

Our *natural* life's  
*fallen nature* is the problem.

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“I tell you the truth...  
You Must Be  
Born Again,”

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*said* Jesus Christ.

John 3:3,7.

It's not complicated.

*It's simple, instant and  
will not disappoint.*

*Authored by* RONALD BAKOWSKY

A clearer understanding of what it means to be "*born again*".

Authored for the  
**Saint & Sinner**  
alike.

Reading this book  
in its entirety  
could bring the change  
you're looking for!

*So grab hold of it, read it and  
consider what is said.*

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"I tell you the truth...You Must Be Born Again," said Jesus Christ.  
Authored for the Saint & Sinner alike.

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## PREFACE

# Who's really in control? Understanding “freedom”.

There are approximately 7.9 billion people inhabiting the earth each with their own will. The catch-22 is they are all under the sovereign will of God even though they are free to choose. God's will prevails to the minutest detail over all of his creation. God has a plan and it's not disturbed by anyone. Everything is by him and for him. The works — malice of the devil, the evil one, Satan and his cohorts — have been destroyed by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* (Colossians 2:15).

Having the knowledge of good and evil is like having a perplexing equation that you have no ability to understand in order to apply it. The good we think we do can be as bad as the evil we do not want to do. What is good? What is evil? We are a confused lot governed by want. Want of a life, a good life, one that we can live with and accept with all its frailties, complications and discoveries and still be able to endure trials, tribulations and persecutions of all and every kind because we know we live in a mixed up unpleasant place at times and at other times an awesome place of wonder and inspiration.

And that's the reason why Jesus Christ came and has the answer to his own creation's problem from which all other problems proceed.

Intimately acquainted with each of us, He weaved us in our mother's womb, and when we came out crying — like I don't want to be here or the ecstasy of 'whoa!' along with tears of joy and an unbridled expression of "I'm out, I'm finally out in a broad place no longer bound or contained, restricted, I'm free" — but still helpless. And as we grow we find out that we are indeed helpless to help ourselves.

We encounter things that threaten to drive us back into a womb of despair, silence, torment and anger because we have been assaulted by a life we are not prepared to live. We do things we think we should and say things we wish we never had but they're done and the result is chaos, regret and sadness. Some are driven mad because they cannot "figure it out". Some are driven to suicide because they are "not going to let anyone treat me like this". Some take it out on others in many ways and forms but it all comes from the same source — not being prepared to live in this world.

Alone, even in the midst of many. Relationships within family, or with a friend or neighbour can turn sour and leave such a horrible result that forever you are restrained, governed, mangled by it. Maybe you've been branded something you're not and the smoke of your burning flesh has blindsided you and you can't see clearly any longer let alone believe what anyone says. You become a creep, creeping slowly and painfully through life wondering whether you will ever be restored or repaired to some meaningful, happy and well-adjusted life.

Well, I authored this book to tell you that you can be repaired and restored to a meaningful, joyful and well adjusted life in spite of having to contend with all this world has to offer good or bad and the different wills that fill it and are in your sphere while living in it.

Ronald Bakowsky

If you have an Internet connection you can review every  
Bible verse mentioned in this book at:

Bible Gateway:  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/>

## WHY I AUTHORED THIS BOOK

I authored this book for saint and sinner alike—to help each understand what it means to be "*born again*" and to give clarity to this vital life changing message given by Jesus Christ to everyone. For this reason I have prayed for you beforehand asking God to reveal to you the knowledge of His will and that He would open your mind to understand and receive what He has purposed for each of us—deliverance from sin and to receive the gift of "*eternal life*" in union with Jesus Christ for all things to work together for good. Romans 8.

Right now you may be thinking that it's impossible to be sure about any "gospel message" preached let alone this one I am writing to you about. So I want you to know that I know that. So we are on the same footing in our thinking. I will be making some bold statements about life, death and living in this world in a way that pleases God and His Son Jesus Christ, "*who created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*" (Colossians 1:16-17) He who made us has gone to great lengths to tell us why and how He intends to make right what has been made wrong because of a tragedy that we can all identify with, the loss of loved ones. It can happen in many ways, death, separation, adversity, divorce, hate, discord, betrayal and more. The loss of loved ones can impact our life in ways that are treacherous and bewildering, including without the awareness of what has taken place until it's made known to you.

I want to encourage you to drop all pretense, presumptuousness, pride and prejudice in regard to everything you thought you knew about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Some of what you've heard or know may or may not be true and only God can convince you what is true and what to believe about Him. It really is between you and Him. There are many lofty ideas raised up against the true knowledge of God as given in the gospel message and spoken by its author, Jesus Christ. I'm writing this to help you discover and understand the truth about "the mystery" of the '*born again*' gospel message.



Our *natural* life's  
*fallen nature* is the problem.

“I tell you the truth...  
You Must Be  
Born Again,”  
*said* Jesus Christ.

John 3:3,7.

It's not complicated.

*It's simple, instant and  
will not disappoint.*

# Jesus in conversation with Nicodemus, a religious leader, answered him...

*“Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless one is born again he cannot  
see the kingdom of God.”*

Nicodemus said to him,

*“How can a man be born when he is old?  
Can he enter a second time  
into his mother’s womb  
and be born?”*

Jesus answered,

*“Truly, truly, I say to you,  
unless one is born of water and the Spirit,  
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,  
and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*Do not marvel that I said to you,  
‘You must be born again.’ ”*

John 3:3-7

We are born with  
a conscious life that is  
*separated* from God.

The conscious life we are born  
with also has an *aversion*  
toward our Creator, Jesus Christ  
because of sin.

There is absolutely nothing that we can humanly do to change this standing before Him. We are born with an inbred resistance toward God. It's as natural for us to reject and rebel against Him, as it is to eat and drink. No effort is required. It's just the way we are born. It's not solved by any plan, any work, any devotion, any flagellation, any anything. There is only one way to resolve this problem and that's through Jesus Christ who says to each of us "*you must be born again*".

It's really miraculous. He will accomplish what concerns us and what concerns Him about us, individually. We are each unique before Him. He has a purpose for the life he has given to each of us to live. He will not force Himself upon any individual but will bring us to deeply consider Him and what He has to say by the work of His Holy Spirit toward us, read John 16:7-15. His Word, the Bible, contains all we need to know about Him, our relationship and ourselves.

Here's what Jesus Christ says to each of us; "*Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*" John 3:6,7

John, an Apostle of Jesus Christ said it this way; "*...to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*" John 1:12,13

Have you ever heard the following saying?

‘You are dead  
to me.’

*Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"  
The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen,  
and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them,  
"Take off the grave clothes and let him go."*

*John 11:43-44*

Well, in a sense, that's what happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God said they were not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and if they did they would surely die. When they did what God told them not to do it resulted in death — spiritual death, eventual physical death with ensuing curses. As a result of despising God's instruction they reaped a judgment of lost intimacy with God and everlasting life from birth. '*You are dead to me*;' is a very harsh way of describing the reality of what happened to their relationship with their Creator, Jesus Christ.

We are born 'dead to God'. It's not a choice we voluntarily make. We inherited our life's 'state-of-death' toward God. From birth we begin living an existence of chaos because we are disconnected, separated from our Creator, having our godless fallen nature's dominion ruling over every aspect of our life. Our fallen nature is subject to presumptuousness, pride, pretentiousness, prejudice, arrogance, including lusts that lead to depravity of character and destruction of our physical bodies to name just a few of death's open doors to destroy our soul and the souls of others we unknowingly or deliberately influence by our example.

As damaging and destructive our original parents left our state of being, our Triune Creator—God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit—provided a way to overcome our state of aversion caused by their willful choice to not heed the instruction of a loving Creator 'Parent' who had their best interests paramount. Yes, there was deception involved by an undiscerned enemy — the craft of Satan. But, had they taken seriously God's warning they would not have listened to him and been saved from the consequences of their naive choice.

Now, if you have already believed the truth and received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour you have been '*born again*' — restored and repaired by the grace and mercy of God and have fellowship with Him.

So, what happened or happens to me  
when I'm '*born again*'?

When ‘*born again*’  
we are given a conscious  
*spiritual life* from God.

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Our ‘*rebirth*’ removes our  
natural aversion toward God  
because of sin and enables us  
in Jesus Christ to have  
fellowship with God, *and*  
sets us free from sin’s sway,  
control — any area of sin’s  
dominion in our life.

What God had to do to achieve this for us is remarkable love. He has provided a way to remove our aversion toward Him caused by sin. A condition we inherited that can produce in us mental and social chaos, impurity, rebellion and deep depravity. The world around us is proof enough we need to be saved from ourselves, individually and corporately. And the only one worthy, capable and willing to do this is our Creator. He made us, loves us and wants to bring us into fellowship with Himself.

*You are God's idea.* He wants you to LIVE, with His very Life's gracious enablement in fellowship with Himself and through you toward others. *You're not a mistake or worthless* because of your fallen condition. *God intimately knows you.* And God has provided a way back to the future he intended you to have and live before the fall of Eve and then Adam, the result of their own doubts and suspicions of God's love and honesty toward them, provoked by the deception, lying and malice of Satan through an attractive but crafty Serpent.

It was God's wisdom to display to the whole of creation — heaven and earth — his character, personality and deeds through his Son Jesus Christ. In birth, life and living and his death — humility and love, emotion and faith, resolve and obedience, through joys, persecutions, slanders and threats of violence—even death by his own created creatures he continued in unwavering devotion to his Father's will to provide a way of deliverance from sin in a manner that respects our person. His love toward us and for us is summed up in his crucifixion and resurrection. *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13) And no greater life can we live than the one *"born of the Spirit,"* the *'born again'* resurrection life of Jesus Christ within our very own life. This is the God of our salvation displayed to friend and enemy alike. This is the loving kindness of God for his created creature, Man—"male and female he made them." (Gen.1:27)

And to those who choose to be *'born again'*...



...the Gift of God  
is “*eternal life*”  
in union with  
Jesus Christ,  
forever.

Read Romans 6:23

It happens when  
you believe and receive him  
by faith.

*(truly trusting, relying, believing, and receiving him at his word)*

---

You only need to bring yourself to him.  
He's the repairer, the restorer.

*You can be "born again" simply by praying  
and asking Jesus Christ to work this miracle of "being  
born of the Spirit" to receive "eternal life" right now.*

*Pray this suggested short prayer silently or audibly:*

*"Lord Jesus, I want to be "born again" to receive the miracle of  
being "born of the Spirit" and to receive "eternal life" that you have  
promised to those who will believe and receive you as their Lord and  
Saviour. I receive you now as my Lord and my Saviour. Amen.*

*If you honestly prayed this prayer you have been 'born again'.*

And as a result...

“God made  
you alive with  
Christ.”

Colossians 2:13b

*"Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal,  
the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance  
until the redemption of those who are God's possession —  
to the praise of his glory."*

Ephesians 1:13-14

Therefore, having received His mercy, forgiveness, and remarkable sacrificial love for you—through Jesus Christ's atoning death and glorious resurrection—present your own body *as a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well pleasing, and perfect will of God. *Read Romans 12:1-2.*

*"Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions [we believe because Jesus Christ chose to reveal himself to us] — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."* Ephesians 2:3-8

*"At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."* Luke 10:21-2

LIFE in Christ is built upon a relationship of faith. You have entered into an intimate relationship with God and you are to freely receive his love and support continually to walk by faith, trusting in and resting upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. He said, *"It is finished."* From beginning to end our *new 'born again'* LIFE in Christ is complete. He is the Alpha and Omega between which our *"born again"* *'eternal life'* is experienced. It's His very LIFE graciously enabled in you and I.

**Jesus Christ is the Alpha-[our NEW LIFE]-Jesus Christ is the Omega**

Your entire LIFE is now under His Lordship and protection if you continue in Him. It is because of His mercy toward us that we know Him otherwise we could not know Him at all. He is *"the way, the truth and the LIFE"*. He is the vine we are the branches. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. ..."*

“For we [You] are [NOW]  
God's workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus to  
do good works, which  
God prepared in advance  
for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

How then are we to live?

Jesus answered,

*"I am the way and the truth and the LIFE."*

John 14:6

of every 'born again' believer who has received  
God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son as Lord and Saviour  
and the Holy Spirit as Advocate and Counselor.

*"You are God's temple and God's Spirit lives in you."*

1 Corinthians 3:16

“Words spoken  
or written for  
Jesus Christ  
are timeless –  
eternal.”

From God's Holy Spirit flow endless streams of living water, streams of encouragement—streams of wisdom—streams of insight—streams of discernment and abundantly more streams to build up our faith. So don't be discouraged by those who are critical of what you say or write—past, present or future. Revelation of the truth given to you by the Holy Spirit is yours to treasure and if appropriate to share with others, saint or sinner. It doesn't matter if someone else said the same thing as you have. If genuine, it's a personal discovery in the Spirit so that we may be one in union with Jesus Christ and other true believers. We who are of the Spirit in spiritual union with Jesus Christ are freely given truths to proper and prosper each other.

Jesus stood and said in a loud voice,

*"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.*

*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

John 7:37-39

The pages that follow are letters of encouragement  
written on my heart over many years and shared with others.  
You will find some necessary repetition.

They are included to give support and insight into the  
personal nature of the experience of being '*born again*'—  
believing and receiving '*eternal life*', a personal relationship  
with God that continues in union with Jesus Christ, *forever*.

Jesus speaking,

*"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;  
no one can snatch them out of my hand."*

John 10:28-29

*"Now this is eternal life:  
that they may know you, the only true God, and  
Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

John 17:3



LIFE in Christ is different.

*However, as it is written:*

*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived what God has prepared  
for those who love him —  
but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit."*

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

John 10:10b

The 8 personal testimonies interspersed  
throughout this book are true.



## A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

As a young man I was a loner, not by choice, but a result of my inability to be successful in my relationships with others. I found it very difficult to get close to people and to make friends easily. I guess somewhere along the way I gave up on trying because I never really even knew what made a friendship close. Any kind of friendship I did have was usually founded on a mutual interest but not much more.

Because a lot of my choices in life were governed by my inadequacies in this area I was not very wise in my selection of friends or activities. Having reached a very low state of affairs, I found myself alone one afternoon reflecting on the past and the influence my life was having on others because of the way I was living. I saw that I was slowly destroying myself and dragging others down with me. I really wanted the direction of my life to change.

So I separated myself from my "friends" and my old haunts, and it was during this time that I began to wonder what the bible had to say about God and life in general. I began to read and discuss the bible with anyone who would. It wasn't to long before someone came my way and explained to me how I could have a relationship with God. He pointed out to me the fact that God loved me and sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for all the sins that I'd committed. "But God showed His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8. He told me that if I asked Jesus Christ to forgive me and to come into my life He would. "Whoever comes to me, I will never drive away" John 6:37. So one evening, alone in my bedroom, I asked Jesus Christ to forgive me for all the wrong I had done and to take over control of my life.

