

There is nothing the nearness of Christ cannot overcome

Revelations!

Often I used to pray, "Lord, I want all of the revelation of You that is possible for a human being to have in this life." Over, and over, and over again I prayed it. Then one day He spoke: "The revelation of My Son is like a roomful of treasure chests. There is one chest for every one of My children, but no child will receive them all. There is one for you, and that one you can have." I more fully understood the body of Christ and His love for each and every one of us. Just as the body needs countless cells to express a human being, it takes countless believers to begin to express all that Jesus is. He is way too big for one person, and any one person that believes he possesses it all is deluded. Paul himself said that we are like members of the body; he refused to see himself as the whole body. I am afraid that many believers have succumbed to the Christian caste system, wherein a particular believer or a certain expression of the body becomes the norm or standard for everyone else. In my early days of being a believer I remember attempting to copy another person's expression of Christ. It was error then and it is error now. I have often said that if I could change anything in my Christian life as it developed, it would be one thing: I would have taken all of the "great" people of God and kept them on the fringe of my life where they belong, leaving Jesus in the center. No one person has it all, and we each have what He has determined is best for us and has given to us.

II Corinthians

4:7,

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves."

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If Only I Knew Then What I Know Now!

Revelation does not come through effort; it will come through life and can take years to arrive. Revelation can never be forced; it is an outgrowth of our lives in a fallen body and in a fallen world. Revelation comes in the fullness of time; therefore, time is essential, and the longer one lives, the more revelation he will receive. Many exit at an early age, having been given the revelation that is needed for a move from this reality to THE reality. Life with a small "I" is constantly teaching us of Life with a capital "L." That is why revelation waits in the future for life to prepare us for what Life would teach us. In the fullness of time, we will receive what we would not have received at an earlier time. There is no need to be frustrated and make silly comments like, "I wish I would have known that sooner." At a sooner time we could not have received it and would not have "known" it. This planet and our lives are not made up of random experiences. This world is the womb in which the things of God are made known to us, and just as a baby is methodically formed in the womb of the mother, the child of God is methodically formed in the womb of the world. God is the God of order, not of chaos; therefore, everything comes in order. To say, "If only I had known this sooner" is assuming that "knowing" is what has made the change in us. Rather, it was revelation. Knowledge can come at any time, and yet revelation must come at the fullness of time as our "time" on earth prepares the way. "If only I could go back and make different decisions!" Well, if we could go back, we would be the same persons that we were back then, and we would make the same decisions. However, such a statement does reveal that we have grown, and the new persons that we are today would never have made such decisions. We have mentioned before that there are journey people and destination people. As believers we need to accept that we are all on a journey and enjoy the journey. In the fullness of time, God is teaching us. We cannot hurry up that process (Bible schools and seminaries are the proof of that). If the process cannot be hurried, then we must accept the way of things on the earth and rest in Him. The Holy Spirit will bring the revelation, His teaching that moves from head to heart, in the fullness of time.

Romans 7:18-20,

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh, for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."



Staying On Point

I was presented a list to follow that would assure any believer's deliverance from the enemy. Looking at the list I began thinking to myself how everything in the steps to freedom could be done by an unbeliever. That being the case, how could the list be Christ-centered? Jesus was not mentioned in even one of the ten steps. Any list that calls for the flesh to do something to improve itself is ultimately doomed to failure. There may be initial success, but in the long term, there will be none. Steps taken in the power of the flesh would have to eradicate flesh, and the flesh will have none of that! It will not participate in destroying or hindering itself! (The odd thing about Satan is that he loves to stir the flesh, but he is at the same time an enemy of the flesh, since he is involved in every suicide and murder to destroy man.) In these times there are myriad methods for club growth, personal growth, financial growth, family growth, and spiritual growth. Be alert and ask the question, "Could this method apply to an unbeliever? Could an unbeliever follow the same steps?" If so, Christ has been left out and we are fixing to be sidetracked. Start with what He has already done for us, get a firm grasp of that, and then move to more of what He has done for us. It is a struggle. I often find myself headed down a track that I do not want to take. I get a check in my spirit and stop talking about the latest book, method, miracle, experience, and doctrine and move back to Him. I have prayed for the last thirty-seven years that God would be gracious to me and not allow me to move from Jesus, add to Jesus, subtract from Jesus, or stop lifting Him up. It is true that He is our sufficiency. I cannot count the programs that are going around today, and few ask why the last program did not produce what it promised it would when introduced two years ago. Why are those that were so involved in the latest "move" of God back in the same place? Let hearts and minds dwell on the Man who did everything and yet did nothing, for it was the Father doing it through Him. Then ask for testimonies of growth and God's faithfulness at the end of two years of that.

