

# WHAT EVERY BELIEVER NEEDS TO KNOW!

## *KNOWING WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST JESUS!*

### DISCIPLESHIP

101

After participating in many churches for fifty-plus years, I have found that not much is taught about having a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father and knowing who He is (other than someone to get something from), or who we are in Christ Jesus!

How can we serve and worship God, if we don't know who He is, what He desires from us, and who He has made us to be? I hope to shed some light on these subjects for the new Christian and the mature Christian and so that Christian teacher's may understand and share them with others.

### PREFACE

The purpose and intent of this writing is to reveal who we are in Christ Jesus, according to scriptural evidence and through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. To help us understand that we are not under the Law, but under grace, and that we have been released from the penalty of our sins and lawless deeds. Also, how to live the rest of our lives here on earth, not for the lust of the flesh, but for the will of God and to understand how to deal with our sinful nature and live in the Sabbath rest that our Heavenly Father planned for us through the power of the Holy Spirit, who now controls our lives. (Galatians 2:20)

by

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# CHAPTER ONE

## KNOWING GOD'S PLAN FOR US

First let me list some defining facts about who our Heavenly Father is! He is GOD!

### **GOD IS:**

#### **Love**

“And we have come to know and have believed the love, which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love” (1 John 4:16-18).

For God so loved the world! (John 3:16).

#### **Spirit**

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

#### **Truth**

“Jesus said to him; I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the Father, but through me” (John 14:6). “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:32, 36).

He is also eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, self-existent and self-sufficient, Holy above all, sovereign, things we can't comprehend because there is none like Him, which reveals our human weaknesses compared to Him.

### **WHAT DOES OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DESIRE FROM US?**

- He desires us to love Him and love one another (1 John 3:23).
- *The Lord desires to have a personal relationship with us!* – just as He had with Adam and Eve, Abraham, His disciples, along with all believers! When Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3), they became fearful and knew they were naked, without a covering for sin! So, they hid from God and made a covering for themselves. However, God did not create them to be afraid of Him, but rather to worship Him and have fellowship with Him. Because of their sin, they broke from their holy state with the Lord. Thus, God needed to atone for their sin, because humans cannot atone for their own sin (1 Peter 3:18). The covering they made for themselves was not acceptable to the Lord. We see in Genesis 3 that the Lord made a covering for them from animal skin, shedding the blood of an innocent one, which is a promise of Christ's blood, the innocent One, shed for the atonement of our sin. In Romans 8:15-16 we see we have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but we have received a spirit of adoption, as sons, by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” For the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. After Christ's atonement, we see that the saints are given a “white robe” (Revelation 6:11), a symbol of holiness!
- He desires us to believe in (give ourselves over to) Jesus (John 3:16).
- He desires us to be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31, 11:16).
- He desires to work His will and pleasure in our lives (Philippians 2:13).
- He desires us to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16).

- He desires us to die to sin through Christ's death and be born again (John 3:3, Romans 6). *The design and object of the sacrifice of Christ was to condemn sin, to declare it guilty and remove its power (Romans 7:8, 8:1-4), to have it executed and destroyed; not to tolerate it as some think, or to render it subservient to the purposes of his grace, as others; but to annihilate its power, guilt, and being, in the soul of a believer.* (Adam Clark's Commentary)
- He desires us to participate when we assemble: each person should bring a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation, or a prophecy, as the Holy Spirit leads (1 Corinthians 14:26).
- He desires us to use the gifts, ministries and effects that He has given us to minister to each other through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). This is part of the glue, which holds the church together – our need for each other, along with our need for the Lord. One day as I was talking to the Lord about the church; He told me to think of a jigsaw puzzle. In a puzzle there are many pieces and each one is different and unique, some have edges and some corners and others don't have either. The thing they all have in common is that they hook together and need each other to complete the picture! The Lord said that this is the way the church is, it needs each piece to be complete! When the puzzle is complete, He said, then I will compress it and take all the individual lines out and the result is that you will only see the picture, which is Me, the Lord of the church.
- He desires us to worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24). What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth? In 1 John 3:9 we see that the Holy Spirit abides in us and always exerts His power, therefore we have ceased to sin against God! Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:14, "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful." In Romans 8:26, Paul says that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, because we don't know how to pray as we should (John 14:26)! Worshiping in truth means to have our understanding opened as Jesus opened the disciples understanding, as described in Luke 24:45, and John 14:6. We need to hear and know His voice: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" we need to spend more time listening (Revelation 2:7)!
- He desires us to make disciples of all the nations – not disciples of men or religious organizations, but disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:19).

This is just a partial list of what the Lord desires from us. He will reveal all of His desires, and directions, when we come into fellowship with Him! Here is what He does not want: "lip service"; and this is what He does want: "heart service" (Matthew 15:7-9), and certainly not this:

You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain? So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham *believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "*All the nations will be blessed in you.*" So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer (Galatians 3:1-9).

THE QUESTION HAS TO BE ASKED? How many of the Apostles taught or encouraged new believers to live the Law “Mosaic Law”? The answer is zero! Why? The Law is good, isn’t it (Romans 7:4-13)? The reason they did not teach the Law is that we are not under law, but under grace (Romans 6:14, 8:2-4).

Christ is the end of the law to those who believed (Romans 10:4)!

The old covenant was with Abraham and his descendants, and excluded the rest of mankind at that time (See Genesis 12, 15, and 17, and Exodus 19:5,6). The blessing promised to all mankind through Abraham’s descendants was fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, who instituted the New Covenant in His blood, first offered to the Jews and then also to the Gentiles.

