



Walk After The Spirit

Kevin Martin

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The Spirit

Kevin Martin

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FORWARD

Galatians 5: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Walking after the Spirit of God is highly recommended for every person on the planet. We were made for this.

The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. John 16:13. This means He will lead anyone who will follow to Jesus, who is the Truth. John 14:6.

The ministry of the Spirit brings life. 2 Corinthians 3:6. As we put aside all our religious education and ideas and ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into the life of God, He will lead us to Jesus. John 14:6.

As you are led by the Spirit you will know that you are a son of God and now heirs of God simply because you believed and received Jesus as the Son of God. Romans 8:14, John 1:12.

The Holy Spirit comforts all our losses. You can bring all your disappointments and personal heartaches to God, and the Spirit will comfort your losses and console your heart. You will notice a very real release of pain as His peace comes in. John 14:16

You will not fulfill the lust of the flesh while walking after the Spirit. Galatians 5:16. How? He is also the power behind the grace of God. The grace of God came by Jesus Christ, but the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us by grace to say, "No!" to sin and to say, "Yes!" to righteousness.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Titus 2:11, 12

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

When you follow after the Holy Spirit He leads you into everything you need, even the deep things of God that settle your heart in any storm. 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10

What more could you ask for?

CHAPTER ONE

WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

In the King James Version the word “according” is not used, but the word “after.” Thus the title “Walk After The Spirit.”

There is no condemnation to those who walk after the Spirit. Yet there is condemnation to those who walk after the flesh, even if they are believers. But the condemnation is not from Christ.

John 5:22 “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”

John 12:47 “And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”

God is not now judging us and either is Jesus. So how is it that the one walking after the flesh is in condemnation? It is because, unless we trust the mercy and grace of God, we are under the law. No one measures up to the law.

Romans 3:19-28

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. ²¹But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

What Paul means by walking after the flesh is that we are not trusting God or His ways. We are walking according to our own wisdom and understanding and doing

whatever our flesh wants to do. The flesh always fails to trust God, and we are not able to succeed in obeying the law apart from God, so our failure puts us in condemnation. Though God is not now judging (that day will come), the law judges us every time we walk in the flesh. Walking in the flesh occurs every time we attempt to be accounted righteous by what we do. God has determined that justification will only be imputed by faith so that no one can boast before Him (verse 27 above).

The good news is two-fold. First, God has given us His Spirit, and when we follow the Spirit, that is an act of trust in God. Whenever we trust God, He accounts that to us for righteousness because He is righteous. He then gives us His mercy and also His grace. In His mercy He forgives every failure no matter how many times or how often. His grace is His power to do what the Spirit is leading us to do. The Spirit will only lead us according to God's will, so we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

Romans 12:2 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.

Second, God has already put all judgment that should be due us on His Son and punished Him fully for our sin and every failure to obey the law (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, He is able to give us the righteousness of Christ despite our repeated failure today and tomorrow and declare us the beneficiaries of His grace simply as we trust His grace and mercy each time we need it. In fact He tells us to come boldly to His throne of grace each time we need it because we have a perfect High Priest, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Now Consider This

Walking after the Spirit will be a direct confrontation to your flesh.

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

As soon as you endeavor to walk after the Spirit of God, your flesh will rise up.

Romans 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The flesh not only cannot please God, it does not want to. It is against God.

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

When you walk after the Spirit, you do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, so your flesh does not have its desires satisfied. Your flesh will feel deprived.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Flesh that is used to getting its way will get upset, become loud and demanding. It will be persistent. If you have never brought your flesh under control, it will try to control you, as it always has in the past. You will have a battle on your hands.

You may lose. One way the flesh defeats us is to get us to use the power of our flesh to defeat itself. No house divided against itself will stand and Satan does not fight against himself. When you try to defeat your flesh with your own will power, you are being duped by your flesh. As long as flesh is in control it wins, not God. Whether you do good or evil, as long as your flesh is in control, you are under the law, you are not trusting God, and you are in condemnation.

The enemy does not care if you do good things. As long as it is not the Spirit of God leading and empowering you to do them.

Satan is defeated every time you are led by the Spirit of God, no matter how small the step of faith is. Every time you say, "Yes." To God, you are saying, "No!" to Satan.

If you are having trouble saying, "Yes" to God, ask Jesus to help you. Say, "Jesus, help me say, 'Yes' to You." Jesus will help you, because then you are not relying upon your strength. You are relying upon His strength (remember grace is His

power working in you). This is what He wants. Your victory is never in the strength of your flesh. It is always in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul rejoiced in the fact that he was too weak to overcome in his own strength.

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul knew that any victory he won without Christ would rob God of Glory and appeal to the vanity of his flesh (Galatians 5:26). The goal of Paul’s heart was to bring glory to God in everything he did. He knew his weakness was an opportunity for God’s strength to shine.

1 Corinthians 1:25-31

²⁵Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. ²⁷But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— ³¹that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

Being led by the Spirit requires you to yield your strength and your wisdom and confess that you require His strength and wisdom for every breath you take and every righteous choice you make.

So turn away from your flesh and its desires and turn to God, looking on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith (Hebrews 12:2). Then wait for Him to speak. Whatever He says, you, having the same Spirit of faith, will also speak. And whatever He does, you are empowered to do likewise, by His Spirit of Grace.

Ephesians 3:8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS

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

There is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. There is also a law of sin and death. According to the law of sin and death, you can never do any better than you have already done, and probably will do worse (See Romans 7:15-24). Jesus, by fulfilling the law of righteousness for us, defeated the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.

Now, in Christ, walking after His Spirit, we are able to fulfill the requirements of the law of righteousness. It is the life of Jesus living in us, by His Spirit, which enables us to live according to that higher law (Galatians 2:20). Because Jesus has defeated sin, He imparts His grace to us to change our focus – from a flesh-based focus to a Spirit-based focus.

Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

The flesh-based focus says, “If I try hard enough, I can do what the law requires. I will get it right and God will have to accept me.” The flesh wants to prove God wrong and itself right and therefore earn eternal life. So the flesh requires a list of rules. It is focused on the commandments of the law, either despising God for giving the law or loving the law more than God because by obeying the rules the flesh will one day prove itself worthy.

The Spirit-based focus trusts God’s appraisal of the flesh as too weak to obey the rules. But it also trusts God’s solution in sending One Who could and would obey every commandment for us, because of love. And in love, take all our sin upon Himself and die in our place. In the process He condemned sin in the flesh.

We are able to set our minds on things above. We are no longer those who focus on what our flesh wants. Now we have grace from God to focus on what the Spirit of God wants. Focusing on what the Spirit wants means we see what He desires,

but also what He wants to do about it. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, but He is also our guide into all truth. Because He is one with the Spirit of Christ, He will not only show us truth, but the way of truth that results in life. Remember Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

God's grace is great! By it we are now able to see what God wants and do what God wants.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

The grace of God to do these things is empowered by the Spirit of God within us. We do nothing in our own strength of flesh. We do everything in His strength. That is why Paul said, “. . . that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 3:3 clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart.