Galatians 1:6-9,

"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"



Repent!

Many say they are called to exhort people to repent, but their call so often is exhibited as something of a one-off from what we know the Old Testament prophets were; for them repentance centered more in the root than the fruit as they sought to bring people back to God. Today the call to repentance seems to take the form of spreading a rebuke, such as, "You think you are saved, but you are not! You call yourselves My children but do not act like My own. If you would have loved Me you would have kept My word. I am going to cut you off and give your portion to those that obey Me," thus says the Lord." It is fairly consistent and only ends in condemnation, even though we know that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Men instruct on the topic of discipline with a similar approach and fervor, and that, too, ends in condemnation. The offenders' sin is pointed out, coupled with a threat to punish. Because of such teaching by the religious who wrongly present God's judgment, one fellow said, "I wish I would have waited to accept Christ until the last minute, got baptized, and had someone shoot me as I came up out of the water. At least that way I would not have accumulated so much of the judgment of God as a believer." This man expressed a common feeling that has occurred among Christians throughout the centuries, but this kind of view of judgment is not dealing with the root but rather the behavior, the fruit. There are two types of discipline: one is punishment, which reaps few benefits and is rarely successful, and the other is a self-discipline that takes a person back to Christ. A Christian who finds himself continually in the deeds of the flesh does need discipline, but it is that found

Romans 2:4,

"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"





within himself that can enable him to begin and end each day recognizing the presence of Christ. It is our job as disciple-makers to pull that person aside and urge him to go to the Lord and abide. The subsequent awareness of the fact of Christ's indwelling that is living through him will free him from the deeds of the flesh. ("If perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth," II Timothy 2:25.) It has been proven that continually emphasizing a person's deeds of the flesh will never set him free from the flesh. ("But the sorrow of the world produces death," II Corinthians 7:9.) Believers ought to be disciplined in recognizing Christ. It does take time to teach that understanding; Jesus spent three-and-a-half years with his disciples. However, the fruit of taking this approach is verifiable, for Jesus said that the Father prunes. To say it another way, when we abide, the deeds of the flesh fall off of us. Unfortunately, there are those that will refuse this discipline; they willingly continue in the deeds of the flesh, making themselves an unhealthy leaven in the Body, and at this point to disfellowship them is appropriate. As for the call to spread the message of repentance, it generally is meant to be a call to stop a particular behavior, and repentance is seen as different from forgiveness. The hiccup enters in when Christians do repent and subsequently continue in the same behavior. This is again where Jesus is tying the hands of man and forcing us to a life of abiding, for only the living Christ within can make a permanent change in behavior. Therefore, the message of repentance without the message of the indwelling Christ is incomplete and will not be attainable.



Only One Faith

For years I would read the passage in Ephesians and attempt to discern what was the “one faith” of the Christians. I think I had read the passage so many times with a religious pair of glasses that I was missing the context. The “one faith” referred to is not the one faith among the many faiths in the world, but a statement of fact that there is but one faith, and everything else is a religion. The basic difference between faith and religion is that religion’s success will somehow end at the feet of the worshipper, whereas the success of faith ends at the feet of God. Hence, religion is all about man, and faith is all about God. Religious people are not exercising faith in God; just listen to them talk to realize that life for them revolves around their behavior, knowledge, or attitudes. Whether it be the piety of the Buddhist, the meditation of the Hindu, the gyrations of the Voodoo priest, the Law keeper, the candle (or incense) lighter, the kingdom builder, the “cutting edge” preacher, or the doctrinally correct, there exists between them the fellowship of the religious. Among them, too, a great lie is perpetrated that the exercise of their religion somehow either alters the very flesh of man or the plane of flesh on which all men live. Religious people have an appearance of godliness, as described by Paul to Timothy: “For men will be lovers of self . . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.” Religious people define what form the godliness will take, so oddly enough they succeed at their own definition! Honestly, I have no vested interest in stating the obvious, but all religious people are failures. The adherents of humanism—which is one great competitor of faith—continue to take human beings’ less than 1% success at playing God and amplify it in their minds and communications until it looks more like 100%. Any of us could come up with a lengthy list of famous people that have been sainted beyond human recognition. Christians have done the same general distortion through stories and images