God’s plan has always been about the “forgiveness of sin” for those who believe in Him (give themselves over to Jesus), as brought out in John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:3. Since Christ died for our sin and we also died to sin (Romans 6:1-11), the Lord has given us a New Covenant. It is not based on sin or the Law, but rather on His grace through faith and the forgiveness of sin – so much so that He doesn’t want us to have a consciousness of sin anymore (Hebrews 10:2). This relationship has always been about God’s love and grace, through faith, for His saints!

## THE NEW COVENANT

In Hebrews Chapter 10, we see the “New Covenant”, which the Lord gave to us through the Holy Spirit. Versus 15-17 read:

*And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them.” He then says, “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

Let’s take a closer look at the meaning of this covenant and why we needed a New Covenant. First, “*after those days, says the Lord.*” The question might be asked, “What days?” We find the answer right here in Hebrews 10:12: “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, *sat down at the right hand of God.*” It was after offering *the* ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins, the laying down of Himself unto death, that the Lord ratified His New Covenant with us!

Why did we need a New Covenant? What was wrong with the Old Covenant? The answer is again found in Hebrews 10, in this case, verses 1-3. The Law was only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things. It could never, by the same sacrifices which they offered (under the Mosaic law), **make perfect those who draw near**. Otherwise, they would have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had **consciousness of sins**? In the old sacrifices there was **a reminder of sins**. The Law (Mosaic Law) could not make the believer *perfect* and in the Law there was the *reminder of sin*! So, who was the Law made for? The Law was not made for the “righteous man,” but for the “unrighteous” (1 Timothy 1:5-11). Does the New Covenant make the worshipers *perfect*? YES! Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering He has *perfected* for all time those who are sanctified.” “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; *for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law*” (Romans 13:8, and Galatians 5:14).

The Lord will not remember our sins and lawless deeds any more! So why do we? What are the sins He is talking about here in Hebrews? In James 4:17 the Word says: “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” 1 John 3:4 says, “Sin is lawlessness,” and 5:17 of the same book says, “All unrighteousness is sin.”

I might add that anything that is not done in faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Mark 3:28-29 declares, "All sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." Who are the sons of men? Every person that has ever been born! So why is the Lord willing to forgive their sins? Answer: Malachi 3:15: "So now we (God) call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up, but they also test God and escape." It is because the priests of Malachi's time were sinning by taking wives from outside of Israel and saying, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge?" It appears that the Lord will forgive all lawless deeds, except to reject His calling through (blaspheming) the Holy Spirit. If a person rejects this call, it becomes the "eternal sin" and there is no forgiveness for that sin (1 John 5:16)! There is only one sin that separates us from the Lord and that is "unbelief". Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3). In John 3:16 we see he who believes in the Son is given eternal life! To "believe" means "to give yourself over to," not just acknowledging that He exists (James 2:19). So, the "lawless deeds" ("deeds" means "works," John 6:29) are rejecting Christ, as we see in Revelation 20:12-13, that all are judged according to their deeds.

## THE COVENANT

Whereas the new covenant is substantially spelled-out in the book of Hebrews 7:6-25, 8:6-13, 9:1-28, 10:1-25, I will here focus primarily on the disclosures of Chapter seven.

- Hebrews 7:6: Abraham was the father of faith, to whom had been given coinciding promises.  
Romans 4:13: "The promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith."
- Hebrews 7:7: Jesus is the promise of restoration with the father (John 14:16, 1 Corinthians 15:23-28); and the way, the life and the truth (John 14:6), promising righteousness, peace, joy (Romans 14:17-18).
- Hebrews 7:11: If perfection is through the law, then there is no need for Christ.
- Hebrews 7:16: The new covenant is not a law of "physical requirement," as was the old covenant (see Hebrews 9:10), but according to the power of an indestructible life. Who is this life? Jesus Christ! (Hebrews 9:14-15).
- Hebrews 7:18: The Law has been set aside. Why? It made nothing perfect! Does the new covenant make the worshiper perfect? YES! (Hebrews 10:14). It brings a better hope, through which we draw near to God!
- Hebrews 7:22: Jesus is the guarantee of a better covenant!
- Hebrews 7:25: Jesus saves forever, for He intercedes for us according to the will of God.

What is the will of God for us? 1 John 3:23: "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us."

## LET'S REVIEW

1. We have received a better covenant.
2. A covenant of *faith* and not by works of men.
3. A covenant of the Spirit, not of the flesh.
4. A covenant that makes the worshiper perfect before God.

## WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW? (MOSAIC LAW)

1. The law brought about the knowledge of sin: Romans 3:19-28 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; **20 because by the works of the Law no “flesh” \* will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.** (Justification is by Faith) 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God **through faith** in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 **being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;** 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, **because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;** 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and **the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**

**\*Meaning of the word “flesh”** = human nature, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God NT:4561 Jn 6:63, Romans 8:3-10

2. “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law” (1 Corinthians 15:56). The thing that separates us from God is sin (guilt); and the power that drives that guilt is the law. *Knowledge of sin makes us feel guilty* and we want to hide from God who made us to have fellowship with Him (Genesis 3:6-11, 21).
3. “The Law came in that the transgression might increase, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Romans 5:20). God gave the Law so we would know that we could not establish His righteousness in ourselves, or by ourselves, and that we would have to cry out to God for His Mercy (Romans 7:8).
4. “The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24).
5. “We have been released from the Law, having died to, that which bound us, so that we serve in the newness of the Spirit and not the oldness of the letter” (Romans 7:6). This is part of what comprises being “born again.”
6. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Romans 10:4). “Until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed (charged to us) when there is no law” (Romans 5:13).
7. Who was the law made for? 1 Timothy 1:8-11 reveals, “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