When most people talk about walking in the Spirit they are thinking of power for ministry. The problem with this way of thinking is that you may not recognize the move of the Spirit to minister Christ to someone, if you do not practice following Him in your daily living. People become so accustomed to doing whatever their flesh leads them to do, that they are easily led away from ministry opportunities by their own flesh.

When we are led by the Spirit in our daily living, He leads us to those opportunities to minister Christ to others. Defeating the enemy by following Christ in the small choices of life, prepares you to be used of God to defeat the enemy in major ways.

So the best way to prepare for ministry opportunities is not to focus on those, primarily. The best way is to learn to follow the Spirit in your daily living. The Spirit of God will bring your whole life into the Kingdom of God and prosper every area of your life as He opens up the Word of God to you.

There is an anointing that teaches you of all things. We need teachers in the body of Christ to teach what I am teaching right now. Yet, in 1 John 2:27 John tells us

that there is an anointing that teaches you in a way I cannot teach you. 1 John 2:20 says we have an unction from the Holy One and we know all things. That “unction” is the Holy Ghost. He is the one that teaches you how He has designed you to minister in love and in power. He does that as we commune with Him (2 Corinthians 13:14). As we give up time for the Holy Spirit to teach us, we learn about Him, we learn about ourselves and we learn how to follow Him.

Look again at Romans 8:5. I like to phrase it this way, *“Those that are after what the flesh wants focus on the things that make the flesh happy. But those that are after what the Spirit of God wants focus on the things which please the Spirit.”*

What is your mind focused on? Are you constantly thinking of the next thing that will make you happy? When you live that way, just reading this question brings condemnation. You feel that you have been put under the law. You blame the one asking the question for making you feel bad. You may even want to lash out at that person; in this case, me. Or, if you are one of those who believe you can live up to the law, you are constantly thinking of the next thing you can do to vindicate yourself. Pride is the motive you are blind to. It drives you to perform. Repeated failure stirs up condemnation as you seek righteousness on your own terms.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

If you have the Spirit of God, yet you live like that, you may feel condemnation, but not from the Holy Spirit. He will be wooing you to turn to Him to know the truth. If you feel condemnation, ask God to show you the truth. “Is my life all about me?” “Am I focused on the commandments instead of Jesus?”

God’s purpose is not to condemn you, but to open your eyes to the fault in your own choices. Do not blame others. Accept responsibility for your choices. The way out is through confession of sin and a change of focus. You will have power to resist the devil after you have turned to God and submitted yourself to Him.

James 4:6–8

⁶But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” ⁷Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. . . .

Once you humble yourself before God, then God releases grace to you to accomplish His will. You will see where the Spirit is leading and you will be able to follow as a Son of God.

Whenever we find it difficult to focus on what the Spirit wants, it is because we have been focusing too much on what our flesh wants. If we confess our sin and repent, the way to follow God opens up to us and we return to the righteousness of God with peace that results in the joy of the Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

The more we focus on God the easier it becomes to stay focused on what the Spirit wants. For a moment capture a picture in your mind of God walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

This may have been a daily occurrence for Adam and Eve with God. This is God's desire in His relationship with us. I do not know when the cool of the day was in the Garden. The Hebrew word translated "cool" can also be translated "wind". In the East there is a cool breeze that comes up in the evening. However, in my experience the coolest part of most days is early in the morning. The evening hours can also be the coolest part of the day in some cases. I know that for me, it is very useful to spend my first waking hour or two focused on the Lord and asking Him what He wants to talk about and what He wants in my life. I also spend my last moments focused on Him before I go to sleep. I have found it easiest to focus on the Lord in those times when the world is not clamoring for my attention.

I have also learned that despite my best effort, I cannot stay focused on God without His help. There are some moments here and there when it seems very easy to focus on Him. But most often I have to confess to Him my weakness and ask Jesus to focus my attention for me – on Him, on the Father; on what the Spirit wants. After I pray this way, I still must will to focus on Him but in a moment His face becomes clearer and I hear Him call to me, "I am here, Son."

Even in this simple little thing I need His help and the strength of His will. The enemy fights this. My flesh does not want this. But in my spirit I want to follow God and know Him. Most important, though, He wants this. He will not force us to choose relationship with Him. He waits for us to ask, then He empowers the moment and communion with Him is sweet.

Yet communion with Him can also be tough.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT IS TOUGH

Romans 8:12, 13

¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Walking after the Spirit does not always mean you will like the places He leads you or the way He leads. God's definition of living is not usually the same as ours. When men say, "You have not lived until you have done this." They are most often referring to fleshly pleasure which they enjoy. God says, "You have not lived until you have died." He recommends we put to death the deeds of the flesh in order to live. But when we try to do this we find out that our flesh is weak. It cannot put its desires and deeds to death, because the truth is, it dies in the process. The flesh does not want to die.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

We cannot look to the flesh to put itself to death. We must look to the Spirit; ". . . **if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.**"

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Jesus did not start His ministry with miracles and signs and wonders. Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. Jesus, as the only Divine Son of God, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days of fasting. This was the first place the Spirit of God led Him. Our flesh would not want that. His flesh may not have wanted that. He was tempted in all points as we are. But by the Spirit He put to death the desire of His flesh.

When we are led by the Spirit, before there can be powerful signs which may lead us to think too much of ourselves – God leads us to a wilderness where we see what and who we are without Him – and what and who we are "In Him." Once you begin to know you can trust Him with your life, He begins to bring up subjects you would rather not discuss.

I have discovered that God knows what is on the road ahead of me. Some of those things I am ready for and some I am not. Some of those things could be disastrous

for me, if I arrived at that moment and place in the same state of mind I was in at an earlier point in time. Therefore, if I am ready to listen to God and follow His direction, He asks the tough questions I need someone to ask. He challenges my perceptions of things and shows me His way of thinking and doing. If I will be honest and repent of my way and by faith implement His way, I will discover His way is better and I avoid disaster and get blessed instead.

I remember such a time which was very challenging for me. In 1989 the Lord began to remind me of things I did not want to remember or think about. In 1973 I joined the US Air Force and I lied to them about my drug history. I told them I had experimented with marijuana three times when, in fact, I had smoked it almost every day for a year and a half. And three times I took a white capsule I believed was a derivative form of marijuana. It was actually something much stronger. Much of my memory of those days was very hazy for a long time.

The Air Force gave me a Top Secret clearance while I was in training which meant they investigated my background. Then I thought they missed it, but now I think they ignored the facts because they needed recruits.

Then in March of 1975 I was shown the gospel and accepted Jesus into my heart. Things were great and I was growing in the Lord. Yet, He never brought this up to me until 1985. I was applying for Officer Training School (OTS) and He dealt with my heart about this. I told the Air Force then as much of my story as I remembered, including what I believed about the white capsule. I thought, "They will put me in jail or take away my clearance at least." They did not. Instead they let me into OTS and let me keep the Top Secret clearance.