Ephesians 4:4-6,


“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”




of believers to the point that they would be unrecognizable to those that actually knew, lived, and worked with them. The saddest thing is that many, upon hearing of the exaggerated portrayal of a spectacular spiritual life, begin a lifelong journey to emulate the Christian, who in reality is non-existent. This imitating leads to the disastrous consequences of “acting religious” as they flesh out phony copies of the exalted. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Religious people, no matter what the religion, have fallen short of the glory of God. It is interesting that religious people will focus on certain aspects of religion that most cannot achieve in order to maintain their “position” in their manmade religion. Amen! There is one faith, and in that one faith God deals with man by putting success at His own feet. He gives an attainable faith, for God’s goal is to bring in as many as possible, while religion’s goal is to be as exclusive as possible. “But what does it say? ‘THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’” Paul, seeing the difference between the efforts of man that lead to religion and the work of God that leads to the one faith, rightly says, “Where then is the boasting?” “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.’” Religious people are like shadows that do not exist in the manner in which they would like to portray themselves. If there were one thing I would have changed in my early life as a Christian, it would have been to take all of the religious



Only One Faith cont.



people and move them to the fringe of my life, keeping Christ in the center. In this one faith, there will be times of discouragement, failure, doubt, bewilderment, rebellious children, loneliness, outbursts of anger, walking in the flesh, and more. There will also be times of unspeakable joy, fulfillment, satisfaction, encouragement, faith that is mountain moving, and unwavering focus. We are unique creatures, half spirit and half flesh. Just as we walk on two legs we must, for now, walk in two realities, that of the flesh and that of the spirit. Religious people seem to want to go through life hopping, either on the leg called flesh and wanting everything that the visible world might offer, or on the leg called spirit, living a life of avoidance of the world. Did you know no revival has ever taken place around a monastery, whether Buddhist or Christian? We must be of the one faith, of those that see this physical world as one in which life with a small "I" will reveal and perfect Life with a capital "L." The human being is not an accident, but is exactly what God wanted, for the physical must come before the spiritual. This earth, our bodies, our souls, and our spirits have a common goal: the revelation and choice of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Just as we bring a bit of heaven to earth, we will also take a bit of earth with us to heaven. Our minds will not go blank when we enter heaven. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you." When we enter heaven, we will remember and rejoice all the more in the Lamb that was slain.



Bible and Division

Of course there is as much dynamite in this passage as in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things." Together they can blow apart most religious institutions. Having acknowledged that it is odd that the Bible is the cause of so much division in the Church, one might say it is the cause for out-and-out hatred. I have imagined that each day, somewhere in the world, there is a church split over what the Bible says. I have noticed one thing that appears to be at the root of this conflict. When the Bible is used to prove itself, there will be division. The flesh of man loves to systematize. Religious flesh will develop a theory concerning a system and then twist any passages that do not fit, until what started out to be a theory has become an absolute. It has been proven that 90% of absolute medical discoveries will be shown as flawed within ten years (this is according to a leading British Medical Journal). Science is used to prove science, and soon things are askew. When the Bible is used to witness to itself, things quickly go awry. Some very conservative "theologians" change the Scripture to fit their systems, not overtly but covertly, through the back door of their commentaries. I believe unity will be maintained among believers as long as the Bible does not witness to itself but rather, as Jesus said, is allowed to testify to Him. We would then have a synthesis around Jesus rather than a dissecting of a system. Of course, in all this, pride enters in and "theologians" go deaf and blind.

John 5:39, 40,

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."



