

# **PURSUING A HOLY LIFESTYLE**

**Ron Christian, Compiler**

**“Growing A Godly Life” - Devotional Series  
Book 3 - “Holiness”**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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**BOOK THREE**  
**PURSUING A HOLY LIFESTYLE**

**INTRODUCTION TO BOOK THREE**

**By  
Ron Christian**

**God has provided a double care for a double problem. Man's problem is twofold - outward practice of willful sins, and an inward attitude of self-centeredness and pride and rebellion. Man's need is twofold: forgiveness for what he has done, and deliverance from what he is. God's provision is twofold: reconciliation of the sinner to the Savior, and empowerment of the believer for victorious living.**

**Where sin abounds, both in its outward practice and in its inner attitudes, the grace of God super abounds. There is no guilt so great but what God's forgiving grace is greater. There are no willfulness and self-centeredness so strong but what God's cleansing power is stronger. God is able to "save to the uttermost." This salvation includes forgiveness of all volitional sins and also cleansing from all inherited sin. It is God alone who can forgive the guilty sinner and who can deliver the self-centered believer.**

**It is God's will (and command) that all believers be 'sanctified'. Sanctification (from a biblical understanding) means both 'separation' and 'purity'. If 'sanctification' means 'separation', then the sinner who experiences the new birth is 'sanctified' in at least an initial way. A sinner separates himself from an outward practice of willful transgressions against the known laws of God. The Bible says, regarding separation from a practice of sin: *"Therefore come out from them and be separate. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18, NIV)**

**A new convert is one who has made "a moral U-turn." He has repented of his sins and has chosen to follow Jesus Christ. He no longer practices sin. He is new in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). He has separated himself from a life of sinning, and is thus 'sanctified' in one sense of the term.**

**Initial sanctification, we have noted, is that beginning separation from a life of sinning, sometimes called conversion. What is 'full' or 'entire' sanctification? Following is a definition of entire sanctification, as explained by one 'holiness denomination'. "We believe entire sanctification to be that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, and his neighbor as himself and it prepares him for greater growth in grace." (Doctrinal Statement of Free Methodist Church)**

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**Initial sanctification means separation from an outward practice of sinning, resulting in conversion, reconciliation, and regeneration. Entire or full sanctification means inward cleansing from a spirit of self-sufficiency and self-centeredness, resulting in Jesus becoming the Lord of one's mind, affections and will. Notes Donald Bastian: "Holiness of heart suggests that, at the center of one's being, Jesus Christ rules in the power of the Holy Spirit. Holiness of life suggests that, as a consequence, one's daily walk increasingly reflects Christ's kind of concerns and conduct at the personal, family, and social levels." (Adventures in Church Membership; pg. 84)**

**God is faithful in dealing with His people. It is God's intention not only to enter your life in conversion, but also to sit on the throne of your heart, as a result of your full consecration. He wants to make you, not only a citizen of the kingdom, but also a soldier of the cross. He not only wants to create within you a desire to serve Him, but He wants to impart power to you to enable you to serve Him. He who imparted His love to you at the time of your new birth wants also to perfect His love in you at the time of your full sanctification. He not only wants to save you from the wrath to come, but He also wants to bring you into full harmony with the nature of God. It is God's will not only to take the repentant sinner out of the "world" of evil practices, but it is also God's will to take the "world" of carnal pleasures out of the heart of surrendered believers. Justification (being converted) admits you into the family of God on earth; entire sanctification (being filled with the Spirit) fits you for the society of God in heaven. The Holy Spirit wishes to become not only Resident in your heart at the time of your conversion, but the Holy Spirit wishes to become President of your heart at the time of your inner cleansing. It is God's intention not only to save you from the guilt of sin, but also to cleanse you from the pollution of sin. God not only wants to cleanse your conscious mind, but he wants also to cleanse your subconscious mind.**

**Notes E. Stanley Jones: “‘The soul gets on by a series of crises.’ I’ve found it so. In conversion there is the sudden, or gradual, rise to a new level of life, a life as different from the ordinary man as the ordinary man is different from the animal. Then after the rise life is on a permanently higher level. But on that new level there usually ensues an experience of ups and downs, of alternate encouragement and discouragement, of victory and defeat. It was so with me. For a year I lived under cloudless skies. The sun of my happiness seemed to have risen in the heavens to stay there forever. But after a year of unalloyed joy I found something alien began to rise from the cellar of my life. I felt there was something down there not in alignment with the new life I had found - ugly tempers, moodiness, deep down conflicts. The general tenor of life was victory, but there were disturbing intrusions from the depths. I was becoming a house divided against itself. I was puzzled, confused, hurt with a tinge of disappointment. Was this the best that Christianity could do - to leave me wrestling with myself; or with something alien to myself? What was this dark something within?**

**"I was in a crisis. I was stymied by this inner conflict. And then a door out of the conflict**

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opened, opened through a book. I began to read 'The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life', by Hannah Whitehall Smith, a Quaker. It told of complete victory for the person. My heart was kindled with desire as I read it. God spoke to me: 'Now is the time to find.' I tried to read on, but the words were blurred. I saw I was in a controversy with God, so I closed the book, dropped on my knees beside my bed, and said: 'Now Lord, what shall I do?' And he replied: 'Will you give me your all?' And after a moment's hesitation I replied: 'Yes, Lord, of course I will give you my all, all I know and all I don't know'. Then he replied: 'Then take my all, take the Holy Spirit. I paused for a moment: my all for his all; my all was myself; his all was himself, the Holy Spirit. I saw as in a flash the offer. I eagerly replied: 'I will take the Holy Spirit'. I arose from my knees, with no evidence, save his word. I walked out on the naked promise of that Word. His character was behind that Word. I could trust him with my all and I could trust him to give me his all. I walked around the room repeating my acceptance. The doubts began to close in on me. I walked around the room pushing away with my hands the menacing doubts. When suddenly I was filled - filled with the Holy Spirit. Wave after wave of the Spirit seemed to be going through me as a cleansing fire. I could only walk the floor with the tears of joy flowing down my cheeks. I could do nothing but praise him - and did. I knew this was no passing emotion; the Holy Spirit had come to abide with me forever." (A Song of Ascents; pg. 51-53)

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, is to be filled with God's love. *"God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."* (Romans 5: 5, NIV) Holiness is not a mere negative experience of cleansing from sin, but holiness is a positive experience of empowerment to love! Holiness in the life of a believer is best seen by a supreme love for God and by an unselfish caring for others. To the extent that a believer is actively practicing love, to that same extent is he genuinely experiencing God's sanctifying power in his life!

Commander Brengle, of the Salvation Army, began his little book with this startling sentence: "On January 9, 1885, at about nine o'clock in the morning, God sanctified my soul. It was a Heaven of love that came into my heart. I walked out over Boston Common before breakfast, weeping for joy and praising God. Oh, how I loved! In that hour I knew Jesus, and I loved Him till it seemed my heart would break in love. I loved the sparrows, I loved the dogs, I loved the horses, I loved the little urchins on the streets . . . I loved the whole world."

Love is the very essence of the Christian life and is the capstone of all the Christian graces. Said John Wesley: "Religion is the most simple thing that can be conceived. It is only humble, gentle, patient love."

Initial sanctification and full (entire) sanctification (which we have thus far been describing) are usually decisive, dated, and dramatic experiences of commitment to Christ, whereas 'progressive sanctification' is an ongoing and gradual experience of

daily commitments to Christ, resulting in the believer's character progressively being perfected. The Holy Spirit daily and continually cleanses the believer from anything which is a hindrance to spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit constantly works in the lives of believers to bring them into full harmony with the will of God. A picture of the ongoing cleansing and perfecting work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers is seen in the picture of the Vine and the branches. Said Jesus, *"I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Gardener. He lops off any branch that doesn't produce. And he prunes those branches that bear fruit for even larger crops. He has already tended you by pruning you back for greater strength and usefulness by means of the commands I gave you. Take care to live in me, and let me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from me."* (John 15: 1- 4, Living Bible)

Being "born of the Spirit" is a description of conversion or initial sanctification. Being "filled with the Spirit" is a description of full (entire) sanctification. Learning to "walk in the Spirit" is a description of progressive sanctification. A. B. Simpson (the founder of the 'Christian and Missionary Alliance' Church) describes the 'dynamic' of this 'life in the Spirit' (progressive sanctification). "When I at last got my eyes off my sanctification, and my experience of IT, and just placed my eyes on the Christ in me, I found instead of an experience, the Christ larger than the moment's need, the Christ that had all that I should ever need who was given to me at once, and forever! I had not only what I could hold that little hour, but also in Him, all that I should need the next and the next and so on, until sometimes I get a glimpse of what it will be a million years afterwards when we shall 'shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father' (Matthew 13: 43), and have 'all the fullness of God'.

"I never had more holiness or healing at one time than I needed for that hour. He said, 'My child, you must come to Me for the next breath, because I love you so dearly I want you to come all the time. If I gave you a great supply, you would do without Me, and would not come to Me so often; now you have to come to Me every second, and lie on My breast every moment.' He gave me a great fortune, placed thousands and millions at credit, but He gave me a check book with this one condition. 'You never can draw more than you need at the time.' Every time a check was wanted, however, there was the name of Jesus upon it, and so it brought more glory to Him, kept His name before the heavenly world and God was glorified in His Son.

"I had to learn to take from Him my spiritual life every second; to breathe Himself in as I breathed and breathe myself out. So, moment by moment for the spirit, and moment by moment for the body, we must receive. You say, 'Is not that a terrible bondage, to be always on the strain'? What! On the strain with one you love; your dearest Friend? Oh, no! It comes so naturally, so spontaneously, so like a fountain, without consciousness, without effort, for life is always easy and overflowing.

