul’s conclusion: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12)

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud {they were all being led by the Spirit}...all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (1 Cor. 10:1, 3-5)

With these thoughts in mind, let us look more closely at some of the spiritual principles that are taught in this God-given example of salvation. The Lord delivered His people from their bondage in Egypt for the purpose of taking them into a life of promise. Everything He did had the objective of settling them in the land of Canaan.

The Land of Egypt: We begin by noting the helplessness of the people when it came to delivering themselves from the Egyptians. God permitted the captives in Egypt {Egypt represents the world} to become more and more miserable in their worldly condition. He did not try to deliver them until they were fully aware of their need for deliverance. He was willing to use the corruption of this world to expose their miserable state.

In preparing people to seek out His salvation, He also permits them to experience the weight of the law. The law of God will begin to reveal how the self-seeking and self-exalting nature is both evil and slated for destruction. (Rom. 2:5-9) It leads to a sense of fear and foreboding, helping us to recognize our great need for a supernatural deliverance through a work of God's grace.

It was law that led Paul to this same conclusion. *Although he was a very religious man, he could not deliver himself from the covetous nature that always wants more for "self."* The law was used to expose this evil and his powerlessness to deliver himself from it. So we find him saying, "...For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin...produced in me all manner of evil desire {the self-seeking and self-exalting nature}... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:7-8, 24) Those who take God's Word seriously will eventually be turned to Christ for the gift and power of His Spirit.

The Israelites were required to look to the blood of the lamb before they could make any further progress. The Passover lamb was a type of Christ. "...Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7) The lamb was slain and the blood was shed. That was substitution. A Jew might have said with a believer today, "That lamb dies instead of me."

Christ shed His blood to save the whole world. It is because of His shed blood that everyone under the age of accountability and everyone who is truly developmentally disabled will be saved. But there comes a point when most people become morally responsible

for their actions. It is then necessary to personally appropriate Christ's blood.

The believer was forgiven by God when he sprinkled the shed blood of the lamb on the door-frame. That is to say, each individual must acknowledge that their only hope is in Jesus and His shed blood. Only the blood sprinkled saved individuals from death.

This God-given lesson also teaches us that the Israelites first came under the blood while still back in Egypt. This was their Passover. They did not experience the death that came upon the Egyptians because they were in a forgiven state. But they were not yet set free from their bondage to sin.

John Wesley referred to people in this relationship with Christ as servants rather than sons. He had lived in this kind of relationship with God until he had his "Aldersgate experience." While these individuals can become quite disciplined in their religion, as the Pharisees did, those who are serious about their relationship with God will eventually acknowledge there is something wrong in their heart. They will not have the power to truly live above sin {including sins against love} as long as self is at the center of everything.

Many of those in the church have never gotten beyond looking to the shed blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. If they are *truly* trying to serve the Lord as Wesley did in this condition, it appears they could be taken to heaven as the thief on the cross. But a person cannot expect to remain in this bondage for long without falling into the temptations of the devil. God will not permit someone who has remained a "slave" to sin to go on living in His house forever without seeking to be delivered.

...Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. And a slave does not abide in the house {of God} forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free {from sin}, you shall be free indeed.
(John 8:34-36)

The Red Sea: The Israelites would have remained in bondage to sin if they had not chosen to come out of Egypt after receiving their Passover. Those who do not take advantage of the means that God has provided for victory over sin can expect to die in their sins and end up in eternal spiritual death.

Again, we will admit that some people, like John Wesley, have spent many years trying to get out of Egypt in their own strength. But this is not how God planned for it to be.

We are driven out of Egypt by the law, in fear, because we know that our sins will eventually destroy us. *The Passover will not have a lasting effect if we refuse to separate from the ways of the world.* "...Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (Jam. 4:4)

The crossing of the Red Sea was another significant step forward in God's work of saving His people. This is where they experienced a real deliverance from the power of sin. It represents the place where God's people receive the gift of His indwelling Spirit.

The Spirit is *with* the believer from the very beginning as He was *with* Christ's first disciples prior to His death and resurrection. "...But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14:17) Those who are honestly seeking to be a disciple of Jesus will recognize His work in their lives. But this is not enough to gain victory over sin. The Spirit must be received within the heart before the believer will begin to experience a real sense of inward freedom and be able to serve God in the Spirit.

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and *given us the Spirit in our hearts* as a guarantee. (2 Cor. 1:21-22 emphasis added)

When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within the heart, He comes as the dove of peace. His indwelling presence provides a deep sense of being at peace with God. He witnesses with our Spirit that we are children of God. This inner witness is our assurance or guarantee that we are living in a right relationship with our heavenly Father.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom. 8:15-16)

We can only expect to have this inner witness of being right with God as we walk by the Spirit. We will experience either peace with God, or condemnation, depending on whether we are being led by the Spirit or are directing our own steps according to the desires of the flesh. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (Rom. 8:1)

Those who still sense fear and condemnation because of their powerlessness to walk in harmony with Jesus need to receive the gift of His indwelling Spirit. We are speaking of those who experience what Paul describes in Romans seven. While the Spirit is working "with" them, He is not yet "in" them.

I find then a law {an inward law of sin}, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good... 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. 7:21, 23)

Paul said, "...I would not have known sin except through the law..." (Rom. 7:7) The Spirit uses the law to reveal the carnal mind. (Rom. 7:14) This condemnation of the law prepares God's called-out people to enter into this deeper level of salvation where they find freedom from sin and a deep sense of peace with God.

While Wesley referred to this step in God's work of salvation as moving from the state of a servant to that of a son, others, like John Fletcher and Daniel Steel referred to it as moving from the Age of the Father to the Age of the Son. It is the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that provides power over the flesh and gives the assurance that all our sins are forgiven. Through the eyes of faith we see all the dead and harmless Egyptians {all of our past sins} floating up on the shore.

Whoever has been born of God {when the Spirit comes to dwell within the heart} does not sin {he does not go on willfully living in sin because the Spirit now gives the believer the desire to please God rather than living to please “self”}, for His seed {the Holy Spirit} remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:2)

This deliverance from the experience of Romans seven to the freedom revealed in Romans eight is the first step in being fully sanctified {set apart for God’s exclusive use}. It is sanctification begun. It qualifies the believer to be called a saint, or one who is holy {set apart}.

In fact, many of those who experience this sudden power over sin often believe they are fully sanctified. But this great miracle of the new birth does not perfect the heart in holy love.

Because this miracle that takes place at the Red Sea is representative of baptism, we need to take a closer look at how God intended for baptism to be used. “...Our fathers... were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. 10:1-2) Every believer needs to be led to this place where they are prepared to be baptized.

Most people see baptism as nothing more than a ritual. But God had a purpose for it. After the Ethiopian eunuch had heard the gospel message, believed in it, and saw water, he requested to be baptized. (Acts 8:35-38) In the same way that the Jews did not put off their crossing of the Red Sea, the Eunuch knew from what he had heard that it would be helpful to submit to baptism. “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:38)

The apostle Paul’s description of baptism helps reveal its purpose. He depicts it as going down into a watery grave where we die to self-will. It is this choice to die and be buried that prepares us to come out of the grave in a whole new form of life – a life of being led by the

Spirit alone. Therefore, if it is to be effective, it will need to be understood as more than a mere ritual. Many of those in the church never find their way out of a Romans seven experience because they do not submit to what baptism represents.

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if {and the word is “if”} we have been united together in the likeness of his death {*by choosing* to die to self-will to live for the Father’s will, as Jesus did}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection... For the death that he died, He died to sin {to self-will} once for all; but *the life that He lives, He lives to God*. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin {to self-will}, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:3-5, 10-11 emphasis added)

At this point, we will acknowledge that it is not necessary to be immersed in water to accomplish what baptism is intended to do. But immersion, as a death and burial of the old self-willed way of life, is intended to help the new believer see more clearly what needs to take place in order to receive the gift of the Spirit. Without this conscious choice to die to self-will, it is not possible to be born of the Spirit.

The people of this fallen world naturally live by their own will. Self-will is the essence of sin. And they cannot become Spirit-led children of God until they choose to reckon themselves dead to this old self-willed way of life. *God looks into the heart and can see when this true conversion has taken place.*

...But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as instruments of righteousness to God*... But now having been set free from sin {self-will}, and *having become slaves of God*, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the

wages of sin {self-will} is death {it results in an ever-dying life – Greek *psuche*}, *but the gift of God* is eternal life {Greek – *zoe*} in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:13, 22-23 emphasis added)

Dying to the sin of self-will, “once for all,” is what Christ’s death meant to our Lord. “He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.” (Rom. 6:10) He submitted His will absolutely unto God. “...Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God...” (Heb. 10:9) “...Not My will, but Yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42) Once there has been this unconditional surrender of the will to God, making possible an entrance into this Spirit-directed way of life, then “sin shall not have dominion over you.” (Rom. 6:14) “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin {the self-directed way of life}, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:11)

Those who choose to go down into the grave and die to self will, whether it is done in water, in a field or at an altar of their choosing, can expect to experience the miracle that takes place at the Red Sea. As they come up in faith to walk in the newness of a Spirit-directed way of life, they can expect the Spirit to begin dwelling within them. *He comes to provide power over sin.*

The Wilderness Testing Period: The Passover represents a deliverance from the penalty of sin. The miracle at the Red Sea provides the gift of the Holy Spirit and power over sin. But this is not the point where God’s people are taken into the promised life of perfect love. There is still a period of testing that needs to be traversed.

Jesus is our forerunner. He has revealed the course that each of His followers must take. After the Spirit came to Him in the form of a dove {representing “peace with God”}, He was led into the wilderness testing period. It was then that He was required to make a conscious decision to resist the devil’s temptations to live by the lust {desires} of the flesh, the lust {desires} of the eyes and the {self-elevating} pride of life.

This is where many of those who had a clear new birth experience have failed. Because there has been a lack of faithful teachers to tell them what came next, they were tempted by the devil to go back to living by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. They were deceived into thinking it was possible to serve two masters. You can therefore find them serving themselves while trying to work in some service for the Lord. But it never works in the end. While they may still go to church and remain in their religion, the spiritual life they once possessed is lost.

God's children naturally come out of their conversion experience at the Red Sea singing praises to the Lord. The change is so great that many initially consider it the life of promise. But it is not long before they sense being in a desert wilderness where people still find themselves with a thirst for the things of this world. While the Lord does provide these earnest souls with periodic "wells of refreshment" to keep them moving forward, it is clearly not the life of promise where God's children "never thirst."

...As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38)

But whoever drinks of the water that I give him will *never thirst*... (John 4:14)

...You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isa. 58:11)

Those who have entered into the wilderness testing period are blessed with a real hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is not the fear of punishment that moves them forward, but a deep desire to be filled with the Son's life of true righteousness. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) But we say again, if they begin sustaining themselves on the world through its lusts {desires} and self-elevating ways, this hunger for righteousness will soon be lost, along with their hope of being "filled" with Christ's life of heavenly righteousness.

It is in the wilderness, after receiving the gift of the Spirit, that God permits us to be fully tested. "Therefore, brethren, we are not debtors

– not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh {after receiving the gift of the Spirit} you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Rom. 8:12-13) You will be taken into the eternal *zoe* life.

