

STEPS TO THE ABUNDANT LIFE

Lay Counseling Series
by
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Chapter 1 - Accept God's Value of the Blood

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PREFACE

"I rejoice when I find counseling material based on Biblical principles and presented in a practical manner. Such is the work of Claude Townsend, my brother in Christ. Claude's life is salt and light. His counseling material will not only help the lay persons who read it, but will greatly aid pastors as they train the laity for the work of the ministry, preserving, penetrating and producing Godly lives as these Biblical truths are learned and obeyed.

These counseling tools are effective as they Exalt the Savior, Edify the Saint, and better prepare us for Evangelizing the Sinner. May they serve to ground us and build us up in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that He will receive ALL the glory."

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FOREWORD

So many times and in so many instances books on counseling are written by professionals in the fields of psychiatry or psychology or pastoral ministering. It is no exaggeration to avow that these wonderfully gifted and trained experts live in a world of their own. Their words are filled with wisdom and are born out of vast experience from penetrating observation. We praise God for the ministries of these dedicated and trained leaders who help us in our hours of need and in our times of trouble.

But all of the above is prelude to another avowal. Practically all of the people who are counseled and who come for help and encouragement are lay people. Is it not reasonable that a layman would know intimately and experientially the problems of those who live in his own world and who are struggling with like difficulties? This is the fundamental and basic reason why the books published by Claude Townsend of the Lay Counseling Institute are so pertinent and so useful. They are tools that have been beat out on the anvil of actual life and living, the situations and problems we ourselves face in the same context that the counselors themselves have worked through. Looking at the layman through a layman's eyes immediately commends itself as an approach most fraught with the possibilities for real answers and actual solutions.

Claude Townsend is correct when he says that all of us at some time or another are counselors. The question is not "Do you counsel?" but "How good a counselor are you?" The purpose of this Lay Counseling Series is to help us to be at our best in speaking words of direction and helpfulness and encouragement to others. There are so many fine things presented in the Series until we have not opportunity in a brief Foreword even to summarize the marvelous contents of the books. Just let it be said and received in all truth that the Christian laymen and laywomen who take time to read these volumes and to incarnate their wisdom in actual practices will be used of God to bless uncounted numbers of people who desperately need our loving prayers and heavenly encouragement.

God bless the eyes that read the books, and God bless the author and people who have made possible the publication of the Series.

W. A. Criswell, Pastor
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INTRODUCTION

Steps to the Abundant Life is presented for two basic purposes: 1. To aid the average Christian in becoming a normal Christian. 2. To give the counselor a guide so he may lead his counselee to experience the abundant Christian life and glorify God.

Dr. Vance Havner said that when an average Christian lives the normal Christian life, that most people think it is abnormal. Many Christians seem to have a blind spot in their life and it seems that some have hit a snag. The real problem may be that there is a step to the abundant life that has not been taken. For some saints the reason the step has not been taken may be that he did not know which step to take. This book is a step-by-step process by which the child of God must walk in order to experience the abundant Christian life and please the Lord.

The counselor needs a guide for guiding the counselee. This book will give the counselor a step-by-step guide for guiding his counselee to experience the abundant Christian life. There are many principles and teachings that a Christian must know. These are by no means all the steps that a Christian must take; however, these six steps must be taken by the child of God for him to please God and enjoy Him forever. Once you take these six steps it will be simple and easier for you to lead your counselee to take the same six steps.

STEP 1

ACCEPT GOD'S VALUE OF THE BLOOD

Every child of God has life, but not every saint has it in abundance. You will do well to seriously consider the question, "What is the abundant Christian life?" The abundant Christian life is something greatly different from what many Christians experience. You can see what the Christian life is in Galatians 2: 20, *"It is no longer I, but Christ."* Christianity is no longer I, but Christ. God wants you to see that you no longer live, but, Christ lives His life in you.

God wants you to know that the answer to all your needs and all your counselee's needs is the Lord Jesus. The way God accomplishes this in your life is to take you out of the way and substitute Christ in your place. The Lord Jesus died in your place for your forgiveness. He now lives in your place for your deliverance. God wants you to see the two substitutions. His substitution on the cross provided your redemption and forgiveness. His substitution in you provides victory for you. You must understand clearly that the one way that God answers all of your questions is to show you more of His only Begotten Son.

You may have many problems, but God puts all your problems into two categories. One is called sins, and the other is called sin. This simply means that your problems consist of the two facts: 1. You have done wrong, and 2. You are wrong. What you have done wrong before God, He calls sins. You not only have committed sins, but you possess the sin principle, which is at work within. It is always the sin principle within that leads you to commit sins. You not only need forgiveness for your sins, but you also need deliverance from the power of sin. You may receive forgiveness for all your sins, but you will have no continuous peace of mind until the principle of sin is dealt with. Forgiveness of sins can give you a clear conscience, but only by dealing with the sin principle can you enjoy the abundant Christian life.

One of the first things that you experience as a Christian is that sins bring a feeling of guilt and the need for forgiveness. Later in your Christian life you discover not only that you commit sins, but you discover you have the tendency to sin. Once you discover that something is wrong within, it may be expressed in a statement like, "I just don't understand what's wrong with me." The thing you have discovered is that you have the tendency to sin. This is the principle of sin at work. There seems to be a power within which draws you to commit acts of sin. We all have experienced this which is like the ebb and flow of the waves of the sea. Surely you appreciate God's forgiveness, but there comes a time when

you discover that you need more. You need deliverance. You not only need forgiveness for what you have done, but you need deliverance from what you are.

God has provided the solution to both of your problems. The problem of forgiveness of sins is solved by His blood. Your problem of deliverance from sin is solved by His death on the cross. The Bible speaks much about the relationship between the blood and your sins. The Bible also deals with your crucifixion. Romans 6:6, *"We are crucified with Christ."*

The blood is shed for your right standing before God through the remission of sins, but you are delivered from the power of sin by your union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Both of these emphases are important. God wants you to see that the Lord's shed blood deals with what you have done and also that your crucifixion with Christ deals with what you are. The blood deals with your sins, and your crucifixion with Christ on the cross deals with the root problem of your capacity to sin.

God wants you to know the value of the precious blood in dealing with your sins which justifies you in the sight of God. Since all have sinned, all need to know the value of the precious blood. Two passages in Romans that deal with the blood are Romans 5:8-9, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"* and Romans 3:24-26, *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins that were previously committed, through the forbearance of God."*

You will remember that when you commit an act of sin, the thing that immediately follows is your feeling of guilt. Sin entered the human race in the form of disobedience, which created a separation between God and man. When man is separated from God by sin, God can no longer have fellowship with him because he is hindered by sin. Therefore, Number One, it is God who said that you have sinned, Romans 3:9, *"they are all under sin."* Number Two, since sin brings the consciousness of guilt, then man says, "I have sinned." The prodigal son said in Luke 15:18, *"I have sinned."* Number Three, since sin provides Satan ground from which to operate, then he accuses you before God. As long as you have consciousness of sins, Satan has ground from which to accuse you. He is (Revelations 12:10) the accuser of the brethren. So he now says, *"You have sinned."*

For God to restore you to the purpose for which He created you, He must deal with these three aspects of your life: sin, guilt, and Satan's accusation

against you. First, your sins had to be fully dealt with by His precious blood. Next, your guilt must be dealt with so your guilty conscience could be at rest. You can have a clear conscience only by seeing the value of the blood. Thirdly, the enemy's attack had to be dealt with and his accusation answered. The Bible reveals that the blood of Christ operates effectively in all three ways-toward God, toward man, and toward Satan. The first essential step for you to experience the abundant Christian life is for you to appropriate the value of the blood. This is absolutely essential.

You not only need to have the knowledge of the fact of our Lord's death as your substitute on the cross, but you also need the knowledge of how effective His blood is for your sins. Only then can you take the first step on your exciting journey with the Lord. You must know that primarily the blood is for God. Since the blood is for atonement, it has to do with your standing before God. You need forgiveness for your sins so you will not come under the judgment of God. Your sins are forgiven because God sees the blood. For you to understand the value of the blood, you must choose to accept God's evaluation of it. Should you not know the evaluation that God places on the blood, you shall never know its value for yourself. The only way that you will ever know the value of the blood to God is for the Spirit to reveal it to you. When the Holy Spirit reveals God's evaluation of the blood, it will become most precious to you.

In the Bible the word "blood" is used to reveal the idea of atonement. The day of atonement will help explain the question of sins. The day of atonement is spoken of in Leviticus 16. Blood was taken from the sin offering into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled before the Lord seven times. When the sin offering was offered, it was offered publicly in the court so everything was in full view. However, only the High Priest entered the Holy Place and took the blood and sprinkled it to make atonement before the Lord.

The High Priest gives us a picture of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 9:11-12. Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place. He had only one purpose, which was to present the blood to God so He could be satisfied. This was an experience between the High Priest and God in the Sanctuary, which was away from the eyes of men, even though they were to receive the benefit from it. This is what God required. You must know that in the first place the blood is not for you, but for God.

You find the same principle taught in Exodus 12:13, which deals with the shedding of the blood of the Passover Lamb for Israel's redemption. They took the hyssop and put the blood on the doorposts. Then the Lamb was eaten inside the house. God said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" This is another example which reveals the fact that the blood was meant for God and not to be

presented to man. Those eating inside the house could not see the blood that was put on the doorposts. Nevertheless, they were safe from the wrath of God because they accepted God's value of the blood.

Only a sinless life could be given for man to satisfy the holiness and righteousness of God. Since there was life in the blood, it could be poured out for your sins. Since God is the one who set the requirement, then God could decide what would meet His requirement. The one who demanded that the blood be presented is God Himself. God said that the shed blood would satisfy His righteousness. It was He who said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" God was completely satisfied with the shed blood.

One great problem that some Christians face is that they get so bogged down in their sins that they become unconscious of the value of the blood. Sometimes our sins seem so real that we lose sight of the blood. You must know that the blood is not for you to sense, to be conscious of, or to feel its value in any way. You must remember that the blood is first for God to see.

Your responsibility is to accept God's value of the blood. This is how the Lord Jesus came to save us from our sins. Should you try to be saved from your sins by feeling the value of the blood, you will remain guilty. Your responsibility is to choose to believe the Word of God. You must believe that the blood is precious to God because He said so. I Peter 1:18-19.

Since God accepted the blood as the payment of your sins, then you can have the assurance that the debt has been paid. You must accept the blood since the blood satisfies God. You should place the same value on the blood as God does. A great change will come to the lives of many saints when they remember that a holy, righteous God has the right to say that the blood is accepted in His eyes, and He has been fully satisfied. Your testimony must be, "Lord, since the shed blood satisfies you, then it satisfies me."

Man's access to God is by way of the blood. The blood is valuable because only the blood can cleanse your conscience. We find in Hebrews 10:22, "*hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.*" The blood does not cleanse your heart, rather you get a new heart. Ezekiel 36:26, "*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*" The blood works in relation to your conscience rather than your heart.

When you have an evil conscience, it will constantly remind you that something stands between you and God. God has revealed in His Word that the precious blood operates and removes that barrier. Once you believe in the value of the blood and accept it, your conscience will at once be cleared. Then your

feeling of guilt will be removed. You will have an evil conscience toward God no more.

It is a marvelous thing to have a conscience void of offense when you deal with God. Please note that you must have a heart of faith and a clear conscience before God. A clear conscience depends on faith, and your faith depends on a clear conscience. You will have both or you will have neither. As soon as your conscience is uneasy, your faith will drain away. With an evil conscience and with your faith gone, you know immediately that you cannot face God. This reveals the necessity for having a moment by moment consciousness of the value of the blood. You are made near by the blood and you are kept near by the blood. The value of the blood is eternal. The only ground on which you may enter communion with God is by the blood.

Are you looking for the way into the presence of God by the blood? When the Holy Spirit convicts you that you have sinned, then you must confess your need for cleansing and confess that you come to God on the basis of the blood. You must approach God only by the blood and never on the basis of your good conduct. Neither being kind to others nor counseling others ever aids you in coming into the presence of God.

Every time you come into the presence of God, you will come by way of the blood. Regardless of how long you have been a Christian, how strong you are, and how much you have done for God, you still must come by the blood every time. A clear conscience is always based on the work of our Lord in the shedding of His blood and it is never based on your achievements. Regardless of your past sins, your difficulties and problems, the way to God must always remain clear. It is by the blood.

Do you come to God on your feelings, your success in counseling, your conduct, or by the blood? You must know the fact that the blood has been shed and that when God sees the blood, He is satisfied. Your feelings change from time to time, but the blood will never change. Therefore, you can always enter the throne of God with boldness through the blood. You may have sinned unconsciously, or it may be consciously, yet your approach is still the same, by the blood of Christ.

Your consideration of access to God has two parts. First, Ephesians 2:13, "*made nigh by the blood of Christ.*" Your right standing before God was made secure by the blood. The second part, you are kept close to God by the blood. We find in Hebrews 10:19, "*boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the blood,*" and verse 22 says, "*let us draw near.*" The first time you are made near by the blood, and also in all future experiences, you will come by way of the blood. You were saved on the basis of the blood and now you maintain your fellowship in the same

way.

You must never believe that you have progressed so far that you have no need to come to God on the basis of the blood. You must not only be satisfied by the blood, but you must stay satisfied by the blood. You will need to come to God on the basis of the blood until you see the Lord face to face. The only way that your conscience can be made clear before God is by the blood.

May God open your eyes to see the meaning of the words in Hebrews 10:2, "*no more conscience of sins.*" The blood is able to cleanse you from every sin, that you may have no more consciousness of sins. Once you experience that, you will shout with David, Romans 4:8, "*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.*" Should you still have consciousness of sins, then there is salvation provided for you by the blood which you have not yet received.

Once God reveals the value of the blood to you and you have no more consciousness of sins, then you can face the enemy and overcome your accuser. The primary activity of Satan today is as the accuser of the brethren. Revelation 12:10. Once your conscience is cleansed you can direct Satan to the Lord Jesus, for He will answer him through his own blood. Hebrews 9:12.

The blood operates against Satan by putting God on your side against the enemy. The fall in the garden put man where Satan had a foothold within man, and the results were that God was compelled to separate Himself from man. Man is now beyond the reach of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.

Morally God is unable to defend man because of what he did. God could defend man only after that sin had been removed. It is the blood that removes the sin barrier and restores man to God. Man is now in favor with God, because God is on his side. Since God is on his side, he can face Satan without fear. "*I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*"

You find in I John 1:7, "*the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.*" It is a marvelous thing to have confidence that you can be cleansed by the blood every time you sin. Everything is exposed to the light when you walk in the light as He is in the light. God cannot only see, but then you also can see. Even though you clearly see all your sins, yet the blood is able to cleanse you from every sin.