## **A SPIRIT FILLED CHRISTIAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MOSAIC LAW**

The Mosaic Law (which is good and of God) brings with it a curse (Galatians 3:10-14). The curse that the Law brings attached to it, is the reminder (knowledge) of sin (Romans 3:20). This focus on sin is not what the New Covenant and Christ are about. It is God's desire that we set our minds on Christ (Colossians 3:1-3), and our sinless state in Him (1 John 3:5-9). When we look back to, and want to do the things of the Law (which is good, but which can not justify), we become entangled in our former condition of being reminded of sin. The curse and the veil are again established, *we can lose sight of what Christ has done, i.e. in Christ the requirements of the Law have been fulfilled.*

The Law arouses guilt (condemnation) and guilt brings on fear and fear weakens our faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9) because the attraction to the Law, is just that, the works of the Law, *which are fleshly* (Galatians 3:1-7) and bring people to self-justification, i.e., self-righteousness (Romans 3:27f). Who is the Law for (1 Timothy 1:9)? By walking in the New Covenant the Mosaic Law is fulfilled, for He has now written His Laws upon our hearts and minds and our sins and lawless deeds are not remembered (Hebrews 10:16-17). Why? Because the Holy Spirit now leads us (Galatians 2:20, 5:18, 1 John 3:9)!

Let us take a look at "baptism"! There are two mentioned in the New Testament: 1) John (the Baptist) baptized in water for repentance of sins, and 2) Jesus baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire.

### **WATER BAPTISM**

Matthew 3:11 "As for me (John), I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The meaning of *baptism* is "dip" or "immerse." While pouring and sprinkling is practiced in some denominations, no writers have ever proved an instance where this verb means "pour" or "sprinkle." The usual form of baptism among the earliest Christians involved the candidate's immersion, either totally (submerged completely under the water) or partially (standing or kneeling in water while water was poured on him or her). This is the general accepted view in Christianity today. John the Baptist's use of a deep river for his baptizing suggests immersion. The symbolical view - stresses the symbolic nature of baptism by emphasizing that baptism does not cause an inward change or alter a person's relationship to God in any way. But that, baptism is a token, or an outward indication, of the inner change, which has already occurred in the believer's life.

"Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you -- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

### **BAPTISM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT (Jesus' baptism)**

In Luke 3:16 John said to them all, the One is coming; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Holy Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6), and Christ is the one who purifies (Titus 2:14).

Evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is given in (Acts 2:4) where they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to "*speak with other tongues*", as the Spirit was giving them utterance. And in Acts 4:31 they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to "*speak the word of God with boldness*".

The value and impact of this form of baptism is well stated by Watchman Nee:

A Christian who has not yet experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit is rather vague about the reality of the spiritual realm. He is like the servant of Elisha whose eyes were closed to that sphere. He may receive instructions from the Bible, yet his understanding is confined to the mind because he still lacks revelation in his spirit. But upon experiencing the baptism his intuition becomes acutely sensitive and he discovers in his spirit a spiritual world opening before him. By the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit he not only touches the supernatural power of God but contacts God's Person as well!

The apostle Peter was a good example of Watchman Nee's statement! Being the most prominent of Jesus' twelve (Mark 1:6, John 20:2, 21:15-17), he did not have much spiritual insight (Matthew 15:16-17, Luke 5:8, 18:34). However, he did gain some insight later, "*not from man*" (1 John 2:27), as we see in Matthew 16:16 and John 6:68. Then Peter denied Christ (Luke 22:57). **No power in himself!** We see that Jesus' later opened the apostles' understanding of the scriptures in Luke 24:44-49. Jesus then told the disciples, that they would put on the "*Power of God*" (Luke 24:49 Acts 1:4-8) soon, which happened when the Holy Spirit was given to them in Acts 2:4. They spoke in tongues and with boldness (Acts 2:4). When other believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit that same "*Power of God*" fell on them, as they also spoke in tongues and with confidence "*the Word of God*" (Acts 4:29, 8:14-17, 10:44-47, 19:2-6). The point here is that "*knowledge*", by itself, does not fulfill God's plan for the believer (2 Timothy 3:7). Christ would have us walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14) so that we are able to walk the "*Spirit Walk*" in "*God's Power*"!

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HOW DO WE GET SAVED, DIED TO SIN, and BECOME HOLY?**

#### **BELIEVING**

**First, we must believe!** There was group of people in John 6:28 who asked Jesus, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?” The following verse records His answer, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3-6 that he must be born again of water and the Spirit! Nicodemus did not understand what He was saying, because he was thinking with his natural mind. What does it mean, to be “born again”? *The first thing, is that we have to die!* 1 Peter 1:3-5 tells us what it means to be born again:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

In Romans 6:1-11 we see first that “grace is greater than sin,” and that we are crucified with Christ and have died to sin through His grace and through our faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8). Second, we see we must believe Christ that we have died to our old (sinful) nature. The new nature, given through the Holy Spirit, keeps us from sinning against Christ (1 John 3:9). At one time we were slaves of sin, but no longer, as we are now slaves of righteousness, i.e., sons of God (Romans 6:17-18 and Galatians 3:26).

#### **THROUGH JESUS!** John 14:6

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil” (John 3:16-19).

Here, “*believes*” means to give oneself over to another, in this case to Jesus.

#### **THE GOSPEL**

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word, which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

**Are we convinced that Jesus died for and released us from our sins?**

“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever” (Revelation 1:5-6).

