

How To Be Alive In The Spirit!

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Chapter 1 New Life in Christ

Christianity Is A Supernatural Life

It is humanly impossible to "live the real Christian life," without the Spirit of Christ actively living within. Supernatural means "above the natural" i.e. superior to it. Christianity is far more than an intellectual belief system. It is more than head knowledge. It is a new spirit inside you.

Romans 8:9-10

Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. NKJV

Being a Christian entails far more than being a good person, living a good life, keeping the Golden Rule, obeying certain ethical standards. A person may even be an avid Bible student, constantly searching the scriptures and even memorizing long portions of it and still not have the life of Christ within their heart. The written Word (Logos) of God is static but the living Word (Rhema/Christ) is alive.

A Christian is a "container" of God. He is a vessel in which the treasure of God's life resides (2 Cor. 4:7). It also involves much more than an intellectual acceptance or belief in Christ, His existence and history. True Christianity means the receiving and imbibing of Christ's spirit into one's life through faith. It is Christ IN YOU which is the hope (assurance) of glory.

Colossians 1:27

*27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** NKJV*

The Creation Of Man

When God first created man He made him with three aspects to his being, namely spirit, soul and body. God first created man's body from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). It was physically perfect, but as yet, had no life. God then breathed into Adam's nostrils, the breath of lives. (The original word which is translated "life," in our Bibles, is actually in the plural, and should be rendered lives). When God breathed into Adam's nostrils Adam received physical and spiritual life. Adam received the life of God and He became a living soul.

The Life Which God Breathed Into Him Had Two Results:

1. It gave a "spirit" to Adam. The Hebrew word ruach can be translated both breath and spirit. The breath of God within Adam formed Adam's spirit.
2. When the breath of life touched the body of man, the soul was produced. Thus Adam had spirit-life, soul-life and body-life.
 1. The spirit is the God-conscious part of man.
 2. The soul is the self-conscious part.
 3. The body is the physical, world-conscious part.

Adam was primarily a spirit being. Although he had a body and a soul, primarily he was a spirit being. The spirit of man was to have pre-eminence. It was meant to rule over and control both his soul and body. The spirit is the most important part of person's being. The primary reason why God created man was so that He might enjoy relationship and fellowship with him. Since the spirit is that part of man which enables him to commune with and fellowship with his Maker, then this is obviously the most important aspect of his person. His body and soul were both meant to be subservient to his spirit. They were meant to be servants of his spirit, fulfilling the purposes dictated by the spirit. They are of secondary importance and are incomplete without the spirit, which should inspire, motivate and control them.

The Two Trees In Eden

Among the many beautiful trees in the garden of Eden were two which were of particular importance to Adam. These were the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9). God gave Adam access to every tree in the garden, including the tree of life, but He strictly forbade him to eat the

fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). God clearly warned Adam that if he ate the fruit of that tree, he would surely die.

The tree of life symbolizes God's offer of life, through His Son Jesus. This tree was freely available to Adam. It was good for man. It enriched and strengthened his life. In contrast, to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil entailed knowing and experiencing evil as well as good. It involved tasting the bitter fruits of evil, as well as the sweet and pleasant fruits of good.

When Adam subsequently ate fruit from this forbidden tree, he was acting in considered and direct rebellion against God. He chose his own way, rather than God's way. He rejected God's will and deliberately chose his own way. God had plainly warned him that if he ate the fruit of that tree, he would surely die, and he did! Not physically, but spiritually. Adam remained physically alive but could no longer commune with God and enjoy fellowship with Him. In fact, he was now dreadfully afraid of God (Gen. 3:10).

Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God had to banish them from the garden and from His presence (Gen. 3:24). From that moment they were condemned to live without the privilege and blessing of fellowship with their Creator. They were now limited to the physical and soulish dimensions of life. Their offspring inherited the same limitations. Whereas Adam had been made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26), the descendants of Adam would now inherit the likeness and image of Adam (Gen. 5:3). The descendants of Adam, until this very day, are born in that same image. They have natural life from their natural parents, but not spiritual life. The God-conscious part of them is dead because of sin.

Fortunately, although Adam and Eve were banished from God's presence (Gen. 3:24), they were not left without hope. Before driving them from His presence, God gave them a wonderful promise of redemption (Gen. 3:15). He predicted their coming Redeemer, one who would break the tyranny of Satan, reverse the result of the curse and restore mankind's spirit to life and God-conscious communion. That Redeemer is Jesus Christ!

Regeneration

Although the word regeneration does not occur in most English translations of the Bible it is certainly in the original text. Regeneration is a word the Bible uses to describe what God accomplishes in us by the presence of Jesus Christ within. To generate means to bring into existence. Therefore, to regenerate means to bring back into existence again. God brought Adam into existence as a being of spirit, soul and body. Through disobedience, his spirit died within him. But God had a plan to re-generate that spirit. His plan is accomplished through Christ, who is a "life-giving spirit"

1 Corinthians 15:45 (AMP) 45 Thus it is written, The first man Adam became a living being (an individual personality); the last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving Spirit [restoring the dead to life].

The entrance of Jesus Christ into a human being re-activates the human spirit. He revives and restores spiritual life again. "And you hath he quickened [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Physically and mentally, we were alive, but, spiritually, we were dead. God breathed the breath of life into Adam and he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). In the New Creation of 2 Corinthians 5:17, Christ, entering in-to us through the new birth, and regenerates our spirit. We come fully alive in Christ.

Easton's Bible Dictionary says: "Regeneration - (Greek: *palingenesia*) is only found in Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5 in the KJV.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. KJV

Other translations render *palingenesia* as Kingdom referring to the time when the redeemed community will be transformed into the manifest Kingdom. E.g.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; KJV*

This word literally means a "new birth." The Greek word is used by classical writers with reference to the changes produced by the return of spring. In Matthew 19:28 the word is equivalent to the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). In Titus 3:5 it denotes that change of heart elsewhere spoken of as a passing from death to life (1 John 3:14); becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17); being born again (John 3:5); a renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2); a resurrection from the dead (Ephesians 2:6); a being quickened (2:1,5).

This change is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. It originates not with man but with God (John 1:12,13; 1 John 2:29; 5:1,4). As to the nature of the change, it consists in the implanting of a new principle or disposition into the soul; the impartation of spiritual life to those who are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins."

The necessity of such a change is emphatically affirmed in Scripture (John 3:3; Romans 7:18; 8:7-9; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1; 4:21-24)."

Previously We Were Only Partially Alive

Before we received Christ, our body was physically alive. The soul faculties of emotion, mind and will were also alive. But our spirit was dead because of sin. Now, in Christ, we are truly fully alive. The Christ-indwelt person is truly and completely alive to enjoy both physical and spiritual life. Regeneration is what the Bible calls "passing from death unto life" (John 5:24) or being "born again" (John 3:3, 6).

The new birth, about which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, is the rebirth of our spirit. This takes place when Christ comes to dwell within us. His Spirit-life quickens our previously dead spirit and makes it alive again. Now our spirit can assume its God ordained role of ruling over the soul and body. Until we are born again, we are controlled by the natural senses and emotions. Once we are made alive spiritually, there is the glorious opportunity of being governed and controlled by God's Spirit operating through our human spirit.

John 1:12-13

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NKJV

Receiving Christ

Receiving Christ means much more than simply believing in Him. It means far more than an intellectual acceptance that He exists. It goes beyond this. If I offer to give you something, you first have to believe that I am sincere in my offer. But then you must actually accept and receive the gift. You must take the necessary steps to make the gift your own. If it were some kind of medicine or elixir you must actually swallow or ingest it. It is must received into your being. So it is with receiving Jesus Christ. You must imbibe His Spirit.

Receiving Christ means surrendering your own life to God and allowing the Spirit of Christ to enter into you and guide you. We thus become one with Christ, citizens of God's Kingdom and members of His body. You need to understand that a spiritual invasion is about to happen when you invite Jesus to enter your life. Invite Him in by faith as the new Lord of your life. The act of receiving is a positive, active act. It requires more than mere obedience or agreement which may be passive. When we receive something we reach out to grasp it and make it ours.

Romans 10:9-10

9 For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. NLT

Surrender your whole life to God. Raise your hands high as a sign of surrender and breathe His Spirit into your being. You will become a spiritual temple as Jesus comes to take residence within you. Begin in faith to thank Him for keeping His promise and entering your life.

1 Corinthians 3:16

16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? NLT

Galatians 2:20

20 I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. NLT

As we allow ourselves to be transformed by God's Word and Spirit our characteristics and new character become those attributed to God, i.e. the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law. NLT

The "fruit" of the Spirit is the evidence from within of a healthy spiritual life just as apples are the evidence of a healthy apple tree. The carnal senses are corrupt and degenerate. They lead downward into sin and iniquity. The carnal mind is closed and full of darkness, hopelessly confused and hardened against God.

Romans 8:6-8

6 If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. NLT

Romans 1:21-22

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. **The result was that their minds became dark and confused.** 22 **Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead.** NLT

Ephesians 4:17-19

17 (Therefore) With the Lord's authority let me say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They don't care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed. NLT

The redeemed spirit is upright and true. We put on the new nature through the renewal and reprogramming of our mind, imagination thought life and actions. Ephesians 4:20-24.

20 But that isn't what you were taught when you learned about Christ. 21 Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, 22 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. 23 Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. 24 **You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness — righteous, holy, and true.** NLT

When we are led by the Spirit, we do not fulfill the sense knowledge desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16) but, rather, we are enabled to fulfill all righteousness. The Holy Spirit opens the eyes of our (spiritual) understanding.

Ephesians 1:17-20

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power NKJV

Galatians 5:16-17

16 So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your (former) sinful nature craves. 17 The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from

what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. NLT

Our mind must be renewed to recognize the reality that we are now a New Creation. In God's eyes, "Old things have passed away and all things have been made new." But we must condition our mind to truly accept this regeneration through feeding on the living Word which is Christ. We must learn to spend quality time in His presence, interacting with His Spirit and imbibing into our life the nature and characteristics of Christ's life.

Talk to Jesus in a normal manner and expect Him to reply in the same vein. Then feed your spirit on every word that proceeds from Him to you. In this manner we will be transformed into His image and likeness. **As we continually gaze upon Jesus in intimate fellowship, praise and adoration we will be transformed into His image and likeness.**

2 Corinthians 3:18

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. NKJV

We Have Been Made Righteous In God's Sight

Romans 5:17-18

17 The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brought condemnation upon everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness makes all people right in God's sight and gives them life. NLT

Romans 6:17-19

17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you have obeyed with all your heart the new teaching God has given you. 18 Now you are free from sin, your old master, and you have become slaves to your new master, righteousness .

19 I speak this way, using the illustration of slaves and masters, because it is easy to understand. Before, you let yourselves be slaves of impurity and lawlessness. Now you must choose to be slaves of righteousness so that you will become holy. NLT

Righteousness, which is the character of Christ is imputed to the New creature as a gift. However, we must then choose to be "slaves of righteousness" so that we might become holy.