Then in 1989 the Lord started to open up scenes in my memory that I had forgotten and did not want to remember. I had sold marijuana to my friends several times and that made me a drug dealer. This was very threatening to me. I feared the Lord's purpose in this. Why clear up my memory of this now? I thought, "They will surely put me in jail and my wife and children will go back home in shame."

I remember putting fleeces before the Lord asking Him to do certain things to confirm if He really wanted me to tell the Air Force. He never answered those fleeces. Finally one day He simply said, "You know the answer." I did. I had to reveal this new information. I decided to trust God and do what had to be done.

Again the Air Force ignored my history, let me keep the Top Secret clearance and sent me to Korea. While I was there, a new investigation form had been finished

and all those with Top Secret clearances had to answer a new set of more detailed questions which was more threatening. You had to have already told them everything or you could suffer dire consequences. I looked at the questions and saw that I had just told them everything these new questions were asking. I filled out the papers and handed them in. This time I knew it was okay. God had moved me to fully reveal all the facts of my drug history before this questionnaire came out and they had all this information on me in their files.

God knew this was coming and had moved me to trust and obey Him in advance to protect me. He is a wise and wonderful God.

God is good! It is good to know Him and walk with Him. We were designed by God to know Him and to walk in His way. There is nothing better.

**Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

Your way is always easy for your flesh. His way always requires faith. Faith requires you to trust His wisdom and love. Go His way! You will be glad you did.

CHAPTER FOUR

Through the Spirit Put to Death the Deeds of the Flesh

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

“We are debtors.” Some might wonder about this statement. Believers do not; for they have recognized the debt they owe to God because of His atonement for sin and even of creation itself. God created man and redeemed him from corruption by the blood of Christ. One day He will finally release us and this earth from this present state of corruption to eternal joy.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

We are debtors, yes; but not to the flesh to satisfy its desires. We do not have to eat and drink and party till our flesh is happy. Our flesh has not done anything sufficient to purchase our souls. The price is way too high. Jesus has done perfectly all that was needed to save us from death and the power of sin.

All our flesh has done is dig the ditch deeper until it becomes a grave in which to bury our lost souls. Some people go back to the law of commandments, thinking to establish their own righteousness in the power of their flesh (Romans 10:2-4). Others cut themselves to feel pain; thinking they can atone for their own sins. The devil leads them to this to mock the blood that Jesus shed to fully pay for all our sins. The devil also leads them to cut themselves to give an opening to his demons to enter the lives of these people to further torture and enslave them.

Romans 8:13a For if you live for what the flesh wants you will die;

Living to please the flesh brings destruction to the natural flesh and can doom our souls to eternal separation from God, Who is the source of love, life and happiness. We do not owe the flesh anything!

Romans 8:13b but if you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, learn the habit of putting to death the deeds prompted by the flesh, you shall really live and live forever.

How does one put to death the deeds of the flesh? I could suggest some psychological behavioral models for you; like when the temptation comes run! Or cut off the hand that offends you. That was the Hebrew model of behavioral psychology and it worked for awhile. But it relies on training the flesh. And the flesh is still the flesh, it opposes the Spirit and you cannot do the things you want to (Galatians 5:17).

Now that Jesus is at the Father's right hand and has given us His Spirit, we can read this verse of Scripture the way we should. **"If through the power of the Holy Spirit you are habitually putting to death the deeds prompted by the body, you shall live forever."** It is the Spirit's power that puts to death the deeds of the flesh – not your will power.

Galatians 5:16 . . . Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

It is not that God expects you to wait for Him for every decision of your life. "God, do I brush my teeth now or put on my pajamas first?" God's Spirit will teach you all truth and guide you in its application, just as a parent teaches a child how to dress, eat, bathe and ride a bicycle. The parent then expects the child to dress himself, fix himself a bowl of cereal, ride his bike to school and bathe when needed.

There are principles in the word of God that may not seem natural to us, because we have spent our lives pleasing our flesh. What prayer is really all about and how to pray effectively is a simpler subject and yet deeper than most understand. We can understand it to some degree as we are taught by parents, teachers and peers. But the Spirit of God takes us into the depth of intimate communication with God, until we see Him face-to-face. Having learned this, we can more and more easily enter God's throne room and sit with him; hearing the heart of God.

The Spirit will also expose to us how we are most readily seduced by our flesh to pursue its pleasures, until we discover we have forgotten our time with God. The Holy Spirit will guide you out of your old death producing habits and into the Way of Truth that results in Life and the good fruit of the Spirit.

How did Paul do this? He says we are to be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16). Start with Him in your focus. Unless you start with the right focus, you will miss the mark.

Colossians 3:1-3

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where

Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Second, notice Paul's use of words. We read his words with a mind-set that puts us under the law. We need to look more closely at his words. When we put ourselves under any law as the primary means of motivating correct behavior, we fail. The law only produces death, not life. Paul instructed us to put to death the deeds of the flesh, by the Spirit, so we could live, not die.

Still, when you look at Paul's use of words, it looks like a set of commands. There is no question Christians want to behave the way Paul instructs us. But look a little closer at his word usage. Paul is declaring the will of God on earth as it already is in Heaven.

Remember how God spoke creation, **"Let there be light."** And there was light. According to John 1:1 and Colossians 1:16, it was Jesus, the Word of God, Who spoke and the world was created. Consider also how Jesus spoke as the Messiah and bodies were healed. **"Rise, take up your bed and walk."** **"As you have believed, so be it unto you."**

Then consider the disciples as they received authority from Jesus and spoke. **"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk (Acts 3:16)."** **"Stand upright on your feet" (Acts 13:10).**

The disciples spoke expecting their words to release the will of God. They were not issuing a new set of laws; they were speaking with creative power. They knew they were sons of God, led by His Spirit. They were excited in the ability and power of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit led, they used that authority to speak and the reality of the redemption purchased by the blood of Jesus produced powerful effects in physical bodies.

The disciples knew that this authority coupled with faith could release God's grace to the minds and hearts of men to think on Christ and heavenly things and thereby put off the deeds of the flesh: malice, blasphemy, lying, stealing and adultery. And put on the new man who follows the Spirit in: mercy, long-suffering, kindness, forgiving one another and working to have supply to give to one another in acts of charitable love.

Notice how Paul used the active form of the verbs he wrote: mortify, put-off, put-on, forbearing, forgiving, do and "let." This word "let" is not as passive as it seems. This is the same commanding word used by Jesus at creation and when He

would say, **“Let her alone.”** He was speaking God’s will with a full expectation that it would be accomplished.

This is the mind from which Paul wrote, **“Let the peace of God dwell in your hearts.”**

All the reader had to do was agree in faith and the same authority that stilled the storm when Jesus spoke, **“Peace. Be still,”** would be released into their minds and hearts. This is what Jesus intended when He instructed us to pray, **“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”**

This is a prayer of faith, not of begging God. It is God’s will for your mind to be at peace in your faith in Him to supply all your need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. He wants us to be His voice now on the earth for our lives and for everything He moves us by His Spirit to declare.