“*Knowing this*, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin” (Romans 6:6-7). “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live (*my will*), but Christ lives in me (*His will*); and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith (*ability of the Holy Spirit*) in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). “You will receive power (*ability*) when the H.S. comes upon you” (Acts 1:8).

THIS IS WHY SOME IN THE BODY OF CHRIST ARE NOT VICTORIOUS –  
THEY ARE TRYING TO WALK IN THEIR OWN POWER (ABILITY AND/OR WILL).

#### FURTHER EXPLANATIONS

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh (suffered death = died to the will of the flesh), arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men (self will) but for the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2).

**Conclusion:** We can choose to believe God when He says in 1 John 3:9 that the Holy Spirit keeps us from sinning against Him (the unforgivable sin of Mark 3:28) and that God’s grace is more powerful than sin, i.e., His grace is sufficient! Or, we can choose to let the condemnation of sin reign in our lives! There is a great difference between conviction and condemnation although they may feel the same. As, is the case with discipline and punishment?

#### LET’S REVIEW

**When we do this:** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). Believes means *to give yourself over to* Jesus, not just acknowledge that He exists. **Then we receive the New Covenant:** “*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them.*” He then says, “*And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more*” (Hebrews 10:16-17). **And this happens:** “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). Sanctified means “*to make holy.*” When we believe in Jesus we are immediately sanctified, as the thief on the cross was (Luke 23:43). There are those who teach we *are* being sanctified, as sanctification is actually an on going process. I disagree! Because we may experience or feel that we are being changed does not mean that it has not already happened in God’s sight. **We now overcome this:** The “eternal sin,” which is unbelief (Mark 3:28-29, Romans 4:5). **It is accomplished through His grace** (Romans 5:19-6:7, 1 John 3:5-9, Hebrews 10:1-25). **The outcome is this:** through our faith in God’s grace He **saves us** (Ephesians 2:8-9).

It also needs to be noted that, in Romans Chapter 6, we have been freed from the Law. The Mosaic Law, although it is good, is not our friend. We now have God’s laws written on our hearts and in our minds Hebrews 10:16. For those who still look to the Law, put the veil back in place and make it difficult for them to see who they are in Christ Jesus!

NEW LAWS WE ARE UNDER:

- Law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21)
- Law of Faith (Romans 3:27)
- Law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2)
- Law of liberty; the perfect law (James 1:25)
- Royal law (James 2:8)
- Law of God (Romans 7:22)
- Law of sin and of death – physical death (Romans 8:2)

## CHAPTER THREE

### HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED?

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16).

*Righteousness has always come by grace through faith!* (Hebrews Chapter 11).

#### HEBREWS 8:7-13

Vs. 7: *A new covenant, a better covenant.*

Vs. 10: God's Laws are in our minds and in our hearts. Spirit led.

Vs. 12: God has forgotten our sin! We need to do the same?

Vs. 13: We have a new covenant. The Old is made obsolete (also see 2 Corinthians 3:6).

#### HEBREWS 9:9-26

Vs. 9: *The New Covenant makes the worshiper perfect in conscience.* This is what the new covenant has accomplished for us; we need to get into agreement with it.

Vs. 14 God desires to cleanse your conscience! “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God” (1Peter 3:21, 1 John 3:21).

Vs. 26 Christ has put away sin (fear and guilt) by the sacrifice of Himself. He released us from our sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5). Not only our sin, but the world's also (1 John 2:2). Which makes Him judge of all! Sin has no power and is not imputed against us.

#### HEBREWS 10:1-18

Vs. 1: The Law could not make the worshiper perfect in God's sight, but this new covenant does (Hebrews 12:22-24)!

Vs. 2: This is the Sabbath Rest of the new covenant (Hebrews 4:9). We should now have *no* consciousness (no guilt, no fear) of sin.

IT'S NOT JUST SIN THAT  
SEPARATES US FROM  
THE FULLNESS  
OF WHAT GOD HAS FOR  
US,  
BUT IT IS ALSO THE GUILT  
OF SIN AND THE FEAR OF  
PUNISHMENT!  
WHO WANTS US TO STAY  
IN THIS BONDAGE?

Vs. 10: We have been made holy through Christ.

Vs. 14: We have been made as if we had never sinned in God's eyes. Why? Because He made a propitiation for our sin (Jesus) and has chosen to forget our sins (that's called grace), as described in the verses below.

Vs. 17-18: He has forgiven and forgotten (love).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HOW DO WE STAY SAVED (SINLESS IN GOD'S EYES)?

In 1 John 3:5-9 we find the answer! "He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God commits sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

When God's "*seed abides*" in us, "*seed*" is used of divine energy of the Holy Spirit operating within the soul by which we are regenerated (Galatians 3:16). "*Abides*" means that something has established itself permanently within my soul, and always exerts its power. The Holy Spirit takes over our lives and works His will and pleasure in our lives (Philippians 2:13)! He has even made our bodies, which are doomed because of sin (Romans 8:3), useable for His temple while we are here on earth (Romans 8:10-11). Our part is to not quench the Holy Spirit, but get into agreement with Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

This is the state that we are in now! "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20; 5:24).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHO DOES THE FATHER SAY WE ARE IN CHRIST JESUS?

These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing (Holy Spirit) which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him (1 John 2:26-27).

#### **WE ARE**

*Spirit-Led Sons of God*

“For all, who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

#### **HOW DOES GOD REALLY SEE US?**

All the following passage are from 1 John 3:1-10.

Vs. 1-2: “See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.”

Vs. 3: “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” Hope is defined in Hebrews 11:6: God is who He says He is and will do the things He says he will do, and is a re-warder of those who seek Him. “Purifies” means to be free from guilt or moral blemish.

