INTRODUCTION

Years ago, as a young Christian I noticed that many believers have a daily experience of life that is far from the "joy unspeakable" and "peace which passes understanding" that the New Testament describes. I began to face into the question of how one can see the Christian life "work out" in daily reality.

Why is it that so many Christians are discouraged? Why do they feel such failures? How can one live the victorious life now?

It was many years before I found the answer. Eventually I discovered that I had accepted Christ as Savior, trusting in Him totally for my forgiveness, but that somehow I had imagined I must contribute something toward living the Christian life now. Christ was adequate to justify, but apparently inadequate for living the saved life on a daily basis! What I didn't realize is that my efforts to "live for God" were getting in the way of Christ living through me. And as long as I still felt that I could live the Christian life, Christ let me bang my head against the wall.

I found in the pages of the Bible that all of the great men of God went through this experience of trying to live for God, until they saw that only Christ can live the Christian life, with us simply as His vehicles of expression.

This booklet is far from a complete statement of the "mystery of the gospel... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is simply an introduction, bringing us to the beginning of real life in Christ.

What this booklet presents is the basic gospel that Paul proclaimed, and it ought to be known by all who are "born again". It is just the foundation of life in Christ, the place where we get...
started. But tragically, much of what you will read here has been ignored in whole sections of God's church. No wonder so few seem to know the victorious, joyous, peace-filled life that Jesus described as "abundant" living. And no wonder the world looks upon Christianity as just another religion, instead of as a glorious way of life, whose participants show to the whole earth that Jesus Christ is alive and well in the twentieth century.

- David Ord

Chapter One

FORGIVENESS IS NOT ENOUGH

A great many Christians are saved people still living under the power of sin. A forgiven past and the promise of a blissful future are wonderful, but they do not solve the problem of a present which continues to be a "hell". The Christian life for many is a battle between good and evil, with the evil frequently winning hands down.

This is the problem that the apostle Paul outlined in Romans 7. He had a desire to do good, but not the ability. The more he tried, the more he failed. He confessed that he continually found himself to be a prisoner of sin. He was trapped by a downward pull as powerful as the law of gravity. Time after time, he did the very thing he hated.

All of us have sat in congregations and heard dedicated ministers preach their heart out to stir us to victory over sin and a manifestation of the loving community that Jesus said the church was to be. We have been moved, even to tears. We have begged forgiveness for our failure to really produce the goods in our lives. We have cried out for power to overcome. But months and years later we still fail to show the life and love that the world so desperately needs to see.

Something, somewhere, is wrong. In our more honest moments, most of us know that the old-fashioned gospel has something missing. Forgiveness of the past and bliss in the future are inadequate.
There has to be another way. The Christian life was never meant to be slavery to sin. Sure, we will all get caught out at times. But we weren't intended to be enmeshed in our flesh, constantly failing to display the love, joy, peace that are the fruits of the Spirit.

Paul came to see that there had to be an alternative. In his desperation to live out the life of Christ, he finally reached the end of his rope. "Wretched man that I am!" he cried out. "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" And when he admitted his failure to manage the self life, God used him to reveal the answer to our plight.

A Total Answer

Paul came to see that Jesus' death and resurrection is meant to touch our present situations. Lack of understanding of how they are to do so is the greatest single problem the church faces today. Most of our other difficulties can be traced to this root cause.

How do neighbors, friends, relatives learn that an individual has become a Christian? The first symptom is usually that he turns "religious". He might declare himself a Christian and "witness" to them. He starts attending church. Time that he formerly wiled away in front of television is now given over to time spent alone on his knees in his room. Bibles begin to appear about the house, even at his place of work. There is a whole reorientation of interests, and of friends; there might even be the axing of a relationship with a girlfriend. Religion becomes the center of his life. This is what the world sees.

The way the individual sees it, he is trying to live the Christian life. He becomes a tither maybe, or perhaps a prayer warrior, Bible reader, or soul-winner. He may even become a deacon or preacher. These are the things Christians are "supposed" to do. He also tries to produce "fruits" and perhaps obtains "gifts".

Jesus told a group of religious people that they were doing all kinds of external activities because they were trying to hide a vacuum in their lives. He said they were concerned with the outside of the cup because the inside wasn't all that godly. They wanted to look holy, but in reality they weren't.
If someone were to suggest that we too are frequently occupied with the outside of the vessel, we would doubtless be as startled and angered by such an accusation as those who heard it from the lips of Jesus the first time. Yet for many of us it is the painful truth.

We hope our zeal in doing those things which are thought to be Christian will outweigh the evil in our lives. We imagine we will receive God's blessing as long as we mean well. We do a lot of things to try to look like we are living the Christian life. But in reality our ministry is often a cover-up for the fact that we find ourselves constantly beset by failure.

Because we don't know God's answer for the present, we do the only thing we can - try to handle the present in our own steam. It is a battle between good and evil. It is having an adequate Christ for the past and the future, and substituting consecrated, dedicated self for the present.

But Jesus' incisive comment to the Pharisees reveals that wrestling with good and evil still amounts to evil. The net effect of good versus evil is still evil. And instead of being touched by our love, joy, peace, the world sees religious people who proclaim themselves to be something they very evidently are not. To them, our pretense at Christian living is as much a sham as children playing house.

Faced with this same problem, Paul came to see that God has a total answer for man's plight, not a two-thirds answer. He isn't a God who brings us through the forgiveness of our sins and then informs us that he has little for us until he meets us on the other side. He called this answer to our problem "the revelation of the mystery".

**A Special Revelation**

Did you ever notice that a new revelation was given to the apostle Paul - something hitherto unknown, never before made plain?

I came to Christ during a Billy Graham crusade in the North of England toward the end of the 1950s. But in twenty years of Bible study, I never so much as noticed this "mystery" until a few years ago. I just assumed that when Paul spoke of the "mystery" of the gospel he meant the old-fashioned gospel of how Jesus died to forgive our sins and get us ready for heaven.

Yet as plain as he could say it, Paul wrote that the mystery was a brand new revelation.
Though he saw himself as "the very least of all saints", Paul said that it was entrusted to him "to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God" (Eph. 3:8-9). This mystery, hidden from every previous generation, was revealed to him, and through his special commission all the apostles and prophets came to know the whole counsel of God.

Paul was commissioned to "fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but now has been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27).

His commission was two-fold. He was to preach Christ among the Gentiles, but also to declare the whole counsel of God by bringing to light the administration of this hidden mystery.

Understanding of the mystery came by special revelation. He wrote "that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery" (Eph. 3:3). To the Galatians he said,

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

Paul was not speaking here of his conversion experience. Certainly, Jesus Christ did reveal himself to Paul in a unique way. But that was only to stop him in his tracks and bring him to his knees so that he might receive the Holy Spirit and be baptized by Ananias.

No, Paul was referring to a revelation by which he received his message for the nations. In fact, he tells us when and how this revelation came to him. It was after he left Damascus.. while he was secluded away in Arabia. He told the Galatians that there in Arabia, away from all opportunity to consult with flesh and blood, God "was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (Gal. 1:15-17).

A missionary in Africa was translating the New Testament into an African tongue. When he was going over his translation, he found that he had translated this passage "to reveal His Son to me". But the Greek is quite clear. It isn't to reveal His Son to me, but "in me".
In Colossians, already quoted, Paul tells us that the mystery of the gospel is the fact of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." These are words we are all familiar with. But they do not mean what many of us have thought they mean. They are much, much deeper than the gospel of forgiveness and future bliss through the blood of the cross. This is that crucial third of the gospel that many of us have missed.

A New Insight

Paul frequently spoke of his message as "my gospel". Not that he preached an entirely different gospel - a different Jesus, a different cross, a different resurrection. No, it was the same gospel that the other apostles preached, but a further unfolding of what had previously been proclaimed.

Paul's gospel contained a whole new insight into what really took place at the cross. It was a revelation that went way beyond the gospel Peter preached before thousands of Jews on that first Pentecost day, years before Paul was even converted. To that degree, it was a unique gospel. And the other apostles did not come to understand it right away, as we shall see.

This special revelation gave Paul "insight into the mystery of Christ" which no one had understood before (Eph. 3:3-5). He saw something about the cross and the resurrection that none of the other apostles had seen. A whole dimension opened up to him that was to be made known to all the apostles and prophets through his special commission.

To the Romans Paul wrote of "Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested... leading to obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:25-26).

Do you want to be established in the Christian life? Do you long for that victorious life of love, joy, peace, and all of the other fruits of the Spirit? Do you desire to actually be obedient to God?

If you do, an understanding of the revelation of the mystery of the gospel is the key. Paul's continual prayer for those in the Ephesian church was "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of
"Him." Paul saw such a revelation as he had received to be the answer to the cry of the Christian's heart for power to come through with the goods. He told them,

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe (Eph. 1:18).

Are you experiencing the surpassing greatness of his power in your life? That is our desire for you as you read on in this booklet. May God reveal his mystery in you.

Chapter Two

TWO KINGDOMS

For centuries the nation of Israel had longed for the dawning of a golden age foretold by their prophets - an age when the government of God would be established over the whole earth.

Isaiah wrote in glowing terms of the day when nature, "red in tooth and claw", would be tamed so that the lion would lie down peacefully with the lamb and a little child would play safely around the adder's nest. Streams of water would break forth upon the thirsty wilderness, and the desert would blossom as the rose.

Micah foresaw this age of peace and prosperity in terms of Israel's exaltation above the nations and the flowing of the Gentile peoples to Jerusalem to learn the ways of the God of Abraham. Nations would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Never again would they train for war.

It is not surprising then that when John the Baptist boldly announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, there was great excitement throughout the Jewish nation. Thousands recognized him as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about a "voice in the wilderness" preparing the way for the Messiah.

Matthew tells us that John was indeed the realization of Isaiah's prophecy: "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah". Mark tells us something similar. John came "as it was written in the prophets" to prepare the way for the Christ. He saw John as the actual one
spoken of by Malachi. Luke too is abundantly clear that John was he of whom Isaiah and Malachi wrote, adding that through this coming of the Messiah which John was preparing for, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

When Jesus strode into Galilee to commence His ministry, He Himself asserted the truth of John's proclamation. "The time is fulfilled," he explained, "and the kingdom of God is at hand." He called upon men to believe the good news of the imminence of the kingdom.

**A Literal Fulfillment?**

The prophets had spoken of a literal government of God on earth, the Jewish nation being restored, and the whole earth keeping the laws of God. Consequently the Jews were looking for an earthly, literal fulfillment in the form of a conquering deliverer who would overthrow Rome and install Israel at the helm of world affairs.

But if the fulfillment of the words of the prophets was to take the form of an earthly empire, why did Jesus complicate the whole issue of the kingdom by speaking of it in parabolic form? Matthew tells us that He never spoke to the nation about the kingdom except in parables.

Hadn't Israel always understood what the kingdom would be like? Didn't the prophets speak of it in explicit, clear terms? Hadn't their nation been expecting the kingdom for generations? Why then did Jesus make the kingdom a mystery?

If the prophets' dreams were to be fulfilled literally, why did Jesus continually describe the kingdom by saying, "It is like..."? Throughout His ministry He employed ingenious analogies to illustrate the kingdom in a manner that would be understood only by the initiated. To the disciples it was given to know "the mysteries of the kingdom", but to the masses these things were hidden. (See Matthew chapter 13.)