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**"Now, thank God, I have Him; not only what I have room for, but that which I have not room for, but for which I shall have room, moment by moment, as I go into the eternity before me. I am like the little bottle in the sea, as full as it can get. The bottle is in the sea, and the sea is in the bottle; so I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. Besides that bottleful in the sea, there is a whole ocean beyond; the difference is, that the bottle has to be filled over again, every day, evermore." (A pamphlet entitled 'Himself' by A.B. Simpson)**

**Initial sanctification, full (entire) sanctification, progressive sanctification - all provided by the blessed Holy Spirit who is more eager to impart these gifts to humans (to you and to me) than we are ready or able to receive them! The Giver (the Holy Spirit) is now making the Gift (of the fullness of the Holy Spirit) available to you! Through full surrender and faith, are you willing to receive His Gift? *“God, who called you to become his child, will do all this for you, just as he promised.”* ( I Thessalonians 5: 24)**

**FOR A PERFECT HEART**

**O for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free;  
A heart that always feels thy blood,  
So freely spilt for me:**

**A heart resigned, submissive, meek,  
My great Redeemer’s throne;  
Where only Christ is heard to speak,  
Where Jesus reigns alone.**

**O for a lowly, contrite heart,  
Believing, true, and clean;  
Which neither life nor death can part  
From Him that dwells within:**

**A heart in every thought renewed,  
And full of love divine;  
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,  
A copy, Lord, of thine.**

**Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;  
Come quickly from above,  
Write thy new name upon my heart,  
Thy new, best name of love.**

**- Charles Wesley -**



**CHAPTER ONE**  
**VISUALIZE THE 'HIGH CALLING'**

John 14: 13-27

## APPRECIATING THE WONDERFUL PERSON THE SPIRIT

Soft music filtered through the car speakers as the radio announcer quoted a familiar Bible verse. My mood was not necessarily contemplative; however, there was a sudden change in my heart as I carefully considered the meaning of the verse I just heard. Actually, I considered only two words from the text. The deep bass voice echoed the prayer of David as he asked God to *“take not thy Holy Spirit from me”*. (Psalm 51: 11) My thoughts fell immediately on the name, “Holy Spirit.”

A preacher, I have used this name thousands of times. Each time, I have spoken that name in the same manner as this radio announcer: “Holy Spirit.” “Holy” is His first name, and “Spirit” is His last name. The two words of His name are spoken with equal emphasis. The name rolls off the tongue so smoothly that it actually sounds like one word. We often say that name as we do any other name, with little inflection and even less reflection.

Is there any way to speak the name of the third Person of the triune God? God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although the Bible does not use the word “Trinity,” we know God is all three and at the same time, One. In Genesis we learn that when God created humans, He said, *“Let us make man in our image.”* When Moses asked God to authenticate who He was, God answered, *“I Am”* is written in plural form, meaning “We Are.”; furthermore, when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit was seen coming down from heaven “like a dove,” and God spoke, *“This is my son,”* placing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one place at one time.

It occurred to me that I had never contemplated the fact that “holy” is not the Spirit’s first name. “Holy” describes who and what the Spirit is! He is “HOLY.” Immediately, as I called the Spirit’s name, emphasizing the title “Holy,” tears began to flow from my humbled heart. I knew I was in the presence of Him who is Holy and I felt shame and guilt from never recognizing that before. At the same time, I felt totally and unconditionally loved by the Holy One. In that instant God allowed me to experience his holiness in the Person of the Spirit. I do not think I can speak the name “Holy Spirit” ever again without recognizing my inadequacy and His sufficiency. God is holy!

“I long for Your Holy Spirit, Father...to fill me with all Your holiness. In Your holy presence, I am at peace even though I am unworthy. Holy God, dwell within me so I may grow in Your love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY:** *“I am the Lord who makes you holy.”* (Exodus 31:13)

**- Thomas Duckworth -**

**NOTES:**

**I Thessalonians 4: 1-12**

### **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HOLINESS?**

**I was driving to a cemetery just a way out of town when I spotted an old, faded street sign. I did a double-take at what I thought I saw. Some of the letters were missing and, not wanting to be mistaken. I drove more slowly on my way back to read that sign more accurately. When I got back to my office, I consulted a city map to verify this new bit of information. Sure enough, there it was, right in our town...HOLINESS LANE.**

**Later in the week I returned to that old faded sign and took a ride down HOLINESS LANE. It was narrow. That was as it should be. Yet something had gone wrong. It seemed to me that the environment of the street bore little resemblance to its name. It was trashy and unkept. There were broken-down cars, old worn-out tires, and unmanicured lawns along HOLINESS LANE. The people who sat on their porches and wondered about the stranger driving down their street did not have any joy in their faces. HOLINESS LANE was a dead-end street.**

**I wondered about the history of HOLINESS LANE. How did it get its name? Was there once a vibrant Church on that street? Had there been a great revival at some point in its history? Did some saintly person or group of saintly people once live there? Why would anyone name a street HOLINESS LANE?**

**I gathered that the people who now live on HOLINESS LANE, never think about the name of their street. Old Testament its history, or the significance of their address, much less feel any obligation to live up to the standard of the name.**

**Whatever happened to HOLINESS LANE?**

**Whatever happened to HOLINESS?**

**Several years ago U.S. News and World Report conducted a poll on religion in America. The poll painted a picture of a nation as religious as ever but uncertain how to “Walk the Walk” in a pluralistic and secular society. Paul desired that no such uncertainty should be in the minds of the Thessalonians. Their walk was to be holy: their address was to be on HOLINESS LANE.**

**“Heavenly Father, help me to realize that my search for happiness is but a longing for HOLINESS.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Every disciple of Christ is called to live on HOLINESS LANE.**

**- William Jenkins -**

Leviticus 19: 2, Leviticus 20: 26

### HOLY - A BEAUTIFUL WORD

The Christian’s vocabulary is rich with beautiful words, and among them is the word “Holy.” The bent toward the sinful nature, sin with all the accompanying adjectives, low views of God - attempt to crowd the word “Holy” into a corner. It is too idealistic, even archaic in this scientific era.

But the word still stands in God’s Word. The basic theme of an Old Testament book concerned with laws and ceremonies is “Holy” and its equivalents. In the 27 chapters of Leviticus the word “holy” is used 81 times; “without blemish” - 31; “hallowed” - once; and “sanctify” - seven. Offering, persons, places, things, animals, vestments of the priests, fruit, tithe, fields, and the year of Jubilee were to be Holy. A casual reading is conclusive: God is Holy; the standard for His people is “Holiness.”

*“I am Holy,”* says God. What does He mean? A.W. Tozer says: “God’s holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unattainable.” (The Knowledge of the Holy, p. 111)

Dr. Shelby Corlett says that “it is the sum total of all His moral characteristics.” Quoting again A.W. Tozer: “Holy is the way God is. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, all His attributes are holy, i.e., whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as Holy.”

*“You shall be holy, for I am holy,”* says Peter in his epistle (I Peter 1: 16). What is holiness in man? Corlett writes: “In a sense holiness in man is the same as holiness in God for there are not two kinds of holiness. The quality of this holiness is the same, in quality there is a vast difference. Holiness in God is absolute. Holiness in man is relative. Holiness in God is infinite. Holiness in man is finite. But in each case holiness is real, it is one kind of holiness.”

Charles Wesley wrote:

He wills that I should be holy be,  
That holiness I long to feel;  
That full divine conformity  
To all my Saviour’s righteous will.”

What should my response be to God who is holy?

1. **I shall want to be holy.** *“You shall be holy; for the Lord your God am holy”.* (Leviticus 19: 21)
2. **I shall live a separated life.** Not as a religious hermit apart from society, but separated from the world in my actions and attitudes. *“You shall be holy to me for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.”* (Leviticus 20: 26)
3. **I will be obedient to God.** *“So you shall keep my commandments and do them...I am the Lord who sanctify you.”* (Leviticus 22: 31, 32)

**Oh, how beautiful is the word “holy”.**

**“Dear God, cleanse my heart, my entire being so that I may be holy. Amen.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY:** Even though I live in a sinful world, by the grace of God I can be holy and live such a life.

**- Floyd Cooper -**

**NOTES:**

Leviticus 11: 44, I Peter 1: 16

### **ARE WE CALLED TO BE SAINTS? ARE WE CALLED TO BE HOLY?**

Some believe that Sainthood can only be achieved after death. As I read the New Testament, I discover that the Apostle Paul refers to the believers as “Saints” in the book of Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. I doubt that Paul was writing such inspired letters to the deceased. I do believe that sainthood is achieved during one’s “Lifetime.” I am also aware of the belief that “The Christian” cannot live a holy life here on earth. I must take issue with this teaching. Why would God command His children to be Holy, if being Holy is not attainable?

Follow closely as I attempt to answer the title’s question. In Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 1, Paul writes to the Saints and in verse 4, Paul uses the word Holy. He is actually referring to the Holy people of God.

This brings me to believe another biblical truth. Now, right here in this sinful world, we can live *holy* lives, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit. This does not infer that we will be perfect human beings, only that, with the aid of God’s Holy Spirit, we can strive to live the life of Holiness. I am aware that man has tried to make rules of *Do’s* and *Don’ts* that will make us *Holy*. An evil person can keep rules and not be holy. This lifestyle comes only through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. From the Greek dictionary I will share a portion of the definition of the word holy. When the word holy refers to mankind, it means that they have “Christ” as the ground of their life. The dictionary also declares that ‘saints’ refers to “*God’s holy ones.*” In another Bible dictionary, I read the idea of *holiness* is in both the Old and New Testaments. It is basically achieved by *consecration* to God. To live a holy life, requires our total surrender to Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Are we called to be *holy*? Are we called to *saints*” YES TO BOTH QUESTIONS. I strongly believe that where God guides, God supplies. I also believe that when God gives a command to His children, He not only acts as the Order Giver, but also acts as the Divine Enabler. Since we are commanded by God to be *holy*, then through His Holy Spirit we can be Holy.

“Dear Father in heaven, I stand before You this day, asking for the Infilling of Your Holy Spirit. It is my sincere desire to be Holy as You are Holy. Amen.”

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: I will seek the mind of Jesus. I will pray to be holy as He is Holy. I will strive to live in such a way that others will know I’ve been with Jesus.**

**- Lowell Weller -**

**NOTES:**

**Romans 8: 1-8**

### **WHO’S THE PILOT?**

**When I was serving as a missionary in Alaska, the man who lived directly behind me ran an air Taxi service. He owned three airplanes. Since the only mode of transportation into our village was either by boat or air, he ran an excellent business. My work called for a great deal of travel. It therefore was my privilege to fly with this man on a regular basis.**

**I will never forget the day when he flew in a new Cessna 185. It was a beautiful airplane. Just shortly after he purchased his new plane, it was necessary for me to take a trip. It just happened to be this new plane.**

**When I climbed into the front passenger seat, I was delightedly surprised to discover that there were dual controls. As we took off into the clear blue sky with the beautiful green tundra of Alaska on the one side and the vast Bering sea on the other, it was an exhilarating experience. And then, he said to me, “would you like to fly it?”**

**What a thrill to take those controls and to sense the magnificent control of that plane which I held in my hands. With the pull, push or turn of that yoke I could make that plane respond to my direction. It was absolutely exhilarating!**

**Not many weeks passed until I had the need to fly again. However, this time, when I got into the plane, the dual controls were no longer there. I immediately inquired why the owner had removed them. His answer was very revealing.**

**"Well, when everything is going smoothly and normally it was great to have those controls. However, as you know, we often get into turbulent weather and frequently have to land on short runways and less than ideal airstrips. Also, the weather is often severe. The problem was that when my passengers sensed any kind of danger or turbulence, they had a tendency to grab the control. I had no choice - the dual controls had to be removed!"**