Although I believed that Christ had entered my life at that moment nothing exceptional happened until about 6 months later when I realized by reflection that God was in fact operating in my life. A number of my negative outlooks, desires, attitudes and habits were gone and there was no direct effort on my part to make it happen other than my trusting and relying on Christ to change me while I walked in obedience to His word.

In Jesus Christ, I found the peace and fulfillment that I so desperately need. The wisdom and truth that I find in His words and the love of those who truly love Him have helped me tremendously in the daily affairs of life and in my relationships with other people. It's all there in the Bible; everything a person needs to know to be successful in their relationship with God and their fellowman.

“Do two walk  
together unless  
they have agreed  
to do so?”

Amos 3:3.

Many years ago I received a Christmas gift that puzzled me. My father gave it to me. I was taken aback by it. Why this particular item at this time? It wasn't something I needed or even wanted. Well, I thought to myself, maybe God wants me to have this for some reason. With that thought came an inner assurance that God did want me to have it. Both God and myself placed significance upon it. So I thanked my father and God for the gift. A short time later I used this gift in what I would term an "unseemly way." Others might have said to me at the time that I was just having some innocent fun and that I was taking things too seriously. But I knew God was not pleased with *my* actions.

The following evening I read from the book of Isaiah, chapter 5 that was my scheduled reading for that evening. As I considered verses 1-6 I began to reflect on my actions the previous evening and asked God to forgive me for such sinful behavior. What I wasn't aware of was the casual attitude I had developed toward sin, confession of sin, God and His word. Why do I say that? Because the following morning, Sunday, the same verses were read by the pastor for the morning scripture reading and the message!

*“I will sing for the one I love a song  
about his vineyard:*

*My loved one had a vineyard on a  
fertile hillside.  
He dug it up and cleared it of stones and  
planted it with the choicest vines.  
He built a watchtower in it and cut out  
a winepress as well.  
Then He looked for a crop of good grapes,  
but it yielded only bad fruit.*

*Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
judge between me and my vineyard.  
What more could have been done for my vineyard  
than I have done for it?  
When I looked for good grapes, why did  
it yield only bad?*

*Now I will tell you what I am going to  
do to my vineyard:*

*I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed;  
I will break down its wall and it will be trampled.  
I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated,  
and briers and thorns will grow there.  
I will command the clouds not to rain upon it.”*

Isaiah 5:1-6

All of a sudden my “casual reading of God's word and my empty confession of sin” were turned into an awesome and significant event. Tremendous fear gripped my whole being, sending my mind reeling and spinning with all kinds of anxious thoughts. What was only an example from scripture of a rebellious people the night before now became an example of my own rebellion.

“What more could have been done than what I have done for you?” was the question put to me by God that Sunday morning. Now what, Lord? You wouldn't do that to a Christian would you? Was I forgiven? Were those words only for me or for all those who are present?

Woe was me! God had taken my actions very seriously and He had led me to a very serious portion of scripture to instruct me. I saw myself as that vineyard and how His Son labored in me to produce good fruit but I continued to produce only bad fruit. He died for me but I was not willing to die for Him. He gave me His Holy Spirit and I resisted its gentle promptings. He knocked on the door of my heart with His word but I wouldn't let it sink in. He brought me to pastors and teachers to strengthen and build me up. He provided for my every physical and emotional need. What more could He do for me than what He had already done?

I was without excuse. Oh, He assured me that He would never leave me or forsake me. God chastens those He loves. I'm glad He loves me that much. I was a stubborn, stiff-necked believer because I failed to give in and give up on my “self-anointing” (self-directed) walk with God. These attitudes led me into many hurtful experiences and into sin. Do you realize that you and I are without excuse in regard to our walk with God? God has provided everything we need to live as He wants us to, read 2 Peter 1:3-10, but it requires that we willingly, with faith, cooperate with Him.

How often we go to scriptures with a dull and sleepy attitude hoping to be awakened by some mystical revelation or experience to spur us on. When we don't receive that “spark” we are looking for we retreat into spiritual boredom, saying to ourselves manna, manna, manna,

I'm so tired of manna. You know what the greatest revelation is? Recognizing that what is already revealed in scripture is significant. If you begin now to practice what has been revealed — the black and white of scripture — you will experience the supernatural in a natural way.

Here I am, writing about an experience I had many, many years ago. Yet it has an even greater significance if you parallel it with another Christmas gift we received — our salvation because of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ for us. A precious Gift you and I know came from God. A Gift you and I received with the inner assurance of the Holy Spirit that it was from God, and upon which we place great importance.

How are you responding to this gift? Are you following God's instructions for better living? Are you as serious about the handling of this Gift as God is? You know we will walk in sin as long as we walk in sin. We will not be serious with God until we take God seriously. We won't walk with Him until we decide to walk with Him. Decision, decision, decision! Today there are "*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision*" Joel 3:14.

Do you know what goes into making a decision? Everything you are at that point in time and circumstance. Scary thought isn't it? To think that my decisions are based on my own hearts condition and my circumstances is unsettling, especially when we have to bear the consequences of our every decision. To be aware of this should encourage us to be in close fellowship with the Lord. We are instructed to "*Trust the Lord with all you're heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your steps and keep you from stumbling*" Prov. 3: 5,6. When we do this it removes pride, pretention and presumptuousness from our decision making process and neutralizes self-love, self-seeking and self-pride the divine "Me. Myself and I" of our fallen self-willed nature allowing the Holy Spirit of God to guide us.



James 1:5-8 says “*If any of you lacks wisdom [don’t turn off your mind], he should ask God [allow for spiritual insight] who gives generously to all without finding fault [It doesn’t matter where you are right now] and it will be given him [we are assured wisdom from above]. But when he asks he must believe and not doubt [believe that He will and doubt that He won’t] because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind [our mind, emotions and will lead us to irrational thinking]. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; [without faith - trusting and relying upon God - it is impossible to please Him] he is a double minded man, unstable in all he does [he is indecisive and uncommitted].*”

You’ve probably heard the saying “Let your conscience be your guide.” That’s poor advice. Having a clear conscience is no indication of our innocence. It only means that as far as our conscience is concerned we are innocent. But God and others see beyond our conscience and so does the word of God. “*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*” Hebrews 4:12.

Have you allowed God’s word to penetrate that deep? Most of us would have to say no, not that far. But it does when a difficulty, trial or tragedy strikes. Why then and not now? I can answer that in part. The cares of this life are diluting and stealing away the deeper things of God from our lives. Luke 8:14 says, “*The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures and they do not mature.*” But when hard times come how we are mocked by this behavior, how presumptuous and careless we discover we have been with God and His precious Gift of Salvation, Jesus Christ. Some things we can’t learn any other way but through trials and sufferings.

Friends, God will not be mocked. What we sow is what we will reap. He loves us too much to allow us to disregard Him in our daily affairs of life. We must do more than to “intellectually enjoy His presence.” Our walk of life must express our trust [faith] in Him by our

obedience to His already revealed word. I say this because I see that in our zeal for God many of us have become followers of men rather than Jesus Christ. We have come to depend too much on others to feed us, to do our devotions, to build our relationship with God, while we run around enjoying life and taking care of business. As a result, we starve ourselves becoming weak and malnourished toward God. So we “hit the bricks” and become “Transient Christians” going from church to church looking for handouts from the word of God. And the Lord’s work suffers because were it really known we no longer have a sincere desire for His Word or His presence in our life, only the benefits. Church becomes a place to meet people and not the Lord. Activities become the measure of our spiritual progress not the fruit of the Spirit expressed through our life. And when the high priests fall many fall with them. When they weaken many a faith is shattered. It should not be like this. Yes, we need people of example but it is Christ’s word of truth lived out in others which is our example to follow not the individual who manifests it. We are to follow Christ.

Scripture encourages us to draw close to God and we can expect God to draw close to us – James 4:8. There is a question recorded in the book of Amos, chapter 3, verse 3 which I think is a very critical one for each of us to answer: *“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”* God put this question to the people of Israel during a time, which in some respects could parallel today’s Christian community. Have you agreed to walk together with God? Yes! I did that when I received Jesus Christ as my Savior. Isn’t that all there is to do. Now it’s up to God to direct me. If you look at that question closely it implies that the relationship is not that one sided. It suggests that we have our part in developing this relationship with Him. And it starts with our decision to agree to walk together with Him - to abide in the vine, - to keep His commandments. *“He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me and He that loves me shall be loved by my Father and I will love Him and will make Myself known to him.”* John 14: 21. If you have not consciously made a decision to walk together with Jesus Christ, I encourage you to do it now. Confess your lukewarmness if you need to. Remember

that it is God who initiated this opportunity to walk together with Him. He wants our love and fellowship.

I would like to give you some very practical scriptures to help you get started. Have your Bible on hand and look up the verse references that follow. Not much emphasis is placed on purity of life today but the scriptures do. This area of our walk with Christ should be top priority. Our thought life and our sexual life are two of the most critical areas in which purity is required. Why? Because the Lord is for the body, He lives in it. He takes residence in it through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He is concerned with what you do with it while He is living in it. Read 1 Corinthians 6:13b-20. These scriptures place our body's use under the authority of Jesus Christ — *“you are not your own: you were bought with a price. Therefore honour God with your body.”* His body is now made up of all believers in whom the Holy Spirit resides. We are also referred to as an individual temple in which the Holy Spirit lives. Therefore we must be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit by our actions.

Christ also addressed the immoral thought life, the reference to adultery and the bad treasure concealed in the heart. There is instruction in Proverbs for the unrighteous man to flee his thoughts. Christ admonished us to flee all unfounded “judge — mental” and suspicious thoughts of others. Abstain also from all “second meaning” immorally suggestive kinds of conversation and thinking so prevalent in our society today and so easy for us to bite into. Purity in these areas of our life will give us confidence and boldness with God *“Be Holy for I am Holy.”* says the Lord. Pray for a clean heart and start taking responsibility for your thought life and your body life for the Lord. God's enabling grace is sufficient for you to do it.

Also be free from concern. That doesn't mean be irresponsible, it means trusting God like King David indicated in Psalm 138, verse 8 (ASV) *“The Lord will accomplish what concerns me.”* He knows exactly where you are. He has not left you nor will He forsake you. He knew you before you were born and you are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so be confident that all things —

the good, the bad and the ugly of your life will work together for good because you have been called into fellowship with Him according to His good purpose. Read Psalm 139 and Romans 8:28-39.

Why is it needful to be free from concern? It chokes the word of God in our life, and deadens us to the Holy Spirits promptings. Read Luke 8:14,15 and Romans 8:5-8. How can this attitude be applied in a practical way? We all have many things to care for like providing for our family etc. Let's look at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7: verses 17 and 24. *"Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called Him."* *"Brothers, each man as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called Him to."* Some of us are very unsettled with our station in life — be free from concern the Lord will accomplish what concerns you. Do your part but not in an anxious way. Keeping God's commands is what counts. (vs.19.) These verses emphasize the need for us to be walking in close fellowship with God.

What should our attitude be toward material possessions? Let's look at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:30b, 31: *"... those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them."* Don't let your possessions become your reason for living. Give no great thought to them. Why? *"I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord."* 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:35.

What about my neighbours, people I work with, my church fellowship? Let's look at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:9-11; *"I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat."* Associate with unbelievers but be careful bad company corrupts good character 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:46. However, whom will they hear the gospel from if we isolate ourselves from them? God is not willing

that any one should go to hell. Do not associate with anyone who claims to be a Christian but live like the devil. Don't even eat with them. Pray for them fervently for they are in danger of losing there life, John 15:61. Jesus didn't want us to be taken out of the world but to be protected from the evil one, John 17:15.

I hope that these verses have illustrated the practicality of scripture and the importance of reading God's word daily so you can work out your salvation in fellowship with God. He is always as close to us as His word is upon our lips, Deuteronomy 30:14. But you have to make a decision to agree to walk together with Him. I hope there will be none among us to whom Christ will say *"I know your deeds: you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake-up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard: obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come to you."* Revelations 3:1b-3.



## A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

When I was a young child. I remember being told by my father, that the Bible was just a fairy tale like "Cinderella" or "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". Well, when the man you thought, "knew everything," says that, you believe him. Therefore I grew up not giving God much thought. The only time I went to church was when my mother would take me on a few Easter Sundays. It didn't leave a good impression because I had to leave part way through the service and go downstairs for a bible study with children I had never seen before in my life. I was very close to my parents and hated being separated from them. I never felt secure being left on my own. I had three other siblings, all quite a few years my senior, so I felt like an only child and my parents doted on me.

I truly believe that built into every human being is a distinctive knowledge of God. How often have we all heard or read that when someone's life is on the line they cry out to God to help them even though, at other times, when the going is easy, they say they don't need God in their lives? They have no one else to turn to, for in that moment they are completely alone. How do they know to call out to God? Its instinctive. When I was older and my parents would go away on trips or a long drive, I would automatically ask God to keep them safe. Why? I was told God didn't exist. Why would I doubt it when, up until my teens, I hadn't heard anything to dispute it

I met [my husband], a new Christian, when I went to work at his father's ad agency. We started dating and I heard the gospel for the first time. Well, was this guy I was interested in a weirdo? Were his friends, who had just become new Christians, crazy? How could they say God loved me when there was no God? As much as I rejected and fought God, I couldn't turn away from the love I had for him.

We were married and I continued to hear and also reject what he and some of his friends were telling me about God ... that He sent His Son to die for me and

that if I believed in Him I would have eternal life. For me, it was still very difficult to erase the atheistic teachings of my childhood until I read Hal Lindsay's book "The Late Great Planet Earth". As a matter of fact, it was after reading just a few chapters that I asked Jesus to come into my life. What he wrote about the decline of people's values and morals and the natural and geological disasters that are taking place as the time for Christ's return draws nearer, really shook me up. He would take scripture verses and apply them to things that were happening now. Wow! How would anybody but God be able to tell us things that would be happening 2000 years after Christ's death and be so accurate too? Well I didn't want to be a part of the lost world. I wanted to be loved and protected by the all powerful and mighty God.

It wasn't until a short while later that I figured out that my husband had left Hal Lindsay's book on the coffee table specifically for me to read. Normally, I would have shunned any kind of Christian literature. I know now that God prompted me to read that book through my dear husband who wouldn't give up on me through our first rocky year of marriage. I made that year a difficult one for him to grow as a Christian because of my attitude toward God and all Christians in general. But, thanks be to God, He wanted and loved me! Hallelujah! Amen.

“The battle is  
for the renewal  
of your mind.”

Read Romans 12:1,2 and 8:5-8



*“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me; but you also must testify”.* If we are going to testify for Jesus Christ we must not be walking in a *“form of godliness”* — denying the Holy Spirit of God access to direct and empower our lives. We must willingly join with God in submission to the Holy Spirit’s promptings to lead us into courageous decisions for Christ.