Despite the expectations of the Jewish people, the first century A.D. passed off without their deliverance. In fact, instead of being exalted as the leading nation of the earth, in 70 A.D. Rome destroyed the temple and plundered Jerusalem. And over nineteen-hundred years have rolled by without the fulfillment of their hopes.

Was John the Baptist in error? Not according to the testimony of the New Testament authors. They said plainly that he was the fulfillment of the prophecies. He was not mistaken. The
kingdom was actually "at hand", ready to be ushered in. It was inaugurated within three years of John's execution by Herod. In fact, Jesus said that the disciples were "seeing" what the prophets wrote of and what the Jewish nation was expecting but missed because they didn't have "eyes to see"! (Matt. 13:17.)

The Kingdom Is Now

Did Jesus picture the kingdom as being offered, rejected, and finally postponed for perhaps 2,000 years? Was it a kingdom of a future age?

In the parable of the wheat and tares, Jesus described the kingdom as present in the world today.

At the harvest, at the end of the age, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend." The kingdom is the field, the world. The offenders (the tares) are gathered out of the kingdom. The kingdom isn't established when the angels are sent forth at the coming of the Son of man; it is already here! The children of the kingdom are the good seed, growing right alongside the children of the wicked one, the bad seed. It is a kingdom which is present now.

Jesus also likened the kingdom to a net of fish. At the end of the age the bad fish are cast out from among the good. The net is here today, spanning the time from the first coming of Jesus up until His second advent. Then the kingdom will be manifested in all the fullness, and the sons of the King will shine forth in the glory of the kingdom.

The parable of the grain of mustard seed illustrates the tiny beginnings of the kingdom. The government of God began with just one man, Jesus of Nazareth. But it has grown steadily until now the birds of the air (the nations of the world) are coming and finding refuge in its branches.

Again, the kingdom is like leaven which spreads silently, almost imperceptibly, until the whole of the dough is leavened. It has been expanding ever since Jesus established it, increasingly bringing its powerful influence to bear upon the affairs of men. Its citizens are like salt, "the salt of the earth" as Jesus called them, adding savor to an unsavory world.
All of these parables speak of the kingdom of God as a present reality. But it is not an earthly
government established upon worldly principles. It is a different kind of government. That is
why Jesus spoke of the "mystery" of the kingdom.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate on trial for His life, accused of being a rival of Caesar, He
explained to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this realm." Elsewhere, He had told His
persecutors that the kingdom of God would not come with "observation". It wouldn't be the
kind of government that you could point to and say, "Here it is!" or "There it is!", as with the
empires of this material dimension. It would not be a part of the social order.

What is the kingdom that Jesus was talking about?

A Heavenly Kingdom

The psalmist said that the Lord is a great God, and a "great King above all gods." He is
pictured as reigning over all creation, the King of creation. "The Lord reigns," he affirmed
over and over. "0 worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, fear before Him, all the earth.
Say among the heathen that the Lord reigns...." Indeed, "His kingdom rules over all!" (Psa.
103:19).

The kingdom of God is first and foremost the reign of God. It is not principally a territory, or
earthly government. It may be expressed at various times in such ways, as it was in the days
of the Old Testament theocracy of Israel, and as it will be in its ultimate manifestation. But
essentially God's kingdom is His reign, which is not always visible to the average person.

The watchword of the earthly disciples was, "Jesus is Lord!" It looked like Caesar was on the
throne, but in reality Jesus is on the throne as King of kings and Lord of lords. The kingdom
of God is present on earth today because God reigns in the lives of His servants.

The kingdom of God is spoken of by Matthew as the kingdom of heaven. But where and what
is heaven?

The ancients conceived of heaven as a distant place above the stars. The first heaven was the
earth's atmosphere. The second was still higher, where the stars are. The third heaven, where
God's throne is located, was thought to be beyond the second heaven.
Today, we understand that all three "heavens" overlap one another. The second heaven is not above the earth's atmosphere, but rather the earth is a part of the second heaven. We are an astral body, moving among the starry heavens, which are all around us. We are "in" the heavens.

So too God's throne, the third heaven, is not "way off" beyond the stars, but is all around us. That is why Paul could quote a Greek poet who said of God, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." The earth is likened to His footstool. He "fills heaven and earth." Heaven, then, is a different dimension, which though invisible is all around us.

The author of Hebrews said of believers that we "are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven...." We are already there, in the heavenly city, he said.

Paul also explained that believers have entered into the heavenly places. Though we were dead in our sins, God "made us alive together with Christ ... and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6).

Scripture places our being in heaven firmly in the now. We are citizens of God's kingdom, alive in the heavenly dimension where Christ reigns as King. We do not have to go somewhere to be in heaven; the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual realm all around us, which though it cannot be seen with human eyes is totally real.

This is what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus, who was expecting a literal government to appear on earth, that the kingdom of God cannot be "seen" by men. It is invisible, like the wind. You enter it by becoming a spiritual person. "That which is born of flesh is flesh," Jesus explained to him, "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Paul tells us in Romans 8 that if we have the Spirit of God, we are "not in the flesh, but in the spirit". Believers have experienced a birth into the spiritual dimension, the realm of God's reign, the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus is said to be the "firstborn among many brethren". This birth took place when He was raised from the dead into the heavens. He is described as "the first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18). He is the pioneer of the kingdom, the captain of our salvation who has blazed the trail into the heavenly places ahead of us.
But Paul assures us that when Jesus rose, we were raised in Him to be seated in the heavens. And through our resurrection and ascension in Him, we are also born from above. Though there is yet to be the bodily manifestation of our resurrected life, in spirit the reality has already come into being. We are today in the kingdom of heaven, under the direct reign of the King.

Our Golden Age

The prophets had to write within the limitations of their day. They knew that a golden age must one day dawn when God's rule would be a reality in men's lives. But they searched in vain for an understanding of the exact manner or time of the events about which they prophesied.

Besides, how could God portray the kingdom of heaven for men who had known only His external rule in the earthly theocratic kingdom of Israel? How could they understand spiritual things when the Spirit had not come to give inner enlightenment? Would it have seemed like a golden age if God had told them that all that was meaningful and precious to the Jew under the old covenant - Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrificial system, their laws - would be set aside as but a shadow of reality?

So He showed them the golden age in the idealized terminology of the old covenant and the kingdom which they understood. He described it as a worldwide feast of tabernacles, with all nations coming up to Jerusalem to learn the laws of their Maker. It would be like everyone keeping a Sabbath, worshiping the true God in His temple, and living under the umbrella of Israel.

Zechariah spoke glowingly of all nations coming to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles. Isaiah described "all flesh" as journeying to Jerusalem from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another to worship in the temple, and then going out to the valley of Gehenna to see the carcasses of the transgressors (and who would wish to do such literally?). Every horse's bridle is said to bear the inscription "holiness unto the Lord", and not a pot anywhere in all of Judah would be unfit to be used for sacrifice in the holy temple itself!

These were beautiful symbols, in the language of the old covenant with which they were familiar, to illustrate a day when the whole of mankind would be tuned to the ways of God and made one with Him. Though physical impossibilities (how could all flesh worship in the
temple each sabbath?), they depicted the reign of God within His saints which we are now experiencing.

Many of us have been focusing on a physical manifestation of the kingdom, as did Jesus’ first disciples. How many believers there are who fail to realize their inheritance in the kingdom today because they have been taught to live only for the return of Christ. This world then becomes a terrible place to be, and the believer wishes life away, ever hoping that Jesus might come "tonight".

While we have the expectation of the Lord's return, and though indeed this event will be the climax of history, once our spiritual sight is reoriented by an inner revelation of the present kingdom and our life in the heavenly places, there is much to live for here and now. An understanding of the mystery of the gospel - the reign of God in our lives today - changes our whole perspective on life. We begin to live victoriously and fully now.

The veil of Moses and the Old Testament needs to be taken away from our eyes that we might see the reality of all that the prophets spoke about, regardless of any much-speculated-over future earthly fulfillment, in the person of Christ and the power of His kingdom (II Cor. 3:11-18). See how Paul in II Corinthians 4 and 5 leads our minds to look through the physical to the spiritual. For in spirit, which is the true reality, we are already in the golden age.

In Christ Jesus the old things are passed away, and "behold, all things are become new." This is the unshakeable kingdom which will outlast every physical thing (Heb. 12:28). It is ours to be enjoyed today.

Chapter Three

RELIGION OR LIFE?

When the voice of John the baptist echoed through the Jordan valley challenging the nation of Israel to prepare for the kingdom of God, something stirred in the patriotic hearts of those Israelites which took them back to a time in the dim and distant past when they had been delivered from Egypt and established as a free people under the rule of God.
The prophets likened the contract which had been sealed at Sinai between God and Israel to a marriage agreement. Israel as the wife had agreed to fulfill certain terms and conditions, in return for which God had promised to be her provider and protector.

Under the covenant Israel was blessed beyond measure. Her enemies fled before her and she rose to prominence among the nations. She took over the wealth of other peoples. So abundant were her harvests that there was barely time to gather everything in before it was again sowing time. And there wasn't a single case of barrenness or ill-health among people or herds.

But it wasn't long before they began to neglect their part of the bargain, and God was forced to send national punishments upon them to pull them back into line. Again and again they vowed to keep the covenant, but they never succeeded for very long. Even the more zealous of them whose lives were disciplined with religious devotions found that they couldn't live up to the terms of the covenant.

Finally, God divorced Israel and disowned her as His kingdom. She was left to the ravages of foreign empires. Once more she became a subservient race.

The Failure Of Religion

The story of Israel in the Old Testament is a record of the failure of an external system of religion to bring man into a living relationship with God and to enable him to live a life pleasing to His Creator. The writers of the New Testament tell us that God actually instituted the old covenant religion of Moses for the specific purpose of demonstrating the limitations of religion.

What is religion?

Religions are generally based on the philosophy of someone who once lived a relatively praiseworthy life. Such a man gathers a group of followers around him who desire to copy his lifestyle. Perhaps he leaves a book which records his philosophy of life. Others perpetuate it after his death. They try to emulate the kind of life he lived.

So religion is to copy someone else's philosophy, to live by his concepts, to do what he tells you to do. It's following an external pattern or set of principles. It's imitating an example.
In the case of the old covenant, Moses wasn't the founder of the religion because it originated with God Himself. But Paul lumped all religions together, including that of Moses in which he grew up, as merely the "elementaries" of worship (Gal. 4:1-9).

It might seem surprising that Paul would pigeon-hole Israel's religion in the same category as the religions of the heathen. But he saw that like all others it constituted an attempt by human beings on a fleshly level to live a life that would gain the approbation of the divine Being.

All religions have certain elements in common. All are for carnal people and involve physical ordinances. All involve the imposition of external rules and regulations. All depend on the performance of set standards. And all utilize a system of rewards and punishments to attain their objectives.

Religion, Paul came to see, is just worship at playpen level - the ABC's of a good life. It is an attempt to imitate godly living, and amounts to trying to be something we are not.

Israel's religion was no one-day-a-week matter. It was ingrained into their whole way of life. It formed their national constitution. It was the basis of their economy and their political structure. But still it failed to deliver the goods, and when the people neglected the constitution, the kingdom fell apart.

Every civilization in history has been based on ideals which for a time its subjects subscribed to, but which eventually proved too demanding for the bulk of the people. It is a simple fact of history that before the world's great empires were destroyed from without, they decayed within.