The Word Of God Is Our Mirror

In the natural we use a mirror to see ourselves as we truly are. The more powerful the mirror the more accurate the reflection. We can distinguish all our faults and blemishes by gazing into a mirror and then (hopefully) we can improve our appearance. But when we look into the Word of God, we see ourselves as God sees us. As our regenerated spirit gazes into the Word of God we see ourselves as God sees us as New Creations created in the righteousness of Christ. We are transformed into the living image of Christ and begin to reflect His glory. We must consciously imbibe the spirit of that image in order to be transformed.

2 Corinthians 3:18

18 And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more. NLT

1 Corinthians 13:12

12 Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now. NLT

James 1:23

23 For if you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance. NLT

Romans 12:2

2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. NLT

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! NLT

2 Corinthians 5:16-18

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. NKJV

Chapter 2 The Renewed Mind

New birth is an experience of the human spirit. It is when the human spirit is quickened and made alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Once the human spirit has been quickened and made alive, the mind of man must then be renewed and educated to this great factual reality. It must be adjusted or renewed in order to take on its new role. The natural mind is no longer the controlling power of man. It must now become the servant of the redeemed spirit mind of man. It is no longer the master, but the servant. It must learn to take the secondary place and be in subjection and submission to man's spirit.

Being Renewed In The Spirit Of Our Mind

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. 23 Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. 24 You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness — righteous, holy, and true. NLT

These verses have many important things to teach us. Paul is exhorting the Christian to put off the old sinful former manner of life and to put on the new righteous quality of life. Imagine a man dressed in rags. He is dishevelled, untidy and dirty, a pathetic figure of a man. However, he is encouraged to put off those old garments, dirty, stained and tattered and put on brand new robes. Not only is his appearance thus changed, his inner man is changed also. He can lift up his head now. He is no longer embarrassed and ashamed. He has an inner confidence which he lacked before. His whole outlook on life is enriched and enhanced. Paul is seeking to lead the believer into this new-found dignity and standing. It is achieved, says he, by being "renewed in (the spirit of) your mind. "

The question immediately springs to mind, "How can I be renewed in the spirit of my mind? Is it really possible to be transformed in mind and thoughts?" Not only does the Bible affirm that this is truly so, it also provides the principles by which the believer's mind can be transformed and his whole life enriched. The first principle is full surrender of our whole life to God symbolic of a whole burnt offering. Stop relying solely on your natural senses. Learn how to discern and obey the voice of God's Spirit within you.

Surrendering Your Whole Being To God

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV

Rom 12:1 Brothers and sisters, in view of all we have just shared about God's compassion, I encourage you to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, dedicated to God and pleasing to him. This kind of worship is appropriate for you.

*Rom 12:2 Don't become like the people of this world. Instead, **change the way you think**. Then you will always be able to determine what God really wants - what is good, pleasing, and perfect. (GW)*

Being transformed by the renewing of your mind is allowing your mind to be changed to agree with God's Word rather than being influenced by the natural things and circumstances that your natural mind sees. We cannot think (perceive) with our natural senses and our spiritual senses at the same time. To do so is to act as a double minded person.

James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. NKJV

The usual mental sequence of a “natural person” is to see and equate firstly through their natural senses. In contrast the spiritual person deduces by what the Spirit of God shows him. It is impossible to see, think and deduce by the natural and spiritual mind at the same time. The two will often be opposed one to the other. The natural mind may tell you one thing and the spiritual an entirely different thing. In any case what the Spirit shows you is always superior and truer to what your natural senses perceive. We should hold loosely what the natural senses suggest and consciously switch by faith to the spiritual mind. Make a conscious decision to overlook what your natural mind is telling you and prayerfully, by faith receive what God tells you through His Word or by His Spirit.

The language of Paul in Romans 12:1,2, links the surrender of our body and faculties to God with the idea of Levitical sacrifices e.g. “a whole burnt offering”. The use of the word “therefore” connects all that follows to all that preceded this verse, Romans 1-11, and particularly to Romans 11 in which Paul describes God’s relationship, strategy and eternal relationship with Israel. We therefore need a totally renewed mind and perspective concerning Israel.

Paul is calling for the surrender of our body to God, together with everything which dwells within that body. The physical body is ruled by the five natural senses, namely taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. These are the physical senses by which the natural man lives. They are the rudder by which he guides his life through thoughts, decisions and feelings. He relates to his world through them. He makes his decisions and plans his life by the information which these senses afford him.

Unfortunately such natural senses are erratic and unreliable. They tend to be filled with doubt and unbelief. The natural man proudly says, "I'll believe it when I see it," or "I'll believe it when I hear it with my own ears." He does not realize that his senses are corrupt and imperfect. He forgets, too, that they bind and limit him to the natural world. They will never take him beyond the realms of the human and the natural. He can never know God through his natural senses. He may admire God’s handiwork in creation through his natural senses but he can never know God through them.

Surrendering Our Physical Senses

When we are reborn, God does not want us to continue living by our natural senses. He wants us to learn how to live by the guidance of His Spirit, within our human spirit. We are no longer to be ruled and controlled by our natural sense knowledge, but by our re-created spirit. God therefore asks us to surrender those senses to Him. It is not always easy for us to do this. We have been taught all our lives to develop and live by our senses. We have been programmed to depend upon them. They have been our defense and protection mechanism. Now God is asking us to surrender them unconditionally to Him as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. This is called our “reasonable spiritual service.” From henceforth He wants us to depend upon His Spirit rather than our natural senses.

He Wants To Teach Us:

How to discern His voice.

How to understand the language of the Spirit by which God communicates to our spirit.

How to sense the pressure of God's guidance upon us when He is wanting to lead us in a particular direction.

We cannot even begin to walk in this new realm of the Spirit until we have made a complete surrender to God of our natural being.

Surrendering Our Bodies to God

Many people, including many “Christians” are ruled by their bodies, i.e. the desires, cravings, physical and sexual appetites. Though some may have confessed Christ as their Saviour and are trying to live a “Christian life” they are still ruled by their natural senses and are classified by Paul as being carnal Christians.

Surrendering Our Emotions

Another aspect of our being which dwells within the soul and which God also wants us to surrender to Him is our emotions. Many people are ruled by their emotions. They go from one emotional crisis to

another. This produces a very erratic and unstable person who reacts emotionally instead of acting responsibly. This kind of living is far below the level which God wants for His people. Therefore, He calls for us to surrender our emotions to Him also.

Surrendering Our Mind

The power of intellect, rationale, and logic rules many people. The mind is a further aspect of our being through which many people are ruled. Every decision and action has first to be filtered through the judgment system of the mind. This can be a good thing if the mind is truly sanctified. i.e.

if the mind has been renewed by God's Word and Spirit if the mind has been transformed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit if it has truly become a spiritual mind.

However, the person who is ruled by their un-renewed mind is doomed forever to live in the soulish realm. He can never rise above the level of his own thought patterns. Unfortunately, such a person is often egotistical. He is so proud of the quality of his mind that he tends to consider his own mind as God, and to worship it. This is really the essence of humanism.

Once we comply with God's command to surrender our being wholly to Him, we then cease to be conformed to this world and its patterns. We stop living as the natural man lives, ruled by his physical appetites and carnal desires. On the contrary we are transformed by the renewing of our minds and begin to prove experientially the good, acceptable and perfect will of God for our lives (Romans 12:2).

While we are walking and living according to the natural senses, we can never experience God's perfect will for our lives. However, when we surrender our body and soul to God, He can begin to transform us and to bring us into the experiential knowledge and enjoyment of His perfect way.

Changing Our Diet - Matthew 4:4

4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, ' People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.'

In our pre-Christian days, we kept our old carnal nature alive and strong by constantly feeding it the food it loved. It delighted to feed upon fleshly, carnal worldly things; to read books and magazines which featured carnal things; to look at pictures which excited and stimulated its fleshly nature.

All these impressions are stored in the file of its memory and imagination. Not only does our mind consciously think about these things, but they actually become part of its subconscious, too. In other words, the carnal nature is thinking about them and dwelling upon them, even when it does not realize it. Such thoughts occupy the mind whether waking or sleeping. Even its dreams are influenced by them and are sensual and erotic.

The mind is fed such food through the avenues of the natural senses. These impressions gain access through what a man sees, hears, touches, tastes and smells. Once we have surrendered our "sense gates" to God, we should no longer allow them to be used for such detrimental purposes. Our Godly inner man can never grow strong and be dominant if we are constantly feeding the old carnal nature through senses which have never been surrendered to the Lord. Therefore, we need a new diet. Instead of placing carnal things before our senses, we must begin to confront them with spiritual matters.

Proverbs 4:20-27 tells us:

20 Pay attention, my child, to what I say. Listen carefully.

21 Don't lose sight of my words. Let them penetrate deep within your heart, 22 for they bring life and radiant health to anyone who discovers their meaning.

23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.

24 Avoid all perverse talk; stay far from corrupt speech.

25 Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. 26 Mark out a straight path for your feet; then stick to the path and stay safe. 27 Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

NLT

Notice how the wise man positively encourages us to place the right things before our senses. He exhorts us to incline our ears to God's words, "Keep His Word before our eyes," diligently keep our

heart pure, not allowing our emotions to feed upon unclean things, lest they become contaminated and inflamed with evil. "For out of the heart proceed the issues of life. "Put away devious conversation from our mouth."

Solomon is speaking from experience. He is pleading with us to properly judge the things which we choose to feed our mind upon.

He has learned from bitter experience that living to gratify the natural senses is a vain and worthless way to live one's life. This is the main lesson to be learned from Ecclesiastes. E.g. *Ecclesiastes 1:2*

2 "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "utterly meaningless!" NLT

If we feed our mind with carnal things, then we will be carnal also. Conversely, if we diligently feed upon God's Word and Spirit, we shall be transformed into the likeness and image of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). We shall put off the old man with his corruption and holiness (Eph. 4:22-24). We will also experience the good, perfect and acceptable will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Hungering and Thirsting For God

An old adage says that the finest sauce for any meal is hunger. If you are hungry you will appreciate and enjoy everything. If you are not hungry, even the finest food may not tempt you. Jesus said:

*Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst** after righteousness: **for they shall be filled.**KJV*

Only those who are truly hungry will be filled.

Why Would We Hunger and Thirst for God?

1. We were created in the image of God with a hunger for His fellowship as part of our basic nature.
2. After the curse that hunger and thirst was died within us. Unredeemed people try to satisfy their God hunger with religion, pleasures, possessions, sex and human love.
3. We have been regenerated and given a fresh hunger and thirst for God.
4. It cannot be satisfied with any natural or materialistic thing.

David said:

Psalms 63:1 O God, you are my God, and I long for you. My whole being desires (cries out for) you; like a dry, worn-out, and waterless land, my soul is thirsty for you.

The principle key to receiving from God is to truly hunger and thirst for Him. We must be WHOLE HEARTED in our desire for Him. If we are double minded we will receive nothing from God.

James 1:6-8 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. KJV

James 4:7-10

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. NKJV

Hunger and thirst, for people living in a hot, barren land is really intense. Finding water is often a matter of life and death. Literally dying of thirst is a desperate way to die. Water is so precious and indispensable. We cannot survive without it. Nor can we survive without God.

After killing 1,000 Philistines with the jaw bone of a donkey, Samson feared that he might die of thirst. (Judges 15:14 – 20)

Judges 15:18 Now Samson was very thirsty, and he cried out to the LORD, "You have accomplished this great victory by the strength of your servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of these pagan people?"