Put to death the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit. Think about the words that express what your flesh wants that is opposed to the Spirit. Connect with the Holy Spirit and put your heart before Him. What does He want? Satan tempted Jesus in the desert but the Spirit of God gave Him the word. He spoke the word of God to defeat the devil, not by fleshly ability to memorize, but by the Spirit.

Learn a new habit. When the flesh is compelling you in the wrong direction, look to the Spirit and wait for a word. When you get the word, speak it out of your mouth or start to do what the word directs. At the very least, set your heart on the will of God.

The word the Spirit gives you is the will of God. As you start to declare it or do it or set your heart on it, that word releases God’s power, grace; for you to do God’s will instead of the will of the flesh – putting to death the deeds of the flesh.

“I will not faint. I will walk by faith.”

“I will not covet. I will rest in the provision of God.”

“I will not fear. I will rest in God my strong tower.”

“I will not fail. I will follow the Spirit to sure victory.”

“I will not die. I choose life in Christ.”

“I am not cursed. I am blessed by the finished work of Christ, my Redeemer.”

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT ARE YOU LED BY?

Romans 7:5, 8

⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

⁸But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

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

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Under the Old Covenant

Under the Old Covenant we are led by rules and the fear of punishment.

Don't be led by fear. Don't be led by condemnation under the law. For the law is just a slave driver. And it never produces righteousness in us.

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Under the New Covenant

Under the New Covenant we are led by the Spirit of life in Christ.

Let the Spirit of God teach you how He leads.

He leads by love. He grows love within you (Galatians 5:22, 23). He leads you in honor. He empowers you with grace. He makes you an over comer. What-ever sin controls your flesh is overcome by the Spirit, not by your will power.

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

BE LED BY THE SPIRIT

He will show you the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ.

**Psalm 25:14 The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.**

**Matthew 26:28 “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many
for the remission of sins.”**

He will show you Jesus, King of Kings.

He will show you Jesus, the source of all life, liberty and authority over sin.

Let Him teach you to hear the Father.

Let Him show you the Father’s heart.

Let Him show you how to live from the Father’s heart.

The key to New Covenant living is being led by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16, 18

¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Yes, it’s wonderful to have the Holy Spirit dispense His gifts through you. There is power to change lives in the gifts of the Spirit. But the evidence of being led by the Spirit is an overcoming life-style. His fruit grows within you. There is peace and joy, but also His kindness and longsuffering.

The Spirit of God is a teacher. He is the Master teacher for the church today. The Disciples of Christ sat at His feet, for Jesus was present for them in that way.

Today, the Holy Spirit is present to teach us from within. We sit at His feet and let Him teach us to know His presence and how He leads. From there He teaches us how to recognize His leading; His split-second promptings in daily routines and in the crisis fast-action-events of life. His answers and ways are better than ours and always produce the best results.

God is the Master of good outcomes. He specializes in good outcomes for those who trust Him. Trust Him to teach you how to follow Him to His good outcomes for you. Be led by the Spirit.

CHAPTER SIX

BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT

If you have read much of our New Covenant material, you may have noticed how often we write of being led by the Spirit as we discuss living under grace free from sin. We believe this is the key to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This is why Paul followed chapters 3 through 7 of Romans with chapter 8. We can, in fact, live free from sin and walk in love and according to the will of God every day, as we are led by His Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

1 John 2:16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

“**All that *is* in the world;**” everything in the world falls into one of three categories: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. So John urged us not to love the world nor the things that are in the world. These things will lead us away from the Father. Therefore, those who are led by the Spirit will be led away from those things and led into the things that are on the heart of God the Father for us. Things against which there is no law (Galatians 5:23). Why are the things of the Spirit on God’s heart for us? Because we are His sons and daughters.

Romans 8:14–17

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

We can see the love of God for His children; that He gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. For God knows that the truth will make us fully free from all bondage to fear. Fear is the enemy’s primary tool to keep us bound so we never fully know the love of our Father. The thought of us fully knowing our Father’s love terrifies the enemy. When we fully know Father’s love, all fear will leave us and we will become bold witnesses for Jesus. No weapon formed against us will prosper, but be turned back upon our enemy’s head. What a frightful thought to Satan.

The Spirit of God leads us into the knowledge of all Christ has done to set us free. Then He leads us into complete knowledge of the full range of our liberty and authority in the Kingdom of God.

In the process of learning all the blessings of God in His love for us, we will discover that the Spirit of God loves us with the same love that Father and Jesus love us with. For He is God and God is love (1 John 4:8).

Think about it. The fruit of the Spirit includes love. Yet all the other ingredients listed as fruit of the Spirit coincide nicely with the attributes of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. The fruit of the Spirit is simply love because the seed planted in every newly born-again believer's new heart is a new spirit joined to and of the same loving nature as the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). Fruit only grows from seed. So the love of the Father and His Son growing to maturity within us includes the love of the Holy Spirit imparted into our spirit.

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

Our old stone cold hearts and our old dead spirits were not able to receive the seed of God's love. So as God gives each new believer a new heart of flesh and a new living spirit, He creates in each one perfect soil for His seed of love. He gives each one His precious Holy Spirit and each one becomes one with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). Truly old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). As this wonderful seed grows in each heart - love becomes the motivation for what we say and do.

The one thing the enemy uses to derail this natural process or slow it down is the lie that the blood of Jesus is not fully sufficient to cleanse our consciences of all evil dead works of our flesh. Fear comes in and deceives us into adding our own works of righteousness to appease God's anger. Hebrews 6:1 calls these dead works, for we have no righteousness to add by any work we can do. Anything we do to add to what Jesus has done is a dead work. Jesus fulfilled all the law for us.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Our old man could never walk in the faith that pleased God. However, the new man, born of the Heavenly seed, has the faith which works naturally in us through love.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

The combination of love and faith is the gift of God within us which causes us to walk in the statutes and ordinances of the New Covenant.

Love and faith; faith and love, work together to cancel the enemy's lie, drive out fear and make it natural for us to walk in the Spirit with Jesus and God the Father.

By the way, the statutes and ordinances of the New Covenant are simple and only two in number.

1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Faith and Love

Faith believes in the One whom God the Father sent to bring us back to Him.

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Who did God send? Who else but Jesus, the Son of His love. The first part of His commandment is to believe on the name of His Son. The second part is to love one another according to the New Commandment Jesus gave in John 13, that we love one another with the love by which He loves us.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

This we will do. Not by external pressure to perform for acceptance. For, we are even now accepted by God the Father in His Beloved Son (Ephesians 1:6). We will love one another with the love Jesus has for us according to our new nature which we receive directly from God.

2 Peter 1:2–4

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

Power and Love

Drawing from earlier chapters you may notice, according to Scriptures cited, that walking after the Spirit enables you to put to death the deeds of the flesh (Romans 8:13) so that you do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). You are able to shift your focus from what the flesh wants to what the Spirit wants (Romans 8:5). This is how sin loses its hold on us and we realize the truth that we are no longer under the law but under grace. But there is so much more the Spirit would lead you into than what He is leading you out of.