Life on Earth, Part II

There are two things that strike me in this passage. First, it is a deathblow to the prosperity preaching that raises its ugly head from time to time. The passage acknowledges that in this life, in a Spirit-filled believer, there will be pain. I read that the denomination with the healthiest, longest living members are the Seventh Day Adventists. Apparently, those in denominations constantly harping on the exercising of "faith" do not live as long or as healthfully. I have discovered that the longing for physical healing is equal to a person's lack of inner evidence of the indwelling Christ. In the past, I was baffled when I saw all of the longing for physical healing, but then I realized that it was slanted more toward being validated by God than physical comfort. I did not say that, He did! "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah." Does this mean that we are not to pray for healing? Never! God does heal, but He does not do it to affirm His acceptance of us, to make a show of it, or to prove Himself. We are commanded to pray, and we must. I like what Andrew Murray and Watchman Nee taught: Death is our enemy. We do not yield to our enemy until the day that God tells us to. We pray for healing until the day that we know God is calling us out of this body. Often I have had it in my spirit to pray for the healing of someone. I actually witnessed the raising of a child from the dead, and, to my surprise, it was not spectacular, but in the normal course of ministry it was Jesus being Jesus, and no one stopped at the miracle but went on with Jesus. Also, I have told believers it was time for their departure when I knew that to be true in my spirit. I asked them to write letters to their families, sort out all of their finances (not to leave a mess for the kids to handle), and make sure all relationships are right. I am all for healing; however, I am also for God's using our sickness. I was very ill in Nepal and prayed through the night, "Lord, You must heal me, for I am not returning home. I have much work to do." The answer came early in the morning, "I will not heal you, but I will carry you through this sickness. You will not miss a meeting, and I will take you home." It was remarkable to be carried, in the arms of love, from meeting to meeting. It took me a few days to enter into the faith of what was happening and

Revelation

4:21,

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Life on Earth, Part II cont.

to believe that He would take me home. But He did! Since that day, no matter how sick I am, I remember that experience of how "He carried me." That occurrence of having been carried is one that I would not exchange for all the health in the world, for it has given me a wonderful confidence to move on, no matter how I feel, into the proclamations of "Christ in you the hope of glory."

The Teeter-totter Syndrome

You have probably seen the diagram of the corral with black horses and white horses. The point in the diagram is that if the gate is left open, both colors of horses will escape. If we open the door to the flesh, the unrighteous and the self-righteous flesh will both escape. Self-righteousness will lead to unrighteousness; hence, the rampant growth of immorality among the self-righteous. The converse is also true. It has taken me years to see that when I put my mind on autopilot, before I know it I am thinking of mistakes that I have made and giving myself a sound beating over failures, especially in my relationships with others. I go over what could have been said to help more, and blah, blah, blah. However, here is the thing that I noticed. Within thirty minutes of thinking about what I might have said, I will be thinking about how someone offended me. Within thirty minutes of thinking about a failure, I will be thinking about another's failure. This understanding has brought me to a place of what I believe is a healthy fear and a deeper understanding of what the Bible says, "Finally, whatever is true and right and pure and lovely, let your mind dwell on those things." Today, the moment that I start to think about my failures, stupidity, embarrassments, and offenses, or those of others, I immediately have a check in my spirit, heart, and mind that says, "If you go there, you will hang yourself by ending up in self-hatred. If you go there, you will be self- or man-centered, not Christ-centered." I immediately stop myself and move to Him. The freedom is something I have never experienced before. I am not being positive for the sake of being positive, which is shallow. I am merely setting my mind on the things above as I recognize I have been given the mind of Christ that is where my mind belongs.

Romans 8:6, 7,

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so."

Separating the Issues in Your Life

Then he said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

We see in this discourse that Jesus is separating the issues in the rich young ruler’s life. What the young man thought was the issue was not the only issue. We think that there is only one issue in our life to be resolved, and even if we discover that there are actually several, the mistake is made of looking for the one thing that will fix all of the issues at once. The same tool will not fix a flat tire, a sink, a bicycle spoke, and a computer; they all have separate problems that need different tools to repair. One answer does not work for every situation, and any one event carries with it several issues, each with a separate answer. The sign that a believer is looking for the magic elixir that will fix every issue is confusion. Therefore, the issues must be separated and dealt with accordingly, such as when an injustice occurs and spawns the need for blessing those that curse, loving the enemy, forgiveness, and the process of reconciliation that will bring closure. Let us take a look at those issues and break them down one by one.

1. We must bless those that curse us or they live in our heads and pay no rent.
2. Loving our enemies is commanded, for He makes His

Matthew 16:19-22,

And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?”