It is not that God overlooks anything, nor that you try to hide something, but when you are in the light, the precious blood cleanses you from every sin. Do not think that there are some sins which are unforgiveable. The Bible says that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from every sin. This includes sins that seem to be forgiven, but also sins that do not seem to be forgiven. This includes unconscious sins as well as conscious sins. The blood works in this manner because it satisfies God.

Even though God can see your sins in the light, He will forgive them on the

basis of the blood. Since your sins are forgiven, then Satan has no ground on which to accuse you. Since God is for you, then it does not make any difference who is against you. Romans 8:31. Satan tells God about your sins, but God only points Satan to the blood. Since the blood is a sufficient answer against Satan, then he has nothing else that he can say. Romans 8:33-34, *"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."* There is no legal charge that Satan can bring before the saint of God. Satan has no grounds on which to judge or condemn the child of God. You do not have to give Satan an answer because God answers every accusation with the blood.

In every case your responsibility is faith in the sufficiency of the precious blood. Nearly 2000 years ago Christ was the Redeemer, but he has been your lawyer and High Priest ever since. He stands in the presence of God and takes away all your sins. I John 2:1-2, *"My little children, these things I write to you that you not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate (lawyer) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."* Propitiation refers to Christ dealing with our sins in order that we may have the right standing before God. Your conscience is made clean by the blood. Hebrews 9:14, *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."* The blood is sufficient for God and He wants you to accept His value of it.

Satan not only accuses you before God, but he also accuses you in your own conscience. Then what should your attitude be toward Satan? His basic argument is that you are weak, you have sinned, you keep on sinning, you can do nothing about it, and God will not have anything more to do with you. Some saints may look within themselves, try to defend themselves, and find some ground for believing that Satan is wrong. You may consider your feelings or behavior. Another choice is to admit your helplessness and give way to your depression and despair. Should you have been a Christian very long, you have discovered that one of the greatest and most effective weapons that Satan has is his accusations. Immediately when you sin, Satan charges you with it before God and should you accept his accusation, you will have condemned yourself and will experience defeat immediately.

Why do you so readily accept his accusation? It is because you are hoping to find some righteousness of your own, but you never will. Isaiah 64:6. Should you accept Satan's accusation, he has succeeded in luring you to look in the wrong direction. Should you look in the wrong direction and accept his accusation, you will become ineffective. When you learn to put no confidence in the flesh, you will not

be surprised when you sin because the very nature of your flesh is to sin. When you come to appreciate your true nature and see how helpless you are, you will not have any expectation in yourself. As long as you have any expectation in yourself when Satan accuses you, you will accept it and go down in defeat. You must remember that without Him you can do nothing.

When you accept an accusation of Satan it is because you have not accepted God's value of the blood. You must trust in the blood. To receive an accusation of Satan reveals that you are trusting in the flesh. God can easily deal with your sins, but there is no way for Him to aid you when you accept Satan's accusations. Regardless of how Satan accuses you, the only way that you can deal with it is by faith in the blood. Since Christ is your lawyer, you must not take sides with the prosecuting attorney.

You must recognize that the only thing of which you are worthy is death, and this is why you were crucified with Christ. You must not try to answer the accuser because you cannot. Only God can answer him and He has already done so by the precious blood. Regardless of the situation that has been created by your sins, you must look to Jesus and see that the blood of the Lamb is sufficient. You can be assured that faith in the blood is a firm foundation on which to stand.

Should you try to answer Satan by your good conduct, you will experience defeat. You know that you are sinful, but you must also know that the blood cleanses you from every sin. Since God looks on the blood, Satan has no more ground for attack. Yes, they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony, and so can you. With faith in the precious blood and your testimony being that you are in Christ, that is the only thing that can silence his charge and put him to flight. You will be amazed what you will experience should you continue to exercise faith in the blood and should you testify that you have all that you need in Christ. Only after you make the first step by adequately dealing with your sins by the power of the blood will you be ready for step two. Your first step toward the abundant Christian life is to accept God's value of the blood.

STEP 2

KNOWING THAT YOUR OLD MAN IS DEAD

Everything that you were in Adam ended with the cross. Your new life begins with the resurrection. Romans 6:6, *"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer serve sin."* Your old life ended with Christ on the cross. II Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

Everything that you received from Adam passed away and truly all things have become new. The cross ended everything of the first creation. Then out of death a new creation in Christ appeared. Jesus was the last Adam and He is the Second Man. When you were born in the flesh, you were born in Adam and you received everything from him. You did not choose to receive it nor did you do anything to get it. Since you received everything that Adam had, it was natural for you to steal, lie, lose your temper, etc.

In like manner, since you are in Christ, everything of Christ comes to you freely by His marvelous grace. It comes on the basis of faith without any effort from you. You may ask, "Since everything comes to me in Christ by free grace, then how does that work out in life?" Yes, you need to know how it may become real in your day-to-day experience.

You can discover in the Word of God that there are certain conditions for you to be able to experience the abundant life. Your first condition is to accept God's value of the blood by faith. Your second condition is to know that your old man has been crucified with Christ. You must take each step as the Word of God reveals it. Should you try to skip one step, it will be like a baseball player trying to skip a base. You will find yourself in trouble.

When you study Romans 6:1-11, you will discover that your death with Christ is an historical fact. God reveals that you were put into Christ and thereby experienced death when He died. Romans 6:4, *"Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* We all died in His death. No one can progress spiritually until he sees this fact.

You were justified by faith when God revealed to you that your sins were forgiven and that He gave you Jesus for your righteous robe. In like manner, He

must reveal to you that you were included in Christ's death. The song asks the question, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" Yes, I was there, and I also have good news for you. You were there, too. Not only were your sins laid on Christ, but also you were put into Him.

You received forgiveness by realizing that Christ died as your substitute. He bore your sins and His shed blood washed your filthiness away once God revealed to you that Christ died for your sins. You did not ask Christ to come and die for your sins. Since there was no need to pray, you only thanked the Lord. Since you knew He had already died for you, you had no need to pray and ask Him to come and die for you.

God wants you to see that since this is true of your forgiveness, that it is also true of your deliverance. When Jesus said, "*It is finished,*" He meant what He said. You do not need to pray and ask Jesus to come and crucify you since that has already been done in Christ. Since God put you into Christ, then when Christ was crucified, so were you. Regardless of how wicked you may feel, still there is no need to pray, "Lord, please crucify me." It would be wrong to pray in such a manner. That may seem to be right, but it is not God's way.

Since you did not pray and ask Jesus to die for your sins, neither do you pray and ask Him to crucify your old man. Your sins were dealt with by His blood and you are dealt with by His death on the cross. Since God said that you were crucified with Christ, you must say the same. The only thing that God desires from you is for you to thank Him for what He has done and praise Him for it. The same Bible that says He died for you, also said that you died with Him. Romans 5:8 reveals that Christ died for us and Romans 6:6 and 6:8 reveal that we died with Christ.

You were not crucified with Christ a year ago today, nor will you be crucified tomorrow or three years from today. The fact that you died when Christ died is one of the most vital missing links for many Christians. Should my wife and I go to a meeting, I would say that my wife came with me. Should she have come when I did, it would have been impossible for her to have come yesterday or the day before. Since the Bible says that it is an historical fact that you were crucified with Christ, then you can truthfully say, "I was crucified when Christ was crucified."

Since He was crucified nearly 2000 years ago, then it is impossible for your crucifixion to have taken place a year or two ago. Since His crucifixion was in the past, it is impossible for yours to be in the future. Should you not be able to see this, then you must say the same thing that God said until you do see it. God not only said that Christ died in your place, but He also said that you died when

He died. Should you believe in His death, then you must believe in your own death.

Your ground for believing in Jesus's death is the Word of God. The same Bible that says that Christ died in your place teaches that you died when He died. It is impossible for you to feel that He died since it is a fact rather than a feeling. You believe that there were two thieves who were crucified with the Lord because the Word says so. Since you believe in Christ's death and the death of the two thieves, then you must believe what the Word said about your own death. Your crucifixion with Christ is just as real as that of the two thieves. The two thieves were crucified on different crosses from our Lord; whereas, you were crucified on the same cross as He.

The reason you died when He died is because you were in Him when He died. You can know that this is so because God said so. Neither does this depend on your feelings. You may not feel that you died with Christ, yet the Bible says that you did. Feeling that you have died with Christ does not make it any more real. Praise God, your old man died on the cross in Christ.

Since you are dead, you have been freed from the power of sin. Romans 6:7. The second essential step for you to live an abundant Christian life is to believe that you are dead in Christ. Since faith is a choice and faith is based on the Word, you simply testify, "I was crucified with Christ and my old man is dead to sin."

The only exercise necessary is with your will, choose to believe. Your crucifixion can never be made effective by your effort or by your will. It can be made effective in your life only by accepting the finished work of the cross. The only praying that is necessary is, "Lord, open my eyes to see the finished work of the cross." Some people try to attain salvation by works, such as praying, going to church, giving their money, etc. One day your eyes were opened and you saw that salvation had been freely provided for you. You only accepted God's salvation and thanked Him for it. You then experienced peace and joy in your heart. Now you must know that progress in your Christian life is made in the same manner. Christian growth, which the Bible calls sanctification, is made exactly in the same way. Forgiveness of your sins was a gift. Deliverance from sin is also a gift.

God wants you to know His way of deliverance. It is different from man's way. Man tries to utilize his defense mechanism by believing that sin does not exist. Some try to suppress sin by trying to overcome it. Some think that should they be strong enough, that they could overcome sin. God's way is to remove the sinner. When someone is preoccupied with the power of sin and his inability to meet it, he

naturally believes that he needs more power to overcome the sin. Some believe that should they be stronger, they could overcome their quick temper. Some pray for God to strengthen them, that they may be able to exercise more self-control. This is all man's way. God's way was to crucify your old man when Christ was crucified.

You must see that God's way of deliverance is by making your old man weaker and weaker, rather than making you stronger. This is an unusual way of deliverance to man's mind, but God's ways are not man's ways. God set you free from the power of sin by crucifying your old man rather than by strengthening him. Your old man needs to be removed from the scene of action rather than by being strengthened. You may have tried to exercise self-control over your appetite, sexual desires, and quick temper to no avail. Once you see the truth, you will recognize that you are powerless to do anything. God has done all that needs to be done by crucifying your old man. Once you discover this, you will stop striving and start trusting, then your self-effort will end.

Your second step to the abundant life begins with knowing. This is more than knowing something about the truth and understanding some important teaching. The eye of your heart must be opened to see what God has done for you in Christ. This is more than academic education. It is divine revelation which means that God lets you see as He sees. This is how you know that your sins are forgiven. You just know it. For the written Word of God to become a living word from God to you, He had to give you (Ephesians 1:17) "*a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the Knowledge of Him.*" This must be true in regard to your forgiveness of sins.

Your crucifixion with Christ needs to be seen in your Spirit. Once the light shines into your inner man, you will be fully convinced with the fact. Once the light of God reveals that you are in Christ and that you died when He died, you will have taken your second step toward the abundant life. You then will know it, not only because Romans 6 says so, but also because God has revealed it to you by His Spirit. You may not understand it or feel it, yet you will know it since you have seen it. Once God reveals to you that you are in Christ, nothing can cause you to doubt that blessed fact.

Should you ask a thousand Christians how they entered into the abundant Christian life, some might tell you of their experience in one way and others would say in other ways. Each person would present scripture to support his experience. Many Christians enter the abundant life by different ways, but you must consider the experience or doctrine which anyone expresses as being complimentary rather than exclusive. This is of great importance. One thing the Bible reveals for sure is that any true experience of spiritual value in the sight of God will be reached

by way of a new discovery of the meaning of the person and work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Your great need is to see that you are in Christ.

The Word says, "*abide in Christ.*" Nowhere do the scriptures say, "get into Christ." Should you try to get into Christ, you would have a similar problem as one who tried to get into an automobile who was riding down the road in one. When you get more revelation, you will have less prayers and more praise. You do not need to wait to die or work to die since you are already dead. You only need to recognize what the Lord has already done and then praise Him for it.

A good illustration has been given that has helped me greatly. The government of a certain country had a desire to eliminate strong drink. They did not go and discover all the bottles that they could find and destroy them, but rather went to the drink-producing factories and destroyed them. Once all the factories were destroyed, no more drink could be produced. You must see that your sin "factory" has been destroyed. Your old man is the factory. Your ungodly conduct is the product. The blood deals with your conduct, but your death with Christ on the cross deals with the factory. You must believe that since God cleanses all of your sins, that He also has gotten rid of your sin-producing factory. God never does a half job when He works. God is wise enough to know that should He only deal with the products made by the factory, that that would not get the job done.

Christ's death on the cross has gone to the root of your problem and dealt with it. He has made complete provision so there is no need for sin to have power over you. Romans 6:12, "*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*" There is no need for you to obey the sinful desires of your body. There is no need for you to live in bondage to sin. Romans 6:6, "*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer serve sin.*" The great need of the day is for you to know this.

STEP 3

RECKON YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN

Your third step to the abundant Christian life is based on Romans 6:11, *“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin.”* The idea is that since you know that your old man was crucified, then you reckon yourself to be dead to sin. You must be sure that you have these steps in the right order. You cannot reckon yourself dead to sin in order to know you have been crucified. The order is so very important. You must know that you have been crucified, and then the next step is to reckon it so.

When the truth of our union with Christ is taught, the emphasis must first be placed on the knowledge that we have been crucified and not on reckoning ourselves dead to sin. The starting point to be delivered from the power of sin is knowing yourself to be dead. A cautious Bible student will recognize that knowing comes before reckoning. The order is most important. Since faith is always based on fact, then reckoning is based on the knowledge of a divinely revealed fact. For your faith to have foundation on which to reckon yourself dead, you must know that you have been crucified with Christ. Only by knowing can you reckon.

In learning these principles, you should emphasize knowing as much as you emphasize reckoning. It will do you no good to reckon until you first know. Should you reckon before the Holy Spirit unveils the fact that you are dead in Christ, you will experience all sorts of problems. When temptation comes you may testify, "I am dead to sin." But you will discover that in experience you are alive unto sin unless you first know that you are dead to sin. In other words, you do not basically reckon yourself dead in order to die. Basically you reckon yourself dead because you are dead. Once you know that you are dead in Christ, then you reckon yourself dead so that the Holy Spirit might work in you what Jesus has worked out for you.

You must know that for Romans 6:11 to work, it must come after Romans 6:6. Should you not know that you are dead with Christ, then the more you reckon, the more intense will be your struggle and the outcome will be defeat. The order is knowing that you are dead with Christ, and then you consider it to be so. Then you live as though you were dead to all sins. Your great need is for your eyes to be opened and see that when Christ died, you died.

Yes, you must know that there is an outworking of this death, but you must first see that you have been crucified and that in Christ it has been done.