In the past when we remained focused on the flesh and its passions we remained in the realm of sin and death. Its only resource to prevent tearing one another apart was the law of sin and death. The law actually empowers sin; therefore, the cycle gets deeper and more destructive. This is witnessed by the history of Israel under the rule of their kings. The nation went deeper and deeper into sin. Galatians 5:19-21 shows you the results for anyone who relies upon rules to keep people in line.

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Though you accept Christ, while focused on rules, you will not be able to walk after the Spirit into kingdom reality, kingdom power nor kingdom living. You will continually experience death in the details.

On the contrary, being led by the Spirit produces life. Life is more than powerful ministry. It's true that the powerful ministries of Peter and John and later Paul are testimony to the anointing of the Spirit upon their lives. But the fruit of the Spirit, love, is the real evidence of walking after the Spirit. You may be used to heal the

sick, but without love that adds nothing to you. Being led by the Holy Spirit brings you deeper into the place where there is no external law; but the law of the Spirit, which is the law of love, springs from within where the Spirit resides, for He is love. Turning one's focus from rules onto the Spirit of God results in kingdom living; **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).**

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Faith and love are the two keys to the kingdom – not power ministry. The end result of walking after the Spirit is that you live like a King's son, because you know you are. You enter into the reality of full inheritance. Romans 5:17b comes into view.

Romans 5:17b . . . those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

You are no longer slaves to the law, to your flesh or to sin. The believer who follows the Spirit is led into a life of love and of power. You are able to reign in life by Jesus Christ who has given you His life and the Holy Spirit who guides you out of darkness and despair into His marvelous light of love, security and all the resources of Heaven to accomplish whatever the Spirit lays on your new hearts.

God wants power ministry to flow from His heart of love, through our hearts of love to hearts starving for love. When the source of power ministry is God's love then the fruit will be hearts secure in the His love. You reap what you sow.

Reading the account of Peter and John taking the hand of the man at Gate Beautiful, you can sense the love of God in Peter's words, "**Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.**" (Acts 3:6).

Anointing to heal works whether there is love in the minister's heart or not. God can show His love to a person by healing them in such a situation. But what of the person who ministers the healing? He/she may be after the praise of men – and will get it, but gain nothing of eternal value in God's kingdom. God's not the author of win-lose deals. Both the minister and the seeker are equally important to God. He's more interested in you than what you can do for Him.

The Holy Spirit will lead you into the depths of God's love, if you will follow. There is a place of peace and rest in God's heart for each of us. It's in the center of God's love. To minister healing from that place will not wear you out. It will be that natural flow of God's power and love. Those who get worn out in ministry should ask God if they are following the Spirit or the praise of men.

Jesus fed the 5,000 because He loved them. But when their interest in Him was more for bread than God's love, He sent them away. When your desire is to know God and His love, the Spirit will lead you to the Secret Place.

Power ministry is important; for some men will dismiss the ministry of love without it. Yet love is more important. Without it we misunderstand the motive of God's heart.

1 Corinthians 13:2, 8-10, 13

² And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

⁸ Love never fails. But whether *there are prophecies*, they will fail; whether *there are tongues*, they will cease; whether *there is knowledge*, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is love*.

A good example of the Holy Spirit leading by love in the use of power ministry is found in Acts 13:6-12. The Deputy of the region, Sergius Paulus, was about ready to receive Christ. With such a man influenced by a Jewish sorcerer, Elymas, the region would be difficult to win for Christ. The Holy Spirit moved Paul to speak for Him and thereby cancel the effect and influence of Elymas as a sorcerer. The Deputy came to Christ, thus preparing the way for the name of Christ to be lifted up and many souls would come into the kingdom.

In love, Elymas was not killed as a sorcerer would be under the law. The Holy Spirit led Paul to so speak as to remove the veil of darkness from his eyes by which he saw things falsely. He would be blind, but only for a season; just as Paul was blinded on the road to Damascus for a season. Love was behind this use of power. Should Elymas turn to Christ there would now be two powerful influences upon the people to receive Christ – the Deputy and the Prophet – rescued from the devil's camp. But first each must know the love of God for them.

Acts 13:6-12

⁶ Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, ⁷ who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? ¹¹ “And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹² Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are led first and foremost by God’s love.

Notice in Acts 1:8, Jesus said we would receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, not before. You get the Holy Spirit first, then power. You get love first, then power. When you commune with the Holy Spirit you discover that love is more important than power. But both are necessary.

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Peter and John were not drawing attention to themselves when they spoke the words of healing to the man at Gate Beautiful. They were moved with love and compassion to release the power to heal him.

Contrast Flesh and Spirit

The Holy Spirit will not lead you to rely upon the power of your flesh. He will lead you to trust His power within you, for you and through you. Being led by the Spirit is contrasted with being led by our flesh or evil spirits.

Being led by the Spirit of God is:

NOT BY:

BUT BY:

The flesh	His power
The law	His grace
Fear and hatred	Faith, hope and love
Condemnation	Goodness and mercy
Bitterness	Love and forgiveness
Rejection	His abiding presence
Panic	The mind of Christ
Witchcraft or spirit guides	The Word of God
The ways of death	The way of truth into life
Murmuring and complaining	Praising God
Vainglory and pride	Humble submission to God

1 John 4:1-6

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. ⁴ You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

The Holy Spirit will always affirm that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. He will move you to take steps in faith that you could not take without God's grace. He will not condemn you for failing, but will instead give you direction for success as you wait on Him. The result will be that the name of Jesus is lifted up and you are drawn deeper into intimacy with God.

A spirit mimicking the Holy Spirit will not confess that Jesus came in the flesh and will lead you to trust other spirit guides instead. But the destinations they lead to are filled with frustration and despair or arrogance and idol worship.

Ask the Holy Spirit how He leads. Evil spirits will partner with your flesh and produce distrust in God. The left column below is filled with the ways of the

world, the flesh and evil spirits. For each way of the flesh on the left let the Holy Spirit show you His way. Place His answers in the column to the right.

Led by the flesh or evil spirits

The Holy Spirit leads by or into:

Torment	
Pressure	
Lack	
Harassment	
Criticism / ridicule	
Meanness	
Pushing you	
Demons	
Endless sorrow	
Hurry	
Evil temptations	
Strife	
Greed	
Rules	
Fear of failure	
Hopelessness	

(See Appendix 1 for some answers as to how the Holy Spirit leads.)

God loves you and wants the best for you. The Holy Spirit will only lead you into God's good, pleasing and perfect will for you life. Let Hm!