**What a picture of our lives! We too want Jesus Christ to be our Pilot, but so often when we face trials, turbulence, or perceived danger, we want to grab the controls of our lives. Consequently, the Lord (our Pilot) is not in control, but we are! The result is often disastrous.**

**Paul says in this Scripture that the law of sin and death which reigns in our lives and that has a dual control over us, must be removed! It is removed by the power of the Spirit of life provided by our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't have to struggle with the dual control of a sinful nature. Praise God, it can be removed so we can live in the freedom**

**of the Spirit!**

**Who is really the Pilot in your life today? Is there the possibility that you have made Jesus Christ your Savior and have declared him as the Pilot of your life, but you are still struggling with dual controls? Is the power of the sinful nature often overpowering your commitment to Christ?**

**There’s only one solution. Allow Jesus Christ to remove the dual control by cleansing your heart from the nature of sin. Make Christ the victorious single Pilot and Lord of your life. This is what He wants to do for you today. You can be victorious in Christ!**

**“Dear Lord, deliver me from every selfish control of my life and may I be singularly submissive to the control of Jesus Christ today.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: It is impossible to live a victorious Christian life as long as there are dual controls in our life. He can change that to a singular Holy control.**

**- Edward Rickman -**

**NOTES:**

**John 14: 25-31**

### **KNOWING WHEN NOT ENOUGH IS NOT ENOUGH**

**I was far from my West Coast home teaching in a Southeast mountain school. Things were different for me there. I didn't talk quite the same way, my cultural reflexes were 'wrong', and I was considered a 'foreigner'.**

**The remarks and actions of some students and local fellows began to get under my skin. During the Church service one evening, some local fellows were setting off firecrackers outside the building. Later, as I followed the sidewalk along the creek toward my quarters, some fellows dropped in behind me. I turned to look, saw a red glow near my skirt and thought: “O no! It's a firecracker!” It was only a cigarette, but I had 'lost it'. I dropped my Bible on the sidewalk, turned and slapped the young man's face!**

**I picked up my Bible, and with a mild apology, I headed for home, surprised and ashamed at myself. “What made me do that? I have not struck anyone since childhood. Don't I have any self-control? Can I continue to be a missionary teacher and act like this?” I thought.**

**These questions haunted me. I thought, I prayed, I read my Bible. I even went to the school principal and discussed resignation. He laughed, shook my hand and said, “my wife hit one of those guys with her umbrella!” Then I was really confused.**

**God began helping me by showing me some things. One was that I need the Holy Spirit to keep me from being merely all I naturally am. I learned I was a worrier, a resenter, someone who could lose her temper. That wasn't a comforting thought, except then I learned that God's Spirit could cleanse and control those things in my life. I only needed to ask Him to do that.**

**Another thing God taught me was that I need to be more flexible, adjusting to a new people and new ways. I need the Holy Spirit so I can be like Jesus, who loves and accepts people just as they are, that He is there for them to be changed and grow in Him too. That understanding is the 'bottom-line' for missionaries.**

**How much I need God's Holy Spirit to fill my life in all circumstances, at home or far away. God is willing to give us His Holy Spirit more than an earthly father gives good gifts to his children. (Matthew 7: 11)**

**“Lord Jesus, I am so needy. I ask your Holy Spirit to fill me, control me, and make me like you”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Today I receive You Holy Spirit, knowing You can change, control and empower me to serve You.**

**- Beth Stewart -**

**NOTES:**

Romans 8: 26-28

### PAUL'S SECRET WEAPON

Paul couldn't keep God's law. *"I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."* (Romans 7: 18) His failures may discourage us. After all, Paul was intelligent, highly educated, from an elite family. He had a forceful personality and had been in the faith a long time. He had great energy and self-control; knew the law and wanted to keep it; did everything he could to please God, but he couldn't do it? If anyone could do it, it would be Paul, but he couldn't. No one can.

So, God, being love, provided grace. Grace is a free gift from God that allows us to have a healthy life in a sick world. Grace is made possible through the work of Jesus Christ. Grace is delivered to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul asked, *"Is there no one who can do anything for me. "*? (Romans 7: 24) Yes, the Holy Spirit. Let us consider how the Holy Spirit delivers God grace.

The Holy Spirit nourishes us when life is dry and dusty. Been there? You have no appetite for God's food, you can't pray, you feel as though you are back to square one. That's what Paul described. Maybe you believe in your mind that God is in your life but you feel so alone that like Elijah you complain that you are the only person who still believes in God (I Kings 19:1-18) Jesus said, *"If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. "* (John 7: 37-39)

The Holy Spirit counsels and teaches us. Jesus explains: *"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* (John 14: 26)

The Holy Spirit helps us pray. *"God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless signs, our aching groans. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good"* (Romans 8: 26-28) Thank you! Help me pray! The Holy Spirit empowers. In the last teaching Jesus gave, he said, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you":* (Acts 1: 8) Read further in Acts to learn how timid believers became bold, and for more promises of the Holy Spirit's empowerment, which is as available to us as it was to them.

The Holy Spirit guarantees that we will come through our valley of doubt, let go of our urges to rebel, and that when God chooses we will receive our inheritance along with Jesus. In Paul's words, *"God makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed*

*us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” (2 Corinthians 1: 21-22)*

**“Heavenly Father, worthy of all praise and honor, thank you for giving me grace. I need so much help; you offer all I need. Thank you! Teach me to live so that I please you, and act in the pattern of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for the presence of your Spirit in and around me, and guide me so that the Spirit can work through me in the service of your kingdom. Amen.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: The Holy Spirit nourishes, counsels, teaches, empowers, and prays with me to guarantee that I will triumph today and forever.**

**- Richard Walters -**

**NOTES:**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Share what your inner response is (in terms of thoughts and feelings) when you verbalize the name of the third person of the Godhead - “Holy Spirit.” What can you say about the ‘person’ and the ‘work’ of the Holy Spirit?**
- 2. Since God has called His people (believers) to be “holy,” how would you describe the ‘life of holiness’ (in terms of ‘holy’ thoughts, ‘holy’ actions and reactions, ‘holy’ lifestyle, ‘holy’ goals)? (Note: 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-12; Galatians 5: 22; I Corinthians 13; Romans 12; 1 Peter 1: 16)**
- 3. Tell what your inner response is to the following words (of longing), penned many years ago by Charles Wesley:**

**“He wills that I should holy be,  
That holiness I long to feel;  
That full divine conformity  
To all my Saviour’s righteous will.”**

- 4. Put a check by the following statements which you believe properly reflect and describe a Biblical understanding of a “Holy Lifestyle”:**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ a. A life of absolute perfection, free from all sin, free from all infirmities, free from theological error, free from all temptations.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. A life which is merely ‘idealized’ by earnest persons but never ‘realized’ on the earth; a life which is finally achieved in heaven following physical death.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. A life which God commands a person to live, and for which God provides divine resources amidst human weaknesses and temptations.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. A life which is the result of a believer being filled with the Holy Spirit.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. A life which is the result of a person’s moral achievements, following many years of character cultivation and intellectual development.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ f. A life which comes only through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ g. A life which has Christ as the “ground of one’s being” and as the “mentor for one’s actions.”**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ h. A life which is achieved as a result of a “once-for-all surrender” to Christ, followed by a “daily surrender” to the lordship of Christ.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_ i. A life which is characterized by a supreme love for God and a sincere love for all persons.**

- \_\_\_\_\_j.      **A life which is characterized by single-minded devotion to Christ and wholehearted commitment to the mission of Christ (The Kingdom of God).**
  - \_\_\_\_\_k.      **A life that is characterized by pure motives and humble attitudes and compassionate service.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_l.      **A life that is both obtained and maintained by repentance, faith, surrender, and obedience.**
  - \_\_\_\_\_m.      **A life characterized by intimate fellowship with God through prayer, daily confession of mistakes and sins, and submission to divine guidance.**
- 
- 5.    Tell to what degree you agree (or disagree) with the following statements: “So often when we face trails, turbulence, or perceived danger, we want to grab the controls of our lives. Consequently, the Lord (our Pilot) is not in control, but we are! The result is often disastrous.” Can you think of any ‘concrete example’ (from your own life or from your observation of others) which illustrates the truth of these statements?**
  
  - 6.    Is it accurate to describe a “carnal believer” (before he is “filled with the Holy Spirit”) as one who wishes to maintain “partial control” of his life (instead of allowing the Spirit to have sole or total control of his life)? (Note I Corinthians 3: 1-3)**
  
  - 7.    Is it possible for the Holy Spirit to enable you to be more than you naturally are? If so, in what ways? (Note Romans 7: 18 - 8: 10; Romans 12: 17 - 21; Galatians 5: 19 - 26; I Peter 2: 9 - 23)**
  
  - 8.    Do you honestly believe that your Heavenly Father is willing to give you (a believer) the gift of the fulness of the Holy Spirit, more than an earthly father is willing to give good gifts to his children? (Note Matthew 7: 11)**
  
  - 9.    List some of God’s “Grace-Gifts” which He wishes to give to you specifically that would enable you to live a healthy life in a sick world. (Do you need “deliverance” from any of the following “besetting sins”? - Lust, greed, jealousy, worry, fear, pride, selfishness, resentment, inferiority complex, negativism, judgementalism)**
  
  - 10.   Put a check beside the following statements which describe your “personal experience” of the ministry of the Holy Spirit:**

    - \_\_\_\_\_a.      **The Holy Spirit was nourished me when my life became ‘dry’ and ‘dusty’.**

- b. The Holy Spirit was provided specific counsel and guidance during my life’s difficult decisions. (John 14: 26)**
- c. The Holy Spirit has provided enlightenment and understanding to my mind during times of mental confusion and darkness. (John 14: 26)**
- d. The Holy Spirit has helped me to pray during times when I did not know how or what to pray. (Romans 8: 26-28)**
- e. The Holy Spirit has empowered me to witness when I felt weak and fearful and inadequate. (Acts 1: 8)**
- f. Holy Spirit has reassured me of my standing and position with God (as an adopted son and redeemed soul) during my times of doubt. (2 Corinthians 1: 21-22)**

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**MAKE THE 'FULL SURRENDER'**

Matthew 13: 44-45; 19: 16-29

### SELLING IT ALL

For many, these verses inspire feeling of dread and guilt, or perhaps resistance: “He ‘sold everything he had’! I don’t want to do that. That seems so unreasonable, so unrealistic, so scary”! Forgetting the story is a parable, we take it too literally, or uncomfortable with the concept of “selling everything”, we shrug it off too easily. Both perspectives prevent us from really exploring what Jesus is saying and what it should mean in our lives.