Satan has created a kingdom on the earth that feeds on the appetites of our fallen nature. He doesn’t need to confront us individually his instituted system does that. This kingdom glorifies man and his mind. Its philosophies are self-centered. Its motivating force is excessive concern for self. It corrupts honest human need by turning attention toward solutions geared to the cravings of our fallen nature. It denies faith in God. Having our legitimate needs turned into selfish pursuits supersedes our spiritual need. This Satanic system has not made us corrupt, we were born sinful. But it continually tries to entice and appeal to our fallen nature. We become tempted and lead astray when we allow its godless solutions to join with our wills. For the Christian living in this world and not being a part of it often means we battle in our minds for divine leadership. *“Take heart! I have overcome the world,”* said Jesus.

The first chapter of Romans describes the progression and ultimate end of those who become citizens of this godless kingdom. Man’s sin began with his deliberate and inexcusable rejection of God’s truth that resulted in him not acknowledging His authority, eternal power and divine nature. The basis of truth was now transferred to corruptible man who corrupted himself even further through his foolish speculations about life — its creation and purpose. Everything became relative, interpretative and experiential so all things became justifiable, excusable and acceptable. The sin in man was now at peace within him because sin was “non specific” or optional to ones own evaluation. As a result, conscience had become seared toward God, His judgment, His righteousness and His truth. Consequently men are living in erring judgments about themselves, God and sin. The spiritual consequences are obvious — “death”. The mind of men

could now run rampant and without spiritual strength, moral decay set in because the passions of man are great, which lead men to be led by them. The physical desires now became the absolute motivators, the mind an encourager for the physical and material cravings of the body and without restraint, causes men to degenerate into depraved physical and immoral practices.

Does this describe our society today? I believe it does. The truth of this chapter becomes visually clearer with each passing year. We are fast becoming a nation of “pagans”. No longer are the Judeo-Christian values adhered to or even considered worthy wisdom. But what is of greater concern is that many professing Christians are being drawn into this world’s mold. As a result, God’s work and Name are being regarded with contempt. The Christian mind is being inundated with all kinds of viewpoints, speculations and lofty ideas about God’s desire and will. Worldly methods are being combined with spiritual truths to accomplish in a “form of godliness,” “the will of God”. This “form of godliness” has all the outward signs of being God directed but denies God in the innermost places.

This first chapter in Romans is also a warning to believers to walk upright. Though it describes those who have “sold out to this world’s rewards and pleasures” can the Christian who lives with a “form of godliness,” expect their end to be any different? As believers in Christ we must be very vigilant to guard our minds from the subtle trap of the “form of godliness”. We are to be Spirit led. We must not deny God’s Spirit access to direct and empower our lives. He will give us confidence and assurance as we acknowledge Him in all our ways. If we don’t live like this then we are living a “form of godliness” while denying the power thereof. There is nothing more God can do for us and we are in danger of trampling underfoot His Son and His grace. The mind set on what our fallen nature desires is hostile toward God. It does not want to cooperate with the Holy Spirit of God. This “frame of mind” cannot and will not submit to God. But the mind set on what the Spirit desires is life and peace. “... be transformed by the renewing of your mind”.

The mind is our responsibility. We decide what our mind will give attention to, not God. Many of us see ourselves as victims, plagued by unrighteous or negative thought patterns, without control. WRONG! A THOUSAND TIMES WRONG! It's a satanic lie. Don't give in. Don't give up. God's word tells US to "*guard our mind, for from it flow the issues of life.*" You are not subject to your thoughts; your thoughts are subject to you. No, we cannot stop an idea, a thought from entering but we can bring it under the authority of Christ and in His name and with His authority eject it. That's the first step. The second step is to fill the void created with thoughts that are pleasing to God. "*Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, admirable, excellent and praise worthy, think about such things.*" Boring you say? Not on your life. Don't let yourself be duped into thinking that to be heavenly-minded means you'll be no earthly good. That statement is a fraudulent one because to be heavenly minded is to have the mind of Christ in all areas of your life — His authority must prevail. Jesus referred to this kind of mindset as being filled with good treasure; you give the nod to what occupies its chambers. Take charge of your mind or your mind will take charge of you. Your mind is for you to use. Make sure it doesn't use you.

Jesus said, that we are to love God "*with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength and WITH ALL OUR MIND*". That requires determination, steadfastness and perseverance. The reward is life and peace. Is your mind set on worldly cares? Are you trying to build your heaven on earth? Filled with anxiety because of a reeling and rocking world? Are you living a "form of godliness"? Pursuing worldly gain, asking God to bless your efforts yet denying the Holy Spirit access to direct and empower your life. This is a very presumptuous kind of faith. We ask God to bless our way yet our heart and mind is distanced from Him because of the object of our faith, our wants, even our needs and not God Himself. Those around us, Christian as well as the unsaved are continually observing us. How we live. How we work out our salvation; what we talk about. Our attitudes. How we obtain the things we need and want. If we live with a "form of godliness", it won't be too long before the shallowness of our faith becomes evident to them. It is this "form of godliness"

that grieves the Holy Spirit and Satan uses it to discredit God and His people in this world. I read this somewhere, “If you want to evaluate something a person wants, if you want to know whether it is good or just, take a look at how they go about getting it. Nothing will tell you better.” Think about that for a moment.

What does this have to do with evangelism and discipleship? EVERYTHING. We become active participants, engaged in spiritual warfare, when we advance in our quest to grow spiritually and to reach the lost. Satan’s chief battleground is the mind “*the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers...*”. The believer and unbeliever alike are targets of his attacks upon the mind. We must recognize that in order to grow spiritually we must take responsibility for what occupies its chambers. The mind is the encourager for what we do. Set on the Spirit — LIFE. Set on the flesh — DEATH. The first step to breaking the “form of godliness” is to “... *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ...*”. We are to set our affections on things above. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MONEY. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. BELIEVE IT! GOD IS NOT A LIAR. You will either be a testimony or a testimoney. We are to let the mind of Christ be in us. We are to stir up the gift that God has placed within us. What does the Holy Spirit have to work with in your mind? A new car or a new life? A new home or being a temple in which God can dwell with authority? A new television or a new thought life? A new vase or a broken contrite heart that will release the fragrance of Christ in every place? YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN. God’s grace is extended toward anyone who will join with Him, to obey His WORD.

We also must testify to the unsaved. We must sow the word of God in their minds as we have opportunity. When we share the truth of God’s love and His Word, we put light into the minds that have been darkened in understanding. We destroy speculations and every lofty idea brought against the TRUE KNOWLEDGE of God. We give the Holy Spirit material to work with in the minds of the unsaved. God will use it to accomplish what He intends in their lives. But how will they hear if no one tells them? Fearful? WE ALL ARE. Friend, it’s normal to be fearful. Even the disciples, after seeing the risen Lord

(and much more), required the Holy Spirit's fullness to be bold. That same "Spirit of Power" resides in us. When we allow the Holy Spirit to direct and empower us, our speech, our manner of life, our doing will become a testimony — a visible faith in action — to the minds of the unsaved. We conquer this fear through choice, the choice to be obedient. "*Do not fear the people of the land* (our community and nation), *for they shall be ours* [to pray for]... ." We are to bring them captive to Christ from the stronghold of Satan, from his kingdom of darkness and slavery to sin, into the kingdom of light as servants of Christ. The truth shall set them free and they shall be free indeed. Amen.

### Scripture References:

1) John 15:26 | 2) James 1:14,15 | 3) John 16:33 | 4) Romans 8:6 | 5) Romans 12:2 |  
6) Proverbs 4:23 | 7) Philippians 4:8 | 8) Matthew 12:35 | 9) 2 Corinthians 4:4 |  
10) Matthew 6:33 | 11) Matthew 6:19-21 | 12) Ephesians 3:17 | 13) 2 Timothy 1:6 |  
14) 2 Corinthians 10:4,5 | 15) Isaiah 55:11 | Hebrews 4:12 | 16) Romans 10:14 |  
17) Numbers 14:8,9 | 18) John 8:32.



### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

In my early twenties I went to an evangelistic crusade being held in downtown Toronto. It was during this crusade that I made a decision to receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I sincerely believed with all my heart that He was God and He had died for my sins but was still alive. I wanted Him to forgive me and be my Saviour but I didn't want to follow Him. I knew that obedience meant change and I didn't want change. For the next two years my life went steadily down hill until I reached rock bottom.

As a result, I began to attend church on and off at first with my parents and gradually on my own on a regular basis. I finally reached a point where I just couldn't live a double life any longer - my heart was so heavy. Finally, I made a total commitment to the Lord. I was scared to death. Was my commitment going to be real this time? Would I stay committed? I had messed up my life pretty badly at this point. I had spent two years running from God so in order to nail myself down on the other side of the fence - in obedience to God - I was baptized. I also became a member of this church. Then I quite my job and went to Bible College.

I want you to know that although my three years at Ontario Bible College were the best years of my life so far, they were also the hardest. Because of my past I had many deep scars that the Lord had to do major surgery on and being taken apart and put back together again is really hard. I cannot tell you the number of times when I was struggling I found out

people who attended this church were praying for me or how many times when I was down that someone came alongside and said the exact words I needed to hear. God has brought us together for a reason. He wants us to grow, not just be baby converts to wait for His return. We are to share our faith, not just with non-Christians but also with Christians. The Lord is constantly at work in and through us to nurture us spiritually and transform us into the likeness of His Son. You never know when you will be used of God - we all need to be available to Him.

In my two years of running away from God I tried to be a Christian on my own. I watched religious programs on T.V. but I wasn't accountable to anyone. I didn't even realize how important obedience was. I really believed I could have God and the world too. It took my coming and being a part of a church family to make me realize the truths of the Christian life. I needed the inspiration of others. We cannot keep our own flame going we need fellowship. We need to talk about the Lord and share our struggles. I had a very distorted concept of who God is because I didn't have the input of other believers. We need each other.

My fears used to almost paralyze me. Now, in most areas I have learned to do the thing I'm afraid to in spite of my fears. To any of you who are afraid I would say trust God - those who trust Him wholly will find Him wholly true and try to do those good things you are fearful of doing - that's how we grow - by going outside our comfort zone.

“God will not hold  
our faults against  
us when we ask  
for wisdom.”

Read James 1:2-6.



Have you made a lot of mistakes? Done some things without God's approval? Acted presumptuously in "faith"? Wisdom will be given you. But you must not doubt. Hold fast with an unwavering faith in HIM. Stand firm in the knowledge that God gives generously to all without finding fault . . . *"AND IT WILL BE GIVEN YOU"* James 1:2-6. Cast aside the unending accusations and fears that are crippling your mind and your spirit. God does not accuse and abuse us in this way, Satan does. He'll dig up dirt that's not even from our pile and throw it into our mind. Rest in the promises that Christ "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5, that "HE will accomplish what concerns you" Psalm 138:8 ASV, that HIS prayer for us will be answered, "that they be kept from the evil one." John 17:15, "For the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much." James 5:16b. Jesus is that Righteous One who prayed those words for us today! – "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ... ." John 17:20.

We are the ones who believe in Him through their message and through an act of our will we determine to practice true faith, *"For faith without works is dead."* James 2:17. We are to resist the Devil by standing firm in the faith. Standing firm in the faith is not passive. It is doing, practicing, persevering, and living out the revealed word of God. This is what Satan cannot resist and he is trampled underfoot by such a practiced faith. Never fear the Devil. Fear God and what He can do. Luke 12:1-12. By practicing and keeping ourselves under the authority of God's word we protect ourselves from deception and every form of evil.

One of the greatest truths I ever heard came from an illustration about money. *"If you want to know how to spot a counterfeit dollar bill, study the real one – get to know the real one."* You don't need to study the counterfeit bills because they are all different and that leads to even greater confusion. The only one that will be the same is the real one. If you know what the real one looks and feels like you will not be confused or deceived by the counterfeit at anytime or under any circumstance.

Satan is a master of deception. He even deceived himself into thinking he could be like God. Remember this, Satan deceived Eve and Adam in a perfect state, in a perfect world. How much more can we be deceived and led astray by Satan in a fallen state. But we are new in Christ if we have received Him as our Lord and Saviour. We now have the capacity to know truth. It enables us to discern evil and false ways — to expose vain thinking, counterfeit faiths and doctrines of Satan that pervade our society today.

Let us set our minds to know the truth, God's word, alert, firm and steadfast in our pursuit of it. And "*our adversary the Devil will flee from us*" 1 Peter 5:8,9. We will not be "*... tossed like waves of sea by every wind of doctrine*" James 1: 6b. Nor will we be left discouraged, frightened, intimidated or confused when we study and practice His truth. We are made stronger, more courageous and become faith-full in Him. We have been redeemed from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light. "*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" Colossians 1:13,14. The power Satan once had over us is now null and void. We now know God and His power will keep us to very end. We must now acknowledge, recognize Him in all situations and circumstances. You no longer need to be confused. Satan is the author of confusion. God's wisdom and His leading are peaceful. Read James 3:17. Our circumstances may be unsettling; they may even be tumultuous and scary. But the peace of God (given to us by God, not of ourselves) that passes all understanding keeps us peaceful, courageous determined and perseverant amidst seemingly "unconquerable odds." Philippians 4:6,7. He is strong! "*I will help you. I will uphold you with My mighty right hand.*" Isaiah 41:10. He fights for us! He is the absolute supreme ruler of our lives. SOVEREIGN. Nothing will go unnoticed. Nothing will be left unfinished. No details left undone. All will be cared for. He will do it all.

"*Fear not, for I am with YOU...*" "*I will never leave you nor forsake you,*" "*I the Lord have called you...*" "*Come unto me you who are heavy*

*laden and I will give you rest*”. Have you had the scriptures flood your mind like that? They will you know if you spend time reading and listening to them. They will become sharper than a two-edged sword when required. Comforting words, challenging words, words that admonish, encourage and bring inexpressible joy to the spirit, mind and body. They are reliable words of truth and power, living and active in each of us, able to discern every thought and the intention of our heart. Hebrews 4:12. Let me share an incident in my life that will illustrate the truth of this verse. I was having a conversation with someone special. It was at a time when I was becoming familiar with the Lord’s word. This person with whom I was conversing “believed in God” but he had not yet received Christ as Lord and Saviour. He was highly respected by me and I esteemed him to be highly knowledgeable. So what ever he said to me had the weight of my attitude toward him behind what he said. I won’t get into the details of our conversation but our discussion centered on God and how we should live our lives. As he shared his thoughts with me the words of God became active in my mind. Whenever he would share a thought with me that was contrary to God’s thinking (as revealed in the scriptures) a verse or sections of the Bible would come to mind and expose the error of his thought. I remember sitting beside him and thinking to myself how exciting it was to have the truth in my heart. How wonder-full was the experience of having the Holy Spirit bring to my remembrance the needed support of God’s word during our talk.