While modern man seeks to solve social ills by treating the effect and cleaning up the environmental factors, the basic cause of all of our problems continues to be neglected. Jesus put His finger on the fundamental problem when He said:

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man (Mk. 7:21-23).
Certainly heredity and environment play their part in our difficulties, but the root of all evil is in man's heart. That is why no religion, no philosophy, no set of principles can deal with the human problem. The whole Old Testament shouts at us the failure of man to help himself.

What man does is the result of what he is. And man can't be what he isn't!

**Trying To Be Like God**

Paul accurately described us as "sons of disobedience" who are "by nature children of wrath." We just naturally fall short of pleasing God.

The deck is stacked against us from birth. No one ever needed to be taught how to sin. It just came automatically as soon as we were old enough to sit upright and bang a spoon angrily because someone refused us more dessert.

But Paul wasn't just writing poetically when he said that we are "sons" of disobedience whose nature is at fault. Man's inability to build a world of love, joy, and peace is the result of an inherited condition which got started with our first parents.

Scripture speaks of all humanity as being "in Adam". We are born with the identical nature that Adam had. We have inherited a hostility toward the ways of God which makes it impossible for us to please Him (Rom. 8:7-8). That is why no religion or philosophy can change man.

Adam didn't start out separated from God, with a natural rebellion in him. God created man in His own image, and what He made He pronounced "very good." Man talked freely with his Creator in the garden and enjoyed His presence.

The trouble only began when Adam and Eve chose to act out of their own self-interest. They looked at the world around them, and drew conclusions. But they were not satisfied with observation; they also wanted to experiment.

The desire for observation and experimentation was stirred up in man by the serpent. He told them to rely on their own five senses. He assured them that appearances were reality. If a thing looked good, it would produce a good effect; if it looked harmful, it was to be avoided. The only way they could be sure of anything was to try it out.
The serpent's line was appealing. Man was an intelligent creature with powers of reason. Why should he need to be told everything by God? Why couldn't he chart his own course through life, without having to bother God for advice all the time? After all, he could "see for himself" what was good and what was harmful, and a little experimentation would settle the doubtful issues.

The serpent actually portrayed the way of experimentation and observation as being the ideal, in fact the way God Himself functioned:

For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5).

Could it be bad to become "like God", with the wisdom to make right decisions in all circumstances?

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate (verse 6).

To their minds, Adam and Eve weren't rejecting God when they ate the forbidden fruit. It wasn't that they disliked God and chose to cut themselves off from Him. No, they wanted to be like Him.

God had made them. He had given them each other, and a beautiful garden to live in. They had no reason to turn against Him. He was their hero, their example. They wanted to be able to rise to His level, to copy His life. They desired His wisdom, His ability to make right choices.

Satan's trick was to get them to believe that it was actually good to eat the fruit, so that although God had told them not to do so He would be pleased to see that they had progressed to His level. They had chosen the way that seemed right, not the way that seemed evil (Prov. 14:12).

The reality, however, was something quite different. Satan in the form of the serpent had encouraged them to take a closer look at the fruit - to focus on appearances. It really looked delightful! So they drew a conclusion from what they observed: the fruit must be good. But
what they didn't know was that reality is more than appearances. It is much more than the five senses are capable of observing.

Notice the next thing that happened:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. . .and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden (Gen. 3:7-9).

This was the birth of what we call "human nature". A change came about in our first parents. They got their "eyes" opened to something more than just appearances. Their whole viewpoint altered, so that things didn't look the same any more.

Somehow, even their bodies seemed degrading. What God had intended to be beautiful and for enjoyment suddenly seemed shameful. It became secretive and "dirty".

God Himself now seemed like an ogre, out to get them. They became fearful and hid. People wonder why God hides Himself, but in reality it was man who chose to hide from God. But it wasn't God who had changed, nor their bodies. It was they who had taken on a negative view of God and everything around them.

The Real Culprit

Man had assumed that he was a wholly physical being and that all he required to live successfully was the freedom to make his own decisions based on what he could observe and experience.

If something looked good and beneficial, he would do it; and he would avoid what appeared evil and harmful. He would act out of his natural instincts - the inbuilt drives for self-preservation, enjoyment, sexual fulfillment, and so on.

But when man chose to be his own god and to function from self-interest, he became fixed in that approach to life. He was trapped in it. He now viewed everything from the vantage of self-interest.

Although conscious of himself before the Fall, man now had an exaggerated sense of self-awareness. This produced a feeling of separation from others, especially from God, and
separation led to alienation. Man became the center of his own universe, suspicious of all others.

The story of history is the record of man's groping around in his separated alienation seeking to function by experimentation and observation. But it seems the only lesson man has learned from his experimentation is the fact that he never learns anything from history. We stumble like the blind, our minds darkened.

Generations of bloodshed have not taught us the way to peace. We are no closer today to the solution of our problems than we were when men first picked up clubs to try to solve their differences. Our generation may yet live to see the Final Solution for planet earth - nuclear oblivion.

Several centuries before Jesus of Nazareth walked this earth, the prophet Jeremiah observed, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" We are simply baffled by the human sickness. There's a problem with man's heart that all of our scientific skill and ingenuity has failed to cure.

Though he wrote in a different day and age and to an entirely different culture, Isaiah aptly described the human condition in a manner than is just as applicable today as it was then:

We hope for light, but behold, darkness: for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope along the wall like blind men, we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at midday as in the twilight, among those who are vigorous we are like dead men. All of us growl like bears, and moan sadly like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none, for salvation, but it is far from us (Isa. 59:9-11).

If there was ever a "midday" in human endeavor, it is today. It took from the time of Christ until A.D. 1750 for the total fund of man's knowledge to double. Today, knowledge of the universe and the world about us doubles every two to three years

But despite the incredible advancements of civilization, when it comes to living together in peace and prosperity, everything we try fails. We have no answers. Man's heart is sick: he is a deceived being, unable to discover the light of day.
What man didn't know at creation was that God never made him to be the center of his own universe. He was created as a container, a vessel, to manifest a deity. But instead of entering into spiritual union with his Maker, so that he would manifest the characteristics of divine love, joy, peace, when man listened to the serpent he entered into a spiritual relationship with the god of this world.

Man now began to manifest Satan's nature. We have all "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

Satan is "self" personified. He is Mr. Self. Many believe that Isaiah 14:12-14 is a flashback to his beginnings. That may or may not be true. But certainly we see his attitude reflected in the attitude of the king of Babylon:

But you said in your heart, `I will ascend to heaven, I will raise nay throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

All of the miseries of man got started when Satan tempted man make himself like God. Man simply expresses Satan's nature, which the way of self. Satan wanted to be the center of the universe, and man sees himself as the center of the universe.

When Jesus explained that all of the evils in the world come from man's heart, He didn't mean that God's creation was evil. No, man is still in the image of God, for Jesus said even of the Jews who sought to kill him, "You are gods".

It is what is in man that is evil. The sins that flow out of man's heart and defile the good creation that God made him to be come from the spirit who indwells him. Jesus said of the unregenerate Jews of His day:

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.
"Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44)."
Man's center is not his physical brain, but his spirit. It is his spirit that is self-conscious, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him?" It is the human spirit that Satan has impregnated to engender "sons of disobedience".

Satan's trick is to blind us to reality, so that we see ourselves in the way that he sees himself - as separated, alienated selves who have to look out for number one. He works through our natural biological drives, blinding us to anything but our own self-importance.

**The Truth About Human Nature**

The Bible speaks of the ordinary man of the world as the living dead. Human beings are said to be "dead" in trespasses and sins. And the loose woman is described as "dead even while she lives."

"Death" in scriptural parlance doesn't refer to the cessation of all life, but rather to separation. Those in Satan's empire are the "living dead" because they function as separated selves, instead of knowing oneness with God's whole created family.

Satan's domain is aptly described as "darkness", for darkness creates an illusion of being alone, separate from others. Even though among others, when trapped in darkness we can be terrifyingly alone. We read that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving," plunging them into the darkness of self, "that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Christ's glory was to reflect the Father. He was not an independent god, but the image of God, manifesting the life of His Father.

Sin is described as falling "short of the glory of God" - living as an independent self, instead of being an expression of the nature of God as Jesus was. All of the sinful deeds which man does stem from the god of this world who indwells him, creating the illusion that man can operate as an independent self, an isolated god.

We either manifest God the Father as did Jesus, or we manifest the god of this world. But we cannot be gods in our own right. Satan lets us *think* we are when he indwells us, but it is an illusion. "You are doing the deeds of your father", Jesus said of his persecutors (Jn. 8:41). Just
as He was a vessel through which His Father could express Himself, so they were vessels for
the devil's expression:

I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which
you heard from your father (verse 38).

Perhaps you grew up thinking of yourself as a fairly decent sort of person who could be
tempted into sin by the devil. Most of us have thought of temptation as an external pull on our
minds, trying to entice us to use our biological drives in a wrong way.

The truth is, however, that the devil works from within. He is a fifth columnist. He is an
indwelling master. He rules his subjects from the center of their hearts, because he is a spirit
who works *in* man. He simply urges us to act as independent, separated selves, as if we were
gods in our own right - and all the time we are manifesting his nature because he is Mr. Self.

What we call "human nature" is actually Satan's nature expressed through the human vehicle.
That is what Jesus meant when He said that we were of our father the devil, carrying
out *his* desires.

Did you ever think of yourself as the expression of Satan - as Satan in John, Richard, Anne or
Mary form? That is what it means to be part of Satan's kingdom. He is our god, and we
manifest him.

*Satan In Perspective*

But there is another illusion that the devil creates. It is the illusion that he is involved only in
sinful deeds - murders, robberies, adulteries, lies, and the like.

Actually, Satan isn't averse to people doing good. Jesus Himself said that we humans "being
evil, know how to give good gifts" to our children. In fact, Satan was the original advocate of
life lived by the knowledge of *good and evil*.

Satan's nature is *self*. When self benefits from doing good, he is happy for us to do good. But
when self finds it to its advantage to murder, steal, or cheat, that is the route it takes.
This explains why there can be so much good in the world even though it is under the control of the kingdom of darkness. Satan's subjects can do wonderful philanthropic deeds, as long as the cause of independent self is advanced.

The devil isn't out to get humans to commit as many murders, indecent acts, or thefts as he possibly can. If he were, the world would be a good deal more unstable than it is! No, his primary aim is to have an alternative society - a rival empire to the kingdom of God.

So Satan is consistent in promoting self, whatever the means. That is why his society "works", even though it is really "hell" compared with the kingdom of God. Jesus said that Satan isn't divided against himself, or his kingdom couldn't go on. The good and the bad in society stem from his nature - the knowledge of good and evil.

And don't be fooled - Satan isn't against self-improvement! He sought to climb to the top, to rival God, and he expresses that same drive for self-advancement through his channels. The striving of man to "be better" is just the manifestation of self.

Satan is even pleased to see man involved in religion, because invariably religion is based on the improvement of self. This is one of his cleverest devices! If he can get us to focus on self, even through religion, he has accomplished his goal. After all, the first trap he laid for man involved religion: it was the temptation to become "like God".

Not surprisingly, the devil actually has ministers! But don't imagine that they are only the liberals who deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ. No, they are "false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds" (II Cor. 11:13-15). These ministers stress living righteously; but it is based on self-effort - obedience to the right laws or principles - instead of on the natural, spontaneous flow of the inner life of Christ.