Look at Matthew 13: 44 again: *in his joy he went...* In both parables the man sold all he had in order to buy what he had found because it was so much *better* than the things he had owned up until that point. His previous possessions became of little value to him compared to the treasure he had found. There was no question about what to do - the pearl was of such great value it was obvious that he needed to sell everything else in order to have it.

No consider another man in Scripture: the rich young ruler of Matthew 19: 16-29. He chose not to sell everything to buy the pearl. He thought the junk he had was of greater value than what Jesus offered. Have you ever wondered what the young man’s life would have been like if he had followed Jesus. He would have had all his needs provided for, been able to participate in something more glorious than he could ever have imagined, and been more fulfilled than he ever thought possible.

You and I, too, have struggled like that young man, and let our affection settle on incredibly inferior, imitation treasure! In one of his books, George MacDonald likens us to children playing in the sewer in front of a grand and beautiful house that belongs to our father. Our father calls us to come in to the house and be filled and made clean, but we are so taken with the poor, broken bits of things in the sewage, that we refuse to turn and go in.

What little bits of broken things are we taken with? Is something from the sewage delighting your eyes and keeping your thoughts preoccupied? The things the Lord calls us to release to Him are of no value compared to what He will give as we come into His house.

I believe these verses are to be taken quite seriously, and some things, literally. What things do you need to sell? What is hindering? Most significantly, have you and I adopted a life attitude that says, “Nothing I own or am is of any importance compared to being in fellowship with Christ”? That is selling it all: making myself and my things utterly available to the living God. It does sound risky, doesn’t it? Yet, it is only because our faith is small that the risk bothers us, for what God is offering is truly much better than what we now have. Who will follow? Who will sell everything else for the riches to be found in Jesus? Who will buy the pearl?

**“Lord, I need you to show me the things in my life that need to be released to you. You know that is frightening for me, but I don’t want to hold anything back. Take it all, Lord, and me as well. I am only your servant. Amen?”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: God offers me a life of fulfilment, purpose, joy, and wholeness culminating in an eternity with Him.**

**- Erik Ritschard -**

**NOTES:**

**Acts 27: 13-26**

### **EGOCENTRICITY - THE CENTRAL PROBLEM**

**The central problem behind all problems is the problem of egocentricity - that is, putting one's self at the center of the universe.**

**“There's a Jewish legend about a group of people in a lifeboat. One of them began to saw a hole in the part of the boat directly below his seat. The others yelled at him to stop. He said, defiantly, ‘This is my place; I can do what I want with it.’ They answered, ‘Yes, but if you do what you what, we'll all drown.’” (Canadian Free Methodist Herald; May 1979; Donald Bastain)**

**that legend reminds me of the person who is living a self-centered life, oblivious to the needs and rights of others. The self-centered person, like the individual in the legend who wanted to saw a hole in the boat, is a person who is on a course of self-destruction. And while he destroys himself, he can destroy others who are depending upon him.**

**‘Self’ in control rather than Christ in control is the cause of all real problems. When several were asked what their greatest need was, here are the answers of several: “I am so full of needs. My greatest need is to surrender myself - lose myself in Christ. I take a handful of pills. I seem to be running away from something.” A pastor said: I'm a self-holic' - I'm addicted to myself.” A Swedish woman: “I came here with a self I don't like, and yet I have to live with myself.” A skeptic said:; “I'm glad I don't believe in eternal life. I wouldn't want to live with myself forever.” (Victory Through Surrender; E.S. Jones; pg. 11, 12)**

**“Someone asked the head of a mental institution: ‘I suppose these people in here are beside themselves?’ ‘Oh no,’ he replied, ‘they are very much themselves. That's why they are here.’” (Ibid; pg. 14)**

**“Just as my fingers are rooted in the palm of my hand, so all these outer sins are rooted in the unsundered self. Why do we get angry and ‘blow our top’? Because someone has crossed the self. Why do we lie? Because we think it will be some advantage to the self. Why are we dishonest? Same reason. Why are we impure? Because we think it will be some pleasure to the self. Why are we jealous and envious? Because someone is getting ahead of the self. All these outer sins are only fruit - the unsundered self is the disease.” (Victory Through Surrender; E.S. Jones; pg. 30, 31)**

**“Father, to center on myself is to lose myself; to lose myself in your person and plans is to find myself. Help me to make a complete surrender, barring nothing! In Jesus' name. Amen”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: If I surrender all to the Lord of life, I will receive all from the Lord of life, for I will receive all from the Lord of life, for self-surrender leads to self-realization!**

**- Ron Christian -**

**NOTES:**

**Proverbs 14: 12, Matthew 16: 24-25**

### **VARIOUS METHODS IN DEALING WITH ‘SELF’**

**There are many ways to deal with the ‘Self’. Depending upon the way we deal with the ‘Self’, we will get either negative consequences or positive results.**

**There are many inadequate ways to deal with the ‘Self’. (1) Eliminate the ‘self’. But this is impossible, for to eliminate self would be to extinguish personal existence. (2) Know thyself. But only through knowledge of Christ can one have knowledge of himself. There is a great identity crisis in modern times - people trying to know themselves. Some use drugs as a means of unlocking their inner self. Who is able to reveal the inner identity of man but the Creator of man? (3) Accept Thyself. But how can you accept an unacceptable self, one that is full of conflicts, guilts, frustrations, inferiorities, inhibitions, cynicism, self-loathing? To accept that kind of self is to become unacceptable to one’s self. Many feel that they are one big bundle of contradictions, and to ask someone to accept that kind of self is to ask one to become a contradictory person - frustrated completely. Most don’t like a lot of things about themselves. (4) Express Thyself. This is not satisfactory, for when many persons are expressing themselves they are expressing carnal, competitive, unconverted, self-centered selves. This sets the stage for clash, confusion, jealousy, and strife. Hell can be defined as a group of self-centered people, all expressing themselves! One cannot cure the disease of self-centeredness by advising all to express their unconverted selves! (5) Center Upon Thyself. To center on self is to frustrate man’s altruistic capacity. Man is made to center on Christ and others; to center primarily on self is to be off-center, hence deep frustration. The frustrated self is a self which is alienated from others, alienated because people don’t like self-centered persons. People who center upon self, “start out to draw life to themselves - its joy, its thrills - and all they succeed in drawing to themselves is sadness and disillusionment and sickness - spiritual, mental, and physical”. (Abundant Living; E.S. Jones; pg. 45) (6) Defend Thyself. But constantly to be guarding and defending oneself is to dissipate energy which should be spent relating redemptively to others. Such a person is oversensitive, and oversensitive people are critical people and unproductive and non-creative.**

**Each of these six methods which the world offers, leaves the ‘Self’ in the center, a ‘Self’ that is divided and frustrated. They all lead to bondage, not freedom.**

**“Father, there are ways that seem right unto the world, but the end of those ways is spiritual death. Surrendering my ‘Self’ to you totally enables me to know myself truly, to accept myself gladly, to express myself lovingly. To center on myself is to lose myself inevitably. I choose to make you the Lord of my ‘Self’. In Jesus’ name. Amen”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: A purified ‘Self’ is a ‘Self’ set free to realize its fullest potential in Christ!**

**- Ron Christian -**

**NOTES:**

**John 12: 24-26, Galatians 2: 29**

### **THE BENEFITS OF SELF-SURRENDER**

**There is only one way adequately to deal with self-centeredness and pride. That way is the way of self-surrender. *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”.* (Matthew 16: 24, 25)**

**Surrender to Christ leads to a right relationship with God, with yourself, and with others.**

**First, you are freed from the bondage of self-worship to worship of God alone. The irony is this: The more you worship yourself, the more you loath yourself, for you are not made to worship yourself. You are made to worship God alone. Self-worship leads to self-loathing!**

**Second, when you transfer your worship from self to God alone, you automatically find that you have a new love for yourself. Loving God supremely, you find that you love yourself subordinately. So surrender to Christ gives you a freedom from self-despising and enables you wholesomely to love yourself. *“Since you are able to live with God, you are able to live with yourself. To be at home with yourself and rather like yourself. For loving someone beyond yourself, and more than yourself, you are now free to love yourself.”* (How To Be A Transformed Person; E.S. Jones; pg. 196)**

**Third, a full surrender to Christ sets up a right relationship to people. On the one hand you are delivered from self-preoccupation. On the other hand, you are delivered from herd bondage - bondage to the group. You are delivered from yourself, in order that you may serve God. You are delivered from peer pressure in order that you may serve people. *“The herd urge, hitherto fastened on the futilities of allegiance to society around, is now cleansed from that enslaving bondage and fastened on the fruitfulness of the Kingdom of God. You do not become unsocial, but loving God supremely you can love others subordinately, but with a love intensified, you love others with His love.”* (A Song of Ascents; E.S. Jones; pg. 54)**

***“The surrender which seems downward, laying down your arms, is actually a surrender upwards. It is a surrender to creative love...It is a paradox, but you are never so much your own than when you are most His. Bound to Him you walk the earth free. Low at His feet you stand straight before everything else. You suddenly realize that you have aligned yourself with the creative forces of the universe so you are free - free to create and free to love, free to live at your maximum, free to be, to be all He will you to be.***

***“Father, as the loose wire surrenders itself to the dynamo, as the paint surrenders itself to the artist, as the marble surrenders itself to the sculptor, and as the ink surrenders itself to the writer, so enable me, a mere man, to surrender myself to the Almighty Christ. Then I shall***

**find myself throbbing with divine energy, creating, creating love movements wherever I go”!**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Surrendering the ‘title deed’ of my life to Christ makes me feel truly ‘at home’ with myself!**

**- Ron Christian -**

**NOTES:**

**Philippians 3: 7-14**

**STEPS TO FULL SURRENDER**

**First, recognize that God is the Center and not you. The humanistic mood of our day puts man at the center of life, with a consequent denial or neglect of God Almighty. You must remember that you are creature, not Creator; son, not Father; subject, not Master; steward, not Lord; man, not God! You must determine that God shall have the same place in your life as He has everywhere else in His vast universe - Center!**

**Second, draw near to God, and determine with your will to make a full surrender of yourself to God, in spite of your hesitation and fears. Remember, when you surrender to God you are surrendering to a Christlike God. You are surrendering to God who is all-loving, that is, to a God who want what is best for you. You are surrendering to a God who is all-wise, that is, to a God who knows what is best for you. You are surrendering to a God who is all-powerful, that is, to a God who is able to give what is best for you. Such a God can be trusted, and such a God is worthy of being your Master. You have nothing to fear when you place yourself in the care and keeping of a loving Master!**

**Third, surrender yourself fully to God’s cleansing and creative love. Your ‘self’ has been frustrated because you have tried to accept an unacceptable self. Now accept yourself as a cleansed self-cleansed of guilt, frustrations, inferiorities, cynicism, fears, etc. Your self is cleansed by Jesus! There is power in the blood of Christ - power to cleanse the deepest stains of self-centeredness form your soul! You can accept a new self which increasingly is becoming Christlike.**

**Your ‘self’ has been frustrated because you have expressed your ‘self’ in a social setting which has been competitive and comparative. This has led to jealousy and strife. Now accept yourself, no longer in horizontal competition with your peers, but as a self which is in the process of vertical development - upward and onward toward the unique standard which God has designed for you. You no longer need to compare and to compete with others - outwardly. God is now your standard, not others. Now you grow and develop with God - upwardly. The fact that God is your standard, releases you, on the one hand, form the contentious and contemptuous atmosphere of peer competition and stress. The fact that God is your standard releases you, on the other hand, from the complacent attitude of self-sufficiency and easy contentment with your present attainments. You are delivered from the stress of carnal competitions, and delivered to the creative pursuits of divinely-given goals.**

**“Father, cleanse me from all self-centered living, in order that I may be creative in God-centered living. Cleanse me from the negative in my carnal selfhood, in order that I may be creative in your consecrated selfhood. Release me from all horizontal competition and give me your energy to pursue God-given goals. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: What Christ cleanses, He also fills. Cleanses from sin, and fills with Himself!**

**- Ron Christian -**

**NOTES:**

I John 1: 7-22

### A WORKING WAY TO LIVE

We continue with the steps to full surrender.

