

Transferable Concepts



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When our Lord commanded the eleven men with whom He had most shared His earthly ministry to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, He told them to teach these new disciples all that He had taught them.

Later the apostle Paul gave the same instructions to Timothy. "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

In the process of counseling and interacting with tens of thousands of students, laymen and pastors year after year since 1951, our staff have discovered that:

- Many church members (including people from churches which honor our Lord and faithfully teach His Word) are not sure of their salvation;
- The average Christian is living a defeated and frustrated life; and
- The average Christian does not know how to share his faith effectively with others.

In our endeavor to help meet these three basic needs and to build Christian disciples, Campus Crusade for Christ has developed a series of "how to's" - or "transferable concepts" in which we discuss many of the basic truths that Jesus and His disciples taught.

A "transferable concept" is an idea or a truth which can be transferred or communicated from one person to another and then to another, spiritual generation after generation, without distorting or diluting its original meaning.

As these basic truths- "transferable concepts" - of the Christian life are made available through the printed word, films, video tapes and audio cassettes in every major language of the world, they could well be used of God to help transform the lives of tens of millions through out the world.

We encourage you to master each of these concepts by reading it thoughtfully at least six times until you are personally prepared to communicate it to others "who will also be qualified to teach others." By mastering these basic materials and discipling others to do the same, many millions of men and women can be reached and discipled for Christ and thus make a dramatic contribution toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation.

No. 1

How You Can Be Sure You Are a Christian

Millions Are Not Sure

A prominent businessman, a leader in his church, sat across from me in my office. By every standard of human measure, this man was an outstanding success. As we talked, it became increasingly clear that in spite of his active leadership in the church, he was unsure of his eternal destiny. And he was desperately seeking assurance of his salvation...

The wife of an evangelist told me, "During the past thirty years, my husband and I have introduced thousands of people to Christ, but I have never been sure of my own salvation. Now, I'm desperate to know for sure. I need your help..."

A student who had just received Christ stood to his feet. With a puzzled and troubled look on his face, he said, "I don't feel any different. I guess God didn't hear my prayer. How can I be sure Christ has come into my life?"

Perhaps you, too, are uncertain about your relationship with the Lord.

From my experience of counseling many thousands of students and lay people throughout the years, I have become convinced that millions of church-goers have invited Christ into their lives, many of them over and over again, but are not sure of their salvation. In fact, surveys indicate that 50 percent of the church members in the United States are not sure Christ is in their lives. These are good people. Often, they have served faithfully in their church for years. And yet, they still have no assurance of Christ's abiding presence, no confidence that, if they died today, they would go to be with the Lord in heaven.

Why does this heartbreaking uncertainty exist among so many devoutly religious people? I am persuaded that their lack of assurance is due either to misinformation or to a lack of information regarding who God is. This includes understanding the deity of Christ, the meaning of the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord, and what is involved in receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Permit me to ask you this personal, so very important, question: What about you? If you were to die today, are you absolutely sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, you would go to heaven?

In the following pages, I want to share with you a message of great hope. It is a message for which the whole world hungers - and one I believe is desperately needed for the Church.

Great Hunger for Christ

I have found a great and common hunger for Christ in men and women throughout the world. Let me give you just a few examples.

A friend asked me to meet with her brother. She was concerned for him because he was not a Christian. This man was one of the financial and political leaders of our country.

A meeting was arranged. After I introduced myself, we chatted briefly about the condition of the world and the need for a moral and spiritual awakening, all to which he agreed. I suggested to him that God had placed him in a unique position of leadership and he could have a real impact for helping to change the world for good. But first he would have to let God change him.

I shared with him a copy of the *Four Spiritual Laws* and asked him if he would like to read it with me. When we had finished reading the booklet, this famous and powerful man humbly said he would like to receive Christ. We prayed together. When we finished praying, he looked up and said to me, "I want you to know I really meant that. Tell me what I am supposed to do."

In Korea approximately ten thousand students, lay people and pastors participating in a Campus Crusade for Christ training conference talked with more than forty-two thousand people during the period of training about how to become a Christian. More than sixteen thousand people prayed with them and received Christ. An additional thirty-eight hundred expressed a desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Haiti during a similar week of training, more than one thousand people received Christ in a single day when approximately five hundred pastors and lay leaders shared the gospel through the use of the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet. Vonette and I have visited the Soviet Union several times in the past few years. What we have witnessed and heard is nothing less than miraculous. The spiritual hunger of the Soviet people and their openness to the gospel are far greater than we ever imagined. Christian leaders are spreading the gospel wherever they can with overwhelming response.

Recently Vonette spoke at a women's meeting, which was the first of its kind held on International Women's Day in the USSR. More than three hundred women packed out a century-old Protestant Church to hear her speak. She shared from the Word for an hour, and her talk was followed by two and one half hours of questions and answers, which further demonstrated the spiritual hunger there.

In the past few months tens of thousands of people have received Christ as the result of viewing the "JESUS" film. Today, more than 425 million people have viewed the film with tens of millions expressing their desire to follow Christ as Savior and Lord.

Christians have found such openness to the gospel in Siberia that they have been showing the "JESUS" film around the clock, even in the dead of winter! It's an evangelistic schedule unheard of in the United States. Every two hours, "JESUS" is being shown in a packed room, even at 12 midnight, 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Starved for God for more than seventy years, the Soviet people willingly endure hard ship, even the frigid Siberian nights, to learn about our wonderful Savior.

In Romania one man describes the openness for the gospel in his country. "Our people...are hungry. They are so hungry. Everyone we meet - young people, students - when we give them Christian books, they are so happy!" A Romanian pastor reports, "Every meeting we have five to six thousand people, and we have only 1,500 seats. The large majority stand three hours Sunday morning, two hours Sunday night and two hours Friday night. The street and the corridor are packed with crowds. If it is rainy or snowing or the heat of the summer, they are there. It is something that warms my heart whenever I come to church and see crowds flowing from every street to that place. I just praise God!"

Missionaries who live in Western Europe and distribute Bibles to Eastern Europeans traveling through these countries also report great hunger for the Word of God. As these missionaries give out Christian literature on Bulgarian, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Russian and Romanian ships, buses and trains, they find hands eagerly reaching for the Bibles to satisfy deep spiritual needs.

Even the seamen on Cuban, Ethiopian and Red Chinese vessels want to quench their spiritual thirst. One missionary reports that when he is allowed to board Chinese ships, he finds many sailors willing and anxious to accept free Bibles. On one ship, his satchel full of Bibles and New Testaments was picked clean within seconds.

These examples are only a few of the many millions of people who are hungry for God throughout the world.

I believe billions of people are unsure of their relationship with God simply because they lack information. We must help them to understand that Christianity is not just a philosophy of life, not just a code of ethics, not just a standard of performance. Christianity is a personal relationship with the living, all powerful Creator God through faith in His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take Buddha out of Buddhism, Mohammed out of Islam, and the founders of other religions out of their religions and little would be changed. But take Jesus Christ out of Christianity and nothing more than form and facade are left. Christianity is a personal relationship with the living Christ!

But how can you be sure of your relationship with Christ? I ask this all-important question again, "If you were to die this very moment, do you know where you would spend eternity?"

Perhaps you have only recently received Christ and are still not sure that anything has really happened - you are not confident of your salvation; you lack the assurance of your relationship with God.

I want to share with you several vital principles which can give you that assurance.

Threefold Commitment

Becoming a Christian involves receiving the Lord Jesus Christ - the gift of God's love and forgiveness - by faith. It results in a threefold commitment to a person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a commitment to Him of your intellect, emotions and will. Let's examine, one by one, each of these elements of Christian commitment.



1. Intellectual Commitment

Christianity is built on solid biblical and historical fact. To be sure you are a Christian, you must understand that Christianity is not a blind leap of faith. The truths of the Christian faith are documented by centuries of historical facts, study and research. Many scholars have dedicated their lives to investigating the birth, life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and influence of Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, we have overwhelming historical evidence proving all of the above.

The evidence includes writings of the contemporaries of Jesus whose lives were forever changed as a result of their intimate friendship with Him. Even Christ's enemies verified His resurrection through their conspiracy to pay witnesses to fabricate a story to explain why Jesus' tomb was empty.

Through these and many more convincing proofs, we know Jesus truly lived on earth; Jesus truly died; and Jesus truly rose again.

In the last years of his life, the German dramatist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "If ever the Divine appeared on earth, it was in the person of Christ." The Russian novelist and philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "Even those who have renounced

Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardour of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque." Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon, former president of the United Nations General Assembly, said, "I really do not know what will remain of civilization and history if the accumulated influence of Christ, both direct and indirect, is eradicated from literature, art, practical dealings, moral standards and creativeness in the different activities of mind and spirit." Napoleon Bonaparte, the famous French general, said during his exile, "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him." Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States of America and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, said, "Of all the systems of morality, ancient and modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

More important than what others say about Jesus Christ is what the Scripture says about Him.

Jesus Christ was God in flesh and blood. He came to earth to die in our place. He willingly took upon Himself the death each of us deserves. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus enables each one of us to receive eternal life and free access to almighty God.

Years ago a brilliant young student came to talk to me following one of my lectures at a major university. He was the head of the Communist movement on the campus. He accused me of trying to brainwash the students because I was more mature than they. And he resented me for presenting my Christian views to them, views which were obviously diametrically opposed to his Marxist beliefs.

Instead of arguing with him, I invited him to my home for dinner. We had a good conversation about many topics as we ate. After we had finished dessert, I reached for my Bible. "I would like to read something to you from the Bible," I said.

He reacted strongly. "I don't believe the Bible!" he declared. "I don't want to hear anything you read. I've read the Bible from cover to cover, and it's filled with contradictions and myths. I don't believe a word of it." I responded by saying, "If you don't mind, I'll read a few portions anyway." So I turned to the first chapter of the Gospel of John and read:

Before anything existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God...Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness - and the darkness can never extinguish it.

To all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn! - not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan - but from the will of God.

And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory - the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father

"Let me read that," he said eagerly. "I don't remember reading it." He went over the passage thoughtfully and handed the Bible back to me without comment.

Then I turned to Colossians 1, beginning with the 13th verse, and read:

For he (God) has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.

Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't...all were made by Christ for his own use and glory. He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together.

It was through what his Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to him - all things in heaven and on earth for Christ's death on the cross has made peace with God for all by his blood.

Again, he asked if he could read that passage for himself. Then I turned to Hebrews 1 and read verses 1 through 3.

Long ago God spoke in many different ways to our fathers through the prophets... telling them little by little about his plans.

But now in these days he has spoken to us through his Son to whom he has given everything, and through whom he made the world and everything there is.

God's Son shines out with God's glory, and all that God's Son is and does marks him as God. He regulates the universe by the mighty power of his command. He is the one who died to cleanse us and clear our record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven.

By this time, the young man was very sober. His whole attitude of belligerence and antagonism had changed. So I read 1 John 2:22,23:

Who is the greatest liar? The one who says that Jesus is not Christ. Such a person is antichrist, for he does not believe in God the Father and in his Son. For a person who

doesn't believe in Christ, God's Son, can't have God the Father either. But he who has Christ, God's Son, has God the Father also.

When I finished reading, he was obviously moved. We chatted a bit. After a while he stood and prepared to leave. I asked if he would write in our guest book. He nodded.

After he wrote his name and address, he penned these words, "The night of decision."

Here was a young man who had come with fire in his eyes, full of resentment for anything Christian. However, through the simple reading of God's holy, inspired Word, the Holy Spirit brought this young man to the point of not only being able to intellectually accept what he heard, but to believe and receive it.

Following one of my talks about the uniqueness of Jesus, a brilliant Indian Hindu scholar with a double doctorate - one in physics and one in chemistry - came to me angry and impatient.

"I resent you Christians," he said. "I resent the arrogance with which you say you have the only way to God. I believe Christianity is one way, but only one way. Hinduism is another. Buddhism, Shintoism and other religions are all ways to God."

As we talked and examined the Scripture together, he began to see that Christianity is uniquely different from other religions or philosophies. Christianity alone makes provision for man's basic need - the forgiveness of sin. He admitted that his diligent reading of the sacred Hindu writings and dutiful observance of the rites and rituals had never enabled him to find God personally. Finally, we got down on our knees together, and this young Hindu intellectual asked Jesus to forgive his sins and become his Savior.

To become a Christian you must squarely face the claims of Christ and believe intellectually that Jesus is God and died for your sins, was buried and rose again. You must believe He wants to come into your life to be your Savior and Lord.

2. Emotional Commitment

Becoming a Christian also involves your emotions.

From the Scripture we know that God has emotions. He feels love, joy, sorrow, compassion, anger, disappointment and many other emotions. The Bible also says you are created in the image of God. As a part of His image, God has given you the capacity to experience emotions. Just about everything you do, from the time you awaken in the morning until you go to sleep at night, involves emotions.

Each person who receives Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord will have a different kind of emotional experience. Paul met God through a dramatic encounter on the road to

Damascus. Timothy, on the other hand, was raised in a Christian home where he came to know Christ at an early age and gradually grew in his faith.

One frequently hears Christians enthusiastically sharing how their dramatic encounters with Christ resulted in their being healed of drug addiction, gross immorality or some other distressing problem. The fact that their lives were indeed changed validates their claims.

On the other hand, there are many who have knelt quietly in the privacy of their homes, as I did, or at a mountain retreat, or in a church sanctuary and there received Christ into their lives with no dramatic emotional experience.