This little exercise will help you discover just how ready the Holy Spirit is to speak to you. The simplest way the Holy Spirit leads is by speaking. God creates by speaking. Jesus saves and heals today as we speak what the Holy Spirit leads us to speak. The Holy Spirit, Jesus and God the Father speak to those who will listen. This is why Jesus says so often throughout the New Testament, **"He who has ears to hear, let him listen to and heed what the Spirit says to the churches."**

HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS

The Spirit speaks directly. The church at Antioch heard the Spirit speak and they released Paul and Barnabas to Asia Minor to win Gentiles to Christ. He speaks in visions. While in Asia Minor, Paul was praying (speaking to God and waiting for an answer) and He was shown a vision of a man in Macedonia who was calling out for help.

Later in his life the Spirit led Paul to Jerusalem though he knew by prophetic words that he would be put in chains there. Because he knew it was God leading him, he trusted God all the way. While under Roman guard Jesus stood by Paul and spoke so he would know where his willingness to follow would take him: Rome.

Acts 23:10, 11

¹⁰ Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks. ¹¹ But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

Such long term direction helps keep one on track through trials and despite long delays. Paul endured several years in prison and perilous travels while under Roman guard before reaching Rome.

Instant Direction

We also see in Paul’s ministry, examples of moment-by-moment promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14:8-10

⁸ And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. ⁹ *This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked.

Paul had learned to recognize the Holy Spirit stirring up faith in a person. He had learned how to follow the Holy Spirit in such moments.

As Paul learned, so you can learn.

There are many simple situations in which you can learn how the Holy Spirit speaks. When you lose things or forget where you put something, ask Him to show you where to look. Then wait for a word or a picture or sense of where to look. If you need to organize better or a strategy to accomplish a complex task, ask Him to give you a plan that works for you. Be ready to write it down or draw it up. One year, every Saturday morning God would put plans in my mind how to take down huge oak trees until every tree that had to come down came down. I did

not know how, but because He showed me, I knew it would work. *Make sure you know the leading of the Holy Spirit before you attempt such a task.*

When you read the word of God, why not ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand? Ask Him what He is saying to you in the Scriptures. Write down what He speaks or shows you. Learn to be content with what He shows you in each moment. He will show more and speak more as you are ready to hear more. Check out what you believe He is showing you with someone who knows the word of God and has the good fruit of the Spirit evident in their life.

I remember several years of daily journals in which I wrote what the Spirit was teaching me in the Scriptures. Yet as I asked Him to explain why bad things happen to innocent children – I got nothing. I read some good teachings to explain it, but they did not satisfy me. After about 3 to 4 years the Holy Spirit started to show me some principles about love and goodness and then linking issues of free-will and responsibility for one's choices.

Finally, it all came together and the Holy Spirit spoke plainly to me about it. I explain this in detail in our manual called, "God is Good."

But in short: God is love and He created us to love. For love to real, it must be freely chosen. For the choice to be real there must be an equal opposite to choose: hate. In addition, the available choices must result in real affects. The choice to love must lead to real blessings. The choice to hate must lead to real negative affects on real people. God warns us about this in the principle (law) of sowing and reaping. If you hate God and hate people – hate will return upon you in increased measure. If you love God and love people – love will return to you in increased measure.

Matthew 7:1, 2

¹ "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

The Holy Spirit is God and God is love. He will meet you wherever and however you are. But if you will choose to listen and learn to discern His voice and His leading, He will lead you out of darkness and into His marvelous light; out of hatred into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. He will pour love into your heart and teach you how to live out of that love; giving it more and more freely and fully until it transforms you.

The choice is always yours.

1 John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 3:1, 2

¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN HIS WORDS ABIDE IN YOU

John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

I often have an experience with the Lord in which I picture myself in Christ at the right hand of the Father. This occurs in my mind, but also in my heart. I wait until I can actually sense His presence. I know when I am there when I can have a sense of looking up and know He is looking at me. He is never angry, though He sometimes corrects me.

In this position of heart I will often ask Him what He would say to me. One morning Jesus spoke John 15:7 into my heart. He spoke it several times until I had the sense that He was helping me meditate on His words. His words began to take on life and meaning within me and I could understand their application in a couple of relationships that are important to me.

In the Amplified Version of the Bible Jesus said in **Revelation 3:21**, “**He who overcomes (is victorious) I will grant to sit beside Me on My throne, as I Myself overcame (was victorious) and sat down beside My Father on His throne.**”

I notice that as I sense the presence of God, I become able to let go of my will on the important concerns of my life at that moment. I become able to decide that whatever His will is, I will yield to that, for I know it is best for me. Yes, we all know that His will is best for us at all times. Yet, in the struggles of daily living, we need Him to bring that truth home to our hearts so we can let go. We hold onto our choices even when we know we are wrong. He helps me yield to His will in His presence. Abiding in Him is a very powerful thing.

This is what it means to overcome at any specific point in time. This is where Adam failed and where I have failed. This is where Jesus overcame. And now, by His grace, I overcome. Jesus was fully committed to do only the Father’s will.

When I am able to bring my heart before the Lord I begin to hear God speak something into my heart. His word first comes into my mind. I may wrestle with it for some time. I have wrestled with God’s will (His word to me) many times for weeks, even months. But as I continue to come to Him and wait in His presence, He does a work in me that gives me the ability to yield to His will. His word gets

into my heart and there it also becomes my word. It begins to live in me and produce life the way only His word can.

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.”

When we allow Jesus to speak to us whatever He wants, a seed of His word is planted in our hearts that yields a harvest. A process begins in us that brings us to victory. It works ability in us to submit to His will and overcome. We become able to sit with Jesus on His throne. We are actually in Him as He sits there (Ephesians 2:6).

When I have concerns, I need His word. It is one thing to open the Bible and read a verse that I know is true and applies to my situation. It is another thing entirely to get before the Lord (sit in His presence) and wait for Him to speak. The word He speaks may be a Scripture as was the case with me that one morning. However, there are other times He speaks to me (by His Spirit) the way He spoke to Peter the day Peter walked on water. Peter said to Jesus (Matthew 14:28, 29), **“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”**

Peter was not referring to a Scripture. There was no Scripture to refer to in this moment. He was a simple man relating to Jesus in a moment of faith. Jesus did not speak from the Scriptures to answer Peter. He did not quote the prophets or Moses. He simply, as the Word of God Who He is, spoke a word to Peter, **“Come.”** This word connected with the faith rising in Peter’s heart and gave Peter the courage to do the will of God; walk on the water to Jesus. Yet this act of faith began in Peter’s heart. He was asking Jesus to command him to do something he himself wanted to do. Jesus granted it to him.

What is your need or concern? Get into God’s presence. Get as close to Him as you can. Let go of your pre-conceived answers and your requirements that God do it a certain way. When you can let go of your ways, you can hear Him speak His way. Jesus is the Word of God – the Way to hear the Truth that gives life.

Do not just open the Bible. Open it and wait for the Spirit of God to release a word from the Word, Who is Jesus! Then you will be hearing the Father’s will.

Jesus, Our Strong Tower

John 15:7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

This verse brought a few other verses to mind as I asked the Lord about it. And Jesus told me, “When you are in Me, you are also in the Father.” Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus.