Fourth, after you have given yourself fully to Christ, be bold to take Christ fully as the Lord of your entire life. When you surrender all, the Spirit of God cleanses all. When you surrender all, the Spirit begins creatively to work through you to glorify God, to benefit others, and to bless you. “God will take you as you are and begin to make you what you ought to be. Through identification with him you now begin to learn to take from Him. You are strong in His strength, pure in His purity, loving in His love, victorious in His victory. You live no longer on the unit principle, but on the cooperative plan. You supply willingness and He supplies power.” (Victory Through Surrenders; E.S. Jones; pg. 109)

Fifth, surrender daily to Christ’s love, and allow Him to work in you as He wills. “You have said ‘All’ to Him and He has said ‘All’ to you. But there are a lot of little ‘alls’ under the big ‘All’. They will come up day by day and little surrenders will have to be made, made about things and issues you did not realize would be involved. So the surrender is a blanket once-for-all surrender, but also an unfolding surrender. As you have given all you know and all you don’t know, the ‘don’t knows’ have to be dealt with as they arise. How? By a continual surrender. You do not fight or suppress the issue, you turn it over to Him and say: ‘I am Yours and this thing concerns me, so this is Yours, too. I surrender it. Tell me what to do about it.’ That keeps problems and issues from piling up and making you tense and burdened. It is a continual catharsis. You are saved from the tension that comes from suppressing things and driving them into the subconscious sphere where they fester, and also from evading the issues in which case they nag us from the margin of consciousness. You are fulfilling that verse, *‘But if we walk in light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin’*. (I John 1: 7) By walking in the light, holding nothing back, you have continuous fellowship with Christ and a continuous cleansing of your problems and sins. It is a working way to live.” (Victory Through Surrender: E.S. Jones, pg. 110)

Surrendering to the lordship of Christ leads to unlimited freedom - freedom to be your true self, freedom to be fulfilled, freedom from fear, freedom to serve people without being in bondage to people, freedom to be relaxed, freedom to live in harmony with the Universe!

“Father, I see that I have only one true freedom in life - the freedom to choose the Master of my life. How I exercise that freedom determines my destiny - for time and eternity! If I refuse to surrender to You, I choose to surrender to pessimism, to hopelessness, to negativism, to futility, to self-destruction”!

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: I choose to make a once-and-for-all ‘blanket’ surrender to Christ, and then to learn daily to surrender every new detail of my life to the lordship of Christ!**

**- Ron Christian -**

**NOTES:**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **Share your personal (inner) reaction or response to the following lines of poetry (from a popular song):**

**“Is your all on the altar of consecration laid,  
Your heart does the Spirit control?  
You cannot have peace and sweet rest  
Until your all on the altar is laid”!**

2. **In “exchange” for your “full surrender of your self” to Almighty God, what will you receive from God in return?**
3. **To the “best of your knowledge”, do you believe that you have surrendered all you are and all you have to the Living God, for Him to use in His “Kingdom Service” as He chooses best? (Matthew 13: 44-45; Matthew 19: 16-20; Philippians 3: 7-11)**
4. **Why do you think that many professing Christians know much more about the secular culture and about the popular Hollywood “stars” and sports celebrities than they do about the Bible’s disciples and prophets and apostles or even Jesus Christ Himself?**
5. **How can a professing Christian (a “carnal believer”) be “delivered” from a rebellious mind, impure thoughts, self-pitying emotions, self-centered attitudes, destructive habits, half-hearted devotion, divided will, covetous desires, lukewarm indifference to spiritual disciplines such as regular Bible reading and prayer and loving service?**
6. **Tell to what degree you agree (or disagree) with the following statement: “The central problem behind all problems is the problem of egocentricity - that is, putting one’s self at the center of his universe”.**
7. **Why is the self-centered person the individual who is on a course of self-destruction?**
8. **Explain (and concretely illustrate) what is meant by the following statement: “Just as my fingers are rooted in the palm of my hand, so all these outer sins are rooted in the unsundered self”.**
9. **Tell specifically why the following ways of “dealing” with Self are inadequate and even destructive:**

- a. **Eliminate thy “Self.”**
  - b. **Know thy “Self”.**
  - c. **Accept thy “Self”.**
  - d. **Express thy “Self”.**
  - e. **Center upon thy “Self”.**
  - f. **Defend thy “Self”.**
- 
9. **From your understanding of Scriptures, and from your personal experience, and from your observation of Spirit-filled Christians whom you have known, share some of the “Benefits” of Self-Surrender to Christ.**
  
  10. **List the specific “Steps” which you (or any other believer) must take to make a “full surrender” to Christ, in order to be “filled with the Holy Spirit”.**
  
  11. **Why is it “proper” (Biblical) to say that your surrender to Christ is both a “blanket once-for-all surrender” and also an “unfolding surrender”? (Note I John 1: 7)**



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CULTIVATE A CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER**

**I Thessalonians 5: 12-28**

**CONCERNING HYPOCRITES**

**There are few words that are loaded with more negative baggage than the word "hypocrite". Hypocrite means "to pretend". It was first associated with the Greek plays where the characters used large masks and loud voices to build up a certain character they were pretending to be. The absence of substance on the inside required props on the outside.**

**A hypocrite can be as glaring as a TV evangelist who leads a double life or as subtle as a speaker who stands up to address a crowd of swindlers and thugs, street-walkers and bar-flies, and begins by saying "Ladies and Gentlemen"!**

**I have observed this curiosity among the general populous: they are quite willing to associate with hypocrites everywhere except in the Church. People will stay away from Church because there are hypocrites in it; but they never give a thought about being with the hypocrites who go to the ball games, the department stores, restaurants, or their own places of work This double standard is confusing-even a bit hypocritical.**

**One of the strangest ads I have ever seen was placed in a New Orleans newspaper by a downtown Church. On either side of the ad was a caricature of snooty Church members. Between them the ad asked in bold print, "Tired of the old hypocrites in Church"? Following in small letters it read, "Come meet some new hypocrites at (Name of Church)". The message of the ad was stated: "We are all sinners and sometimes hypocritical, but the Lord is working on us." Then followed the times of the services when the Lord was working on them. At the bottom of the ad was the pastor's name with this notation, "Chief Hypocrite".**

**I have met very few true hypocrites in my life. I have, however, met many sincere and devout people who have made honest and regrettable mistakes, as well as others who were trying their best and "tripping up" as they did. Hyper-critical people would label them hypocrites.**

**The great majority of Church people are not hypocrites, imperfect for sure but not hypocrites. The Scottish preacher, James Denney, describes our situation: "What's bothering us is not religious difficulties, but the difficulty of being religious".**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Considering my own failures, I will refuse to pass judgment on the failures of others.**

**- William Jenkins -**

**NOTES:**

**James 3: 1-12**

**SPIRIT - CONTROL BRINGS TONGUE - CONTROL**

**The human tongue is amazing. How we can control it by moving the muscles in the tongue is even more amazing. By simply rotating the tongue in various directions and uttering guttural noises, we are able to communicate with other people. In fact, the tongue becomes so well developed that we have no need to think about the motion of the tongue to form the words we wish to speak. Perhaps it is that fact which caused my father to constantly tell me, “Think before you speak”. To our embarrassment, we too quickly speak words which we would not normally say if we would stop to consider what we are saying. The finest response I have ever heard to someone who used foul language was, “Did those words pass through the lips with which you kiss your mother”? Unfortunately for me, those words pass over my tongue and through my lips on occasion.**

**Warm sunlight penetrated through the bedroom window as I proceeded to dress. As I normally do, I reached to the lowest drawer on the dresser to select an item of clothing. Apparently I had pulled the drawer a bit too far and the drawer slipped out of its rails, falling to the floor. Before it hit the floor, it hit my uncovered toes, cutting the flesh at the point where the toe-nail begins to grow.**

**Do I need to describe how much it hurt. I think not!**

**Instantly, as I withdrew my foot from under this sharp, heavy object, my tongue went into action. You can just imagine what words came out of my mouth. You would have to imagine it, because nothing more than the word, “ouch” filled the room. I can assure you, it was a sincere “ouch”.**

**As I hobbled around the room I became very aware of the fact that I did not swear. It was a bitter-sweet moment. I was proud of the fact that I did not let my tongue get the best of me, yet pride does not remove the pain of a bleeding toe.**

**You may not think of this as a great victory, but learning to control my tongue has been a difficult undertaking. The Bible admonishes us to bridle the tongue, and I can say with great joy that, for once, I succeeded. The toe is healing, thank you, but the happiness I feel still lingers. There are two reasons for my happy thoughts: first, I did something I have been striving to be able to do for a long time, and second, my mother would be proud to be kissed by these lips.**

**“Lord, make me aware that what I say matters to You. May every word I utter be spoken as if I were speaking to You. May only what is pleasing to Your ears ever be released from my tongue. With Your help. Amen”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Positive, affirming words of life bring health and healing.**

**- Thomas Duckworth -**

**NOTES:**

Proverbs 6: 6, Philippians 2: 5

### A LESSON LEARNED - DOWN UNDER

In Proverbs 6: 6, we read these words from the New International Version, *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise”!*

Several years ago, I decided to look into the meaning of this verse. I went to our local library and found several books which helped me learn more about ants. I prepared several sermons on this topic. I did the same with the topic of palm trees, eagles and geese. There are many lessons we can learn from God’s creation. The following experience is a good example.