Emotions can be misleading. Probably no one issue has caused more people to lack the assurance of a vital relationship with God than a wrong emphasis on feelings. I have had moments of great joy, enthusiasm and spiritual awareness. And I have also felt times of sorrow and disappointment. But I do not depend on these feelings to determine my union with God. My emotions can be very deceiving.

We are to live the Christian life by faith, not emotions. Yes, emotions have a place in your experience, but how you feel does not determine the truth of your life with Christ. Rather, your emotions are a result of your faith and obedience. Our Lord said, "The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him." The Book of Romans assures us, "In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

There is a place for emotions in the Christian experience, though you should not seek them nor attempt to recapture them from the past. While you should not ignore the value of legitimate emotions, it is more important to remember that you are to live by faith in God and in His promises- and not by seeking an emotional experience.

An acquaintance brought his friend to see me, hoping that he might receive Christ, which he did. But in the course of our conversation, it became apparent that my friend, despite his concern for his friend, was himself not a Christian. So I asked him, "When did you become a Christian?"

"I'm not really sure that I am a Christian," he replied.

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that He died on the cross for your sins?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that if you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, He will come into your life and make you a child of God?"

"Yes."

"You would like to receive Him, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would. But I'm waiting for an experience. When my mother became a Christian, she had a dramatic emotional experience, and I've been waiting all these years for God to give me such an experience."

Although he was a professing Christian and active in his church, the thing that kept him from assurance of salvation was the wrong emphasis on emotions. I was able to explain to him that he did not have to look for an emotional experience, but could believe God's Word. Finally we bowed in prayer, and as a simple expression of faith, he received Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord and rejoiced in the certainty that Christ was in his life.

3. Volitional Commitment

Becoming a Christian not only involves your intellect and your emotions, it also involves your will. You must first be willing to obey God and His Word.

Christ emphasized the importance of man's will in relation to the assurance of salvation. Jesus said:

If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth.

Some people are reluctant to obey Christ because they fear He will change their plans and take all the fun out of their lives.

One student with whom I counseled and prayed hesitated to receive Christ because he enjoyed his life of parties and sex. But through the prayers of fellow students and friends, this young man decided to obey Christ. He discovered that what he thought was an exciting life was nothing compared to the abundant life which the Lord Jesus gives. He became one of the most vital and fruitful Christians on campus.

This student had fought against God's will for his life until he realized the truth of Jesus' words:

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross, and follow me closely. If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.

And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process? For is anything worth more than his soul? And anyone who is ashamed of me and my message in these days of unbelief and sin, I, the Messiah, will be ashamed of him when I return in the glory of my Father, with the holy angels.

Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything- home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or property - for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won 't be given back, a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land - with persecutions!

A leading athletic coach held in high esteem by millions of people, a man of sterling character and tremendous ability, shared with me his reluctance to surrender his life fully to Christ. He feared God would ask him to become a minister and to give up the joy and love of his life - teaching.

Many successful people have refused to follow Christ because they are afraid He will demand they sell their possessions and give everything to the poor as Jesus told the rich young ruler to do." Although God does lead some people to give their possessions, He leads others to use their influence for Christ in other ways.

As you walk in faith and obedience to God as an act of your will and allow Him to change your life, you will gain increasing assurance of your relationship with Him. You will experience God's work in your life as He enables you to do what you could never have done on your own - things like being able to love someone who treats you badly, maintaining a spirit of peace while surrounded by great pressures and problems, developing a growing desire to reach other people with the love of Christ.

But, if you do not trust God and His plan for your life and obey His commands, you will inevitably have doubts about your salvation.

Some people refuse to receive Christ because of pride or self-will. For approximately fifty years, I have worked with the so-called intelligentsia. In all those years, I have not met one single person who has said, "I have considered all the historical evidence and the claims of Christ, and I cannot believe He is the Son of God."

Every one with whom I have counseled who has rejected Christ has always denied Him as a matter of the heart, not the head - a matter of the will, not the intellect. They have used intellectual issues as a smoke screen to cover the deeper issues of the heart.

Many years ago I met with a famous professor of a very prestigious seminary. He did not believe that Jesus is God, even though he had taught thousands of young students who became ministers. One day I was invited to visit this great scholar by a friend who was getting his doctorate under his supervision.

My friend explained, "He does not believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but he is a good man. I like him. He is personable and warm-hearted, and I think you might be able to communicate with him."

The professor's first words to me after I was introduced to him were, "Mr. Bright, when you talk to students about becoming a Christian, what do you tell them?"

Knowing his reputation, I wanted to weigh my words carefully, but before I could reply, he asked a second question. "Better still, what would you tell me? I would like to become a Christian."

He went on to explain that he had recently been reading the Word of God with a new understanding. For a couple of years he had also been studying the writings of the church fathers and biographies of great heroes of the faith. As a result, he had become intellectually convinced that Jesus is the Son of God. But he did not know Him as his personal Savior.

I drew a circle on a piece of paper explaining, "This circle represents your life. In the circle I drew a throne and on the throne I wrote the letter "S" for self. I explained, "In order to become a Christian you must receive Christ into your life as your Savior from sin and the Lord and Master of your life. You must surrender the control of your life to Him."

"That's my problem," he said. "Intellectual pride has kept me from doing this. I've received many honors in the academic world, and I haven't been willing to humble myself before God. For years I have denied the deity of Christ and have taught thousands of young men to do the same."

At that moment we were interrupted by a telephone call, and due to other scheduled appointments, we were unable to finish our conversation. He asked us to return two days later. When we returned, he took us into an office with no phones and, locking the door behind us, said, "I want you to know that I went this morning to one of the local churches, took communion, and prepared my heart for your coming. I have been meditating on the third chapter of John, and I want you to pray for me that I may know Jesus as my personal Savior."

First I prayed; then he prayed, and then my friend prayed, and that day this man of international renown, like a little child, received Christ by faith as an act of his will. His whole life was changed. His teachings changed, his philosophy of life changed, and he became a new creation in Christ. Basically his problem was not intellectual; it was a problem of pride and self-will.

Another reason people are reluctant to commit their lives to Christ is because Satan has deceived them. Jesus spoke about Satan's character this way:

He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Some years ago I was invited to meet with a well-known military leader. He was a most cordial and gracious person. As we talked, he said he wanted to become a Christian but somehow couldn't make the decision.

We talked together for more than an hour, and finally I felt impressed to share with him a passage from Colossians 1:13,14. I asked him to read it aloud. "God has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins."

Then I explained, "There are only two kingdoms in the world - God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Which one are you in?" After some thoughtful moments of silence, he said, "I guess I'm in Satan's kingdom."

I then asked him, "What would you like to do about it?"

He replied, "I would like to move over to God's kingdom."

Then this great general, whose influence was felt over the world, entrusted his life to Christ and moved from the darkness and gloom of Satan's dominion into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Has your enemy Satan deceived you? Have you thought you must become a better person before God will accept you? Has your enemy caused you to question whether God really loves you? Has he caused you to become comfortable with your disobedience to God?

No matter what influence may be keeping you from Christ, I encourage you to turn from that influence - and turn to Christ.

To be sure you are a Christian, you must be aware of basic truths from the Scriptures. You must not only believe these truths intellectually, but you also must, as an act of your will, accept them and make them central to your life.

This begins with knowing that God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

God has your best interests at heart. He is concerned about your needs and has provided a way for you to know His love and plan for your life.

But you are sinful and separated from God; therefore, you cannot experience His love and plan for your life until something wonderful happens.

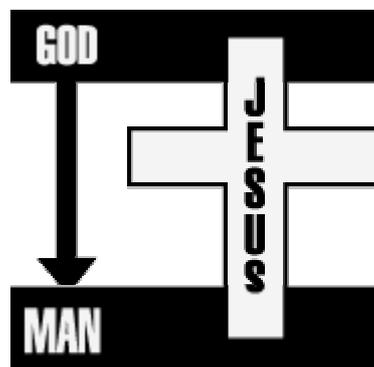
You see, you were created to have fellowship with God, but because of self-will, you chose to go your own way as we all have. This self-will with which we struggle is revealed in either active rebellion against God or passive indifference to Him. The Bible calls self-will "sin." Your sin has made you spiritually dead and separated from God.



God is holy and people are sinful. A great gulf separates the two. People attempt to reach God and the abundant life through their own efforts including living a good life, holding to a certain philosophy and practicing religion. But no human efforts enable a person to reach God.

God's Only Provision

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for your sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.



Who is Jesus Christ? Why does He have the power to bridge this gap between a holy God and sinful people?

Jesus' miraculous birth, the life He lived, the miracles He performed, the words He spoke, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven - all demonstrate He was no mere man. Jesus is God.

You must receive Jesus Christ as God, as your Savior and as your Lord. By receiving Christ you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. You receive Christ through faith, by personally inviting Him into your life. Paul said, "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." And Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me."

Receiving Christ begins by turning away from yourself, repenting of your sins, and turning to God. It involves trusting Christ to come into your life, to forgive your sin, and to make you the person He wants you to be.

Let me illustrate it this way:

Suppose you meet a certain young man or woman about whom you have heard many fine compliments. You like what you see - looks, personality and many other qualities. Would this be enough on which to launch a marriage?

No. There is more to marriage than mutual respect and admiration.

As you become better acquainted, you soon fall in love. Is this sufficient for marriage?

No. There is more to marriage than the intellect and the emotions.

Then you become engaged, and the wedding day arrives. How exciting! Intellectually you believe he or she is the most wonderful person in the whole world. Emotionally, your heart beats twice as fast when you are together.

But now something even more important is about to take place. As you stand before the minister or priest to exchange your vows, you commit your wills one to the other. The marriage is not a true marriage if there is no mutual giving of one to the other.

So it is when you become a Christian. When you commit yourself to Christ, you must give yourself wholly to Him in a commitment of your intellect, emotions and will.

Your life may be pictured in one of two ways. If you are living a self-directed life, you control your interests. This kind of life always results in discord and frustration.

If you are living a Christ-directed life, you are yielding to Christ, and your interests are controlled by Him, resulting in harmony with God's plan for your life.

Our lives parallel that of a caterpillar crawling in the dust - an ugly, hairy worm. One day this worm weaves a cocoon about its body. From this cocoon emerges a beautiful butterfly. We do not understand fully what has taken place. We realize only that, where once a worm crawled in the dust, now a butterfly soars in the air.

So it is in the lives of Christians. Where once we lived on the lowest level as sinful, self centered individuals, now as we trust and obey God, we dwell on the highest plane,

experiencing full and abundant lives as children of God. This life begins by receiving Christ into your life as your Savior and Lord.

Some years ago, a woman who had just received Christ through the witness of a staff member asked me to talk to her father about Christ. He was the founder of one of the largest corporations in the world at that time. I visited him in his beautiful home. He was truly a great man. His bearing, his manner, everything about him suggested he was truly a statesman.

He showed me trophy room after trophy room filled with plaques and photographs of him with kings, presidents and all kinds of celebrities. He was a great philanthropist who had given hundreds of millions of dollars to very worthwhile causes.

After awhile he said, "My daughter tells me you have something important to share with me."

With this invitation, I began to talk with him about his relationship with Christ. He was very gracious, very warm, very open and responsive. I shared with him the words of our Lord in His discussion with Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was deeply religious, moral, ethical and above reproach. I read from the Gospel of John, chapter 3:

Jesus told him, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 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.'"

At this point this dear, gracious man in his middle eighties said to me, "Mr. Bright, I've been the chairman of the board of my church for fifty years, and no one has ever told me that I have to receive Christ as my Savior or that I have to be born again! Do you think, in the light of all of the good things I have done through the years, that I must be born again?" I explained, "The need for you to be born again is not my suggestion. It is Jesus who said, 'You must be born again' to Nicodemus, who was also a fine leader and very religious."

Then I asked him, "Would you like to be born again?"

"Yes, I would," he replied.

You Can Be Sure

You may say, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and died for my sins. Am I not a Christian?" You are not, if you have refused to surrender your will to Him.

Or you may say, "I heard a wonderful sermon, my emotions were stirred and I had a great emotional "spiritual" experience. I even responded to the invitation to go forward for counsel. Am I not a Christian?" You are not, if you have never relinquished the throne of your life, your will, to Christ.

How, then, can you be sure that you are a Christian? Is there not some kind of confirmation that God gives to those who sincerely receive Christ? I believe there is a threefold confirmation that Jesus Christ is in our lives.

**TRUSTWORTHY WORD
CONFIRMING HOLY SPIRIT
CHANGED LIFE** } = **ASSURANCE**

1. External Witness of God's Word

The promise of God's Word, not your feelings, is your authority. His word is totally reliable. As a Christian you are to live by faith in the trustworthiness of God and His holy, inspired Word.

For years Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, had attempted to earn his salvation by his dedication and good works. When he discovered that great biblical truth "The just shall live by faith," his life was dramatically changed, and he no longer labored for the assurance of his destiny in Christ. He believed what God's Word had to say and had assurance of his salvation.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, was not sure of his salvation as a young man even though he was the son of a minister, the leader of the Holy Club at Oxford and a missionary to the Indians of America. Upon his return to England, he met Jesus Christ at an Aldersgate meeting where he heard the reading of Martin Luther's treatise on faith as a preface to the Book of Romans. Wesley explained what happened in his autobiography. "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone, for my salvation - and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Before the experience at Aldersgate, Wesley had engaged in a frenzied effort to try to earn God's salvation by his good works. There he received the assurance of God's salvation by faith.

1 John 5:11,12 confirm that Christ is in your life if you received Him:

This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John 1:12,13 echo this promise:

To all who received him, to those who believe 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.