Vs. 4: “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.” Here, “practices” means to commit; to set our intent on a certain course.

Vs. 5-6: “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.”

Vs. 7: “Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” Who is the deceiver? Falling into deception results in fear and guilt.

Vs. 8: “The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Romans 7:14: “For I know the Law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into bondage to sin.” Who released us? It started in the Garden of Eden. Satan deceived Eve; she and Adam felt guilty and afraid.

Vs. 9: “No one who is born of God commits sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” Why? 1) *His seed abides in us*. “Seed” here refers to divine energy of the Holy Spirit operating within the soul by which we are regenerated (Galatians 3:16). “Abides” means that something has established itself permanently within my soul, and always exerts its power in me (1 John 5:18). 2) *Because we are born of God*. The reason this is true is that God cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:12-13).

Vs. 10: “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”

#### **SO HOW ABOUT 1 John 1:8-2:1?**

“If we say that we have no sin (offense), we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins (that we at one time offended God by rejecting Christ, but now we have received Him), He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8-9; also see Hebrews 10:17). “If we say that we have not sinned (past tense, as we sinned both in the spirit and the flesh), we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:10). When we read

1 John 1:2, we see that John is talking about eternal life. As, we were all sinners (Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God) before we came to the Lord, we do not have the right to say “we have no sin (offense)” because we did! When we confessed that sin and were “born again” and the unforgivable sin was forgiven! We cannot say that we have not sinned, but Christ says that through the leading of the Holy Spirit we have stopped sinning against God (1 John 3:5-9).

1 John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” If the flesh sins, and it will (Romans 8:7-9), we have Christ to intercede for us, as He is not going to remember these sins (Mark 3:28, Hebrews 10:17). However, the fleshly sins can bring either grace or the stick. We may get the “rod of discipline” which feels like punishment, but is given in love! (Hebrews 12:7-11). Fleshly sin can keep us from the fullness of the abundant life, which was promised by Christ (John 10:10). More about the “*abundant life*” in Chapter 10.

## **DO WE HAVE SIN?**

We are born with two types of sin. 1 John 5:16: “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.”

1. *Unforgivable Sin*: Sin of the spirit unto spiritual death (Mark 3:28-29).

"Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; {29} but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin " – When we speak against someone, we reject Him and/or what is being said. The Holy Spirit is the one who calls us to salvation! If we reject His calling (saying that we need to make Jesus Lord of our lives) we don't agree (believe) with what He is saying!

2. *Forgivable Sin*: Sin of the flesh (Romans 7:18-8:4; 7:20).

Sin, which indwells me, is the sin of the flesh. Can we overcome it? No! (see Romans 7:25). Can we be set free from it? Yes! (see Romans 8:2). Can we live with it? Yes – in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 7:25). We are a split personality! Will we ever be set free from this sinful flesh? Yes, when we physically die. Yet, God sees us like it has already happened! “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:6). What are we to do in the mean time? James 5:16 says: “Confess your sins (fleshly) one to another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.” *Healed? Healed from what?* From fear and guilt, reminding each other that we are forgiven!

## **WHY DID GOD LEAVE US IN THIS POSITION?**

“And He has said to me (Paul), ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

## **CONCLUSION**

This is the way our Heavenly Father sees us: *holy* and *sinless*! What He says, is what is true! We may chose to see ourselves differently, but it is important to get in agreement with what the Lord says. Anything else is just a figment of our imagination! I will deal with the “*sin of the flesh*” more in later Chapters.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **WHY ARE WE PLEASING TO GOD?**

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:21-24).

#### **LOVE GOD AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES**

“And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets’ ” (Matthew 22:35-40).

#### **LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW. THE LAW OF GOD**

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Galatians 5:14).

#### **LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SIN**

“Above all, keep fervent in you love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

#### **LET ME SUM UP WITH THESE THOUGHTS**

“As those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful” (Colossians 3:12-15).

**WE ARE PLEASING TO GOD BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN (gave ourselves over to) THE SON!**  
(John 3:16)

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **LET'S EXAMINE THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

“For the kingdom of God is not eating or drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

#### **RIGHTEOUSNESS:** Believing by faith

“But what does it (righteousness) 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 shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:8-10).

#### **PEACE**

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). “God has not destined us for wrath” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

#### **JOY**

“And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8-9).

#### **IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound” in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

“And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52).

“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed’; and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

#### **WHERE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

“The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, Look, here it is! For behold the kingdom of God is in your midst (within you)” (Luke 17:20-21).

Heb 12:22-24 22 But you have come to Mount Zion (the church triumphant) and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriad’s of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE INNER CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO NATURES

The thoughts here are based on Romans Chapters 7 & 8; Galatians Chapter 5; and 1 John Chapter 3

We shall start our examination of the text in Romans Chapter 7. Verse 1 says that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives. In verse 4 we read that we are made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that we would be joined to Him who was raised from the dead. Let us be reminded here that the Law came in that sin would increase (or that I, through the Law, would have knowledge of sin: Romans 7:7). In verse 14 we see that the Law is spiritual, but we are of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. When Adam fell, he actually gave his flesh to the devil by disobedience to God's command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He chose for us a separation from God's perfect will.

Let us take a simple look at ourselves when we are born into the world. In the natural man the flesh (self-will) controls the soul-mind, and the soul-mind, controls the spirit. In the spiritual man, the Holy Spirit controls our soul-mind, which takes control of the flesh (the old nature). In our natural birth, our flesh (which Paul says is sin) actually controls our mind, which quenches our spirit. God desires our spirit, in that His Spirit asserts His influence upon our mind, renewing or making it new; then by the Spirit we will overcome the deeds of the flesh (Romans. 8:13, 12:2).