And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

(continued
above)






- sun to shine on the just and the unjust. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.
3. Forgiveness is a package. Just as a person cannot hold a tire and tell me he owns an automobile, since a car comprises many parts, so forgiveness has many parts. There is an offense, a break in relationship, confession by the offender, forgiveness given by the offended (there is no forgiveness for unforgiveness), all ending in restoration. Due to its very nature, there is no forgiveness without confession, since the purpose of forgiveness is restoration. "If we confess our sins," "repent for forgiveness of sins," and "as often as your brother comes to you," all show the context of the giving of forgiveness. We must carry a heart of forgiveness so that when it is asked for, we can dispense it freely. Does God forgive without confession? (I am not teaching here about the common concern of, "What if I die and I forgot to confess a sin?" Once a person is in Christ, Jesus died for all of his sins.) Confession for man is cleansing and releasing, but there is a common teaching that believers should go to an offender and offer forgiveness without any acknowledgement from the wrongdoer that a sin was committed. Instructing a young woman that has been abused to go and tell the uncle, "I forgive you," when the uncle has not asked for forgiveness, usually has a detrimental outcome. I have heard many stories of believers who went to someone to forgive him when it was not in the offender's heart to ask for it; the offender actually denied it, walked off, and/or condemned the hurt person for making such an accusation. This is soul killing anew for an injured believer. Many will argue that forgiveness is unconditional, but those two words do not go together, for "unconditional" implies that there is no sin, and if



Separating the Issues in Your Life cont.



no sin, there is no forgiveness. Yet all have sinned, and through confession, "He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Prodigal Son asked for forgiveness and was restored. Today there seems to be more emphasis on the need for the offended to forgive when it is not asked for, thus loading responsibility on the victim. Why not call attention to confession of the offender as something that is cleansing and restoring? Those that have sinned against another are cheated when there is no mention of confession. Confession and forgiveness are two words that are inseparable and should remain together. However, the victim is not stuck; there is something to do when confession has not, and may never, come. "Bless those that curse you," "do good to those that harm you," and "pray for those that persecute you." All of these things set us free and make us all the more excited about forgiving, should the occasion arise.

4. Forgiveness must be given when asked for. "Forgive us (See? We are asking) as we forgive our debtors." However, there is a process after forgiveness that brings closure. Let me explain. A man has an affair; once it is over, for three years he is tormented. He repents before God and then tells his wife, asking, naturally, for forgiveness. She must forgive. However, this has taken her completely by surprise, and she is extremely hurt. Yet, if she asks any further questions or gets angry in the future, he accuses her of walking in unforgiveness, which covertly shifts the load of the whole event to her shoulders. The children have been





hurt, the wife has been embarrassed and betrayed, there is a break in trust, and she has many unanswered questions; she needs closure. Though I do not want to camp at the event and want the couple to move forward, there are a few things that need to be said about forgiveness. Talking will help bring closure. Yes, she must move on, but talking and getting a few answers will help her do so. The same is true for the believer who has lost a loved one due to an injustice such as murder. We hear many stories about murderers asking for forgiveness, which must be granted by the family. However, normal questions ensue, such as, "How did he die? Where did you put the body?" (This was the question asked by the women at the grave of Jesus.) Some believers use an injustice and the lack of repentance to get stuck at a point of hatred and condemnation; there is no profit in that. Hearts are revealed through injustices, confession and forgiveness.

5. We must and will forgive. However, that does not mean that a lawbreaker should not go to prison. I Peter 3:17, "For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong." A couple told me of a man that killed their daughter. From prison the criminal sincerely confessed what he had done and asked for forgiveness. The parents asked what they should do. I said that the couple must forgive and must also let the man serve his prison sentence. Forgiveness and staying in prison are separate issues. Judging the man and putting him in prison is the job of government in order to protect the populace. "For (governments) are a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what



Separating the Issues in Your Life cont.

is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for the sake of conscience.” The thief on the cross was forgiven but not taken off the cross. Lawbreakers are not victims, but it does amaze me to watch the news and see how the world is consequence conscious and not cause conscious. It seems as though the treatment of those who have caused atrocities (consequence of their actions) is more important than the cause of their being treated that way! The victims of their crimes are looking for assurance that it will not happen again, and that security will not come as long as those that violated them do not ask for forgiveness. (Of course, the opposing danger is that victimization is a religion; it is very addictive.) It reminds me of the Great Depression. It left such an impact on my grandmother that she still saved newspaper, jars, rubber bands, bread wrappers, and more. She never forgot what it was like and never, looking at unrepentant government, regained the confidence that it would not happen again.

6. Facts do not oppose each other. It is a fact that birds fly and a fact that I cannot. We separate the facts. It is a fact that I love my enemy, it is a fact that I bless my enemy, a fact that my enemy must ask for forgiveness, a fact that when I am asked I must forgive my enemy, and it is a fact that wounds do take time to heal. Each of these facts will come to fullness in our daily lives as He makes them alive according to His own timing.