If you have always thought of Satan as advocating only such things as gross immorality, it may seem strange that he should actually advocate righteousness as if he were an angel of God. But he is delighted to preach righteousness as long as it is the outcome of self-effort. And because religion is man's attempt to live like God, whatever the precise form of the religion, God's way of producing righteousness in us doesn't lie in the field of religion.
Jesus didn't come to found another religion. What He came to bring isn't based on a written code left behind by its founder, which others then try to follow. It isn't the teachings of a dead man perpetuated by his admirers. It's not a philosophy of life or a set of principles that we must try to live by.

But if religion isn't the path of righteousness, what is?

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**Chapter Four**

**DO WE HAVE TWO NATURES?**

Religion holds out no hope for us. It is impossible for us to live as Jesus did as long as we have a heart that is centered on self.

What, then, is the solution to our dilemma?

Ezekiel saw the answer centuries before Jesus came to implement it in the first century A.D.:

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (Ezek. 36:26-27).

The remedy is drastic surgery! God must actually remove our old nature and implant within us a wholly new one. Then we will automatically walk in obedience to Him. Just as it was formerly natural to sin, now it would be natural to be obedient. Righteousness would spring forth spontaneously!

Jeremiah, recognizing the failure of the old covenant, looked forward to the day when the new covenant would be established. He spoke of it in terms of the *internal* rule of the King in His subjects:

I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach every one his fellow citizen, and every one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least to the
greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more (Heb. 8:10-12).

No longer would men try to obey God. No longer would we need to urge fellow-citizens of the kingdom to walk in close relationship with the King.

Instead, God would give us a new heart and a new spirit with inbuilt obedience. Further, the occasional failures and detours into sin would be fully covered by the blood of Jesus so that God would not even take note of them. And in this atmosphere, free from all condemnation, the Spirit within the new heart would bring forth fruit just as naturally as a vine produces grapes.

Through Death Into Life

How does God perform His surgery upon us? How does He remove the stony heart and place a new heart within us?

Jesus enunciated a cardinal principle of kingdom life when He said that except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it cannot bring forth new life.

In God's timeless overview of the world, the whole human race is identified with two men - the First Adam, and the Last Adam. What both of these men did has affected the entirety of mankind throughout history. Paul explained:

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive, (I Cor. 15:22).

So then through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:18-19).

When Adam sinned, all of us were reckoned to have sinned. Though we were nowhere near the scene of the crime, we would all have done as Adam did in the same circumstances. Because of his sin, he became joined in spirit with Satan and from that time on men have all been born as natural citizens of the kingdom of darkness.
But just as we were all identified with the First Adam, so God identifies us all with the Last Adam. And when He died to meet the penalty of sin, we died with Him. "One died for all, therefore all died (II Cor. 5:14).

That is why Paul could say, "I have been crucified with Christ". Indeed, he wrote to the Romans:

How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death ... Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin: for he who has died is freed from sin (Rom. 6:2-7).

I used to think that to be "crucified with Christ" was to reckon myself on the cross, but not yet dead. I thought I had to try to keep myself up there, so that eventually, after a life of trying, I would finally succeed in "dying to self".

But Paul doesn't say that we are presently being crucified with Christ. He says that we were crucified with Him, and that we died, and were buried. The old life came to an abrupt end. Paul's statements are all in the Greek past tense.

This death set us free from the clutches of the god of this world. He was our master, but we are no longer his subjects. When you die, the government you were under no longer has any power over you. So we are no longer subjects of the kingdom of darkness.

But Jesus didn't stay dead. He is described as "the first-born from the dead", and when He rose we rose with Him. We were "born again", this time as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. We are completely out of the rule of Satan, now under the rule of Christ:

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13).

The Bible couldn't be clearer: we died to the kingdom of darkness and were born anew in the kingdom of heaven. We aren't under the rule of two kingdoms. We have just the one Master, Jesus our Lord. As Paul expressed it:
But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).

These statements strike at the jugular vein of the false teaching that man has two natures warring against each other. Certainly there is a war going on, but as we shall see in due course it is on a different battlefront and of a different style than most of us have imagined. It is definitely not between two natures!

The believer has undergone a change of heart - a change of nature. Satan ruled us from within, so that our minds and bodies were his subjects. Now Christ Jesus is King, and His internal rule from the new heart makes us "slaves of righteousness."

Could Ezekiel have been any plainer? He said that God would remove the old heart - the heart from which Jesus said all of the evils in the world flow - and place within us an obedient heart. And Jeremiah added that out of this new heart would proceed righteousness to fulfill all of God's requirements.

The confusion over whether man has one or two natures has come about because we haven't understood that man really doesn't have a spiritual nature of his own. The devil's greatest trick was to fool us into thinking that we are "gods" in our own right, instead of seeing ourselves as "gods" because we are in the image of God and meant to express His nature. We are meant to contain a deity, not to be independent deities.

Through our natural lineage "in Adam", we contained the god of this world. He was the one who blinded us to a true understanding of ourselves as vessels, telling us that we were independent gods. And when we walked the natural course of this world, we imagined we were "doing our own thing", when in reality we were simply expressions of his self nature.

But now, because we are "in Christ Jesus" through our death and new birth, we are vessels for the divine nature. We have "become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (II Pet. 1:4). We have completely finished with Satan's nature - escaped from his rule - and the nature we express is the love-nature of our heavenly Father.
The trouble is, at first many of us have difficulty believing that so radical a change has taken place. This is because Satan's rule was internal and invisible (so that we actually thought it was us), even as Christ's reign is within us and invisible. But there is more to life than meets the eye.

**Dead Or Alive?**

To be "in Christ" is not just legal terminology. It is not just "the way God looks at us." God does not kid Himself we are something we are not. He does not deceive Himself.

To be "in Christ" is to enter into union with God through Christ. Through Adam we were joined with Satan. Now through Christ we are joined with God. We formerly expressed Satan's nature, but now we express God's nature.

Adam's union with Satan was "reckoned" ("imputed" - KJV) to us. It had to be this way because we weren't on the scene of the crime at the time. We were in the loins of Adam, much as the Levites were in the loins of Abraham and therefore tithed to Melchizedek when Abraham gave him a tenth of his spoil (Heb. 7:4-10).

But this reckoning is not mere legal jargon. It is actual. Something is actually put to our account - reckoned, or imputed to us - that was not originally ours. It is not just "on the books" against us. When Adam sinned we actually became sinners - God doesn't just "consider" us sinners.

Even as our being "in Adam" resulted in us being born as sinful individuals who naturally fulfill the desires of their spiritual father the devil, so our being "in Christ" results in an actual righteousness. In Adam we were born as sinners who are sinful; in Christ we are born as saints who are righteous.

We cannot make the point too strongly that it is not a mere legal status that we are talking about here. A real grasp of the fact that we have *died* as sinners and been born all over again as saints is the fundamental key to the operation of Christ's life in us.

Most of the sense of failure, the discouragement, and the condemnation that many believers experience finds its root right here in the false teaching that this change is only a matter of legal status. Countless born-again individuals do not know what really happened to them at
their conversion, and as a consequence they inadequately experience the reality of Christ's life on a day-to-day level.

Many have built a doctrine on "reckoning" themselves dead, as if reckoning meant we are to imagine something to be true that is not in fact true. They "reckon" themselves dead, without ever seeing that we really are dead!

To reckon ourselves dead is simply to accept as true what God says is true. It's just that simple. God says that when one died for all "then were all dead." To reckon is to look beyond external appearances and believe what God says. We may not look dead on the surface, but we confess that we are. This is the battlefront we face.

If you owe a debt, and the debt is settled by someone else, your creditor reckons the account settled and so do you. He doesn't have to pretend that it is settled and keep on telling himself that it is. It just is, and that's the end of the matter.

Just as you can only reckon an account settled when it has been paid (any other kind of bookkeeping is plain fraud), so we can only reckon ourselves dead if we really are dead. Indeed, this same Greek word rendered "reckon" is used in Romans 3:28, where it means that we reach a conclusion based on facts. The King James translates it, "We conclude that a man is justified by faith...", and the New American Standard even more strongly renders it, "We maintain that a man is justified by faith...."

We are dead - and we are to maintain that we are dead, despite external appearances. This is not kidding ourselves something is true when it isn't, but is seeing that spirit is reality. In spirit our death and resurrection in Christ is a fact. We "fight the good fight of faith", standing on what God says of us.

So God calls upon us to believe what He has accomplished for us through the cross. He says we're dead, and we say we're dead. And when we act in a way that looks as if the old man is still alive, we still say he is dead, despite all appearances to the contrary. That is true reckoning. We fight the devil's accusations by standing firm in faith.

But though we begin by reckoning, as we affirm spirit-reality above appearances, we shall come through into knowing. Faith proves to be its own evidence, and the Spirit witnesses with
our spirit that what God says is indeed reality. We no longer need to reckon, because we have a fixed inner knowing.

The Replaced Life

The problem with words is that their meaning tends to become watered down.

When Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born again, this Pharisee was dumbfounded. How on earth could a person shrink back to the size of a tiny baby and again enter his mother's womb? Physically, of course, such is impossible. But Jesus asserted that such a radical event is necessary in spirit before anyone can enter the kingdom of God.

Today, in the United States it is almost fashionable to say you are "born again". It has become a watered-down term which for many means nothing more than that they asked Jesus to come into their hearts to ease their guilt and give them comfort in a tough world.

It doesn't take a lot to utter a silent prayer in a church meeting, or even to raise your hand to signify acceptance of the Savior. It can be a rather nice step to take, and certainly a lot more comfortable than in the early days of the church, when you were putting your life on the line to become a Christian. In those days, they baptized you the moment you came to Christ, whether out on the desert road as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, or in the middle of the night as was true of the Philippian jailer. (They didn't even wait for the church service!) This isn't to say that the millions of "new birth" experiences that don't have this note of radical change - of death and resurrection - aren't genuine. But it's little wonder so many believers stay as spiritual babes for so long when they have hardly any idea of what actually happened to them at the time of their conversion.

Instead of Jesus coming into the old heart to try to make some improvements in our character, the new birth is the total end of the old heart - its complete removal by death - and the implantation of a new heart.

Before, we walked according to the course of the world, and the god of this world was our spiritual life - a "living death". The old heart wasn't just some "thing" within us, it was the inner center of our being. Our human spirit in union with the spirit of Satan formed the old heart.
At conversion, the link with Satan was broken. His spirit was ousted, and with the end of the union the old heart which issued forth in sin ceased to be.

But if our former center was a union of Satan's spirit with our spirit, what is our new center - our new heart?

Again, Ezekiel expresses it very clearly:

...I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will put My Spirit within you... (Ezek. 36:26-27).

The new heart is a product of the union of our spirit with the Spirit of God. Whereas Satan indwelt us, now Christ Jesus indwells us through the Holy Spirit. Just as we were expressions of the "prince of the power of the air", walking according to his worldly ways and fulfilling his lusts, now we are expressions of the divine nature through union with Christ.

The human spirit is like a container. (Paul called us "vessels"). It was made to be in union with a divinity. There is a God-shaped hollow at the center of every human being. The container expresses the water it contains in a particular form - water in cup, jug, glass or mug form, for instance. We were born into this world with stagnant water in our containers, because we contained the god of this world. But when we are born all over again, the container is totally purged of its former contents and filled with the living water of the Spirit.