A doctor and his wife from Zurich, Switzerland, sent their son to the University of California, Los Angeles, to complete his doctoral studies in meteorology. Their son Hans received Christ at one of our meetings and wrote to his parents about his new-found faith. He mentioned my name as the one who had introduced him to our Lord. They wrote back asking if he would set up an appointment for them to see me so they might also receive Christ. At great expense the father, mother and their daughter flew all the way from Zurich to Los Angeles for the express purpose of becoming Christians.

This was at the beginning of the ministry of Campus Crusade. I never had anyone even walk around the corner to see me, yet these people were coming all the way from Switzerland. It was a dramatic moment for me when this man of great influence and means, with his wife, came into my office near the UCLA campus.

He began our meeting explaining his own spiritual journey. "I was an atheist for years," he said, "but I found no future in atheism. So, I began to study the religions of the Orient. Again, there was no satisfaction. Then, someone told me the New Testament was where I would find my answers. I began to read it and became convinced Jesus was the one I was looking for. Then we received the letter from Hans telling us how you had helped him to become a Christian. We want you to tell us what you told Hans."

Well, you can imagine how I felt. What a privilege it was to talk to this wonderful couple about our Savior, the living Christ.

I explained how they could receive Christ by simply inviting Him into their lives. He interrupted me. "Mr. Bright," he said, "I've already done that. I receive Jesus into my life every day. On some occasions I ask Him in several times a day."

Now I was puzzled. Relatively new in leading people to the Lord in those days, I didn't know what to say. I prayed silently, "God, help me. What do I say now?"

There flashed on the screen in my mind Ephesians 2:8,9:

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.

I explained it is not enough to ask Jesus into your life; you must believe He will come in as He promised. Faith says, "I know, Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Faith says, "I know Jesus died for my sins." Faith says, "I know if I open my heart's door to Him, He will come in." Faith says, "When He comes in, I'll become a child of God." Faith says, "I know that, when I receive Jesus into my life, I will have eternal life."

I told the couple, "God honors faith. He does not honor your invitation to Him to come in. It is your faith in Him and His promise that, if you open the door, He will come in that He honors. You can ask Jesus into your life a thousand times, and He will never come unless you believe, on the basis of His promise, that He will come. You can depend upon Him to keep His promise to come in if you ask Him in as an expression of faith."

I suggested to them that they invite Christ into their lives one more time and that this time they believe His promises that, if they will open the door, He will come in and that "as many as received Him, to them He (God) gave the right to become children of God."

Even before we prayed, the father's face lit up with assurance of his salvation, and he began to laugh. He was filled with wonder, gratitude, relief, praise and thanksgiving. At last he had found the One for whom he had sought for many years.

He turned to his dear wife and spoke to her in German, telling her what I had shared with him. She began to laugh with what I discovered later was a holy laugh, a laugh of assurance. They had been looking for God, and now the light went on, and they were filled with joy.

They met the Savior, and oh, how their lives were changed. Later that night I had the privilege of praying with their daughter, who also received Christ. The entire family father, mother, brother, sister - was united in Christ. Eventually, I had the opportunity to visit them in Zurich and saw further the miracle of God's grace in their lives.

I was telling that story later to a gathering of people at one of our training conferences. A woman came up to me afterward. She was in her eighties, her hair was snow white and her radiant face was stained with tears.

She said, "I've been a Sunday school teacher for more than forty years. Every day of my life, I have asked Jesus into my life, and I've never been sure He was there. Tonight, by faith, I asked Him in for the last time as you told the story of the man from Switzerland. Now I know He's there because He said He would come in. He promised never to leave

me nor forsake me. I'm never going to insult Him by asking Him in again. For the rest of my life, as an expression of faith, I'm going to begin every day thanking Jesus that He is with me as He promised."

2. Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul writes, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Paul emphasized the validity of this inner source of assurance to the Thessalonian converts:

When we brought you the good news, it was not just meaningless chatter to you; no, you listened with great interest. What we told you produced a powerful effect on you, for the Holy Spirit gave you great and full assurance that what we said was true.

3. Changed Life

Your changed life is a witness to the fact that you are a Christian. Paul records, "When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun!" John says, "How can we be sure that we belong to him? By looking within ourselves: are we really trying to do what he wants us to? Someone may say, 'I am a Christian; I am on my way to heaven; I belong to Christ.' But if he doesn't do what Christ tells him to, he is a liar. But those who do what Christ tells them to will learn to love God more and more. This is the way to know whether or not you are a Christian. Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did."

I remember well the night I prayed, "God, what do You want me to do with my life?" It was a simple, quiet prayer. But I meant what I prayed, and God heard me.

My life began to gradually change as I studied the Scriptures with other believers in the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. With the passing of time, I began to feel the assurance of God's love and forgiveness. My relationship with Him became the most important experience in my life.

If you have never personally received Jesus Christ, or if you have any doubts about your salvation, you can receive Him right now through faith. You can open the door of your life to Christ by expressing your faith to Him in prayer. The following prayer may express your desire:

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal and abundant life. Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

You do not become a Christian by simply praying this or any other prayer. You become a Christian by faith and by faith alone. Faith is putting your trust in God and His

promises. I encourage you to say this prayer aloud in faith, for it is through prayer - talking to God - that you can express your faith in Christ and the promises of His Word.

If you have invited Jesus Christ into your life, you can now have confidence that He is in your life and has given you eternal life as He promised.

Jesus would not deceive you. You can be sure, if you asked Him into your life, He now lives inside you and will give you the abundant, eternal life He promised.

I encourage you, right now, to thank God for His faithfulness to you and for His presence in your life. Do not depend on your feelings. God's Word is your authority. Faith and obedience always results in the awareness of our Lord's presence.

Begin to spend some time each day in Bible study and prayer. It is best to set aside a particular time each day to do this and to make it a habit. This will help you grow and mature in your faith.

Become associated with vital Christians. If you do not belong to a local church, don't wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and God's Word is preached. Make plans to start this week and to attend regularly. If you have not already been baptized, plan to be baptized as an outward expression of your identification with Christ.

Now that you are sure you are a Christian, I encourage you to experience the joy of helping others receive Christ. Share your faith in Christ with your friends and neighbors at every opportunity. The apostle Paul was so excited about Jesus that he exclaimed in Colossians 1:28, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen." Take the initiative to tell everyone you meet about the person and claims of our Lord Jesus Christ and the revolutionary way He can change their lives - and how they, too, can be sure they are a Christian.

Remember, *How You Can Be Sure You Are a Christian* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- Why do some Christians lack the assurance of their salvation? (See "Millions Are Not Sure")
- What do you believe intellectually about Christ? By what evidence do you know these beliefs to be true? (See "Intellectual Commitment")
- According to the following passages, who is Jesus Christ?
 - a. Mark 1:1
 - b. John 1:1,14
 - c. John 10:30
 - d. John 14:6
- Why were Jesus' miracles recorded for us? (See John 20:30,31)
- Why did Jesus have to die?
 - a. Hebrews 9:22
 - b. 1 Peter 1:18,19
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:3
- In John 1:12, what is the relation between the words "receive" and "believe"?
- What does knowing who Jesus Christ is mean to you?
- What scriptural assurances do you have that your salvation is more than emotion (based on the following verses)?
 - a. Romans 8:16
 - b. Ephesians 1:3-11
 - c. 1 John 5:11-13
- What emphasis do you think Christ placed on emotions during His earthly ministry? What do these two Scripture passages show?
 - a. Mark 8:12
 - b. Luke 10:21
- How can emotions deceive you? (See "Emotional Commitment")
- What happens as you begin to know God better? (See "Volitional Commitment")
- What does God's Word say about faith? (See Romans 1:17; 14:23; Hebrews 11:6)

- Why does becoming a Christian involve an act of the will? And why are some people reluctant to accept Christ? (See also 2 Corinthians 4:2-4)
- What kind of confirmation should you have that you have become a Christian? (See "You Can Be Sure")
- How can you give God control of your life?
- From Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:34-38; 10:21,29,30; and John 3:1-21, explain Christ's advice and promises to those who hesitate to accept Him as Savior.
- How can you be sure of your salvation and position in Christ? (See John 3:16; 10:28,29; 1 John 5:11-13)
- How would you relate Matthew 21:22 to salvation and a Christian's assurance of his salvation?
- Think of someone who is unsure of his salvation. What will you do this week to help this person gain assurance of his salvation and realize his position in Christ?

Group Discussion Questions

- Christianity is built on biblical and historical fact. Discuss what facts are most important in making a commitment to Christ.
- Why is Christianity different from all other religions? What does this difference mean to you personally?
- The Christian life is to be lived by faith, not emotions. What place does emotion have in your Christian life? How and when can emotions be misleading? Share with your group a time in your life when you especially had to apply this truth.
- Some people are reluctant to become Christians because they fear God will change their plans. Discuss an area in your life in which you saw God do this. What were the results?
- Why is it important that you be sure of your salvation?
- Church history records no great personal or group revivals that have taken place apart from an emphasis on God's holy Word. How does this emphasis affect the corporate life and witness of the church today? What role does God's Word play in your assurance of salvation?
- With whom would you most like to share Christ right now? Break into groups of two, discuss a strategy for reaching that person, and pray with your partner for him/her.

No.2

How You Can Experience God's Love and Forgiveness

The Forgiveness God Offers

Do you sometimes find it difficult to believe that you have *total* forgiveness for your sins in Jesus Christ? Intellectually you believe it, but how about deep within your heart?

Imagine yourself in the crowd as this story takes place as recorded in the Book of Luke:

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven!"

"Who does this fellow think he is?" the Pharisees and teachers of the Law exclaimed among themselves. "This is blasphemy! Who but God can forgive sins?"

Jesus knew what they were thinking, and He replied, "Why is it blasphemy? I, the Messiah, have the authority on earth to forgive sins...I'll prove it to you by healing this man." Then, turning to the paralyzed man, he commanded, "Pick up your stretcher and go on home, for you are healed!" (Luke 5:18-20,24, TLB).

What a marvelous illustration of God's willingness to forgive.

God's holy Word tells us that Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, has set us free-free from sin, free from the Law, free from the bondage of guilt that sin and the Law bring.

Maybe you are finding it difficult to believe in your heart that your sin has been paid for. Perhaps you are thinking, "I have lustful thoughts toward another person." Or, "I've been taking the Lord's name in vain. God won't forgive that, will He?"

The fact is, He has forgiven you. You simply need to claim His forgiveness and believe His promise. And what a promise it is:

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:11,12).

That's the forgiveness God offers. And think of it! It became yours the moment you believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior and as an act of your will received Him by faith into your life as your Lord and Master.

The Greatest Relationship You Will Ever Experience

Jesus of Nazareth is the most remarkable, the most powerful, the most unique, and the most attractive personality of all time. To know Him personally as your Savior and Lord is the basis of the greatest relationship you can ever have, because only through Jesus can you experience God's love and forgiveness. Let me explain why.

Jesus Claimed to Be God

One winter during the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), Jesus was walking in Solomon's Colonnade of the temple in Jerusalem. A crowd gathered around Him demanding, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

"I did tell you," He answered, "but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me...I and the Father are one" (John 10:22-25,30).

Our Lord's claim is reinforced by the fact that He fulfilled prophecy. Hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, various prophets of Israel foretold His miraculous birth, the place of His birth, His divine character, the purpose of His ministry, how He would die, and that He would be raised to life. These prophecies represent only a few of the many predictions made about Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. And He fulfilled every one down to the very last detail.

After His cruel crucifixion, Jesus demonstrated that He was God by rising from death and appearing to hundreds of people over a period of forty days, as many as five hundred in a single meeting. Then, as His followers watched in wonder, Jesus returned to heaven, having promised a continuing relationship with those who love Him.

God's holy, inspired Word also affirms Jesus' claim. The apostle Paul records, "He promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:2-4).

Jesus Came to Provide the Life You Need

Jesus didn't live on earth just to prove He is God. He came to give you eternal life, to offer you forgiveness and set you free from sin and guilt, to give you a full and meaningful life here on earth. And it's because Jesus is God that He can provide forgiveness from sin and enable you to live abundantly.

In a conversation with a religious leader of His day, Jesus said, "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" (John 3:16,17).

Paul wrote, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1,2).

A rich and satisfying life is the heritage of every Christian. Jesus intended the Christian life to be an exciting, abundant adventure. He promised, "I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). When you walk in a close relationship with our Lord, and in the control of God's Holy Spirit, every day is filled with wonder, meaning, and purpose-your life overflows with desirable qualities:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23).

But most Christians don't experience the abundant life. The life of joy and victory modeled and promised by our Lord is strangely foreign to them. Instead, they consider the Christian life a burden, a chore, a terrible cross to bear. They endure their Christianity on earth, hoping at last for relief in heaven.

Jesus never intended for you to live a defeated, dreadful existence. He called you to a life of joy and victory. Whatever the circumstance you are in-comfort or conflict, abundance or need, health or sickness, freedom or persecution-our Lord promises peace (John 14:27; 16:33). He said He would never leave you, and if you ask anything in His name, He will do it (Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 28:20; John 14:14).

As a Christian, God has promised you a legacy of support, abundance, and joy. Why, then, are so few Christians really enjoying their inheritance? Let me ask you: Are you living a joyous, fruitful life?

In his *Introduction to the New Testament Epistles*, J. B. Phillips writes:

There is a vast difference between the Christianity of the first century and the [Christianity of today]. To us, Christianity is all too often a code of ethics, a philosophy of life, a standard of performance, but to those first-century Christians, it was a new quality of life altogether, and they did not hesitate to describe this as Christ living in them. Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we could achieve what they achieved.