19 So God caused water to gush out of a hollow in the ground at Lehi, and Samson was revived as he drank. Then he named that place **"The Spring of the One Who Cried Out,"** and it is still in Lehi to this day. NLT

God will always provide a gushing spring for the one who is truly thirsty. The intensity of our thirst determines the measure of God's response. When you are pursuing God with a hungry and thirsty soul He will provide water from His well.

Ruth 2:9

9 See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to bother you. **And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well.** NLT

Isaiah 44:3-4

3 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, And floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, And My blessing on your offspring;

4 They will spring up among the grass Like willows by the watercourses.' NKJV

King David was a man who constantly hungered and thirsted for God. His psalms constantly expressed those deep desires. Many of the psalms were composed as a result of such communion with his God.

Psalms 42:2 I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and stand before him? NLT

Psalms 143:6 I reach out for you. I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain. NLT

Psalms 145:16 When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing. NLT

Isaiah 41:17 "When the poor and needy search for water and there is none, and their tongues are parched from thirst, then I, the LORD, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will never forsake them. NLT

Isaiah 44:2 For I will give you abundant water to quench your thirst and to moisten your parched fields. And I will pour out my Spirit and my blessings on your children. NLT

John 6:35 Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst. NLT

John 7:37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "If you are thirsty, come to me! 38 If you believe in me, come and drink! For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water will flow out from within." NLT

John 4:15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me some of that water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to haul water." NLT

Chapter 3 Developing Your Spiritual Senses

In Hebrews 5:12 Paul makes a very sharp statement with regard to the spiritual immaturity of the Hebrew Christians. He tells them: "Considering the length of time you have now been Christians, you ought to be mature enough to be teachers; instead of which you still need to be pupils and, in fact, you have not yet assimilated those things which are the first basic principles of our life in Christ" (Paraphrase).

Hebrews 5:11-14

11 There is so much more we would like to say about this. But you don't seem to listen, so it's hard to make you understand.

12 You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food.

13 And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right.

14 Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right. NLT

The reason for this, says he, is their laziness in learning. They are not working hard enough in the matter of learning spiritual development and maturity. Consequently, they are unskilled or inept in the new areas of life as they ought to be lived by those who have been made righteous in Christ. In the things of the Spirit, they are still babes. They are still living like natural men motivated by their carnal senses. They cannot teach anyone how to live in the Spirit, for they themselves have not yet learned to do so. Paul longs to see this matter remedied and he sets forth some simple principles which, if followed, will achieve this.

The Natural Senses

He then brings to their attention the matter of their "spiritual senses," and how they are developed in one's life. To help them understand these things, he reminds them first of their natural senses. The word he uses, is Gk: *aistheteria*, means organs of sense, referring to the five natural senses of man plus the nervous system which coordinates them. They were as familiar as we are with these senses: smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing. These are the senses by which natural man lives. He relates to this world by the antennae of his five natural senses. His senses are activated when something stimulates one or more of his sensory organs. This sends a nerve impulse along the appropriate nerve to the relevant area of the brain, and this, in turn, causes a conscious sensation. He lives according to what he sees, hears, smells, touches and tastes and is thereby limited entirely to the natural realm. He says, "I'll believe it when I see it." "I know it is so because I heard it with my own ears." These are typical statements of the natural man.

Now, says Paul, there are also spiritual senses which correspond to the natural ones. In the realm of the spirit, there is a spiritual sense which is akin to each of the natural senses. So, although the spiritual man still has and uses his natural senses as he relates to his natural world, he also has keen spiritual senses - it is by and through these that he relates to the bigger world of spiritual things. The natural man has organs of sense such as eyes, ears, nose, mouth and fingers by which he is able to see, hear, smell, taste and touch. These are all physical senses which relate purely to natural things. The spiritual man has these also, but he also has spiritual senses by which he sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches things in the spiritual world.

Paul's Three Men

Let us look briefly at three kinds of men which Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.

First, There Is The Natural Man. This is unregenerate man in his natural condition. His spirit is dead because of sin. He is physically alive but spiritually dead. He therefore lives in a physical world by that which his physical senses tell him. He does not understand the things of the Spirit (v. 14); such things

are foolishness to him, for they are spiritually discerned and he has no spiritual faculties with which to discern them.

The Second Man Is The Carnal Man

This is a person whose spirit has been made alive through faith in Christ. He has been reborn. His spirit, which was dead because of sin, is now alive because of righteousness. His previously dead spirit has been quickened (Eph. 2:1), and he has now been made alive in his spirit. Nevertheless, he still continues to live by his natural senses. It is as though he has never sought to develop his spiritual faculties. He has been lazy and indolent in this regard. Consequently, he is still a spiritual babe. There is little or no development of the spiritual sense. This person has never had their senses renewed through the intentional presenting of them to God. (Romans 12:1,2)

In Contrast The Third Is The Spiritual Man

His spirit has been made alive in Christ, and he has begun to develop his new spiritual senses so that he is now able to live by them. He no longer relies upon his natural instinct, reasoning, logic or emotions. He is now able to discern matters spiritually. The reason he is able to do this is because after conversion he began to exercise his spiritual senses. The word Paul uses is *gumnazo* from which we derive our words, gymnastics and gymnasium. All these words convey the thought of serious, diligent regular exercise. The gymnast is not erratic and spasmodic in his training and development; he is serious and devoted. We visualize him stripped for action and seriously dedicating himself daily to the matter of developing his muscles, balance, co-ordination and technique by constant regular programs of exercise. This surely conveys something to the person who wishes to excel in the things of the Spirit. Our spiritual senses are developed by exercising them often. Sometimes we may make an error of judgment but this should not stop us from practicing the use of our spiritual and prophetic perceptions. There must be a serious desire and determination to do so, coupled with a consistent application of one's self to this matter.

Stepping Up A Gear

Moving from the natural to the spiritual is somewhat like moving into top gear or overdrive. You might be cruising along in the natural realm when some thought or impression pops quietly into your spirit. You can then switch gears from the natural to the spiritual. Use or express whatever comes to you "in your spirit" and you will discover that this frequently leads to other impressions. It is often like developing a Polaroid picture as the outline of a picture develops in your spiritual mind.

Entering The Third Dimension (Physical¹, Mental², Spiritual³)

One of the principles of Bible interpretation is the "law of much mention." This principle says that the amount of treatment and space given to a particular subject indicates its importance. When we consider how much space is devoted to the description of the Tabernacle - fifty one chapters throughout the whole bible, we realize how important this subject is. Since the primary purpose of the Tabernacle was the worship of God, we see that God is conveying to us the vital nature of worship, and the tremendous importance He attaches to it.

The basic teaching implicit in the Tabernacle for us Christians is that of worship or drawing closer to God in the Spirit. God had brought forth His people out of Egypt with a strong and mighty hand (Ex 32:11). Once their deliverance from Egypt was complete, the first thing He did was to commission Moses to build the Tabernacle. God's first desire, after our deliverance from Egypt (sin and its bondage), is to initiate us into the ministry of worship and spiritual intimacy.

The Three Compartments

There were three „compartments“(areas) in the Tabernacle and Temple. The first of these was the Outer Court which is typical of the body or the physical aspect of our being. Here was located the altar of sacrifice and the brass bowl (laver) of water. This area represents the body. This is the realm of praise! Secondly came the inner court in which the table of showbread, the menorah (seven branch candlestick) and the altar of incense were situated. The showbread symbolized the Word of God. The menorah represents the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The golden altar of incense portrays the offering of praise to God as the incense ascended into His nostrils. This area represents the soul and worship.

Finally came the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place. Under the law this place was only accessible one a year by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This final phase represents the spirit of man. This is the area in which we move into spiritual intimacy with God. The place of adoration and communication where God often whispers His secrets to you.

The Tabernacle teaches us the order and progression of worship. Firstly the Outer Court, (Praise) then the Inner court (Worship) and finally the place of closest intimacy, the Holy of Holies.

When entering the outer court of the Tabernacle, the first item one sees is the brazen altar of sacrifice. This is where our sins and iniquities are dealt with and we receive the pardon of God.

Next came the brass laver, typical of cleansing through the water of the Word. The would-be worshipper had to come through these two experiences before reaching the curtains of the holy place.

Within the holy place stood the table of shewbread, the seven branch candlestick and the golden altar of incense. All of which have deep significance in the teaching of worship.

Ultimately, there was the Holy of Holies, that sacred and solemn meeting place which typifies the highest and purest forms of praise and worship. It is to this spot that the Spirit wants to bring us. There is a definite progression in learning the skills of worship. God wants to bring us through all the various phases until, at last, we can enter the ultimate place of sacred worship, that place within the veil with Him.

The first piece of the Holy of Holies furniture that God describes (Ex 25:22), is the ark of the covenant which was overlaid by the mercy seat. God said, "... *there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat...*" The Holy of Holies, in which the ark was located, was the place where God would meet and commune with man face to face. It was the place of worship.

In the Old Covenant economy, this awesome privilege was given to the High Priest only, and that on only one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. How blessed we are, under the terms of the New Covenant, to have the privilege of continual access through the blood of Christ. Now, under the New Covenant God wants everyone to enter the Holy of Holies and enjoy intimate, face to face encounters with him. Jesus said that the Father is seeking for worshipers who will worship Him in the Spirit who is the Spirit of truth. (John 4:23,24)

Faculties Of Discernment

Paul further illustrates the objective and purpose of the spiritual faculties by use of the word *diakrisis*, which literally means the faculty to distinguish, discern and judge.

The particular use of these senses then is to "discern (between) both good and evil" as the Authorized Version puts it (Hebrews 5:14). However, the realm of application is really much wider than this as we shall soon see. The various spiritual faculties which afford us insight into spiritual realities cover many more areas than those which enable us to know whether something is good or bad

Let Us Take A Look At Each Of The Spiritual Senses, One By One.

1. The Sense Of Smell

Within our spiritual awareness there is an ability to distinguish and discern through aroma or scent. The things of God have a sweet-smelling savor. They are pure, wholesome and healthy and, therefore, give off a good smell. The fruit of the Spirit is good fruit; it has a nice, pleasant smell. The garments of Jesus are said to be as myrrh, aloes and cassia (Psalm 45:8), all of which are pleasant, aromatic perfumes. Therefore, when our Lord is near, it is frequently possible, in the Spirit, to smell the sweet perfume of His garments. The spiritual aroma of His presence is clean, pure, holy, like fresh air.

In complete contrast to this, the things of Satan have a foul, offensive smell. This smell is sometimes discernible by the natural sense of smell. For instance, some diseases are known to have an extremely offensive odour. However, there are also spiritual aromas which cannot be picked up by the nostrils but can only be discerned by the spiritual sense of smell. It is, therefore, possible, by the exercising our spiritual sense of smell, to discern the origin of a certain thing-whether it is of God or not. Demons often give off a most offensive smell that sometimes gives away their presence and may be used to discern that someone is possessed by them.