In 1987, my wife, daughter and I made a trip down-under. We spent a week in New Zealand, and a week in Australia. The thing we wanted to do most, while in Australia, was hold a koala bear. We inquired as to where we might do this. After purchasing our tickets and boarding a tour bus, we arrived at a small zoo where Tasmanian devils, wallabies, and koala bears lived. Before leaving the bus, we were instructed how to hold the koalas. Each live koala bear would be clutching a stuffed koala bear. Since Koalas are nervous animals, their toy provided them with a sense of security. If we tried to take it from them, we would probably be bitten or clawed. Obeying the rules, gave us the enjoyment of holding one of God’s special creatures. Later, as I was ruminating, I realized that these cute little animals had an attitude problem.

While traveling as an evangelist, I often spoke on Godly Attitudes. I mentioned that, as a teenage boy, I disliked my curly hair. As I grew older, I realized that since God had given me those curls, I had better like them. In two different churches where I preached, I had someone come and tell me they had not liked me at first, because they thought I had a permanent. When they found out I had gotten my curly hair from God, they changed their minds, and even enjoyed my preaching. I had not changed; their attitude had!

An excellent translation of Philippians 2: 5 is, *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ’s”*. When we do not possess the same attitudes that Christ possesses, we are apt to jump to conclusions or unintentionally hurt people. It reminds me of the koala bear, who would attack if’s toys were taken away. The word *attitude* is defined as “a disposition, or way of acting, thinking or responding”. I am sure this is why the Apostle Paul encourages us to have the same attitudes Christ displayed.

“Dear Jesus, from the depths of my heart, I pray that You will create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. May I respond to Your directions, and display Your righteous attitudes.

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: I will pause before reacting, and take an attitude check. May I always ask myself, “Is this how my Saviour would respond”?**

**- Lowell Welder -**

**NOTES:**

**I Corinthians 9, II Peter 2**

**TOLERANCE MUST NOT BECOME MORAL COMPROMISE**

**Biblicists believe that the Bible is the literal, inerrant word of God, the standard for a Christian's daily life. Departure from that position reaps dread consequences.**

**Homosexuality is inconsistent with Christian teachings. "God's plan for a sexual union is one man and one woman in heterosexual, monogamous and lifelong marriage relationship". Both statements are equally taught and demonstrated in Scripture.**

**Sodom and Gomorrah no longer exist - not even on a map. They were destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven as God's wrath was poured out. God's people had cried out against the wickedness of homosexuality.**

**Have God's people today become so tolerant that they are afraid they might offend people? Why should there be any need for "reasoned discussion" on the issue of homosexuality within a Church when considering a person's membership? Tolerance is not listed as part of the fruit of the Spirit. Have we become so tolerant of acts that God calls sin that we have ignored or lost our standards?**

**People used to say, "Let's call a spade a spade." Today we say, "If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it is a duck" Sin is still sin in God's sight and we ought not to be afraid to condemn it as such. Certainly in the world there are a variety of understandings on human sexuality but God's instruction given to us in the Bible should be the Christian's standard. Jesus prayed that the Father would keep the ones that followed him from evil because he had given them God's Word. The Church is not to be a part of the world; it is to be a lighthouse, warning of dangers which can destroy any people.**

**In consideration of whether there is a place for homosexuals in the churches' pews, the individual's attitude must be taken into consideration. If he comes to demand special rights and seeks to defy God's Word and to propagate his "life-style", then, of course, he should not be accepted into the membership of the Church. If he comes to confess his sin and seeks to repent and turn his back on his sinful ways, God, of course, will forgive him, and the Church members should rally around him and teach him God's Word. He will no longer be a homosexual, but a Christian brother.**

**I Corinthians 9 states, "Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God And that is what some of you WERE." Every other person sitting in the pew is also a sinner, but the difference is that he has been washed, sanctified, and**

**justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. He is a new creature, the old life is gone.**

**II Peter 2 reminds the Church that it is possible for false teachers to come and teach damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. If a pastor becomes a homosexual and expresses to his congregation that he believes it is an acceptable lifestyle, he has erred from the Word of God and should be asked to resign or be dismissed from his position. Then he should be dealt with as any other brother who slips into sin. Matthew 18 teaches that we should strive to restore him to God’s grace.**

**The real issue here is that the leadership needs to call for a return to God’s Word, the literal, inerrant code for Christian conduct in our world today.**

**“Lord, help us to believe your Word, practice it, and teach it that our children may accept your standard for their lives, and not the standard of the world. Help me to hide your Word in my heart that I may not sin against you”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: The Bible is God’s literal, inerrant message to us, telling us how to live and the rewards that are promised to a consistent, pure life, pleasing to God.**

**- Laura Drewer -**

**NOTES:**

Matthew 6: 1-18, Colossians 3: 15-24

### LETTING GO OF ALL THAT

Though it is embarrassing to confess, I want to tell you of my struggle with a quiet, insidious sin that has plagued me for as long as I can remember. I write of it today because I know I am not alone in my struggle. The sin I speak of is the desire to have my life to be significant in the eyes of people.

This struggle, I find, comes from deep inside - some inner hunger to have people recognize and affirm what I do, and deeper than that who I am. Like every other sin, the wages of this one is death. My hunger to have the affirmation of others leads to the wages of this one is death. My hunger to have the affirmation of others leads to the death of contentment. Stewardship of my days suffers and dies also, as I allow myself to be preoccupied with the “next thing” - the “something” that I will do that will cause others to notice and affirm me. This sin gives birth to envy of other’s accomplishments and recognition, and, when I allow it to grow, kills love. It is an ugly situation, and knowing there are others who share it with me is no excuse and no comfort.

What is comforting, and what has kept me in the battle against this attitude of my heart, this sin that I want to defeat, are the marvelous words of challenge and affirmation and promise in the Scriptures. Re-read the verses from Colossians 3. First, concentrate on verse 17: “...do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”. Now look again at verse 24: “since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving”. It is the Lord Christ you are serving! Return now to Matthew Chapter 6: “Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them...”. Then three times before verse 19, Jesus affirms, “ then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you”.

What is the message for me here? The recognition of men is not as important as it seems to me (in fact it is not important at all), and when I am tempted to judge my significance by what others think of me, I am called by my loving Father to turn away from that false standard and remember that I am already significant *in Him* and He will be faithful to give me things to do that are significant *to Him* as I obey Him. It is the Lord Christ whom I serve. Not myself, not my Church, not the world, but Christ alone. Desiring the praise of men, the affirmation of the crowd, the rewards of the here and now - I must be continually letting go of all that in order to receive the deeply real, genuinely significant things Christ would bless me with instead. When I am free from desiring the affirmation of humanity, then I am free to love and minister in Jesus’ name to any to whom the Lord calls. Then my significance will be in secret, where the Father rewards, and I will be able to rest content in the role the Master Director has given me to play.

**Mine eye too quick to hold, mine ear to hear  
The glittering, noisy baubles of the world so near.**

**Oh God!**

**Let all my senses, all my fear,  
Center only on that which You hold dear!**

**“Lord, the thought that I must accomplish something that people will call significant in order to have my life count is a recurring theme with me, but does not honor you. Help me, Father, to let go of all that, and be content with only, and always, You alone. Amen”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: To have the ‘smile of God’s approval’ on my life is worth more to me than having the applause of the multitudes of earth’s inhabitants!**

**- Erik Ritschard -**

**NOTES:**

**Matthew 6: 5-8**

### **PRAYING JUST AS I AM**

**Mac moved from Alaska to Oregon and got a job as a window decorator in a large department store, where I worked. Though I was supposed to work with him, I disliked his mannerisms and found ways to avoid him.**

**One day Mac told me that the store wasn't happy with the way I was (or wasn't) working. Then I realized something had to change and knew I needed to pray. That I did not want to do, knowing God would want me to change.**

**I didn't want to like Mac. Finally, however, I stated to pray, “Lord, help me to want to pray, for I really don't want to.” Soon I was praying more earnestly, admitting to God that I didn't want to like Mac! Then God surprised me! “Don't tell me you don't like Mac, tell me you hate him.” “Oh, no,” I cried, “I'm a Christian, I don't hate anybody”! But I had to obey God, and confess my real hatred for Mac. I was really convicted and prayed for forgiveness. Peace soon followed. Mac and I began working well together. I thought he had changed! When he told me he was moving on to Mexico we had a final coffee break together. I looked at him in amazement - he had not changed at all! His looks and ways were the same as before. God had done a miracle - He had changed me! How exciting!**

**What did I learn from this experience.**

**First, start where you are. I had to start with, “Lord, help me to want to pray”. God honored that honest request and in a few days I could pray with urgency. We usually associate the gospel song, “Just As I Am” with altar calls and repentance. But ‘just as I am’ is a prayer for older Christians too. There is only one way to come to Christ at any time - in simple honesty about true conditions. God wants to hear it ‘like it is’.**

**Secondly, let God lead you in your praying. He can help you pray in truth. (See Romans 8: 26) In my case, admitting the awful truth and saying the very words to God caused me to repent. Then, without realizing it, hate and rejection began being replaced with caring and cooperation. We need God to reveal what we do not know and cannot change about ourselves.**

**Then, thirdly, love will always impact the situation. Love is lining up with God's nature and His way of working in people's lives. LOVE WORKS.**

**The thing that remains with me to this day is that God performed a real miracle back then - He changed my heart, something I could not do.**

**“Father, I want to pray honestly and urgently about the situation that confronts me. Come alongside and help me”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Today, I open my heart and give myself and my situation to God my Father. He will change me.**

**- Beth Stewart -**

**NOTES:**

**Galatians 1: 15-17, Job 1, Genesis 39**

### **GOD REVEALS HIS SON IN ME**

**Paul states that "God, who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles."**

**After a person has become a Christian, it is only natural that God desires to reveal Jesus in that life. When we are baptized, Romans 6: 4 states we are "buried with him in baptism, risen to walk in newness of life." That will be a life of integrity, holiness and righteousness.**

**A Christian should be a replica, a reproduction, an image of Christ. My friend made chalk drawings of my grandchildren as Christmas presents. I was delighted to discover a likeness of my own children in my grandchildren.**

**Some people have never read the Bible and have never darkened the door of a Church. The only way, whatsoever, that they can know about Christ, is to listen to my testimony and watch my actions.**

**An old hymn prays, "Oh to be like Thee, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art, stamp thine own image deep on my heart". The Holy Spirit living within me produces fruit: love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self control. God desires to reveal his perfection and attributes in my attitudes and my actions every day. This is not something I can do in and of myself. It is God's Spirit working in me to do His will.**

**God was so pleased with Job's integrity that He was willing to allow Satan to test him. Job exhibited God's character even as he sat in the ash heap, arguing with his friends. He stated that he would never give up his integrity when his wife suggested that he curse God and die, thus ending his pain and suffering.**