The first-century church rocked their world. Filled with the Spirit and compelled by the love of God, the early church took the Good News of God's love and forgiveness to the entire known world. Never before had any small body of ordinary men and women made such an impact on the world.

Those Christians were a group of ordinary people, like you and me, who knew the love and forgiveness of God. Controlled and empowered by God's Holy Spirit, they reached out in love to people living under the tyranny of an evil empire.

If you have experienced God's love and forgiveness in your life, you too can influence your world.

The world today is filled with anxiety, fear, and crisis. So much of the world is in a state of chaos. Nothing so characterizes the mood of our day more than the word "upheaval." In every facet of society and in every country of the world, there is upheaval - politically, socially, economically, even religiously.

In America, for example, we are witnessing epidemics of crime, drug addiction and alcoholism, pornography, AIDS and venereal disease, abortion, and broken homes and divorce-just to mention some of the serious problems facing our nation.

Countless human solutions have been proposed, and yet the crisis becomes increasingly worse. People are searching as never before for peace in their troubled relationships, for answers to the gnawing emptiness in their lives, for something more.

Through the process of elimination, many are now beginning to turn back to God. Never before has there been such an ideal climate for presenting the claims of Christ. The Spirit of God has created an unprecedented hunger in hearts. People are turning to Christ in increasing numbers and are experiencing God's marvelous love and forgiveness.

Even so, a relatively small number of Christians are involved in this great harvest. In the midst of these tremendous opportunities, most Christians have not entered into the joy of reaping the harvest God has prepared. The vast majority of believers live in spiritual impotence, defeat, and sterility. The average lay person and even many pastors seldom, if ever, introduce another person to Christ.

Unfortunately, many Christians do not display a quality of life that encourages others to desire a relationship with our Lord. Some believers do not even display a quality of life that encourages others to have a relationship with *them*.

You Can Change From Living a Fruitless Life

In speaking to millions of Christians around the world, I have found that most defeated, frustrated, fruitless believers want to change, but they do not know what to do. I have a message of hope and help for them and for you: You can change from living a defeated, fruitless life. You can experience the full and abundant life God has promised to all of His children through Jesus Christ.

One day as I was driving in an unfamiliar city, I made a wrong turn and found myself driving against traffic on a one-way street. People on the sidewalk called to me that I was going the wrong direction. But I had already realized that in the split-second after I turned. My problem was not to decide whether I was going in the right direction - it was how to get turned around! Soon, through the help of a friendly policeman, I succeeded

in changing my direction and went on my way relieved and happy, driving with the traffic. It is the same in the Christian life. If you make a wrong turn and find yourself defeated and frustrated, you do not just need to be told you are traveling in the wrong direction, you need someone to help you get turned around. In this booklet, I want to show you how you can get turned around.

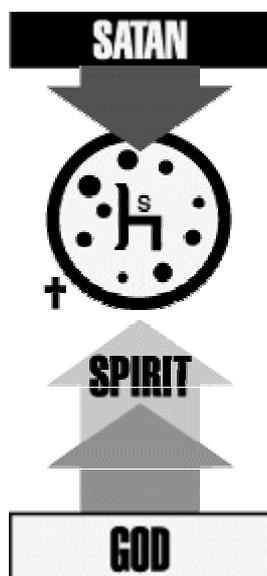
The Bible, God's holy, inspired Word, provides this guidance. Paul wrote:

The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone (2 Timothy 3:16,17,TLB).

The Bible not only instructs you, but it can show where you have turned in the wrong direction, give you assistance in making your course correction, and then train you to continue in the right way.

To understand the problem of misguided, unfruitful Christians, it is important to know what the Bible says about the problem. It reveals that there are three kinds of people in the world: the natural person, the spiritual man, and the worldly believer. Let me share briefly the characteristics of these types of people.

1. The Natural Person



Before you became a Christian, you were what the Scripture calls a "natural" person:

The circle represents your life, and the throne represents your control center or will.

You were living under Satan's dominance, and your fleshly nature - directed by Satan - was "on the throne," controlling your life. Christ was outside of your life, knocking at the door, wanting to liberate you from Satan's dominance by bringing you His love, forgiveness, and eternal life.

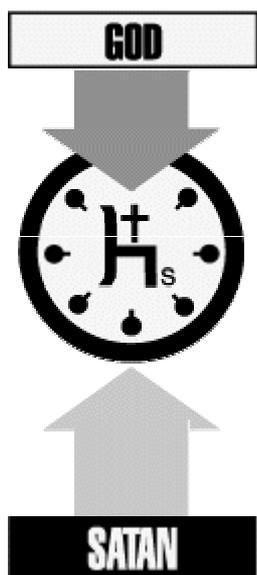
The natural person considers things of the Spirit of God as foolishness. Paul writes:

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14, NKJ).

Relying entirely on your own resources, you were spiritually dead to God and separated from Him because of sin.

Then you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ:

2. The Spiritual Man



At your invitation, Christ entered your life and took the throne to guide you and strengthen you to live for Him. At that moment, His Holy Spirit indwelt you, gave you new birth, sealed you for heaven, and baptized you into the body of believers. With Christ (Spirit) on the throne, you are "filled" (directed and empowered) by the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual man understands the things of God. The apostle Paul records:

The spiritual man has insight into everything, and that bothers and baffles the man of the world, who can't understand him at all. How could he? For certainly he has never been one to know the Lord's thoughts, or to discuss them with him, or to move the hands of God by prayer. But, strange as it seems, we Christians actually do have within us a portion of the very thoughts and mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:15,16, TLB).

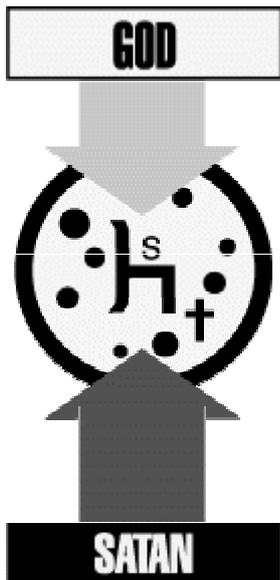
The act of staying "filled" with the Spirit is the act of deliberately keeping Christ on the throne of your life. He will not demand control against your will. If, despite His guidance and warning, you wish to yield to the influence of your flesh and wrest control away from Him for a period of overt or covert sin, He will sorrowfully step down. When you are in this state of unconfessed sin, God's Word describes you as one who is "worldly" or "carnal".

3. The Worldly Believer

There is a vast difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. The Scripture clearly teaches in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Also, "Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did" (1 John 2:6, TLB). But often, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3, the worldly Christian acts like the non-believer, and it is very difficult to tell the difference between them.

The worldly Christian is one who has received Christ but who also has allowed his sinful nature to reclaim the throne through sin. God still has possession of this person, and Christ is still in his life, but the individual has fallen into sin in one or more areas of his

life. Not yielded to God, the worldly believer is in a period of stunted spiritual growth because he is not confessing and repenting of his sins, and Satan has succeeded in influencing and controlling him through the flesh.



Paul wrote to the Christians of Corinth:

Dear brothers, I have been talking to you as though you were still just babies in the Christian life, who are not following the Lord, but your own desires; I cannot talk to you as I would to healthy Christians, who are filled with the Spirit. I have had to feed you with milk and not with solid food, because you couldn't digest anything stronger. And even now you still have to be fed on milk. For you are still only baby Christians, controlled by your own desires, not God's...In fact, you are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord at all (1 Corinthians 3:1-3, TLB).

The worldly or carnal Christian certainly experiences the conviction of the Holy Spirit and will not continue in his sins indefinitely; otherwise, he is possibly not a Christian at all. But defeated and fruitless, he depends on self-effort and energy to live the Christian life instead of drawing on the supernatural, inexhaustible resources of the Holy Spirit. Grasping self-interest in one hand and groping for God's blessing with the other, this person fails again and again to live the Christian life in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit.

The state of carnality, or unconfessed sin, is a miserable existence. Yet, sadly, this is where millions of Christians rest today-back on the throne of their lives-and they often don't realize that they are in this fleshly category. One man told me he had heard his pastor talk about worldly Christians all of his life, but he always thought his pastor meant somebody else. It surprised and shocked him to discover that he was a worldly Christian.

Paul knew what it meant to be worldly. In Romans chapter seven he records:

The law is good, then, and the trouble is not there but with me, because I am sold into slavery with Sin as my owner.

I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to-what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws I am breaking. But I can't help myself, because I'm no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things.

I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. Now if I am

doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is; sin still has me in its evil grasp (Romans 7:14-20, TLB).

Does this passage of Scripture describe your present relationship with God?

In Detroit, Michigan, an elderly couple was taken to the hospital, suffering from malnutrition and starvation. When police began to search through their rubbish-cluttered home, they discovered \$40,000 in cash hidden away among their belongings. They had long since forgotten that they possessed such wealth.

In similar manner, the worldly Christian lives in spiritual poverty, much like a practicing atheist: Professing to believe in God, he acts as though God doesn't exist or is unwilling to help. He fails to understand the significance of Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. Christ not only paid the price for his sins, but actually broke the power of sin in his life.

Paul understood the anguish and frustration of attempting to live the Christian life in the energy of self-effort. He records:

It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned; but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin.

So you see how it is: my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin, Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in. Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? (Romans 7:21-24, TLB).

Have you ever asked, "Who will free me from my ugly self, my failures and defeats?" There is good news! Look at Paul's answer:

Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free (Romans 7:25, TLB).

A pastor of a large church came to talk to me after I had presented a message on how to experience God's love and forgiveness. He was filled with hatred and resentment toward the lay leaders of his previous church because he felt they had done him great harm and had even tried to destroy his ministry.

The pastor had now realized that in his attempts to get even he had turned into a mean, critical, worldly Christian. He had come to the point of either getting right with God or getting out of the pastorate. As he put it, "This cancerous worldliness is destroying my life and ministry."

As we knelt together to claim the love and forgiveness of God, his tears of repentance were followed by tears of joy. Several days later he went to visit the church leaders whom he had hated before, and when he told them that he loved them and asked them to forgive him, the leaders responded with joy and Christian love. This dear pastor returned to his second church with a heart burning with love and zeal for our Lord.

A businessman from another church came to see me one day, greatly distressed because his church was splitting.

"Half of our members are going to move out and start another church," he said.

This distressed me, too, because I cannot think of anything more tragic than for a body of Christians to be divided.

As we talked, the man discovered and admitted that he was a worldly Christian. I explained to him how God had made provision for him to be a spiritual person. He did not need to continue to live as a worldly, carnal Christian. Finally, we knelt together and prayed. He asked forgiveness for his sins and invited God to fill and control his life by the Holy Spirit. As we rejoiced together over what God had done, he said, "You know, there won't be any problems in my church now. You see, I'm the one who has been causing all the trouble."

Unfortunately, the acid of worldliness doesn't just burn into churches. It also dissolves marriages, homes, families, and jobs. You may have felt its affect in your life as relationships with loved ones have deteriorated and friends have become mere acquaintances.

You Are Free To Live As A Spiritual Person

You can discover the same freedom Paul found. And you can enjoy the victory he wrote about in Romans chapter 8:

So there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit - and this power is mine through Christ Jesus - has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death.

We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God, because we can't and don't keep them, but God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours - except that ours are sinful - and destroyed sin's control over us by giving himself as a sacrifice for our sins. So now we can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us (Romans 8:1-4, TLB).

The Holy Spirit supplies power for you to live as a spiritual person. For years I had sought God with all of my heart. I tried all kinds of self-imposed discipline, including

days of fasting and prayer, begging God for His power. The more I tried, the more frustrated I became. Then one day, as I was studying this passage in the book of Romans, I read a verse that changed my perspective:

The old sinful nature within us is against God. It never did obey God's laws and it never will (Romans 8:7, TLB).

What a relief to discover that I could never be able to live the Christian life through my own efforts. I must trust Christ to live His resurrection life through me. He alone could enable me to live as I should. You see, the Christian life is a supernatural life and only Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can enable you to live it.

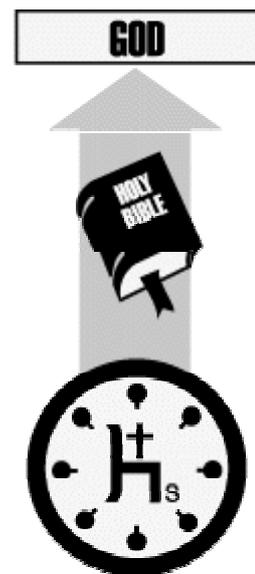
Self-imposed religious disciplines lead only to defeat and frustration. The Holy Spirit liberates you from the vicious power of sin and death. Only the power of the Holy Spirit gives victory!

By faith you can experience God's love and forgiveness and live as a spiritual person. Faith, not your own effort, pleases God.

But it isn't enough to just have faith in faith itself. On a winter day, a man can have great faith that the ice on a lake would support his weight. With great faith he can boldly walk out on thin ice - and get very wet.

You must place your faith, weak or strong, in an object worth trusting. The object of a Christian's faith is the Lord Jesus Christ and His holy, inspired Word. Only our Lord has the power to deliver you from a worldly life to a relationship of great joy and fruitful blessings.

You must place your faith in a trustworthy God and His Word. The better you get to know God, the more you will trust Him. And the more you trust Him, the more you will experience His selfless love and limitless power.



How You Can Receive God's Love and Forgiveness

Have you ever questioned Christ's forgiveness? If so, I have good news for you. Christ's death, in your place, is the basis for your forgiveness. Because of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, your forgiveness is not merely a hope. It is fact!