Of course, what has happened inwardly doesn't yet show at the soul (thought, reason, emotions - we speak of "soulish" music) and body (action) levels. But Jesus and Paul show us that we are principally inner beings (spirit) who express themselves outwardly through soul and body. And in our center, which is what we really are, the end of the old and the coming of the new is total.

So we now live a replaced life. Our new nature is Christ indwelling our spirit. We contain His life, and instead of walking according to the course of the world we are led by His indwelling Spirit. He is now "the Way" that we walk.

We may not look different on the outside. We may have many of the same thoughts that plagued us previously. But body and soul are not spirit-reality. Regardless of appearances, if we have taken Him by faith He has taken us, and what Paul calls the "old man" - the old heart,
our former center, which was the union of our spirit with Satan - has been put to death, totally eradicated, through the death of the body of Christ.

Paul could therefore write of himself and all believers:

Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (II Cor. 5:16-17).

Let Paul's words sink into you until the Spirit makes them reality for you. Your "old man" has passed away. You are a wholly new creation. There is nothing left of the old. It has been replaced by your union with Christ. And so Paul concluded:

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. .. (Gal. 2:20).

We don't focus on externals - we don't regard anyone according to fleshly appearances. We focus on the new man, the new heart, which is the union of our spirit with Christ. He is now our life, and hence Paul speaks of "Christ, who is our life", and asserts that "for me to live is Christ". This is the mystery of the gospel... "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Let us now see what this union means, and then go on to consider how it works out in practice.

Chapter Five

NO MORE SEPARATION

Many of us have grown up with the idea in the back of our minds that Jesus of Nazareth somehow wasn't quite "for real". Sure, we know that He was a man - but we have this lingering feeling that He wasn't fully human.
Despite the artists' impressions of Jesus as a "holy man" with a halo about His head and a sweet, almost beatific look on His face - or the sculptors' images of Him forever in a prayer pose or with hand uplifted in blessing - Jesus was an ordinary human being who had a great deal in common with the average man-on-the-street in first century Palestine.

He wasn't an apparition. Nor was He an other-worldly being in the guise of a man. He was every bit as real as you and I. He was an inner person expressed through outer soul and body just like us.

Jesus had been from past eternity the image of the invisible God. He was part of the "I AM" through whom all things exist. But when He was born of woman, He did not continue in His former role and simply disguise Himself in a human body. We are told that He completely gave up what He was:

... who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6-7).

When Jesus was born, He knew nothing of His past existence. He was like every other baby, developing gradually in self-awareness until He was old enough to "know" Himself. It was only as He grew, with the teaching of His mother and through reading the Scriptures, that His role as the Last Adam began to dawn on Him. As a baby, and later as a child, He didn't have the awareness of an adult: He didn't have all knowledge.

By the time He was thirty, Jesus had a pretty good idea of His identity. But still He wasn't so certain that there couldn't be a shadow of doubt, for all three of the devil's temptations homed in on the question of whether He was really whom He believed Himself to be.

There was one difference between Jesus and ourselves. As the Last Adam, He had to begin with the same sinlessness as Adam had when first created. So He wasn't indwelt by the god of this world as all since Adam have been. And He never became a child of the devil. When the devil offered himself as a candidate for the one who would indwell Christ, promising to make Him "His own man" and to give Him power over the nations as God in the flesh, Jesus chose to be indwelt by His Father.
Jesus took the opposite route to that of the First Adam. Very God from eternity, and now God made flesh, He chose to be a container for His Father, instead of functioning independently. As a result, His life was an expression of the Father.

**One With the Father**

It may be strange to think of Jesus as being "indwelt". But the fact is that Jesus was indwelt by the Father just as we must be. Notice what He Himself said:

I can do *nothing on My own initiative.* As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me (Jn. 5:30).

Again:

For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak (Jn. 12:49).

Further:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do *nothing of Himself* unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son does in like manner (Jn. 5:19).

Jesus, then, was a container to express His Father. Instead of asserting Himself He was willing to empty *Himself* of His own initiative and become God in Jesus of Nazareth form. All that He said and did then manifested the Father.

But how could Jesus only speak what the Father commanded and do what the Father did? Did Jesus receive a script to learn every morning? Did He have a fresh list of miracles each day, like a shopping list?

"Let's see, Son, today we'll heal a leper, cast out a few demons, and turn water into wine. Now here's what you say to the leper...."

No, Jesus didn't receive His commands externally. He didn't read them in a book or have them handed to Him on parchment by an angel.
Look at what He said: "...whatever the Father does, these things the Son does in like manner." He was simply a manifestation of the Father. The Father expressed Himself through Jesus, so that although it looked like Jesus saying and doing these things it was really the Father in Jesus form!

Jesus' life wasn't based on a religion. He didn't copy someone else. He didn't try to follow external instructions. He just lived spontaneously, and because He was one with the Father - His human spirit in union with His Father's Spirit - when He lived, it was the Father living as He. He expressed His Father's nature and thus was the Father manifested to the world.

So Jesus was able to say of Himself:

He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves (Jn.14:9-11).

The simple fact is, Jesus Himself couldn't do a single miracle! Remember, He had given up His right to equality with God. He had become human. Now, He could no more perform miracles than you or I. He was powerless, unable to do a single thing more than any other common piece of human clay. He could of His own self do "nothing".

Yet Jesus did do miracles, because He was a container for the Father's life. He was in union with the Father - so much so that to see Him was to see the Father manifested.

But - and this is the staggering truth that revolutionizes the believer's life - Jesus said that in the precise manner that He manifested the Father through union, so also we are to manifest the Christ.

"Just As We Are One"

Immediately following His statement that to see Him was to see the Father manifested, Jesus went on to make an even more- incredible claim. He included us in the picture!

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father (Jn. 14:12).
For years I read right over that statement, never catching the profound truth Jesus was giving. I used to look back on the life of Jesus and think what a marvelous time in history that must have been. Those were "Bible times", and who could have wished to experience anything better than being right there with Jesus?

But Jesus said that it is better now that He has gone! He said that if we really do believe in Him, we will do greater works than He Himself did!

To "believe in" Jesus is much more than simply accepting His shed blood for the forgiveness of our sins. That is only believing in the blood. But there is also the body side of the cross. And it is through the body of Christ that we are identified with Him so that we are made one with Him.

We are one with Him in His death - our "old man" died with Him. "I have been crucified with Christ", as Paul put it.

But he went on to say, "and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" - just as Jesus said of Himself that it wasn't really Him living but the Father living in Him. And if we are not living any longer, what people are seeing when they look at us must be something else - it is actually the manifestation of Christ! We are Christ in His human forms - in His Bob, Peter, Linda or Sue forms.

I know that some are going to be shocked by such a claim. But if we are no longer living, and Christ is living in our place, what other conclusion is there?

The trouble is that we have read right over these great statements of Scripture and never caught the impact of the words. If we did grasp what actually happened at our new birth, we simply wouldn't be trapped by the feelings of failure, discouragement, or heaviness that are so common among God's people.

If we really knew that we are simply containers of Christ, manifesting Him in this world, the problems we have with fussing about ourselves would evaporate. We would know that we are no longer separate selves, but instead one with God through Christ.
In that beautiful final prayer of John 17, Jesus asked that we might know union with Him just as He knew union with the Father - that we might function as one life as He did. He wanted us to experience that identical oneness:

...that they may all be one, *even* as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us ... that they may be one,*just* as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity... (verses 21-23).

Jesus wasn't just using nice words. He meant for us to know that same union He had, so that just as He manifested the Father we might manifest Him.

Many of us have thought Jesus was talking about the various churches all being one. But trying to become "one" externally without knowing our inner union with Christ, and therefore with one another -since we all collectively make up His Body, as various expressed forms of Him - is putting the cart before the horse. Unity can only be manifest to the world when we know union within.

Prior to the death of Christ, most of mankind were kept at a distance from God. Only a handful knew a real relationship with Him. Compared with the Gentiles, Israel was "near"; the Gentiles were "far off". Yet this nearness was not oneness with God, and He had to be approached through an external mediatorial priesthood and system of rituals.

Because even the Israelites knew only the God "up there", sin could break their arm's-length relationship with Him. Isaiah said that their iniquities made a separation between them and their God, and their sins had caused Him to hide His face so that He did not hear.

But under the new covenant, God is no longer just "up there"; He comes to make His abode in us. We are so joined to Him that there are no longer two. Paul said that "the one who joins himself to the Lord is *one spirit* with Him" - so much one that for us to cohabit with a harlot is tantamount to taking Christ into an illicit relationship! (I Cor. 6:15-17).

No wonder Jeremiah said the new covenant would eliminate the need for us to urge one another to "know the Lord" - to get closer to the Lord. From the least to the greatest we are one with Him, rendering all need for priests or mediators of any kind null and void.
We have entered into the holy of holies in heaven. Where Jesus is, we are. He is seated at the Father's right hand, and we too are seated in these heavenly places. There is no more separation. As Paul concluded, there is nothing past, present, or future that can affect our relationship - neither temptation nor sin, neither trial nor tragedy, neither Satan nor his demons (Rom. 8:38-39).

All our sins are dealt with in full, removed from God's sight. He no longer takes note of them. There is no condemnation whatever! Christ settled the sin problem once and for all. "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?"

This stupendous experience of "no condemnation" is not something we have to duplicate every time we sin. This is the difference between the old and new covenants. The first held man at arm's-length and merely allowed him to come "near"; the new covenant makes us "one".

Every time Israel sinned, they had to be forgiven and the relationship restored. So God instituted a daily sacrificial system that would serve for the nation, since not every individual could sacrifice each time he went astray. But what Christ Jesus did was once for all time. He paid the price of every sin that would ever be committed. That is why there is no need for further offerings for sin (see Heb. 10:10-18). We have been sanctified by that one offering, "perfected for all time". So we rest in what Christ has fully accomplished. His sacrifice has been accepted once and for all by the Father, and we do not need to be washed anew and have our sins removed from us each time we fall short.

Notice, Jesus prayed that we might be "perfected in unity" - no longer separate, needing to draw near, but one. God no longer sees us as sinners, but as the righteous - as saints!

This is the whole force of Paul's argument in I Corinthians 6 concerning why we should no longer live sinfully. Murderers, thieves, adulterers and the like will not inherit the kingdom of God. "And such were some of you", he adds. But we are no longer the unrighteous - we are saints. He continues: "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified" - so why live any longer as if you were still one of the unrighteous? Because we have been born as entirely new persons, we are no longer liars, cheats, drunkards or covetous, and therefore are under no compulsion to live as if we were.
We are now sons of God expressing His divine nature. Christ Himself, the very image of the Father, is our life. And since the old man is no longer alive, so that there is really only Christ living through us, there is no way we can ever be separated from God again!

**Jesus Is Our Example**

The apostle Peter said that Christ is our "example", and that we are intended "to follow in His steps." Paul said something similar when he told the Corinthians, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

Do these statements mean that we are to copy the lifestyle of our founder as if we had a religion? Do they mean we are to try to act as He acted, imitating His behavior?

In what sense is Jesus our example? In what way do we imitate those who have walked this way before us?

The life of Christ isn't following an external set of rules or moral principles. It is not religion. Jesus isn't our example in the sense that we are meant to try to live as He lived, subscribing to His philosophy and copying His concepts.

He is our example of how the divine is to be produced in a human being. To imitate Him is to experience God living in human flesh in just the same manner as He experienced it. He pioneered the method, setting us an example of the indwelt life. To imitate Him or to imitate Paul is to be *indwelt as they were indwelt*.