Romans Chapter 7 reveals that we are spiritual beings living in bodies of flesh, the spirit being holy and the flesh sinful. Now I know that this may be hard for some to grasp, but as you understand this, you will be able to see the war that is within the members of our body. In Ephesians 6:12, we see that we struggle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, powers, world darkness, and spiritual forces. Adam allowed the bondage of the enemy to come into our flesh when he sinned.

I believe it is very important to understand that we are not to be fighting against this flesh and blood. We find ourselves caught up in this area so much that we cannot possibly live in liberty or victory. How much of the time do we find ourselves doing as Romans 8:6 says: "The mind set on the flesh is death; but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace." There is no life or peace with our mind set on our flesh; yet I find so many Christians with their minds set on their own flesh, trying to perfect it by the flesh (Galatians 3:1-3). It will never happen; nor will peace of mind come. Picking up again in verse 14, we hear Paul telling us that he doesn't understand. He is not practicing what he wants to do, but doing the very thing he hates. Sound familiar? If I do the thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good – that the Law brings me to the knowledge of my sin. "So now it is no longer I (the real me, my spirit) doing it, but sin which indwells me. I know nothing good dwells in me; that is in my flesh, for the desire is present in me but the doing of good is not" (Romans 7:17-18).

Paul repeats the same thought again in verses 19-22. What is he saying? Simply that the flesh is sinful and is going to sin because it is sold into bondage to Satan. In verse 23 we see a law of *sin* in the members of our bodies, waging war against the law of our mind and making us prisoners of the law of sin in our members. Verse 5, Chapter 8 reminds us that the flesh directs our mind to the flesh, our natural condition at birth. Verse 7 says, "The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; it does not subject itself to the law of God for it is not able to do so." Our natural mind is not able to overcome the flesh or bring it under control. Do you see what is being brought out here? In 7:24, Paul now asks the question, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from this body of death?" The answer is, "Jesus Christ our Lord!" He goes on to explain that on one hand, I myself (my spirit) with my mind am serving God, but on the other with my flesh the law of sin.

As was stated before, we are spiritual beings, holy before God, living in bodies of flesh which are sinful. It may be shocking to some that our flesh is unable to please God. In fact, the flesh is in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:17). Because of our close tie to the flesh, we try to make it pleasing to God, normally by our own efforts or by trying to use the Holy Spirit to help us. We know our flesh desires to sin, and the devil does what he can to encourage that. Then we, with the enemy's help, start to condemn ourselves. But God's Word tells us that Christ overcame for us (Romans. 6:6, Galatians. 2:20-21). Let us not nullify the grace of God by trying to be perfected by the flesh (Galatians 3:3).

### **THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION**

Each step of the way in our walk with God requires faith. We need to have faith in what the Word tells us. Romans 8:1 reads, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This is spoken from God's view and not our own. God sees us quite differently than we see ourselves; He sees us as being perfect through the blood of Christ. We commonly see ourselves as we would be without the blood. This is the problem. If we have condemnation on us, it is either that we are not in Christ Jesus, or that we condemn ourselves.

Why is there now no condemnation? Condemnation means to be guilty of wrongdoing. Romans.3:23 tells us that all have sinned, but that God did something about that. He sent His Son to shed His blood that we could pass from death unto life; for there is now no judgment for those in Christ Jesus. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies, who is the one who condemns" (Romans 8:33, 14:22)? We condemn ourselves! It's ours by choice. The truth is that we are saying to ourselves, "God has not forgiven me, and I will have to do better to earn a clear conscience," therefore nullifying God's grace. That brings us to salvation by works.

We need to be reminded here that it is the sin of the flesh waging war that wants to bring condemnation on us. So where does this leave us? First we need to be renewed in our minds to the fact that Christ died for our sins once and for all. He paid the debt! Secondly, we died with Him leaving the old nature behind (1 Peter 4:1-2), taking on a new nature which is controlled by the Holy Spirit – that He, working in us, will deliver us out of bondage into a walk of freedom and liberty. "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God" (1 John 3:21). Keep in mind, this applies only to persons being led of the Holy Spirit.

### **WALKING IN THE SPIRIT**

In Romans 8:5 we read, "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on things of the flesh." The statement has been made many times that we are in this world, but we are not of this world, and yet our minds are set on the things of the flesh to a great degree. We spend much of our time concerning ourselves with what other people think of us, trying to impress them with our worldly possessions and knowledge, gathering money, land, and other tangibles. There are those today that believe they can only be great witnesses for God if they have much of the world's goods. God forbid! His Word tells us that our witness is dependent on His Spirit! Now don't get me wrong here, I believe God has a purpose in our lives for such things, but not when they become troublesome, burdensome, or worrisome for us. We need to grow spiritually by ministering to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving; studying the Word; praying in the Spirit; and Christian fellowship as in Acts 2:41-47. As we seek the Lord first in our lives, God will bless us as our souls prosper (3 John 2).

Let's go back to the beginning when God created Adam from the dust (Genesis. 2:7). The Word says that He took the dust and breathed into it, and the dust became alive. In John 20:22, Jesus breathed on the disciples, and they received the Holy Spirit. Our natural lives and our spiritual lives are of the breath of God.