While the new birth definitely supplies power over the flesh, it is not yet dead to the world and its things. This is where the *psuche* life must be lost before Christ’s eternal *zoe* life can be found. Again, with Jesus setting the course to follow, we must choose to deny ourselves and lose the old *psuche* life that has its source in the temporal realm before we can find His eternal *zoe* life. (Matt. 16:24-25). “...My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life {*psuche*} ... I lay it down of Myself...” (John 10:17-18)

God permits us to come out of Egypt with some of our old dependencies. He never requires us to give up more than He has prepared us to bear. But He cannot take us into the life of promise until these things have been lost in the wilderness. Every heart idol – everything that is not fully devoted to the Lord and His purposes – must be surrendered before the eternal soul can find the heavenly life of promise.

...For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them...” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean {anything that is not fully devoted, consecrated, given up to the Lord}, and I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:16-17)

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life {*zoe*}, to which you were also called... (1 Tim. 6:12)

Once the supplies taken out of Egypt are gone and we begin to lose our self-sufficiency, God teaches us to live on manna alone. This manna represents His Word. We learn to sustain ourselves on the promises while the Lord teaches us His ways and tests us to see if we will fully surrender to the Kingdom-life He has described in His Sermon on the Mount. We are to seek first this “kingdom of God and His righteousness” above even the necessities of life. (Matt. 6:33) If

we will take our eyes off the world and its things, He will make sure we have everything that is needed to sustain us physically.

It often takes some time to renew the mind and fully surrender to Christ's way of life. We soon begin to see how the ways of this world are diametrically opposed to the way of life in God's eternal kingdom. "...For what is highly esteemed among men {of this passing world} is an abomination in the sight of God." (Luke 16:15) We must choose to reject the spirit of the world as God increases our light in this time of testing. He will be preparing us to make the kind of full surrender that He requires.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:2)

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in dying out to the flesh-life in the time of testing}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (1 Pet. 5:10)

The Lord has only promised to manifest His heavenly life within those who have shown their willingness to yield to all revealed light. "He who has My commandments and keeps them {through the power of the Spirit}, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." (John 14:21) This promise is to those who have already received the gift of the Spirit.

Those who press forward in their faith during this time of testing will soon come to the place where they are willing to live through the life of Christ alone. It is this deeper surrender that results in a complete healing of the inner nature. God fills the temple of these fully consecrated believers with His glory and begins to manifest His nature of holy love in everything they do.

Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather healed. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness,

without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God... (Heb. 12:12-15)

...I will come to you... Because I live {in the eternal "zoe" life}, you will live also {in the same life}. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (John 14:18-20)

We also need to recognize that group of believers who were permitted to live out their life in the desert wilderness without being destroyed. While they did not enter the life of promise, neither did they fall into the sin of living by their own fleshly desires. These earnest souls lived as pilgrims and strangers in the world, looking forward to their future life in heaven. They represent the Christians who are unable to lay hold of Christ's eternal life of promise by faith in this world. Instead of living wholly by the Spirit in faith, they continue in a mixed life of trying to serve the Lord in their own strength. Because they do not have a faith that looks for the firstfruits of heaven to come down into their heart, all their faith is in the future heaven.

These all died in the faith, *not having received the promises*, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.... But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Heb. 11:13, 16)

Everyone who truly desires to live in holiness with the Lord will receive the life of promise in the end. But the Christians we are now speaking about spend their lives serving the Lord in an arid land. They depend on the temporal wells of refreshment they periodically receive from the Lord to keep them going. They are like Moses. They are restricted from entering into the life of promise because they attempt to produce the Living Water from the Rock of Christ through their own efforts. They have never entered into the rest of faith by

ceasing from their own works and learning to live through the life of Christ alone.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to come short of it... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest... (Heb. 4:1, 9-11)

The Life of Promise: It will be helpful to provide a general description of “the life of promise” so we may avoid misconceptions. We have limited ourselves to Scriptural statements that reveal what is now available to everyone who believes. Each individual will need to search their own heart to determine if they have found what has been promised through the New Covenant:

1.) God has promised better things for us than a wilderness life of dryness and doubt. It is a life where the soul remains blessed, with all discontentment vanishing. We can now receive a constant and abiding supply of Christ’s “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

2.) It is a life of deep rest of soul. “Come to Me...and I will give you rest... Learn from Me...and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matt. 11:28-29) Soul rest does away with “spiritual weariness.”

3.) It is a life where the soul enjoys the “peace of God.” (Phil. 4:7) This is much greater than “peace with God.” “My peace I give to you.” (John 14:27) Those who experience anything other than a Christ-like peace—even under opposition, oppression, loss and perplexity—should seek to gain an abundant entrance into the “life of promise.”

4.) It is a life where the fruit of Christ’s Spirit flows without ceasing. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23) If you find a contrary spirit periodically rising out of your heart, there is still a need to have it {the heart} purified through a

filling with Christ's Spirit. "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit..." (Matt. 7:18)

5.) This fruit from Christ's Spirit includes the presence of His joy. "My joy may remain in you...your joy may be full." (John 15:11) "...I will see you again {as an indwelling life} and your heart will rejoice, *and your joy no one will take from you.*" (John 16:22 emphasis added) This divine life that comes down from the heavenly realms is not overcome by the things of this world. An inward sense of "joy in the Holy Spirit" "may remain in you" even while passing through severe hardships.

6.) The Presence of God within the soul provides an intimate knowledge of His divine nature. "...We {the triune God} will come to him and make our home with him." (John 15:23) The Spirit imparts "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face {the image or likeness} of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6) We become filled with His life of holy love. "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:22, 26) "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory...*to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge;* that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:16, 19) Being filled with the fullness of God is what enables us to "know God" and reveal His spiritual image.

You should not put off pressing into this life of promise until you can learn more about where it may lead. Like the Jews of old, there are still those who insist on having reports from the new territory before they go forward. *To God it represents unbelief and distrust in Him.* Once He has prepared His called-out people to enter His life of promise, He expects them to go forward by consecrating themselves completely to Him regardless of where it may lead. You will need the trust of a little child that is willing to go wherever it is led by its parents if you hope to have God raise you spiritually into His heavenly life. Many have failed to enter the life of promise because they hesitated to move forward after God had led them up to the

Jordan River. He has sent many back into the wilderness for a few more years of dryness and struggle for hesitating at this point.

God eventually prepared a people who would step out in faith. With the flooded {Jordan} river before them and the full realization that it could not be crossed without divine intervention, they stepped forward trusting in God. The Lord performed the miracle when the first step touched the water. (Joshua 3: 13-17) Without this step of faith, the river will not open.

No sooner had they entered the life of promise than the Lord appeared to Joshua. He came as a Commander to take complete control of their lives. Once He manifests Himself, He becomes the source of power and victory over every situation. He said to Joshua, "...As Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come..." (Joshua 5:14)

Christ is now far above all other principalities and powers. He has a life that nothing from this world or the world of evil spirits can touch. And He has given everyone access to this victorious life through faith. Every spiritual blessing in His life is now at our disposal. (Eph. 1:3) Once we have counted everything as loss, including our own righteousness and zeal, and have learned to live through Him alone, we will find that we can do "all things through Christ." (Phil 4:13) "...I will come to you... Because I live, you will live also." (John 14:18-19)

This crossing of the Jordan is truly a miraculous event in the spiritual progress of a Christian. We should note that the river was backed up to "Adam." (Josh. 3:16) The Lord comes to fill the vessel of our body with the glory that Adam originally lost. The lost image is regained when we are once again living through the heavenly life of the Son. (Rom. 5:17)

This does not imply that we have "arrived." God is infinite, and there is lots of room for growth in His eternal life. For example, Jesus revealed the image of the Father through His mortal body from a very young age. From the point He was old enough to walk by the Spirit, the life of His Father could be revealed through Him. We are

also told that He grew in wisdom and stature. As He received more light and continued to respond to His Father's will, more and more of His Father's life could be revealed through His mortal body. Similarly, with an infinite God of light before us, we are to grow with ever-increasing glory into His heavenly life. (2 Cor.3:18)

Christ, as He lives in His glorified state, is now in a position to pour out His heavenly life and fill every vessel. "He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." (Eph. 4:10) "And of His fullness we have all received {we all have access to the same life}, and grace for grace." (John 1:16) It is a vessel that will continue to expand and be filled as we yield to what God is working out in our life. Why go on living in your own strength with its wilderness experience when you can now share with Christ in His heavenly life?

The Son will become your life once His power has been perfected through the weakness of dependent faith. Be prepared to come to that place where you can honestly say that you no longer live and that Christ has become your life. Count that old oppressive life {*psuche*} as loss and seek the eternal life {*zoe*} that comes from above.

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form {the life of the Trinity was reestablished in a human body}, and you have been given fullness in Christ {you have access to every blessing in Him}, who is the head over every power and authority. (Col. 2:9-10 NIV)

Praise the dear Lord Jesus forever and forever!

A Witness of Life From Above

{Chapter 6, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:6)

If we intend to consistently walk as Jesus did in holy love year after year, in every trial and difficulty, it will be necessary to find life from above. This was Paul's secret. "...It pleased God...to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles..." (Gal. 1:15-16)

Every Christian naturally starts out serving the Lord in their own strength. From a very young age we are told to work hard to achieve our goals. The spirit of the world teaches us to live "out from" ourselves. This means of achieving human success is drilled into our minds. We therefore have a natural tendency to bring these thought processes with us when we become members of Christ's church. And it is not easy to fully renew the mind and begin living by the Spirit alone.

It is not unusual to find people in the church today doing what Paul originally tried to do by depending on their religious heritage, their education, their zeal and their concerted efforts to make themselves good Christians. But none of these things can supply the soul with God's life of holy love.

"...Not by might nor by power {man's strength}, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts. (Zech. 4:6)

If anyone could have made himself right through his own efforts it would have been the apostle Paul. He was raised from birth in a religious heritage where he earnestly studied the Scriptures. He attended the best religious school of his day. He had a zeal for God that was willing to risk his life in fighting against anyone who "perverted" his understanding of the Scriptures. And when it came to submitting to the laws of God, he was "blameless." (Phil. 3:4-6) But then he received a vision of the heavenly Pearl. At that point he began to realize how these other things did not supply him with an inward knowledge of the life of God. He then learned how He could "know Christ" and the "power of His resurrection" through faith. At this point, where he finally rejected the spirit of the world, we find him saying:

...If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so... But what things were gain to me {the human methods for becoming right}, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss {everything from the self-originated form of life} for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law {by trying to conform to laws}, but that which is through faith in Christ, *the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...* (Phil. 3:4, 7-10)

Paul chose to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl. The Pearl is Christ Himself coming in the power of His eternal Kingdom-life and making Himself known within our inner being as a new nature {of self-less, self-sacrificing love}. He brings with Him the “righteousness” that has its source in God – “the righteousness that is from God by faith.” “For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

It is not unusual to see new and highly motivated Christians zealously serving the Lord. They sacrifice their time and resources in working for Him. But we eventually find them running out of energy and gradually slipping back to lower levels where they live mostly for themselves. Even when they go on faithfully attending church services, tithing on all their income and conforming to certain religious standards, they will still sense a falling away from their first love. This sense of running out of energy and slipping backwards comes from not learning how to live through Christ’s endless life.