Unlike the founders of other religions, Jesus is not dead. He is alive. And Christ in us is able to duplicate the same spontaneous kind of life that the Father expressed through Him.

Jeremiah foresaw the day when men would have the divine nature within them so that external law would no longer be necessary. Ezekiel said that God would *cause* us to walk in His ways from within. The old covenant was external, but the new is the life of Christ springing up from within us like rivers of living water.

There is nothing wrong with the law. Who can fault the ten commandments, the annual holy days, the food laws, the instructions about tithing, the agricultural laws such as the seventh-year land rest, or any of the other commandments? Paul rightly called the law "spiritual", and
the commandment "holy and righteous and good", for it reflected something of the character of God.

The external law God gave Israel (it was never intended for Gentiles) was however just the ABC’s of God's nature. "God is love." The law expressed love in a childlike form which humans without the indwelling nature of God could understand and to some degree perform.

The law said worship God. But how could carnal humans worship a holy God? Only in shadow form - by not having other gods, by not making idols, and by setting certain periods of time aside to concentrate on the things of God. That was the closest they could come, and that was all God required under the terms of the external law.

When you were a child, your parents and school teachers placed you under rules. You lived an externally regulated life. You were told when to go to bed, when to get up, how to dress, what to eat, what to study, and a host of other instructions. That is how the external law functioned:

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world (Gal. 4:1-3).

A child learns the elementary principles of life. Getting sufficient sleep: eating a balanced diet instead of only sweet things: washing behind his ears and cleaning his teeth regularly: the discipline of study and work instead of all play. These qualities are instilled into him from outside. enforced through a system of reward and punishment.

When we are young, we are restricted to the playpen. We learn the ABC's, just the elementaries of living. But when we mature and come of age, we begin to function as adult sons. Though we were under orders and no better than slaves, now we become lord of all - masters of our own lives - no longer requiring the restrictions of the playpen:

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal. 4:6-7).
The external has become internalized. Only instead of a set of rules, it is the spontaneous outflow of a mature life. So the adult doesn't have to have a set bedtime; he is free to go to bed early when tired, or to stay up into the early hours of the morning, perhaps even working a night-shift and sleeping through the day. Yet if he wishes to stay healthy, he *fulfills* the external law which he was under as a child. Though free to live spontaneously, he gets enough sleep to stay healthy: and that is what the aim of the external law was.

A child can never be an adult just by doing the things he is told to do. Going to bed at a fixed time, making sure he washes behind his ears, or studying when assignments are given do not make him an adult. But when the child matures into an adult, he will naturally fulfill the aim of the external regulations of childhood without needing to be told to wash or study.

In like manner, trying to be loving as God is will never produce a loving person. Trying to please God will never fulfill His will. The external commandment only demonstrates our inability to do these things (Rom. 3:20; 5:20). But when God lives through us, He will fulfill in us all that the external "ought to" of the law attempted to inculcate. Thus, "what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did" - and this was "in order that the requirement of the Law *might be fulfilled in us*, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."

**What Are the Commandments of Christ?**

God is a specialist in simply being. He does not live by commandments. He just lives, spontaneously. He is the "I Am". He is - functions as - what He is.

When Jesus walked this earth He kept His Father's commandments. But it wasn't external law that He lived by. He simply allowed Him who is the law personified - for the external law is but a shadowy outline of His nature - to "be" through Him.

Jesus told the Jews, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." Here is a major clue to understanding how this indwelt life works. Just as Satan's nature was expressed through us spontaneously, without our having to try to be sinners, so God's nature was expressed through Jesus without any effort on His part. It just came naturally. Because He was in union with the Father, so that the two were one, He manifested the Father's life.
We are to imitate Jesus by being conscious of the fact that we are indwelt as He was, and when Christ indwells us there will be a spontaneous flow of obedience to His will. We formerly expressed the lusts of the god of this world quite effortlessly, and now we express the divine nature in precisely the same manner. Like Jesus, we can do nothing of ourselves - the nature of God will be seen in us only as Christ manifests Himself through us as vessels.

So we are obedient, and we do fulfill His commandments. But we do not try to do His will. We simply find that we are His will, because He is our life and expresses His nature through us.

For years I tried to find out God's will for my life in various circumstances. I waited on God in the usual ways. But I have come to feel that much of our "waiting on God" is akin to astrology and divination - we want to peer into the future. God does want us to know His will, and He tells us that we should understand what He is doing in our lives. But He is not in the business of fortune telling. We are called to walk by faith, not by sight. He doesn't show us the way and then tell us to walk in what He has shown us. He tells us to step out without sight, trusting that He walks in us. Though He may occasionally give us an overall glimpse of what life has in store for us, mainly He wants us to know His will today. It is the kind of "knowing" which is a moment-by-moment experiencing of His will.

This means that we don't emphasize discovering "God's will for my life" in the sense of trying to find out what the God "out there" has planned for us. Instead, we are content to be the will of God each moment. And as we live boldly, trusting that we are Him in His human forms, we find that we do know His will in every situation, not necessarily even a Moment ahead of time, but always at the time.

John in his first epistle said that the lawless person is a liar when he claims to know Christ. Although under the new covenant we do not live by external law, paradoxically, anyone who is in union with Christ will find himself fulfilling the essential aim of the law without needing "ought to" admonishments, because the divine nature is flowing through him. (We shall deal with the question of sin and the believer in the next chapter.)

It was this spontaneous reproduction of the divine nature in human lives that Jesus intended when He said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." He had just explained how He Himself manifested the Father's nature on a moment-by-moment basis, as a natural
flow of the life of God through His flesh, and He was showing that if we abide in Him - if we know union with Him - we will manifest His nature (Jn. 14:7-15).

*The commandments of Jesus are not written laws.* They are an *internal* urge. In a thousand different ways each day we find ourselves living the life of Christ as He loves through us. And when we love, we have fulfilled everything that the external commandment of the old covenant tried to show in its limited shadow form.

We walk the ascended life of Christ, receiving His commandments in our innermost heart and mind from moment to moment. Thus we are the will of God in every situation that faces us from day to day. And though we "cast out" the external ought to - for it has no place alongside the freedom of this spontaneous life of Christ (Gal. 4:21-31) - we do not void the law but establish it and fill it up full, living at a level far and above what the written commandment could ever express.

In place of the written code we have the inner voice of the One who is our life - the constant flow of commandments that are He thinking His thoughts through us in every situation, for "we have the mind of Christ."

The law, then, served to lead us into the box-canyon of "I can of my own self do nothing", that in spirit we might see ourselves as complete in Christ. He is sufficient not only as Savior, but as our present righteousness and our very life. The new way, unlike the old, does deliver the goods!

When we were married to the law, though we sought to obey the commandments of our husband we found in reality that we couldn't - and condemnation and death were the only fruit of that relationship. But when Jesus' body was crucified, we were crucified in Him so that we died to the law. The marriage was ended, and the external commandment no longer had any claim over us. We were now free to remarry, to be "joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God."

In the new marriage, we do not go back and obey the commandments of the first husband. We are free of all requirement to do so. Indeed, it would be adulterous to do so. We are married not to the law now, but to "another" - to the living Christ who reigns within us. We do not return to living "in oldness of the letter", for "we serve in newness of the Spirit" (Rom. 7:1-6).
That is why we must "cast out" the old if we are to bear fruit in the new - for the external "ought to" will always render Christ of none effect (Gal. 5:1-4).

The old way was indeed glorious, surpassing any other religion on earth. But the ten commandments and all that God gave Israel at Sinai have a faded glory compared with the new internalized life of Christ. (See 11 Cor. 3.) The law brought only death because of man's failure to keep it perfectly, and so God introduced the much more glorious life-imparting new covenant:

...who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills. but the Spirit gives life (II Cor. 3:6).

The commandments of Jesus are not a written law. God does not function by a set of rules. He simply is. And He is love. Any code of rules can only be a shadow of the reality. Not to murder, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor covet is wonderful. But it is a long way short of being One who by nature is the very opposite of all of these evils! And God's purpose is to indwell us so that His nature will be expressed in us, so that like Him we naturally love!

The "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" isn't a code of law or set of external principles. It is Christ Himself expressing Himself through us:

Now the Lord is the Spirit [the law of the Spirit which has replaced the written commandment]; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (II Cor. 3:17-18).

As the law is fulfilled in us, so we find we live a changed life. But it is not the container that has changed - it is not improvement of the vessel - it is simply the glory of the One who is in us filling His earthly temple and making it radiant with light in a dark world. This is the mystery of Christ in us, our hope of present glory (Col. 1:27).
Chapter Six

WHY DO WE STILL SIN?

Once in a while, Christians are honest. They admit that their lives aren't what they were meant to be.

I was at a church weekend when the topic was "knowing God". Several of the talks at one of the sessions centered around the dryness of many believers' lives. One person spoke of the "drone of reluctant prayers" that had been offered to God all around the globe that morning. It was also admitted that much Bible study is simply a boring duty.

A leading London newspaper once said that if Christians have so much joy, as they claim to have, they should tell their faces about it.

The believer's life was meant to be joyous! It was meant to be a glorious daily experience. So much so that Paul and Silas in jail after a lashing were able to sing hymns of praise in the middle of the night.

Peter said that though those to whom he wrote were in severe trial, they "greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."

Glory! Yes, life in Christ was meant to be glorious! Not just in a praise meeting, but in all of the seemingly mundane matters such as washing the dishes or sweeping the factory floor. Our existence was meant to be thrilling, challenging, creative.

On the eve of His death, Jesus said that He had glorified His Father on earth, and now He looked forward to that fuller glory by which even His human body would become radiant. He had lived a fulfilling life, a glorious life. And now, speaking of us, He told His Father:

And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them; that they may be one, just as We are one (Jn. 17:22).

Though there is that same future glory that Christ now has awaiting us, and though it transcends what is possible in the flesh, we are already in the heavenly places and meant to know glory. We are the called, justified and glorified people of God (Rom. 8:30).
So what is glory? Is it just a nice charismatic word, to be repeated over and over again?

Jesus had no halo. He had no especially "holy" expression. Isaiah said in that well-known 53rd chapter that there was nothing about Him to make Him particularly attractive. He was like a root out of parched ground, without any stately form or majesty.

Yet, though a common person, through Jesus shone glory - because God is glorious, and to be glorified is to be an expression of God. Glory is the life of God manifest in a human vessel.

The Fulfilled Life

Why is it that so many believers feel they have to renew their relationship with God every morning? Why have we felt that we need to "top up" on the Spirit continually?

The answer, of course, is that we haven't known that we are one with God - we haven't recognized that we are in union with Him, so that Christ's life is our life.

When Jesus came across a Samaritan woman drawing water at a well, He took the opportunity of using the incident to illustrate a vital facet of new covenant life. He contrasted the water that sustains physical life with the living water of eternal life. He told the woman:

Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life (Jn. 4:13-14).

To know union with God - to partake of His life - is to be fulfilled.

The searching and seeking for reality comes to an end. The dryness is quenched as God Himself through Christ comes to dwell within. There is a continual feast, an inner joy that cannot be touched by external circumstances.

The prophets of the Old Testament often spoke of this day when men would no longer hunger and thirst for spiritual reality. Notice Isaiah's description of the inner life of the Spirit:

The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the Lord, will answer them Myself, as the God of Israel I will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the
wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land fountains of water.... For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, and My blessing on your descendants; and they will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water ( Isa. 41:17-18; Isa. 44:3-4).