John 17:21-23

²¹“that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²²“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³“I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

See what Jesus prayed in verse 21? “**That they also may be one in Us.**” Jesus wants us to be one with each other, one with Him and one with the Father. As I meditated upon this I could see myself in Christ inside God the Father and I recognized what a perfect place of safety and strength this is. He indeed is our fortress and our strong tower.

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.

The righteous run into Him and are safe. Righteousness is accounted to us whenever we trust God’s word over every other word. That puts us into the Word of God, Jesus, our Strong Tower. What Proverbs 18:10 literally means is that the righteous one is safe and high above his enemies. They cannot reach him.

Psalm 18:1-3

- ¹ I will love You, O LORD, my strength.
- ² The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
- ³ I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

Psalm 61:1-4

- ¹ HEAR my cry, O God;
Attend to my prayer.
- ² From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed;

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
3 For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah

Psalm 119:113-117

113 I hate the double-minded,
But I love Your law.
114 You *are* my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.
115 Depart from me, you evildoers,
For I will keep the commandments of my God!
116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;
And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.
117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe,
And I shall observe Your statutes continually.

When we abide in Christ, the enemy cannot reach us because we are in Him and He is in God the Father. This is an unassailable position. **“Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” Ephesians 1:21.**

Further, as we consider Jesus as the Word of God (John 1:1) and remember that to abide in Him is to abide in the Word we know His word is a strong tower for us. Yet when we abide in the Word we are half way to the point of this verse. The other half is that the Word must abide in us. The Psalmist said, **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!” Psalm 119:11.**

Before we can ask what we will, we need to be in Him, abiding, and His word needs to be abiding in us. Both these points are equally important. When His word is in abundance in our hearts (Matthew 12:34) over every other word and it is that way continually, then we can say His word abides in us. When that is our reality and we also abide in Him, then we can ask what we will and it shall be done for us.

Bear in mind that this is possible or Jesus would not have spoken it to His disciples.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1, YET 3

There are many rivers that flow into the oceans of the world: The Amazon, Danube, Darling, Euphrates, Ganges, Mississippi, Nile, Ob, Yangtze, etc. etc. Each river flows pure and free at its source. On the way to the ocean each river passes by various sources of impurity and contamination: chemical plants, cities, factories, farms, power plants and what have you. The water that flows into the ocean is not the same pure water that flowed from the source.

There is a river, however, that remains pure and undefiled from its source to you. That river flows from the throne of God and from the Lamb (Revelation 22:1). It flows unhindered and pure right into the spirit of every born again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It does not stop there. That river flows out of the spirit (belly) of each believer as living water. It is the River of Life and it brings life wherever it goes. Jesus told us about that river.

John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Holy Spirit is that River of Life. The ocean He flows into is the ocean of humanity. Though most of us in the world have become polluted in our spirits from other sullied rivers, the River of the Holy Spirit does not mix with the waters of the world as it flows through the ocean. It remains pure, distinct and undefiled as it passes near you. All you have to do is invite the Lamb of God into your heart and the River of the Spirit will divert its course and flow into and through you; purifying you completely of all impurities and all defilement.

Before this could happen Jesus had to complete His work of redemption to free us from the penalty and power of sin. He had to live sinless, be crucified by sinners and shed His blood as the innocent Lamb of God, die on the cross, travel to Hades and set all believers free to follow Him to Heaven, and pour out His blood on the altar of God before His throne. Once this was all done He could sit down next to His Father in Heaven and rejoice as the Father released the Holy Spirit to flow like a river into the ocean of humanity to set all who will receive Him, as Savior, free.

God has done this for us because of His great love. One God, yet you can see He exists and acts in the roles of three distinct persons.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

John 14:16, 17

¹⁶ “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jesus prayed to (asked) Father God and Father God sent the Holy Spirit to live in us forever.

John 14:20, 23

²⁰ “At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Jesus and the Father are individual, yet One. It is not that they are the same person, anymore than we are God simply because He has made us one with Himself and His Son.

John 17:21 “that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

We are one together in the body of Christ, yet we remain individual, just as every cell in a body is one with the body but each one is an individual cell.

At the moment a believer accepts Christ as Savior, the word of God says the Holy Spirit baptizes the new child of God into the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For in fact the body is not one member but many.

We become one with the body, while simultaneously remaining individual members.

1 Corinthians 12:27 (Amplified Bible) Now you [collectively] are Christ's body and [individually] you are members of it, each part severally *and* distinct [each with his own place and function].

At the moment the Holy Spirit joins Himself to our spirit we become one with Him. This oneness with the Spirit is like pouring one fruit juice into another. The two become one and seemingly impossible to separate.

1 Corinthians 6:17, 19, 20

¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*.

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?* ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Does this mean we are now little gods? No! But we do partake of His divine nature according to Peter (2 Peter 1:4). We are one with Him despite remaining individuals, able to make choices not aligned with His will. We have access to the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), yet still must choose for ourselves to trust His ways.

So Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One, while being distinctly individual members of the Godhead. They are One, yet Three.

A baby is birthed out of the mother because cells from the father joined to cells within the mother. A child was conceived. At first the child was one in every way with the mother. Then as the child grew within her the child became her or his "own self" able to survive outside of the mother. The child would grow into a young adult able to thrive apart from both parents.

In this way cells leave our bodies and live on in our children. Later, we die, yet our children live. Cells die within our bodies every day, yet we live on.

So it is with the members of the body of Christ. We live and die but the church remains.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One eternally, yet can function individually. One way in which Father, Son and Holy Spirit function together while they act as individuals is in the role of witness. By God's wisdom He has decreed that guilt in a crime must be established by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15).

2 Corinthians 13:1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”

Those witnesses must be competent, trustworthy and individual. A man can declare another man guilty but he needs two separate witnesses. The same is true if an unknown person comes forward to declare himself to be the heir of a deceased person. To receive anything of value the presumed heir must have proof; either by properly witnessed documents or by living credible witnesses. The man cannot simply step to one side of himself and declare himself to be a witness. One cannot witness for himself.

Silly to make such an argument you say? Some make this same silly argument when they assert that Father God is Jesus and is the Holy Spirit.

1 John 5:6, 7

⁶ This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

The Spirit can bear witness for Jesus because He is not Jesus. Notice that the Father, the Word (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit are listed in verse 7 as witnesses. If the Father is Jesus and if the Father is the Holy Spirit, then there would only be one witness. Throughout Scripture we see the Father witness that Jesus is His Son (John 8:18, 1 John 5:9, Matthew 3:17). We see Jesus witness that His Father is God (John 6:27; 8:42, 54; 16:27, 28; 17:1-5). We see the Spirit of God witness independently that Jesus is the Son of God (Luke 10:21, 22) and that Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the Son of man (1 John 4:2).