Why was this happening to me? Simply, to expose and protect me from error and being misled by false teaching about God. And God’s word will do this for all who will devote themselves to studying and practicing them. The “New Age” is no threat to those who have, know and practice the truth. It’s a threat to those who don’t. His words are a lamp, revealing the wrinkles of false and vain teaching, even of our own thoughts. Jesus said that His word purifies us. “*Sanctify them by the truth: your word is truth.*” John 17:17. One of Satan’s chief tactics against the Christian is to keep them from the sanctifying effect of God’s word in their life. Our spiritual life’s nourishment comes from our reading and practicing the word of God. 1 Peter 1:22,23.

Does the topic of spiritual warfare frighten, intrigue you or both? We may be inclined to keep ourselves ignorant of this aspect of our Christian walk because we may be afraid of getting ourselves to focus too much on evil. Or we adopt the “what I don’t know can’t hurt me, attitude.” Regardless of our reason for avoiding this area we need to realize that whether we like it or not we are involved in a conflict between God and Satan and it takes place during everyday life and living. The battle we fight is a spiritual one and it must be fought with spiritual insight, discernment and weaponry. 2 Corinthians 10:4,5. We cannot discern the will of God with our natural mind, Romans 8:7, or by our circumstances. It must be discerned with our mind set on what the Spirit desires. Our enemies are not men, women and children for whom Christ died, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms,”* Ephesians 6:12, that influence and injure men, women and children of the world, Christian or not!

Spiritual warfare brings to my mind the struggles, sufferings, trials, temptations and circumstances we face each day that challenge or test our faith as we endeavour to remain a vessel worthy of God’s use. It is to me the Holy Spirit of God at war with the sinful nature — *“the old man”* within us. Romans 7:21-25. It can be compared to a wrestling match that requires all our strength and cooperation with God to win. 1 Corinthians 9:27. It is the battle we endure in our mind — to set it on the things of God. For the mind set on what the Spirit desires is spiritual LIFE, but the mind set on what the sinful nature desires leads us to spiritual DEATH. Satan’s chief target is our mind, 2 Corinthians 4:4 says *“The god of this age has blinded the mind of the unbeliever”* and he continues to assault the Christian’s mind through the things of the world that our sinful nature craves with its *“lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”* 1 John 2:15,16. Read Romans 8, 12:1,2, Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5b. It is a fight — the good fight — of holding on to faith and a good conscience toward God and others, 1 Timothy 1:18b-19a, 1 Timothy 6:12, *“therefore present yourself as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual worship. Don’t conform to the pattern of this world,*

*but be TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – "His good, pleasing and perfect will,"* a paraphrase of Romans 12:1. This is key to our spiritual progress.

How would I describe Satan's activities here in sophisticated, 21st century North America? Satan wants to destroy the work, of God — that's the work of Satan in the world. His objective is to malign, distort or keep suppressed God's word so that men, women and children will not come to the knowledge of the truth about God or eternal life. 2 Corinthians 10:5. For the unbeliever it means keeping them from possible salvation. Are you keeping the word of God from them? For the believer it means keeping them from a deeper, closer walk with God — eternal life's abundance and joy. John 17:2,3.

What warning would I give to Christians? DON'T DABBLE WITH THE DEBBLE (Devil!). Deal quickly and severely with the things you already know are not right in your life. Abstain from sinful desires that wage war against your soul and spirit. We are all sinners; all of us and we each must maintain our lives by God's grace. Do you think God would fail to answer a prayer that is in accordance with His will? Not on your life! The bible says, "*...if we ask anything according to His will He hears us, and if we know that He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him.*" 1 John 5:14,15. Satan uses disobedient Christians to discredit God's holiness, love and truth. 1 Peter 2:11b, 1 Peter 4:1-3. Some of the most confusing times can be the spiritual battles we endure. Discerning the attacks of Satan and the hand of God is almost impossible. How do we know when we are battling Satan or resisting God and the changes He may be trying to make in our life? Our natural inclination is to resist change, to attribute difficulty to evil sources or God's judgment against us. We know that within ourselves there is a conflict, the same kind that the apostle Paul describes in the book of Romans, chapter 7 - the desire to perform God's will vs. the self-will of our sinful fallen nature. Whenever we move for God our sinful nature tries to exert its influence upon our will. The obvious temptations and blatant calls to sin do not require much discernment to identify

their source. However, it seems that even the blatant calls to sin are being heeded by many today. What about those conflicts that cause disunity, try our patience, and our desire to be securely in the will of God and at peace with Him — the working out of our salvation?

The illustration of Job's suffering has been particularly helpful to me because it reveals the other side of the battle — the invisible things that cause the visible. Let's turn to our Bible and read Job, chapter 1:6,12,20,21 and chapter 2:1-6,10b. What was the first thing Job did when these things happened to Him? Job's first response to His circumstance was to acknowledge God as Sovereign. He recognized that God was the final authority in his life and that nothing could happen to him without God knowing about it and permitting it to take place. We too must acknowledge God in this way. "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart (as Job did), lean not on your own understanding*" ... can you imagine how Job's mind must have been reeling and spinning trying to find answers for what was taking place in his life — we know the reason why but Job never did — and it says "*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing*" "in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your steps." Proverbs 3:5,6. God is Holy, Righteous and Just, in whom there is no wickedness. This requires faith to believe, especially in a world filled with violence. Those who acknowledge Him in this way will see Him as such. "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*" Matthew 5:6. Let's not be like that wicked slave, who imputed his master as an exacting and hard man. Luke 19: 2-27. This attitude will keep us from trusting Him and will limit our growth and use in His kingdom. We cannot hoard the Christian life it must be spent to profit spiritually.

What can we do to be winning the war, to be better equipped, more frequently victorious? One of the things that I became aware of in my life was my aimlessness. I had nowhere to go and I was going nowhere in my walk with God. This I believe is something most Christians contend with. Where do I fit in the scheme of things — God's plan? Well the scriptures are very clear on this if we look at them with this question in the back of our mind. What helped me the most was to have a reason for carrying on - a statement of hope.

My hope statement was that I might be at all times a vessel worthy of God's use. God has the master plan for my life and knows what I am best suited to do. What I may lack He will provide. The inspiration and leading of the Holy Spirit will provide the necessary insight and wisdom to make life decisions that are his will. For me it helps to determine what's important and what isn't. It means for me purity of thought and life. It governs my priorities and activities. Even though *"Everything is permissible for me – not everything is beneficial nor will I be mastered by anything."* 1 Corinthians 6:12.

Two other areas that I determined to care for were diet and rest. It's very easy today for us to become overwhelmed by our schedules problems or whatever and we end up eating poorly selected foods or not eating at all. Proper nutrition and proper rest are of strategic importance. Remember that Satan confronted Jesus Christ when He was tired and hungry and his tactics still haven't changed today. Matthew 4:2-3a. Eat right. Sleep right. It's important!

Two of Satan's chief weapons are the mind and the mouth. Guard them. Even Peter the apostle tried to persuade Christ from going to the cross and was severely rebuked by Him for it. Matthew 16:23. We too need to be careful of our minds conclusions for they could very well be thoughts that are in opposition to God. Hold fast to the word of God. Hold your own thoughts and ideas loosely and they won't be so hard to give up when they need to be. Be careful of what you say. The tongue really is a restless thing. James 3:1-12. Your words can damage the work of God in someone else's life so easily. They can damage your own. To stay within God's protection first DO the will of God that is revealed on the pages of the Bible. They are God's spiritual priorities for us to become spiritual worshippers of Him — *"For such the Father seeks."* John 4:23,24. They keep us in close fellowship with God because we practice them and God can bless us and empower us for HIS good pleasure. Deliberate, determined cooperation with our Lord is a very practical, very spiritual choice we make!

*"Is not My word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"* Jeremiah 23: 29. Isaiah 41:10; Hebrews 13:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Matthew 11:28.





### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

When I became pregnant with my first child, I began to think about what I really had to offer a child. I knew that my husband and I wanted a child and that we could love and care for a child but somehow that didn't seem like enough.

I found a Living Bible that had been given to us as a wedding present and I started reading it. I didn't understand what I read, but it made me feel good to read it. So while I was pregnant I tried to read the bible every night.

After our son was born we went to see a minister, from a denomination I had been raised in, to find out what it was the church did with babies - we didn't really know. But we knew something should be done with our baby in the church.

The minister explained that we probably wanted to have the baby dedicated. He asked us what our religious beliefs were. No one had ever asked me exactly what I believed. I told the minister, "I believe in God ... ". As soon as I said it I realized that just wasn't enough.

The minister knew from my answer that something was missing in my life. He promised to send me some information in the mail. I thought it was information about having the baby dedicated. I didn't read the minister's letter right away, but I kept it and I knew exactly where it was.



When we moved to Winnipeg my husband and I were invited to attend a bible study. I decided I should read the minister's letter before I went to the bible study. It was a religious letter and I was going to a religious meeting.

The minister's letter explained how I could really know God, not just believe in Him. It said that God loved me, but that I was a sinner and therefore separated from God.

It explained that I had to realize that I was a sinner ... "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. I had to confess my sins ... "for if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1John 1:9 and accept that Jesus Christ had paid the penalty for my sins ... "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16. Jesus death made it possible for me to live!!

There was a prayer at the end of that letter. I prayed that prayer and asked Jesus Christ to come into my life to be my Saviour and the Lord of my life. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23.

“Satan wants to  
destroy the work  
of God.”

*"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.  
Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand  
against the devil's schemes."*

Ephesians 6:10-11.

What thoughts just past through your mind as you read this headline? He does? ... How? ... What do you mean? Do you take our enemy seriously? Look at our world. Is Satan alive and living on planet Earth? Yes, he is and he is a vicious and malicious being who wants to influence and destroy the work of God. We learned a secret about Satan in our study of Revelations. He is an enemy already defeated. Whose power is exaggerated in our minds. We should be living the truth of this revelation in our lives.

As believers in Jesus Christ we have become dead to sin and it's power over us. We have been made alive unto God. And *"greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."* Yes, we drag along our fallen nature, but we are free of its power to influence our choices for Christ! We are absolutely set free in Christ. Free and forgiven. Never will victory come to our adversary, the devil, but only if we allow him to have it. God has equipped us even in our weakest moment to have a defense against him who persecutes us.

God has said that no temptation has overtaken us but such as is common to everyone. (Takes the wind out of it doesn't it.) God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure it. Acknowledge Him, turn from it and He will provide a way of escape.

Satan loves to kick us when we are down. Don't give in! Get up! Smile in his face and say "The Lord rebuke you Satan", you've kept me down long enough. Remember, God is holy, righteous, just and good. There is no wickedness in Him. Persevere. Be all God says you are in Christ. Strengthen yourself with the knowledge of your position in Christ — VICTORIOUS! Shake off your dust. You remove the chains from around your neck. God has done and is continuing to do His part, now you do yours. Believing He can and He will use you because you have made yourself available to Him. You have a mission. We have a mission, a destiny in Christ. Read your Bible.

Jesus Christ is soon returning. But we don't have to wait because He is among us now. We can be all God wants us to be - NOW! We can fulfill

His commission. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Have you completed your sphere chart? Have you started your testimony? Are you involved in any community outreach? Pray. Pray that God will reap a harvest plentiful. The heavens will shake in glorious rejoicing, as one soul trusts Christ for their salvation. We are advancing the kingdom of God and pushing back the gates of hell. Will you be a part of it? You must love. Will you give the gift of yourself? You must do. Will you allow others to rejoice with you in your conversion experience? You must testify. You are a witness of the power of the gospel to change a person's life. You must follow Christ!

The Lord knows the plans He has for you, for me, for us. Step by step let's follow Him. As we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our steps. Take a social media fast. Turn off the TV. Put the newspaper aside. Give your mind and imagination to God and His word. Fill yourself to overflowing with thoughts that are acceptable and pleasing to God. Think thoughts that build upon spiritual realities in Christ. Thoughts that encourage, strengthen and inspire! Guard your mind for from it flow the issues of life. As a man thinks so he is, says the bible. For Satan truly has become the prince and power of the air-waves. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Remember, our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers of darkness, things raised up against the true knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but Satan does because *"he is a liar and a murderer from the beginning."* He wants to destroy the work of God in your life and mine, in the lost as well.

Be steadfast, be immovable, and be always abounding in the work of the Lord. For we know that our labour in the Lord is not in vain. We do not serve a God who is not acquainted with our grief, sorrows or despair. Let us recognize that all things that come into our lives are under the authority of God. He has the last word—let Him have it! If we acknowledge Him in all our ways He will direct our steps and keep us from stumbling. We have the power of the resurrected life

of Christ abiding in us. The Creator of all things lives in us and we abide in Him. Join with God NOW and RESIST the devil and he will flee from you. God will start with you right where you are, right now. Confess your sins. Claim the grace of God for your life and current situation. You can be a victim or you can be a victor through Jesus Christ. The choice is yours.

### **Scripture references**

1Peter 5:8., Romans 6:12,13., Romans 8:9,10., 1John 4:4., 1John 4:4,5., Romans 13:14., 2 Corinthians 12:9., Hebrews 2:18., Philippians 4:19., Proverbs 3:6., Jude vs.9., Psalms 92:15., 1Corinthians 2:12., Ephesians 6:10,11., Numbers 23:19., 1Samuel 26:3., 2 Peter 1:3,4., Psalm 119:9,11., Joshua 1:8., James 1:18., Revelations 3:11., Joshua 1:9., 2Corthians 2:14., Philippians 4:13., Acts 1: 8., 1 John 5:14,15., 1 Thessalonians 5:17,18., Matthew 9:37,3 8., John 13:34., John 9:4., Jeremiah 15:27., John 21:22., Jeremiah 29:11., Psalm 37:31., Romans 8:56., Philippians 4:8., Matthew 6:22., Romans 12:2., Luke 6:45., Proverbs 4:23., Proverbs 23:7., 2 Corinthians 10:4,5., Ezekiel 18:23,32., John 8:44., 1Corinthians 15:58., Hebrews 12:3., Romans 8:28., Galatians 2:20., John 1:1-13., James 4:7,8., 1John 1:9., 1Corinthians 15:57., Deuteronomy 30:19,20., Joshua 24:15., Romans 8:5-8.



### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

I grew up in Ireland and there I attended a Catholic Church. I never knew what it was like to have a personal relationship with, God. I came to Canada in 1972 and I stopped attending church altogether.

It was around 1980 that a young man around my own age came to the apartment where I was living, to fix an appliance machine. He shared with me how God could change my life. His name was Stan. He invited me to his home for dinner and gave me a Bible. We became friends. He also used to come and visit with me during the week.

He suggested I should go and talk to the minister of the church where he attended. I met with the minister after I phoned for an appointment. He shared with me how God could help me with all areas of my life (my life was

in great turmoil at the time). It was through the truthfulness of Stan and the encouragement and help of the pastor that I turned my life completely over to God.