...There arises another Priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. (Heb. 7:15-16)

Hudson Taylor, the well-known missionary to China, went through a similar experience. It will be helpful to describe at some

length how he found the life of promise. From a letter written to his sister we can see how he too had grown weary in trying to serve the Lord in the kind of holy love this is required. But then he received a vision of the heavenly Pearl. With the life of promise opened to his spiritual eyes through faith, he was willing to surrender everything from his old self-sufficient form of life in order to buy it. This is his confession:

"I prayed, fasted, agonized, strove, made resolutions, read the Bible more diligently, sought more time for retirement and meditation—but all without effect... Then came the question: 'Is there no rescue? Must it be like this to the end...instead of victory, too often defeat?... I felt I was a child of God, but how to rise to my privileges as a child I was utterly powerless to see. I thought that holiness, practical holiness, was to be gradually attained by a diligent use of the means of grace. I felt there was nothing so much desired in the world, nothing I so much needed. When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus."

What was it he read? The letter stated {italics added}: *"By faith a channel is formed by which Christ's fullness plenteously flows down. The barren branch becomes a portion of the fruitful stem. He is most holy who has most of Christ within. It is defective faith that clogs the feet and causes many a fall. Abiding—not struggling or striving: looking to Him; trusting Him for present power; trusting Him to subdue all inward corruption; resting in the conscious joy of a complete salvation; a salvation from all sin: willing that he should be truly supreme... Christ literally ALL seems to me now the power, the only power for service; the only ground for unchanging joy. How, then, is this faith increased? Only by thinking of all that Jesus is and all that He is for us... Not a striving to have faith, or to increase our faith, but a looking off to the Faithful One seems all we need—a resting in the Loved One entirely for time and eternity. It does not appear to me anything new—only formerly misapprehended."*

Mr. Taylor took these words and applied them to his heart. He suddenly realized that all he needed was an inward revelation of the eternal life of the Son within the temple of his body. It was not a matter of struggling to make the life real. Rather, by faith, he chose to offer himself to be a vessel that Christ could use to manifest His own life and works.

Mr. Judd, one of Mr. Hudson's coworkers, later wrote: "He is a joyous man now, a bright happy Christian. He had been a toiling, burdened one before, with latterly not much rest of soul. It was resting in Jesus now, and letting Him do the work—which makes all the difference. Whenever he spoke in meetings after that, a new power seemed to flow from him, and in the practical things of life a new peace possessed him. Troubles did not worry him as before. He cast everything on God in a new way, and gave more time to prayer."

Six months before finding the heavenly Pearl he had written, "I have continually to mourn that I follow at such a distance and learn so slowly to imitate my precious Master." But now he had begun to live through Jesus. He exchanged his old self-originated form of life for the life that comes down from heaven. He could then truly say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God..." Gal. 2:20)

His biographer goes on to say, "There was no thought of imitation now! It was in blessed reality 'Christ liveth in me.' And how great the difference!... So great was the deliverance, that from that time onward Mr. Taylor could never do enough in helping to make this precious secret plain to hungry hearts wherever he might be. And there are so many hungry hearts that need such help today."

With this thought in mind, we believe it will be helpful to let Mr. Taylor speak more of the results:

Oh, my dear sister, it is a wonderful thing to be really one with a risen and exalted Savior... Think what it involves. Can Christ be rich and I poor?... The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being sweeter than

another, is the rest... *I am no longer anxious about anything...for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine.* It makes no matter where He places me, or how. That is rather for Him to consider than for me... So, if God should place me in serious perplexity, must He not give me much guidance; in positions of great difficulty, much grace; in circumstances of great pressure and trial, much strength? No fear that His resources will prove unequal to the emergency! *And His resources are mine, for He is mine, and is with me and dwells in me...*

In other words, do not let us consider Him as far off, when God has made us one with Him... *Nor should we look upon this experience, these truths, as for the few. They are the birthright of every child of God, and no one can dispense with them without dishonoring our Lord...*

His biographer goes on, "It was an experience that stood the test as months and years went by. Never again did the unsatisfied days come back; *never again was the needy soul separated from the fullness of Christ.* Trials came, deeper and more searching than ever before, *but in them all joy flowed unhindered from the presence of the Lord Himself.* For Hudson Taylor had found the secret of soul-rest. In this experience there had come to him not only a fuller apprehension of the Lord Jesus Himself and all He is for us, but a fuller surrender—*yes, indeed, a self-abandonment to Him...* Surrender to Christ he had long known, but this was more; *this was a new yieldedness, a glad, unreserved handing over of self and everything to Him.* It was no longer a question of giving up this or that if the Lord required it; it was a loyal and loving acceptance, a joyful meeting of His will in things little and great, as the very best that could be for his own."

Praise the glorious Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! He has come to give His eternal life to everyone who believes in Him. All He asks is that we cease from our own works and learn to live through Him. He wants us to enjoy His Presence in an abundantly full measure so we may reveal His life and work. Today is truly the

day when we are to be saved from our old fallen and defeated way of life by being “filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19)

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory... (Eph. 3:20-21)

How then can we secure the fullness of this blessing? Only by letting Jesus Christ do what our own struggling and striving have failed to do. We cannot display the life of Jesus by trying to do so. He does not ask us to do what He has come to do. In fact, He cannot work until we have ceased to work in the strength of our flesh.

The life of Ishmael {produced by Abraham’s flesh} and the life of Isaac {the life produced by God’s promise} cannot reside together. God will not permit His life of promise to be mixed with the fleshly works of man. And so we cannot expect to find the life of promise until, like Abraham, we are “as good as dead” to our old self-originated form of life. (Heb. 11:12)

God did not completely reject Abraham for trying to help Him produce the life of promise. In one sense Ishmael was also accepted by God. But he was relegated to a wilderness experience. “So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.” (Gen. 21:20-21) We need to realize that this statement was written down for the purpose of teaching a lesson to Christians in this New Testament age of fulfillment.

There is a root meaning in the word Paran that is related to vaunting and glorifying in self. It reveals how those who follow in this lineage of Ishmael, by living in a self-produced form of righteousness, will naturally have a tendency to exalt self and look down on others for not conforming to the same standards. While Ishmael Christians believe in God and live for God, they remain married to the self-originated form of life that comes out of Egypt. Not only does it keep them in their own wilderness experience, it ends up causing strife and division throughout the church as they

multiply the rules in their books of tradition. You will also find them shooting their arrows at people who do not precisely conform to what they believe. It results in a form of Christianity that inevitably divides the body of Christ and turns many away from the life of promise.

Throughout the centuries, the prophets had been speaking about a day when the Messiah would come for the purpose of revealing God's life of holy love through His children. We are now living in the age of fulfillment {the New Testament age} where we are to live through Christ. This was the mystery that had been hidden for so many generations. "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come to you.*" (1 Peter 1:10) We are to enter into the righteousness that comes from God, by living through Christ in faith.

In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. (1 John 4:9)

The Old Covenant was never able to bring the full reality of Christ's "Light of Life" into the heart of God's called-out children. The New Covenant is what makes it possible to enter into the reality of grace and truth. Unfortunately, most Christians are still attempting to live in an Old Covenant form of salvation. They are attempting to make themselves right as they pick and choose the laws they will obey. While Paul did admit there is some glory in the Old Covenant in comparison to living as the world does, it has little value when compared to the glory that is now available through the New Covenant.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious...how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. (2 Cor. 3:7-10)

The Word of God reveals the standard and then points us to Christ—the source of truth and life. He has clearly stated, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life {the eternal *zoe* life}. No one comes to the Father {to the original source of this heavenly life} except through Me.” (John 14:6) It is in this sense that the new way has so much more glory in it. It enables us to share with God in His eternal life of holy love.

Here is where we need to examine ourselves to see if we are still trying to make ourselves right through the means of the lesser glory of the Old Covenant. Are we still attempting to live by our pet laws, or have we been willing to follow Christ through the cross, counting everything from the self-originated form of life as loss so we may enter into His heavenly life? This way of the New Covenant is much more glorious than the old one. It is the one means for being filled with the glory of God.

Unfortunately, many church members have not had their spiritual eyes opened to these truths. It was in this sense that Paul longed for God to open the understanding of the Christians he taught. He wanted them to recognize the hope of their calling. His prayer to the Ephesians would apply to many Christians in the church today. He prayed “that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead *and seated Him...in the heavenly places.*” (Eph. 1:18-20)

God is now ready to use His resurrection power to lift your spiritual life into the heavenly realms. It will enable you to begin sharing with Christ in every spiritual blessing found in His heavenly life. (Eph. 1:3-4) Is this not what your soul desires?!

The question is this: Are you willing to surrender everything to Christ and begin living as a vessel that He can use according to His purposes? It will entail dying to your self-life, including your self-will {living by “the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph. 2:3), - that old life that originates in self, “of self,” “by self, and “for self”}, your

possessions, your work, your future and everything else that leads you to live for your own selfish desires. You cannot serve two masters.

A fully consecrated vessel must remain holy to God {separated to Him for His exclusive use}. If it becomes devoted to any other purpose, it becomes “unclean” in God’s sight. And God will not manifest His glory in an unclean vessel. “As God has said, ‘I will dwell in them...’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean {the things that are not fully devoted to the service of God}, and I will receive you.’ ” (2 Cor. 6:16-17)

Even though he had already become a noted missionary, Wilbur Chapman hesitated for some time before he was prepared to entrust his future to Christ. F. B. Meyer said to him, “Are you willing to be made willing?” Mr. Chapman then agreed to be made willing. Those who enter into their own Garden of Gethsemane to make a similar decision can expect God to do whatever is necessary to take them through the cross and into resurrection life.

Jesus Himself went through this same struggle. And we need to note that His Father only required Him to make the decision about going forward through the cross. Our Lord did not crucify Himself, nor bury Himself, nor raise Himself from the dead and into resurrection life, and neither can we. We must all choose to say with Jesus, “Not my will, but yours be done.” Once we have honestly and wholeheartedly made the choice to follow Christ through the cross, which implies dying to the self-originated form of life, the Spirit of God will then work out the details of taking us into His resurrection life.

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)

Knowing God’s Presence

{Chapter 7, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

Two things are required before anyone can share with Christ in His heavenly life—absolute surrender and faith in God: man’s part and God’s part. The entrance may be summed up in two simple mottoes: Let Go and Let God.

It is surprising how difficult it is to get people to understand what it means to “surrender” to God. And when they finally understand the implications, we find that it is even more difficult to convince them that it is for their good!

It seems like it would be easy to persuade Christians to let go of this world once they can see from the Scriptures how it provides access to the firstfruits of the life of heaven. Most of these people are willing to become holy in the future so they may go to heaven and live in God’s Presence someday. But it is surprising how many prefer for the time being to cling to the feeble spiritual life they have developed through their own efforts in this world. However, we are here to exhort you to pay the full price for the heavenly Pearl. Today is the day when you may begin sharing with Christ in His heavenly life.

There is a Christian classic called *The Practice of the Presence of God*. It describes the life of a man called Brother Lawrence. He had learned to live in unbroken fellowship with God. While he started out in his spiritual journey as everyone else does by attempting to improve his spiritual life through various religious exercises, he eventually found that these things hindered his growth.