Revelation is the secret of reckoning. You must have the spirit of revelation so that your eyes may be open to see the fact of your union with Christ. This is much more important than knowing it as a doctrine. Once God revealed to you that Christ died for you. Now He must reveal to you that you died with Him. The only way that you will experience death is to know that you are dead, then reckon it to be a fact. The order is knowing that you are dead, reckoning yourself dead, and then experiencing death.

There is a big difference between what God did for you in Christ and what He does in you by the person of the Holy Spirit. What God did for you in Christ was to crucify you with Him. What God does in you will be based on your reckoning yourself to be dead to sin. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The word "reckon" means "count it so" and "write it down." It is as though you are keeping books. Should you deposit \$100 in the bank, you would enter that figure in your checkbook. This you can do accurately. Very few jobs can you do perfectly. Bookkeeping can be done accurately. Should you put \$102.07 in the bank, you can accurately enter that into your checkbook. Why do you enter \$102.07 in your checkbook? Because it is a fact that you put \$102.07 in the bank. You write it down only because it is a fact. Then why does God tell you to reckon yourself dead? It is because you are dead. Would I tell my wife to enter \$100 in our checking account should I have put only \$50 into the bank? Reckon means "write it down." Would God tell you to write that you are dead should you not be dead? It is because you are dead that God said "consider it to be so." God would not ask you to consider something to be true that was false. Would He ask you to reckon yourself to be dead should you be still alive? What a marvelous blessing for one to know he is dead to sin.

Reckoning is not wishful thinking. Can you get \$100 in the bank by entering \$100 in your checkbook? You may enter \$100 in your checkbook and then write a check on it. Your problem is the bank will not honor that check. For God to honor your reckoning, you must first know that you are dead. Knowing that you are dead with Christ is like having money in the bank. You can draw upon that just as you can draw on a bank account. Once you know the \$100 is in the bank, with great confidence can you write a check for \$100. God tells you to reckon yourselves dead not that you may become dead, but because you are dead. The only reckoning that counts is based on the fact that you are dead.

You must know that God commanded you to reckon yourself dead to sin. This reveals that you should have a definite attitude toward sin. This means that you must live as though you are dead to sin. You must consider how a dead man reacts to the temptation to sin. You must respond to sin in the same way as a

dead man. Since God said you have died, then you must abide by the principle of death. Why? Because it is a fact. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, you were there in Him. Since He died, you died. That is why you reckon yourself to be dead.

The reason it is a fact that you are dead is because you are in Christ. Always remember that this is always and only true in Christ. Should you look at yourself, you will discover that you are very much alive to sin. The issue is faith in Him rather than faith in yourself. Faith is based on the Word of God, not on what you feel or sense within yourself. Should you wait to reckon yourself dead until you are dead in yourself, you will never reckon yourself dead for you will never die in that manner. Once you know that you are dead, reckon yourself to be dead, which means that you live as though you are dead, then you will begin to experience death.

You must understand the importance of faith. You receive forgiveness of your sins by faith. You are justified by faith. Only by faith in what God has done for you can you possess these. You must understand that this word "reckon" is basically the same thing as faith.

You know that faith is your acceptance of God's fact. Faith is always based on history. Hope refers to the future. Faith often has its object in the future, but we are told that the word "reckon" relates only to the past. This means that the issue of your death has been settled. It is not something that will happen in the future. This kind of faith is referred to in Mark 11:24, "*When you believe you already have received your requests, you shall have them.*" To believe that God can or that God will is not faith in the sense that you find here. Faith here refers to something that you already have. It only relates to the past. This kind of faith says that God has acted.

When you have this kind of faith in your crucifixion, you will say, "I am dead." Faith says, "In Christ I am crucified", not "God can" nor "God will crucify me." The Lord Jesus bore your sins and died as your substitute so you might be forgiven. You must see yourself included in Christ's death, which is how God obtained your deliverance, Romans 6. You were justified by faith by believing on Christ for your forgiveness and for your righteous robe. You must reckon on the fact of your death for your deliverance. Reckon means that you have faith in the fact that you have been crucified with Christ. For you to progressively experience the abundant Christian life, you must progress by faith in the divine fact that you have been crucified with Him. Galatians 2:20

We come now to the matter of temptation. The purpose of temptation is to try your faith. Two of the greatest facts in history are: 1. All your sins were dealt

with by the blood; 2. You were dealt with by Christ's death on the cross. Once you have seen and believed these two facts, then what should your attitude be when you discover that your old man desires to rise again? Suppose you discover that you over-eat, lose your temper, or something worse? Does this prove that you are not dead? No. How much you sin has nothing to do with whether or not you are dead in Christ.

You must remember that one of the devil's primary objectives is to cause you to doubt the Word of God. Genesis 3:4. After you know that you are dead with Christ and have counted it so, the devil will then ask, "What is that moving inside, is that death?" Your answer will reveal the acid test. Will you believe the Word of God or will you believe your experience?

This is basically how Satan tempted Eve. He did not use these words, but this is the principle. "Eve, you are alive to eat food." Her testimony, by her conduct, was that she was alive to that food rather than dead to it. Suppose you are invited for cocktails. Will you say, "I am dead to that;" or, by participating, will you say, "I am alive to that"? You may believe that you are alive to a certain sin, then you may indulge, but that does not make you alive, for indeed you have been crucified with Christ regardless of your experience. Your problem is not that you are not dead. Your problem is the fact that you do not believe that you are dead and act on that conviction.

For your faith to work you must understand what the Word of God states as facts. How does God accomplish your deliverance? You are not told that the principle of sin is removed or rooted out. Some saints seem to reckon that sin has been removed and that they can live as they please. This is not God's way. You must not believe that you do not possess the sin principle. I John 1:8, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* Verse 8 deals with the sin principle, whereas verse 9 deals with your acts of sin. Jesus is the propitiation for your sins, but not for your sin. I John 2:2, *"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."* He takes away your sins, but He has never taken away your sin. You still possess the principle of sin.

God deals directly with your sins by means of the blood. In the matter of deliverance from the power of sin, He deals with the principle of sin indirectly. God removed the sinner, but He did not remove the sin. Since your old man was crucified with Him, then your body which has been a puppet of sin, is now unemployed. Romans 6:6. Please notice that it is your old man that is crucified in order to put your body of sin out of operation.

You still possess sin as the old master, but the slave of sin, the old man, has

been put to death and now sin has no more control over the old man because he is dead. You can no longer use your tongue to judge and criticize because your tongue is unemployed. You can no longer use your feet to carry you where you should not go because your feet have become unemployed. Since your tongue, eyes, ears, hands, feet, and all other members of your body are now unemployed, they are available to be used as instruments of righteousness unto God. Romans 6:13.

In Romans 6:7 you find the expression "freed from sin". In verse 11 you find the term "dead unto sin." This reveals that you have been delivered from a power that is still present and very much real. Therefore, the term "deliverance from sin" seems to be more scriptural than the term "victory over sin." The fact that you still sin reveals that you have the sin tendency or the sin principle. You have complete deliverance from sin in Christ, but we are experiencing deliverance from sin's power in increasing measure day by day.

You now have two facts: 1. You are dead in Christ; 2. The facts of your daily experience. The big question is which will be your choice of the two facts that you will count on and live by? With your mouth, you must confess that you are dead in Christ until you experience salvation from the power of sin. With your mouth confession is made until you experience salvation. Romans 10:10. God is at work in your life, conforming you to the image of His Son. The crucial question is, "Are you willing to make real in experience what is true in divine fact?" To do this you must be willing to endure temptations. When you believe that you are dead to sin, you then will react to the temptation to sin as a dead man. This does not mean there will not be a struggle. Jesus sweated drops of blood resisting temptations.

For you to live by faith, you must understand what faith is. Hebrews 11:1, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* There is no English word that clearly translates the word "substance." This word reveals a sense of an action rather than a thing. Also this has been translated "faith is the substantiating of things hoped for." That means that faith makes real in experience what is real in fact. Since you are dead in Christ, then your faith must substantiate that in experience.

There is a difference between substance and substantiating. Substance is an object, while substantiating is the power to make that substance real to you. Suppose you have a red apple. The way that apple becomes red to you is by your power of substantiating. Your eyes substantiate the color for you, but should you be blind, you would not have the power of substantiating. The apple does not become red because you believe it is red. Your faith does not make it red. You believe that it is red

because it is red. Should a person be blind, he could not substantiate that the apple is red. The apple is red whether you have the power to substantiate it so or not.

Should you be deaf, you could not hear an airplane or enjoy good music. The apple, airplane, and music are real things, and their reality is not affected whether you are able to substantiate them or not. Even though your death with Christ is an eternal fact, it can be substantiated only by faith. You cannot substantiate divine things with your natural senses. For your old man to be crucified with Christ is not something hoped for. Only faith can make the real thing become real to you in experience. Faith substantiates the things of Christ to you, for "*our old man was crucified with Christ*" must become more than academic knowledge. Only mental accent is insufficient apart from spiritual illumination.

How wonderful it is that we are dealing with facts instead of promises. Facts are real whether you believe them or not. God's promises are revealed to you by His Holy Spirit, that you may lay hold of them. Should you not believe the fact that you are crucified with Christ, still God says you are dead. However, should you not believe that as fact, it will be of no value to you. Your death with Christ does not need your faith to make it real in fact, but only by your faith can you substantiate that and make it real in your experience.

Regardless of how much you sin, that does not change God's fact. Anything that contradicts the truth of God's Word, you must consider the devil's lies. It may be a real fact to your senses that you sin, but God stated a greater fact which you must learn to live by. Suppose you are accustomed to eating more than what is healthy for your body. Suppose you believe that you should not eat a piece of pie. Should you believe that God does not want you to eat that piece of pie, then to eat it would be sin, for "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" God does not say that you are dead to all food. He says that you are dead to sin. Since you are dead to sin, then you are dead to that extra piece of pie. Should you believe that you are dead to that piece of pie, you would not eat it. Should you not believe that you were dead to that piece of pie, then should you have a desire for it, you would eat it.

Your testimony must be "I am dead to that piece of pie." Then you must live as though you are dead to that piece of pie. Should you not believe that you are dead to that piece of pie, then you must believe that is a devil's lie. For you to eat the piece of pie means that you are acting on a devil's lie. Every time you yield to temptation, you are acting on a devil's lie. He says that you are alive, and God says that you are dead. The sixty-four dollar question is which one will you believe.

Satan is a very skillful liar. He not only lies with words, but also with

feelings, experiences, and sign. His purpose is to cause you to doubt the Word of God. He may tell you that God gave you the desire for sex so you may as well satisfy those desires. When you believe that you are dead to sex sins, then you will endure the temptation to commit those sins. James 1:12, "*Blessed is the man who endures temptations.*" The word "*endure*" reveals that there will be something unpleasant involved. This reveals the reality of the flesh.

The desires of the flesh are real, but the Word of God is more real. For you to abide in Christ means that you stay by faith in your death position in Christ. As soon as you accept your death position with Christ as a fact, the devil will do his best to convince you by your day-to-day experiences that you are very much alive.

This reveals the necessity of a choice. Each time you are tempted, you will believe God's truth or a devil's lie. You will control your life either by what God says or by the desires of your flesh. Every choice has its natural consequence.

You must live as though you are dead to sin even when you feel that you have a strong desire to do something that you know is sin. How can you be sure that you are dead with Christ? II Corinthians 5:14, "*Since one died for all, therefore, all died.*" As long as you stand by faith that you are dead with Christ, it will be impossible for you to yield to temptation. Each time you yield to temptation, it is because you are not fully persuaded that you are dead to sin. When you doubt God's Word, then Satan has you under his power, but when you rest in the assurance of God's revealed fact, then the tactics of Satan will not matter. You can afford to laugh at him.

You must walk by faith and not appearance. II Corinthians 5:7. For you to walk by faith you must remember the divine order: fact, faith, and then experience. Satan would like for you to wait until you experience death before you believe that you are dead. Should you wait until you experience death to believe that you are dead, you will never believe. Faith always comes before experience.

All of Satan's temptations are to lure you to take your eyes off Jesus, look within and consider appearance. A mountain in the Word of God is evidence that seems to contradict the Word of God. Your faith will continuously meet mountains. These mountains will appear in the form of feelings, suggestions, and failures. When you meet a mountain, either the mountain will go or your faith will go. Either your faith will move the mountain, or the mountain will move your faith. Both cannot stand. Be sure your faith stands on the Word of God until the mountain moves. Only by faith can you please God.

Should you consider your senses to discover the truth of God, you will

discover the lies of Satan and you will not know it. You will be deceived. Should you refuse to accept anything that contradicts the Word of God and maintain your faith in Him, you shall discover that Satan's lies will be revealed. Truth does to lies what light does to darkness. You also will be pleasantly surprised because your experience will harmonize more and more with the Word of God.

When you maintain your union with Christ by faith, He will become progressively real to you in life situations. The more you stand on the Word of God, the more mountains you will see move. You will begin to sense the reality of the fact that Christ is your peace, your patience, your righteousness, your holiness, your resurrection life, and whatever blessing you need for the moment. What you see in Him objectively will operate in you subjectively. As God begins to work out in you what God has worked out for you, you will have reached the mark of maturity. You will begin to know what it means in Galatians 4:19, "*until Christ be formed in you.*" For your faith to substantiate God's facts you must stand on faith until God works out in you what He has worked out for you.

You must know that the scriptures proclaim that you are dead indeed, but nowhere does the Word say that you are dead in yourself. You will never find death in yourself. You are dead in Christ, not in yourself. The reason you were crucified with Him is because you were in Him when He was crucified.

John 15:4 says "*abide in me.*" You must stay in the Lord by faith, but nowhere do the scriptures say "get into Christ." It was God who put you into Christ. It is your responsibility to stay there by faith. Therefore, you should understand the divine principle that God did His work in Christ and not in you as an individual. What Christ experienced nearly 2000 years ago is that which must become your experience as a Christian. You have no spiritual experience apart from Him.

The Bible reveals that you were crucified with Him, made alive in Him, raised in Him, and set in heavenly places in Him. In Christ you have already experienced all of these because you were in Christ when He experienced these. For you to experience each of these you must enter into each experience by faith. Since you have experienced all of these in Christ, it is now possible for you to experience all of these in life by faith.

You must understand that no saint has ever had any Christian experience except what he experienced in Christ. When God dealt with Christ as Head, He dealt with all of the members of His body. You can never experience any Christian experience in yourself apart from the Lord. Some Christians have experienced death in Christ and others have not. The reason is because some have entered into their death experience and others have not. Since the death experience has

already been experienced by Christ, then you can experience death in Him. God wants you to enter that experience so you will experience death in your lifestyle. When we speak of our experience it is only our entering into His experience.

When you have a true spiritual experience, this only reveals that you have discovered a divine fact in Christ and that you have entered into it. Once you discover that Christ has had a particular experience, then you can have the same experience by entering into His experience. The foundation for your experiences are the facts of Christ.