**Joseph was an upright, honest young man. He refused to be tempted into sexual gratification by Potiphar's wife, so he chose to leave the scene quickly. Although she told lies about him and he landed in prison, he did not feel sorry for himself, he let God's light shine. Wherever we go, we take ourselves along. Our character does not change according to our surroundings or circumstances.**

**Paul and Silas were put in prison for preaching in Jesus' name (Acts 16), but they sang praises to God at midnight. When the prison gates were opened and the chains fell off the prisoners, the guard was sure they had all escaped and he was ready to take his own life. However, because they chose to be honest, Paul and Silas had the opportunity to win the jailer and his family to the Lord. When God's image is revealed in us, His love and forgiveness flow freely also. Job, Joseph, Paul and Silas all chose to pursue a holy**

**lifestyle. God was revealed in their lives and others came to God because of their testimonies.**

**Pursuing a holy lifestyle is a choice each Christian must consciously make daily. God has given us the ingredients: purity, godliness, honesty, virtue, integrity, uprightness, cleansing, newness of life, sanctification, devotion, and service. It is our responsibility to display them for the world to view, judge and desire.**

**“Oh, God, let the world see Jesus living in me. Reveal your holiness and righteousness in my walk and talk very day, in every way, wherever I go.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: The reproduction of God’s Holy Son, Jesus, in my life allows me to exhibit a holy lifestyle in order that others might be drawn to Him and come to know Him as personal Saviour.**

**- Laura Drewler -**

**NOTES:**

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **Give your reaction or response to the following statements: "People will stay away from the Church because there are hypocrites in it; but they never give a thought about being with the hypocrites who go to the ball games, the department stores, restaurants, or their own places of work. This double standard is confusing - even a bit hypocritical."**
2. **Do sincere Christians, who seek daily to be "filled with the Sprit", sometimes act inconsistently (i.e., act in ways that are less than fully "Christlike")? Why or why not?**
3. **What is the "secret" to effective "tongue-control" in your personal life?**
4. **When you, as a believer, are severely tempted to judge your own worth and significance by the praise and recognition which others give to you, what can you do to conquer this temptation?**
5. **Why is it so easy for Christians to "jump to conclusions" about people, or to intentionally "hurt" people? What can you personally do to correct your tendency to judge other people's actions?**
6. **How can you learn to be tolerant of other people's actions and beliefs, without morally compromising your own moral principles? How do you "reconcile" the two following Biblical statements?**

**Statement One: "By their fruits you shall know them".**

**Statement Two: "Judge not that ye be not judged".**

**How can you ( as a believer) properly be a "fruit inspector" of other people's lives without improperly becoming a "moral judge" of other people's lives?**

7. **As a sincere Christian who is committed to respecting and obeying the moral principles of the Bible, what should your reaction be to a person who practices a homosexual lifestyle?**
8. **What should be your response to yourself and to God when you (as a sincere believer) suddenly or gradually realize that you have been "entertaining" resentful or hateful feelings towards a fellow human being?**
9. **Is it possible (in light of human weaknesses and the universal vulnerability to sin) for a Christian to be a "replica, a reproduction, an image of Christ"?**

- 10. Share your honest response (or reaction) to the following statements: “Some people have never read the Bible and have never darkened the door of a Church. The only way, whatsoever, that they can know about Christ, is to listen to my testimony and watch my actions.”**
- 11. Tell if you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Pursuing a holy lifestyle is a choice each Christian must consciously make daily.”**
- 12. Why do you think believers are so concerned to make a “good impression” with others, in order that other people will think highly of them? What “steps” can believers take to be delivered from this “bondage”?**



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**PURSUE A CONSTANT GROWTH**

Jeremiah 13: 23, 2 Corinthians 5: 17

### THE EXCUSE IS INEXCUSABLE

In the Judges, Chapter 6, we read of an angel who had a task for Gideon, but Gideon did not want to get involved, so he gave the following excuse. *“My family is poor and I am the least in my father’s house”*. (Judges 6: 15) God’s answer was *“I WILL BE WITH THEE.”*

The leopard cannot change it’s spots, neither can the Ethiopian change his skin. But, even though certain ‘features’ in the physical world cannot be changed, you and I, in the moral and spiritual world, can change! You and I have no valid excuse for retaining habits, lifestyles, and attitudes that hurt others. I am sure you have heard the same excuses I have for an uncontrollable temper “I am a redhead”, “It’s my Irish blood”, or “Bad tempers run in the family”.

A man asked permission to borrow a rope from his neighbor. “Can’t do it”, replied his friend. “I need it to tie up my milk”. “Milk”? Replied the neighbor. “You can’t tie up milk”. “I know that, but when I don’t want to loan something, one excuse is as good as another”.

There is a lot of truth in the man’s reply. How easy it is for us to make excuses for our behavior traits that annoy others. We may even want to change, but Mr. Excuse comes along and offers reasons for our displeasing behaviorism. When we yield to his suggestions, we refuse to admit that God can help us change. In 2 Corinthians 5: 17, Paul wrote the solution for living a Christlike lifestyle.

I too have had character flaws. The men in my family have the ability to lose their tempers easily. Since it seems to be a family trait, I could have used the excuse “It is in our genes. We can’t help it”. Because I believe 2 Corinthian 5: 17, I discredited that excuse. In my early teens, I made the decision not to give into family traits. Faith in God’s Word and His work in my life, has freed me of such temper. **PRAISE GOD!**

Is there something in your life you want changed? Read 2 Corinthians 5: 17, Romans 6: 4 and Ephesians 4: 22-24. **GOD IS MORE THAN ABLE TO CHANGE YOU.**

“Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ, I ask You to work in my life, and make me the person you want me to be. Change the traits that hinder my Christian testimony”.

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY:** I want God to mold and shape me on His divine potter’s wheel. I am ready, Lord!

- Lowell Weller -

John 3: 1-15

### TRUSTING THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Taking the trash to the curb on the night before it is collected has never been a memorable experience, although I have repeated this task at least 800 times since we moved into our house. This night was a time to remember, it was a “three can night” with each one standing properly in its place, creating a straight row. The evening was cool and I could feel the soft breeze dance across my face. I turned into the wind to capture the essence of this calm beautiful night. There was silence all around me. The only sound I could hear were the leaves vibrating in the gentle breeze.

There appeared to be a cat walking toward me in the street. I thought that unusual because a cat will normally stop or turn a different direction. In a moment, I realized that it was not a cat, but, of all things, a balloon!

Instinctively, like a little child, I walked to the balloon to hold it in my hands. I wondered where it came from and how far it had traveled. Not able to bring myself to stuff this soft sphere into one of my neatly aligned trash cans, I could only do what my heart was telling me - set it free. I released the balloon and watched it rise a few feet above my head before it descended onto the street where the wind continued to propel it along its original course. I watched it roll along the street and into my neighbor’s yard, heading into a fence. Fearing its journey was at an end when it came against the strong fence, I was relieved as it changed direction, moving along the fence line, past the house and out of my sight.

Envious of its carefree life, how it traveled with no worries or fears, my wish for the night was that my life could be like that balloon, unconcerned with how rough the road of life is or unafraid of life’s obstacles. That was the moment of my revelation. As the wind is to the balloon, so is God’s Spirit to my life. I may bounce along a rough road or come against some unconquerable situation, but God’s Spirit will continue to gently nudge me the direction He wants me to move. When I run into barriers, He will even redirect my life. The point is I don’t have to worry about where I’ve been, or how far I have come, or even how far I have to go! If I trust God, He will like move me.

Like a balloon in the wind, God will compel us in the direction He wishes us to move.  
*“The wind blows wherever it pleases...(John 3: 8)*

**“Lead on, Holy Spirit. Lead me where I need to go. I do not wish to follow the path the world takes, which leads to destruction. The path which the Lord directs is my choice. Lead on, Holy Spirit. Lead me where I need to go. Amen”.**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: In God’s hands, I am safe. What harm can come to me while I am trusting the Lord? I will go where He leads me.**

**- Thomas Duckworth -**

**NOTES**

## WHEN TAILGATING IS PROPER

Tailgating is a form of road rage, therefore, it is against the law. There is a time however, for tailgating. The following Scriptures show when following closely is good advice.

<b>THEY DID</b>	<b>2 Chronicles 34: 33</b>
<b>THEY DIDN'T</b>	<b>1 Kings 11: 6-11</b>
<b>WE MUST</b>	<b>John 12: 26</b>

Female eels swim to the Caribbean Sea to give birth to their young. They travel from France, Norway, Japan and other parts of the world. A deep hole exists in those waters that attracts them. The mother eel lays her eggs and then leaves. After the eggs are hatched and the baby eels are old enough, they begin their journey to their home waters. The young eels swim through oceans, streams and rivers, regardless of the distance or direction, until they arrive. How did each eel know where to swim? Which part of the world did their mother come from? Can there be any other answer than God? Only God-given instinct could enable them to achieve this.

While stationed in Korea, our medical unit received word that two men had been killed by buried bombs, known as “bouncing bettys”. The other soldiers stood still, afraid to move. It was imperative that each follow in the footsteps of the demolitionists, in order to survive. Their obedience, to follow closely. Brought the remaining men to safety.

In Numbers 14: 24, we read, Caleb *“hath followed Me fully”*. 1 Kings 18: 39 gives the account of the prophet Elijah who commanded the people *“if the Lord be God, follow him”*. After the fire fell, the people said, *“The Lord, He is the God”*. David remarked that he delighted in God’s statutes. Psalms 119: 16 and verse 47, *“I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved”*. In Matthew 16: 24, Jesus commands you to take up your cross and follow Him. Jesus’ words are pertaining to soldiers, servants and pupils. As Christians, we are soldiers of the cross, servants of God, and pupils of Christ.

If I intend to arrive safely in heaven, I must follow Christ closely, walking in His footsteps.

“Lord Jesus, today, many want to be leaders. Help me to be Your follower. Help me to follow the instructions given in Your Holy Word”.

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY:** Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus. Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow on. Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus. Everywhere He leads me, I will follow on. (W.O. Cushing)

- Lowell Weller -

2 Peter 1: 1-11

**I CAN ‘BECOME’ THROUGH HIM!**

Several years ago I penned the following thoughts as my testimony to the joy I felt when I reflected on the changes I had experienced during my ‘walk’ with Christ.

During my fifty-nine years of living, I have changed from a frightened, dependent person to a healthy, reasonably confident woman. As I have tuned into God’s grace and love, moving step by step, I have, indeed, been “born again”. I am becoming receptive and responsible to God through Christ alone. Further, I am growing to sense the inner light of the Spirit of Christ guiding, freeing, and influencing me to desire what is good and in His Will.