While religious exercises are needful in grounding the believer in the Christian walk, there comes a time when God expects His children to go on to perfection. This is when it becomes necessary to rest from our own works and learn to live through Him. We must go beyond the elementary principles of the faith. Looking for help through religious activities in the temporal realm eventually becomes more of a hindrance than a help.

While it was good for Jesus to be with His disciples in the physical realm when He first began ministering to them, there came a time when He spoke of the need of going away. He said that it would be better for them after He left to be with His Father. Once He was in a glorified state, He could come to them in a new way. It would actually help them to understand His way of life and to have more faith in Him than was possible by hearing His teachings and seeing His miracles.

When looking at this important truth we should consider how Jesus was the best teacher who ever lived. If anyone could have taught these earnest disciples how to live “right,” it would have been Him. While His teachings and their religious practices were needed in preparing them to receive the promise, these activities could not impart His *zoe* life to their soul. There comes a time when all these things must go away, including our human understanding of Jesus, so we may begin looking in faith for God to supply the life that is needed to walk as Jesus did.

We should also note that Jesus did not instruct His disciples to wait for a New Testament Bible to be produced. The written Word could not impart the knowledge of God’s eternal *zoe* life within their soul any more than His personal teachings could. Their real hope of becoming like Him was in His promise to send His Spirit to reveal His life of holy love within their inner being.

Of course, because they were still living by natural thought processes on a temporal level, the disciples were unable to relate to what Jesus was trying to say. But Jesus continued to press His point. He needed disciples who would go beyond the natural and begin looking to Him as a “life-giving spirit.” (1 Cor. 15:45)

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away... He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine {the eternal *zoe* life} and making it known to you {as a new inner nature – the “divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4)}. All that belongs to the Father is mine... (John 16:7, 14-15 NIV)

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation... (Heb. 6:1)

Even though Brother Lawrence continued to participate in the religious activities of the church, he learned to turn his focus from these activities to the Christ who had come to be the source of his spiritual life. He was in a church that had become caught up in all kinds of error and was quite dead to the spiritual life of God. But Brother Lawrence was one of God's remnant who had learned to live through Jesus. He learned to worship God through the Spirit in everything he did. He therefore was able to live in constant fellowship with God.

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit {live by the Spirit}, rejoice in Christ Jesus {for what He is doing in our lives}, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

Brother Lawrence had one goal in life and that was to continuously live in the Presence of God. While his job involved working in a busy kitchen, his priority was unbroken communion with God. He always sought to live in harmony with the Spirit of his Lord. He once said that he would not even pick up a straw from the ground if he felt it would be in opposition to the Lord's will. Because he walked as Jesus did by always seeking to please God, the Lord never left him alone.

...I do nothing of {out from} Myself... The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:28-29)

Brother Lawrence could testify to the fact that Christ's presence continually remained within Him. "The times of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

Now, is not that the spirit we want? “You will show me the path of life; In your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Ps. 16:11) This is a description of the heavenly life that Jesus desires to give to each of His followers. Our Lord has purposed to share His own life of heavenly peace, joy and love with everyone, and will with those who follow Him through the cross.

...My peace I give to you... (John 14:27)

...That My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

...That the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:26)

We often speak of God coming to our worship services. People sense His coming. But these instances are like wells of refreshment while passing through a dry wilderness in contrast to having the abiding Presence of the Lord within our soul. God is looking for disciples who will go beyond finding life from these temporal activities. He needs disciples who can actually take the life of heaven with them wherever they go, regardless of the circumstances. As Paul and Silas once revealed from their prison cell, the Lord wants to continually display His love, His joy and His peace through His disciples, even when they are confronted with severe hardships.

The Lord wants us to realize that He can make Himself known within our inner being as we learn to live through Him in the same way He lived through the Father. He repeated over and over again to His disciples how the Father was living through Him. (John 10:38) In fact, considering all He said about the life He was sharing with His Father, He could hardly believe what He was hearing when, toward the end, Phillip asked him to help them understand the Father.

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? ...The Father who dwells in Me does

the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves." (John 14:9-11)

Jesus specifically told them that He was not able to do anything "of Himself." He assured them that the Father was in Him and doing the work. (John 5:19, 30) And if He could not do anything "out from" Himself, but as the Son of Man had to receive everything from above, then why are we trying to do His work in our own strength? The flesh cannot do anything of value in the kingdom of God. "For without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Everything must come from God and be worked out in the power of His Holy Spirit. " 'Not by might nor by power {of your own strength}, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." (Zech. 4:6)

But how can we enjoy this life that comes down from above? How are we to "know Him and the power of His resurrection"? (Phil. 3:10) How was it that both the apostle Paul and Brother Lawrence were able to continually enjoy the Presence of the Lord within their soul? The secret is – they were both willing to count "all things as loss" and abandon themselves entirely to the Lord to be a vessel of His life and works.

Brother Lawrence said, "I know that for the right practice of it, the heart must be empty of all other things; because God will possess the heart alone. And as He cannot possess it alone without emptying it of all besides, so neither can He act there and do in it what He pleases unless it be left vacant to Him."

A heart that has been vacated of all else permits God to be "all in all" and allows Him complete freedom to do as He pleases. The Lord loves to reveal Himself in such a heart.

Christians who are willing to become nothing in themselves will be lifted into the highest levels of spiritual life in the heavenly realms. Those who are the "least" have the assurance of becoming the "greatest" in this Kingdom-life of heaven.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ
Jesus: Who, being in very nature God...*made himself*

nothing, taking the very nature of a servant {slave – Gk. Doulos}...he humbled himself and became obedient to death...therefore God exalted him to the highest place... (Phil. 2:5-9 NIV)

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...and the things which are not, *to bring to nothing* the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:27-29)

Those who remain full of themselves and their own doings will never find this life that comes down from above. The life cannot be found until Christ has gained complete “dominion” within the heart. God actually resists those proud-hearted people who think they are serving Him while directing their own steps and doing their own works so they may receive honor and glory. (1 Pet. 5:5)

This was Brother Lawrence’s prayer: “My God, here I am, all devoted to Thee. Lord, *make me according to Thy heart.*” And what was the result? He had such a joy in God that for thirty years his soul was so elated and exulted that he had to repress his raptures to keep them from breaking forth and interfering with his work.

“You will never have the Victorious Life,” said Wilbur Chapman, “until Jesus Christ has all there is of you—never!” And before Christ can have all of us, we must agree to die to that old self-life that naturally lives for its own honor and glory.

Christ brings His heavenly life with Him when He comes to take complete possession of our being. While He waits for our decision, His glory filling the temple is what brings an end to our fleshly works. Those who choose to enter into this kind of holiness that receives everything from above will secure for themselves Heaven on earth!

We do not lose anything of everlasting value by following Christ in His downward path to nothingness, because as soon as we have lost everything from the old self-originated form of life, we will find

ourselves being lifted by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit into Christ's eternal *zoe* life. It is then that we can honestly say, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. (1 Cor. 6:17)



Some Cautions to Consider

{Chapter 8, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

Jesus is working in the lives of everyone who is trusting in Him to be their Savior, not just from sins committed in the past, but also from the sinful nature. Because they have chosen to live by His Spirit, He dwells within their heart and helps them to understand His ways. Most Christians, however, are like Peter in his early walk with the Lord. They remain at a distance. "And Peter followed afar off." (Luke 22:54 KJV) There is still a gulf between their way of life and Jesus' way of life. This distance will need to be eliminated before it is possible to become as "one" with Him in His life and will.

We should also note that many have separated themselves from Christ's heavenly life after entering into the life of promise. Ezekiel chapter forty-seven speaks of the river of life that flows from the

temple of God. The river flows only ankle deep in the beginning. But it can be increased to knee deep, and then to waist deep, and finally to a deep river that no one can cross. It is easy to go back across an ankle deep stream. We should therefore expect the devil to work hard at drawing souls away from the Lord while still in this early stage of the fully sanctified life. We can therefore say it is not wise to set up camp at the border. The soul will need to find a much deeper measure of His heavenly life than an ankle deep stream if it wants to find true security.

Those who press into the deepest measures of the eternal life will find what might even be considered the equivalent of eternal security. "It was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed." (Ezek. 47:5) This word-picture represents an abundantly full measure of the Son's spiritual life carrying the believer along without any resistance to God's will. Regardless of the difficulty, Christ's indwelling Presence continues to bear a heavenly fruit through these lives.

Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and *their fruit will not fail*. They will bear fruit every month, *because their water flows from the sanctuary...* (Ezk. 47:12)

Everyone who enters the life of promise desires to do those things that are pleasing to God. But many in the shallow waters end up becoming absorbed with worldly things. In time, they are drawn back to using temporal means to help support their spiritual life. For example, two and a half tribes entered into the life of promise and fought bravely for awhile in the kingdom of God. But they eventually put their eyes on the plain and ended up coming out of the life of promise. And today, because there are so many things to attract the lust of the eye, appeal to the desires of the flesh, and encourage prideful behavior, we believe the ratio of those coming back out to find life from the world is probably much higher.

The apostle Paul also had to use great care in his walk with the Lord. We know that he was fully committed to a Spirit-directed way of life. Even when he was aware of the suffering that awaited him in Rome, he went forward "bound in the Spirit." And he was also aware of the necessity of remaining temperate in all things in order to keep every natural desire in complete subjection to the Spirit.

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection {to the Spirit}, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1 Cor 9:24-27)

Paul's objective was to keep every part of his body in full subjection to the Spirit of God. The Spirit, with His still small voice, must be permitted to direct our every step. There will be times when the world and its things have a tendency to speak very loudly to our natural desires. But we must resist these temptations and yield only to the guidance of the Spirit. "For if you live according to the flesh {live for your own desires and will after receiving the Spirit} you will die {have a spiritual life that keeps dying and leaking out of your soul}." (Rom. 8:13) You cannot share with God in His eternal *zoe* life while trying to find life from this world. This was the original evil that separated Adam from the glory of God.

Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate," says the LORD. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns-broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jer. 2:12-13)

We can know when we are beginning to drift away from the ways of the Spirit. The Spirit will withdraw God's divine peace from our

heart. Some people enjoy a sense of peace with God during their times of communion with Him. But it soon goes away as they begin walking in the strength of their flesh. We are therefore instructed to let the “peace of God” rule our heart. The loss of this divine peace is a sure sign that we have begun to walk in our own strength according to our own desires and notions. Those who respond to their latest wants, naturally experience unsettled lives. Because something will inevitably interfere with what they are attempting to do, they find themselves becoming worried and upset over many things.

Martha represents those who attempt to serve the Lord in their own strength. Jesus said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42) “Martha was distracted with much serving.” (Luke 10:40) She neglected to listen to Christ’s voice and permit Him to direct all her steps. Because Mary chose to listen to the Lord and respond only to what He wanted done, she never had anything to be worried and troubled about. God’s will is always accomplished in those who walk by the Spirit. And, as Jesus stated, “one thing is needed,” which is the “peace of God” ruling the heart, and it would not be taken from Mary because she chose to abide in Christ.