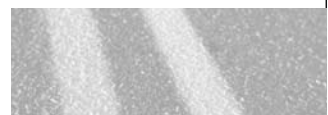
Knowing Your Call!

The Apostle was very clear on what the call of God was for him. Yet many believers are unsure as to what they are to be doing. The confusion over their "call" is compounded by the onslaught of writings that purport to help believers discover their call. Just as an employer does not hire people when he has no idea what job he has for them, I would assume that God is not hiding from His children the call He has on their lives. I have discovered through my interaction with believers that before they can understand a "call," they must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the Christian life. If I were to take one digit out of someone's phone number and place it at the end of the number, the whole thing would be so out of order that I could never use the number to call the person. In God's order we must first know the purpose of our lives. His goal is the revelation of Christ in us, and once our goal in life also becomes the revelation of Christ within, we will see that these two purposes meet perfectly in our unique sets of circumstances. From working in the yard to working in the corporate world, our life's goal and His goal remain consistent, the revelation of Christ. We have all had friends for whom nothing seemed to work out; they always have a broken car and are in financial straits, and, though amply qualified, they never get the good job. In the past I was vexed over that, but no longer! Once I could see the purpose of life, I could see that God had permitted them to be placed in situations that would best aid their advance into the great revelation of Christ. Therefore, we first define the goal of life, which will be expressed uniquely through every individual. I believe that this is what many people define as a "call." On the Vine we are branches witnessing to other branches about

Colossians

1:25,

"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God."



Knowing Your Call! cont.

the very same Life that flows in all of us. I have said several times, "There are no great speakers; there are only great audiences able to respond to the message." Perhaps God has not spoken ahead of time into the hearts of the other branches; in that case, a speaker's attempts to witness to a message that is not in the listeners will not bear fruit. I was visiting a church in Asia where many of the men had taken mistresses. The pastor had chosen the topic on which I was to speak: prayer. It is a beautiful topic, but it was not where the Vine was speaking to the other branches. If I had the "call" of God to teach prayer, this was not the time, and we must be sensitive to our call. It is very simple for a believer to determine what his call is. It is that which, when witnessed to by the leading of the Vine, creates a divine explosion in others. The secret is that since the life flows through the Vine, when there is an explosion in the receiver branches, there is an equal explosion in the witness branch! I am always telling people things that they already know, for God has placed it in them. Yet when I see a spark in the eyes concerning the indwelling Christ, the love of God, the sufficiency of Jesus, and the hope that we have in Him, I never know who gets more excited! For the explosion, by way of the Vine, is taking place in me, also. In short, the "call" is the work of God witnessed to and exciting a believer as he shares it every bit as much as the receiver. "Calls" are different. Paul makes this point to the Corinthians. We are all different members of one body, one Vine. In our "calls" we do not compete with the other branches but complete the work God has for all of us to do.



Nobody Has It All!

In our uniqueness we express the things of God differently. I am once again reminded about a man in Africa who prayed that the Father would give him all the revelation of Christ that is possible for man. He next had a vision of a room so large that none of the walls could be seen, but gold chests were all around, and on each chest was the name of a different believer. God spoke to him, "It would take every believer to begin to express who I am. Each is given his own revelation. There is a chest with your name on it. You will have what I give, but all of Christ cannot be expressed in one man." Amen, I believe that man. I have seen Christ, learned of Him, and had revelations of Him from different people ranging from what the world and religion would call the upper and lower castes. I understand that I am simply a thread in this Christian life, that my message is simple, and that what I say is not intended to be the last word for the Christian life. Yet sometimes I am taken aback by the complaints. I remember getting a traditional East Indian treatment that consisted of beautiful feeling and smelling botanical oils. The interesting thing about those doing the massage was that though their hands were constantly in oil and touching soft skin, their palms were covered with huge hard calluses. As in everything in life, we can learn something about Life, and I could see that even in ministry in the Holy Spirit and touching the souls of believers where they hurt, there must be a little protection. If I reacted every time someone criticized me or sent an angry e-mail, I would never get around to ministering. I must glance at the complaint and gaze at the Christ that is in the person. More than once I have heard this testimony from a believer that invited me to his church: "The pastor said that he wants me to remain involved, but I am not to advance the 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' teaching that Abiding Life Ministries brought." This baffles me, for even

Ephesians

4:11,

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers."