Your progress as a Christian will not be based on God giving you something. He is not interested in bringing you through some experience. Rather He put you into Christ so you may enter into what He experienced. You must not be overly concerned about the times when you had particular experiences. All true experiences you had in Christ nearly 2000 years ago. In life you only enter into what He experienced, which becomes your experience.

You may say, "It was three years ago when I died with Christ." It would be better terminology to say, "It was three years ago when by faith I entered Christ's death." Even eternal life is not given to us as individuals because life is in the Son, and He "that has the Son, has the life." God has accomplished everything in His Son, and He included you in Him.

Since God put you into Christ, then all that is true of Him is true of you. That is why God said "abide in Him." You must abide in your death position. Satan always tries to get you to operate outside of Christ. He tries to convince you by temptations, failures, trials, and sufferings that you are outside of Christ. He desires to make you feel very much outside of Christ. You must remember that you abide in Christ by faith and not by feelings.

You may ask, "Since I am in Christ, then why am I in this situation?" Should you judge by your feelings, you may conclude that you are out of Him, and you may even pray, "Lord, put me into Christ." That is not God's way of deliverance. His way is for you to abide in Christ. Only as you abide in your death position in Christ will a way be made open for God to work in your life and work things out in you. That is the key to the power of His resurrection.

As you abide in Christ from day to day, the facts of Christ will become progressively the facts of your daily experience. You will discover that sin no longer reigns and that you are no longer in bondage to sin. The key is to abide in your death position by faith. Many Christians make the mistake in thinking that once they reckon themselves dead to sin that they will immediately experience death in life. You must remember that it takes time for God to conform you to the image of His Dear Son.

Once you accept the fact that you are in Christ by faith and stay there, you have everything, but should you look at your experiences, you will have nothing. When you look within, you will find that you are very much alive to sin. When you look away from yourself to the Lord, God will not only see that you experience death, but also that you experience newness of life, for truly you are alive unto God.

When Jesus said, "*Abide in Me, and I in you,*" He gave a command and also a promise. God can work in you only as you abide in Him. You must be more concerned about abiding in Christ than you are His abiding in you. Once you abide in Christ, then God will take care of your experiences. The illustration has been given of the electric light. You are in a dark room and would like to have light so you may read. There is a lamp on the table beside you. You may do many different things, but you will get light only when you find the switch and turn on the current. You must turn your attention to the source of power. When you take the necessary action, light will come on. Trying to have spiritual experiences without abiding in Christ, is like trying to get the light to shine without turning on the switch. Christ is in you, yet He promises to abide in you only when you abide in Him. This is the divine order. As you see the glory of the Lord, you will be transformed into the same image. II Corinthians 3:18.

The same thing is true in regard to success in your counseling, or fruitfulness. John 15:5, "*He that abides in me, and I in him, shall bring forth much fruit* "When you are not bearing fruit for the Lord, you must examine your abiding in Him. For He has promised that when you abide in Him, He will abide in you and you shall bear much fruit. Producing the fruit is His business. Your business is abiding in Christ.

How do you abide in Christ? By entering into His experiences and by staying there by faith. You must enter into His death and stay there by faith. Once you rest in the fact that God has put you into His Son and live in the expectation that He will complete His work in you, you will see that He will make good His promise that sin shall not have dominion over you. Romans 6:14. Are you ready to make that third step of faith by considering yourself dead to sin? Only then can you present yourself to God.

STEP 4

PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD

Only after you have taken the first three steps will you be ready to consider the true nature of consecration. Consecration means that you present yourself to God. God reveals His will about consecration. Romans 6:13, *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."* The key word in this verse is the verb *"present"*. You will find the word *"present"* five times in Chapter 6.

The words *"present"* and *"offer"* are better than the word *"yield."* These words *"present"* and *"offer"* imply consecration and require acts of obedience on your part. You must understand that you do not consecrate your old man with his natural instincts, resources, natural wisdom, etc. You can understand this when you consider the phrase *"present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead."* Consecration does not begin with your old man. You are to reckon him dead, and only then can you reckon yourself alive unto God. You can consecrate only that which passes through death and experiences resurrection life. The reason that some Christians have a problem presenting themselves to God is because they do not first know justification by faith, know that they are dead in Christ, and reckon themselves dead to sin. Only then can you present yourself to God as alive from the dead. That is the divine order.

Once you know that you are crucified with Christ, you will naturally reckon yourself dead to sin. Once you know that you have been raised with Him from the dead, you will naturally reckon yourself alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Not only your death in Christ must be accepted by faith, but also your resurrection in Christ must be accepted by faith. Once you reach that point, you will naturally give yourself to God. His resurrection is the source of your life. Since He is your life, you can only present everything to Him since everything is His and nothing is yours. Only by passing through death by faith will you have anything that you can consecrate, and only then will you have anything that God will accept.

God will not allow you to bring anything of the old creation and consecrate it to Him. Death is for the purpose of eliminating everything that cannot be consecrated to Him. Consecration is made possible by resurrection. For you to present yourself to God means that from this day forward you consider your whole life as belonging to Him. For a better understanding of consecration, read the first chapter in the author's book entitled, **How to Minister to Your Spouse.**

Your fourth step to experiencing the abundant Christian life is to present

yourself to God. Please notice that Romans 6:13 speaks of presenting the members of your body to God. Earlier you saw that your body was unemployed in regard to sin. You must not present any member of your body for any sinful activity, but rather present your members to God as alive from the dead.

You must consider that all your members legally belong to God. Would you get into my automobile without my permission and take a vacation in it? No, because it is not legally yours. It would be just as wrong for you to take any member of your body and commit any sin for the same reason. All of your faculties belong totally to God. You are not your own, for you have been bought with a price. This is indeed a great discovery.

Should you buy an automobile, you could use it as you desire because you have legal right to it and full authority over it. My brother, John, has the power of attorney for my mother. He has been placed in trust over her money, but he dare not spend the money to satisfy his own personal desires. Once you know this, you will experience more of the Lord's abundant life. Since Christ is risen, you are therefore alive unto God as well as dead to your old self. This means that you do as God desires rather than do as you desire. This means that you dare not use the members of your body, your emotions, your time, talents, or money as you desire because you know that you are the Lord's and not your own.

Is your consciousness, that you belong to Him, so strong that you dare not spend your money or one hour of your time simply because that is what you want to do? Maybe this is something of what Jesus was speaking when He said, "*Should your right hand offend you, cut it off. Should your right eye offend you, pluck it out.*" Should you be tempted to do something that you know God does not want you to do, you simply say, "My hand is cut off. I do not have a hand for that purpose" or "My eye has been plucked out. I dare not use my eye to engage in that activity." You must regard every member of your body as being totally for the Lord. This has been called true holiness.

Since the Bible says "*present yourself unto God*", may I ask, "Has there been a definite time in your life when you have done that?" For you to experience the abundant Christian life, there must be a time when there was an act of your will and you said, "I choose to present every member of my body to God. From this day forward I will not use them for my personal desires. I will use them only to please the Lord."

What does it mean for you to be separated unto the Lord? Holiness does not come by the removal of something evil from within. True holiness comes by being separated unto God. When a man was chosen by God in Old Testament times, he was publicly anointed with oil and said to be sanctified. They regarded him as set apart to God. Holiness in the Old Testament meant something set apart. Therefore, all true holiness is holiness to the Lord. Exodus 28:36. When you give

yourself totally to the Lord, that is holiness.

Only when you recognize that you are no longer your own and that you totally belong to the Lord will you present yourself to God. Giving yourself to God must be just as definite as reckoning yourself dead to sin. There must come a day in your life when you pass from your own hands into His and from that day onward, you know that you belong to Him and that you no longer belong to yourself.

Giving yourself to God does not mean that you consecrate yourself to be a teacher, preacher, counselor, or missionary. That is God's business. You present yourself to God, then He sends you where He wants you to go to do as He desires. When you consecrate yourself to God, you will be faithful to the church, yet you do not consecrate yourself to the church. Neither do you consecrate yourself to certain Christian work. You must consecrate yourself to the will of God to be as He desires and to do what He requires.

What God requires is faithfulness, not results. I would prefer to know that I am in the will of God and be a doorkeeper for Him than to be a General in Satan's army. God has marked out the pathway for every one of his children. Paul called this a course in II Timothy 4:7. Your course has been clearly marked by God. It is very important that you should know what your pathway is and walk in it. You must tell the Lord, "I give myself to you, with only one desire, and that is to know and walk in the path that you have chosen." This is the way that you present yourself to God. I hope I can say with Paul, when I come to the end of my journey, "*I have finished my course.*" That indeed will be a blessed day.

What greater tragedy can one experience than to come to the end of his life and discover that he has been on the wrong road. You have only one life to live, and you have one choice, to either use that life to please yourself or to please the Lord by denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following the Master. The closer you come to wanting everything for God and nothing for yourself, the more you will experience the abundant life. Romans 12:2 reveals that the will of God is "*good and acceptable and perfect.*" Is the will of God good, acceptable and perfect to you?

Consecration has to do with submitting your will to the will of God. What is commonly called a strong will God may call a stubborn will. Should you not have a submissive will, then the cross of Christ is the solution to your problem. You must be willing to present yourself wholly to the Lord. Just as a baker must have dough to make bread, just so you must be willing to give the Lord your life for Him to live out His life in you. To present yourself unto God means that you give yourself to Him without reservation, without controversy, to do as He pleases with you. This step must be made completely without reservation, with no qualification, for you to be able to progress to the next step.

Many Christians are willing to work for the Lord as an employee so they may go and come as they desire. Luke 16:13, " *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.* " The principle taught here is not as an employee, but as a slave. You may work part-time for one company and part-time for another, however, it is impossible for you to be a slave for one master and do any work for another. To be a slave means that all of your strength, time, and resources belong to that master. That is the picture.

Once you present yourself to the Lord with no reservation, He will begin His work of conforming you to the image of Christ His hand will touch everything that is not of Him. You will hear him saying, "*Are you willing for this to go?*" You must be conscious that it is always wise to submit to God and always foolish to resist Him. God may want one thing while you may want something else. Is there some area of your life that you have not looked into or prayed about or even thought about for fear you might lose your peace? Should you do this type of thing, you must be conscious that you would be out of God's will. It is so much easier to get out of God's will than it is to get into His will.

That will be a blessed day in your life when you willingly hand yourself over to Him and let Him have full authority over you. What a blessing to be conscious that you belong to the Lord and that you are not your own. This will release you from many responsibilities. This is a most blessed truth. Once you become aware of God's possession of you, you will become conscious of His presence. This is because once you have the sense of His possession of you, you will have the sense of His presence with you. Once you establish His ownership, then you will do what you do to please Him rather than from your own interest.

This will be natural once you are conscious of the true fact that you are exclusively His property. Romans 6:16, "*Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves servants to obey, you are that one's servants whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?*" The word "*servant*" speaks of a bond servant, or a slave. Since you can only be a slave to one master, you will either be a slave to the Lord or to sin. Your commitment must be firmly established. The reason you are a slave to the Lord is because you are His possession. Have you ever told the Lord, "I am your slave"?

Not all saints are slaves of the Lord, since some are still a slave to sin How does one become a slave to the Lord? From the Lord's standpoint, you present yourself to Him. Since God redeemed you, then He has the right to you as His property, yet He will not force you to be His slave. This must be a cautious choice on your part. You must be willing to be His slave.

You must be aware of what God is asking of you. You must not speak lightly when you say, "I am willing for God to have His way with me." The cost

is great because God is asking of you your very life. When you willingly present yourself to the Lord, you must understand that there are many things that will have to go. You may ask, "Well, what will have to go?" The answer is your stubborn will, your much loved work, your precious relationships, your greatly loved ideas, etc. They all must go.

For you to present yourself to the Lord when you do not mean it will cause great inner conflicts. God will take you seriously. Once you present yourself to the Lord, He will begin the breaking process. When the little boy brought his bread to the Lord, He broke it. He always breaks everything before He uses it. What he takes, He breaks. But after breaking, He blesses and uses it to meet the needs of others. Many Christians want to meet the needs of others but there is no way that God can use you to meet the spiritual needs of others until you experience brokenness. The only way that you will ever experience brokenness is for you to present yourself to the Lord unconditionally with no strings attached.

Once you give yourself without reservation to the Lord, everything will seem to go wrong. You will find fault with many things that God allows to happen to you. From the world's standpoint you will become no more than just a broken vessel for you have gone too far with the Lord to be of any good to the world. Neither will you be of any use to the Lord unless you present yourself to the Lord with no reservations.

You will never progress in your Christian life until there comes a time when you have a firm commitment to the Lord by presenting yourself to Him. Once you give yourself to the Lord, you will discover that you must continue to give to Him on a day-to-day basis. You must not find fault with the way He uses you. You must not have your mind made up as to how the Lord will use you. That is His decision. You must accept everything with praise. You must accept even what your mind and emotions find hard to accept.

Your life will be greatly enriched by cheerfully accepting the undesirable things that God allows to happen to you. Since you are the Lord's, you must no longer consider yourself to be your own, but rather be conscious of His ownership and His authority in everything of your life. This is the only attitude that delights the heart of God - one that maintains true consecration.

You do not present yourself to the Lord as a counselor, teacher, preacher, or missionary. You must present yourself to God where you are to do His will, whether it is in the home, office, school or church. Since only good can come to those who are wholly His, then everything He ordains for you is definitely the very best for you. It may not seem the best to you, but you must testify that it is the best for you. It will be a blessed day in your life when you are continuously possessed by the consciousness that you are not your own, but that you belong to Him, for you will have presented yourself to Him. You will also have made

your fourth step on your road of the abundant life.

STEP 5

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

For you to experience the abundant Christian life, you have need of revelation, faith, and consecration. For you to walk in the Spirit, you have a need to know God's eternal purpose. For you to understand what God is doing in your life, it will be helpful to know where He is leading you. God's purpose is revealed in Romans 3:23, "the glory of God", and in Romans 8:21, "the glory of the children of God." God's desire for you is for you to receive glory.

Some saints are preoccupied with their sins, but God wants them to sense the glory of God which they have missed. God's purpose for man is glory, but sin distorted that purpose by missing God's glory. Once you sin, immediately you think of the judgment and the condemnation that sin brings. Man always thinks of the punishment of sin, but God's thoughts are always on the glory that man misses when he sins. The major consequence of sin is that you forfeit God's glory, but praise God, redemption restores you so that you are again qualified for glory. The purpose of God's redemption is glory.