Christians should expect to be “overtaken by faults” while self-will still has a foothold somewhere in the heart. The Spirit cannot fill the temple of our body while we are directing our own steps in some matter. We can recognize this self-will and a lack of Christ’s fullness by a periodic rising up of such carnal traits as pride, anger, irritability, impatience, willfulness, anxious worry, jealousy and self-seeking. Great harm is done to the cause of Christ by people who insist they are living victoriously above sin while manifesting these traits.

Nothing from this world, or even the world of evil spirits can touch our soul while we are reckoning ourselves dead to our own will and depending on Christ to be the source of everything we do. The victory is maintained as we permit Christ to live through the

vessel of our body with His overcoming life. As slaves of God, we do nothing on our own. "And having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness." (Rom. 6:22)

Jesus instructs us to abide in Him. "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) That implies resting from our own works and peacefully trusting in Him. *He will provide* the guidance we need, the spiritual sustenance that our soul requires, and the divine fruit that others will need to see if they are to be drawn into the true kingdom of God.

Our Lord will continue to work out all things for our good when we are living for His will alone. Nothing will interfere with His plans in the end when we are truly living by His Spirit. And as we continually manifest His "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" in everything we do, we can expect to draw others into His true salvation.

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought {that may be all around you}... You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. (Isa. 58:11-12)

In all our conflict with evil there must be a deep sense of trust in the Lord. "And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." God cannot work in miraculous ways in an atmosphere of unbelief. Our problems develop when we revert back to our own power and effort. A deterioration of faith will be revealed through the carnal traits of worry, fretting and anxiousness.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

At every alarm, at every approach of temptation, we are to "hide in Him," just as a little child turns its face to its mother's breast whenever it senses danger. God knows the beginning from the end,

and nothing will be permitted to take place in our life that is not for our good and His glory. Let us therefore trust in Him in all matters.

We also need to know what God expects from us if we find ourselves in spiritual defeat. We can learn the lesson by examining Israel's defeat at Ai. The people had already entered into the life of promise. It represents a life that is fully devoted to the Lord. But some of the "devoted things" were taken for personal use. While it was not an easily recognized sin, God sees everything. It is because God sees things that have been rationalized away by once sanctified souls that many have lost the Presence of the Lord from their life. If they are not caught up in an obvious sin, in all likelihood they have taken some of the things that were once devoted to the Lord for their personal use.

The devil is very subtle in these matters. He is able to lead the most earnest souls into rationalizations that are contrary to their original consecration. It leads to the loss of the Presence of the Lord. It eventually reveals itself in spiritual defeat and a display of various carnal traits that are contrary to perfect love.

When Israel was defeated at Ai, the Lord found Joshua on his face in prayer. Even though dependent faith is the way to regain the loss of God's power, it never helps while some of the "devoted things" are still hidden away. It will require a searching of the heart—possibly one area at a time—until the Lord points to the problem. There can never be continuous victory without a complete consecration. Everything that is not fully devoted to the Lord and His work becomes an "unclean thing" in the sight of God. And the Lord never changes His mind. He will continue to say, "Touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (2 Cor. 6:17 KJV) Everything must remain fully devoted to Him and His purposes if we are to consistently share with Him in His victorious life.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face {in prayer}? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I have commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the

devoted things...I will not be with you anymore...Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves...That which is devoted {irrevocably consecrated or given over to God} is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it. (Josh. 7:10-13 NIV)

Once the heart has been thoroughly searched and everything is once again surrendered to the Lord, we can step back into the victorious life by an act of faith. This heavenly life is maintained within the soul by a constant attitude of dependent faith.

We have tried to show how striving and struggling on our part never provides victory in the first place. Therefore, it should be obvious that struggling in these cases will never lift us back into the Presence of the Lord. Turning to Christ in faith is the only way to enter back into His reigning life. He is the One who needs to make the heart pure again. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

It is not unusual to find "holiness" people redefining the sanctified life based on their own experience. They speak of their carnal traits as infirmities. But this will never bring true glory to God. We believe there have been many earnest souls turned away from the life of holiness because of what they see in the lives of those who profess to possess the gift of holy love.

On the other hand, we should also note that not everyone will recognize the eternal *zoe* life even when it is being revealed before their eyes. "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:5) Christ is the only Man who has revealed this divine life without flaw. And yet the religious leaders of His day did not recognize the source of His heavenly life. They said of Christ, "We know that this man is a sinner." If they accused Christ of being a sinner, we should expect the same. They even accused Him of being an evil spirit. But He certainly did reveal the "light of life" from heaven. We therefore should not be surprised when people

question, and even doubt our profession of sharing with Christ in His eternal *zoe* life. We can certainly expect to be misunderstood. And our greatest opposition will typically come from those who are religious.

It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub {a bad spirit}, how much more will they call those of his household! (Matt. 10:25)

We need to see everything that is said or done against us as another opportunity to reveal more clearly the heavenly life that comes from our Lord. For example, it was after the centurion had observed the horrible ordeal that Jesus was taken through on the way to the cross, and then heard Him asking the Father to forgive His tormentors for their sins, that it finally dawned on him that Jesus was truly sharing in the life of God. And when we truly follow Him and become vessels of His life, we can expect God to provide us with similar opportunities to reveal His nature of perfect love in very difficult conditions.

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12)

...But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. (1 Pet. 2:20-23)

The “light of life” (John 8:12) that Christ gives to His followers reveals God’s nature of love. He therefore said, “Let your light so shine.” (Matt. 5:16) This Christ-life is to be revealed wherever we go. It is by revealing this “wisdom that is from above” (James 3:17) that we become an “epistle of Christ” (2 Cor. 3:3) that is “known and read by all men. (2 Cor. 3:2) May God help us all to become a true source of this heavenly light.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jam. 3:17)

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless {pure – NIV}, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. (Phil. 2:14-15)

Christ Our Life

{Chapter 9, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

In our service of making God's truth known, we have purposely drawn on the spiritual insight of a number of different writers. This chapter uses some of the lessons provided by Ruth Paxson in *Rivers of Living Water*.

Our great desire is to open up the real meaning of Christianity. The church in general is not making people aware of what Christ has come to do. The implications of this can be seen in the following example. It refers to young people raised in "Christian families," some of which had ordained ministers as fathers, and who have attended Bible college without ever learning what it means to be saved by Jesus Christ.

A small Bible college has former students who owe money to the school. Attempts to collect the fees are rejected. And yet the majority of these individuals profess to be Christians while spending money that is owed to the school for their own pleasures. Some of them honestly think they have a good relationship with the Lord, even while choosing in self-will not to pay their debt. And yet the Scripture says, "Owe no one anything..." (Rom. 13:8) This speaks of people who are expected to repay a debt and can repay it. Paul

would say to them, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived..." (1 Cor. 6:9) And he includes thieves among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. We are amazed at how people can be raised in the church, and even attend Bible college, and never learn how sin separates people from Christ unless they repent.

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord... (Heb. 10:26-30)

Now if we were to stop at merely revealing how God's Word will one day judge sinners for not keeping the laws of God, we would be describing Old Testament standards. But the New Testament teachings raise the standard much higher. When Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and gave His Sermon on the Mount, He went beyond the requirement of obeying outward laws. He insisted that the heart also be right. That being the case, if someone else were to pay the debt owed by these students, or even if they were to pay it under compulsion, they would not gain anything when it comes to being right with God. If the heart is still willing to do something wrong without confession and repentance, it has not been saved from sin by the grace that Jesus supplies. While the law was designed to constrain this kind of sin, the grace and truth that comes through Jesus Christ changes the very nature.

There are many so-called “good people” who do not rob banks. Of course, many of them would take the money if it was somehow put in their hands without anyone knowing it. But they avoid being an outright thief because of a concern for their reputation. They resist this sin without even professing to be a Christian. But when Jesus puts His Spirit within our heart, He changes our nature so we cannot go on sinning.

If people are ever to be saved from sin, they must be taught what Jesus has come to do. And they must not be permitted to think they have become Christians until they have fully submitted to the salvation He offers.

...You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people *from* their sins. (Matt. 1:21)

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned {lived by his own will and out from his own resources} from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin {go on resisting the teachings in God’s Word}, for His seed {the Son’s submissive nature} remains in him; and he cannot sin {he cannot rebel against the light of truth}, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:8-9)

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you {with His submissive nature}—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Cor. 13:5 NIV)

We have already described the various stages in God’s work of saving a soul from sin. The new Christian, who has truly surrendered their will to walk by the Spirit, will still lack light on many matters. And we should not be loading them down with unnecessary burdens that come from our personal convictions. The Holy Spirit can be counted upon to lead them into all truth if we will continue to encourage them to remain in this Spirit-directed way of life. But there are fundamental issues of obedience they must be taught if we are ever to keep them from being deceived by the devil when he

masquerades as an “angel of light” and by his so-called “ministers of righteousness” he now has working in the church. (2 Cor. 11:14-15)

There is only one Christian life. Receiving into our heart, through faith, the “light of life” that is in the Son is what makes us a Christian. (John 8:12) *We receive New Testament justifying grace and the gift of the Spirit when we lay down our will so that Christ may begin to live through us and reveal the same divine nature that He revealed through His mortal body.* While there will be some preparation work that needs to be worked out through the power of the Spirit before we are “filled” with His “light of life,” *we can only remain justified by walking in all revealed light.*

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another {with God – what an awesome privilege!}, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7)

...If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Rom. 8:13)

God in heaven is invisible. But He wants to reveal Himself in this world. Our choice to live through Christ in the heavenly realms provides Him with an opportunity to walk again on this earth. The spiritual blessings that are now residing in the Son—His love, joy, peace, victory, spiritual power, holiness and others—can now be revealed through us when we give Him an opportunity to fill the temple of our body with His Spirit. (Eph. 1:3; 1 John 4:9)

So what does it mean to be a Christian? It means we must submit ourselves in a way that permits the Son to reveal Himself through our mortal body. To be a Christian is to have Christ become for us our wisdom, our righteousness and our holiness. It is a life of faith where we continually look to Him to manifest His rivers of Living Water through us so we can do by nature what the law requires.

It is not unusual to hear a modern Nicodemus say, “How can these things be? How can I live such a life in my home where I

receive ridicule rather than help and where I have experienced so much spiritual defeat? How can I live this kind of spiritual life in a place of business where everyone around me is living for self? How can I find the highest plane of Christian living when I remain unfed in a church filled with worldly-minded people?" But Jesus still has an answer for every Nicodemus. He has an overcoming life that makes human beings in this world "more than conquerors," regardless of their circumstances.

Let us remember that the life is in Christ. We should not be thinking in terms of what we can and cannot do. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son {through His shed blood}, *much more*, having been reconciled {a past event}, we shall be saved {from our self-willed nature} by His {indwelling} life." (Rom. 5:10) We also know that Christ has previous experience in manifesting this very life in a world where evil surrounded Him. He continued to reveal the divine nature, even when He was misunderstood and maligned. The people ridiculed, scoffed, opposed and finally crucified Him. But His spiritual life held up. The heavenly "light of life" continued to shine.

Christ has a spiritual life that is able to reign over the most difficult conditions. If you find yourself failing to manifest His righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit in any situation, it simply means that you are not currently filled with His Spirit. "Those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness *will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*" (Rom. 5:17)

Christ's first disciples were also perplexed about how they would get along after Jesus was no longer with them in the physical realm. But He insisted that their spiritual life would be improved when He came back in the power of His Spirit to dwell within them. His indwelling Presence within the soul is better than having Him physically present in the room.