Whether you believe that Jesus is the Father and the He is the Holy Spirit or you believe as I do, that they are mysteriously One God yet Three distinct persons; it is clear that the Spirit of God will witness with your spirit that Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the Son of man. Any human spirit that denies this is not speaking by the Spirit of God. For it is only by the Holy Spirit that men can say that Jesus is Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

When we believe on the One whom the Father has sent and we accept Jesus as Savior, at that moment the Holy Spirit joins Himself to our spirits making Himself one with our spirits. We then become naturally and easily able to say that Jesus is Lord!

But this is just the beginning. Praise the Lord Jesus!

In the same way the Holy Spirit becomes one with our spirit and yet distinctive, He also is able to be one with the Spirit who is God the Father (Matthew 10:20) and with the Spirit of Christ (Luke 23:46) and yet distinctive.

Matthew 10:20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, *‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’*” Having said this, He breathed His last.

The following verse (Romans 8:9) could be taken to mean that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. But it could also be taken to mean that the Holy Spirit dwells in a believer and the Spirit of Christ also dwells within the believer according to John 14:17 and 20.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Yet, either statement could not be thought to contain the whole truth of the intimate relationship among the members of the Godhead. The Trinity is too deep a mystery to be captured in such simplicity. In some way the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and also the Spirit of Christ.

Some try to get this all figured out so they can validate their doctrine. We may never be able to know the details of the mystery of the Trinity. It is too marvelous to comprehend with our limited capacity. Regardless, there are wonderful experiences we may have as we fellowship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-20

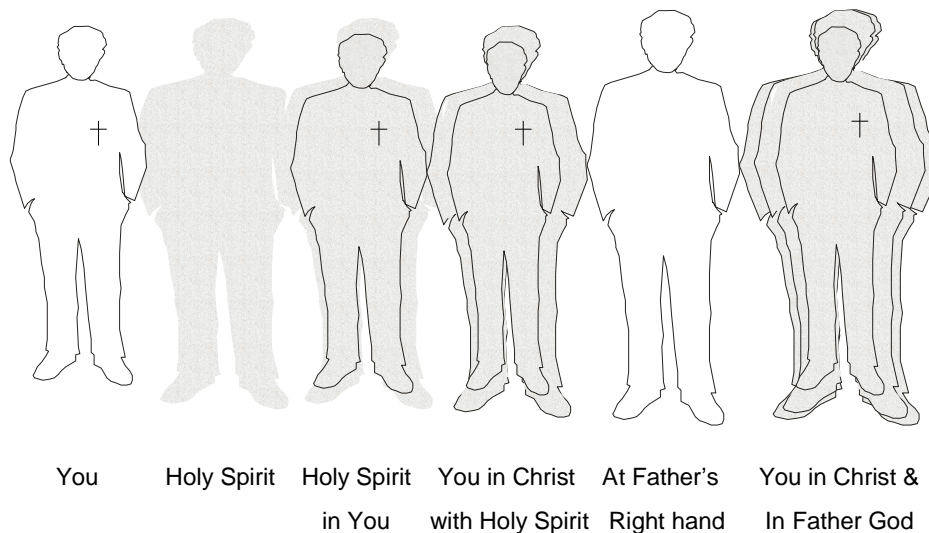
¹⁶ “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me.

Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

The Spirit of Christ is able to be one with the Spirit of Father God. Because we are spirits made new and holy by the blood of Christ, we are also able to be one with the Spirit of Christ and one with the Spirit of God the Father. This is all possible by the Holy Spirit through Whom we all have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18).

We are able to be in Christ Who is in the Father while the Holy Spirit is all around and all through each of us.

Picture it this way. You accept Christ as Savior (Romans 10:9, 10). The Holy Spirit becomes one with your spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17). He then baptizes you into Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13). Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20, 2:6). Jesus then steps into Father God with you inside (John 14:20). So, there you are in Christ, in the Father and the Holy Spirit is in your spirit (John 14:17), and all around you as He is also One with the Spirits of Christ and Father God.



These images seem rather fanciful and improbable. I have embraced them, however, because they were suggested to me in prayer as I asked God to help me understand my relationship to Him. He has used images for many years to help me

understand and, in the process; truths about His Trinitarian nature became clear. It has been remarkable to me how many other people from different nations have had similar experiences in times of prayer and meditation. You might think that such images were suggested to me by others prior to my personal times of prayer in which they then occurred to me. But that is not the case. Several episodes over a span of years occurred in times of prayer before I heard any others speak of their own similar experiences.

Prior to the Lord using such images with me I had never had any visual images as I read verses of Scripture speaking of the body of Christ or being in Christ. My natural inclination was to associate such passages with movie scenes of governmental bodies such as Congress or the British House of Commons. I remember statements that included the phrase “*this body*”, in which the actor referred to the collective members of the House of Commons or the U.S. Senate. These were the normal concepts that came to my mind when I would read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

When Christ started to speak to me that I am like one cell among a countless multitude in His body, it was a totally new concept to me. At the first occurrence of these images I had been a Christian and serving in many roles in the church for 20 years. As I had been in the U.S. Air Force all that time, I and my family had been in churches and fellowships in many states and two other countries. Yet we had never heard anyone speak like this.

The Place of Authority

God’s use of these images has helped and accelerated my understanding of the spiritual authority I have in Christ. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father far above all demonic rule and influence.

Ephesians 1:20, 21

²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

And we as the church and His body are in Him as He sits there.

Ephesians 1:22, 23

²² And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 2:6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus

God has used these images to help many in the body of Christ to function in confident authority over the wiles of the devil and the works of the enemy in all their forms in the world and in the atmosphere around us. Jesus is truly the Lord of Hosts and there are at least twice as many powerful angels with Him as there are fallen angels with the devil. Believers who know their authority in Christ just dismiss demons with one word and declare deliverance and healing with another. This is God's plan and pleasure. Notice the pleasure of Christ as His disciples reported to Him their discovery of their authority in His name.

Luke 10:17-24

¹⁷ Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." ¹⁸ And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. ²⁰ "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." ²¹ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²² "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*." ²³ Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; ²⁴ "for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it*, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it*."

Our confident authority in Christ is one of God's purposes in redemption from sin and the lies and corruption the enemy has used to blind and bind us. God sent Jesus to set us free to walk with Him in dominion, holiness, light and love. He set us free and empowered us to set others free. Let's agree with God's purpose and His plan.

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are One, yet Three. Don't try to figure it all out. But know they are eager to help you know them individually and together. You have not because you ask not. Why not ask God to open your understanding of their great love for you and their invitation to walk with them in Spirit and Truth? It is a great adventure you will not want to miss.

Appendix 1

Contrast Flesh and Spirit

Torment	Love and joy
Pressure	Love and peace
Lack	Full provision
Harassment	Kindness and gentleness
Criticism / ridicule	Encouragement
Meanness	Goodness
Pushing you	Leading you
Demons	Angels
Endless sorrow	Mourning turns to joy in the morning
Hurry	Patience
Evil temptations	Godly desires
Strife	Longsuffering
Greed	Charity
Rules	Relationship
Fear of failure	Expectation of success
Hopelessness	Faith, hope and love