God's method was for us to partake of His divine nature. II Peter 1:4. Only by His life can you walk in the Spirit. For you to walk in the Spirit you must see God's purpose for the death and resurrection of our Lord. You must see the reason for true consecration, which is by reckoning yourself to be dead to sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, and presenting yourself unto Him as alive from the dead. You must know that all must go to the cross, because what is in us by nature is a self-life, which is responsive to the law of sin. Adam chose a self-life rather than choosing God's divine life. Therefore, God had to take everything that was in Adam and do away with it. It was "your old man" that was crucified. God put all of us into Christ, then crucified Him as the last Adam. Everything that is of Adam has passed away, "behold all things are new. "

When Christ arose, He arose in a new form as the Second Man. Even though He still possessed a body, He was in the Spirit and no longer in the flesh. The Second Man is a life-giving Spirit, I Corinthians 15:45. Our Lord now has a resurrected body, a spiritual body, and a glorious body. Since He is now in the Spirit, everyone can receive Him. Since He is now in the Spirit, we all can receive Him and by partaking of His resurrection life we are constituted children of God John 1:12, "*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*"

To walk in the Spirit you must be conscious of the indwelling Spirit. God wants you to know that He lives in you, in the person of the Holy Spirit Romans 8:9, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." May God open your eyes to see the greatness of His gift. God wants you to be conscious of the greatness of the resources in your heart. The indwelling Spirit is not an influence, but a living person. He is God. The indwelling Spirit of God is a person. You are only an earthen vessel, but that earthen vessel carries a treasure of unthinkable worth, which is the Lord of Glory.

Once your eyes are opened and you see the greatness of the treasure, which is hid in our heart, all of your cares and worries as one of God's children will come to an end. Since God is in your heart, there are enough resources in your heart to meet every demand of every circumstance in which you will ever find yourself. There is enough power within you to transform your life.

Once you recognize the greatness of the treasure within your heart, your life will not only be transformed, but God will begin to use you to transform the lives of others. Should you possess \$10, you might be quite carefree as you go about your daily activities; however, should you possess \$10,000 cash in your pocket, you would not be carefree. Should you lose \$10 it would make very little difference, but should you lose \$10,000, the situation would be greatly different. Once you understand the value of the treasure in the vessel, it will make a tremendous difference in the way you live. You will have gladness in your heart, which will disperse all your cares.

We see something of this picture in the Old Testament. In the camp of Israel there were thousands of tents, yet there was one tent greatly different from all the rest. In the tents where people lived, you could do as you pleased. You could be noisy or silent. You could eat or fast, work or rest; yet, there was one tent that commanded your reverence. In this tent you walked more quietly. Should man or beast touch this tent with impurity, his penalty was death. This temple was so very special because it was the temple of the Living God. There was very little that was unusual about the tent itself. It was made out of ordinary material. It was made great because God chose to live in it.

This is exactly what happened when you were born again. God came into your heart, and you became the temple of the Living God. In that day, God lived in a temple made of material substances, but today He lives in a temple made of the saints of God. When God reveals to you that He has made your heart His place of abode, you will experience a deep reverence that will come over you. God has come to live with you and go with you in the person of the Holy Spirit. I feel different when I carry my Bible, but I feel even a greater difference when I am conscious that the Holy God lives in my heart.

You will discover that the more reverence you have for the Spirit of God, the greater will be your power. Once your eyes have been opened to the fact of His presence, you will possess that reverence. Lack of reverence only reveals the lack of the consciousness of His presence. Why do some Christians live a defeated life while others live a life of victory? The difference cannot be accounted for on the basis of the presence or the absence of the Holy Spirit, since He is in the heart of every child of God. The difference is based on the fact that some recognize His indwelling and others do not. My prayer is that God will unveil your eyes that you might see the fact of the Spirit's indwelling, which will revolutionize your life.

For you to walk in the Spirit, the lordship of Christ must be a reality in your life. I Corinthians 6:19-20, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. " Once you discover the indwelling Spirit of God, then the normal results will be a complete surrender of yourself to God. Once God reveals to you that you are the temple of God, you shall immediately acknowledge that you are not your own. Consecration always follows revelation.

For you to experience the abundant life, it is essential that you recognize God's divine ownership of your life. There must come a time in your life when you definitely give up all rights to yourself and submit yourself completely with no reservations to the lordship of Christ. The Philippian jailer asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" He replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." You can live the victorious Christian life only when you accept Jesus as the Lord of your life.

For Jesus to be Lord of your life means that you surrender everything to Him without reservation, yourself, your family, your possessions, your business, your time, and your talents. Have you recognized that they are all His? Have you come to the place where you have told the Lord, "I take my hands off and put everything into your hands for your care"? The Spirit can operate effectively in your life only after the question of the lordship of Christ is settled in your heart.

He takes His place as Lord. You must come to the place that you say with David, Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You." You must know that you have this treasure in earthen vessels.

We have one more important teaching to consider before we deal with the question of walking in the Spirit. Romans 6 reveals that you are free from sin. Romans 7 deals with freedom from the law. Some Christians believe that Romans 7 deals with Paul's life before he became a Christian; however, you must

admit that many Christians do experience what is described in Romans 7. You must not conclude that once you are delivered from sin, that this is all that God requires. Chapter 7 reveals that you need to know deliverance from the law in addition to knowing deliverance from sin. Only when you are fully freed from the law can you know full freedom from sin.

To understand what it means to be delivered from the law, we ask, "What is the law?" Surely Romans 7 has a lesson for the saint of God. Romans 7:5 speaks of being in the flesh, verse 14, "*I am carnal*", and verse 18, "*in me, that is, in my flesh dwells no good thing.*" You must know that this speaks of more than the question of sin because it also relates to the matter of pleasing God. The principle is found in Romans 8:8, "*They that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" How can you discover that you cannot please God in the flesh? You make this discovery by the aid of the law.

Once you come to the place in your life that you have no more consciousness of sins, you know that you are dead to sin, you reckon yourself dead to sin, you then will present yourself to God because you now recognize God's legal claim on your life. You have no more right over yourself. This is why you present yourself to God as alive from the dead. This is tremendous progress, and you are beginning to experience a beautiful Christian life, one of praise to the Lord. Once you present yourself to the Lord, you then diligently desire to discover the will of God and you decide to carry it out.

Each one who has gotten this far on his Christian journey has made a strange discovery. He thought he could do the will of God because he thought he loved it. But over a period of time, he becomes conscious of the true fact that he does not always like to do it. At times he feels very reluctant to continue and very often very often when he tries to put it into practice, he finds that it is impossible. Then he starts doubting his experience. He goes over all of his checkpoints, "Am I free from the consciousness of sins?" "Do I really reckon myself dead to sin?" "Have I really given myself to the Lord?" And with all of these, the answer is "yes."

Sooner or later, he will come to the conclusion that he really never loved God's will at all. He then not only prays for the power to do God's will, but also for the desire. He confesses his acts of sins and promises to be obedient next time. To his amazement, very shortly he is conscious of defeat again. Perhaps he then says, "My last decision was not definite enough. This time I will be 100% sure." So he brings all of his will-power to influence the situation. Then only to find defeat again. Should he continue, sooner or later, he will come to Romans 7:18-19, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I*

practice." This is the point of desperation. He will stay desperate until he discovers what it means to be dead to the law.

You may ask, "Then what does the law teach in this respect?" Many saints have had these experiences but do not understand why. They seem to believe that Romans 6 is enough. They believe that should you put Romans 6 into practice, there would be no more failure, but to their utmost, they are surprised when they find themselves in the middle of Romans 7. You may ask, "Can this be explained?"

The answer comes from the fact that we do not fully understand Romans 6. Romans 6:14, "*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*" Romans 7 is given to explain and make real to you that you are under grace rather than under law. Romans 7 explains Romans 6:14. When you understand Romans 6, you will know deliverance from law.

God surely has holy and righteous requirements that He places upon you. That is law. Law means that you do something for God; whereas, grace means that God does something for you. Understanding this is a great need. Since law means that God requires something of you, then deliverance of law means that He no longer requires anything from you. What a release! Grace not only gives but also does something for you. Yes, He does require something of you, yet grace means that He Himself does it for you. Law requires that you do something for God; whereas deliverance from the law reveals that you are exempt from doing it. Many times our trouble is that we identify with Paul in Romans 7 when we try to do something for God in the flesh. As soon as you try to please God in the flesh, you place yourself under the law, and then you will experience Romans 7.

You must understand that the law is not your problem. Romans 7:12, "*Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*" Your problem is your need to be delivered from the law. You must discover that there is nothing wrong with the law, but there is something greatly wrong with you. What the law demands is righteousness, but you cannot do what is righteous because you were made in unrighteousness. The law does not make unjust demands, rather you are unable to meet those demands.

As long as God leaves you alone you seem to do quite well, but once He asks you to do something, your sinfulness is revealed. Do you have a problem trying to express your love when someone mistreats you? Your problem is revealed in Romans 7:14, "*sold under sin.*" Sin has dominion over you. This is like a basketball player who is very clumsy. As long as he sits on the bench, you do not detect his clumsiness, but once he gets on the floor and starts playing, it shows up immediately. As soon as God makes a requirement of you, your sinfulness is detected shortly. The basketball player was clumsy whether he was sitting on the bench or trying to play in the game. It is only revealed when the coach requires something from him. Just so, your sinfulness was in your makeup all the

time, but only revealed when God speaks and you try to perform. When someone does you wrong, should you react the way you know that you should not react, your sinfulness is revealed.

The Bible reveals that we are all sinners by nature. Now you say, "I received a new nature when I became a child of God." This is true; however, your old man will be revealed until you learn how to walk by faith rather than walk in the flesh. The law reveals your weaknesses. When God's holy laws are applied to your sinful life, then your sinfulness will be on display. You must know that God knows who you are and that you are full of sin from head to feet. He knows that you are carnal and weak and that you can do nothing. The question is, do you know that?

You may admit that all men are sinners and therefore you are a sinner, but do you still hope that you are not as hopeless as some? Should you not know that, then God will bring you to the place so you will know that you are weak and helpless. You may say that you believe this, but God will convince you of that fact Only by the law will you ever know how weak you are. Try to be patient with an impatient person. Try to be kind with an unkind person. The Lord Jesus said, "*without me, you can do nothing.*" It was the law that convinced Paul that he had committed the sin of coveting. Romans 7:7, "*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except by the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'*"

As long as you live an average Christian life, you will not find that you have trouble in this area; however, once you become serious in knowing and following the will of God, the more your weakness will be revealed and the deeper you will get into Romans 7. Then one day the Spirit will clearly reveal to you just how hopeless and weak you are to do the will of God. God knew this about you all the time, but you did not know it. God had to bring you through many unpleasant experiences for you to recognize this fact. You must discover that a man living in the flesh cannot do the will of God. Therefore, you need your weakness proved to you without any question This is why God gave the law.

God did not give us the law to keep. He gave us the law to break. Before He gave us the law, He knew that we could not keep it. No one has ever made himself acceptable to God by means of the law. The New Testament does not tell us that men of faith are to keep the law, but that the law was given so that our sin may be revealed. Romans 5:20. The law was given so that you might know that you are a law breaker.

Romans 7:7-9, "*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the Contrary, I would not have known sin except by the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'*" *But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all matter of evil*

desires. For apart from the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." It is the law that reveals your true nature.

You may feel that you are quite strong, but that is only the strength of the flesh. God wants to bring you to the place where you confess that you are a sinner from top to bottom, and without Him you can do nothing to please a Holy God. Once you have broken the law enough for you to confess that it is utterly impossible for you to keep the law, then the law has served its purpose. The law is your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ so that He may fulfill the law Himself in you. Galatians 3:24.

Should you be discouraged by now, then cheer up, because Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Romans 10:4. Chapter 6 reveals the way of deliverance from sin by considering a master and his slave. The relationship between sin and the sinner is like the relationship between the master and his slave. The way of deliverance from the law is revealed in Romans 7 by the picture of two husbands and a wife. We now see that the relationship between the law and the sinner is like that of a husband to a wife.

Notice in Romans 7:1-4 that there is only one woman, yet there are two husbands. The woman in the picture has a difficult position because she can only be a wife to one and her problem is that she is married to the less desirable one. The law is referred to as the less desirable husband. Really, there is nothing wrong with the husband for he is a good man. The trouble is with the woman. The husband and the wife are incompatible. He is a very particular man, very accurate, while on the other hand she is easy going. He wants everything just so, very precise, while she wants to let nature take its course. How can there be happiness between such a couple?

This husband also makes demands on her. You cannot find fault with him as a husband because he has a right to expect these things from his wife. All his demands are legitimate. There is nothing wrong with the man nor with his demands. These two cannot get along at all. The incompatibility causes the woman great distress. It seems that everything she does and says is wrong, for she is keenly aware that she often makes mistakes. There seems to be no hope for her.

Then she thinks, "Should I only be married to the other man, then all would go well." This other man is just as exacting as her husband, yet he helps her as much as she needs. She would like to marry him but her present husband is still alive. Since she is bound by law to the husband, what can she do? Nothing unless he dies, for she would be breaking the law to marry the other man. God reveals this picture in Romans 7.

In the picture, the first husband is the law, while the second husband is

Christ, and you are the woman. The first husband, or the law, requires much and offers no help in fulfilling the commands. Our Lord Jesus even requires more. Consider the Sermon on the Mount. The key is revealed by the fact that He carries out in us what He requires from us.

The law makes lawful demands but supplies no help to be obedient to them. Christ has definite requirements, but since He is our life, He fulfills in us the demands that He requires of us. Any woman would desire to be freed from the first husband so she may marry the other man. However, her only hope of release from her first husband is death and there is no hope of his passing away. Matthew 5:18, *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."* The law will not pass away, yet Christ is the end of the law for doing right to those who believe (Romans 10:4).

Since the law will continue forever, then how can you be united to Christ? How can you marry the second husband should your first husband continue to live? God has provided the way out. Since he will not die, then you can die, and when you die, the marriage relationship is ended. That is exactly the way God delivered you from the law. There is an important point to note in this passage. First, the husband seems to die. But verse 4 reveals that in reality it is the woman who dies. It is not the law that passes away, rather you pass away, and by death you are delivered from the law. The law will never pass away, and God's righteous demands of you remain forever.

Should you live in the flesh, you must meet those righteous demands, but when you die, the law has lost its claim on you. The law will not follow you beyond death. The same principle operates in your death from the law as in your deliverance from sin. Even though you are dead to sin, yet your old master, which is sin, continues to live. Nevertheless, his power over you cannot extend past death. He could ask you to do a thousand things when your old man was alive, but once your old man is dead, he can call on you in vain. So it is with the law. Since you are dead to the law, it can call on you in vain. The law may still make demands on you but its power to enforce those laws has ended.

The Lord's word answers the question, "How do I die?" The answer is revealed in Romans 7:4, *"You also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ."* You were delivered from the law at the same time and in the same way as you were delivered from the power of sin. Therefore, you also were made dead to the law. Through the body of Christ you are not only dead to sin but also to the law, and alive unto God.