It is now possible to come into a far more vital and real relationship with God than the greatest saints of the Old Testament. The Life of the Vine can now become the very essence of the life of

the branches if we will choose to live through the Son. We can now become “perfect in one” as we share with Him in His life. (John 17:22-23, 26)

And all these {the greatest saints of the Old Testament}, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Heb. 11:39-40)

These truths about living through Christ were the center of Paul’s teachings. He wanted everyone to understand the riches of the glory that was now available to the saints. He had but one aim in everything he did—that Christ might be formed in every believer. “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.” (Gal. 4:19) His whole being was given over to the work of furthering this eternal Kingdom-life in the hearts of those who would listen to him. “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” (Col. 1:28)

Christ is in the heavenlies. While He is the Head and the Source of what His Spirit-led disciples are doing, He is the invisible part of the church. His followers here on earth are to be the visible part of His body. This is a staggering thought. It plainly implies that you and I are to bring Christ down from heaven to earth so that others may see His eternal 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—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us {by sharing in the same life}; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:2-3)

True Christianity involves entering into this fellowship that takes place within the Trinity by sharing in the eternal life. It was this sharing with the Father and the Son in their life of love that led to

such a rapid spread of Christianity in the first century. And if we are to continue drawing others into this true Christian life, we too will need to become vessels of the same "light of life."

Perhaps you are saying, "The truth regarding this life on the highest plane is Biblical, but it does not match my experience or the experience of most other Christians. It therefore seems to be impractical and beyond the realm of possibility." But our response is to exhort you to take your eyes off people and begin looking to the Word of God and His teachings. The fact that only two of all the Jews that came out of Egypt were prepared to enter the life of promise does not mean that it was impractical and beyond the realm of possibility for the multitude. It is unbelief that prevents God from fulfilling His promises. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:19) "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27)

In the same way that refusing to come to Christ to be justified is the great sin of every unbeliever, *refusing to look to Christ for His abundantly full spiritual life is the great sin of those who are in the church.* God does not hold us accountable for our inability. He will however hold us accountable for not using the provision He has provided. Christ shed His blood so that we could live through His sanctified life. He has provided a salvation that makes it possible to consistently live in true righteousness and holiness all the days of our life.

{The Messiah came} To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies {everything that causes sin}, might serve Him without fear {of the carnal nature}, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. (Luke 1:74-75)

Just as He chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1:4)

The Father and the Son are now prepared to come and make their home within our eternal soul. They have prepared a banquet feast that is to take place within us forever. "All things are now ready."

Since the provisions are now ready, we can expect to be held accountable for refusing their invitation.

...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Rev. 3:20)

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, '*Come, for all things are now ready.*' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'*{His property was more important.}* "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'*{His business was more important}* "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come *{His wife was more important to him than the will of the Lord.}*...For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper." (Luke 14:16-20, 24)

God has set a feast before you, but He cannot compel you to eat. He has opened the door into His life in the heavenly realms, but He cannot compel you to enter. Do not permit the things you have invested your money in, or your plans for a career, or the house you have planned, or even your family to keep you from entering into this heavenly life today. "But seek first the kingdom of God *{His heavenly Kingdom-life}* and His righteousness..." (Matt. 6:33) If you make excuses and put it off today, you can expect to be turned away from His Presence in the day of the Great Feast.

The basic principle that governs whether or not we will share with Christ in His spiritual life is control. The Holy Spirit must bring each one of us to the place where Christ is given sovereign control over everything we do. Those who will yield unconditionally to Him, which entails permitting Him to be the Head who directs their every step, will become filled with His Spirit.

It is not enough to simply believe in some Bible truths. Andrew Murray said, "We are too easily content with the thoughts suggested by the words of the Bible." For example, Christ's Sermon on the Mount sounds good in theory. But these words often remain in the abstract and never become an innate part of the Christian's life. We do not mind having Christ as our hero and thinking highly of His teachings as long as we can remain in control of our own life. *But we will one day learn that singing praises to the Lord on Sunday and living for self the rest of the week will result in being turned away from heaven.*

We are now coming to the fundamental reason for so much confusion within the Christian church. We have developed hundreds of individual religions that consist of varying beliefs in mere words. Each one has a little different emphasis on which "words" it stresses. And because there is so much confusion about who has the correct words, everyone seems to think they have a right to believe whatever they want. No one seems to realize that the kingdom of God—the Kingdom-life that needs to be established within the heart—"is not in word but in power." (1 Cor. 4:20) It does not matter what words we believe if Christ does not come to us in "the power of an endless life." (Heb. 7:16) *He is the One who determines if we have truly submitted ourselves to be a vessel of His life.*

Jesus has provided an exact pattern of how His true disciples are to walk. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40) *True Christianity comes from studying the spiritual image that Jesus revealed through His mortal body, and fully yielding ourselves to the same divine life.* This is the only way to enter into the full salvation of the Lord. He will manifest within us whatever we truly yield to with our whole heart.

Once we begin to understand these truths, it becomes easier to see why people are not being saved from sin. What keeps Christ from revealing His heavenly life through the multitude of people now filling our churches is their unwillingness to fully yield to the light that Jesus revealed. Since He is the source, it has nothing to do with inability. Of course, we also need to realize that most of them have

never received these teachings. They do not know that Christ is waiting to reveal His eternal *zoe* life within their mortal bodies.

Our greatest need today is not more preachers. What we need to see is Jesus Christ walking up and down our streets and living in our homes. How will He do it? – By individual believers choosing to walk by His Spirit! There must be a real death to the old self-originated form of life {the independent and self-sufficient nature that Satan fostered on the world}. “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:24-25)

This is where many of Christ’s disciples turn back and follow Him no more. The devil convinces them that their life is their own and the requirement to die to their *psuche* life is too much to ask of them. They say to themselves, “Do we not have an inalienable ‘right’ to have freedom to do as we please? Is that not what freedom is all about – to provide personal liberty to pursue life and happiness from the world as we desire?”

What?! “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and *you are not your own*? For you were bought at a price...” (1 Cor 6:19-20) The kind of freedom that is in your mind – the kind that gives you a “right” to find life from the world – comes from the spirit of this world. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” (1 John 2:15 KJV) And if you do not renew your mind and choose to be a vessel that Christ can use as He pleases to display His life and works, you will end up separating yourself from Him forever. Jesus only gives His eternal *zoe* life to those who listen to His voice and continue to follow Him wherever He leads. (John 10:27-28)

We pray that “the many” will begin to see the hypocrisy of trying to be a Christian while living by self-will. “I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, Lord, but only with justice – not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing.” (Jer. 10:23-24 NIV) *We must be converted from the*

lawlessness of a self-directed life to a Spirit-directed life before leaving this world.

Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matt. 7:22-23)

If we are to separate from lawlessness, there needs to be a crisis point where there is a definite, voluntary transference of the control of our life to Christ. Even though Christ has already purchased the vessel to be used for the display of His glory, each individual believer is required to deliver the property to Him. Purchase gives title to property, but it requires delivery to provide possession. Let us therefore fear coming before the Lord on the Day of Judgment as a thief who refused to give Him full possession of the property that He had purchased with His own blood.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
(Rom. 12:1)

This absolute yielding to God includes everything within—intellect, heart, will; and everything without—home, children, business, possessions, friendships, time, money and every future plan. Let it be clearly understood that God is able to see into the heart. And He will not accept a blemished offering. He will not fill the temple with His glory while anything is being held back. Whether the refusal is little or great, it is still an act of rebellion against God. If Christ is to be Lord, He must be Lord of all.

Again, the banquet feast has already been prepared. We can now live in the Presence of God and dine with Him. But He will not make Himself known within our inner being until the door has been opened through absolute surrender. It is impossible to be a true follower of Jesus if we are refusing to follow Him in His way of the cross.

The devil has deceived many into thinking they can direct their own steps through life. It has cut them off from the life of promise. As Jesus has said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Only the few are now enjoying the banquet feast that Jesus has prepared.

Some may say at this point, "As far as I know I have yielded my whole life to Christ, yet I still seem to be living on the natural plane." We will find that yielding alone is not enough. Many have failed to begin looking to Christ with the kind of expectant faith that believes He will do what He has promised.

Full surrender says, "Lord, I am no longer my own. I present my body a living sacrifice for your exclusive use." Faith says, "Christ is my life."

Faith is what enables us to rely on Christ to reveal Himself through us. Whatever we see in Him, whatever light He opens up to our understanding, we must then look to Him in expectant faith to reveal the reality of that life within our inner being. In other words, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by faith in the Son of God...*" (Gal. 2:20)

Many seem to think they must make themselves right after presenting their body to Christ. Like Abraham of old, they attempt to help God produce the life of promise. But these efforts will never produce anything more than another Ishmael life. It always falls short of the life of promise. We cannot develop the eternal *zoe* life through our human efforts. The life of true righteousness comes from Christ. He is our righteousness. As Paul went on to say, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law {trying to obey written commandments through our own efforts and strength}, then Christ died in vain." (Gal. 2:21)

We all have access to a life of consistent spirituality. But this heavenly life must be appropriated by faith. Grace supplies the life, but faith must receive the life. Faith makes real what grace has made available to every believer. "According to your faith will it be done to you." (Matt. 9:29)

Andrew Murray says, “Abiding in Him is to consent with our whole soul to His being our life, to depend on Him to inspire us in all that we do, and to absolutely surrender everything for Him to rule and work in us. We rest in the full assurance that He works in us what we are to be and He enables us to maintain that perfect surrender in which He is free to do all His will.”

Mr. Murray helps us to see how our part is in the surrendering and in the looking in faith for Christ to do what He has purposed to do. Everyone who remains in this kind of yielded walk of faith will find that Jesus is able to begin manifesting Himself through their mortal body. The power truly comes from God.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7, 10)



Examining Our Plane of Life

{Chapter 10, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

Can you begin to see how we are expected to live on a heavenly plane of life far above what anyone can achieve through their own efforts? Jesus was serious when He said that we cannot do anything apart from Him. The branch can only bear the fruit that originates in the genetic makeup of the plant. (John 15:5) It is His Presence within us that lifts our spirit into this heavenly life on the highest plane.

The branch never strains to make the fruit develop into maturity. There is something placed inside a plant by the Creator that naturally

produces the fruit. The fruit is to naturally flow out of the inner nature. While man can train himself to produce a crude facsimile of the Spirit's fruit, a close examination will reveal how it does not have its source in the ever-flowing life of Jesus Christ.

We know that certain traits can be developed by people who do not profess to be Christians. The people of the world, as they seek to display their own glory, will go to great lengths to make themselves look good in the eyes of others. An Olympic athlete will "flee youthful lusts" and even "keep himself unspotted" from sinful conduct so he may win the prize. A businessman will "control" his temper to improve his business. You can expect a society lady to remain outwardly "sweet" in order to maintain her image, even when you spill tea on her lovely dress. It is in this sense that many Christians have learned to "school" themselves in religion. But these efforts to be "right" will never result in a nature that naturally and consistently produces God's life of holy love in every situation.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (Jam. 3:17)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)

We all start out trying to imitate Christ by conforming ourselves to God's Word. We might refer to it as "The Promising Way." It looks so attractive and right; and it appears so likely to succeed. Surely it is a splendid thing to imitate Christ. But can it be done? You say, "I can try." But let us reply with Paul's response to the Galatians: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect {in love} by the flesh {your own human strength and efforts}?" (Gal. 3:3)

Jesus promised to come and dwell in our hearts by faith. Surely this is much better than having Christ as my helper while I strive to make myself like Him. We are to abide in Him, and He in us.