Is this too much to hope for? Is this attainable only after death? Is that what Isaiah had in mind - just a future glory? Or didn't he rather mean that in the thirsty, parched places we find ourselves in right now we can know the abundant life?

This is indeed the life Jesus came to bring. But this spiritual Eden is not some thing He gives us; it is Himself. And we can know this abundant life as reality just as soon as we quit looking to Jesus only for a forgiven past and an assured future, while substituting consecrated self for our present life.

Paul urged the Colossians not to let anyone spoil their experience of the life of Christ through external "ought to's" which at best can only restrain an individual's outward actions but cannot rule his heart and spirit. Since we have died with Christ to the childish elementaries of external commands, we ought to refuse to allow anyone to place us back under such "self-made religion" which cannot really produce the controlled, law-fulfilling life. (See Col. 2:20-23.)

Christ Himself is the reality, and there is nothing to add to His indwelling presence:

For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form [He is the fully expressed image of the invisible God], and in Him you have been made complete... (Col. 2:9-10).

The Jews of Jesus' day couldn't give up Moses. For over 1500 years, Moses had been "the way of life" to them. The law seemed so wonderful, they could conceive of nothing better. Didn't it spell out a path to full life?

But Jesus told them that they needed to forget about Moses, for Moses himself had spoken of One to come who would usher in a new way. Restraint of the flesh through external commandments was all well and good, but in the final analysis the end is still death. Only Spirit is reality:
It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (Jn. 6:63).

There is no greater reality than to know union with Christ. He is total reality for each of our lives:

I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (Jn. 6:35).

No more hunger - no more thirst. Instead, total sufficiency in all things, so that we can do "all things" through Christ within us. Yet it is not we doing them, but He. We are simply His unique containers through whom He expresses Himself.

Because Christ is the "fulness of Deity", all fulness dwells in us! No wonder Paul said that we are "adequate" servants of the new covenant! We have a contentment that leaves nothing to be desired, which enables us to abound in situations of either physical plenty or want. We are focused on the One who is our life - on spirit-reality - instead of on external circumstances.

So Paul said that for every believer, regardless of his physical birth or situation in the material realm, "Christ is all, and in all , (Col. 3:11). Christ is "all" in you, and He is "all" in me! We are indwelt by the "fulness of Deity"! And to the Ephesians he similarly wrote of "the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

There is nothing more to add. We are complete - fully filled up - in Him who is our total reality. Christ didn't merely give us a part of His life, He came to indwell us and to be our life.

**Growth Is Recognition**

But just as when Adam and Eve entered into union with Satan they got more than they bargained for, at last learning that there is more to reality than can be seen, so in our union with Christ there is more to life than meets the eye.

God doesn't intend that we stay the same externally as we were when first born anew internally. He purposes that this new life burst forth in the material dimension.
But once again, we have to learn that it is all of Him - that just as we could do nothing to save ourselves when lost in sin, so now we can do nothing to bring this inner life into fruition. Growth is a fruit of the Spirit, not of human effort.

We now go the negative route of trying to make this new life "work". We have been made new, so we imagine that we ought to be able to live a new life. We proceed to try to do so.

But before we know it, we fall flat on our faces. So we try again. And still we find we cannot do it. We become discouraged, defeated; condemnation begins to set in. "Why can't I do it? What's wrong with me?" we exclaim.

And that's just the problem! We have been trying to do it. Instead of realizing that we are still just containers through whom Christ now expresses Himself even as the god of this world formerly did, we act as if we were the "I Am" ourselves - as if we were now something.

But the Scriptures do not say that God has love to dispense to us, or peace, or joy, or patience. They tell us that "God is love". God will not give us love so that we can become independent gods - that is the way of the knowledge of good and evil, whereby mother Eve saw that the fruit of the tree would make her wise, so that she of herself could live like God.

Instead, God's way is to become one with us through Christ and to express Himself through us as containers of His life. So we become more loving, more joyous, more peaceful, or more patient because He who is these attributes dwells in us in all His fulness through Christ and shines gloriously through the clay pot.

In Romans 7, Paul tells of his own struggle with trying to make the new life work. But the whole experience is one of "I" and "me". No wonder he concluded that he was a wretched man who needed to be delivered from his net of self-effort by Christ. He finally recognized that he was still "nothing", and that he was only ever meant to be a container for God, and not something of himself.

Growth, then, is more of the One who is our life manifesting Himself through us. And as we recognize that we are already filled, already complete in Him, and rest in that fact, He will simply be Himself in our unique forms of expression.
So when Paul urges us to "be filled with the Spirit", he does not mean "get more of the Spirit". He is simply telling us, as he wrote to the Colossians, that as we have received Christ - in all of His fulness - we should walk in Him. We should let Him be "all" in us, for that is what He is.

It is much the same as a parent might say to a nine-year-old child who is acting like a five year old. By telling him to "be your age", he is not suggesting that he has to add some additional years, but simply to walk in recognition of what he already is.

And this recognition changes everything. Because as we face life's situations, we have an inner awareness that we are one with Christ, and so when difficulties and trials come they are coming to Him in His expressed forms. Financial worries, marital problems, ill-health -- all of these are a natural part of life, and they come upon us because only in such seemingly negative circumstances can we really learn that we are one with Him.

Our first reaction in any trouble is to feel separation -- that He is "up there", and poor we down here. We don't immediately see the crisis as coming to "Us", we see ourselves as separate, instead of recognizing the union. But gradually, as we go through these various difficulties and see Him handling them, we learn to take the faith position of oneness and union more quickly. And so adversities become an adventure, as we watch keenly for how He means to glorify Himself in these various situations.

The righteousness of Christ in the believer is not based on works, but is "from faith to faith". It begins in faith, goes on in faith, and ends in faith. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. "The righteous man shall live by faith."

It is only as we meet life's trials that we begin to learn how great is the "fulness" of God's power in us. We don't know the reality of His fulness at first. But as we believe that we and He are one, we recognize more and more that we really are complete in Him, and so experience a fulfilled life here and now.

Paul wanted the Ephesians "to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man", and he knew that this would become a practical reality in their lives as they recognized by whom they were indwelt. As the recognition grew, they would "be filled up to all the fulness of God" in their daily lives.
Sin and the Believer

But there is another way in which God allows us to become settled as faith persons. Though we are wholly new creations in the inner man, He does not totally remove our ability to commit sins. We therefore have to rely on faith as our only evidence that there really is no more condemnation for sins, and for the fact that we really are His righteous sons.

Though we still commit sins in the flesh, those sins do not cut us off from God. Indeed, it is no longer we doing them:

But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me (Rom. 7:20).

The new man - the inner man, which is Christ indwelling our human spirit - does not and actually cannot sin. John in his first epistle said of all who are born again:

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him [the divine nature indwells us]; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (I Jn. 3:9).

But though the new man who has been born of God cannot sin, the flesh is still capable of committing sins. Formerly, out of the heart flowed all of these evils. But that heart has been replaced. Sins in a believer's life do not come from our center. Satan is now on the outside, no longer indwelling us and motivating us to perform his lusts.

It was not only man's spirit that was affected when Adam and Eve entered into union with Satan. Satan gained control of spirit, soul and body. And though he no longer controls the command-center, the heart, the flesh has not yet been redeemed, and he is still able to entice us with temptation. But even when the flesh indulges in some act of sin, the reborn man does not sin; and indeed the flesh no longer has to commit sins. because Satan's reign in our inner man has ended and the body is freed to come under the control of Christ.

We must be very careful here, because there is a false teaching which says that the body itself is the seat of all sin, and the pure spirit is trapped in this evil body. No, the body is not the seat of sin. The heart is the source of sin, and with the replaced heart sin has been dealt with at its source.
Perhaps at first we don't see very much victory. So we have to believe we are new persons at the center of our being despite all appearances to the contrary. And when it seems as though sin overwhelms us, we still say that there is "no condemnation" because the blood of Christ totally envelops us.

But as we continue, we do see fruit. And though we still commit sins, we do not sin from our center. All that God says is that we ought to admit the fact that although we are no longer sinners, we do still get caught up in sins at the body and soul levels.

We should confess - admit - our sins. Not in some "act" of confession, as though needing to be forgiven all over again, as was true under the old covenant. But simply "agreeing with" God that it is so, and recognizing at the same instant that the blood of Christ covers it completely. It was in fact covered all along; there is no point at which we become separated from Him because we are one in union. We recognize that our flesh sometimes follows old habit patterns which became established when the old man ruled us, but we also know that even while we are momentarily following that old way, God doesn't heed it because it isn't what we really want any longer.

We don't try to kid ourselves that wrong actions are right, as if we were entirely beyond committing sins. We see sins as the detours they are. But neither do we get condemned about them since we know that they are not the way we really are. We are now the righteousness of Christ - albeit saints who sometimes take side trips into wrong conduct. And though we glance sideways at times, we never change course and go fully into evil with our whole being as we once did, because the old man who did that no longer exists.

Of course, when we commit sins Satan likes to scream at us that we really are no different. "You're no saint!" But we don't take that. We "fight the good fight of faith" - we affirm that we are saints, no matter how it may momentarily appear from the outside.

"Faith believes nor questions how", says the hymn writer. We know we are one with Him, and when it doesn't look like it we still believe it. So we rest in Him, "For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness." And we have His word that the manifestation of what is actually true is indeed coming forth.
If feelings tell you something different, don't accept them. It is only when there is room for doubt, such as when we are caught out by some wrong action, that faith can manifest itself. Affirm - *say* it verbally if it helps - that you are one with Him.

And sooner than you think, as you make this positive confession you will begin to move into a fixed inner-consciousness of the reality. You will *know* it is true, because faith will have become its own substantive evidence. Spirit will have become more real than what meets the eye!

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**Chapter Seven**

**THE PURPOSE OF LIFE**

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me (Gal. 2:20).

The broad majority of believers know only the forgiveness of sins, made possible by Jesus' death on the cross in our stead. This is the first stage of life in Christ, described in detail in Romans chapters one through three.

For this, we come *to* the cross.

Some come through to know that when Jesus died, they died with Him. They see themselves as a new creation, with the old man dead and buried. And they begin to experience freedom from condemnation and the victory of the resurrection life of Christ, as Paul depicted it in Romans chapters four through eight.

For this, we see, ourselves *on* the cross.

Still fewer get to the ascended life where they truly function in the fourth dimension, the heavenly realm. This is a life which sees through external situations to the God who "works all things after the counsel of His will", such as Paul wrote of in Romans chapters nine through sixteen.
In this stage we take up the cross.

To the cross, on the cross, taking up the cross - crucifixion, resurrection, ascension - are three steps in our recognition of the One who indwells us as a result of our new birth. John in his first epistle spoke of them in terms of children, young men, and fathers (1 Jn. 2:12-14).

Children are dependent. They need to be cared for. They need to be reassured and comforted. Perhaps all they know is that they have been forgiven.

Youths are beginning to lose their need for dependence on others. They are at the stage of exerting their independence. They have begun to flex their muscles and are ready for the fray. They are keen to try their hand at overcoming.

Fathers have matured to the point that they "know" they are in union with God, and are experiencing a fully-formed Christ within. The dependence of childhood and the wavering of youth has passed. They are fixed in the fact that Christ is their replaced life.

Paul's desire was that all might grow up "to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ." He wanted all to press on to this point of maturity; and when he saw the Galatians had not yet become fixed, he wrote to them as "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you ..."