We now wish to deal with the application of the principles that we have been discussing. Only when you stop trying to please God can He begin to work in your life. To be delivered from the law means that you are going to let God

work in you and you will stop trying to please Him. Should you try to please God in the flesh, you will again place yourself under the law. Since you are dead to the law, the law has no more claims over you.

Since Christ came to fulfill the law, then He wants to meet the demands being made on you. It is God who works in you and makes you willing to let the Lord do for you what He requires of you. Philippians 2:13. To be delivered from the law does not mean that God does not want you to do His will. The basic idea is that you are free from doing God's will from yourself. It is the old man that cannot please God. Once you realize that you cannot please God as of yourself, you will stop trying and put your trust in the Lord to live His life in you. As long as you try, you leave the Holy Spirit no room to operate.

You must come to the point that you say, "I cannot do it, therefore I will trust the Spirit to do it in me." Then you will discover a power within strong enough to carry you through. For example, the power in you delivers you just as the life in the bird delivers him from the law of gravity.

God not only wants you to see that He is the law-giver on the throne, but also that Christ is the law-keeper in your heart. He gave the law, yet it is He who keeps the law. He consistently makes demands of you, yet He consistently meets those demands for you when you trust Him instead of trying. Remember, law is doing for God what God requires. As long as you try to do anything, He can do nothing. It is when you continue trying that you continue failing. It is God's purpose to reveal that you can do nothing to please Him. God wants to bring you to the point that you say, "Lord, I am not able to do anything for you, but I trust you to do everything in me."

A lifeguard cannot save a drowning man until he gives up. Just so, God cannot save you from the law until you give up trying. The flesh profits nothing. By the works of the flesh you cannot please God. Every effort that you make trying to please God reveals your lack of faith. Faith accepts God's word that you are not able to do anything to please Him; therefore, you are willing to do nothing and let Christ meet God's demands in your heart.

Once you see the law which says, "*Be ye kind one to another,*" then you think that you must meet that demand. There is nothing wrong with that law, yet it will be all wrong should you apply the law to the wrong person, the old man. The thing that caused the wretched man trouble in Romans 7 was that he tried to meet the claim of God's law himself. The law said, "*Thou shalt not covet*" and he found himself unable to meet that law. Since he thought God was asking him to keep the law, he naturally tried to do so. Actually God was not requiring that at all. In his effort to please God, he discovered that he was doing exactly the opposite. He was displeasing Him.

Romans 7 deals with the body of death, whereas, Romans 6 deals with the

body of sin. The question considered in Romans 7 is death, whereas, the question considered in Romans 6 is sin. In relation to sin, you have a body of sin so that when you try to please God you become actively involved in sin. When you consider the law of God, which means that you try to do the will of God, you must consider that you have a body of death. When you commit sin, sin makes your body a body of sin. When you try to do God's will, your failure makes your body a body of death. God wants you to see the true nature of your old man. This is a pitiful sight that we all must see before we recognize the impossibility of pleasing God by our trying.

You must not only discover this from the Word of God, but also in your life. You must discover that you have a lifeless body when it comes to doing God's will. This is why some people can speak so freely about worldly events, yet seem to be tongue-tied when it comes to speaking to someone about the Lord. This is why when some pray they fall asleep or they discover their aches and pains. It seems so much easier to do many things than it is to do the will of God. This is because your body of death does not harmonize with the will of God. It never will.

God wants you to see clearly what it means by having a dead body in relation to doing God's will. It means that your body is so weak that it has no power to do the will of God. It is a dead body. God wants to bring you to the point that you will echo what the man said in Romans 7, "*O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*" That cry is as valuable to your Christian life as your first cry when you entered into this world. That first cry was music to the doctor's ear. You must know that this cry will be music to the Lord's ear. You must know that that is one of the most spiritual cries that you can make. That cry reveals progress. Should you not have made that cry as of now, it is because you still believe that you can do something. When God brings you to the point that you discover that you can do nothing, then you will cry unto the Lord. Should you not have uttered this cry up to this point, it is because every time you fail, you make a new resolution and will to double your effort. Only when you realize there is no value in saying, "I will not do that again", or "I will do this next time," will you stop trying. Once you recognize your despair, it will be like the cry of a drowning man who cries for help.

Do you still believe that should you witness more, read your Bible more, pray more, or go to more spiritual meetings that you will be a better Christian? Not any of these is wrong within itself, but it is wrong for you to trust in them for victory. All of these will help only when they bring you closer to Him who is your victory. Your help is in Him rather than being in those activities in which you engage.

You must not only come to the place that you cry in your despair, but you also must ask the question, "Who shall deliver me?" Romans 7:25. You must look for a person to deliver you. You must stop looking within yourself for the solution

to your problem, for you now must look unto Him who is your Savior. You must come to the place where you have no expectation in yourself. Rather, all of your expectations must now be in Him.

Did you receive the forgiveness of sins by reading your Bible, praying, etc.? You not only received forgiveness by believing in what the Lord Jesus did, but you also were delivered from the power of sin in the same manner. Your capacity for pleasing God will come in the same way. Your forgiveness came by faith in Christ on the cross. To experience deliverance from sin and from doing the will of God will come only by faith in Christ in your heart. Deliverance from sin and deliverance from doing the will of God is Christ abiding in you. When you have faith in what God has done for you in Christ Jesus, then God will work this out in you by the person of the Holy Spirit.

At the time of the writing of Romans, it was customary that when a murderer was punished, that the dead body of the one murdered was tied to the living person. He was bound to him until he died. The criminal was free to go wherever he desired, but he must carry the murdered man's body. Can you conceive of such punishment? This is the picture revealed in Romans 7. It is as though you have been tied to a dead body - your own body of death. This body of death has gone with you wherever you have gone. At last you despair for you can tolerate it no longer and you cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" In Romans 7:25 you can hear his plea of despair change to a song of thanksgiving, *"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

You know that justification is by faith, but you also must know that your sanctification is by faith alone and does not depend on your own efforts. Please do not believe that should you do nothing, that nothing will happen. In reality, it is when you do nothing that something good happens. Before you became a Christian you were in the habit of doing things. It is quite natural that you believe that you should continue doing things. You must believe John 19:30, *"It is finished."* He not only did everything on the cross for your forgiveness and for your deliverance, but also He is the end of the law for you when you believe. It is God who works in you mightily.

When one is born again, he should thank God for what He has done. Now you must thank God for what He is going to do. The reason that God must do all the work and keep the law for you is because He must receive all the glory. Should you be able to please God in the flesh, you would claim some of the glory. When you know that God does all the work, then you will be willing to give Him all the glory. Paul thanked God because he now trusted in the law of the Spirit of Life to deliver him from the law. It is absolutely essential for the law of the Spirit of Life to be free to operate in your heart for you to be able to walk in the Spirit.

To learn how to walk in the Spirit, we wish to consider two contrasting terms: 1. In Adam and In Christ, 2. In the Flesh and In the Spirit. The understanding of the relationship of these four will help greatly. In Adam and in Christ are your position which are objective. In the Flesh and in the Spirit are subjective, which relates to your daily walk from a practical experience. In Adam and in the flesh is only a part of the picture, for in Christ and in the Spirit are required to complete the picture. It is inadequate to only be in Christ for you must also learn to walk in the Spirit.

The Spirit is related to Christ, the Second Man, whereas the flesh is related to Adam, the first man. Every child of God is no longer in Adam, since he is now in Christ; however our question is, "Are you living in the flesh or in the Spirit?" When you live in the flesh, you do what you do from yourself. This is the old man raising his head, giving his opinions, ideas, and convictions. This comes from the old natural source of life that you inherited from Adam. To obey in life what is true of you in Christ, you must learn to walk in the Spirit. It is an historic fact that your old man was crucified when Christ was crucified and that now you are in Christ. Truly you are blessed (Eph. 1:3) with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, but only by living in the Spirit can what is true of you in Christ be expressed in you. You may recognize that you are in Christ, yet it is possible for the old man to become very much irritated inside. What is the trouble? The problem will be solved when you walk in the Spirit, which will make what you know in your head become a reality in your heart. It then will become a reality in your lifestyle.

This is true because you are not only in Christ but Christ is in you. Physically you can only live, move, and have your being in air rather than in water. So it is spiritually, you cannot live, move and have your being in the flesh, but only in the Spirit. When you live in the flesh, you will not experience the blessings that you already have in Christ. Everything that is real of you in Christ becomes real in your daily lifestyle only as you walk in the Spirit. Should you not be enjoying the truths that the Word reveals that are yours in Christ, then the quicker you confess that the cause is that you are walking in the flesh, the better off you will be.

Walking in the Spirit means that you trust the Spirit to do in you what you cannot do. When you are presented a command from the Lord, you must look to Him to do in you what He requires of you. It is a matter of resting in Him rather than struggling. It is a matter of trusting rather than trying. Should you have a temper with a short fuse, you must reckon yourself dead in Christ to your uncontrolled temper rather than deciding that you will change yourself. You must expect the Spirit to produce in you a pure heart, humility, submissiveness, the desire to forgive, etc. You will begin to understand what it means in Exodus 14:13, "*Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.*"

Have you ever tried to express your love to someone who was difficult to love? You have tried to express your love on many occasions, but failed. You must come to the place that you say, "Lord, I do not have in me the ability to express my love; therefore, I will rest in you and trust you to love this person through me." You will be amazed at the difference once you trust the Lord to do in you what you cannot do of yourself. You must remember Mark 9:23, "*As you believe, so shall it be done.*" You must continue in this manner until you experience the Holy Spirit carrying you through.

When you take your hands off things, then the Holy Spirit will take hold of things. Then there will be no need for strain or effort on your part. When you experience victory in Jesus, there not only will not be fleshly efforts involved, but the Spirit will naturally carry you through.

It is the nature of the flesh to want to do something. When Satan tempts you, his objective is always to try to get you to do something. When temptation comes and the struggle begins, you must remember that the battle is of the Lord. Galatians 5:17, "*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things you want.*" The inner conflict is not your fight. Should you attempt to fight, you can only fight the flesh with the flesh and you will be doomed for failure. The fight is between the Spirit and the flesh. Should you engage in the fight, the Spirit becomes unable to bring you through to victory. That would be the natural thing for you to do. But you must not do what comes natural, but rather by faith you must choose to be still and wait for the salvation of the Lord.

May we further consider the phrase, "*that you may not do the things that you would.*" What is your natural inclination when someone does or says something that you dislike? What is your normal course of action? When you do what you normally would do, you act from your own will. When you refuse to act out from yourself, then the Holy Spirit is free to do His work and deal with the flesh. When the Spirit deals with the flesh, you will not need to do what you would normally do.

You must find your satisfaction and contentment in His perfect will. You only have one of two options. You will either walk by the Spirit or you shall fulfill the lusts of the flesh. To live in the Spirit is to walk by faith in Christ and then you can stand still while the Spirit experiences victories over the flesh day by day.

The Spirit has been poured out to take charge of this activity for you. Rather than fighting you must hide in the Lord. You will discover on a day-to-day basis that the Spirit will overcome your fleshly lusts. Our Lord died on the cross to provide salvation for us. The Spirit has been given to work this salvation out in us. As the Holy Spirit produces this salvation in you, you will experience

the power of the Spirit. You must not only know what it means to be weak in yourself, but also what it means to be strong in the Lord. You must not only know that you cannot, but you must also know that the Lord can.

The more you are willing to let the Spirit fight your battle with the flesh, the more you will experience Galatians 2:20, *"no longer I, but Christ."* You must learn what it means for Christ to be your life. You must learn that only Christ can live the Christian life. It is too great a burden for any human being to bear. Therefore, it is no longer I, but Christ. This is truly the abundant life. The abundant life is the life that He lives in you. The more you allow the Spirit to overcome the lusts of the flesh, the more you will experience the abundant life.

We find in Isaiah 40:31, *"Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength."* We are told that this word *"renew"* actually means exchange. What you need is an exchanged life, rather than a renewed life. Christ must become your substitute within. Yes, you live but yet *"no longer I, but Christ lives in me."* This is the production work of the Holy Spirit. The life of Christ must be reproduced in you.

Romans 8:29 speaks of being conformed to the image of Christ. This seems to refer to Christ being reproduced in us. At regeneration the life of Christ was placed in you by the Holy Spirit. The scripture reveals that it is somewhat like grafting a twig from a fruitful tree to the stump of an unfruitful tree. The life of Christ that has been planted in you must grow just as the little twig must grow. The life of Christ must be reproduced in you. When His life is expressed in your heart, it also will be expressed in your conduct. The more this life grows, the more it will be expressed in your life. God speaks of this in Galatians 4:19, *"Until Christ be formed in you."*

One of our problems is the fact that when we need one of the Christian graces we ask God for it. God will not give you patience, humility or love as a separate gift of His grace. God does not give meekness to the proud, patience to the impatient, or love to the unloving. You must discover that what you need is more of Christ, yet there is a sense in which it is not more of Christ that you need, rather Christ needs more of you. Once you see that Christ is all that you need and that He has given all of Himself to you, then you will give all of yourself to Him. Once He lives out His life in you, then He will be patient, humble, loving and everything else you need. It will be a blessed day in your life when you discover the difference between Christ and the Christian graces. Once you know the difference between Christ and the Christian graces, then you will know the difference between patience and Christ, meekness and Christ, self-control and Christ, and between love and Christ. Christ not only has been made unto you righteousness, sanctification and redemption, (I Corinthians 1:30) but also patience, humility, meekness, love, self-control, etc.

God reveals that He wants us to be holy. Holiness is Christ. Christ is our peace. Ephesians 2:14. You can make the statement, "Christ is _____" and then put into that blank any of the Christian graces that you recognize for which you have a need. Should you recognize your need to have self-control, then He is your self-control. Should you recognize a need for patience, then He is your patience. Should you recognize a need for a pure heart, then He is your purity. He is the answer to your every need. When His Spirit is free to operate in your life, His Spirit will naturally produce the fruit of the Spirit. Notice it does not say "fruits of the Spirit," but rather the fruit of the Spirit, as one. Since God has given you the Spirit, then when your need is love, the fruit of the Spirit is love. When you need comfort, the fruit of the Spirit will be comfort. This will be true in relation to any need that you have from day to day. Our Lord is the answer to every human need.

The way that you can know Christ more in this way is by discovering your needs. God cannot meet a need for you that you do not know that you have. You must become aware of your needs, admit your deficiencies, and trust in Christ to meet these needs. Should you be afraid to discover deficiencies in yourself, you will never grow. Should you have any fear, you must testify with David, "*I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears.*" Psalm 34:4.

It is painful to recognize a need in your life when you know that you cannot meet it. However, only when you recognize that you have a need that you cannot meet will you trust God to meet that need for you. When God does something for you, that is grace. You will be growing in grace, and grace is always God doing something for you. Every saint of God has the Spirit of God living within. When the Spirit of God reveals a need in your life, you must trust Christ to live out His life in you in that particular way. This will bring enlargement, and enlargement means greater capacity to enjoy God's blessings. We must learn more of what the saints of old meant when they said, "*Let go and let God.*" Each time you let go and let God, you will discover that God has conquered more land in your life. You will discover the secret of enlargement, Christ who is my life.