Nobody Has It All! cont.

if I were to look at the very worst in teaching that I have ever brought, there is no doctrine that would deter someone from a focus on Jesus, and all great teaching has the goal of Christ. However, I realize that the teaching of Christ in you does equalize all believers, and those in the Christian religion have worked very hard to be exclusive. I thought I would have my throat cut in Asia when before a large crowd I said, "If the men in robes and collars have not admitted to you any of their weaknesses, you should stop attending their church." For, in fact, it had become "their" church, the self-serving domain of the higher-ups. We must look at teaching and judge its goal. Is the goal the revelation of Christ in you? If not, then what is the goal? God was so depressed with man, so to speak, that He sent His Son. If the goal is man, then you will get depressed. I am a great supporter of the Christian religion and the legalism to which it gives birth. Why? Because we need it! We must pass through it to discover that the man that is now in Christ is just as weak as he was before Christ. Once this is accomplished, we will look to the Christ that is in us for everything that is needed. Well, no matter what treasure chest is yours to open, you will know that it is the golden one when "your message," or rather, as Paul called it, "my gospel," is pointing others to Christ.

Revelation 3:5,

"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

Working Your Way Out Of God

I have noticed that with my ever-increasing age, the strength of my glasses has to be changed frequently. When I increase lens intensity, I can see things that I was missing. I believe it to be true of my spiritual eyes, as well. As I have gotten older, God keeps giving me new glasses with which I can see things previously unnoticed by me. With new spiritual glasses come many changes. I still shudder when I think of Bible School and wearing the glasses of superiority because



Working Your Way Out Of God cont.

of what I knew and disdain for the "ignorant" of God's Word, which was constantly proclaimed. After all, we were becoming "Theologians." With the glasses that I have had for some time, I see the folly of that and repent of it. To think that a man will "know" God! My, it is so much nicer to bask in the beauty of the fact that I am known by God. Well, back to my present prescription. Jesus holds all things together (Colossians 1:15-17; John 1:1-3; Ephesians 4:6; Acts 17:28). He is the Life that holds all life together. We all exist in His Life; we are all connected to Him and totally dependent on Him for our existence. Therefore, we are in the Book of Life. The problem is that man lives by Him but refuses to recognize Him. What if God has given us seventy years (plus or minus) to either acknowledge He is our life or to work our way out of the Book of Life? Names are not put in the Book of Life but taken out. So if a man, held together by Life and in the Book of Life, refuses to acknowledge that Life, then with that attitude he is actually working his way out of Life during his lifetime. Finally, at death, that person gets the desire of his heart. All his years on earth were spent working his way out of Life, and now for eternity God gives what he wanted and fought for and removes his name from the Book of Life. I am amazed at how hard this type of man works to get out of Life. Jesus holds him together, and yet the man hates Him with a passion and is anti-Christ in all he does. He goes to the grave as a God hater. God, on the other hand, strives to keep him in Life; His sun shines on him, He provides for him, He heals him over and over, He blesses him, He sent His own Son for him, and yet the man wants away from Him, out of the Book of Life. God is doing His utmost to keep the man, who in turn is struggling to be free. Recognizing Jesus is so easy, and in so doing, one will never have his name taken out of the Book of Life. Working one's way out of God is so, so, so very difficult. Amen.

A special letter by a dear brother in Christ

The Normal Abiding Life

We continue to experience so many circumstances that we would characterize as "bad," though we know He has us here, and therefore there is no "bad" or "good" in total, just Him.

Our son practices in some rebellion, as you are aware, and we thank you for your help with him, but our daughter promises this: "Mom and Dad, you've been playing in single A ball with him; I promise to take you to the major leagues in dealing with me." Wow, it is vexing beyond words; breaks our heart daily or weekly or, wow.

I remain without work, we eat sometimes via credit card, and all sources of income are pretty much used up. Our house is for sale, our rental property where our sister lives is up for sale, too (though she never really paid market rent, per se, but she needed a place to live, and seven years ago we had the ability to help her, so, anyway, may be displacing her, too . . . ouch!).