This is the point at which we have attained to "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" - that fixed consciousness of Him as our "all", from which we can no longer be swayed (Eph. 4:11-16). Faith has become its own evidence, so that we pass beyond reckoning into knowing. We know we are one with Him - this is the unity of the faith.

**Fatherhood Is "For Others"**

Spiritual fathers are ready for interdependence. They are equipped to function as part of the whole body of Christ for the cause of the kingdom of God. They are prepared to be commissioned as intercessors - ambassadors for the kingdom - and like human fathers, to reproduce themselves.

There seem to be two extremes in the church. Either babies are born in mass-evangelism campaigns and left without the care of older brother; and sisters who could help them come into a living experience of their new life; or they are born in groups which believe in
shepherding and discipling, but who maintain them as babies for years, never bringing them to the point where they themselves are fathers who can move out from the family and begin their own families.

True, babies need help - they are dependent. But from the time they are born, the goal of their parents should be for them to become fathers. Shepherding should never take the form of making decisions for others and fostering reliance upon another human being. It should always be aimed at acquainting a newly-born child with the One who is "all" in him, so that as quickly as possible he can learn to function as a reproduced father in the kingdom.

Fathers are free to be who they are - Christ in their unique forms - no longer unduly concerned about what other people think, but living in a fixed knowledge that when they live spontaneously it is really Christ living as they. This sets them free for the ascended life as intercessors - those who "stand in the gap" on behalf of others. Now they take up the cross to bring life to others. Tremendous work is accomplished. They are in a race as commissioned entrants, representing their heavenly country. They strive according to His mighty power which is striving within them. Yet it is all from a victory position, all from a state of rest, all His life being poured out through them as vessels.

Reproductive spiritual life always requires a death. But it is not trying to put to death the old man; that is an accomplished fact which needs nothing more than simple recognition.

Jesus said that He was the "light of the world". But He also said that because we are in union with Him, we are the light of the world!

Light is a good illustration of this ascended, intercessory life. How does the sun in the sky give light? It is continually dying to produce light. We don't see the death, or the dark contracting forces in this great star. We only see the light. But death is the key to the light. And that light is the life of our world in the physical dimension.

Intercession has become watered down to mean prayer. But intercession is much more than prayer. We become a prayer for another person or group of persons. We lay down our lives for them daily. And it costs us.

Paul described his own intercession for us in II Corinthians 4. He saw himself as an earthen vessel through which the surpassing greatness of the power of God could be transmitted to the
world. He was afflicted, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; continually "carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." He went on to say:

For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:11-12, 16).

Paul actually described his many beatings, his shipwrecks, his being stoned and left for dead, his imprisonments, and the tremendous burdens he carried for others as "momentary, light affliction"! He could say this because he experienced Christ as "all fulness" in his inner man. He was doing what He wanted to do - what he enjoyed doing - because all of the "works" that were flowing out from him were simply Christ urging him on. God was at work in him "both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

A commission, then, is not something we do grudgingly against our will. It is not an "ought to" that we feel we "have to" do. It is something we simply cannot not do. We have to do it because it is a part of us! It is the expression of Christ through us.

As He Is, So Are We

The Scriptures give us various analogies to describe our life in union with Christ. Each analogy is of itself incomplete, showing only one side of the coin. We just get a part of the truth through the different analogies, each of them making up the whole picture (because spiritual truth cannot be contained in any one illustration).

So we have the analogy of treasure in earthen vessels. We are cracked pots. We live in the constant recognition that we are "nothing" - just earthen vessels of no intrinsic value.

We don't need to keep harping on this. It is the usual fashion to talk about our worthlessness. But we don't need to keep going back to the first things of repentance (Heb. 6:1-2). Besides, most of those who continually stress the failure of man and his worthlessness in God's sight are the very ones who shout the loudest about somehow trying to be different, never having seen that we can do absolutely nothing ourselves.
We just live in the recognition that we are clay pots as a fact. We know it. Through varied circumstances the Lord has broken the self, so that we recognize that of ourselves we are nothing. We also see that He is the treasure in the vessel - the everything. And we know that it always remains that way. We don't become something better. We are just the vessel for Him to pour Himself out through. He stays the treasure, and we stay the vessel.

Now once we have that fixed, we go to another analogy. So far we have the "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" part of Paul's great statement in Galatians 2:20 in focus. That is the replaced life - "not I, but Christ" (as the King James version puts it). But it doesn't stop there.

Paul went on to say that the life which he now lived in the flesh, he lived by faith in the Son of God. Not Christ, but Paul! Now that is something we hear very little of among believers. Even those who get to the stage of the replaced life - death and resurrection with Christ - do not generally move into this third stage, where we live the ascended life.

This stage is illustrated by another analogy - the vine-branch illustration which Jesus gave in John 15. The branches make up the vine. The vine manifests itself in branch forms.

Where is the fruit? Do you find it on the roots? Ah, it's on the branches! In fact, the fruit began its life as sap; but you don't see the sap, you just see it expressed as fruit. The life of the vine isn't visible. All you see is bunches of grapes, green foliage, and branches. But the whole is the vine expressed!

This illustrates the "I live" part of Paul's great statement. You get the grapes, and that's what you are after. You can't eat sap. You can't eat the vine. It is the grapes that give you the wine. And that's all the world ever sees of Christ - just the manifestation of the Vine through its fruit-bearing branches.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, despite all of their faults - Which even included getting drunk at the Lord's supper - he described them as living letters of Christ. They were the letters, not Christ! They were letters written by the invisible pen of the Spirit within, for all to see and read.
When we get a letter, we don't see the pen. We see the words. We catch the life - the meaning, the emotion, the warmth, the friendship - that is coming through the words. But we don't see the pen, and we don't see the one who wrote it.

So we read in I John 4:17 that "as He is, so also are we in this world." This is tremendous, because it takes us back to the words of Jesus when He told the disciples, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father."

If the world sees us, it sees the Christ expressed in the material dimension. We are He in this world - His life manifest. And that is all the world sees of Him!

Scripture, then, calls us "the body, of Christ". This isn't just a nice thought. It is an analogy which reveals that we are Him in this time space dimension. "As He is, so are we in this world." The invisible Christ who was incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth is now able to indwell millions of sons of God in a way that was not possible when He was just the One person on earth.

**The Vessel Doesn't Change**

The visible human being is a composite of spirit, soul and body. The spirit is invisible - the inner, essential man. But soul and body are of material origin, being the product of chemical and electrical processes.

The way that each human spirit expresses itself in the material dimension is affected by heredity and environment. These factors acted upon the old man, tempering how spirit was manifest. and they continue to shape the manifestation of the new man.

The container doesn't change at the new birth. It is the one who indwells us who changes, and hence the union changes. But although the inner man - the essential man of spirit - has changed, the person who inherits red hair or a quick mind continues to exhibit these same traits, because they originate at the soul and body levels and not with spirit.

So we retain our basic temperament and personality, because as science has shown these are to a large degree the product of heredity and environment. But the use of them changes because they are under the command of a new control center. As they were formerly used as
the instruments of Mr. Sin (expressing himself through self), so now they become the instruments of righteousness because Christ is at the helm.

We find then a paradox. We are clay pots, and yet we are chosen vessels. We ever know that we are nothing, and yet at the same instant we live with the inner awareness that we are "all"! The vessel remains just the same, but the one indwelling us is now He who is "all, and in all".

So we recognize three different truths at the same time: that we are dead: that He now lives as us; but that the union is so complete that we can say we live. Paul could speak of "the life which I now live in the flesh" because he knew the spontaneous flow of Christ's life, just as Jesus said that He could of Himself do nothing and yet at the same instant described Himself as the light of the world, the life of men, the bread of life, and a host of other manifestations of God. As we live quite naturally in recognition of all three truths, we find that we are able to be ourselves - and all the while it is actually Christ manifest in human vessels. This is the "mystery" of the gospel.

Jesus brought out this paradox when He said:

If any one wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it (Matt. 16:24-25).

The new birth comes out of death with Christ on the cross. It is a total end to the old man. Self was once king (though it was really Satan at the controls), but we allowed self to be crucified and come to an abrupt end. To "deny" self is much, much more than giving up some luxury in Lent, or going without to help others. It is the radical destruction of self by our recognition of co-crucifixion! We are to live daily in the reality of this death of the "old man"

That is why Jesus continually talked about conversion as an irrevocable decision from which there is no turning back. It is giving up all that we have - giving up our very selves! We "sell ourselves" for the pearl of great price.

Sometimes, as in the case of the rich young ruler, Christ requires the actual giving away of all physical possessions. Some have even had to sever friendships, or leave relatives because of the reign of Christ in their lives. C.T. Studd, one of England's greatest cricketers, left all to
follow Jesus - even leaving his wife back in England when called to the mission field in Africa.

But whether we actually sell our possessions and give up our friendships or not, when we come under the rule of the kingdom of God we no longer count them as the possessions of self. We have been bought out by Christ - lot, stock and barrel. There can be nothing more radical.

It costs us our house, our car, our job, our husband or wife, our children, our bank account - our very life! We die, and Jesus inherits everything we have and are.

But when we give up our own life and self is crucified, we find that we really only had a false life; all the while we were simply the instruments of Satan, ruled by his lusts. We weren't our own man after all! We weren't free - the freedom we imagined we had, in our blinded condition, was slavery compared to the broad place Christ now sets us in.

So we find ourselves. We discover the person we where meant to be as a container for the life of Christ. And frequently Christ gives us back the very house, car, job, bank account and family that we had before - only now it is His, to be used as He commands. And we discover that we find true freedom - the fulfillment we searched for all our lives - as His slaves, as containers that express Him!

Now we live confidently, not forever questioning our motives or fussing about ourselves. We know we have been replaced by Him, and that when we live spontaneously from our center it is He living. We don't have to keep checking our relationship. We act boldly, in faith, trusting ourselves because it isn't we, but He!

We haven't changed - the vessel is just the same. But we are like a computer which has been reprogrammed. The computer can do nothing of itself; it just functions according to the program that is fed into it. Satan was our programmer, but now Christ is our programmer. But when the computer has been programmed, it produces a tremendous amount of work - though it itself really does nothing! It is the programmer who is doing the calculations - and yet it is the computer that is doing them! Ever the nothing, yet ever the all, both at the same instant.
Just the Beginning

This is the mystery of the gospel. And it really is good news! It is not only a message about a forgiven past and a wonderful future for all eternity, it is a message of the fulfilled life now.

We have passed from death to life, so that we are living eternal life at this very moment; because eternal life is to know Him - to be in union with Him, as the biblical word "know" really means. And though there is yet to be the glorification of soul and body also, the essential change has already taken place and we are new creatures.

Of course, in practice it takes time for us to become established in the knowledge of who we are. God takes us many varied routes, through many negative situations, to bring us to this positive realization. It rarely comes overnight. And in most cases this deeper recognition of the One who is in us is brought about through a series of crises in our lives, when we can no longer lean on our earthly crutches and are thrown upon the Christ within.

But coming to this awareness is just the beginning. It is only then that we can really get in gear and become commissioned intercessors for the cause of the kingdom. And with each of us, the intercession will be different. God has a special, unique way of expressing Himself through every individual. So we never try to copy someone else. We just walk as that person He wants to be through us. And the mystery is that as we live, it is actually Christ living!

This is abundant living. It is care-free living. It is the purpose for which we came into being - the very reason for which we were born.