You may be saying to yourself, "There is nothing new in this." No, indeed; but have you acted upon it? Many have known these truths for years without fully responding to the conditions. There must be a day when we die to the independent and self-sufficient ways of the world. God's way for insuring that each of His children would be enabled to live on the highest plane of spiritual life regardless of their own abilities, was by making the life available through faith.

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all... (Rom. 4:16)

When God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness," (Gen. 1:26) He knew that it would be necessary to have the Living Word residing within the heart of man. He did not give Adam an instruction book to follow. God supplied Adam with life from heaven. The Living Word—the Son—was in him, manifesting God's image through Adam's human body. The Son has always been the "light of life" and the "light of men." (John 8:12; John 1:4) It was only after man lost the eternal *zoe* life of God out of his soul that he needed an instruction book to teach him how to live. But today we have access to the eternal life that Adam lost. And so we can get by without a teacher or an instruction book if we will truly abide in Christ by responding to every leading of His Spirit.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine {the eternal *zoe* life} and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father {the life that originates in Him} is mine... (John 16:13-15 NIV)

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all

things, and is true...you will abide in Him {share with Christ in His eternal life}. (1 John 2:27)

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life {zoe}, and this life is in His Son. (1 John 5:11)

There are people in the church who think they have made themselves right by conforming to certain outward standards as the Pharisees did. But it requires a great deal of rationalization to come to this conclusion. There will inevitably be discrepancies between what the Word requires and what is taking place in their life.

The real trouble is that so many people who deplore “higher criticism,” tend to indulge in what might be called the “highest criticism.” *They do not deny the truth found in God’s Word, but they are always toning it down to levels that will permit them to remain comfortable with their current Christian experience. They do not honestly search the Scriptures to see if they are meeting every mark that God requires of them.*

Even when they see something amiss, instead of acknowledging the discrepancies in their life, which would eventually turn everyone to Christ for His heavenly life, there is a tendency to rationalize why certain commands do not apply. Oh, if we could only take Christ at His word and recognize the need for complete conformity!

At this point, we want to remind every earnest soul of the need for confessing everything coming out of them that is not in complete agreement with the light of life as revealed through Jesus. People who have built their spiritual life on a foundation of self-effort do not like to confess what is wrong in their life. The pride of life keeps them from acknowledging their faults because it would continually tear down the *psuche* life they are attempting to build. But once we understand how we cannot produce our own righteousness and that nothing from the self-originated form of life is any good, it becomes easy to confess the corruption that God exposes. This is what prepares us to count everything from ourselves as loss, so that we may come to a knowledge of the life of Christ and receive His gift of righteousness by faith. (Phil. 3:8-10; Rom. 5:17)

The key to entering into this heavenly life is the confession of everything that is contrary to the life that Jesus revealed. If we will confess the discrepancies, yield to the light of truth, and look to Christ to make His life a part of our very nature, He will save us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Our responsibility is to confess everything that is wrong. It is Christ's responsibility to cleanse us from "all unrighteousness."

Holiness people tend to rationalize why the "wrong" is not sin. Since they believe they are sanctified wholly and cannot sin, they must call their inappropriate behavior something other than sin. This is what has prevented many of them from being turned into a true display of Christ's life of perfect love. In spite of their high religious standards, many of them continue to have attitudes and carnal traits that have turned many away from Christ. The children are being lost at a very high rate because they do not necessarily want what they have seen in the nature of their parents. They see the hypocrisy between their profession and what frequently comes out of them.

We should also acknowledge that the rich young ruler was able to see the eternal life in Jesus. There was something very special in Christ's nature that he wanted to possess. Everyone would like to be consistently filled with God's eternal life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc. But this young ruler was unwilling to give up the *psuche* life he had developed from the things of the world in order to receive it. Jesus can only give His eternal life to those who die to self-will so they may follow the leading of His Spirit. "My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life..."

The point being, that if people turned away from the eternal life that could be seen through Jesus, we can expect some children to turn away from the eternal life no matter what. They will choose to live by their own will and develop their own *psuche* life from the things of this world. *But the problem today is that they are seeing religion without*

the eternal life. And mere religion has little drawing power in comparison to living for self in the world.

We definitely need more people revealing the eternal life. And if we are to have them, it will be necessary to confess everything in the nature that is contrary to the fruit of Christ's Spirit. Those who truly die to everything that is self-originated and begin looking to Christ alone to be the source of their life, have nothing to fear when they confess these discrepancies to Him. If they can see that their hope is in Christ rather than in themselves, they will be willing to confess everything He reveals so that He may cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

There are many examples that could be used in considering this matter of fully conforming to God's requirements. His command to love "as He loved" would be high on the list. But we have attended enough Bible classes to know that most Christians believe they do love God and others. Even though we have previously discussed how Paul defined love to the Corinthians, the English word remains so nebulous and adaptable to so many different opinions that it is difficult to use it as a marker of life on the highest spiritual plane.

We will therefore consider God's command not to be anxious. This is a hard one to get around. "Be anxious for nothing..." (Phil. 4:6) Those who have been empowered by the Spirit to consistently obey this command can know they are now living on the highest spiritual plane.

It does not take us long to discover how the flesh-life becomes anxious about many things. At the same time, we need to realize that the Spirit does not become anxious because there is in God's very nature a deep sense of heavenly peace.

Even earnest Christians will find themselves coming up against situations they believe gives them a right to disobey God by being anxious. They will insist that obeying this command is beyond their power. And while in one sense this is true, it is within the grasp of faith to be filled with Christ's Spirit. And since the flesh-life can be crucified {the source of anxiety can be "done away with" – (Rom.

6:6)} and the Spirit is available to fill our soul, we can potentially be set free from this sin. For the Kingdom-life of our Lord is a consistent display of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

The only way we will ever obey this law is by sharing with God in His heavenly life. It is the “peace of God” filling our soul that keeps us from ever being anxious about the things of this world. His conscious Presence within us makes us fully aware of His absolute sovereignty. And so regardless of the apparent difficulties taking place around us, we know that everything is working together for our eternal good and God’s glory.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose...to be conformed to the image of His Son... (Rom. 8:28-29)

People who live by their own strength and try to control the providences of their life will naturally have many things to worry about. The more a person attempts to dominate and control his environment, the more he can expect to have anxious moments. These self-sufficient Christians will also have a very difficult time trying to display Christ’s nature of love when their will has been crossed and things are interfering with their plans. It will be obvious to those who are close to them how they are not sharing fully with Christ in His divine love.

While anxious thoughts can rise up without the consent of our will and not be sin, they become sin if we permit them to go on. The real sin comes from not seeking out the remedy that God has provided to do away with this carnal trait.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled {fully met – NIV} in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3-4)

Many Christians will admit they are anxious about many things. A physician once said, “May I make a remark about you clergy? Many

people consult me, but I find that you leaders of religion are just as anxious about your bodies as men who profess no religion at all." What a rebuke! If our spiritual leaders do not obey this command, how are we to ever lead the multitudes into a faith that will look to Christ to enable them to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law?

Paul had learned the secret to being content in every situation. Contentment excludes anxiety and worry. He did not care if the Lord kept him in this world to spend more time suffering for the work of God's kingdom or if the Lord chose to take him from the world. He left all those decisions to the Lord. He had died to his own will and had entered into a deep rest in God's will. His one purpose in life was to respond to the leading of the Spirit. Because He had complete faith in His Sovereign God, he could keep His mind on things above and remain hidden with Christ in the heavenly realms. (Col. 3:1-3)

Do you remember when Paul and Silas were in the inner prison locked in stocks after receiving a severe beating? We do not find them either anxious about their future or complaining about their unfair treatment. They did not lose their spiritual life when they had a "bad day." Because they were receiving their "life" from another realm, they were in a spiritual state that permitted them to sing praises to the Lord in spite of their painful situation. We are not surprised that the jailer and all his family sought out the salvation that both Paul and Silas revealed before their eyes.

Paul never tired of speaking about the peace and joy he received from the Lord. And if anyone might have a reason for being anxious about each new day, it was Paul. But regardless of his hardships, he spoke of rejoicing always. He had found the secret for being content. The secret was the Presence of Christ's heavenly life dwelling within his soul. "It pleased God...to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." (Gal 1:15-16)

From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked...in journeys often,

in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen...in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things... (2 Cor 11:24-28)

Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content {there is no anxiety in contentment}... I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:11, 13)

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Phil. 4:4)

The fact that earnest Christians become anxious about certain things does not mean they do not have a saving relationship with Christ. But it is something that needs to be confessed and acknowledged as wrong. It is a sinful trait that prevents others from seeing the true salvation of the Lord. And the fact that it still rises out of the heart also reveals how there is a higher plane of salvation available through faith. “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit...” (Matt. 7:18)

Read again the earlier statement about what divine love does and what it eliminates {in Chapter 3 – *New Testament Salvation*}. Included in the list of things it expels are impatience, unkindness, jealousy, envy, boasting, self-assertion, pride, foolishness, selfishness, self-seeking, selfish anger, irritability, bad temper, fretfulness, uncharitable remarks, complaining, despair and despondency. We cannot consistently reveal Christ’s life of holy love when some of these traits are a part of our nature. It results in a carnal darkness that prevents others from seeing the Saving Life of Jesus. But praise the Lord, we have a Savior who can deliver us from everything that is contrary to His divine nature!

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him... (Heb. 7:25)

“We may be quite sure of three things,” says Francis Ridley Havergal. “First, that whatever our Lord commands us, He really means us to do. Secondly, that whatever He commands us is ‘for our good always.’ And thirdly, that whatever He commands He is able and willing to enable us to do, for ‘all God’s biddings are enablings.’” Let us therefore submit to His full salvation so that as His church body, we may begin displaying to the world the true glory of our God.

God’s Calling on Your Life

{Chapter 11, From the Book – *The Way to Eternal Life* – Steve Bray}

The emphasis of this book has been on the necessity of learning to live through Christ. We believe the Word of God places its priority on what we are to “be” more than on what we are to “do.” In fact, there will be “many” who are turned away from the Lord on the Day of Judgment in spite of all the things they have done for Him. (Matt. 7:22-23) He will say that He never knew them because they neglected to respond to the teachings that lead into a participation with Him in His life.

Those who are willing to become vessels of Christ’s life will naturally become fruitful workers in His kingdom. The Spirit of Christ is always working to further God’s eternal kingdom. When we have the mind of Christ and are making judgments that have come from the leading of His Spirit, we can expect to find our mind primarily focused on this work that has eternal value.

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day... (John 9:4)

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)

God has provided everyone with a special gifting and calling. He has planned from the beginning certain things He wants to accomplish through our lives. *We are not to plan our own works, but instead are to discover the work that God has planned for us to do.*

This takes us back to the fact that God intends to be the source of everything taking place in His universe. He therefore requires us to submit to being a vessel that He can use for His previously planned works. He will make sure we are taken to the places where we are to fulfill His plans once we have fully yielded to being led by His Spirit alone.