In Isaiah 11:2-3, Isaiah discusses the seven-fold anointing which rests upon Jesus. He mentions wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord resting upon Jesus through the anointing of the Spirit upon His life. He further comments (v. 3) that the Spirit shall make Jesus of "quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." The thought conveyed is that of quick scent, or keen sense of smell. Reference is made to this in the margin of most Bibles. Here then is a spiritual faculty of discernment which corresponds to the sense of smell. Isaiah is saying that, by the anointing, Jesus would have a keen sense of smell in order quickly to discern the fear of the Lord in a given matter. He further tells us that Christ would never judge a matter by use of his natural senses. He would never judge by the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears but rather by this spiritual sense of smell. This would constitute a righteous judgment and one with equity (v. 4).

Often people dimly understand that there is a spiritual sense of smell: they sense that something is wrong. To use a crude colloquialism, they say "I smell a rat. I sense that something is wrong here." This gives some simple ideas as to how the spiritual sense of smell operates akin to our natural sense of smell. For instance, a woman may discern that the meal she is preparing is burning. She is in a room other than the kitchen. She cannot see the meal; nevertheless, she knows something is wrong by the particular smell which reaches her nostrils. She runs off to the kitchen, quickly saying, "oh my goodness, the meal is burning." She discerned that something was wrong through her sense of smell. In a similar way we are able to smell things in the Spirit and thus discern whether all is well (a good aroma) or if something is wrong (a bad smell). In the spiritual world everything has a smell.

2. Taste

The spiritual sense of taste is very similar to that of smell. Just as things in the spiritual realm have a particular and distinctive smell, so they also have a distinct taste. David says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). He is saying, "The Lord and the things of the Lord have a pleasant, good taste, so taste and see!" The Word of God also has a pleasant taste. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them" (Jeremiah 15:16). "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103). David also says that the statutes, commandments, judgments and fear of the Lord are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Paul also speaks of Christians having "tasted the good word of God" (Heb. 6:5). In other words, they tasted the Gospel word and discerned by the good, wholesome, sweet taste of it that it was God's Word. In the same manner, right doctrine has a good, wholesome taste. Our mind may not initially agree with a particular truth; nevertheless, our spirit, having savored the doctrine, finds it palatable and good to taste. Conversely, there are also many things that do not taste good. Perhaps we cannot, with our minds, explain or even understand what is wrong, but our spirits within witness, "If it does not taste good, don't swallow it."

3. Touch

The natural sense of touch is also one of discernment. In a state of profound darkness in which we can see nothing at all, we may feel our way along. As our fingers touch certain objects, they either warn or assure us. They also help to guide us in areas where none of our other senses can help us. So, in the spiritual realm, there is a very real sense of touch. We can touch things in the realm of the Spirit. Let's think for a moment of the story of Moses in Exodus 17:11. The children of Israel were engaged in battle with the Amalekites. Moses stood on top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. Whenever he lifted up his hands, the Israelites prevailed. When his arms became heavy and began to droop, the Amalekites began to turn the battle in their favor. Aaron and Hur came to aid Moses. They lifted up his heavy, drooping hands until Joshua had finally prevailed against their enemies. What was so significant about the hands of Moses being uplifted? Because, in the spirit, he was touching the throne of God. It was far more than a natural, physical thing. He was reaching far beyond the limited world of the natural and into the limitless world of the spiritual. We understand from Exodus 10:21-23 that when Moses lifted that rod, he "touched heaven" and remarkable things happened. When we begin to understand that through our faith, our prayers and our words of authority we also can touch heaven, things will begin to happen for us also.

Another Bible incident is worthy of our attention in this regard. It is the story related in Mark 5:24-34, of the woman who touched the border of Christ's garment. There was no special virtue in the physical touching of Christ. The disciples testified that because of the great crowd on that occasion many were pushing Him and jostling against Him. The secret is revealed in verse 28. Before she ever got to where Jesus was, she said within herself (in her spirit), "If I may touch but the border of His garment, I shall be whole." She did not actually touch the person of Christ. She only touched the hem of His robe. But it was the touch of faith, about which she had a witness in her spirit, that released the healing virtue of Jesus in her behalf. Jesus also knew that something supernatural had transpired. "Who touched me?" He said. The disciples responded, "The crowd is pushing and jostling; many people are touching you. What do you mean who touched you?" (Paraphrase). But Jesus knew that someone had touched him in the spirit. He had felt the virtue [life] within Him respond to that touch and flow out to meet the woman's need. The touch was the moment for her to release her faith and receive her healing. When the writer says that she knew that she had been healed, he is speaking of revelation knowledge. Even if the symptoms had been exactly the same as before, she would still have known. She was not speaking by the natural senses but by the spiritual ones.

4. Sight

Paul speaks of the "eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). He is referring to the eyes of our spirit. The things he mentions cannot be seen with the natural sight. They are spiritual and can only be seen with spiritual eyes. This is why David prays, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18). With our natural eyes we see natural things. With our spiritual eyes we see spiritual things.

Think for a moment of the story in 2 Kings 6:15-17. The prophet's servant had risen up early in the morning. Walking to the outskirts of Dothan, he had seen all the armies of the Assyrians that had encamped around the town during the night. He panicked, and, running back to his master inquired, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" The subsequent prayer of Elisha is very revealing. He could already see something in the spirit, which to him was extremely reassuring. He could see the armies of the Lord, and saw that they were far more numerous than that of the Assyrians. However, he realized that his servant only knew what his natural eyes had conveyed to him, namely that they were surrounded on every hand by their enemies. Elisha, therefore, prayed that the spiritual eyes of his servant might be opened, that he might see spiritual things as well as natural. When God answered this petition, the servant suddenly saw, too, that, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them!" for the mountains were filled with horses and chariots that he had not previously been able to see.

In the ministry of Jesus, it is clear that He saw many things other than what His natural eyes beheld. Possibly, this was by the word of knowledge. Nathanael was amazed when he realized how much Jesus knew about him (John 1:48). Jesus said, "When thou was under the fig tree, I saw you." It is obvious from the reaction of Nathanael, that this fig tree was not within the visible range of Jesus. Possibly, it was some miles away. Jesus was not referring to having seen Nathanael with His natural eyes. He had "seen" him with the eyes of His spirit, and this, to Nathanael, was an amazing thing. A further indication of the spiritual sight of Jesus is given in John 2:25. Jesus "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Jesus did not see men merely with His natural eyes and thus see only the exterior. His spiritual eyes frequently bored beneath the surface and He knew what was actually in them.

5. Hearing

Frequently in the Bible the writer exhorts "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." God knows that all His people have natural ears, but He also knows that not all of them have developed the ability to hear "in the spirit." He therefore encourages them - "Develop the spiritual ability to hear and then you will know what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church." This faculty could be called a "hearing heart." This is really what Solomon asked of God. *1 Kings 3:9*

9 Give me an understanding mind so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. NLT

Sheep Recognize Their Shepherd's Voice

The Bible has much to say about sheep. Sheep are mentioned more frequently than any other animal in the Bible-about 750 times. This is only natural since the Hebrew people were known early in their history as a race of wandering herdsman. Even in the days of the kings, the simple shepherd's life seemed the ideal calling. The Bible makes many comparisons between the ways of sheep and human beings. In the New Testament the church is often compared to a sheepfold.

John 10:3-5 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't recognize his voice." NLT

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, NLT

John 10:25-27 25 Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is what I do in the name of my Father. 26 But you don't believe me because you are not part of my flock. 27 My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. NLT

By nature, sheep are gentle, submissive, helpless creatures that tend to be innocent and naive. They are easily tamed and depend on their shepherd to lead them to water and pasture, to fight off wild beasts, and to anoint their faces with oil when a snake nips them from the grass. Sheep are social animals that tend towards gathering in flocks, but they can also tend to wander off and fall into a crevice or get caught in a thorn bush. Then the shepherd must leave the rest of his flock to search for the stray. Jesus used this familiar picture when He described a shepherd who left 99 sheep in the fold to search for one that had wandered off. The God of the Hebrews revealed His nurturing nature by speaking of himself as a shepherd (Psalms 23). Jesus also described Himself as the Good Shepherd who takes care of His sheep (John 10:1-18).

A unique relationship existed between shepherd and sheep. He knew them by name, and they in turn recognized his voice. Sheep were models of submissiveness. Because he demonstrated purity and trustful obedience to the Father, Jesus was also called "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29,36).

In complete contrast wild sheep, are high-spirited and independent, they tend to live among the tall peaks of Palestine's mountains. Like their domesticated cousins, they are social animals and flock together, but their disposition tends to resemble goats rather than the more timid domesticated sheep. They are referred to as mountain sheep to differentiate between them and their domesticated cousins. They are designated separately in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 14:5 the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. NLT

It seems to be a relatively rare thing for one actually to hear the audible voice of God. Such a thing seems to occur on very few occasions. More often do we hear the inaudible voice of the Lord speaking quietly within our spirit. When God speaks in this way, it is just as definite and specific as if He had spoken audibly. He is constantly wanting to share His mind and His counsel. God is always ready to share communion and fellowship with us. We need to develop the ability to recognize His voice. We need to learn how to wait upon God quietly, our own mind in neutral, and allow His thoughts to flow quietly through the channels of our spirit. There need be no lack in Divine communication to our life if we learn how to listen. God will initiate all kinds of desires in our hearts as we wait before Him. I am sure that this is what David is referring to in Psalm 37:45: "Delight thyself also in the Lord." Sit before Him beholding and adoring Him, quietly meditating upon Him and listening for Him. In this quiet, relaxed attitude He will put His desires in your spirit. We have to allow Him to place the right desires within us before we can expect the fulfilment of God's will in our lives. Having received His thoughts and desires, commit your (own) way to the Lord. Surrender it to Him in submission, and He shall bring His perfect will to pass in your life.

We will never even begin to aspire to maturity until we start to develop the potential of the spiritual senses that are within our redeemed, recreated and renewed spirit. God will not be able to use us to teach others His truths until we have learned and imbibed them into ourselves. Obey the injunction of the Scriptures and begin to "walk in the Spirit." We'll discover the depth and variety of life that God intends us to enjoy. Instead of becoming discontented with a continuous diet of manna, we will begin to feast on the grapes of Eschol. The purpose of God will be fulfilled in us and we will begin to function in His perfect will for our lives!

Chapter 4 Knowing Christ by the Spirit

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

16 So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! 17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! NLT

As Spirit filled believers we should never evaluate people by what is physically evident. We should endeavour to see them through the eyes of the spirit.

1 Samuel 16:7

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at a person's thoughts and intentions." NLT

John 17:3

3 And this is the way to have eternal life — to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. NLT 57

True Christianity Is Knowing Christ, "Through The Spirit."

The initial encounter the disciples had with Jesus was in the flesh. They met him while He was on earth in His flesh and they came to know Him according to their own natural senses. Their contact with Him, at this point, was on the level of the natural man, according to their physical senses, and for some considerable time they did not get to know Him by the Spirit.

When He spoke of spiritual things, they could not discern or comprehend what He was really seeking to teach them. He had to resort to speaking to them in parables and told them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

God's Words Are Spirit

John 6:63

63 It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. NLT

His parables were simple earthly stories which contained profound spiritual truths. The disciples heard Him with their physical ears, but not with any spiritual understanding. John says that they actually handled Him physically (1 John 1:1), but they were not able to "touch" Him spiritually, as the little woman who was completely healed of her long-standing illness did (Luke 8:43-48).