Christ paid the price for all of your sins - totally, once and for all. If you are a Christian, all of your sins - past, present, and future - have been forgiven. You cannot add anything to what Christ has already done for you. Pleadings, tears, personal efforts, and religious

ritual cannot reconcile you to God. That has already taken place - the moment you confessed your sins and placed your faith in Christ as your Savior and Lord.

Hebrews 10 proclaims:

Under this new plan we have been forgiven and made clean by Christ's dying for us once and for all.

For by that one offering he made forever perfect in the sight of God all those whom he is making holy.

Now, when sins have once been forever forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them (Hebrews 10:10,14,18 TLB).

To receive God's forgiveness, simply confess your sin and accept his forgiveness by faith. I call this process "Spiritual Breathing."

Just as you exhale and inhale physically, so you must also breathe spiritually.

You exhale spiritually when you confess your sins. The Bible promises that if you confess your sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive you and to purify you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). To confess your sins means to agree with God about your sins. Your agreement is threefold.

First, *you agree that your sins are wrong and grieve God.* God is holy and will have nothing to do with sin. Although He loves you even though you may have unconfessed sin in your life, you must consider your sin as seriously as He does to receive His forgiveness. Without acknowledging your sin, you have no hope of salvation. Proverbs 14:9 says, "Fools mock at making amends for sin." John writes, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives (1 John 1:8,10).

Second, *you recognize that God has already forgiven your sins* through Christ's death and the shedding of His blood on the cross.

Confession, then, is an expression of faith and an act of obedience, which results in God making real in your experience what He has already done for you through the death of His Son. This real and ongoing experience of God's forgiveness helps you remain an open channel through which God's love and power can flow.

Unconfessed sin short-circuits the flow of God's power in your life. Let me illustrate. One day, as I was operating the controls of my son's electric train, it suddenly stopped running. I could not figure out what was wrong. I took the train apart, and put it back together. I pushed the plug in and out of the socket; nothing happened. Then I

discovered that a little piece of metal - a "No Left Turn" sign - had fallen across the tracks, short-circuiting all the electrical power.

To maintain a victorious Christian life and live as a spiritual Christian, you must keep short accounts with God. By that I mean, you confess any sin that enters your life the moment God's Holy Spirit reveals it to you. If you refuse to confess your sin, you become carnal and walk in the shadow instead of in the light of God's love and forgiveness.

Third, *you repent*. You change your attitude, which results in a change of action. Through the strength of the Holy Spirit, you turn from your sins and change your conduct. Instead of giving in to the compulsion to what your worldly, fleshly nature wants to do, you now do what God wants in the power of the Holy Spirit.

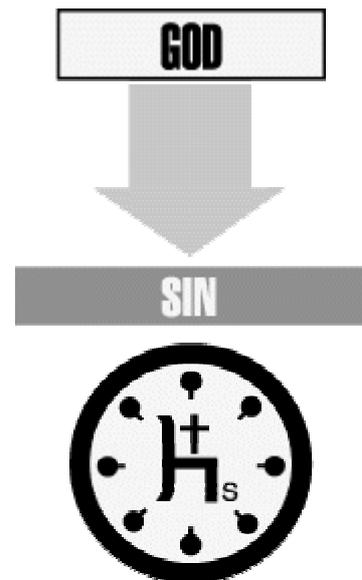
Through confessing your sins, you begin the process of "Spiritual Breathing" by exhaling. You change from a worldly Christian to a spiritual Christian by inhaling, appropriating the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit by faith. Many people today deny the stain of sin in their lives. Others attempt to ignore sin's smudge by saying, "It's not so bad." Some try to excuse their blemish claiming, "I'm no worse than anyone else." And many others attempt their own methods to overcome sin's blot in their lives. But the only hope anyone has to overcome sin is a supernatural cleansing - the cleansing that only God can perform through His Son, the Lord Jesus, who died and shed His blood for our sins.

King David was well acquainted with sin. Psalm 51 was written after Nathan the prophet had come to inform David of God's judgment against him because of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, her husband. Yet David is described as a man after God's own heart because he was repentant. "O loving and kind God, have mercy," he wrote. "Have pity upon me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions. Oh, wash me, cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again. For I admit my shameful deed..." (Psalm 51:1-3, TLB).

And in Psalm 32 he expresses the joy he felt over God's love and forgiveness:

What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record.

There was a time when I wouldn't admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. All day and all night your hand was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted



all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess them to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone (Psalm 32:1-5, TLB).

David, from the depths of his experience, shares this admonition from his heart: "Now I say that each believer should confess his sins to God when he is aware of them, while there is time to be forgiven. Judgment will not touch him if he does" (Psalm 32:6, TLB). I am concerned about multitudes of Christians who are being disciplined by God because they do not confess their sins. They have financial reverses, physical illnesses, and all kinds of difficulties - all because they are being disobedient to Him, and He is trying to get their attention so that He can bless and enrich their lives.

I encourage you to do what I do when I experience difficulties - turn to the Lord and ask, "Lord, is there sin in my life that is making it necessary for You to discipline me?" The Scriptures say those whom God loves, He disciplines (Hebrews 12:6). When you experience difficulties, it is important to look into the mirror of God's Word and to confess any sin that He reveals.

God's cleansing from the sins that hinder you opens the way to the abundant, fulfilling life to which Jesus has called you.

By faith you can simply claim as true what Jesus Christ has said and done for you. By faith you can view yourself as God views you, as His child - loved, forgiven, and cleansed. By faith you can confess your sins and repent. And by faith you can accept God's forgiveness and cleansing.

Now you may wonder, "If Christ has already paid the penalty for my sins, why should I confess then?"

By confessing your sin, you act on your faith in God and His Word. Confession does not give you more forgiveness. Christ has already forgiven you once and for all. But by admitting your sins, you establish in your experience what God has done for you through the death of His Son.

Jesus told a story to illustrate confession and God's forgiveness (condensed from Luke 15:11-32). At the insistence of his younger son, a father gave the boy his share of the family estate. The son left home and wasted his inheritance on parties and prostitutes. Later, the son returned home destitute, hungry, and feeling he was no longer worthy to be considered a son. But his father ran to meet him, embraced and kissed him, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and held a banquet in his honor.

Through this parable, Jesus was teaching that God loves you not "when," "if," or "because" you deserve it, but even when you are disobedient and rebellious. One of my most moving discoveries in the study of Scripture was a statement Jesus made in a prayer recorded in John 17:22,23:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Think of it! God loves you as much as He loves His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's true. When you confess your sins, God, in His unconditional love, welcomes you back and eagerly forgives you. Instead of running away from Him in fear, you can run to His loving arms, confident that He forgives you.

But if you refuse to deal honestly with God by ignoring your sins, you become worldly and are living in the shadows instead of walking in God's light. As 1 John 1:6,7 says:

If we say we are his friends, but go on living in spiritual darkness and sin, we are lying. But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ does, then we have wonderful fellowship and joy with each other, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin (TLB).

Perhaps you are aware of sins that you haven't confessed to God. As a result, you have left your first love for Him. You may feel resentment toward someone. Your relationship with Christ may seem mechanical and routine. Your prayers do not seem to reach God. You read the Bible, but you do not remember what you have read. You may even attempt to witness for Christ, but no one responds.

One day I was speaking to a friend on a cellular car phone. At one point in our conversation, all I could hear was loud static. Some obstruction had interrupted the radio signal, and I missed a portion of what my friend had said. After the car had cleared the obstacle, I could once again hear his voice clearly, and we were able to continue our conversation.

Sin obstructs your communication and relationship with God. When you tolerate sin in your life, you can't hear God. You become discouraged and confused. Soon, you may find yourself operating on your memories of God instead of living in vital interaction with Him.

All you need to do to experience God's forgiveness is to confess your sins - exhale spiritually. That cleansing breath restores your fellowship with Him.

A Spiritual Formula

Let me share a simple process, a spiritual formula, that has helped thousands of people to experience God's love and forgiveness.

1. List Your Sins

It begins by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin in your life. Take a pencil and paper and list every sin He brings to mind. As you write, confess each one of them to God.

I encourage you to humble yourself before God as you do this. Give him time to reveal everything in your life that is displeasing to Him. This list is just between you and God, so be completely honest. Tell Him everything that's wrong.

Your list may include (to name a few):

- Leaving your first love for God
- Spending little or no time praying or reading and studying God's Word
- Seldom, if ever, witnessing for Christ
- Lacking faith in God
- Having a jealous attitude
- Lusting after material things
- Dealing with others in a spirit of pride
- Acting selfishly
- Being dishonest, lying
- Talking about others behind their back
- Entertaining immoral thoughts
- Committing sexual sins

Whatever your sin, write it down and remember: you have a loving God who forgives you - who even gave His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die for you.

A young man said to me after an evening meeting, "I didn't believe I needed to make a list. I couldn't think of anything seriously wrong in my life. But when I saw others making their lists, the Spirit of God told me to do the same."

While there were no major areas of disobedience in his life, he said, a lot of little things had dulled the cutting edge of his love and witness for Christ.

He encouraged me, "If you ever speak on this subject again, be sure to insist that everyone, including those who think there are no major sins in their lives, make a list of their sins. If I had not made my list, I would have missed a special blessing from God."

2. Write God's Promise Across the List

After you have written the sins that God reveals to you, write God's promise of forgiveness from 1 John 1:9 across the list:

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

3. Destroy the List

When you have completed your time of prayer and confession, accept His forgiveness by faith, then destroy the list as an illustration of the forgiveness God has granted you. You may want to tear it into pieces or burn it to show how completely God has forgiven you.

4. Make Restitution

The final step in the process is to ask God if you need to make restitution to someone. You may need to apologize for having a bad attitude toward someone. You may need to ask someone to forgive you for the way you have treated him or her. You may need to return something you have stolen.

It's important for you to make restitution to others because you cannot maintain a clear conscience before God if you still have a guilty conscience before people. Confession often includes making restitution.

At the conclusion of a Christian medical meeting where I had spoken on the subject of forgiveness, a doctor accepted my challenge to make his list. He was very excited when he came to see me early the next morning.

"Last night about midnight," he said, "a doctor friend of mine came to my room and told me that he had hated me for years while pretending to be my friend. As he was making his list, God told him that he should come and tell me and ask me to forgive him. We had the most wonderful time of prayer, and God met us in a special way."

He encouraged me to keep telling Christians to confess their sins to God and, if necessary, to ask forgiveness of those whom they have wronged as the Holy Spirit leads them.

If, after you have fully confessed all of your known sins to God, you still feel a sense of guilt, it may be because you have not been completely honest with God by making a full disclosure. So be sure you are honest with God.

Are you weighed down by heavy burdens of guilt? Do you sometimes wonder if you will ever experience the love and forgiveness of God that other Christians joyfully profess?

Perhaps you feel like the man who was stumbling along the road with a heavy pack on his back. Soon, a wagon stopped, and the driver offered to give him a ride. Joyfully, the weary traveler accepted. But when he climbed onto the wagon, he continued to strain under his heavy load.

"Why don't you take off your pack and rest?" the driver asked.

The discouraged traveler replied, "Oh, I couldn't do that! It would be too much to ask you to carry my load as well as me."

"How foolish," you say. We wouldn't think of responding like that to such an offer, would we? Yet many Christians continue to carry heavy burdens of guilt even after they have entrusted their lives to the Lord Jesus and received His forgiveness.

Frequently we experience hostility or punishment from our friends or family when we fall short of their expectations. If you have truly wronged another person, confessing it and making restitution when necessary will release the guilt. But feelings of guilt will linger if you do not forgive yourself or if you try to live up to the unrealistic expectations of others.

None of us is perfect. But as Christians we do not live in condemnation. As one who has been forgiven, you are righteous before God in Jesus Christ.

When you have completed this simple process, any feelings of guilt that remain are not from God. They are from your enemy Satan. Your sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). They are buried in the deepest sea (Micah 7:19). God has put them behind His back and remembers them against you no more (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

There was a young boy who had a pet bird, and one day the bird died. The boy was broken-hearted, and his father and mother decided that instead of allowing their son to be downcast, they would make something memorable of the occasion.

They said, "Let's have a funeral." Calling all the neighbor children together, they dug a little hole in the ground, put the bird in a box, and buried it with a ceremony. Instead of being downcast, the boy was excited.

But the next day, he went out and dug up the bird to see how it was getting along. His father, however, insisted that he bury it. So he did. A few days later, the boy went out and dug up the bird again. This happened several times, and each time the father would reprimand him. Finally, the father became angry and said, "Now look, you leave that bird in the ground, and don't ever dig it up again!"

Are you confessing your sins over and over again - out of a sense of guilt - like the little boy digging up that old dead bird?

All of your sins have been forgiven by God on the basis of Christ's death on the cross and the shedding of His blood for your sins. Whenever Satan accuses you of some act in your past that has grieved or quenched the Holy Spirit, you can say with great joy, "I have confessed that sin and I know God has forgiven me and cleansed me as He promised."

I challenge you to examine your life right now. Are you experiencing the fullness of the Christian life? Are you carrying a load of guilt over past sins in your life? I urge you to begin the process of Spiritual Breathing today. It has helped millions of other Christians, and I know it will also help you.

God's forgiveness is complete. Thank Him for canceling your guilt and cleansing you. Claim victory over those negative feelings and move on in faith to be a fruitful disciple and witness for our Lord.

Now you are free to experience the abundant life that He promised. Now you can encourage and serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. And now you can enter the harvest fields to enjoy bringing other people to the Lord Jesus who has done so much for you.