The Lord has been at work in my life in these past years in a great way. We don't need to have problems to need God. The Bible says, "In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" Rom. 5:8. I thank the Lord for His goodness to me. And today He is my closest Friend. I would not be without Him in my life.

“The heart is  
deceitful and  
desperately wicked.  
Who can  
understand it?”

Read Jeremiah 17:9.



That's a good reason to be Spirit controlled and to focus our attention on the Kingdom of God and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is also a good reason not to become overly introspective of one's self. All that leads to is confusion, frustration and even mental paralysis. You've probably heard the saying "Know Thyself". It's not from the Bible. Great men of God "Knew God" and what He had to say about them. If you truly knew yourself, you probably wouldn't believe what you discovered anyway or wouldn't want to.

Men and women are continually trying to discover "SELF". What makes "ME" tick? The "REAL ME". The "GOOD ME". The "BAD ME". The divine "ME, MYSELF and I". Why? So they can be "SELF-CONTROLLED", to change what's bad, to be good. Even we as Christians find ourselves caught up in the "SELF-ANALYSIS" "SELF-DEVELOPMENT" trap. "How can I change my ways if I don't spend time in introspective thought?" we say. Trouble is one thought leads to another and what started out with the best of intentions becomes an exercise in self-destruction.

"The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. "WHO CAN UNDERSTAND IT?" Is that the cry of your heart? Those are the very words God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the heart condition of mankind. It is a direct challenge to our "SELF-ABILITY." Read Jeremiah. 17: 7-10. Are you struggling with defeat that causes you to be "mind-weary"? Have you become entangled in negative, introspective thinking patterns? Have you considered what you're going to do with all this introspective information you've collected about yourself? Is it going to help you to change your life? How will it? How can you be sure the information you've collected about yourself is correct or has led you to a correct assessment of yourself? Do you now have the power to change your life because you now "know thyself"? Apart from God, you can do nothing. We all speak and think from our heart's condition. If our heart's condition is deceitful and desperately wicked, unable to be understood, what then is the solution to this dilemma?

The answer is to acknowledge our weak condition before CHRIST.

God wants us to recognize, not agonize over our shortcomings and lack of power to change ourselves. The world, the flesh and the devil would have us analyze, theorize, categorize, even hypnotize ourselves into being great SUPER SELF-ACHEIVERS. This insatiable pursuit will drive us to mental exhaustion and depression even drug therapy.

Self-control is a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be accomplished apart from Him. I'm not telling you to avoid your problems. I'm saying look to God first. Let God's Spirit bring forward what He wants you to deal with. Often we deal with our symptoms. God deals with the root cause. This takes willingness on our part to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. Often this happens when we are in a reflective and peaceful state. During these moments we are approachable, willing to reason with God in our hearts. WAIT upon God with quiet confidence and your concern will be cared for. David said, "*The Lord will accomplish what concerns me.*" Psalm 138: 8a. ASV.

God calls us to faith — to trust and rely upon Him. The world calls us to fate — I am what I am. God tells us to believe we are a new creation in Him and to live with this attitude. Why zap your energy and create your own discouragement by over-analyzing yourself. Simply confess your need of His enabling power and grace to live victoriously. That's what walking humbly in the Spirit is — fully trusting and depending upon God, not self-ability.

Spend your energy on knowing God and applying His word to your life's situations and circumstances — the promises of God. The joy of knowing Him gives us peace of mind. God doesn't want us to focus our attention on our faults and failings. We will always have those. He wants us to focus on His provision in Christ. His resources. His ideals. His goodness. Remove the chains of discouragement by practicing the encouraging word of God.

When a drug addict or anyone else for that matter receives Jesus Christ as Saviour, do they then begin to psychoanalyze their way to freedom in Christ? Of course not. They readily accept the truth of God's Word (an act of grace) that says they are set free and forgiven.

They leave the past behind. They press on in victory through the possessing, taking hold, believing to be true what the scriptures say about them, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and God.

Isn't that the way you and I started off in Christ? But some how we get off track. We get to thinking.... analyzing.... rationalizing.... It's called going astray unto your own way. The only way to get back on track is in the same manner you received Christ. Turn from your own ways, lay aside those things that have weighed you down and turn to God. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct and empower you by simply acknowledging God in all your ways. He will direct your steps. You need His grace to do His will. Ask Him for it! But He needs you to be a willing participant with Him.... *"how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:17b.

Put on the 'HELMET' of your SALVATION. It's there to protect your mind from the authors of confusion — our fallen sinful nature and Satan — the liar and cunning merchant of death. Remember this is the first piece of armor given to us. This is a God given piece of armor that we are to wear at all times. We must be diligent to remember what it means for us — SALVATION — FREEDOM to choose for Christ — A SOUND MIND — PROTECTION from Satan's fiery arrows of slander, accusation and discouragements — HOPE — ETERNAL LIFE — FORGIVENESS.

Let's also remember that in our community, our sphere, there are the lost who have no protection from our spiritual adversary, the devil. They have no Helmet of Salvation. Let's bring them this piece of armor through the preaching of the gospel of Christ TODAY.



### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Looking back on my life, I can truly see how God had his hand on me even though I didn't know Him.

As a youngster, part of my life was to attend Sunday school every Sunday. My parents believed in this and therefore so did I. I was taught about God and His Son, Jesus Christ. I knew the bible stories very well as they were taught to us year after year. I thought I knew all there was to know about being a good person, a Christian they called it.

In my seventeenth year I was attending a Christian camp and after devotions I asked the speaker a question. Being the director of the camp, he knew me quite well so I was surprised when he answered my question with "You are a Christian, aren't you?". Of course I was and told him so. What a silly question. Didn't he know that I had been to Sunday school all my life, that I knew the bible stories frontwards and backwards. Why would he ask me such a question? This nagged me for the rest of the evening. Was I a Christian or wasn't I? Why did he ask me, of all people? Why?

That night I prayed and asked God to make it clear to me what a Christian was and whether I was one or not.

The next night at devotions, the speaker (not the director of the camp this time) gave an introduction to his "little talk" which went something like this: "I had prepared a message for tonight, but I will share that with you another time. I feel that there is a need tonight and God has led me to share with you, with someone in particular the meaning of a 'Christian'." "God was speaking directly to me. I found out what I was missing. A personal invitation for God to come into my life, not only as God and Lord but also Saviour. I had all the head knowledge that was necessary, but not the heart knowledge.

That night as I sat and thought about the message, I asked Jesus to come into my life so that I could answer Yes, I am a Christian. He did just that and today, I no longer doubt my relationship with Jesus. As well as having head knowledge about the saving grace of our Heavenly Father, I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is living in my heart. Yes, I am a Christian.

“I will bring him  
near and he will  
come close to me,  
for who is he  
who will devote  
himself to be  
close to me?”  
“declares the Lord.”

Jeremiah 30:21.

How does God get His work done? We live in a city of over 360,000 people. We have approximately 5 evangelical churches in this immediate area (this includes ours). Most of these churches have remained the same size for many years. Why?

God is not asleep. The Creator of our universe is yearning that His work be done and we live, walk and talk as though someday God's will, will suddenly happen. We are waiting for God to do something. What that something is we really don't know. GOD IS ALSO WAITING. He is waiting for us to do something — to devote ourselves to be close to Him.

Just as we made a voluntary choice to believe in Jesus Christ we must also make a voluntary choice to be devoted to God. Repentance is not only turning from sin but also turning from Self-Will to His-Will. A HALF TURN (away from sinful things but not toward God) KEEPS US PASSIFIED BUT NOT ENERGIZED. We will be divided in our loyalty to Him, weak, uncertain about His love and care for us and vulnerable to the desires of the flesh and an unrighteous thought life. We must love God by DEVOTING OURSELVES TO BE CLOSE TO HIM with ALL OUR HEART, with ALL OUR SOUL, with ALL OUR MIND and with ALL OUR STRENGTH and LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR as yourself. Don't say you can't — YOU CAN when YOU WILL TO — when YOU begin TO DO. God will complete what's lacking BY HIS GRACE.

Our church was in the plan of God before the foundation of the world and we are part of that plan of God to reach out to this community with gospel of Christ. This, I believe, will happen as we devote ourselves to be close to Him. Then His Holy Spirit will be able lead and prompt us individually and corporately to do what pleases Him. What is most effective. We will cast the right net in the right place at the right time. God has special works for this church, unique works that only this work of God can perform.

One example is how God has initiated individual members of this church to become involved with the elderly. We in turn must be

sensitive to the requests of these members as they ask for our support. There are many elderly people who need to be loved and cared for — there are many who need to hear the gospel message. This is part of evangelism, and lays the foundation for a credible Christian witness.

We need to remember that this church is no accident or the idea of one person. It was God's idea and He gave the idea to those who were devoted to Him. God brought it into being for a purpose. God has a definite plan for us. This work of God is not meant to be an “Exclusive Social Club of the Redeemed” but an active, vibrant force of godliness in this community.

Yes, there are many needs to be met but it is important that we become involved in those things that God wants us to be involved in. We must not be looking for “SUCCESS” but for the leading of God's Holy Spirit. God is the One who gives success and He gives it to those who are devoted to Him. He sees the success that we don't and one day we will see it as He does, if we don't give up.

Let's deliberately devote ourselves to Him, as He wants us to. Choose to do His will. For it is God at work within you (urging you) to act and do according to His good purpose. For as long as it is day we must do the will of Him who sent Jesus Christ. Start NOW! He can't do it without your co-operation.

Imagine this — the Creator of all things the One who created the Sun with it's megatons of energy and light being bound in your life because of the often unconcerned and casual choices you make. AWESOME ISN'T IT! Will you take Him as seriously as He has taken you? God has told us to “*Enlarge the place of our tent*” to “*stretch our tent curtains wide*” ... we are “*not to hold back*” (ourselves), you and I are to lengthen our cords strengthen our stakes, spreading the gospel of Christ in every place. We know and He has now told us directly that there are people within our grasp who are ready to receive Him. He wants us to awaken to the seriousness of the time and the seriousness of His work and will. He has brought us close to Himself and now He is asking ... who is he who will devote himself to be close to Me?



Where do you and I fit in? What is my job and yours? It's to consider one another and to encourage (provoke) each other unto love and good works through our example and the practice of hospitality. Mine is temporarily from a position of visible leadership, yours from a position of not so visible leadership. We are leaders by our example to each other and to the world at large through our devotion to be close to Christ and not the ways of the world. We have a great responsibility to see that we care for one another, knowing that we will give account for how we treated GOD'S PEOPLE, that is, one another.

We don't have a testimony if we don't have yours. If you would like to share your reason for believing in Jesus Christ please hand in your testimony to the church office so we can publish it in this newsletter.

As the elder of evangelism I have endeavored to provide you with materials to help you discover opportunities for ministry and outreach. Our individual sphere is a key part in God's plan to reach a lost world. We will be having an outreach-training seminar held in our church. I would like to encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to learn how to reach out to the unsaved in your world — your sphere of life and living.

Please take note of the outreach dates listed in this newsletter. Take part in handing out our church outreach pamphlet containing personal testimonies and a personal invitation to visit our church. Pray for these things. Thank You.



### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

*I had been going through some very confusing and depressing times and did not know what I wanted to do with my life. I had held the same job for eight years but received no career advancements.*

*My husband was very supportive during this time and told me to quit if I was so unhappy but what would I do? I quit my job and went back to school where I studied to become qualified to do something I had always dreamed of doing, but something was still missing. One day I asked God to lead me, if there was a time I needed Him it was now. I asked Him to give me a sign of what He wanted me to do with my life.*

*[My husband] and I had unsuccessfully been trying to have children for three years but were resigned to the fact that if it didn't happen, it wasn't meant to be. Just when we became concerned about it and were considering seeking some medical advice I prayed to God, asking for His help. That month I became pregnant, although I never discovered I was until two months later. "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" Matthew 21:22. But God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld His love for me ... Psalm 66:19,20.*

*During this time a Christian girlfriend of mine who was to be married in Texas asked me if I would be a member of her bridal party. We flew to Texas and after the wedding the groom's parents invited everyone back to their home. After dinner some of the adults and all of the children gathered around the piano and began singing Christian songs. Everyone*

*seemed to have such an inner joy and happiness on their faces and it was then that my husband and I - so moved by the moment - decided that we too wanted our children to be brought up in a Christian home.*

*I had never gone to a particular church when I was younger, just to different ones with different friends. So we attended Sunday worship at another church in the area but didn't feel at home. The following Sunday we attended another church and enjoyed the service and fellowship extended towards us afterwards. We asked the pastor to contact us, as we wanted to become Christians. He came to our home with some literature and that night [we] prayed, asking Jesus to come into our lives.*

*We now have been blessed with a healthy baby girl, a true gift from God. "Children are a gift from God." They are a real blessing. Psalm 127:3. My plans to embark upon a new career have been put on hold by my current career duties - staying at home and caring for our beautiful daughter. The emptiness I felt before I asked Jesus into my life has been filled. I still feel dissatisfied with myself at times but then leading a Christian life isn't always easy. The comfort, however, is knowing that there is always someone at my side to guide me. "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" Philippians 4:13.*

“Jesus Christ is  
the same yesterday  
and today and  
forever.”

Hebrews 13.8.

Have you recreated your Creator? In times past, those who didn't know God made images of Him out of stone and wood. These images represented their thinking about God. They even created images of his attributes, as they perceived them to be. An image for prosperity, an image for fruitfulness, some even created an image for laughter.

We laugh too! — at them, because we can see the foolishness of their approach to God. They created images of God without knowledge, more from superstition and a wild imagination. We kindly refer to them as misguided or ignorant souls. Paul referred to them as “futile in their thinking”. The manner in which they worshipped and the images they made of God repulse our “sophisticated intellect”.

Today I get the feeling we are doing the same thing. As Christians, we too often create God in “our own image”. By this I mean we recreate God “as He should be” for the occasion or circumstance. We adapt God to our mindset — according to our hearts condition and then we worship OUR IMAGE of Him. Sometimes it is a God of great forgiveness, that will condone “a weakness” that we never deal with and continue in, making no effort to truly repent. God accepts me AS I AM we say and then we wonder why things don't change.

In suffering, we look for a God of deliverance and that's good. But what if we are not delivered and must suffer to the end? We don't want to think about that. You know we even create “God for the Day” and presume upon Him our expectations of having a good day. Hey! Maybe we are not going to have a good day. It is good to begin your day “In the Lord” on a positive note but not at the expense of common sense. Jesus said, “... *each day has enough trouble of its own*” Matthew 6:34. Those who talk about being “positive”, correctly understand that in spite of being overwhelmed by terrible odds (physical, emotional, mental and or even the desire to give up) they persist, they endure, they persevere because THEY CHOOSE TO. They depend upon God's enabling grace to sustain them. Their choice to live positively is not governed by their feelings or circumstances.