The difference between trying and trusting is the difference between light and darkness, truth and the devil's lies, peace and inner conflict, joy and sorrow, power and weakness, inner conflict, joy and sorrow, power and weakness, and life and death. Do you think and talk more about trying or trusting? You will stop trying only when you are convicted that you cannot do it. Only then will you no longer try to do it. It is so difficult to come to the place that you are willing to confess, "Lord, I cannot, therefore, I take my hands off. From this day on I trust you to do what I know I cannot do." When you have inner conflict, you must refuse to act and depend on Christ to overcome the desires of the flesh for you. You then can enter fully and joyfully into the victory that He has secured for you. Only then can you please Him as He desires. You must see that this is an active

life rather than a passive one. It is a matter of drawing life from His life by trusting in the Lord. It is a most active life.

Deliverance from trying comes by the law of the Spirit of Life. Romans 8:2. This is dealt with in the author's book, **Counseling and Basic Needs**. However, we wish to deal with it briefly. One thing the Spirit of God deals with is condemnation. You must know that there are two kinds of condemnation: 1. Condemnation before God; 2. Condemnation before yourself. When you know that God is satisfied with the blood, you know that your sins have been forgiven and you know that there is no more condemnation before God, even so, you may still know defeat and experience self-condemnation to be very real as shown in Romans 7.

When you learn to live by Christ who is your life, you will discover the secret of victory. You then will discover that there is no more self-condemnation. Why? Romans 8:6, *"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."* This you will experience when you learn to walk in the Spirit. With peace in your heart there will be no more self-condemnation. With any self-condemnation, there will be no peace in your heart and you will be walking in the flesh.

A saint will condemn himself when he experiences defeat and he will experience the sense of hopelessness to do anything about it. Before you see that Christ is your life, you will be in bondage trying to fulfill the law. This is revealed when one consistently says, "I cannot do this, nor can I do that." He may try as diligently as he knows how, but he still must confess, Romans 8:8, *"cannot please God."* Only when you walk in the Spirit will Philippians 4:13 become real to you, *"I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me."*

Would you dare say, "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me?" Can you be humble when humility is required? Can you be patient when patience is required? Please notice the Bible does not say, "I can do all things," but rather *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* There is the answer. "For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2.

When you try to be patient and fail, you will naturally condemn yourself. When you try not to lose your temper and then you lose it, you will naturally condemn yourself. What is the secret? Trusting rather than trying. Should you not try to be patient, then you cannot condemn yourself for not being patient. You will cease trying once you discover that the law of the Spirit of Life is stronger than the law of sin and death. God delivers you from one law by enacting another law. The law of sin and death is still in your life, but God has put another law into operation that is powerful enough to deliver you from the law of sin and death. Once you understand this, you will not try to live by your own insufficient strength. You will then know what it means to live (I Peter 1:5) by the power of God.

From the practical standpoint, you must know that you cannot live the Christian life by will-power. When you do, you will experience the trouble that Paul spoke of in Romans 7. This truth is revealed when you consider the question, "*Does my conduct harmonize with my will?*" When you operate by will-power, you will be like a person trying to push his car uphill because he ran out of gas. Your strength would be inadequate for the job. It is just as impossible when you try to live the Christian life by will-power. It is most exhausting. You may force yourself to do Christian things, but they will have no meaning to you. You must be conscious that the most noble thing that the will can do is that of willingness.

Anything in your life that has to be forced is not of the Spirit. When the Spirit is free to operate in your life, the Christian graces will be revealed gracefully and with great ease. You do not have to force yourself to give, love, be patient, etc. It comes quite naturally. You must use your will to will the will of God, but you must not exercise your will-power to do the things of the Christian life. You can operate by your will-power for a short period of time, but the law of sin and death will overtake you. This experience always comes to the child of God who becomes serious in pleasing God. You may be willing, but sooner or later, you will come to confess, "how to perform it I know not."

The only reason that a saint of God will use his will-power to try to please God is because of the lack of understanding of the law of the Spirit of Life. You must realize that you have greater resources than you have tapped. Should you not have the wisdom and power, then you must know that the will of the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has come to your aid. This is not some new gift but only the revelation of what you already possess. You must understand the importance of discovering your resources.

Should you turn loose your own will and trust the inner Spirit, you will not fall off the cliff but rather you will fall into the law of the Spirit of Life. Since His life is a law, you not only have life, but you have the law of Life. The law of gravity does not need your help for it to function and neither does the law of the Spirit of Life. Once the Spirit is free to operate, the law of life will operate just as naturally as your heart beats.

The more you consciously live in this new law, the less conscious you will be of the law of sin and death. It will still exist, but it will no longer control your conduct. Could this be why Jesus said, "*Consider the birds?*" They have no consciousness of the law of gravity. God wants you to progress to where you continuously have the consciousness of the Spirit of Life and that you no more have the consciousness of the law of sin nor the law of death. We have a generous, gracious Heavenly Father.

How you live the Christian life is a question of the new life within you and is no longer a question of your will. Have you discovered what an impossible task

it is to become patient once you discover your impatience? Have you discovered the impossibility of loving when you discover that you do not love? Should you require yourself to fulfill these kinds of responsibilities, you will discover that it is enough to make you sick. God never told you to force yourself to have peace when you have inner conflict or be humble when you recognize your pride. You may worry about these things, and worry will take away from you but it will never add anything to you. God uses these predicaments to get your attention and lead you to discover the law of Life in Christ Jesus. When you discover the law of the Spirit of Life, that will be a greater discovery to you than was the discovery of gold in California of that day.

When you begin to walk in the Spirit, you will discover that the Spirit will begin to put His finger on various things in your life that must go. Should you have ill manners, the Spirit will point this out to you. Should you be talkative, this will be revealed. Should you use unkind words, the Spirit will put His finger on that. Should your voice be harsh, the Spirit can reveal that. When your motive is wrong, it will be noticed. Should you over eat, the Spirit will let you know. Hundreds of details in your life the Spirit will reveal how you are to act. Should you continue walking in the Spirit, you will discover that your life be refined and that your personality will radiate greatly. The Spirit has the power to make you a perfect gentleman or a perfect lady. Your character flaws will diminish. You will not have the need to watch your p's and q's. It is very awkward to have to stay on your toes.

When you walk in the Spirit you will please God quite naturally. You will not need to do what you do because you feel the responsibility. You will do it because it will be the natural thing to do. When you follow the law of the Spirit you will know instantly when to start talking and when to stop. This you will know in the inner man. This spontaneous life is the abundant Christian life. It reveals itself in love for the unlovely, it reveals itself in the patience toward the impatient, in humility toward the proud, and respect toward the disrespectful, etc. It will reveal itself in true moral character. The salt in your life will become effective in creating a hunger and thirst in the lives of those around you. There will be no need for you to pretend that you are humble or patient, kind or loving. You will have no fear that someone would find out what you really are. Your pretense will be removed by reality when you trust in the Law of Life.

How does one walk after the Spirit? Romans 8:3-4, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."*

May we consider two things that are presented in this passage: 1. What the Lord did for us; and 2. What the Holy Spirit does in us. Since the flesh is weak, the

righteous requirement of the law cannot be fulfilled in us according to the flesh. No one can please God walking in the flesh.

God did two things to solve the problem: 1. He dealt with your heart problem by sending His Son in the flesh who died for sin and condemned sin in the flesh. This means that He took everything in you of the flesh and did away with it on the cross. That is what the Bible speaks of in Romans 6:6, "*the old man*" or what the Bible calls "*the flesh*" and what some people have called the "carnal I." God dealt with the basic principle of your problem by removing your weakness.

Still the righteous requirement must be fulfilled in you. 2. God made this possible by giving you the indwelling Spirit. The Lord Jesus did what was necessary for you on the cross. The Holy Spirit takes care of the inward side as you walk after the Spirit. The Holy Spirit can do His work of conforming you to the image of Christ only as you walk after the Spirit.

To walk after the Spirit is a walk, not a work. When you walk in the Spirit, your trying to please God in the flesh gives way to a quiet, restful walk depending on His working, which works in you mightily. Colossians 1:29. In Galatians 5:19-22, the Spirit contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. What you do in the flesh to try to please God is called works. When you walk after the Spirit what is manifest in your life is called the fruit of the Spirit. The reason is because the works of the flesh come from you and the fruit of the Spirit comes from the Spirit.

To walk after the Spirit is not only a walk rather than works, but it also reveals the need of submission. When you walk after the flesh, you yield to the desires of your flesh; whereas, when you walk after the Spirit, you obey the desires of the Spirit. The only way that you can walk after the Spirit is to take His yoke. There is no way for you to walk after the Spirit and live independently of the Lord. You must be sensitive to the inner witness of the Spirit and follow after His leadership. The origin of all activities must be from the Spirit. The law of the Spirit of Life will find free operation in your life as you respond to the Spirit with obedience. The righteous requirements of the law will no longer be met by you (which you can never do) but in you.

There are three interesting things that are revealed in II Corinthians 13:14, "*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*" 1. All your spiritual blessings come from the love of God; 2. The spiritual blessings have become yours by the grace of our Lord Jesus; and 3. These blessings have been imparted to you by means of the communion of the Holy Spirit. God is love, grace is the expression of that love made available in Christ, and communion speaks of the Spirit imparting that grace. What our Father did for us in Christ is now being communicated to us by His Son. Once God reveals something new that the Lord Jesus did for you, then you must expect the Holy Spirit to impart it to you. The Holy Spirit came to do this ministry. He came to make real

in you the finished work of Christ.

Every new Christian must be taught well that his heart has become the home of a living person. The Lord Jesus came in the person of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit now lives within, it is His business to reveal the scriptures that you may find Christ who will direct your prayer life, provide authority for your life, and reproduce in you the character of our Lord Jesus. You must know that the inner witness of the Spirit is your new boss. You must know that the only way that you can please God and be happy is to be obedient to your new boss and walk in the Spirit.

STEP 6

BEARING YOUR CROSS

We have spoken several times about pleasing the Lord. One big problem that man has is created by his soul life. We wish to consider the principles that regulate all your ministry. God proclaims spiritual laws which govern our life for Him, and everyone who wishes to serve Him must comply. Not only is the basis of your salvation the truth of the Lord's death and resurrection, but you also shall discover that the conditions of your counseling is based on His death and resurrection. Not only is the fact of the death and resurrection of our Lord the ground of your standing before God, but also it is the basis of your Christian life and counseling.

As an honest counselor of the Lord you must know the principle of death and the principle of resurrection. These are the bases on which our Lord served. Jesus's public ministry began with His baptism. He was baptized to identify with the death principle, even though He had not sinned nor had any need of cleansing. Baptism is a picture of death and resurrection. Our Lord took this stand before He began His earthly ministry. As soon as He took this ground of death pictured by baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Only then did He minister.

This reveals some important principles to us. Even though our Lord walked this earth, He knew no sin. Jesus said, *"I seek not my own will but the will of Him that sent me."* Does this mean that the Lord did not have His own will? No. Our Lord had a will, but He used that will to do the will of the Father. You must see that our Lord, since He was a perfect man, had a soul and a body. This means that He had the capacity to act from himself or from the soul. He had the capacity to act independently of His Father.

It is because our Lord had a soul that Satan came and tempted Him. This was immediately after His baptism. Satan tempted Him to satisfy the needs of His body by turning stones to bread. He tempted Him to gain immediate respect for His ministry by a supernatural appearance in the temple court and assume His world dominion immediately.

What did Satan mean when He said to Jesus, "Command that these stones become bread"? He implied that since you are the Son of God, you must do something to prove it. Satan offered Jesus a short-cut. Satan challenged Jesus to settle the matter finally by coming out directly and proving it. What was Satan's objective? His objective was to get Jesus to act for Himself, which means from

His soul. Jesus refused to take such a stand. The first Adam acted from his soul apart from God, but the second Man refused to make such a blunder. The stand that Jesus took was His basic life principle. John 5:19, "*The son can do nothing of himself.*" Jesus's denial of his soul life was to govern all His earthly ministry. Everything Jesus did was founded on the basic principle of death and resurrection.

Since Jesus, the Son of Man, had to go through death and resurrection in order to do His work, the only saint that can serve the Lord in the Spirit is the one who knows the working of the principle of death and resurrection in his life. It is impossible to serve the Lord otherwise.

Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for power to come upon them. What is this power from on high? It is the power of His death, resurrection, and ascension. It has been said that the Holy Spirit is the vessel in whom all the values of the death, resurrection, and exultation of our Lord are deposited so that they may be brought to us. The Holy Spirit is that power and it is His function to bring that power to every saint of God.

This is why the Holy Spirit could not be given or received until Jesus had ascended and had been glorified. Only after Peter received this power could he preach as he did on the Day of Pentecost. Without the values of the death and resurrection of Christ, his preaching would have been empty. Just so, without that power your counseling is empty. Only when you experience death and resurrection will your counseling be characterized by power. Without this principle, you cannot be used to help build the kingdom of God. You can only make a contribution toward building a social club.

You must know that the death of Christ works in many different ways. You have seen his death work in regard to the forgiveness of your sins. You have seen how it works to deliver you from the power of sin, since your old man has been crucified with Him so you may no longer serve sin. At this point you discovered that when you tried to please the Lord, your self-will intervened. You then discovered the work of death working in your life to bring about a willingness to deny your own desires and present yourself to the Lord. These are absolutely essential for they constitute a starting point for your spiritual counseling. There is still a deeper lesson that one must learn. That is the question of the knowledge of what is meant by the soul.

For you to continue your life with the Lord, you will recognize a need of personal holiness. You will discover that when you try to please God in righteousness, that you will come under the law and the holy, righteous requirements of God will find you out. You will discover that you have tried to please God by using your own carnal power. You will come to experience the work of the cross in your life that brings you to the place where you say, "I cannot do it. I cannot satisfy

God with my own powers. I choose to trust the Holy Spirit to do that in me." Some of us have gone through deep lessons to learn that You must discover the value of the death of the Lord working in you in this manner.

To better understand the death and resurrection principle, we wish to consider Matthew 10:34-39, "*Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' And 'a man's foes will be those of his own household' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*" You will also profit by studying all related passages in the other three gospels. This passage speaks concerning the activity of the soul of man. Man's soul life is touched in this passage.

This passage and several other related passages reveal that the soul of man can be dealt with in only one way, which is by bearing the cross daily and following Jesus. No one can deny his legitimate desires, take up his cross and follow Jesus until he knows the principle of death and resurrection. You must see that this is a deeper lesson than the lesson of the old man of the flesh. Your old man was dealt with by Christ on the cross; whereas, your soul life is dealt with by your carrying your cross. Your old man was crucified once and for all; whereas, your cross is a daily experience.