Remember, *How You Can Experience God's Love and Forgiveness* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- How does 1 Corinthians 2:14 describe a natural person?
- How do these verses describe a spiritual Christian?
 - a. Romans 14:22-15:3
 - b. Galatians 5:22-6:2
- How do 1 Corinthians 3 and Romans 1 describe the worldly believer?
- Which of these characterize your life: the "natural person," the "spiritual man," or the "worldly believer"? What would you like to change in your life? How will you do that?
- In your own words, explain how Romans 7:14-19 relates to your life.
- What does the great promise of Romans 8:1 mean to you?
- Why does God care if there is sin in your life?
- What does each of the following verses tell you about God's view of sin?
 - a. Ephesians 2:1
 - b. Psalm 107:17
 - c. Isaiah 59:2
 - d. Habakkuk 1:13
- What influence do pride and humility have in the Christian life? (See Proverbs 11:2; 15:33.)
- What do these verses assure you regarding God's cleansing from sin?
 - a. Psalm 103:3, 9-12
 - b. Psalm 86:5
 - c. Matthew 12:21
 - d. 1 John 1:9
- How does Hebrews 11:1 describe faith? How would you apply that verse in your life on a day-to-day basis?
- What do the following verses tell you about exercising or increasing your faith?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:13-18
 - c. Galatians 5:6
 - d. James 2:14-26

- God's Word says that your sins have already been forgiven. Why then, do we confess sins?
- If a person has confessed all known sins in his life and has claimed the forgiveness of God, but still has guilt feelings, what should he do?
- Have you confessed all known sin to God and made right every wrong done to others as far as it lies within your ability to do so? (Read Matthew 5:23,24.) If not, what further action do you need to take?
- Think of someone in your family or place of business who doesn't know Christ. How could you influence them to believe in the vitality and excitement of living for Christ?
- Are there any unconfessed sins that are short-circuiting God's power in you life? Take a few moments to list on a piece of paper any sins that the Holy Spirit reveals to you. Write 1 John 1:9 across the list, claiming the verse by faith for your life. Then destroy the list and make restitution, if necessary.

Group Discussion Questions

- Is God's forgiveness also possible through the other religions of the world?
- The word "confess" means to "agree." It means you are saying, "I agree with you that I did that wrong thing to you. I am guilty." How much should you tell God and the person you have wronged when you agree about your sins?
- To whom do you confess: the whole church, your neighbors, only the person you sin against?
- Suppose God brings to your mind that last year you stole or used some of your employer's money and did not pay it back to him. So you confess this sin to God. Your employer is not a Christian and does not want you to talk to him about God. As far as you know, he does not know that you stole the money. What should you do? (See Mark 11:25, Matthew 5:23,24.)
- Can you remember times in your life when you refused to repent and confess your sins after God had shown them to you? What happened in you life because of this? What happened in your public and family life?
- Discuss what can happen if you do not confess your sins. Will you lose your salvation? Will you need to believe and receive Jesus Christ again as your Savior? (See John 10:27-29.)
- What if you commit the same sin again? Do you need to confess every time? Why do you continue to do this evil, even after you have confessed? If you confess the same sin so many times, does this mean that you are not saved?

No.3

How You Can Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

The Wonderful News of the Spirit-Filled Life

The senior pastor of one of America's leading churches came to talk with me after my message on "How to Be Filled With the Spirit." He said, "My life will never be the same after tonight! I have been a pastor for more than twenty years, but until now, I have never understood how to be empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit as a way of life. I can hardly wait to share this with my church members. . . "

A retired businessman and his wife came to my office from halfway across the continent to share their excitement. "Our lives were totally changed when we learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of your ministry. Now we are sharing Christ with others wherever we go."

They handed me a generous check with this request. "We have come to ask you to share on television how to be filled with the Holy Spirit with millions of others. We are eager for other Christians to experience the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives as He is in ours..."

At the conclusion of one of my lectures, a man came rushing down the aisle. "This is the greatest thing I have ever heard in my life!" he began. "Today I have been liberated!" This man was on twelve boards of various Christian organizations. He exclaimed, "I have been trying to serve God so diligently that I practically ignored my business and my family. I have been trying to serve God in the energy of the flesh. I understand now why I have been so miserable and so unproductive!"

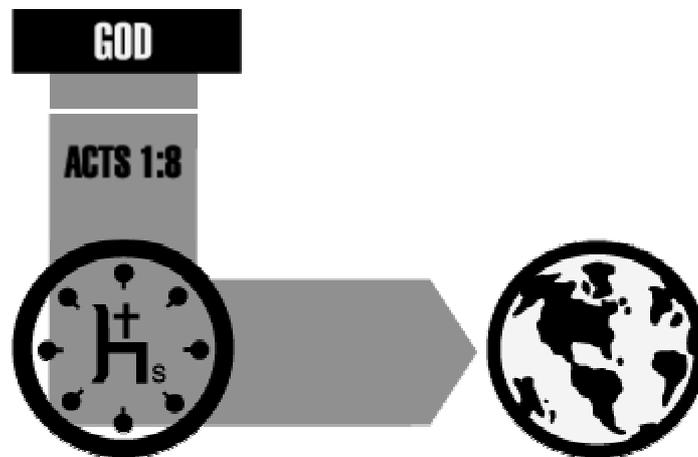
These people were all liberated from what I believe is one of the greatest afflictions in the body of Christ today. This blight is at the core of all the problems hurting the body of Christ throughout the world. The sickness I am speaking about is the epidemic of worldliness or carnality.

Why Do You Need The Filling of the Holy Spirit?

Learning how to be filled (controlled and empowered) by the Holy Spirit by faith can be the most important discovery of your Christian life.

Consider carefully the very last words which our Lord spoke as He met with His disciples on the Mount of Olives only moments before He ascended into heaven. Jesus

had commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel and to make disciples of all nations.' But He had told them not to leave Jerusalem until they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.



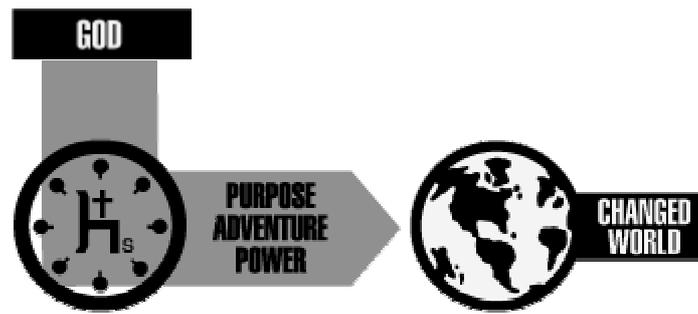
"You will receive power," He said, "when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

By these words, Jesus was suggesting, "Though you have been with Me for three years and more, it is not enough that you have heard Me teach the multitudes, and have seen Me heal the sick and even raise the dead. You need to be empowered with the Holy Spirit in order to be effective and fruitful as My witnesses throughout the world."

A very successful businessman came to Arrowhead Springs, our international head quarters, for training. He was the son of a minister, had been reared under the good influence of the church, had been a Sunday school teacher for years, a Sunday school superintendent, deacon, member of the board of trustees of one of America's leading theological seminaries, and president of all the laymen for his denomination for an entire state; yet, he had never to his knowledge introduced anyone to Christ.

During the training he learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith and how to introduce others to Christ. Since that time, he has personally led hundreds of people to Christ and has trained thousands of laymen and pastors through our Lay Institutes for Evangelism. Thousands of others have been introduced to Christ through those whom he has trained.

The pastor of a 1,500-member church appropriated the fullness of the Holy Spirit at a Pastors' Institute for Evangelism at Arrowhead Springs and learned how to introduce others to Christ. During one afternoon of witnessing for Christ, fourteen of the fifteen people whom this pastor interviewed received Christ. Never had he had such an experience. He returned to his pulpit a changed man. Soon hundreds of his church members had, like their pastor, appropriated the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith. They began sharing their enthusiasm for Christ, and through their witness, many more responded to our Savior.



The Christian life is a great adventure. It is a life of purpose and power. Christ has given the almost unbelievable promise, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

Obviously, you cannot, in your own energy, accomplish these great works. It is Christ Himself - living within you in all of His resurrection power, walking around in your body, thinking with your mind, loving with your heart, speaking with your lips - who will empower you with the Holy Spirit to do these great works. It is not your wisdom, your eloquence, your logic, your good personality, or your persuasiveness which brings people to our Savior. It is the Son of Man, who came to seek and to save the lost, who sent His Holy Spirit to fill and empower you.

Jesus said, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." First century Christians, controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit and filled with His love, turned the world upside down.

As the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they received a divine, supernatural power that changed them from fearful men to radiant witnesses for Christ. They were used of God to change the course of history. And this same omnipotent power, the power of the Holy Spirit, is available to you to enable you to live a holy and fruitful life for Jesus Christ.

Yet, tragically, multitudes of Christians do not even know who the Holy Spirit is. Or, if they do, they do not know how to appropriate His power. Consequently, they go through life without ever experiencing the abundant and fruitful life which Christ promised to all who trust Him.

Again and again I am reminded of the great contrast between Christ's church today and His church in the first century. In his introduction to the Letters to the Young Churches, J.B. Phillips writes:

The great difference between present-day Christianity and that of which we read in these letters, the New Testament epistles, is that to us, it is primarily a performance; to them it was a real experience. We are

apt to reduce the Christian religion to a code or, at best, a rule of heart and life. To these men it is quite plainly the invasion of their lives by a new quality of life together. They do not hesitate to describe this as Christ living in them.

This same first century power - the power of the risen, living, loving, indwelling Christ made known through the Holy Spirit - is still available to you today.

Do you know this power in your life? Are you a victorious, fruitful witness for Christ? If not, you can be.

I believe the most important message that I can possibly give to Christians is this wonderful, revolutionary news of the Spirit-filled life. I have shared these truths around the world with millions of Christians, old and young. I have never shared any message that has been more used by God to transform the lives of multitudes.

If you are not already experiencing the abundant life which Jesus promised and which is your heritage as a Christian, if you are not already introducing others to Christ as a way of life and you sincerely desire to do so, I have good news for you!

The answers to the following questions can change your life and enable you to experience the abundant and fruitful life which our Lord promises to all who trust and obey Him.

First, who is the Holy Spirit?

Second, why did He come?

Third, what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

Fourth, why is the average Christian not filled with the Holy Spirit?

Fifth, how can you be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God. He is not an "it." He is not a divine influence. He is not a fleecy white cloud. He is not a ghost nor a concept. He is a person possessing a will, intellect and emotions. He is God - with all the attributes of deity. He is the third person of the Trinity - co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. There is only one God, but He manifests Himself in three persons, whom we call the Trinity.

I cannot define the Trinity. No one can. Dr. Wilbur Smith, one of my seminary professors, once shared in class, "The man who denies the Trinity will lose his soul. The man who tries to understand the Trinity will lose his mind." We, who are finite, cannot comprehend God, who is infinite.

We try to illustrate the concept of the Trinity, but the attempt is wholly inadequate. For example, I could say that a man has a body, a mind and a spirit - which one is the man? Or I could describe H₂O as a liquid, a solid or a vapor, depending on whether it was water, ice or steam. Which one is H₂O? Or, a man is a husband, a father, and a son - yet, he is one man. No illustration is adequate. At best, it can only suggest what God is like.

As much as you and I would like to know all about the Trinity, some of our questions must wait until we are with our Lord in eternity. Then we will understand completely. In the meantime, consider what Paul says in Romans 11:

Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his wisdom and knowledge and riches! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! For who among us can know the mind of the Lord? Who knows enough to be his counselor and guide?

And who could ever offer to the Lord enough to induce him to act? For everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power, and everything is for his glory. To him be glory evermore."

Why Did God Send The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ and to lead believers into all truth. On the eve of His crucifixion while still in the Upper Room, the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "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."

The Holy Spirit came to enable you to know Christ through a new birth and to give you the power to live and share the abundant life which Jesus promised to all who trust and obey Him.

The Holy Spirit inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. As you read the Bible, He reveals its truth to you. I read passages of Scripture that I have read many times before, and suddenly, at the moment I need a particular truth, a certain passage comes alive to me. Why? Because the Holy Spirit makes the Word of God relevant and meaningful when I need it. It is a living Book inspired by the Spirit, and only Christians who are filled with the Spirit can understand the true meaning of God's Word.

I pray and - except for the prayer of confession - I cannot expect God to answer my prayer unless I am walking in the Spirit. I witness, and no one responds unless I am controlled and empowered by the Spirit.

I cannot live a holy life apart from the help of the Holy Spirit for, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control."

A minister friend said to me, "I don't like all of this talk about the Holy Spirit. I want to talk about Jesus Christ." I reminded him that was the reason the Holy Spirit came - to exalt and glorify Christ."

It is impossible to even know Christ apart from the regenerating ministry of the Spirit. It was Jesus of Nazareth, Himself, who said, "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." It is impossible for you to become a Christian, to understand the Bible and other spiritual truths, to pray, to live a holy life, to witness or do anything for the Lord Jesus apart from the person of the Holy Spirit of God.

What Does It Mean To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit?

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with Christ. The Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ. Therefore, if I am filled with the Spirit, I am abiding in Christ. I am walking in the light as He is the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse and keep on cleansing me from all unrighteousness.

I am controlled by Christ because the word "filling" means to be controlled. And if I am controlled - not as a robot but as one who is led and empowered by the Spirit - the Lord Jesus will walk around in my body and live His resurrection life in and through me.