Jesus also said, “*Simply let your yes be yes and your no, no.*” Matthew 5:37. There's that principle of choice, of decision — deciding what to do and

then doing it. We don't make the day God does. We make the choices throughout the day — yes, no ... yes, no ... no, yes ... to participate with Him or without Him. Care for today, plan for tomorrow but **DON'T BE PRESUMPTUOUS WITH GOD**. King David asked the Lord to keep him from presumptuous sin. James said it this way "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that" James 4:15. Proverbs 27:1 instructs..."*for you do not know what a day may bring forth.*"

We have become accustomed to picking and choosing the parts of God that make us feel better and will advance us toward our desires. This approach to God leads us to create and worship a God of fragmented attributes, attributes to be used by us at will. Today's situation requires this kind of God and we recreate Him for today. In other words, we give priority to those things of God that concern ourselves and hardly ever those things that concern Him. This is a great affliction of Christianity today. It is no less idol worship than in days of old. **WE ONLY WANT FROM HIM WHAT WE WANT.**

I honestly believe that most of us don't do this deliberately. It's so humiliating and humbling to find out that "it can happen to me". The only thing that will keep us there is our pride. You know, we are never more than one step away from sin and never more than one step away from God's grace of forgiveness. Carnality is the cause of this approach to God. Carnality's root is **THE MIND SET ON WHAT THE SINFUL NATURE DESIRES**. And God says this approach to Him can never please Him, nor can it be receptive to the Holy Spirit's leading. It only produces spiritual death. Read Romans 8. Yet we continually try to mix the spiritual life with carnal desires and wonder why it doesn't work. We find ourselves deprived of spiritual strength and vigor. It's like trying to mix oil and water. They just can't be mixed or blended together. Our life in Christ will be much like water and oil - mixed up - never blended!

Well, how can I avoid throwing water on myself? How can I avoid slipping on the oil of my carnal desires? The answer is "**SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**" by "**SETTING OUR MIND ON WHAT THE SPIRIT DESIRES**". "**The Lord is my Shepherd I SHALL NOT WANT.**"

I shall not want what? — ANYTHING BUT HIM and HIS WILL for my life. “Hold on here, I think you’ve gone to far!”

“How boring that sounds to me. I’ve got big plans! I’m excited about living! I really believe I’m going to be around for a while. I’ve got a family, friends, a home, vacations to go on, even a cottage. Yeah, I wanted some of these things; some just fell in my lap. Look. I was born in North America. I’m not going to be a monk for God. You know what? I even like my job.”

Do you remember why you received Jesus Christ? Why did you ask Him into your life? Is He still Lord of your life amidst the good things, good times and your good job? God has a big plan too! Some of the blessings of that plan you are enjoying right now. You know what the opposite of faith is? SUSPICION and most of us are suspicious of God’s plan for our life. We are not willing to trust God for His best for us. We would rather enjoy it as we would like it to be and that’s why we fragmentize God’s attributes.

The Bible says, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”* Hebrews 13:8. He does not change. We change. And because we change our viewpoint or perception of God changes. We try to fit God to our experiences to the wisdom at the time and like Job’s companions we impute wrong judgments on our selves, others and God as to why things are the way they are when we really don’t know why. When things are going well for us, we like to think it is because we’re doing things right. When things go wrong we wonder, “What did I do to deserve this?” This approach to God is very fragile because it hinges itself on circumstantial evidences.

Whether enduring times of bewilderment, strained relationships or just enjoying day-to-day good times, be humble before God like Job was. Job didn’t know why the things that were happening to him were happening. And neither do we most of the time. Acknowledge GOD AS SOVEREIGN, the Final Authority, who will only allow His will to take place in your life and mine. This attitude is a great strength. We each have been given free will to make choices and this is an awesome, even frightening thing to understand. That God would

place our eventual destiny into our own hands is a sobering thought.

As Christian's we are secure in the knowledge that we will go to be with Christ in Heaven for all eternity. Why? We made the choice, a decision to believe and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Remember, there are many who don't. They have chosen a Christless eternity. The One who is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End of all things has appointed men and women to be free will agents. I often hear the comment "I want God to take control of my life." That's good! You give Him that control by the choices you make for Him. It requires us to acknowledge God in ALL our ways that He may direct our steps. God must become OUR ALL — IN ALL. This will keep us from vain pursuits. Just because God doesn't appear to us, as we would like Him too, doesn't mean our faith is weak or that He is not Sovereign. Be strong! Be courageous in your choices for Christ. You're never alone when you choose for Him.

We really only know what we are told and if what we are told is not true we are misled and deceived. If we act upon this inaccurate information we will eventually reap what we have sown, although we didn't know fully all that we had sowed. "That's just the way it is", so the song says. But that's not the way it has to be for the Christian. We must present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, holy, meaning set apart, and acceptable which is a reasonable thing to do. HOW? BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND — THAT WE MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE WILL OF GOD.

Read your bible. Ignorance of the scriptures is the cause of most of our spiritual strife, not the excuse. It's very important to read it because the God of the Bible is the God of the Bible. And we must know Him as He is and not as we would like Him to be or not to be. We have the Holy Spirit within us to teach us. We really don't need anyone else to teach us. He will do it. But how many of us are devoted enough to God for this to be a reality in our lives? So to help us He has given us one another to encourage, impart wisdom and love, to share what He has given to each of us freely — Jesus said, "*FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.*" Matthew 10:8.



HE UNDERSTANDS we are weak and become discouraged easily, prone to sleep through critical times like the disciples did in Gethsemane when Jesus needed their support the most. You know God's support often comes in conjunction with our support for one another. And today we need one another's support more than ever. START NOW by being a fruitful branch on the vine of Jesus Christ. God will produce the fruit if we abide (live) as a branch. The fruit-bearing life comes from God through the vine (Jesus Christ) into the branches (You and I) producing fruit. God also gives a stern warning to those who will not abide in the vine. They will be cut off and discarded but saved as by fire. Consider this ...could the One who gave His life in exchange for yours have anything less than your best interests at heart?

Non-believing friend can you identify with some of the things I have said? Do you have some of these same struggles? Is the god you serve the god you made for yourself? Has he become a merciless, hard taskmaster for you to serve? Are you in so deep to him now that you would give anything to be released from his power? Then give yourself to the One who loves you and has your best interests at heart, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* John 14:6. He came to bring us to God. He knows us intimately and He wants you to have eternal life, fellowship with God, NOW AND FOREVER if you will admit your need of Him, be willing to turn from your sins and believe that He died for you on the cross and rose from the grave, you will be saved and brought into fellowship with Him. Jesus said, *"Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."* Don't delay. Receive Him now as your Lord and Saviour, for you don't know what the next moment holds for you!

You can pray this prayer or use it as a guide: 'Lord Jesus, please come into my life, forgive me and help me to turn from my sins. I receive you now as my Saviour and my Lord. Thank you for the gift of eternal life. Amen.'



### A Personal Testimony

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;  
the old has gone, the new has come!"*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Regular involvement in Sunday school and Church has always be a part of my life and for many years I had no reason to question my faith. My participation in various groups and involvement as a leader seemed all that was needed.

However in my early thirty's I began to wonder if this was all there was. I had become involved with a number of other Christians, some as commuting companions and with others developing a Christian pavilion at Expo 67. Through the witness of one of these men I saw that my faith was not complete and I surrendered my life to Jesus. For the next four years I spent all my spare time in the preparation and presentation of a Christian witness that reached hundreds of thousands of people.

Although I was even busier than ever before in church "work", my questioning about the effectiveness and longterm value of such busyness was replaced by an assurance that this was what God wanted me to do and that it had eternal values for myself as well as others.

A few years later we moved back to Toronto and for seven years God used me on a mission board. My earlier experiences were used here to help promote

this mission's ministry while I, at the same time, experienced a steady increase of spiritual growth as I worked alongside those who gave direct leadership and encouragement to student groups throughout Canada.

I am now back full circle in the business world, but with a new perspective on the value of time spent in congregational and para-church activities and more importantly with a deeper relationship with God.

“Let him  
do his worst.  
We must do  
our best.”

Winston Churchill's response to  
Hitler's aggression against England.

However, we as believers, do not war against flesh and blood. Our enemies are the [fallen] principalities, powers and rulers of this dark world, the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly realms that wreak havoc in this world. — *Jesus said,*

*"Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Matthew 4:10*

*"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Luke 10:18*

*"Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" Luke 13:16*

*"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Luke 22:31*

*'I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'* Acts 26:17-18

What a statement! What a truth! When I heard Winston Churchill say that during an A&E Biography television series it inspired my devotion to God and my opposition to evil. It really captured for me the essence of God's strategy to rout Satan and bring men, women and children into the kingdom of God.

What a tremendous parallel to the spiritual warfare we are engaged in, in this world. When Satan did his worst — to deceive Adam and Eve into disobeying God — God did His best by providing a Saviour for all mankind. When Adam and Eve did their worst — by listening to Satan and rejecting God — God did His best by not rejecting them. When Satan and a few men, together, did their worst — to betray and crucify Jesus Christ, God's only Son — God did His best by raising Him from the dead and sending His disciples to preach forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

There are examples all around us, everywhere, people doing their best while others continue to their worst.

Like England, we cannot win the war by just doing our best in our own strength. They needed the support of other nations and we need the support of God's Holy Spirit and one another.

Our weapons are the must do's of spiritual truth found in the bible. Have you ever looked up the must do's in the Bible? "*As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me.*" John 9:4; "*As I have loved you, so you must love one another ...*" John 13:34; "*... but you also must testify, for you have been with me ...*" John 15:27; "*... you must follow me.*" John 21:22.

Must is a word that communicates urgency, commitment, determination and perseverance. It's a "D-Day" word — that expresses [D]eliberate resolve and action! We must do our best in Jesus Christ, God's way, in dependence upon Him in order to be successful in communicating the gospel of Christ.

The saving of a soul is a spiritual battle. It requires spiritual truth,

spiritual weapons, spiritual armour, and prayer in the Spirit to deliver a soul from Satan's dominion.

One of the sobering thoughts that we must keep in mind is that not all people are going to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. We are told to preach the gospel to everyone. Only God knows who will be saved. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, nor is He willing that anyone should perish. God desires repentance. Ezekiel 18:23.

There are really only two kinds of people in this world, the saved sinners and the lost sinners. Both however, are sinners. God graciously calls the saved sinners Saints because He has imputed the righteousness of Christ upon them. This perspective helps to keep us from a self-righteous attitude toward the lost sinner. It does not give us a license to continue in sinful behaviour but encourages empathy, having been made righteous through no righteousness of our own doing. It's part of the gift of salvation. I mention this only to encourage you to consider your own view of the unsaved. Our attitude in this area is crucial for us to share the gospel of salvation.

When an unbeliever begins to be drawn toward God, he or she will encounter opposition from the spiritual forces of darkness. This opposition may manifest itself through sudden difficulties, hindrances and discouragements or worldly distractions. We must be alert to these forms of opposition not only in their life but also in our own as well. They will not attribute this to evil intent because the God of this world has blinded their minds. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

It is therefore extremely important that we pray for the unsaved. We must intercede, through prayer, on their behalf in order that God's will may be accomplished in response to our prayers for His will to be done in their lives.

Paul in Ephesians 6:18 encourages us to *“pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*

Praying in the Spirit requires that we be sensitive in every situation to the Holy Spirit's leading as He guides our thoughts to pray specific prayers for others and ourselves in accordance with God's will, as revealed in His word.

Who is our enemy?

The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12 *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the Spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* Our ultimate struggle is against the devil's schemes, to entrap, discourage and destroy the work of God in our own life and the lost. Ephesians 6:11.

How do we fight back?

We are to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17b. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 10:4,5, *"the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."*

When we begin to discuss with non-believers Bible truth, the gospel message of salvation, as well as our own reason for believing in Jesus Christ, we put light into minds that have been darkened in understanding concerning the Bible, Jesus Christ, God and the Holy Spirit.

We do this by lining up their argument, speculations and lofty ideas about God with the true knowledge of God contained in the His word, the Bible. We take their thoughts about God and make them conscious of Christ. More simply, we put the lies of Satan up against the truth of God's word to bring people to a true knowledge of God.

When we sow the seed of God's word in the minds of the unsaved, the Holy Spirit will use what has been said to accomplish what He intends in their life. Remember, the word of God is the sword of

the Spirit, not our sword. *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”* Hebrews 4:12.

How do we protect ourselves while advancing God’s kingdom?

One way, in which we can become effective in speaking the truth of the gospel with the unsaved, is by consciously taking to ourselves by prayer the whole armour of God. To encourage yourself parallel each piece of armour with an item of clothing you put on as you get dressed in the morning. I’m including this prayer by association as a way to help recognize the sufficiency of *“putting on Christ”*, *“walking in the Spirit and truth.”*

Lord, as I put on this Belt of Truth should the enemy of my soul attack my understanding of you and your will for me, may your Holy Spirit bring to my remembrance your truth for the occasion that I may stand firm against his opposition and every temptation to dishonour you.

O Lord, I put the Breastplate of (imputed) Righteousness in place to protect me from the accusations of the evil one. There is no one righteous but you. May your Holy Spirit remind me throughout this day that I have access to your throne of grace to obtain all that I need to live as I should.

Jesus as I put on these Shoes of Peace, may your peace that passes all understanding keep my heart attentive and responsive to your Holy Spirit's leading and enabling that I may be an effective representative of your kingdom in word and deed, ready and willing to share the gospel of peace with anyone, anytime and anywhere.

As I take up my Shield of Faith, to protect myself from all the flaming arrows of the evil one, I pray to be filled with your Holy Spirit that I may not only quench our enemy’s attacks but grab hold of your promises in order to advance your will in this world.



Lord as I place this last piece of armour, the Helmet of Salvation on my head, I'm reminded of the cost of my salvation. May it protect my mind from the author of confusion — Satan. May I be diligent to remember what it means for me — freedom and power to choose for Christ, sacrificial love, eternal life, forgiveness, hope, a sound mind and no fear.

Thank you Lord.

I am also reminded Lord that in “my world” and community there are the lost who have no protection from our adversary the devil. They have no Helmet of Salvation. May I be one who will bring them this piece of armour through the preaching of the gospel of Christ TODAY! Amen.

Apply these truths in the context of your situation and maturity in Christ. Walk in dependence upon God, not your enthusiasm. Although Satan is described as a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, in Christ, Satan is also under our feet in Christ. Isaiah 54:17; *“Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.”* 1 John 4:4.

It's a real battle we are engaged in, invisible to the unsaved but highly visible to the devoted in Christ. Don't underestimate our enemy, but don't overestimate him either.

We must continue to do our best, while he continues to do his worst.

The Holy Spirit gives LIFE.

# We are to rest in Christ.

It's not a reckless rest or without responsibility.

It is a rest of confidence and assurance  
that God will accomplish what concerns us.

We are not to grieve His Holy Spirit.