Later, when His physical presence was taken from them, they came to know Him after the Spirit. This is the manner in which people are to know Christ today, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Not according to the intellect but through the spirit.

It is possible to know many things about some famous person and yet not know that person. If we were to ask them, "Do you know the Queen of England?" they would probably say, "Oh, I know a great deal about her. I have been an admirer of hers for many years. I have read so many books about her and I have an enormous amount of information on her. I know so much about her that if you were to ask me any question about her, I am sure that I could answer it." "Yes," we would say, "but do you actually know her? Have you really met her personally? Have you actually spoken with her?" "Well, no! I have never actually met her, but I know so much about her that I somehow feel that I know her." However, that is not the same thing. Many people today know a great deal about Christ, but they do not actually know Him personally. They have never met Him, spoken to Him, nor had Him speak to them. They know of Him according to the senses and the mind, but they do not know Him by the Spirit.

Some Know The Christ Of History

They have read, heard and learned much about the life of Christ when He walked this earth, but all their knowledge of Him relates to 2,000 years ago. They may be familiar with all that He did then, but they know nothing of what He is doing today. Their minds have amassed many historical facts about Christ, but they have no personal knowledge of Him. To know only the historic Christ is to have no present experience of Him. Such a knowledge can increase but it cannot grow. It is a knowledge of facts and they are dead things. To know Christ today is quite different. That is a living and growing thing, alive and vital.

Some Know The Christ Of Theology

The real meaning of theology is "the disciplined study of God." The word *theos* is Greek for God, and *ology*, meaning "science, discipline or learning." Hence, it means "the study of God." However, most modern theology is actually bibliology or the study of the Bible. There are many modern theologians who have a vast knowledge of the Bible, its origin, history, tradition and teaching, but, sadly, these same people have no personal knowledge of God, nor of Jesus. A minister once told me, "When I entered seminary, I was an agnostic. Seven years and two theological degrees later, I graduated, still an agnostic." He embarked upon his chosen career in the priesthood, still an agnostic, but I am happy to

report that he subsequently met Jesus, was born again and delivered from his agnostic doubts.

Despite their considerable knowledge of the Bible, such people do not possess eternal life, for this is obtained, not by knowing or even memorizing the Bible, but by personal encounter and knowledge of the One true God and of Jesus Christ, whom He sent (John 17:3).

Eternal life is given to those who believe in Jesus Christ. Eternal life is not the prize given to the best Bible students. As the Scripture says: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:11-13).

Many earnest Bible students have avidly studied the doctrines concerning the life and ministry of Christ. They have familiarized themselves with many historic details of His eternal existence. However, this knowledge is all in their head. They know Christ through their intellect. They know of Him after the flesh, but not after the Spirit.

The early disciples were with Jesus day and night for some three-and-a-half years. They ate with Him, walked with Him and talked with Him throughout this period. They must have learned many things about Him during that time, but most of this knowledge was after the flesh. On at least one occasion Jesus had to say, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" (John 14:9).

Peter probably knew Jesus more intimately than most of the disciples, and yet it was only towards the end of their time together that He fully realized who Jesus was. It was when they came to Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-20) that Jesus directly confronted His followers with the question of His true identity. "But whom say ye that I am?" He asked them. I can imagine the awkward silence which fell upon them. They were challenged to search their own heart and mind, to discover what their personal conviction was about who Jesus really was. Their deep mental searchings produced nothing. They knew so many things about Him, but suddenly realized that they did not actually know Him. They had never yet pondered the deeper aspects and implications of His person and being. At that moment a sudden flash of revelation came to Peter. It came, not to his mind, but to his spirit. It was not born of flesh and blood. It was not the product of his mental faculties or thought processes. He did not suddenly solve the imponderable mystery. It came as revelation directly from the Holy Spirit to his spirit. Now, for the first time, Peter began to understand who Jesus truly was. He knew it within his spirit. It was a conviction and assurance born of supernatural revelation. The Father had revealed it to him. Later he would know it in his mind also, but initially it is born within one's spirit. Such things are spiritually known and discerned.

Jesus went on to tell the disciples that He was going to build a Church (v. 18), not of stones, or bricks and mortar, but of a called-out company of people. That company would be composed wholly of persons who had received and confessed that same revelation imparted to Peter. The confession relates to the fact that Jesus is truly the Son of God (Rom. 10:9).

We Need To Know Christ After The Spirit

It is obviously not sufficient to know what the Bible teaches about Christ. We may be dedicated students of the Bible, conscientiously dedicating much time to the study of it, and yet still not know Christ. This was true of some of the Jews to whom Jesus spoke in John 5:39-40. "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you might have life" (NASB).

Here was a company of people who diligently searched Holy Scripture because they thought that by doing so they would obtain eternal life. At the same time they were adamantly opposed to coming to Christ. He pointed out the irony of their situation: "You search the Scriptures," said He, "because you think that eternal life is in them. Yet those very Scriptures point to Me and you are not willing to come to Me who, according to those very Scriptures, is the only One who can give that life." Knowledge of the Scriptures is not sufficient. We must know Christ, and we must know Him personally and by the Spirit.

How The Disciples Met Jesus

The disciples met Jesus face to face. They did not merely hear about Him, they actually met Him personally. We obviously cannot meet Christ today as they did in the days of His flesh. Nevertheless we can meet Him spiritually. Jesus is as real today as He was in those times. His is not visible to the natural eye today but He can be "seen" through the eyes of faith. He is even more accessible now than He was then. During His days on earth He could only be in one place at one time. Now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, He is present everywhere.

The early disciples first met Jesus physically but later, when He ascended into heaven they came to know Him spiritually. They knew Him no longer after the flesh (2 Corinthians 5:16) now they knew Him by the Spirit. This is how we can come to know Christ also. We encounter His spiritual presence through our spiritual senses.

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me and believe anyway." NLT 64

1 Peter 1:8-9

8 You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him, you trust him; and even now you are happy with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9 Your reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls. NLT

We do not learn to know Christ through our natural senses but rather by our spirit with His Spirit. This is why it is essential to develop our spiritual senses. Our ongoing relationship with Jesus is enriched and enhanced as we continuously fellowship with Him through the Spirit.

The Disciples Were Introduced To Jesus

As we follow the gospel narrative, we discover that each of the disciples was introduced to Jesus personally. For example, Andrew having first heard about Jesus through John the Baptist.

John 1:40-41

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who had heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon, and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means the Christ). NLT

This was also Simon Peter's first introduction to Jesus. Likewise today, the Holy Spirit delights to introduce

John 1:12-13

12 But as many as received (lambent to seize or catch hold of) Him, to them He gave the right (exousia: authority) to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NKJV

Receiving Christ Means Ingesting Him Into Our Being.

John 6:51-56

51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; this bread is my flesh, offered so the world may live."

52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

53 So Jesus said again, "I assure you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. 54 But those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them at the last day. 55 For my flesh is the true food, and my blood is the true drink. 66

56 All who eat my flesh and drink my blood remain in me, and I in them. NLT

Knowing Christ After The Spirit

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

14 Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. 15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live to please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them.

16 So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, as though he were merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! 17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! NLT

The King James Version expresses verses 16 and 17 slightly differently.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after (according to) the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more (in the flesh but in the spirit). 67

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. KJV (Emphasis added)

When we meet a person for the first time we tend to consciously or sub-consciously evaluate them. We usually do this initially by our sense knowledge. We gain a certain impression about them. We then need to transition to our spiritual senses and see them again through our spirit senses as God sees them.

Romans 8:9-10

9 But you are not controlled (now) by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all). 10 Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. NLT

Galatians 2:19-21

19 For when I tried to keep the law, I realized I could never earn God's approval. So I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ. 20 I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I am not one of those who treats the grace of God as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping the law, then there was no need for Christ to die. NLT

Romans 8:13-14

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons (Huios) of God. NKJV

Romans 8:16

16 For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts (spirits) and tells us that we are God's children. NLT

1 Corinthians 2:10

10 But we know these things because God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, and his Spirit searches out everything and shows us even God's deep secrets. NLT

1 Corinthians 2:12

12 And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world's spirit) so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. NLT

1 Corinthians 2:12-13

13 When we tell you this, we do not use words of human wisdom. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. NLT

1 Corinthians 2:14-15

14 But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to

them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means. 15 We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all. NLT

1 Corinthians 6:17

17 But the person who is joined (Gk. kola: "glued") to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. NLT Galatians 3:3

3 Have you lost your (spiritual) senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? NLT

When we first come to Christ we do so not because of what our natural senses tell us but what our spirit tells us. We will only grow up spiritually if we keep exercising our spiritual senses.

They Began To Spend Quality Time With Him

Christ's first command to His disciples was "Come, follow Me" (John 1:43) It is a command that forms the foundation for Christian discipleship. It is the willingness to forsake our former life, deny our old self life and begin to faithfully follow and emulate Christ. Those first disciples spent three and a half years in His immediate presence and company. They observed Him closely and keenly listened to His every word. Jesus was not content for them to merely hear His words He insisted that they put every teaching into practice. He regarded as foolish anyone who heard his words but did not practice them.

He likened them to one building a house upon the sand. When a storm comes the wind and rain will quickly destroy that house, and great will be its fall. Instead, he admonished them to be as a wise man, who not only hears the teachings of Christ but immediately and consistently applies them practically to his life and relationship This man, says Jesus, is building His house upon a rock. The storms of life will come. The rain will fall upon it, and the winds will blow against it, but the house will stand firm and steadfast through every storm (Matt. 7:24-29).

Thus His teachings formed and molded their lives. Their new Christian character was being fashioned daily by the truths which He imparted to their spirit. He was building His kingdom in their heart through the words which He shared with them.

We also need to spend adequate time alone with Jesus. We must learn how to come into His presence, how to draw aside from the awareness of the physical things of life and centre our awareness on the spiritual presence of Jesus. There is no substitute for this spiritual exercise, the communing of one's spirit with Spirit. Paul tells us, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit [with the Lord]" (1 Cor. 6:17). There is a oneness, a unanimity of spirit, with the Lord. In order for that harmonious relationship to further develop and mature, we must spend much time in spiritual communion with Jesus.

Spiritual worship is one of the means which one can use in order to experience the awareness of God's presence. True worship is spiritual in character (John 4:24) and serves to tune our spirit to spiritual things. Likewise, praying in the Spirit is also a powerful aid to experiencing the presence of the Lord. When our spirit prays (talks to God), the mind is in neutral (1 Cor. 14:14). Our personal thoughts are put to one side. Every pre-conceived idea and imagination is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

A quiet place is highly desirable for such fellowship so that our natural ears are not picking up sounds which distract our concentration. In this way our spiritual ears can be all the more finely attuned to the voice of the Lord within. As we begin to tune our spirit to the wave-length of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to recognize His voice. We can then commence to commune with Him in spirit and He will start

to share His thoughts with us. The development, growth and ultimate maturity of our inner man is greatly enlarged and accelerated through this kind of communion.