God does not ask us to produce the final results. Since He is the one who gives the increase, the final results are left to Him. But when we abide in the life of the Lord, we can expect to be fruitful. "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

It might be helpful to look at ourselves as messengers that God has sent on an errand to accomplish a few tasks. We can begin to see the importance of this mission by considering that it has been entrusted to us by the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Almighty God has something special He wants to work out through our lives. While our part in the overall scope of the work may be small, He still sends us to do a particular task. One small part of the body may think it has little value, but God has put it there for a purpose. Life ceases to be trivial once we can understand this special partnership we have with Him.

Jesus Christ will one day judge His people based on their faithfulness to Him. But we need to be careful in how we interpret this statement. Regardless of how sinful we have been, we can come before Him cleansed of all our sins by confessing them and choosing to walk in all known light. We can also know He will not specifically judge us on the outcome of our work since He is responsible for the increase and the results. But everyone can and will be judged on how faithful they have been in permitting the Lord to work through them

as He has purposed. Again, our responsibility and accountability is in the area of yielding to His will and walking “in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:25)

The carnal mind will not like to hear this truth but God expects us to live as His slave. A slave does not have any rights of its own. We are expected to surrender our will completely to Him so we may begin doing what He has planned for our life.

We have been purchased by God through the shed blood of Jesus. After Adam turned away from God to follow Satan’s independent way of life, the Son purchased us back from this life of sin in order to turn us into a “vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (2 Tim 2:21) “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price...” (1 Cor. 6:19-20) That means you cannot live for yourself. “But now having been set free from sin {the self-directed way of life}, *and having become slaves of God*, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” (Rom. 6:22)

As the “slaves of God”, we are to live exclusively for His glory. That includes faithfully carrying out the work He has planned for us to do. We must consciously choose to live by His will and for His purposes if we hope to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant {slave, Greek – *doúlos*}; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” (Matt 25:23)

Faithfulness involves remaining true to a responsibility. We cannot afford to be unfaithful to our calling. Jesus specifically stated that all unfaithful servants will be cast into “outer darkness” where there will be an endless “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt. 25:30) This is what occurs to those who refuse to walk by His Spirit. “For if you live according to the flesh {according to your own desires and will} you will die... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:13-14)

Those who insist on living by their own fleshly desires today instead of finding their spiritual life from God and walking in the light of His Presence, should expect to remain separated from Him

throughout eternity. We must walk as Jesus did. It was because Jesus lived for His Father's will alone that His Father never left Him alone.

...This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. (1 John 2:5-6 NIV)

...The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. (John 8:29)

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. (John 9:4)

...A little while longer the light is with you {the Spirit will be revealing Jesus' way of life to you}. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you {and you become lost forever}. He who walks in darkness {directs his own steps} does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light {follow Jesus in His Spirit-directed way of life}, that you may become sons of light... (John 12:35-36)

...I am the light of the world {revealing how man was intended to walk}. He who follows Me {along the same course} shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life {zoe}. (John 8:12)

We do not make ourselves faithful. Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:22) Our responsibility is to offer ourselves to God in a way that permits Him to fill our inner being with His Spirit. *The Spirit of Christ within us is the source of our power to walk as Jesus did.*

Once we have presented ourselves to the Lord to be filled with His Spirit, He begins to supply the needed energy and motivation to do those things that please God. Jesus Himself comes to "dwell in" us and "walk in" us. (2 Cor. 6:16 KJV) We then have within us the same nature of faithfulness that was in Him.

Are you following Him in the light as He walked in the light? "He died to sin {self-will} once for all; but the life that he lives, He lives to God." (Rom. 6:10) And if we will truly offer our bodies to Him in order to become "one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17), His *zoe* life within us will also make us faithful as He remained faithful.

A careful examination of the lives of the first disciples before and after Pentecost will reveal a radical change in their faithfulness to the Lord. It was only after they were filled with His Spirit that they were truly empowered to be faithful unto death. Christ came back to them and lived through them with His *zoe* life, carrying out the work He had previously planned to do through them.

This should help everyone see how important it is to remain filled with Christ's Spirit. The command to be "filled with the Spirit" means to go on being filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18) And we can only remain filled with Christ's Spirit as we choose to be led by the Spirit alone. There will need to be a real death to the old self-directed and self-originated form of life if we hope to remain filled with Christ's Spirit.

If you therefore find yourself lacking in the faithfulness that was revealed by both Jesus and His first disciples, it implies there needs to be a deeper consecration. There is still something coming "out from" you that prevents the Spirit from possessing the whole vessel.

You have no right to direct your own steps. You have been purchased to live as a servant of the living God. "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. {The world is filled with people living for their own will.} Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is...be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:15-18)

The fruit of "faithfulness" includes a powerful energy that works within us to keep us moving in the ways of our Lord in spite of all the hardships we face. We are enabled to say with Paul, "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:29 NIV)

Most members of the church have never come to this place where they are willing to be slaves of God. It is the reason they have not been filled with Christ's Spirit and have their fruit to holiness. Even those who have chosen to live by high religious standards separate themselves from the life of God when they live by their own plans. The prophet warned us about this sin long ago: "I know, O Lord, that

a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23 NIV)

Let us therefore enter into a Spirit-directed way of life and discover what God has purposed for us to do. In effect, we do not have a choice. "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Rom. 11:29) His plans cannot be changed by the human will. We can therefore expect the Lord to hold up this irrevocable calling before us on the Day of Judgment. Those who have continued to live according to their own plans can expect Him to say, "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness." (Matt. 25:30)

While God may place us on the backside of the desert for a few years while He is humbling and preparing us for His specific calling on our life, we need to remain attuned to the leading of His Spirit. We must never become so entrenched in the affairs of this world that we are not prepared to faithfully respond to His "still small voice." "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." (2 Tim. 2:4) Those who will submit to being led by His Spirit can expect Him to lead them step-by-step to the place where He has planned for them to be.

We will also need to distinguish between our gifts and our calling. While both are included in the irrevocable work we are expected to do, there is a difference. God begins by putting within our heart an inclination to do certain kinds of work. He provides a natural aptitude, which is a gift, to do what He has planned for us to do. Those who will come to Him in faith, seeking His guidance, can depend on Him to reveal these gifts.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (Jam. 1:5-8)

Many leaders build up their church organizations according to their own plans. They often try to put round pegs in square holes in an attempt to make their programs work. But that is not how the Lord planned for the church to function. The Spirit is the Executive Director of the church body. He must be permitted to make the assignments. "But one and the same Spirit works all these things {giving out the individual gifts and assignments}, distributing to each one individually *as He wills*." (1 Cor. 12:11) If the church is to ever function properly and show forth God's glory, it will be necessary for each member to live by the Spirit and begin doing what He has planned for them to do.

Everyone who is truly born of the Spirit will naturally desire to begin implementing their gifts in their service to the Lord. And they need to respond to these inclinations. The Spirit will keep us busy in the work of the Lord from the very beginning. But the Lord will generally wait until we have grown more spiritually mature before He leads us into those special works He has planned for our lives. For example, it was a number of years after Paul's conversion that he received instructions from the Spirit to enter into the special work that he had previously been called to do.

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers... As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, *the Holy Spirit said*, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul *for the work to which I have called them*." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. *So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went...* (Acts 13:1-4)

Our primary responsibility is to faithfully follow the Spirit. When the Spirit moves, we are to move; when He stops, we are to stop.

We can expect the devil to do his best to draw us away from God's purposes for our lives. He comes with different temptations to turn our eyes back to earthly things. He is always tempting us to develop our own personal kingdoms. As He did with Jesus, he will try to lead us back into the self-seeking and self-exalting ways of this world.

Those who hope to avoid this trap must always be prepared to say with Jesus, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, *and Him only you shall serve.*' " (Matt. 4:10)

No one can worship and serve God while they are also trying to worship and serve themselves. In spite of what you may think, Jesus very specifically stated, "No one can serve two masters." (Matt. 6:24) "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Many of those who once had a clear calling to live for God and His purposes have turned away from their first love. Having turned their eyes back to the world, they have begun living for their own purposes and pleasures. Their spiritual lives have therefore become like pillars of salt. Similar to Lot's wife, they have not moved forward in their spiritual life since they began to look back. Their hearts have hardened to the calling of God.

For many walk {speaking of those who once served the Lord}, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ {in self-will they have turned back to live for the enjoyments and acclaim of this world}: whose end is destruction...*who set their mind on earthly things.* (Phil. 3:18-19)

Remember Lot's wife! Whoever seeks to save his life {psuche} will lose it, and whoever loses his life {so he may live for God alone} will preserve it. (Luke 17:32-33)

John Knight once said, "Back before materialism got hold of the Korean Christian church, after studies were completed and graduation approached for Bible college students, they would climb up mountains and seek God's face as to exactly where He would have them to go out and start a new work. They would stay up on the mountaintop until they received clear marching orders from the Commander-in-Chief. Then, after graduation, they would go forth and work in faith knowing that God went with them, for they knew

that He sent them.” It was during these days when people were truly being led by the Spirit that God was able to work so mightily through the Korean church.

Unfortunately, when the devil tempts people to turn to the materialistic ways of this world, their spiritual progress ceases. They lose interest in discovering God’s will for their lives once their minds have turned back to the things of this world. But this does not free them from their responsibility and accountability. Their faithfulness will still be judged.

Our faithfulness in the few things will determine our place in the eternal realms. Let us therefore yield ourselves fully to the work that God has called us to do before it is too late. While it may appear that our role is insignificant compared to others, it is our faithfulness to these little things that will be judged.

Not everyone who is working for the Lord is building on the right foundation. As we have stated, it is possible to work for the Lord according to our own will and purposes. But everything that has its source in the self-originated works of the flesh will be burned in the testing fires of Judgment. *Only what has been done through the Spirit according to God’s will can be rewarded.* While the people may still be saved, if most of what they have done is self-originated, there will not be much left after passing through the fire. (1 Cor. 3:12-15) Not one part of the flesh-life will make it through. Let us therefore surrender to be fully possessed by the Spirit and begin doing what He has planned for us to do, so we may one day hear those sweet words: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt. 25:21, 23)

Jesus said of Mary, “She has done what she could...” (Mark 14:8) While she did not do many and great things for the Lord, she was willing to pour out everything she had in her service to Him. And while others criticized her for giving so extravagantly, she effectively became the example of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Because Mary’s example of a poured out life represents the true salvation of the Lord, those who present the Gospel message have been instructed to report what she did wherever the message was

taken. “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” (Matt. 26:13) May we all begin holding up this example of obedience to Christ so that others will truly understand what it means to be saved by the life of Jesus.

Everyone who learns to live through Jesus will have the same kind of “poured out” life that He revealed. He lived for God alone, pouring out everything He had for the good of the eternal kingdom of God. And by fully surrendering our body to be a vessel of His life, this same fully sanctified life will be revealed in and through us. We can then do by nature what God requires of His children. His light of life will begin to be displayed in everything we do. May we all be found faithful on the Great Day of Judgment!

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you {with His self-emptying and self-sacrificing way of life} – unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Cor. 13:5 NIV)