*"Therefore don't let sin reign in your mortal body,  
that you should obey it in its lusts. Neither present your  
members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness,  
but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead,  
and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."*

Romans 6:12-13 (World English Bible)

# When we sin.?!

Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked,

*"Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?*

*Which is easier: to say,*

*'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?*

*But that you may know that the Son of Man  
has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ."*

He said to the paralyzed man,

*"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."*

Immediately he stood up in front of them,  
took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.  
Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God.

They were filled with awe and said,

*"We have seen remarkable things today."*

Luke 5:22-26

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we  
ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know  
that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have  
what we asked of him."*

1 John 5:14-15

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us  
our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

1 John 1:9-10

Read 1John—Chapters 1-5

“What am I like?”

“What are you  
like?”

Similar in base nature but  
differ in personality.

Jesus asked a divulging question:

*“But what about you?”* he asked.

*“Who do you say I am?”*

Matthew 16:15

What are we apart from Christ? Sinners. [But not worthless to God.] Meaning we are all less than what we should be because of being defrauded by Satan's deceit, then and now—our life was hid in God back then and is hid in Christ Jesus now. Satan lied to Eve but Eve made the choice to believe what he said to her. And so did Adam indirectly when He didn't observe any negative signs or repercussions in her demeanor or appearance. Sinful actions are often hidden behind seemingly good intentions. But, because of God's love, grace and mercy and Satan's deceit we ended up with a far greater, more intimate and perfect relationship with God than Adam and Eve had with God in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had to follow orders [God was on the outside] – we have the Holy Spirit – the very Life of God within us. They didn't have that [for God would not sin against Himself]. This too is true of our continuing relationship with God today – we are brought closer and into a deeper union with Jesus Christ with every necessity or occasion to call on His Name.

What are you like? You're [you] the sinner who became a saint, who grew up and responded to life and living as you thought you should. At times, inappropriately and impulsively, at other times thoughtfully but most of the time step by step, good and bad, as your world turned. The bible doesn't describe people the way the world does – “he's a nice guy” – but mostly by their character in relationship to God – King David was 'a man after God's own heart' – this description of David is given by the Holy Spirit and recorded by man. Many, if you read about the life of David, thought of him at various times as a traitor [Absalom], insolent [Goliath], weak [Bathsheba], an enemy [Saul], mentally ill [Philistines], and the list goes on and on. It depends on whose doing the talking. People today might refer to him as bipolar, reckless or a fake. They even wished him dead while he lay ill. I'm sure the 'facebook's' and 'twitter's' at that time [gossip face to face] were permeated with likes and dislikes. Journalists would have had a field day with his antics. You are to others what they believe you to be. I'm sure there were 'facebookies' betting on the outcome of his life. Would it be syphilis [all those women, shameful], heart attack [too much on his plate], murder [boy he's upset a lot of people], suicide [how does he stand it],... ? The general population was as fickle toward David as they were to God [and Moses].

Jesus Christ is always the standard by which we are to measure our self. It's not about knowing our self as much as it is to know and commune with Him. He will make known to each of us what it is we need to come to Him for as we encounter our own various faults, trials and temptations and He will give us of His Holy Spirit the comfort, instruction and wisdom we need to prevail while enduring them by His enabling grace and unmerited mercy — not do's and don'ts. That didn't work with Adam and Eve and it won't work with us when push comes to shove. When the end of our life comes and we see Him as He really is, will He say, "I never knew you, depart from me"? Christ won't be referring to a "Peter" and saying, "I heard you were a nice guy and you're really cool, please enter, the door's open. Make sure you behave yourself." So for me to say to someone "You're a nice person and this and that" is about as helpful as saying "You're a bad person and this and that". Peter asked of Christ, "What about Him? (referring to John who was following behind them)" And Christ replied to Peter, "If I want him to remain until I return — what is that to you?" "You must follow Me." Only our Lord is sovereign over our life. Go to Him, follow Him, rely on Him and trust in Him. It's no longer your life. It's His. He's bought and paid for it with His own life. Do you think He's no longer thinking upon you? Isn't a thought like that somewhat "faithless"?

Faith in God, because of all He has done for us, is our way of escape from hypocrisy and fickle behavior in our self and in others. Don't put your trust in man, ever. Without Christ we can do nothing. So [briefly] what was King David in the end — to the community at large — "a great guy", "a real warrior", "no, he's nothing but an adulterer and murderer", "no, the guy's really unbalanced, shameful, he partially disrobed and praised the Lord while dancing in the street in front of his men and everybody else", "and that's not all, the guy's happy, can you believe that? What right does he have to be happy, his own eldest son wanted to kill him because he didn't do anything about the incest rape of his daughter", "yeah, what a jerk", "a real creep", "well everybody's got their faults, he's my hero, he's won many battles for us and look he really cares about God's temple, he's been collecting all this stuff to build it, boy, he really puts his money where his mouth is." AND how did God describe David — "*a man after my own heart*",

in today's language—I love that man. "God testified concerning him: *I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.*" God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for him and all those like him—past, present and future—bound up in their sins yet they love God because He first loved them and they received Jesus Christ when He called them. They confess their sins and repent. *"Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders."* (Deuteronomy 33:12)

Friend, God loves us and for us it really is a "Never Ending Story". The Gospel is His Sovereign Promise to us — it contains all that we need to know about ourselves, and more importantly all we need to know about our heavenly Father and His Son. All the rest is of the world, the flesh and the devil to keep us in bondage to sin. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the LIFE. Keep your heart in the kingdom of heaven and your feet on the solid ground of His Word because He cares for you. His Word is who He is. That's only true of Him. Our words usually fall to the ground and are trampled underfoot by our own feet. We are called Saints, nevertheless we sin and need God's grace to LIVE victoriously. God says be holy for I AM Holy. How can a sinner ever be Holy? By FAITH. We have no righteousness of our own, only His righteousness imputed to us. So what kind of person are you? You are now God's workmanship. Not mine or anyone else's to judge or assess your worth. It is before our Lord we stand or fall just like King David and Moses did. So all the other stuff of life and living becomes rather mute in comparison to God's love for us. It's a relationship plain, simple and prayerfully maintained.

God is meek and humble and full of mercy toward us. When I think of how He revealed Himself in appearing to Moses, with great humility and without condemning or condescending spoke of Himself to Moses as one does with a friend, in truth, proclaiming Himself before Moses. Can you imagine the God of all creation standing before you and saying the following? "Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, *"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and*

*faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."* (Exodus 34:5-7 ) That the Lord, would make Himself known to an individual He created in such a manner as He did with Moses, words cannot describe only His Holy Spirit can reveal the greatness of the encounter Moses had with God at that moment. So much respect and worth is given to His created creature — His friend, Moses, and again through Jesus Christ toward us through generations, we too can have this kind of fellowship with God as well, but in a way that exceeds the relationship Moses had with God. Moses knew about it. The Lord, our God proclaims Himself to us as *"the way, the truth and the life"* and He too calls us friend. For Moses said, *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you."* (Acts 3:22-23)

Like Moses, King David's life was not without sin, torment, fear, trepidation, malice, hate, intrigue, remorse, revenge, murder, lust, laziness, pride, presumption, pretension and prejudice some of it their own and some of it toward them by others. Read the Psalms 1—72 and you quickly see King David recognized all these things and worshipped God.

When Jesus asked the question

*"But what about you? Who do you say I am?"*

"Simon Peter answered,"

*"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Jesus replied,

*"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."*

Matthew 16:15-17

And so it is with each of us who come to Jesus Christ and are saved.



## Spirit, Truth and Prayer

The oil that keeps the Light of Christ's LIFE in us glowing.

*"I have been crucified with Christ  
[in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I  
who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I  
now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and  
reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God,  
Who loved me and gave Himself up for me."*

*"[Therefore, I do not treat God's gracious gift as something  
of minor importance and defeat its very purpose];  
I do not set aside and invalidate and frustrate and nullify  
the grace (unmerited favor) of God."*

Galatians 2:20,21 (Amplified Bible)

Whatever your providence  
God in Christ is your way forward.



# Pray in Secret

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.

Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:6

3 prayers—make them your own.

*“I know the plans I have for you,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you a future and a hope,”  
“declares the Lord.”*

Jeremiah 29:11

Lord, before I was born you knew me. You weaved me in my mother's womb and watched over me throughout my youth, even unto this very day and hour, *"The Lord sees me."* Genesis 16:13 Thank you, Lord, for knowing me and not being someone unknown to me. Your plan to be my God, my Saviour, my Lord, my Friend, my Rock, my Protection, my Fortress, my Hiding Place, my Hope, my Future, my Strength, my LIFE, my Resurrection, my Righteousness, my All in All, whose love is unfailing and who is closer than a friend, who carries me and lifts me up and who keeps me close to Himself should I strike my foot against a stone. Throughout all my days, you have cared for me, kept me from Satan's grasp and his wicked schemes to destroy the work of God, my faith. You have been a father to me, a mother also, you have been my brother and my faithful friend in whom there is no deceit, slander or withholding of the truth. Lord, I am glad that I know you and that you know me and that you will continue to lead in the way I should go. You will conquer my enemies because the battle is yours and not mine.

I will stand still and see the deliverance of the Lord for your angels encompass me round about and your strength keeps me strong to want to glorify you and honour you though I be less than worm and shameful in my conduct and ways. You are my LIGHT in the darkest places and my HOPE when overwhelming forces prevail against your LIFE that lives in and through me. May the Lord continue to prosper and prosper me for His Name's sake, for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. You, Lord, are my future and my hope, may I love you more than *"these"*, may I love you more than I do, may I love you. Forgive my waywardness, my sins, my straying from the truth, my worldliness, my pride, pretension and presumptuousness, my stony heart and mixed up mind that tries to possess both lives, the Spirit

and the flesh in harmony to my own hurt and discouragement. Yet, Lord, you are faithful and will not let me be held captive by my own sins and shortcomings, nor will you allow your LIFE in me to be held captive by the evil one but you grant me grace to help me in my time of need because your compassion fails not and is new every morning. Great is your faithfulness, Lord, unto me. You, Lord, are worthy to be praised, worthy to worship for you are Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God Almighty who is merciful toward me and descends to be my very LIFE *eternal*. In you are all things possible and nothing can separate me from your love toward me in Christ Jesus my Redeemer, my Saviour, my God. To God be the Glory, great things he has done, to God be the Glory O' Great Three-In-One, to God be the Glory Look—the Lamb of God, Look—the Saviour dying, Look—the King arising, *I see* what He has done, to God be the Glory through Jesus Christ His Son.

Lord, pray for me, intercede for me, with my Father in Heaven in regard to my LIFE in you and in this world. I know not the plans you have for me so I don't know where I'm going. May I have the eyes of faith to lead me in the way I should go. May I have my mind open to understand what the will of the Lord is for me. May I have revelation to instruct and guide me in all that is of the Lord and His will in all that concerns me. I not only pray these things for myself but for my whole house — my family and all those whom you have called and those yet to come, that they too would have eternal LIFE and have it more abundantly that their joy may be full and their hearts be full of faith toward you who is our LIFE and who sustains us through all our difficulties and who gives us peace that passes all understanding, not as the world gives but as you give. May the Lord keep us from defiling ourselves. May He keep us pure and our conduct pleasing in His sight as we rest in your work of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling  
and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory  
with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ  
our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority,  
before all time and now and forever. Amen”*

Jude, 24,25.

*“Believing friend, don’t be perplexed or discouraged when you experience strange and seemingly unrelated incidences in direct opposition to your progress in Christ.*

*Recognize these intense trials are in partnership with Christ, and if you endure in them will bring you great joy when the marvel of his glory is revealed.”*

Paraphrase of 1 Peter 4:12,13

Lord, I bring this ordeal to you. It appears to be designed by the unrighteous powers to impede my spiritual progress by exercising their cunning schemes against my vulnerabilities as a sinner saved by grace. For this knowledge and spiritual insight I am thankful. I ask you for wisdom and discernment to know how to practically respond to it.

Lord, my strength, my friend, grant me justice against my adversary, the prince of this world, Satan, through the victory you give in Christ Jesus my Sovereign Lord. Let not any sin of mine or that of others rule over me, or have any kind of dominion over our family. Let me never forget that you, Lord, are my righteousness, and it is imputed to my credit, I have no righteousness of my own.

I pray and ask for this in the Name that is above every name, Jesus Christ, my Lord, Saviour and King whose compassion fails not but is new every morning. Great is your faithfulness Lord, unto me. Amen.

*“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”*

Luke 18:1

*“For the mind set on the flesh is enmity with God  
[it produces hostility, animosity, antagonism, friction].  
The mind set on the Spirit produces life and peace.*

*The Spirit helps us by interceding for us with prayers  
that cannot be spoken; for God searches for the mind  
of the Spirit toward us because the Spirit’s intercession  
on our behalf is according to the will of God.”*

Paraphrase of Romans 8:5-26

There is nothing in me Lord that would inspire righteous behavior but your Holy Spirit. He is a fountain of eternal life, a river of living water enabling me to live the life you promised to give me that is an abundant life that my joy may be full. He is your very Life that you share with me. Measured out to me by faith, freely given, and not obtained by works should I boast or think myself superior or deserving of it. It is a life given to me to glorify you. A marvelous fellowship full of grace and truth that is of your good pleasure, purpose and sovereign will. Increase my faith in your faithfulness toward me Lord. You are for me and not against me in all situations and circumstances because you love me with an everlasting love. It is always your Life’s life that gives me Life to see, hear, listen and discern your voice. Thank you, Lord.

Grant me sufficient grace to walk in the Spirit, to set my mind on the things of the Spirit, so I will not give in to, fulfill the desires of the 'old man', the 'fallen nature', the lusts of pride, the eye and flesh, I ask in Jesus Name with thanksgiving. Amen.

*“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

2 Corinthians 13:11

Jesus replied,

*"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."*

*"All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

John 14:23-27



What more  
could I have  
done for you  
than what  
I have  
already done?

A question put to me by God.

Fragments from Isaiah chapters 50, 52, 53.



### Isaiah 50:6-10

"I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up."

"Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God."

### Isaiah 52:13-15

"See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness — so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand."

### Isaiah 53:1-12

"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

"Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."*

John 3:16-18

*As the Scripture says,  
"Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."  
For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile —  
the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,  
for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Rom 10:11-13

To trample underfoot the  
remarkable love of God for you  
by rejecting His offer of Salvation



through Jesus Christ  
is an unforgiveable individual choice.

I would be gravely negligent  
if I did not inform you of the consequence  
of rejecting God's offer of forgiveness and  
salvation from the second death —  
a Christless eternity.

Rejection of God's offer of salvation will result in being eternally separated from Him. The Bible indicates that we have been created to live forever. Where we are going to spend eternity is our choice. Heaven is described as the place where all who have believed in Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour will live with Him. While those who have rejected God's offer of salvation—forgiveness of their sins and fellowship with Him—will spend eternity separated from Him.

The choice is one of humility.