Conversing With The Lord

In our everyday contact with other people, we understand that conversation is a two-way function. How strange it is that when it comes to prayer, which is conversation with God, so many Christians presume that this type of conversation is a one-way affair, i.e. our speaking to God! Too few people realize that God may want to respond to their prayer and make it a two-way dialogue. God wants to speak to us far more than we want to speak to Him. He longs to commune with His people and to share His heart with them. He delights to impart fresh truth and revelation. So many times a sincere and earnest Christian will "say his prayers" and, as soon as he has finished praying out the concerns of his heart to God, he immediately feels that his prayer time is over! Imagine how rude we would consider a friend to be if he were only ever concerned about doing the talking, and never stayed around long enough for us to reply. We would quickly tire of such a relationship. How frustrated the Lord must be when He is constantly denied the opportunity to reply to our prayers. Even when some of us ask Him a question, we do not stay around long enough to receive the reply.

Conversing In A Natural Manner

We ought to learn how to converse with the Lord in a natural conversational manner. There is a place for formal prayer, but it is not in our normal everyday communion with God. Too often our prayers are religious, prosaic and unreal. We are so stilted in our manner of expression, I sometimes wonder if the Lord does not get bored with listening to such prayers. Maybe sometimes He is saying, "You have wearied me with your words" (Mal. 2:17). God is not impressed with our religious words and beautifully constructed and flowery phrases. He longs for us to communicate with Him from the depth and sincerity of our heart. God wants us to be real and honest. He wants us to talk with Him, not out of our religious vocabulary, but out of the integrity of our spirit.

Learning To Listen To Jesus

We are so accustomed to listening with our natural ears that it is often difficult for us to learn a new form of listening with our spiritual ears. Of course, the most obvious way that we can hear the voice of the Lord is through the reading of His Word. God speaks to us through the Bible. We may also hear Him speak to us through the preaching or teaching of the Word to which we are exposed. Sometimes God may even choose to speak to us through a dream or a vision. However, He also wishes to be able to communicate with us through what the Bible calls the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12).

There had been an earthquake, followed by wind and fire, but God had not spoken through any of these dramatic occurrences. After these had concluded, God spoke to His servant Elijah in a "still small voice". This voice is inaudible to the natural ear. We need to learn how to be quiet, relaxed and still, physically and spiritually, in order to concentrate our spiritual faculties upon listening to the still small voice of God within. He speaks deep in our spirit, for His Spirit communicates with our spirit. Then His words flow on into our mind and understanding. However, they are first spiritually discerned. We must learn to hear God in our spirit and to discern His voice there. Remember, God's voice is not the product of our thinking process. Often, waiting for the voice of God begins with a deep sense of anticipation. This is our spirit sensing the presence of the Lord. We must remain very still and attentive before Him, so that what God is saying to our spirit may be interpreted to our mind. Do not try to judge His words with your natural mind. We will often dilute and limit what God is saying to us if we pass His communication through the intellectual filter of our natural wisdom. Remember that The reverence and fear of God are basic to all wisdom (Prov. 9:10 TLB).

Frequently in the book of Revelation, God pleads for the exercising of our spiritual ears. "He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit would say to the church" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29). God desires spiritually perceptive people who can recognize His voice and discern what He is desiring to say to His people.

John 10:27-29

27 My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will ever perish. No one will snatch them away from me, NLT

Chapter 5 The Mind of Christ

Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. "

If we are to have the mind of Christ we must be willing to surrender our own natural mind to Him. Otherwise we will be double minded. We must consciously and sub-consciously accept His thoughts as more worthy than our own. We must acknowledge that His wisdom and thoughts are far superior to ours.

James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. NKJV

Thinking His Thoughts

The thoughts of God are far above the natural man's thoughts. Isaiah says, "As the heavens are higher than

the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:9).

However, God does not wish this to be so. He longs to be able to communicate His thoughts and His ways to His people. This is gloriously possible for those who are born of the Spirit. To them He says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

It has often been said that when two people spend a lot of time together, they begin to think alike. This is frequently true of husbands and wives who have been together for many years. Spending so much time together in intimate fellowship causes them to know each other so well that they can almost read the other's mind. Often they will both suddenly say the same thing in unison. Their minds have been running along the same lines, thinking the same things. Frequent, intimate communion causes a blending and sharing of thoughts. So it is with our fellowship with the Lord. We begin to think on the same lines that He does. This is partly because we have been feeding on His thoughts through reading His Word. The Word of God has thus been renewing our mind, and we begin to think differently, seeing things in a different light and perspective. This kind of renewing should be happening constantly. Paul says, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed daily" (2 Cor. 4:16). It is through this consistent, progressive change that we are being transformed into the likeness and image of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18).

I am sure that every Christian would like to have the mind of Christ. Legally or positionally, we do have His mind from the moment we are indwelt by Him. However, we want that mind to be operative and functioning freely. We want to have His mind experientially, and for this, God needs our cooperation. We cooperate with God by,

1. Becoming Desirous To Have Christ's Mind

This is the first factor. LET this mind be in you, says Paul. We must be willing for it to be so. In fact, we must will or determine that it shall be so!

2. Surrendering Your Mind To The Lord

In surrendering our mind we let God know that we no longer wish to live according to our natural senses, we do not want to be controlled by our thoughts and imaginations. We gladly surrender our mind to God that He might guide and lead us by His Spirit, working through our redeemed human spirit.

3. Spending Quality Time With The Lord

In order to have the mind of the Lord, it is essential that we spend much time with Him. I do not refer only to the so-called "quiet times," i.e. the time we may spend reading the Bible or praying. We also need to spend time quietly waiting upon the Lord.

To do this, we must get away from all distractions and find some place where we can be alone with Jesus. We may commence this exercise with prayer and reading the Bible. However, having done so, we must be prepared now to spend some time simply waiting quietly before the Lord. Your own thoughts must be stilled and your mind, relaxed and calm. In a peaceful atmosphere of meditation, we let our mind reach out to receive the thoughts of the Lord. We seek to interpret His thoughts, letting them quietly flow upon and through our mind. We may wish to question Jesus about something. Perhaps it is about a matter which has puzzled us for some time, something we have long desired to know. Having asked Him, we then quietly wait before Him in worship and communion until His response begins to flow through the channels of our mind. It is amazing how much we can learn from Him through such an exercise.

4. Meditating On God's Word

God has given us His Word as a means of strengthening and maturing our inner man. Meditating upon it will develop our spiritual man. Meditation means far more than merely reading the Bible. It means, "to think about, to dwell upon, to ponder, to consider deeply, to ruminate." It is the art of thinking deeply about a subject. Reading the Bible is an intellectual exercise that educates the mind. Recognizing the *rhema* of God and eating (imbibing) it is a spiritual exercise. We must certainly read God's Word in an attitude of waiting on Him for a *rhema* or living word that God quickens to our spirit.

Such meditation is essential to spiritual growth and development. When God appointed Joshua to succeed His servant Moses, these were His words to him: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8). From this scripture we learn that;

A. We should think deeply upon the Word of God, both day and night. We should meditate (Contemplate, Ponder upon, Turn over in your mind) the Word of God.

B. The Word of God should be on our lips at all times. It should not "depart from our mouth." We should confess the word that God quickens to us.

C. That we must also do, all that we learn from God's Word, putting it into practice in our daily life (Phil. 4:9).

D. In so doing, we shall have good success and our way shall be made prosperous.

Joshua 1:6-9

6 "Be strong and courageous, for you will lead my people to possess all the land I swore to give their ancestors.

7 Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them, and you will be successful in everything you do. 8 Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed. 9 I command you — be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." NLT

Psalm 1 outlines some of the blessings which come to the man who meditates on the Word of God day and night. David says, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

5. Thinking On The Right Things

In Philippians 4:8 Paul encourages us to focus our minds and our thoughts upon certain things. They are the type of things which God's mind dwells upon. As we discipline our minds to think only on such things which typify the mind of Jesus, His mind will be formed within us, for such are the things upon which His mind dwells continually.

These are,

A. Truth. Jesus says of the Word of God, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). He further says that we are sanctified (cleansed, purified, prepared for God's service) through that Word of truth. Before we allow our mind to engage upon a matter, we should ask our self, "Is this true?" If the plain answer is "No," or

even if we doubt its truth, then we must reject that line of thought, refusing to think about it or dwell upon it.

B. Honesty. We must ask ourselves, "Is this an honest and honorable report?" If not, then we must not even entertain the thought. We should never allow our mind to be polluted by a matter which is in any way dishonest. Only those thoughts which are of the highest integrity are worthy to occupy the mind of a Christian.

C. Justice. We need to ask ourselves, "Is this comment just, fair and unbigoted? Does it do justice to the person or situation involved?" If not, then we do not let it occupy our thoughts for a moment.

D. Purity. Only those matters which are uncontaminated, decent, righteous, ethical and unpolluted should be entertained in our mind. We must ask ourselves, "Is this matter of such purity that Jesus would be happy to meditate upon it?" We will never have the mind of Christ if we allow impure matters to occupy our thoughts and thus pollute our mind.

E. Loveliness. Beautiful, delightful and pleasant thoughts which uplift, edify and encourage one are worthy of our contemplation. They create an atmosphere of loveliness within the mind.

F. Of good report. This refers to matters that are admirable or worthy of praise and therefore receive a good report. We must feed our mind on matters that can be commended and praised for their goodness. On the other hand, we must avoid feeding our mind on dubious and unsavoury subjects.

G. Virtuous. This has to do with moral excellence, essential goodness, uprightness and integrity. Whatever matters promote such virtuous thought should be thoughtfully dwelt upon.

H. Praise. Is the theme of our thoughts worthy of praise? Can we eulogize and commend it? Can we extol its attributes? More important, would Jesus do so? If the answer is a definite yes, then we should think deeply and at length upon such matters. The exercise will surely edify our mind.

As we discipline our thoughts to dwell upon such matters that pass this test which God proposes, we prepare the soil of our mind to receive the seeds of the mind of Christ. The more we meditate on such matters, the more completely will the mind of Christ be established within us.

Of course, the Word of God abounds with all these qualities and virtues; therefore, it is a perfect food for our mind. The more we read God's Word, the better. But 83

let us not only read it, let us ponder and meditate upon it. Let us eat and digest it, allowing it to become part of us. It will shape and rebuild our mind, and we shall be renewed in the spirit of our mind and changed into the image and likeness of Christ.

Chapter 6 Walking in the Spirit

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk (move forward or grow) in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

"If we are living now by the Holy Spirit's power, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives" (Gal. 5:25 TLB).

Walking In The Spirit Is True Christian Living

The Bible teaches that we must be indwelt by the living Christ and then faithfully and obediently follow every leading of God's Holy Spirit. New Testament Christianity is not form and ceremony, ritual and religious rites, nor is it the keeping of rules, regulations and ethics. It is far more than living a good life, doing the right thing, abiding by the Golden Rule. Christianity is far more than a philosophy or a system of positive thinking. Real Christianity is supernatural; it is the life of Christ within the believer! Once Christ indwells our heart by faith, we begin to experience the counsel or leading of the Holy Spirit. Our role is one of surrender, obedience and faith. By these means of grace, we cooperate with the power of Christ within us and He is able to live His life through us to the praise and satisfaction of the Father.

Walking In The Spirit Is Scriptural And Biblical

"Walking in (after) the Spirit" (Gal 5:16).

"Be led by the Spirit" (Gal 5:18).

"Walk ...after the Spirit" (Rom 8:1).

To be spiritually minded" (Rom 8:6).

"They that are after the Spirit" (Rom 8:5).

"Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:4).

"In the Spirit" (Rom 8:9).

"Led by the Spirit of God" (Rom 8:14).

These various phrases are used to convey the same thought which we are simply referring to as "Walking in the Spirit." However, each of these expressions conveys a different aspect of our walk in the Spirit. Therefore, a careful and prayerful examination and analysis of them is a very worthwhile exercise.

It Is Consistent And Dependable

Many sincere Christians have been fearful of "walking in the Spirit," as they have imagined this to be something mystical, erratic and even fanatical. Nothing could be further from the truth. A true walk in the Spirit has accuracy, precision and consistency in keeping with the nature and mind of God Himself. To walk in the Spirit is to follow the plan and purpose of God which He has designed for our life in every minute detail. Biblical examples of walking in the Spirit illustrate this principle. Consider the incident in Luke 22:8-13. "Jesus sent Peter and John, saying. 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover. 'Where do you want us to prepare for it?' they asked. He replied, As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.' They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover" (NIV).

Notice the detail implicit within the guidance which Jesus gave His disciples. When they followed His instructions, they discovered that every minute detail was accurately fulfilled (v. 13).

Consider, too, the narrative in Acts 9:10-11. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord, ' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying'" NIV).

Notice the details given to Ananias by the Spirit. The name and address of the man he should visit, the fact that he was presently praying, the further fact that Paul had already seen Ananias in a vision and

knew that when he laid hands upon him, his sight would be restored. Every detail was fulfilled (vs. 17-18).

It Is The Way Of Safety And Security

Again, many Christians have a deep fear that keeps them from trusting spiritual guidance. They feel that their reasoning, deduction and logic is far safer. They will trust their mind when they will not trust the Spirit of God. We do need to have adequate, reliable means of proving that our guidance is in fact, coming from God and not merely from our own thoughts or imaginations. However, when we have properly tested this, and know with a deep inner witness that the Spirit is in fact, guiding us, we can rely completely on the Holy Spirit and invest our total faith and confidence as we act upon His Word. It is only as we are led by the Spirit, by His guidance, control and correction that we can be completely assured of His providence and protection. There is an example in 1 Kings 17:2, "Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the ravine of Kerith east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there'" (1 Kings 17:2-4 NIV). It was only as the prophet Elijah heard and obeyed the word of the Lord which came to him that he was sustained and protected by the Lord. It is only as we walk according to God's directions, that we can be sure of having His strength and ability. We must learn to let the Holy Spirit be our guide.

The Holy Spirit Speaks To Our Spirit

Spiritual guidance is not received initially through the mind or the emotions (both of which are attributes of the soul) but rather through our redeemed spirit. The spirit of man is not in his head (cranium). It is in the abdomen or solar plexus area.

Our Spirit Has Three Aspects Or Functions

Spiritual Intuition or inward teaching. Instruction coming from within. An inner witness of the Spirit.

1 John 2:27 says, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth [lives] in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.

Intuition. The promptings of the law of God which is written in our heart by the Spirit (Jer. 31:31-33, Ezek. 36:26).

Conscience is an inward knowing of right and wrong. An inward alertness as to what is right or wrong. The word relates to the Latin word from which we get "science"- to know.

Communion or fellowship with God. The ability to relate to God. The capacity to commune and communicate with Him.

What Happens To Our Spirit At Salvation

It is quickened (made alive). (Eph. 2:1).

It is cleansed by the Blood, the Word and the Spirit (Heb. 9:14, John 15:3, Titus 3:5-6).

It is united to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).

It is enlightened (Prov. 20:27).

It is indwelt by Christ (Eph. 3:17, Rom. 8:9, Col. 1:27, 2 Cor. 4:7).

Our spirit has the ability to "sense" (to receive intuition).

Intuition is the inner, spiritual ability to sense and understand what the Holy Spirit is impressing upon us. Sometimes He speaks to us by giving us a sense of deep concern. We feel a heaviness deep in our spirit. As we begin to bring this prayer burden to God in prayer and to wait upon Him, He begins to reveal to us what the burden is about. Praying in the Spirit (1 Cor. 14:15) can often be a means of discerning what God is saying as we pray first in tongues and later with the understanding or interpretation. Sometimes such a burden communicates to us the urgent need to pray for someone or some situation. Many times the burden may be a warning to us about a particular thing. We sense in our spirit that something is wrong. Oftentimes our mind has told us that everything is fine, but a burden, deep in our spirit, tells us, No it is not! We need to learn how to tune in to our spirit and to discern what the Holy Spirit is telling us. We have been taught to recognize the sensations of the body-hunger, pain, heat or cold. We know how to respond to these communications.

We have also learned to discern the messages of our soul and emotions. Now, as born again Christians, we need to recognize and discern the language of our spirit. We must learn to recognize when the Spirit is grieved, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30). We need to recognize when the Spirit is elated within us and wants us to rejoice with Him or when He is burdened and wishes to pray through us. He has so many functions that He wishes to perform through us, and we can learn to recognize every one of them.

First, we recognize an activity within our spirit and we understand that the Lord is wanting to say something to us. We stop and inquire of the Lord. We wait quietly upon Him until we comprehend what He is saying. We then act upon that information. If we will seek to remember this experience and what it meant, we will then be able to recognize it again next time.

Learning To Walk In The Spirit

The basic requirements for walking in the Spirit are

- A regenerated spirit, quickened by receiving the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:11, Eph. 2:1).
- A renewed mind (Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 4:22-24).
- Receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 2:4, 10:44-48, 19:6).
- Relaxing in righteousness (Rom. 14:17).

Religion creates tension, but redemption releases us from it, if we:

Spend ample time with God.

Get alone with Him, away from all distractions.

Learn to recognize His voice (John 10:4, 1 Cor. 2:9-16, Isa. 50:4-5, Psalm 40:6).

Learn how to wait upon God (Isaiah 40:31, Romans 12:7).

Learn obedience (1 Samuel 5:22, Hebrews 5:8).

Remember that faith is essential to such a walk (Heb. 11:6).

Learn by doing it! (Hebrews 5:14 "by reason of me...")

Being filled with the Word of God (Jer. 31:33, Col. 3:16, Matt. 4:14).

Not with the letter of the Word (2 Cor. 3:6), but with the spirit of it (Rom. 2:29. John 6:63).

How To Confirm Your Guidance

1. Inward Conviction

The guidance of the Spirit generally comes to us through an inner witness within our spirit. On rare occasions there may be an audible voice or even an angelic appearance, but this is an exception rather than the rule. We need, therefore, to be able to prove to our satisfaction that the inward impression or voice that we sense is truly the Lord.

Since God speaks to our spirit, our inner man, it is essential that we develop the faculties of our spirit to the highest possible degree. Ideally, God wants us to develop such a quality of spiritual maturity that we can recognize His voice immediately and be so humbly confident that it is indeed the Lord, that we can act immediately on His word. Do not be suspicious of your spirit; learn to have confidence in your ability to properly discern.

Proverbs 20:27 says, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. " God speaks to us in our spirit. He enlightens us in our spirit. It is our spirit which God addresses, rather than our mind or our emotions. Your spirit knows many things that your mind does not know because God has spoken to your spirit things which your mind, as yet, cannot comprehend or understand. "The natural man [the mind] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned [discerned by one's spirit]" (1 Cor. 2:14).

There are several scriptural tests by which we can determine whether or not a certain impression or thought is from the Lord. Particularly while we are still novices in these matters, it is important that we know how to test our inner impression so that we may know for certain whether or not such a leading is of God.

2. The Written Word Of God

The Bible is our most reliable guide and possibly the simplest one to use. The inner voice within our spirit is a somewhat subjective or somewhat less than totally reliable. It may at times be influenced by

our emotions or personal desires. Therefore, we need to submit such an experience to an objective or reliable judgment. The Bible is just such a source of judgment. It is not emotionally influenced or biased. Therefore, it is so much more reliable. However, we must approach it with an openness and honesty of heart because we can also make the Bible say what we wish it to say. There must be an integrity of heart in our approach to it. Often people purposely look for a scripture to support what they want to believe. This is known as "wresting or proof testing" the Scriptures and it is damaging to faith and sound judgment.

When you sense a certain leading or impression within your spirit and you are not certain that it is the voice of the Lord, prayerfully submit that impression to God. Ask Him to please confirm it or deny it through His Word. Inevitably, once this has been done a verse or scripture will come to your attention which relates to the matter under consideration. It is really amazing how many different circumstances and subjects to which God can cause His Word to apply. Often in unusual ways, God freely gives His guidance through His written Word. God's Spirit will never disagree with His Word. The Holy Spirit would never tell you to do anything which is condemned by the Bible. He will never lead you contrary to the clear principles set forth in the Bible.

3. The Peace Of God

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Col. 3:15).

Paul intimates that we may sometimes gain peace about guidance we appear to be receiving when we share that guidance with other members of Christ's body.

The word translated „rule“ in this scripture is the word for umpire, or referee. So Paul is saying, "Let the peace of God be the umpire in your heart." Imagine a game of football. While everything is going according to the rules and there are no fouls or infringements, the umpire's whistle is silent. However, when there is an infringement of the rules, the whistle blows and immediately the game must stop. The players then look to the umpire to find out what went wrong and what his decision is in the matter. Once he has clarified this point, the game can go on again. It is like this with the peace of God in our heart. When things are flowing sweetly in the purpose of God, there is a deep inner peace within our heart. This should always be there. Paul says we are called into such peace. If we ever lose that peace, then we must look to the Holy Spirit to discover what has gone wrong. Why have I lost my peace? He will quickly show us where we are going wrong and how to rectify it. When we do so, asking God's forgiveness and getting back on the right path again, our peace will be restored.

4. Mature Counsel

1 Corinthians 2:16 tells us `But we have the mind of Christ."

Please notice that Paul says WE (plural) have the mind of Christ. He is teaching us the wisdom of asking other mature persons to censor and evaluate with us what we feel God is saying. Sometimes we can only fully discern what God is saying to us when we share it with other trusted persons.

Not only are we to possess inner personal peace as an indication that all is well. We may also, if need be, submit our impression to the discernment of other members of the Body. Such a thing can be done among the company of born again believers to whom you are joined in Christian fellowship. Lay the matter before this company; if there is a response of united peace, then you may be assured that God is confirming the leading you have received. As the scripture says: "In the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Pro v. 11:14).

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established" (Prov. 15:22).

I emphasize the point that it is **mature** counsel that one should seek. Seek counsel from spiritually mature people who have a proven credibility for wisdom. Asking counsel of spiritually immature persons will only add to your confusion and uncertainty. Go to someone whose life proves that they have found the will of God, someone who is obviously succeeding in the Christian life because they have been able to hear the voice of God directing them in the circumstances of their own life.

5. Circumstances And Divine Providence

When God tells you to do something, you can expect that He will begin to open the way for you to do so. If He is leading you in a certain matter, then His providences will begin to open up to you in that matter. There is a little phrase which I have learned that has been extremely helpful to me when I have been wanting to obtain guidance from the Lord. It is, "Get going, and you will get guidance." I believe a scriptural support for this concept would be in Genesis concerning the servant of Isaac who had been sent to seek a wife for his master. He said, "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen. 24:27). In other words, once he started out on his journey God gave him guidance. David says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). If you sit-around waiting for a revelation, you may sit there forever. If you begin to move, and you are going in the wrong direction, the Lord will tell you so. The Holy Spirit is within every Christian and He is longing to lead us in the ways and purposes of God, so as soon as we get moving with a sincere desire in our heart to walk in God's ways, the Spirit will give us guidance. As you begin to move out in harmony with God's will, circumstances and providences will open up before you, giving you assurance and confidence within.