The problem we are having is that the natural man wants to come back in as Paul tells us in Galatians. 3, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" How often do we fall into this ourselves? May the Lord help us to see ourselves as we are! In Romans. 8:9, it is written that, "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." A reminder here: we need to believe and confess what God's Word says. We are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in us. How do we know He does? Romans 8:16 tells us, "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

In Galatians 5:16, God promised us a path to victory over the flesh: "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." And, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians. 5:1). "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). God has done His part in that He paid for our sin so that there is no judgment, no guilt, and no condemnation. God gives us a new spiritual life when we choose to die to the old nature which is SELF. God also gives us a new mind, the mind of Christ. However, we have to believe that what His Word tells us is true. By faith we receive and allow His Spirit to work in us to His satisfaction, believing that this is what He will do. We need to check ourselves to see that we are being renewed by the change in attitudes and by overcoming the desires of the flesh. There is a great tendency for us to try to be overcomers in ourselves.

## **OVERCOMING THE GUILT OF SIN**

It is also necessary to know where we stand with God in reference to sin. Many people believe that we sin continually and need to be before God repenting often. But let's look at His Word.

1 John. 3:6 says, "No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." Verse 9 of the same chapter reads, "No one who is born of God commits sin, because His seed abides in Him; and he cannot sin; because he is born of God." God's Word is quite explicit here, and yet there is controversy over how those scriptures compare to 1 John 1:8-9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Are they in conflict? I believe not. Let us take a closer look. Key to 1 John 3:6 are the words "*abides in Him*," indicating that the sin-free person is one who dwells in union with God. 1 John 3:9 then compliments and completes this idea by saying of the sin-free person, that, "*His seed (God's seed) abides in him*." Thus, the sin-free person is one who has God's seed of new life in him through being "born of God" (born again), and who then lives in union with God.

We must walk in the Spirit, for as we stay in the Spirit, we cannot sin against God! The Holy Spirit will keep us from sin. We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:19, "The will of God for us is not to quench the Spirit." Do you see why? We are also shown this in the parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were wise, and five were foolish. The foolish, not maintaining a full supply of oil, ran out; thus they did not enter into the marriage feast (Matthew 25:1-11). The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit abides in us and we in Him, He is able to keep us from sin.

We may need to go a little further here for some, so look at Luke 10:42. Jesus tells Martha that there are only a few things necessary – really only one – that we have a close personal relationship with the Savior (see also John 3:16). Everything else that we do, say and believe hinges on this saving relationship with Jesus.

In Mark 3:28-29 the Word reads, "Truly I say to you all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." The key word here is "*blaspheme*." The dictionary tells us that blaspheme means to "*speak about with abuse or contempt*." The word '*contempt*' is a legal term that indicates "disobedience or open disrespect for rules or decisions of a lawmaking body. The lawmaker in the Bible is God. We see here that God shall forgive all the sins of men except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. I believe the word "*rejection*" is more understandable here, for as a person is disobedient to the Holy Spirit's calling (the Holy Spirit is the key individual who calls us to Christ), he rejects God's only plan for salvation. Such a person cannot be saved. Thus, there is only this sin which forever separates us from God: the rejection of the Holy Spirit's calling.

Going back to 1 John 1:8-9, God's Word tells us that if we say we have no sin (the key word here is "*we*"), we are deceiving ourselves. We do not have the right to say we have not sinned (Romans 3:23). We have all sinned and come short of the Glory of God. This is a salvation issue. 1 Peter 4:1-2 will clear this up for us: "Because he who has suffered death in the flesh has ceased from sin; so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lust of men, but for the will of God." Remember our flesh, Paul says, will serve the law of sin (Romans 7:25); but we are of the Spirit (Romans 8:9). We have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)! We now can understand an attitude of repentance, one which turns us from the desire of sin to the desire of being pleasing to God. Knowing that God looks at the heart, and His Word said He gave us a new heart and spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-27), we rest in the fact that the Holy Spirit will guide and lead us to repentance. Do you see now that as we receive Christ by the Holy Spirit, we are made holy before God, actually without sin, by His blood, as if we had never sinned?

Knowing that repentance is a change of desire, we can now draw the conclusion that by walking in the Spirit, God will keep us holy. If we get caught up in the things of the flesh, His Spirit will convict us, and God is faithful to forgive us.

## **ON TO LIBERTY**

Paul's message to us in the New Testament is this: "*Christ set us free to be free men.*" Throughout the New Testament we see this message being brought out not only by Paul but by Jesus Himself (John 8:36). God uses the liberty that He has given to us to see how we are going to respond to His commands.

I believe we do the same thing with our children when we tell them what is required of them and then allow them an opportunity to walk freely before us, encouraging and disciplining as we see the need arise. For without the ability to choose freely, we remain slaves instead of sons; we live in fear rather than love.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:12 that, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not profitable; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything." Again, in 1 Corinthians 10:23, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not profitable; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." Some believe that these two statements refer only to meat, but the wording here is "*all things*." Now some may say that this gives us a license to sin; may it never be! Rather that we would seek to find the things that are profitable, edifying, and free from bondage, without the fear of being cut off.

Let me say here that by the blood of Jesus, God has opened to us the right to choose freely and to learn by our mistakes, without the loss of salvation or a separation from God, knowing that we will not be able to go on making the wrong choices. We will learn to desire the things that are pleasing to God because we love Him and also for our own well being. We serve God because we choose to, not through force. Can you see here how imperative it is that liberty exists, whereby God and we may see our hearts? Now some may say this is very dangerous ground, that we are unable to choose properly; but remember, this is only for the Spirit-filled Christian who has a new heart, a new spirit, a new mind – the mind of Christ.

God is willing now when He proclaims, "I will give you the desires of your heart," because He has given us a new heart, which is in unity or can be brought into unity with His.