# Rewards

*“Behold, I am coming soon!  
My reward is with me,  
and I will give to everyone  
according to what he has done.*

*I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the First and the Last,  
the Beginning and the End.”*

Revelation 22:12-13

## Churches with problems. Addressed to the angel or messenger.

*"These are the words of him who holds  
the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the  
seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds,"*

Revelation 2:1-2

*"These are the words of him who is the First and the Last,  
who died and came to life again.  
I know your afflictions and your poverty —"*

Revelation 2:8-9

*"These are the words of him who has the sharp,  
double-edged sword. I know where you live —"*

Revelation 2:12-13

*"These are the words of the Son of God,  
whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like  
burnished bronze. I know your deeds,"*

Revelation 2:18-19

*"These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God  
and the seven stars. I know your deeds;"*

Revelation 3:1

*"These are the words of him who is holy and true,  
who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut,  
and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds."*

Revelation 3:7-8

*"These are the words of the Amen,  
the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's  
creation. I know your deeds,"*

Revelation 3:14-15

# Our Saviour, Jesus Christ encourages us to overcome and to pray

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

2 Chronicles 7:14

## Surely, this is the right time to pray for revival.

Then Jesus said to his disciples,

*"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.*

*What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then...*

## ...he will reward each person according to what he has done."

Matthew 16:24-28

## Addressed to overcomers attending churches with problems.

*"To him who overcomes,  
I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,  
which is in the paradise of God."*

Revelation 2:7

*"He who overcomes  
will not be hurt at all by the second death."*

Revelation 2:11

*"To him who overcomes,  
I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone  
with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it."*

Revelation 2:17

*"To him who overcomes and does my will to the end,  
I will give authority over the nations—'He will rule them with an iron  
scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received  
authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star."*

Revelation 2:26-29

*"He who overcomes will,  
like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book  
of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels."*

Revelation 3:5-6

*"Him who overcomes  
I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it.  
I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God,  
the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God;  
and I will also write on him my new name."*

Revelation 3:12-13

*"To him who overcomes,  
I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame  
and sat down with my Father on his throne."*

Revelation 3:21-22



*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that*

you will  
receive an  
inheritance  
from the Lord  
as a reward.

*It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

Colossians 3:23-25

# “Always be prepared

to give an answer to everyone  
who asks you to give the reason for  
the hope that you have  
with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15b



PRAYER-EVANGELISM

OBTAINING A VISION FOR OUTREACH  
IN YOUR SPHERE OF LIFE & LIVING.

# The reason I believe in Jesus Christ is...



A coherent, progressive, step-by-step presentation of why you believe in Jesus Christ helps the hearer to understand what has taken place in your life. Often when unprepared to give the reason for our belief in Him, our thoughts wander and we end up being sidetracked, bringing things into our conversation we never intended. As a result, we confuse the hearer and they begin to question the legitimacy of what we say.

Prayerful reflection and thoughtful preparation will enable you to confidently communicate the truth of your experience in receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of your life.

The goal here is not to prepare yourself to mechanically repeat word for word your written reason, but to have a “mental outline” of what you would say to someone, when you have the opportunity to share the reason you believe.

## What was your reason for the need of change?

- *What was your life like then?*
- *What was the need, issue or difficulty?*

1). Put your thoughts down on paper. Use sentences, point form notations, questions you had, key words, etc. Don't concern yourself with content, order or complete facts. You are only collecting information at this point. Do this for each heading. Now lay it aside for a couple of days. You may want to carry around some paper and a pen. Usually when we are thinking about something specific, thoughts come back to us at the oddest times, and if we don't write them down right away, we fail to recall them later. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring it back to your remembrance.

## What was your reason for coming to Christ?

- *What led you to consider and believe in Jesus Christ as the solution to your problem?*
- *What bible verses encouraged you to make your decision?*
- *How you took the step of believing in Jesus Christ?*

2). Review what you've written. Add any new thoughts you may have. Delete inappropriate material. Leave out those things you feel God doesn't want you to share. There are things that should remain between you and God and no one else. Now begin to organize your material in the proper sequence of events. Leave it for a few days and then review it again.

## What is your reason for following Jesus Christ?

- *How did God meet your need?*
- *What changes have taken place in your life?*

3). When sharing your reason for believing in Jesus Christ, speak plainly and avoid religious sounding phrases. Don't use terms that would be difficult for a non-believer to understand. Be sure to include bible verses that helped you. It will show how practical the word of God is.

Review the personal testimonies in this book to help inspire and guide you in writing your own.

## Your reason for believing in Jesus Christ has great power when used by the Holy Spirit.

*Jesus said, "Go home to your family (friends) and tell them how much the Lord has done for you ... "*

Mark 5:19.

*"...they were holding golden bowls full of incense,  
which are the prayers  
of the saints."*

Fragment from Revelations 5:8-9

*"The smoke of the incense,  
together with the  
prayers of the saints,  
went up before God  
from the angel's hand.*

*Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar,  
and hurled it on the earth;"*

Fragments from Revelation 8:4-5



# A Simple Plan

for Personal Evangelism

## PRAYER-EVANGELISM

OBTAINING A VISION FOR OUTREACH  
IN YOUR SPHERE OF LIFE & LIVING.

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”

2 Corinthians 2:14

**A Simple Prayer-Evangelism Plan**

*Bring them into the presence of the Lord by way of prayer,  
— your world, your sphere of life and living.*

- | In-laws: Brother(s), Sister(s), And Their Family Members
  - | Church/Sunday School (Attending Or Teaching)
  - | Para-Church Activities, Bible Studies Etc.
  - | Immediate Family Members
- | Your Parent’s, Guardian, Foster Parent’s (Past/Present)
- | Married Brother(s), Sister(s), And Their Family Members
- | Your Relatives, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins, Their Family Members
  - | Neighbourhood Friends, Families
  - | Office, School, Clubs Etc.
- | Acquaintances — Usually Frequent Or Consistent Contact
  - | Activity In Community, Possible Ministries
- | Other Spheres — Peoples, Nations & Local Governments


**“Prayer-Evangelism is like '*Moses with hands raised in prayer for a victory*' of the gospel message in those you have been led to pray for.”**

### **The Purpose for this Graph**

*(But, I don't know anybody. Yes, you do.)*

1. To obtain a visual perspective of your contact with others.
2. To clearly see your immediate scope of reach in the world — *your sphere of life and living.*
3. To help you assess your relationships and activities with these people.
4. To encourage prayer—evangelism, prayer—fellowship and prayer—ministry in practical ways.
5. To be a gospel outreach through prayer—evangelism.
6. To broaden your vision and focus your efforts.
7. To give God the opportunity to direct your thoughts and prayers toward His desire in your relationships.

### **What Should I Pray?**

| **PRAY** God will use their present circumstances to bring about His will for their lives. | **PRAY** their eyes will be opened to the truth of God's word. | **PRAY** the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of sin and judgment because they do not believe in Jesus Christ. John 16: 7-11. | **PRAY** the spiritual forces of evil will be prevented from destroying the work of God in each person and home. Eph. 6: 12. | **PRAY** the seed that is sown will produce eventual salvation through Jesus Christ. | **PRAY** follow-up would be successful in establishing them in Christ or in knowing more about God's plan of salvation in Christ. | **PRAY** (ask) the Holy Spirit to lead you in praying. | **PRAY** for yourself that God will give you the words to speak to them. | **PRAY** for others, as you would want others to pray for you. | **PRAY** in your 'closet'. God promises to reward you. | **PRAY** for 'harvest' workers.



# CAUTION, Occult Ahead.

Psychic, 'soulish-self' is the spiritual fraud of Satan's domain and unregenerate man's pseudo-spirituality. It's the domain of the principalities and the powers to deceptively coincide events in the mind to convey false knowledge to a darkened mind and soul (dead in trespasses and sin) and an attempt to deceive the elect of God. It's an inherent deception that is the result of the fall and used by the powers (Ephesians 6:10-18) to achieve works of iniquity and is the stronghold upon which the unregenerate spirit in man strives with the soul—our mind, emotions and will. It is the 'dead' ungodly spirit within man under the control of the soul. It is the natural man's use of his unregenerate spirit to loosely seek answers for the world of unexplained events and providences of God that capture his imagination. It leads man into an elevated self-importance and erring judgment and demeanour toward self and others. It's a power grab for some, an escape for others but in reality it is the devil's workshop of delusion and deceit and God's judgment against those who are perishing.

Churches are filled with believers and unbelievers so do not be surprised or discouraged when all kinds of worldliness hold sway. Believers who neglect their own spiritual development can be hurt by the unbelievers pseudo-spirituality and should always pray asking for the grace of discernment so as not be deceived or led astray.

*"The secret things belong to the Lord our God,  
but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever,  
that we may follow all the words of this law."*

Deuteronomy 29:29

*"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.  
Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand  
against the devil's schemes."*

Ephesians 6:10-11

# Climate Change & God.

Some have made a mess of our environment. Others have made a mess of dealing with it. But, you can be confident in this truth, believer, nothing is done without the knowledge and care of our Creator. Climate Change advocates overstep the human boundaries' of man's natural abilities when they attempt to control the world's atmosphere. The truth is man has a restricted presence in this world that is within the bounds of our Lord's stated order of dominion. Man's dominion is limited and specific —

*"Do you know the laws of the heavens?  
Can you set up [God's] dominion over the earth?"*

Job 38:33

*"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image,  
in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea  
and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth,  
and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'"*

Genesis 1:26

However, there are madmen, godless individuals bent by pride, presumptuousness, pretense, arrogance and prejudice who think of themselves more highly than they should resulting in chaos for the rest of mankind leading many astray and deluding themselves with falsities.

He [Jesus] replied,

*"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"*

Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked,

*"What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"*

Matthew 8:26-27

# ADVICE, Hearing Voices.

I read a article in Wired® magazine a number of years ago about technology that's available to pinpoint and project an audible voice toward an area that could make an individual think they heard from [god, God, someone]. I mention this only as a tech alert and warning.

God has placed  
His Word, the Bible,  
above Himself.

You can distinguish His voice  
from the voice of error, should you hear a distinct voice  
[or audible thought] that troubles you.

## Example:

You hear an audible thought or voice say, "Satan wants to destroy the work of God." You believe the voice you heard was in your head. How do you respond if a voice in your head said that to you? It's the first time in your life that's ever happened to you or maybe it's happened before. Is that God alerting me? Is that the devil wanting to recruit me? Whose voice was that? God's? The Devil's? Your own? Maliciously projected? The Bible says that God has placed His Word above Himself. God's Word, the Bible, says, "hate evil, love good". Decide to—apply/follow the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:3-17.

“hate evil and love good”

Amos 5:15a.

# How Well Does God Know You?

*"For troubles without number surround me;  
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.  
They are more than the hairs of my head,  
and my heart fails within me."*

Psalm 40:12

*"Those who hate me without reason  
outnumber the hairs of my head;"*

Psalm 69:4

*"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he,  
I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you;  
I will sustain you and I will rescue you."*

Isaiah 46:4

*"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.  
Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

Luke 12:7

*"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?  
Yet not one of them is forgotten by God."*

Luke 12:6

# Dead Man Stalking.

In closing, I would like give some light on the '*born again*' conflict with 'the-self-interest'. Live wisely, always remember you are now a *spiritual person* '*crucified-dead-to-sin*', but made *alive to God in Christ Jesus*. Walk as Jesus did, in humility exercising faith. Ask for and receive the Holy Spirit's filling enabling victorious participation in the miracle of a '*born again*' made alive in Christ Life. There will be wrestling matches with self. Don't be discouraged. As you grow in faith and in the knowledge of Christ you will learn how to respond '*in the Spirit*' to the various responsibilities, opportunities, conflicts, trials and tribulations you encounter. "*Always wait for the Lord.*"

Our natural life's sinful fallen nature—the old man, as it is sometimes referred to, acts like a "*dead-man-stalking*" ready to suggest a sinful alternative in an attempt to defile our new life in Christ—to interfere with our progress in Christ.

Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ said it this way,

*"The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."*

Galatians 6:8.

*"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness."*

Romans 6:11-13.

# Psalm 37

*"Don't fret because of evil-doers, neither be envious against those who work unrighteousness. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither like the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good. Dwell in the land, and enjoy safe pasture. Also delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in him, and he will do this: He will make your righteousness go forth as the light, and your justice as the noon day sun. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Don't fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who makes wicked plots happen. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath. Don't fret, it leads only to evil-doing. For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land. For yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more. Yes, though you look for his place, he isn't there. But the humble shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord will laugh at him, for he sees that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, to kill those who are upright in the way. Their sword shall enter into their own heart. Their bows shall be broken. Better is a little that the righteous has, than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. the Lord knows the days of the perfect. Their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be disappointed in the time of evil. In the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish. The enemies of the Lord shall be like the beauty of the fields. They will vanish—Vanish like smoke. The wicked borrow, and don't pay back, but the righteous give generously. For such as are blessed by him shall inherit the land. Those who are cursed by him shall be cut off. A man's goings are established by the Lord. He delights in his way. Though he stumble, he shall not fall, For the Lord holds him up with his hand. I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his children begging for bread. All day long he deals graciously, and lends. His seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; live securely forever. For the Lord loves justice, and doesn't forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and live in it forever. The mouth of the righteous talks of wisdom. His tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart. None of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to kill him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait for the Lord, and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil. But he passed away, and behold, he was not. Yes, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and see the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace. As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together. The future of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is from the Lord. He is their stronghold in the time of trouble. The Lord helps them, and rescues them. He rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they have taken refuge in him." (World English Bible)*

*Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened.*

*Matthew 7:7-8 (World English Bible)*

*This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he listens to us. And if we know that he listens to us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.*

*1 John 5:14-15 (World English Bible)*

*God is not a man, that he should lie, Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it good?*

*Numbers 23:19 (World English Bible)*

*Therefore don't let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Neither present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

*Romans 6:12-13 (World English Bible)*

*But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that were freely given to us by God.*

*1 Corinthians 2:12 (World English Bible)*

*I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.*

*Philippians 4:13 NIV (World English Bible)*

*Don't you be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. Yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.*

*Isaiah 41:10 (World English Bible)*

*It is of [the Lord's] loving kindness that we are not consumed, because his compassion doesn't fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

*Lamentations 3:22-23 (World English Bible)*

*Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things.*

*Philippians 4:8 (World English Bible)*

*In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:6-7 (World English Bible)*

*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

*1 John 5:13 (World English Bible)*

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.*

*2 Corinthians 5:17 (World English Bible)*

*Not by works of righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us, through the washing of regeneration [rebirth] and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*

*Titus 3:5 (World English Bible)*

*But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*John 1:12-13 (World English Bible)*

*I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me. That 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 NIV (World English Bible)*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*1 John 1:9 (World English Bible)*

*[F]or by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.*

*Ephesians 2:8-10 (World English Bible)*

*Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

*Romans 12:1-2 (World English Bible)*