God wants you to see that Jesus bore you on the cross, but that now you must bear it. Jesus's bearing the cross was an external thing, but your bearing of the cross is an inward experience. That is why this work is called the subjective working of the cross. This inward working of the cross is a continuous process. This is a day by day process, a step by step, as you follow your Master.

It will be helpful to see that this teaching is different from the teaching of the old man. It is not quite the same. Your soul is not crucified or put to death as is your old man. God still wants to use your natural gifts, faculties, personality, and your individuality. God does not want any of these to be put to death. This is revealed in Hebrews 10:39, "*Have faith unto the saving of the soul.*" You do not lose your soul in the same sense as you lose your old man, for should you, you would lose your individual personality and existence completely. God wants you to keep your natural attributes, but the cross must bring your natural endowments into death and put the mark of death on them. Once you present all of these to the Lord, once they experience the death and resurrection principle, then God will give them back to you in a glorious new manner.

This is that of which Paul spoke in Philippians 3:10, "*That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being*

conformed unto His death." Our point is that the mark of death must be upon the soul all the time so as to bring it to where it is always submissive to the Spirit and never act independently.

When you come to this point in your Christian journey, you will see more clearly what Paul meant when he wrote to the Corinthians, *"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."* Your counseling must be in the power of God.

You must know that the seat of your affections is your soul. Many of your decisions and actions are influenced by the affections of your soul. You must know that your natural affection is different when it comes from you rather than when it comes from the Spirit. When your affections are not governed by the Spirit, they can affect your decisions wrongly about your counselee. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 10:37-38, *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."* You must take notice that the way of the cross is not set before you as some Sunday event. God wants you to see the cross of Christ before you as you make every decision of your life and ministry. You will then discover Matthew 10:39, *"He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."* This speaks of the soul life.

It is so easy to let your affections turn you away from the way of the Lord. The key issue in the sixth step to the abundant Christ is the matter of your soul. The cross must touch your soul deeply. You must lose your soul life in the sense in which the Lord meant this teaching and which we pray that you will understand.

You may ask, "What does it mean for me to lose my soul life?" It means that you can no longer do as you desire. You cannot say, "God gave me these desires so He must have intended for me to satisfy them." That expression reveals that the cross has not had its deep work on your life. You must know that you will have to go through a painful experience to discourage what your soul desires. It is possible for you to be detained from following the Lord by some secret love. It may be some natural legitimate affection which may cause you to take a detour from following the Lord. Your natural human affection must be purified by the death and resurrection principle of the cross.

Jesus had just taught His disciples that He was going to suffer death when Peter tried to express his love for his Master in protesting (Mark 8:34-35): *"And when He had called the people to Him, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life*

for My sake and the gospel's will save it." Jesus had to rebuke Peter, as He would rebuke Satan, for caring for the things of men and for not caring for the things of God. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes.

The issue here is also that of the soul's desire for self-preservation. We seem to have the conviction that "should I be allowed to live, I would do anything. I would be willing to do anything." Peter seemed to be saying, "Lord, should you go to the cross and be crucified, that is too much. Have mercy on yourself." Peter seemed to prefer that Jesus go against God rather than going against Himself. We all must make this choice many times to either move with God or go against our own desires. For a saint to go on with God there are times that he must go against the desire of his soul. This means that he must go against his feelings. When he lets the cross operate, it will silence that desire for self-preservation.

Which do you desire more - the will of God or to do your own will? Are you fearful of the will of God? There may be times when you do not like the will of God, but you must be willing to do it. You must be willing for everything to go in order to do His will. It may be difficult to allow a loved one to be gone so much under hardship to minister for the Lord.

This was Peter's problem. He was concerned for the Lord and was controlled by his natural love. It seems that Peter had a deep devotion to the Lord for only a strong love could bring one to do what Peter did. Do you understand what Peter did? When your spirit is pure with no effects of the soul, you will not be led into a mistake as Peter made. He did not recognize the will of God. The soul must experience a deep working of the cross for you to recognize and discover the will of God in your counseling ministry. Once you do, your heart will be truly delighted.

The Lord Jesus dealt with the matter of the soul several times. In Luke 17 He relates it to His return. When He spoke of the day that the Son of Man is revealed, He related that to the day that Lot went out of Sodom. Verses 29-30. When Jesus spoke later of the rapture of the Christians, he twice said in verses 34 & 35, "*one shall be taken and the other shall be left.*" Then Jesus said, (verses 31-32): "*In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And he who is in the field, likewise let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.*"

Why did Jesus place so much emphasis on remembering Lot's wife? Because, verse 33, "*Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life will preserve it.*" It seems that this passage deals with the rapture of the saints. The soul must have a deep working of the cross for a person to enthusiastically welcome the Lord rather than look back as Lot's wife did. You must not have some unfinished business or some unfulfilled desire.

When the rapture call comes, you will discover your true heart's desire. You will discover your true sense of values. Should your greatest value be the Lord

Himself, you will not look back. Mrs. Lot did not say a word, yet her backward look revealed the nature of her heart. She had a greater love for the things of Sodom and Gomorrah than for the Lord. Humanly speaking it is natural to be attached to the gifts of God rather than God Himself. Some rejoice in their ministry more than they rejoice in the Lord Himself.

The only way by which you may escape the danger the Lord speaks of is for the cross to leave its mark on your soul. Peter's action revealed his change of heart when he recognized the risen Lord by the lakeside, even though he had gone back to his former way of life. The boat, net, fishes, nor his friends meant anything to him when he recognized the Lord. The Bible reveals that when he heard John call "*It is the Lord,*" he cast himself into the sea and went to Jesus. There you have it. Will that be your reaction when the Lord returns?

The true question is the desire of your heart. It must be detached from the things of the world. When the cross does its work, you will experience true detachment in spirit from everything that you love, from everything that is outside of the Lord Jesus.

Even though we have spoken of a deep work of the cross dealing with the activity of the soul and the things that the soul loves, yet there is a deeper working needed of the cross. John 12:24-25, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it does, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life.*" This passage is dealing with the love for the soul and its desires. This speaks of the inward working of the cross, the losing of the soul life. This is related to that aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus which is pictured by the grain of wheat. Only by the death of the grain of wheat can there be new life - yes, much new life. This is the principle of multiplication. The natural result is fruit bearing. Should the grain of wheat abide alone it remains but one, yet when it is planted it gives way to itself, and then you see reproduction.

When the grain of wheat is planted, it will experience the chemical reaction of the soil, the humidity and sunshine. Over a period of time the little grain of wheat will give way to new life. Why does God want you to understand the nature of the grain of wheat? Only when your life has this kind of experience will you have the power to impart resurrected life to your counselees. Only then will power be released. This is the only road to true ministry.

This is not a new teaching. The Lord Himself set the example when He passed into death and His life emerged in many lives. The Son died as the Only Begotten Son, yet now there are many sons. He was willing to give up His life that we might receive life. Are you willing to give up your natural desires that others might live? Only when you conform to His death and lose your natural life can the power of His resurrection impart the new life of God that is within you to your counselees. This

is the secret of a successful counseling ministry. This is the secret of fruit bearing. This way is the way revealed in II Corinthians 4:11-12, *"For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you."*

Every child of God has new life within. All saints have the valuable possession, the treasure in the vessel. All Christians have new life, but this is our main point. Why do we not see more expression of that life? There will be very little expression of that life as long as you abide alone. God wants to see more overflowing life imparting life to your counselees. I long for the day when others will experience more of this overflowing life in my life.

The reason there is so little expression of life is because the soul in us is contained and restricted and cannot find its way out. It is just as the grain of wheat in the hard outer shell. As long as the grain of wheat stays in that hard outer shell, the life within will never be expressed. We must be willing for the soul to experience the adverse effects of our environment that our soul may experience what the hard outer shell of the wheat experiences when it falls into the ground. Once you experience this breaking, you will no longer serve the Lord by counseling from your own natural strength. Your power will then come from the Spirit within. Should you not be experiencing the abundant life and there not be rivers of living waters for your counselees, then you need to ask God to break you. You must be willing to lose all that is precious to you. This is the only way to the abundant life and the only way to glorify God.

One thing that you must understand well is that your soul with its natural energy and resources, will stay with you until the Lord returns; therefore, there is a day by day need for the cross to operate in you dealing with this natural energy and your natural resources. This is the day by day condition for service which is revealed in Mark 8:34, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." You will never progress in the Lord's army to the point that you will have no need to deny yourself and take up your cross daily. Should you evade the cross in this way, you will not be worthy of the Lord. Matthew 10:38. Neither can you be His disciple. Luke 14:27. The continuous principle of death and resurrection must be the principle of your life for you to lose your soul life and release the resurrected life from within. Every saint of God who has reached this point has had his whole life and service for God transformed.

Once God brings you to this experience, your own natural power will be touched and weakened so that you will no longer trust yourself. God has to deal with some of his children in a very unusual way. Some of these ways are very painful and difficult, but they are for a purpose. There will be great progress in your life when you counsel because God wants you to counsel rather than because you want to counsel. You then will receive your joy from the Lord rather than from serving the

Lord. Some saints are a slave to their temperament, yet God does not want this to be true. Once you experience brokenness, you will be in the Lord's hands as clay is in the potter's hands.

Should you not be flexible in the Lord's hands, then He must weaken your strength and deal with your likes and dislikes until you are willing to do as He desires because He wants it done rather than because you like it. You may like it or you may not like it, but you do it because you know it is the will of God. You do not counsel or minister because you will derive certain pleasure, rather you do it because you know it is God's way. You now do what you do because it is the will of God regardless, of whether it gives you conscious joy or not. Your true joy will come from knowing that you are doing His will, which is much deeper than your fickle emotions.

God will bring you to the place so that He must need only express a desire and you will immediately respond. That is the nature of the true servant of the Lord. Yes, he will look upon himself as a slave to the Lord. This spirit will not come naturally. It will come only when the seat of your natural energy, will, and affections, which is your soul, has been touched by the cross in a deep way. This is the way to a servant attitude and only the servant attitude can delight the heart of God.

Even though the saint of God will lose much that is precious to him, he will lose only that which he cannot keep so God may give him that which he may keep forever. He will lose only that which will not satisfy so God may give him that which completely satisfies. He desires this so greatly. The reason God makes it so profitable for the saint of God is because this is His great desire. For some this may be a long drawn-out affair, while with others it may be a rather short period of time.

For you to go on with the Lord, you must know that there will come a time that you will never again be quite the same as you were before. You will experience a disabling from which you will never quite recover. This means that you will come to the point that you will not trust in yourself. You will be afraid to do as you desire because you will know what a bad experience you will have with the Lord. You will understand how unprofitable God will make it for you to operate from your soul power. God will deal with you as with sons, for you will know that He will discipline you.

Once you suffer with Him, you will come to a new place in your life where you will know His resurrected power. You will be standing on resurrection ground. When you operate from the death principle, you will experience a crisis in your natural life, but then you will discover that God will release you and you will experience resurrection power. You will now be motivated by the principle of life which is at work in you. You will be empowered with fresh, divine life. You will be motivated by the love of Christ. You will now be submissive to the authority of the indwelling Spirit.

You need to know that you still will possess your soul with all of its functions: yet, you will no longer live by the desires of your soul. You will no longer try to live by will power. Should a saint's body become his master, he will live like an animal. Should his soul become his life, he would be a rebel and a fugitive from God. He may be gifted, educated, and cultured, yet he would be separated from the life of God. When a saint lives his life in the Spirit and by the Spirit, even though he will still possess his soul faculties just as he does his physical members, he will now be a servant of the Spirit. He then will have come to the place that God can really use him.

This process of breaking will take some time. The Lord may lay you aside for a period of time where you will have spiritual darkness. There will be no light. It may seem that the Lord has forsaken you and that He is not using you in the least. You may sense that everything has come to an end. Some verses from Isaiah have helped me much at this point. Isaiah 45:3, *"I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel."* When you sense spiritual darkness, you must thank God for it because He has given you treasures.

When you experience this period of darkness, you must wait on the Lord rather than try to wiggle out by yourself. Isaiah 50:10, *"Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon His God."* God will discipline you should you not wait on Him. Verse 11, *"Look, all you who kindle a fire, Who encircle yourselves with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled. This you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment."* When it speaks of lighting your own fires, this speaks of operating from your soul. You would be using your own thoughts and your own opinions rather than waiting on the Lord. For you to receive His hand means that He will discipline you. The reason you will lie down in torment is because He wants you to learn to trust Him and wait until He gives you light.

As you wait on the Lord, you will discover that He will bring things back to you. You must not yield to the temptation to try to help God by taking things back yourself. You must be willing to wait for the full period of time, whatever length of time that may be. You may be in a rush, but you cannot rush God. He knows what He is doing. The more you are willing to wait on Him and yield to His dealings with you, the quicker the long period of darkness will give way to morning light.

It is so difficult to wait on God. You naturally wish that you could have death and resurrection in the same period of time. During this time of waiting, it is natural to ask God "How long?" You must know there is a definite period of time. During this time all the doors will seem to be like blank walls. It will seem to you that everyone else is being blessed and used while it seems that you are losing out and

being passed by. You must choose to be silent before the Lord and wait. You will experience only darkness, yet night always gives way to morning light. Once the morning dawns you will discover that everything has been given back to you in glorious resurrection. Only eternity can measure the difference between what you will experience then and what you experienced before. The only one who can appreciate the difference is the one who has experienced it

The reason so many saints of the Lord bum out is because they are operating from soul power. No saint of God will bum out when he is laboring under the resurrected power of our Lord. You will have a blessed day in your life when you know that the Lord has met you and touched you in this basic way and you know that you have received that disabling touch. Jacob received that disabling touch in his hip. He remained limp for the rest of his life.

For many years God experienced great difficulty in getting Jacob to do as He desired, but after the hip was touched, God could easily get Jacob to respond. Should you break your arm, the least touch on your arm would cause you to respond. Once you experience God's breaking, it will be the same with you. God will only need to let you know His will and you will immediately respond.

The Lord knows what He is doing with you. He has left no part of your need unmet. The Lord's cross will meet every need of your life. Once you walk this way you will understand what Paul meant in Romans 1:9, *"I serve the Lord in my spirit."* You will have learned the secret of a meaningful, fruitful ministry. You will (Philippians 3:3) *"glory in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh."*

Regardless of how active you become and how much God uses you in counseling or any type of ministry, you will have one objective in life which will be to lift up the One who made it all possible. You will glory in Christ Jesus. Romans 15:17-18, *"Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient."* You will be cautious of the things of which you speak. You will know what it means to bear your cross. You will know what spiritual counseling means. You will know what it means to be a slave of Jesus Christ. You will know what it means to please the Lord and enjoy Him forever.

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