This amazing fact that Christ lives in you and expresses His love through you is one of the most important truths in the Word of God. The standards of the Christian life are so high and so impossible to achieve, according to the Word of God, that only one person has been able to succeed. That person is Jesus Christ. Now, through His indwelling presence, He wants to enable all who place their trust in Him to live this same supernatural life.

If you are willing for Jesus Christ to live His resurrection life in and through you, you will bear spiritual fruit as naturally as a healthy vine will bear an abundance of fruit.

Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." You can be a great preacher, a Christian scholar, a deacon or elder, attend church meetings daily, live a clean, moral life, memorize hundreds of verses of Scripture, direct a church choir, and teach Sunday school, but if you are not bearing fruit in the sense that you are introducing others to Christ, you are not filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God.

Some people say, "I witness for Christ by living a good life." But it is not enough to live a good life. Many non-Christians live fine, moral, ethical lives. According to the Lord Jesus, the only way to demonstrate that you are truly following Him is to produce fruit, which includes introducing others to our Savior as well as living holy lives. And the only way you can produce fruit is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some time ago I asked one of the leading theologians of our time, the dean of faculty for a famous theological seminary, if he felt that one could be a Spirit-filled person without sharing Christ as a way of life. His answer was an emphatic, "No!"

On what basis could he make such a strong statement? The answer is obvious. Our Savior came to "seek and to save the lost," and He has "chosen and ordained" you to share the good news of His love and forgiveness with everyone, everywhere. To fail to witness for Christ with your lips is to disobey this command just as much as to fail to witness for Him by living a holy life is to disobey His command. In neither case can the disobedient Christian expect God to control and empower his life, nor can he experience the reality of God's presence and blessing.

A very discouraged student came to me for counsel after one of my messages. For several months he had spent at least three hours each day reading his Bible, praying and sharing his faith with others. Yet, he had never introduced anyone to Christ. After a time of discussion, his problem became apparent - he was not controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, although he wanted to be.

So we prayed together, and by faith he appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit on the authority of God's Word. His life was absolutely transformed. That very day he had his first experience of introducing a person to Christ. The next day he led another to Christ and, two days later, another. He has since introduced hundreds, if not thousands, of people to our Lord.

Not only do you receive a supernatural power for witnessing when you are filled with the Spirit, but your personality also begins to change. As you continue to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit becomes increasingly obvious in your life.

In Galatians 5:22,23, Paul explains, "When the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control..."

The Christian's relationship with the Holy Spirit is both critical and progressive: *critical*, in that one learns that the Christian life is a life of faith rather than a life of works and has no reference to emotions ("The just shall live by faith."); *progressive*, in that, as one walks consistently in the power and control of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in his life.

A word of caution is in order. Do not seek an emotional or mystical experience. Do not depend on mystical impressions. The Word of God must be the basis of your spiritual growth. There is an interesting parallel between Ephesians 5:18, which admonishes us to be constantly and continually directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and Colossians 3:16, which admonishes us to "let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you..."

The end result of both letting the Word of Christ dwell in you and being filled with the Holy Spirit will be that you will talk much about the Lord quoting psalms and hymns and making music in your heart to the Lord.

It is very important to recognize the importance of the balance between the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The Word of God is closed to our understanding and has little meaning to us apart from the illumination given by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is hindered in speaking clear and life changing truth apart from the Word of God.

When the emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is in proper balance in your life, the result is a life of power and great fruitfulness in which our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is wonderfully honored and glorified. As you continue then to allow the Holy Spirit to control and empower you, and as you meditate upon the Word of God, hiding it in your heart, your life expresses more and more the beauty of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit which Paul lists in Galatians 5:22,23. These attributes of our Lord Jesus Himself, plus fruitful witnessing, indicate that the Lord is actually living His life in and through you!

Being filled with the Spirit results in an abundant and overflowing life. Jesus of Nazareth once cried out to the multitude, "If a man 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." John adds, "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive."

Truly, this is "the abundant life," yet most Christians are experiencing little of it.

Why Is The Average Christian Not Filled with the Holy Spirit?

The average Christian continues to live in disobedience to God and is not filled with the Spirit for two reasons:

1. A lack of knowledge
2. Unbelief

From the moment of your spiritual birth, you have the power to go on growing toward maturity in Christ. And yet, the average person, not understanding how to live by faith, lives on a spiritual roller coaster, rising and falling from one emotional experience to another.

In Romans 7, Paul describes the predicament of the worldly, carnal Christian, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul describes a worldly, carnal believer as one who acts like a non-Christian. Although the worldly believer has received Christ, he also has allowed his Flesh nature to reclaim the throne through sin. God still has possession of this person, and Christ is still in his life, but the individual has fallen into sin in one or more areas of his life.

Not yielded to God, the worldly believer is usually a miserable person - even more miserable than the non-Christian. He is in a period of stunted spiritual growth because he is not confessing and repenting of his sins, and Satan has succeeded in influencing and controlling him through the Flesh.

Paul wrote to the Christians of Corinth:

Dear brothers, I have been talking to you as though you were still just babies in the Christian life, who are not following the Lord, but your own desires; I cannot talk to you as I would to healthy Christians, who are filled with the Spirit. I have had to feed you with milk and not with solid food, because you couldn't digest anything stronger. And even now you still have to be fed on milk. For you are still only baby Christians, controlled by your own desires, not God's...In fact, you are acting like people who don't belong to the Lord at all.

The worldly or carnal Christian certainly experiences the conviction of the Holy Spirit and will not continue in his sins indefinitely; otherwise, he is possibly not a Christian at all. But defeated and fruitless, he depends on self effort to live the Christian life instead of drawing on the supernatural, inexhaustible resources of the Holy Spirit. Grasping self interest in one hand and groping for God's blessing with the other, this person fails again and again to live the Christian life in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit.

Having experienced the joy and blessing of fellowship with God, he has lost present contact and does not know how to recapture that lost fellowship. Yet, the worldly believer can never be satisfied with that old way of life again, and in search for happiness and fulfillment, this person has become self-centered instead of Christ-centered.

As a result, he has become increasingly confused and frustrated and does not know what to do about it. He does not know how to live by faith - instead he lives by feeling. The worldly Christian tries rather than trusts. He does not know how to stop being worldly nor how to become a spiritual Christian. The only one who can enable him to change is, of course, the Holy Spirit.

The Christian life is a miraculous and supernatural life. Christianity is not what you do for God, but what He does for you. Apart from faith in Christ, you cannot become a Christian, and apart from moment by moment faith or dependence on Him, you cannot live the Christian life. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, Christ lives His supernatural life in and through you.

But the average Christian does not understand how to draw upon the resurrection resources of Christ by faith. As a result, the worldly believer lives in spiritual poverty, not knowing or experiencing his great riches and resources which are his heritage in Christ.

An old Scottish woman lived in the most impoverished conditions in her hometown. Years before, her son had emigrated to America. There he had become a very successful businessman but had never found time to return home to visit his mother.

One day a friend sat talking with the old lady in her sparsely furnished cottage.

"Doesn't your son ever send you money to help with your needs?" she inquired.

"No," the woman shook her head sadly. "He does write me nice letters, though. And he sends me the most interesting pictures!"

The listener was annoyed, realizing that the son was quite wealthy. But instead of speaking her mind, she simply said, "May I see the pictures?"

The aged mother proudly brought them out of a drawer. To her visitor's amazement, they were not pictures at all. They were valuable bank notes from America amounting to thousands of dollars. For decades, the Scottish mother had been needlessly living in poverty. The problem? She did not know the value of those "interesting pictures." She owned the bank notes, but she did not possess them.

In West Texas is a famous oil field known as the Yates Pool. During the Depression, this field was a sheep ranch owned by a man named Yates. Mr. Yates was not able to make enough money on his ranching operation to pay the principal and interest on the mortgage, so he was in danger of losing his ranch. With little money for clothes or food, his family, like many others, had to live on government subsidy.

Day after day, as he grazed his sheep over those rolling West Texas hills, he was no doubt greatly troubled about how he would be able to pay his bills. Then a seismographic crew from an oil company came into the area and told Mr. Yates that there might be oil on his land. They asked permission to drill a wildcat well, and he signed a lease contract.

At 1,115 feet they struck a huge oil reserve. The first well came in at 80,000 barrels a day. Many subsequent wells were more than twice as large. In fact, thirty years after the discovery, a government test on one of the wells showed that it still had the potential flow of 125,000 barrels of oil a day.

And Mr. Yates owned it all! The day he purchased the land he received the oil and mineral rights. Yet, he was living on relief. A multi-millionaire living in poverty! The problem? He did not know the oil was there. He owned it, but he did not possess it.

I do not know of better illustrations of the Christian life than these. The moment you become children of God through faith in Christ, you become an heir of God, and all of His resources are made available to you. Everything you need - including wisdom, love, power - to be a man or woman of God and to be fruitful witnesses for Christ is available to you.

But most Christians continue to live in self-imposed spiritual poverty because they do not know how to appropriate from God those spiritual resources which are already theirs. Like the old Scottish mother before she knew the "interesting pictures" were valuable bank notes and Mr. Yates and his vast ocean of oil, they live in ignorance of their vast riches.

Lack of knowledge is not the only reason that Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Many of them basically do not believe in God's trustworthiness and are afraid to relinquish the control of their lives to the Holy Spirit for fear that God will require the impossible from them - that He will change their plans, ask them to give away their wealth, take all the fun from their lives, make them endure tragedies, or something similar.

An outstanding young minister, a seminary honor graduate, once told me, "I have never surrendered my life to Christ because I have been afraid of what He will do to me." Then he told me how, years before, he had had a premonition that, if he were to commit his life to Christ, his parents would be killed in a tragic accident. He was afraid to say "Yes" to God for fear his parents would lose their lives - God's test for him to determine the genuineness of his commitment.

Now does that sound like a loving Father? Who do you think put that idea into his mind? Certainly not God. It was Satan saying, as he said to Adam and Eve centuries ago, "You can't trust God." But I say you can trust God! He loves you and is worthy of your trust.

Suppose your child were to say to you, "Daddy, Mommy, I love you and have decided that I will do anything you want me to do from now on as long I we live." What would be your response?

If you were to respond to your child's expression of trust in you as many believe God will respond when they surrender their lives to Him, you would grab your child by the shoulders, glare at them sternly and say, "I have just been waiting for this. I am going to make you regret this decision for as long as you live. I am going to take away everything you like and make you do what you hate. I am committed to making your life miserable."

Of course you would not respond like that to your child's trust in you. I expect, instead, you would put your arms around your little child and say, "I love you, too, and I deeply appreciate this expression of your love for me. It is the greatest gift which you could give me."

God has proven over and over again that He is a loving God. He is worthy of your trust. Jesus assures you, "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"

Many people come to me for counsel concerning God's will for their lives. Often they are fearful of what God will ask them to do. Usually I ask them, "Do you believe that God loves you? Do you believe that He has a wonderful plan for your life? Does He have the power to guide and bless your life if you place your trust in Him?" As a rule, the answers are in the affirmative. I then ask them, "Are you willing to trust Him right now to direct and empower you to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for Christ?" By this time most of them are ready to say "Yes" to Him without reservation. They have begun to recognize that their feelings of doubt have been placed there by the enemy of their souls.

When you give your life to Christ, you need not worry about what is going to happen to you. Maybe you are afraid that He will take away your pleasures, cause you to leave your business or profession, take away your wealth, or terminate a friendship or love affair. You may fear that He will send you, as a missionary, to some remote part of the world where you will lose your life for Him.

He may indeed ask you to do one or more of these things, and again He may not. If He does, you will rejoice in the privilege, for God always blesses those who trust and obey Him. The happiest people I meet are not those who have all the best of what this world has to offer - or those who have achieved great success in their professions - or those who are in great positions of power and influence. The happiest people I meet are those who have learned to totally trust and obey God in their lives no matter their circumstances.

You can trust God. If He leads you to give up anything, He will give you more of His blessing in return than you will ever receive apart from His grace. God alone is worthy of your trust. I invite you to come freely to Christ and say, "Lord, here I am. Take my life, and use me for Your glory."

As God reminds us in 1 John 4:18, "We need have no fear of someone who loves us perfectly; his perfect love for us eliminates all dread of what he might do to us. If we are afraid, it is for fear of what he might do to us, and shows that we are not fully convinced that he really loves us." The word of God and the experiences of multitudes through the centuries give unqualified assurance that you can trust God with your life, your all.

How You Can Be Filled with the Spirit

We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. How did you become a Christian? By faith. "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." "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him."

You receive Christ by faith. You live by faith. Everything you receive from God, from the moment of your spiritual birth until you die, is by faith. Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? You can be filled right now, by faith.

You do not have to beg God to fill you with His Holy Spirit. You do not have to barter with Him by fasting or weeping or begging or pleading. For a long period of time, I fasted and cried out to God for His fullness. Then one day I discovered from the Scriptures that the "just shall live by faith." You do not earn God's fullness. You receive it by faith.

Let me illustrate. Suppose that you want to cash a check for a hundred dollars. Would you go to the bank where you have several thousand dollars on deposit, place the check on the counter, get down on your knees, and beg, "Oh, please, Miss Teller, cash my check?" No, that is not the way you cash a check. You simply go in faith, place the check on the counter, and you wait for the money which is already yours. Then you thank the teller and go on your way.

Millions of Christians are begging God, as I once did, for something which is readily available - just waiting to be appropriated by faith. They are seeking some kind of emotional experience, not realizing that such an attitude on their part is an insult to God - a denial of faith. But faith is the only way you can please God.