6. Prophetic Confirmation

Sometimes a prophetic utterance may be given to confirm something that one has received from the Spirit. I have deliberately used the word confirmation because that is exactly what the prophetic utterance should do. It should serve to confirm something which one has already received from God in his spirit.

We should always be cautious about an apparent prophecy which tends to start something rather than simply confirming it. If God wants to tell you something, He will speak to you first, within your own spirit. Afterwards He may confirm it through a prophetic utterance which will serve to confirm and establish what He has already told you.

Never do anything merely because someone "prophesied" that you should do so. Get your own personal guidance from God first. Then, if a prophecy substantiates what you have already received, that's fine.

Prophetic utterances are certainly not infallible. The human element involved in uttering the prophecy renders them fallible. The Spirit who prompts them is perfect but the people who utter them are imperfect. Many Christians stand in awe of prophecies as though God Himself were speaking from heaven. However, it is not God who is speaking directly. It is men, speaking on behalf of God. If such people are truly in the Spirit, that's fine. Their words will edify, exhort and comfort the church (1 Cor. 14:3). Unfortunately sometimes the utterance may be coming from the heart of the person himself, or it may be collared or influenced by the injection of some thought of his own.

Because of this, every prophetic utterance should be judged as to whether it is truly a word from the Lord before it is received and certainly before it is acted upon (1 Cor. 14:29).

- It should be judged first by the Word of God. The Bible is infallible and, therefore, it is a perfectly objective judge. If an utterance is not in perfect harmony with the stated principles of the Bible, it is immediately suspect. No matter how religious or spiritual an utterance may sound, it must agree wholly with the Word. Even though the prophecy may be filled with such phrases as, "I, the Lord say unto you my servant," this is certainly no guarantee of accuracy or validity. The Bible is our final, unerringly accurate and infallible guide. Always trust the Bible rather than any prophecy.

- It should be judged by what God has already shown you in your own spirit. If it does not bear witness with and confirm what you have already received from the Lord, then do not accept any personal prophecy. Certainly you should NOT immediately act upon it. You may begin to earnestly pray about it, submitting it to God and seeking His wisdom and guidance on the matter.

- If a company of believers is present when the utterance is given, then a community judgment may be given in respect of the prophecy. What is consensus of thought on the matter? Do the believers agree that this is truly a word from God? Or are they united in their conviction that this word is not from the Lord and should therefore be treated very cautiously?

Many innocent lives have been wrecked through acting too readily upon "personal prophecies" without seeking guidance and confirmation from other mature and trusted fellow believers.

Chapter 7 Marching To Victory

Jeremiah 31:33-34

33 "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," says the LORD. "I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins." NLT

The Old Covenant was based on the ten commandments, given to Israel through Moses, on tablets of stone. The Jewish people through careful religious analysis discovered 613 commandments in the Torah. The people had to do their best, at all times to live up to the ethic and standard of these commandments. The law was perfect and holy, but the people were imperfect and human. Consequently, there was a continual struggle, and an unending battle. The conflict was between the strength of the law and the weakness of the flesh. It was between the lofty holiness of the commandments and the earthly carnality of their humanity.

Many Christians have fought this battle, too. They see Christianity as a continuation of the Old Covenant instead of a completely New Covenant. God said that the New Covenant would be, "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers" (Jeremiah. 31.32).

It was to be a different covenant, not like the old. These Christians are therefore, caught in the same net as the Israelites of old. That constant inner striving to live up to the outward commandment and the disappointment and frustrations of defeat and failure. Thank God, there is a better way!

Under the terms of the New Covenant, God says, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (v. 33). In this wonderful new covenant relationship, we have God Himself living within us, and constantly giving us inner guidance, tuition and instruction. The ability to interpret and obey those instructions is called walking in the Spirit.

Likewise in Ezekiel 36:26- 27,

26 And I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. NLT

First, Ezekiel says that instead of the Word being written on tablets of stone, God will write it upon our hearts. Now He tells us, through Ezekiel, that He will give us a new heart, and put a right spirit within us. Instead of men struggling to keep an external commandment and failing miserably so much of the time, God would give them a new heart which would have an inbuilt desire and ability to walk in God's ways. He said, "I will put my Spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them." This is the New Covenant, our walking in the Spirit, and thus fulfilling the desires and requirements of God. Not by striving and struggling to do so, but rather by resting in God, following the intuition of His Spirit within us, and allowing Him to live His life through us.

There are many wonderful statements in Romans, Chapter 8, relating to privileges of the victorious Christian life. I encourage you to read this chapter again, and, as you do, please notice that all these great blessings depend upon our "walking in the Spirit." Several different terms are used to describe our walk in the Spirit but they all basically amount to the same thing.

Walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1).

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (v. 2).

Walking after the Spirit (v. 4).

Living "after the Spirit" (v. 5).

Being spiritually minded (v. 6).

Living through the Spirit (v. 13).

Being led by the Spirit (v. 14).

Receiving the spirit of adoption (v. 15).
 The Spirit bearing witness with our spirit (v. 16).
 Having the first-fruits of the Spirit (v. 23).
 The Spirit within us, compensating for our inadequacies (v. 26).
 Now, notice some of the wonderful blessings which come to us through such a walk.
 We live above condemnation (Romans 8:1).
 We are free from the law of sin and death (v. 2).
 The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us (v. 4).
 We enjoy life and peace (v. 6).
 We are enabled to please God (v. 8).
 The Spirit is life within us (v. 10).
 The Spirit quickens our mortal body (v. 11).
 We can mortify the deeds of the flesh (v. 13).
 We mature into the sons of God (v. 14).
 We do not live under the bondage of fear (v. 15).
 We enjoy intimate fellowship with the Father (v. 15).
 We have a deeper awareness that we are the children of God (v. 16).
 The Spirit intercedes through us, according to the will of God (v. 26, 27).
 All these glorious blessings depend upon our walking in the Spirit. Galatians 5 reminds us of some of the further blessings experienced by those who walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh (Rom. 8:9).

1. Victory Over The Flesh And Its Works

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature" (Gal. 5:1.NIV)

The Christian life was not meant to be a constant, unrelenting battle of the spirit against the flesh. It is intended to be a life of manifest victory over the flesh. The battle is already fought and won. The victory was gained by Christ on the cross. He defeated Satan on our behalf. Now we are called to manifest and display that victory, but we can only do so as we consistently walk in the Spirit. God did not ordain a fluctuating experience in which we are victorious one day and defeated the next. He did not intend for us to be constantly swinging between elation and depression, joy and despair, mountain heights and valley depths. He has procured for us a life of victory over our flesh and of overcoming the works of the flesh. Now we can gladly say with Paul, "Thanks be unto God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:14).

2 Developing The Character Of Christ

In Galatians 5:22 Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit, as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance." These are not virtues which we are to struggle to produce; they are the fruits which will be sweetly manifest in our lives if we will walk according to the Spirit. They are the obvious outcome and evidence of one who is abiding in Christ, and He in them, the proof that we are allowing Him to live His life through us. Such graces are a part of the evidence that Christ is actually dwelling in you. Someone has said, "If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be sufficient evidence to convict you?"

This list of virtues and attributes is a character description of Christ. Character is the passive aspect of our being. It is the kind of person we are. Oftentimes a pastor may be requested to write a character reference for someone, perhaps a member of his congregation. He will endeavour to faithfully describe what kind of person this is. He may say, "I have known this person for some five years, during which time I have found him to be extremely loyal and trustworthy. He is also hard working and conscientious. I have found him to be respectful of authority and a well disciplined person. I am sure that he will prove to be an excellent employee and will render reliable service." This is an attempt to describe what kind of person he is. Now, when the Holy Spirit wishes to describe the kind of person that

Jesus is, He says, "Jesus is love, joy and peace. He is longsuffering, gentle and good; He is faithful, meek and temperate." The Holy Spirit also longs to be able to say the same thing about you and me. He greatly desires to be able to honestly describe our characters in the same terms. He wants to make us into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), which includes our having the character of Christ. He ultimately wants us to manifest the life of Jesus to such a degree of maturity that these evidences of Christ's life will be clearly and consistently displayed in our life. This can only be accomplished as we faithfully follow and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit within our inner being.

3. Developing True Spirituality

A further result of our walk in the Spirit will be the development of true spirituality. Galatians 6:1 is an interesting scripture which illustrates the difference between religious people and those who have true spiritual life and maturity.

Galatians 6:1-3

1 Dear brothers and sisters, if another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

2 Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

*3 If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody.*NLT

I am sure that you have noticed in religious circles, that if a person is overcome in a fault, inevitably people want to exact judgment upon him. Religious people take delight in pointing out the faults and weaknesses of others. They delight in the opportunity to gloat over their brother's weakness. This makes them feel more secure in their self-righteousness. They love to look down upon such a person, to judge, criticize and condemn him. They are like the Pharisees, proud that they are better than their neighbour.

However, this is not the attitude of a Christian who is walking in the Spirit and who has the fruit of the Spirit in his life. The virtue of meekness, which is one of those fruits, gives him the desire to restore such a one rather than destroy him. God does not delight to condemn. He delights to restore. If we are truly motivated by His life within us, then we also will delight to restore such unfortunates. Our attitude will never be, "Well he just got what he deserved! He had this coming to him! I have known for a long time that one day he would come to grief!" Instead our attitude will be one of loving concern and regret. We will be overwhelmingly conscious of deep concern and compassion for a fallen brother. His plight will make us feel very humble inside. There will be no desire to gloat over his misfortune but rather a deep sense of thanks to God and the awareness, "There, but for the grace of God, go I"

Our ministry of restoration will be accomplished in a spirit of true meekness and humility, knowing also that we reap whatsoever we sow. If we sow mercy, we will reap mercy. If we sow restoration, and the day ever comes that we are in a similar unfortunate position, then God will bring along someone to minister restoration to us. This is true spirituality.

4. Inheriting The Kingdom

Paul points out that those who "walk after the flesh," rather than following after the Spirit, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21). That is to say, they shall not enjoy the present blessings of the Kingdom, nor will they display its virtues. The works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) can never be evidences of the Kingdom within. They are instead clear indications that the flesh is ruling, and Christ is not Lord. The fruit of the Spirit is in complete contrast to the works of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is a beautiful evidence of the King enthroned in the heart and life, a glorious affirmation of the rule of Christ within that life. As we seek to consistently walk in the Spirit, we begin to experience and enjoy the righteousness, peace and joy which are marks of the Kingdom (Rom. 14:1). Therefore, "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

Romans 2:28-29

29 No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from God, not from people. NLT

Romans 7:6

6 But now we have been released from the law, for we died with Christ, and we are no longer captive to its power. Now we can really serve God, not in the old way by obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way, by the Spirit. NLT

Romans 8:3-4

4 He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. NLT

Romans 8:5-6

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. NLT

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