These changes do not come quickly. The process is more like the planting and tending of a garden - cultivating, watering, weeding, waiting, and finally, reaping. Neither do they happen through God’s “zapping” me or through anyone else doing it for me. Yes, God’s Spirit encourages me to believe that I can “become” through Him; yes, other people are helpful models, sounding boards, and burden sharers. But the responsibility is mine. I am not finished, and I am sure God is far from finished. The tide is not yet in, but I see the shore more clearly. To grow into fuller maturity in Christ is a long process, involving my cooperation with the Spirit of the Living God. Peter teaches this lesson clearly. *“God will give you, through His great power, everything you need for living a truly good life...But to obtain these gifts, you need more than faith; you must also work hard to be good, and even that is not enough. For then you must learn to know God better and discover what he wants you to do. Next, learn to put aside your own desires so that you will become patient and godly, gladly letting God have his way with you. This will make possible in the next step, which is for you to enjoy other people and to like him, and finally you will grow to love them deeply. The more you go on in this way, the more you will grow strong spiritually and become fruitful and useful to our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 1: 3, 5-8, Living Bible)

I am experiencing some wonderful by-products in this process. As I have taken steps to grow in one area, I have almost spontaneously, stepped out in others. For instance, as I was exerting courage to deal with a tough area in personal family relationships, I also found the courage to overcome a disabling childhood fear of the water. I learned to swim and earned lifesaving certification. I managed a municipal swimming pool one season! This is the changing woman who previously “could not” put her head under water. My old fear of heights also dissolved somewhere along the way. I don’t even know when this happened. I believe that we are “all of a piece’. Therefore, as I (and you) become healthier spiritually and emotionally, I (and you) also tend to become physically healthier - and the reverse is just as true.

**“Loving God, help me to use the patterns and insights I have discovered, to continue to make the changes that will result in my becoming more and more Christlike.”!**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: Because I am daily learning to follow Christ more closely, I increasing like the person I am becoming!**

**- Kay Kline -**

**NOTES:**

Romans 5: 1-5

## INFECTIOUS LOVE

One time while doing maintenance on my car, I received a deep gouge on my hand. Failure to properly care for the injury resulted in swelling and soreness. After applying hydrogen peroxide (I like to see it fizz), mending began, swelling receded. Then for the following two days because of travel, once again there was swelling, redness, and pain. Not only that, but the infection had reached a lymph gland in the arm. Under a doctor’s care, the hand healed and only a small scar remained.

The analogy may be limited, but the thought is worth our consideration. Infectious Love! Paul wrote: *“Already we have some experience of the love of God flooding through our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us”*. (Romans 5: 5, JBP)

I like what the writer in “Response” (Seattle Pacific University’s alumni paper) said of a board member: “Dick Klein ‘47’ has lived with an infection most of his life. Call it hereditary”. The term was used of SPU, and Klein’s dedication to this institution.

This “infectious love” - what does it do in my “bloodstream”?

First, it consumes what is unholy. As a fire it burns up “the dross of base desire”. This includes the principle of sin in the heart. Then the fountain from which flows the varied aspects of life is clean.

Second, it refines every passion and appetite. When saved and wholly sanctified, one is not dehumanized. The three drives within - the self, the heard, the sex drives - remain, but when surrendered to God, He refines these three basic human drives or urges. They are controlled and placed in the proper perspectives of life.

Third, it brings everything into proper focus. Whatever life throws at us can become instruments whereby we mature in grace. Not bitterness or resentments toward these happenings, but is deepening in the grace of God.

Resentment and bitterness are as infections which spread throughout every aspect of one’s life. They poison relationships, choke effectiveness, burden with suspicion, and damage the soul. Without the refining fire of the Spirit, without the pouring in of God’s love, there these remain, smoldering, and may in time break forth into some soul catastrophe. A misunderstanding, for example, within a family grows into a feud, alienation, and hurts.

By allowing God’s “infectious love’ to flow into the soul, healing begins and restoration is realized. Bishop K. Paul Taylor in ‘Holiness, the Finished Foundation’, writing of

entire sanctification which “enables the believer to love God...and his neighbor”, said”  
“When the heart has ‘set its affections on things above and not on things on the earth’.  
The love of God within is normal health, and this inner health has a power of resistance  
that makes it impossible for the germs of the world to find a point of contact or any room  
in which to work and incubate”. (pg. 166)

Just as the devastating infection does its work in the body through the blood stream, so  
the “infectious love of God” can permeate every cell of our being - controlling,  
constraining, conveying.

“Jesus, thine all victorious love, shed in my heart abroad; then shall my feet no longer  
rove, rooted and fixed in God...Scatter thy life through every part, and sanctify the  
whole”. Amen (Hymn by Charles Wesley)

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY:** In a world of sin’s infections, I deeply desire, by  
God’s grace, to bring love, healing, and blessing to hurting people.

**- Floyd Cooper -**

**NOTES:**

**Philippians 1: 3-11**

**GOD’S LIFETIME CULTIVATION OF CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER**

**I love to work with wood! Your porch swing has aged to the point it needs to be repaired. After selecting the pieces of redwood for this project, I cut and drilled the planks to the correct size and began to apply a finish to protect the wood. While sanding and putting the finish on these boards, God reminded me of a very simple truth. The process of finishing these wood slats is much like the process God uses as He puts His finishing touches on us.**

**Applying the first coat of finish reminded me of my conversion into Christ Jesus. The finish was so quickly absorbed into the wood that it did not appear to have even been put on. Like water to a sponge, the liquid finish soaked immediately into the dry, porous wood. Similarly, when I received salvation from Jesus, I felt like God’s love was filling me and I just soaked it in. The effect was mostly inward. Not much changed outwardly at first.**

**The second coat went on as smoothly as the first, but this time it left just a little shine. Although, it had a bit of a shine, it was not enough to say the job was finished. As God continued to work in my life, He filled the emptiness where I may not have allowed Him to completely come in. Furthermore, He added a shield around me for my protection from the Devil and the world. As a second coat of finish is not enough to give wood a lasting protection, I also was too new to the Christian faith...I needed more of God to face the dangers and troubles which lay ahead.**

**The third coat developed a hard protective finish over the wood, just as God’s continued presence shielded me from more aggressive attacks from Satan. After three coats, the woodwork appeared to be finished, but I could see a benefit for even more coats of finish. In like fashion, we are constantly under construction spiritually. God keeps adding coats of finish to us until He knows we have what we need. This constantly being under construction is not so much to fill us with God’s power or even to protect us from the devil. We are a constant work of God, so that in His coming Kingdom, He will be able to present us as a shining example of His glory! The work God does on us today is not only for our benefit, but it will also enable us to shine for Jesus in heaven.**

**There is a dual purpose for allowing God to put His finishing touches on our lives. It is for our benefit as well as for His glory. Whenever I sit on our porch swing, I will remember this small lesson from God. We are not finished until God says we are finished. When that time comes, we will really shine!**

**“Lord, I know You are not finished with me yet. Thank You for Your patience as You smooth the rough edges of my faith. In Your hands, I trust You will complete what You started. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: In the hands of God, I will become all He wants me to be.**

**- Thomas Duckworth -**

**NOTES:**

II Peter 3: 8-14

LIVING IN ANTICIPATION

".....what kind of people ought you to be?" Why does Peter ask this question? In today's Scripture Reading, Peter is telling about the end of the world and the coming of the Lord.

Peter tells us in verse 10, "...the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire and elements will be destroyed by fire ... everything will be destroyed in this way."

Are we so connected to this old globe that we want to deny it will come to such an end? Unthinkable? But think, is it? Could it be the needed solution? We are told in Genesis that God put man in the Garden of Eden, "...to work it and take care of it." (2: 15) But after that, man fell into sin. Man and the earth have both suffered lasting effects from that fall.

As people increased they began to abuse the earth they were told to care for. We too, in our day, have denuded and polluted the home God gave us. These days, tugs and ships carry our waste and destructive garbage to far places.

And what to do with all the nuclear waste? Contaminated air and water are growing problems. Is there any solution?

Yes! God has the solution. He will cleanse the earth of sin and its effects. How? He will use fire, that great leveler and purifier. "But God has promised us a new heaven and a new earth, where justice will rule." (II Peter 3: 13) Isn't that something wonderful? The Contemporary English Version follows that with, "We are really looking forward to that!"

But let's come back to our original question: "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought we to be?" Peter answered his own question, "*My friends, while you are waiting you should make certain that the Lord finds you pure, spotless, and living in peace.*" (3:14)

Clean lives can go a long way in purifying the spiritual and environmental atmosphere that is around us now. And certainly pure hearts will personally prepare us for the new heaven and the new earth ahead.

We aren't warned to be withdrawn survivalists, but to grow "...in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come." (Matthew 6: 10)

**“Lord Jesus, help me to live a clean life both spiritually and physically, making a difference now.”**

**AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: I will live now in anticipation of God’s coming Kingdom.**

**- Beth Stewart -**

**NOTES:**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tell why, you agree (or disagree) with the following statement: “You and I have no valid excuse for retaining habits, lifestyles, and attitudes that hurt others.” (Note 2 Corinthians 5: 17; Ephesians 4: 13-32; Romans 6: 4)
2. After reading the following statements, share your personal experiences which illustrate the gracious and powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit who has enabled you to enjoy victory during life’s difficult circumstances; “As the wind is to the balloon, so is God’s Spirit to my life. I may bounce along a rough road or come against some unconquerable situation, but God’s Spirit will continue to gently nudge me the direction He wants me to move. When I run into barriers, He will redirect my life.”
3. From your own personal experience and from your reading of the Scriptures, what are some of the greatest “motivations” for closely following the living example and the explicit commands of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? (Note 2 Chronicles 34: 33; I Kings 11: 6-11; John 12: 26; Numbers 14: 24; Matthew 16: 24-25)
4. Tell why you agree (or disagree) that the following description of Christian Growth is Biblically accurate and reflective of reality: Changes do not come quickly. The process is more like the plan ting and tending of a garden - cultivating, watering, weeding, waiting, and finally, reaping. Neither do they (personal changes) happen through God’s ‘zapping’ me or through anyone else doing it for me. The responsibility is mine.” (Note 2 Peter 1: 1-11)  
  
Share at least one behavioral or attitudinal change which you have experienced in your life, as a result of your obedient and disciplined response to God’s initiating grace in your life.
5. What is meant by “the refining fire of the Holy Spirit”, and why is it vitally necessary for every believer to regularly experience this “refining fire”?
6. With a Biblical understanding of Holiness “in mind”, give your interpretation and application of the following statements: “We are constantly under construction spiritually. God keeps adding ‘coats of finish’ to us with. He knows we have what we need. We are a constant work of God, so that in His coming Kingdom, He will be able to present us as a shining example of His glory!”
7. As citizens of a fallen world where evil is widespread, what should be the response of earnest Christians? (Note 2, Peter 3: 8-14)