We experience, too, the loss of our younger son's friend—they were not real, real close this last year, but close nonetheless—through his suicide on Xmas night. To pray and watch my tender son deal with this, along with, of course, the family that lost their 15-year-old, who saw darkness so deep that this is what his only answer was that made "sense" to him. With the enemy showing up to condemn our son and us with questions of "doing enough" for the young man, which we did not, but Jesus was there at that moment, and He always does enough.

The strain on our marriage from all of this . . . and no hope in sight in the eyes of one another, a truth He has brought to us years ago, Him and in Him only is our life, and thankfully we get this. In the midst, we say this. God is enough, more than enough. He loves. To have all "sets" of our eyes for our various needs re-aligned and focused to Him, and Him only, is a miracle, and He is sufficient. It has been difficult for us. Fear is removed as we depend on Him, the contrast so vivid. Questions are dismissed as we let Him just sustain. Faith is not increased per se, but is more fully utilized; clarity is given, like having your ear cleaned and being able to hear. The denying of self (looking to ourselves or reason, will, emotion) fails. He lives and reigns.

Denial of self, followed by picking up of cross (prepare to die, death itself), which to me has meant that the time in the Spirit is not an "on demand" thing. He decides . . . lovingly . . . each moment . . . provision, or my "cognizance" of His presence, anyway. "So, yes, your eyes are finally all focused on Me, where I have led you to in the first place, dividing your soul from your spirit [YOUTH, LORD], but I am sufficient for you even if you do not find Me in the very place you will find Me, where I led you." Does this make sense? He says, "I AM." I AM!! Which leads to, "Follow Me." You OBSERVE HIM. HE changes lives, provides, loves, casts the enemy out, heals, kindness exuded, compassion . . .

We speak thankfulness in the midst, free from circumstances (sometimes, anyway!! Never gonna "arrive at a final destination"), not due to circumstances being "in line," but because HE SAYS SO, HE IS ENOUGH! Walk, laugh, enjoy; I HAVE YOU.

Thank you both for being there and for writing what you have written and being so patient with us. Recently, believe it or not, we have learned we have to put down the ALMI reading materials, even though they are a road map of sorts given to us by Him through you, because He is in the journey, and He is the ONLY way. Not to trust what we read (though we love it so . . . thanks again!!), but to trust HIM, our guide. The Holy Spirit is so gentle, such a servant. And the Father has warehouses of patience and wisdom for us . . . thanks, LORD, so much . . . and Jesus, the Way. We cannot "lose" this thing called the Christian life, because He lives it through us.

ALMI NEWS

—It is in my heart to do more in the U.S., and so we might possibly try to schedule seminars in the U.S. for 2011 and 2012. There are many cities in which we have yet to conduct a seminar. If you are in one of those cities and are interested in hosting a seminar, please contact Betty at abidelife@aol.com to be placed on the list of potential future invitees. You will be surprised to discover how easy and inexpensive it is to host an Abiding Life seminar.

—Summer has arrived and so has Mike. It was a busy Spring! Those of you on the support team will be getting the nearly 100-page trip report around September. Betty is still in the process of editing it.

—I see that the Holy Spirit is like the wind and does blow where He wills. Traveling around the world it is amazing to see revival. North America, South America, South Africa, and Botswana are places where the Wind is blowing, and that has created a hunger for the message of “Christ in you, the hope of Glory.”

—I will be doing conferences from September 6th to December 15th in Hawaii, Fiji, Australia (conference and training), then Kazakhstan, Western Ukraine, Kiev, Latvia, and end in Spain, which, after years of labor, has really opened up. Raimundo Ericson (you know him from Argentina) was in Spain for three months making preparations, and that effort has been blessed greatly.

—Betty has yet to begin editing (there will be four more for editing purposes) the 365-day devotional, *My Weakness for His Strength*. It is a ways from being printed, but she is making progress.

—**ANNOUNCING A NEW CD SERIES!** “TIME AND ETERNITY,” a four-series set that includes topics such as Time and Eternity, The Holy Spirit, What is Church?, and “Prayer” by Tim Lester. As always, everyone on the support team will be getting a set for free once it has been produced.





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2010 TRAVEL SCHEDULE

June – August

Writing

Sept. 8 – 12

Maui

Sept. 13 – 27

Fiji

Sept. 27 – Oct. 9

ALMI Training,
Mt. Alford, Australia

Oct. 17 – Nov. 1

Kazakhstan & Lutsk
& Kiev, Ukraine

Nov. 5 – 15

Latvia

Nov. 18 – 26

Spain

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