Paul cautions us in Galatians 5:13, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." We are not only required by the Word to walk in freedom, but also to discipline ourselves, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, so that we do not abuse our freedom. Living in the USA we can see this clearly: we have the freedom and the opportunity to do wrong things, with minimal or no reprimands. Thus, we have to discipline ourselves out of concern for others: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

1 John 4:18 reads, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment and the one who fears is not perfected in love." Let us walk before God in love, knowing He loves us and will keep us as long as we desire to be kept. He is not going to punish us for our errors, but is willing to forgive us as we turn away. He will lead us to things that please Him and give us the ability through the Holy Spirit to walk perfectly before Him in love. The Word does teach us, however, that we will reap what we sow. It is very important that we learn what is pleasing to God and to move in that direction, keeping ourselves from going through heartache that could be avoided by listening to the voice of God, instead of our flesh.

By walking in the permissive will of God we encounter hard knocks, but in the perfect will of God – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control – against such things there is no law. We are exhorted by the Word to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith and to examine ourselves. "Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you fail the test" (2 Corinthians 13:5)!

**Now we can say, "IN JESUS CHRIST VICTORY SHALL BE MINE!" Amen.**

## CHAPTER NINE

# OVERCOMING THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH

### THE SPIRIT vs THE FLESH

Some may ask, “What do you do with the following verses which seem to be commands?” We may indeed struggle with some of these verses, taking them as “commands,” but I see them as identifiers of what the flesh is and how to overcome it! We overcome through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:13 and Galatians 5:16).

Romans 6:12-13: “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” *How do we stop sin from reigning in our lives? Give ourselves over to God!*

Romans 13:13-14: “Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify (fulfill) the desires of the sinful nature.”

Galatians 5:13-26: For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Practice means “*to do*” = mind set on doing the fleshly things listed here!) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

1 Peter 2:11: “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

All these verses identify what the “flesh” is: **sinful**. The way to overcome these deeds is through the Holy Spirit living in and controlling our lives and by faith, believing what the Lord says! The list also keeps things from being added that are not from the Lord. Do you think He needs our help? He doesn’t! He desires our cooperation, by believing in what He says and by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us.

Romans 6:11: “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

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

Romans 8:6: “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” Death comprises all the miseries arising from sin, as well as physical death.

Romans 8:13: “For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Galatians 5:16: "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

Colossians 3:1-2: "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

Hebrews 10:16-17: "*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them.*" He then says, "*And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*"\_

1 Peter 4:1-2: "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

1 John 3:9: "No one who is born of God commits sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

James 4:7-8 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

**THIS IS ALL ABOUT A MIND-SET: ARE WE GOING TO BELIEVE GOD  
OR BELIEVE WHAT "WE THINK" WE ARE EXPERIENCING?**

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE ABUNDANT LIFE!

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;  
I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

We have looked at our status in Christ. But what happens when the flesh rises up and we do something that is not edifying, prosperous or pleasing (1 Corinthians 10:23)? I have given much scriptural evidence that we have ceased to sin against God, as we have given ourselves over to Christ and we allow the Holy Spirit to live in us and to have His will and pleasure in our lives (Philippians 2:13). So, now that we are in Christ and He is in us, what happens when we quench the Spirit and do not follow the precepts that we find in the Bible? Such instances may include: “Husbands love your wives as Christ love the church and gave Himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25), and “Wives, be submissive to your own husbands” (1 Peter 3:1). Another example is that king David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and caused her husband's murder (2 Sam 11) and he paid a penalty by losing his son. However, God loved David, as one after His own heart. My experience is that sometimes I get His “grace” and other times I get His “rod of correction.” God corrects us like quality earthly fathers do – in love (Hebrews 12:9-10)! We should not be afraid of God. Rather, we should appreciate the precepts that He has established for us to have a more “*abundant life*” while here on earth. If we find ourselves unable to accomplish the precepts He prescribes, we should ask Him to help us overcome “*the flesh*” through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:13), so that we might accomplish the goal set before us (1 Corinthians 9:24)! We will find that He does not always take all our issues away, or sometimes it is a slow process. If that occurs, then we need to do as Paul did in the following verses, knowing that we are to be weak so that He can be strong!

#### PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH

It appears to me that Paul's “*thorn in the flesh*” was his *sin nature*, which he wanted to be rid of! In Romans 7:14-25 he identifies the opponent as “*sin*.” In 2 Corinthians 12:1-6 we see that Paul had been caught up to the “third heaven” also called “Paradise.” There he saw all that was holy and in God's perfect order, which he of course had a great desire for. Therefore he wanted to go and be with Christ; yet God told him that he was to remain here, for a time, for the sake of the brethren (Philippians 1:23-24).

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 tells us that the Lord had a great reason for allowing the “*sin nature*” to remain in Paul and in us. The Lord wants us to be weak, as Paul was, so that He can be strong! This *sin nature* is quick to remind us where we came from and how God's grace is sufficient and necessary! This nature will keep us looking to Him and from thinking that we have some how become holy on our own. It will also teach us to give grace to ourselves and when we do that, we have to grant it to others! What a precious “*thorn*” we all have to keep us from exalting ourselves! The Lord's power is perfected through our weakness! So, Paul became content through understanding that God's power is perfected in his weakness and joyfully concludes that he is strong in Christ, and weak in his own ability. We should have this mind-set! “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6).

Galatians 2:20 reads, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” If it is no longer Paul who lives (*his will*), how can he do anything in himself?

In Genesis 3:2 God rested from His work and proclaimed the day holy. In Hebrews 4:8-9 we see that God has also proclaimed a day of rest for the church, who are holy. Our “day” of rest takes the form of resting from our fight against sin (Hebrews 10:2)! What could be better?