Though you are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith and faith alone, it is important to recognize that several factors contribute to preparing your heart for the filling of the Spirit. First, you must desire to live a life that will please the Lord. You have the promise of our Savior, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Second, be willing to surrender your life totally and irrevocably to our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul admonishes in Romans 12:1,2: "I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer 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."

Third, confess every known sin which the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and experience the cleansing and forgiveness which God promises in 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

I call this process "Spiritual Breathing." Just as you exhale and inhale physically, so you also breathe spiritually. You exhale spiritually when you confess your sins.

If you have wronged a brother or have taken that which is not rightfully yours, the Holy Spirit may lead you to make restitution to right your wrong. If so, obey Him, or you will miss His blessing. The blessings of the fullness of God's Spirit come only to those who willingly obey Him.

Jesus promised, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

Again, you are not filled with the Holy Spirit because you desire to be filled nor because you confess your sins or present your body a living sacrifice - you are filled by faith.

There are two very important words to remember.

The first is *command*. In Ephesians 5:18, God commands you to be filled: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Not to be filled, controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, is disobedience.

The other word is *promise* - a promise that makes the command possible: "This is the assurance 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."

Now, is it God's will for you to be filled and controlled by Him? Of course it is - for it is His command! Then right now you can ask God to fill you - not because you deserve to be filled, but on the basis of His promise.



If you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit already dwells within you. When you purchase a mechanical item that runs on battery power, frequently the notice "Batteries Not Included" is printed on the box. The Holy Spirit - your Source of power for living - is "included" when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Therefore, you do not need to invite Him to come into your life. He did this when you became a Christian, and Jesus promised that He will never leave you.

The moment you received Christ, the Holy Spirit not only came to indwell you, but He imparted to you spiritual life, causing you to be born anew as a child of God. The Holy Spirit also baptized you into the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul explains, "We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body."

There is but one indwelling of the Holy Spirit, one rebirth of the Holy Spirit, and one baptism of the Holy Spirit - all of which occur when you receive Christ.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, however, is not a once-and-for-all experience. There are many fillings, as is made clear in Ephesians 5:18. In the Greek language in which this command was originally written, the meaning is more clear than that in most English translations. This command of God means to be constantly and continually filled, controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

I cannot control myself and be controlled by the Holy Spirit at the same time. Christ cannot be in control if I am on the throne. So I must abdicate. This involves faith. As an expression of my will, in prayer, I surrender the throne of my life to Him, and by faith I draw upon His resources to live a holy and fruitful life.

The command of Ephesians 5:18 is given to all believers to be filled, directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, continually, every day of our lives. And the promise of 1 John 5:14,15 is made to all believers that, when we pray according to God's will, He hears and answers us. If you claim the fullness of God's Spirit in prayer, He will hear and answer you. He *will* fill you. And in the process, you will "inhale" spiritually.

Do not think that you have to have an emotional experience or that something dramatic must happen to you. How did you receive Christ? Was it because of some great emotional pressure brought to bear upon you? Your emotions may have been involved. But ultimately, you became a Christian, not because of your emotional experience, but because of your faith. For the Bible says, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith."

The Holy Spirit is not given to you that you might have a great emotional experience, but that you might live a holy life and be a fruitful witness for Christ. So, whether or not you have an emotional experience is not the issue.

There is no place in Scripture where you are told to pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. You are filled by faith. However, since the object of your faith is God and His Word, I suggest that you pray to Him claiming the fullness of His Spirit as an expression of your faith in God's *command* and in His *promise*.

Have you met God's conditions? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you sincerely desire to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit? If so, I invite you to bow your head and pray this prayer of faith right now. Expect God to fill you. Without begging or pleading, just say:

"Dear Father, I need You. I hunger and thirst for a more vital relationship with You. I admit that I have been in control of my life. As a result, I have sinned against You.

"Thank You for forgiving my sins through Christ's death on the cross for me. I now confess and turn from my sins and surrender the control of my life to the Lord Jesus. By faith I invite You to fill me with the Holy Spirit as You *commanded* me to be filled. You *promised* to fill me if I ask according to Your will. I pray this in the authority of the name of Jesus Christ.

"To demonstrate my faith, I now thank You for filling me with Your Holy Spirit and for taking control of my life. Amen."

Now, if you sincerely prayed that prayer, you are filled with the Holy Spirit. You will begin to experience a greater love for God. You will want to spend time with Him in studying His Word and in prayer. You will want to trust and obey God and His Word. You will want to share your love for Christ with others who do not know Him.

Empowered to Share

Christ said to His disciples, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." The primary purpose for which you are filled with the Holy Spirit is to make you a witness for Christ through the holy life that you live and the empowered words which you speak.

Sometime ago I had the privilege of speaking at a seminar on evangelism in Dallas, Texas. My topic was on the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be effective and fruitful in our witness for Christ.

After I had spoken, a woman shared with me her great concern for her father-in-law. She said, "My father-in-law lives with my husband and me. I have prayed for him for many years, but he is not a Christian. He is getting along in years, and I fear that he will die with out Christ. Will you help me?"

I asked her, "Are you a Spirit-filled Christian?" She said, "Yes. This morning at the conclusion of your message, I claimed by faith the fullness of God's Spirit."

"That is really wonderful!" I exclaimed. "Now, this is what I want you to do. Go home and prepare your father-in-law a delicious lunch. While he is eating, read to him from this little booklet..." And I showed her the *Four Spiritual Laws*. "This booklet contains the distilled essence of the gospel and all that one really needs to know in order to receive Christ," I said. "After you have read it to him, ask him if he would like to receive Christ as his Savior and Lord."

She said, "You really think he will listen?"



"Yes," I said. "God's Holy Spirit will lead and empower you."

Later that afternoon, she called me. She was so excited she could hardly express herself.

She told me how she had followed my instructions. As her father-in-law ate his lunch, she read to him the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet. He listened intently, and when she finished reading, she asked him if he would like to receive Christ. And he said, "Of course I would."

So they bowed together, and he opened his heart to Christ and became a child of God.

This dear woman, who had prayed for her father-in-law and witnessed to him for years, discovered that it is God the Holy Spirit who makes the difference in witnessing.

Remember our Lord's final words to His disciples, and through them to you, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The greatest spiritual awakening since Pentecost has, in my opinion, already begun. Millions of Christians are discovering this great source of power which altered the course of history and turned a wicked Roman Empire upside down. That same power, the power of the Holy Spirit, is being released through the lives of believing and obedient Christians in our generation to turn our world around and accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation.

According to our many surveys, you can be sure that most of your Christian friends will want to know how they too can be filled with the Holy Spirit. So I would like to suggest that, within the next twenty-four hours, you tell at least one other person about how God has filled you with His Spirit. Telling another person will give tangible expression of your decision to claim the fullness of the Spirit by faith. And by telling someone else how you were filled with the Holy Spirit, you may help them understand how they too can enjoy the abundant life promised by our Lord through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

You can continue to "breathe spiritually" for the rest of your life. "Exhale" by confessing your sins whenever you become aware that you are grieving the Spirit, and "inhale" by appropriating the power of the Holy Spirit by faith as an act of your will. Through Spiritual Breathing, you can live an abundant, joyful, fruitful life for the glory of our great God and Savior.

Remember, *How You Can Be Filled with the Holy Spirit* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- Who is the Holy Spirit? (John 14:26; 15:26) How do you know He is a person and not a force or impersonal power? (See 1 Corinthians 2:11; 12:11; Romans 15:30)
- Why did the Holy Spirit come? (See John 14:16,17,27; 16:7,13,14)
- What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? (See Romans 6:1-16)
- What does "fruit" mean in John 15:8? (See Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:22,23)
- Why is the average Christian not living in complete obedience to God?
- What do these verses tell you about God's love for you?
 - a. Matthew 7: 11
 - b. John 10:28
 - c. 2 Chronicles 16:9
 - d. John 14:21
 - e . Hebrews 13:5
- How can you be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What command does God give in Ephesians 5:18 and what does it mean?
- How is the command of Ephesians 5:18 related to the promise of 1 John 5:14,15? How can this give you assurance that you are filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What characterizes the life of a Christian who is empowered by the Holy Spirit? (See John 15:1-11; Galatians 5:19-25)
- What does "the abundant life in Christ" mean to you?
- How is the Holy Spirit's power evident in your own life?
- Explain the concept of Spiritual Breathing.
- List two or three Christians you know who do not understand the Spirit-filled life. Make plans this week to share with them how God has filled you with the Holy Spirit and how they, too, can experience the Spirit-filled life.

Group Discussion Questions

- The self-centered Christian manifests certain characteristics that reflect his worldly nature. Consider these questions in your discussion:
 - a. What does he think about most of the time?
 - b. What kind of person is he?
 - c. What kind of things will he be doing? Talk about both good and evil, religious and non-religious activity.
- Is the self-centered Christian really a born again believer? How do you know? (See 1 Corinthians 3:1-3)
- How can you know for sure whether you are a self-centered or a Spirit-filled Christian?
- Why do you need to confess your known sin to God before He can fill you with His Spirit? (See 1 John 1:5-7) If you confess your sin and still feel that you are not forgiven, what must you do to receive that assurance? (See James 4:7; 1 John 1:9)
- Once you have been filled with the Holy Spirit, will you ever need to be filled again? Why? How many times? When? How could you be filled again?
- The Spirit-filled Christian demonstrates certain characteristics that reflect his godly nature. Identify and discuss these characteristics. What kind of thoughts, desire, actions and emotions will he manifest? (See Philippians 2:12-16; Colossians 3:1-17)
- Perhaps you have asked God to fill you with His Spirit and to control your life. But you don't feel any different? Does this mean you are not filled with the Spirit? Or does it have any meaning at all? What should you do about it?
- Discuss the differences between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. Would you say that the fruit of the Spirit is to guide and control the gifts, or do the gifts control the fruit? Why? (See Galatians 5:22,23; 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:10)

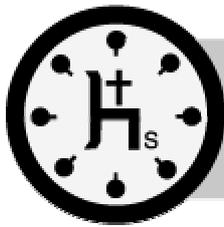
No.4

How You Can Walk In The Spirit

Experiencing The Adventure

A medical doctor approached me with great excitement at the conclusion of our training conference. He was overflowing with joy and excitement.

"Since I have learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in His power, the Christian life has become a great adventure for me!" he exclaimed. "Now, I want to experience this same adventure with Christ."



FRUITFULNESS ABUNDANCE

CHRIST DIRECTED LIFE

- + - Christ is in the life and on the throne**
- s - Self is yielding to Christ**
- - Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan**

Would you like to know how to enjoy what this man and millions of other Christians have experienced? You too can know the adventure of a full, abundant, purposeful and fruitful life in Christ!

If you have been living in spiritual defeat - powerless and fruitless, wondering if there is any validity to the Christian life - there is hope for you! What greater promise could Christ offer to the Christian than the assurance that he can walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and experience an abundant and fruitful life of purpose and adventure? Here is His promise:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Certain basic spiritual truths, when understood and experienced by faith, bring revolutionary spiritual benefits. These proven principles can help you to be more consistent in your walk with God and be more effective in your witness for our dear Savior.

The Christian life, properly understood, is not complex nor difficult. As a matter of fact, the Christian life is very simple. It is so simple that we stumble over the very simplicity of it, and yet it is so difficult that no one can live it! This paradox occurs because the Christian life is a supernatural life. The only one who can help us live this abundant life is the Lord Jesus Christ who empowers us with His Holy Spirit.

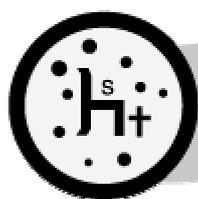
Be Sure You Are Filled With The Spirit

One of the most important truths of Scripture, the understanding and application of which has enriched my life as has no other truth, is a concept which I like to call "Spiritual Breathing." This concept has been shared with millions - with revolutionary results - through our literature and various training conferences and seminars.

As you walk in the Spirit by faith, practicing Spiritual Breathing, you need never again live in spiritual defeat. Spiritual Breathing, like physical breathing, is a process of exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure, an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God's love and forgiveness and walk in the Spirit as a way of life.

The moment you invited Christ into your life as Savior and Lord, you experienced a spiritual birth. You became a child of God and you were filled with the Holy Spirit. God forgave your sins - past, present and future - making you righteous, holy and acceptable in His sight because of Christ's sacrifice for you on the cross. You were given the power to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for God.

But the average Christian does not understand this concept of Spiritual Breathing as an exercise of faith and, as a result, lives on a spiritual roller coaster. He goes from one emotional experience to another living most of his life as a worldly Christian, controlling his own life - frustrated and fruitless.



SELF-DIRECTED LIFE

s - Self is on the throne

† - Christ Dethroned and not allowed to direct life

• - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration

If this is your experience, Spiritual Breathing will enable you to get off this emotional roller coaster and enjoy the Christian life that the Lord Jesus promised to you when He said, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly." As an exercise in faith, Spiritual Breathing will make it possible for you to continue to experience God's love, forgiveness, and the power and control of the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

If you sin by committing a deliberate act of disobedience, breathe spiritually. *Exhale by confession.* God's Word promises in John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and

just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (*homologeo*) means to "agree with" or to "say along with." Such agreement involves at least three considerations.

First, you acknowledge that your sin or sins - which should be named to God specifically - are wrong and are therefore grievous to Him.

Second, you acknowledge that God has already forgiven you through Christ's death on the cross for your sins.

Third, you repent, which means that you change your attitude toward your sin. The power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to change both your attitude and conduct. Instead of doing what your old sinful nature - your flesh - wants to do, you can do what God wants you to do.



Now *inhale* by appropriating the fullness of God's Spirit by faith. Trust him to control and empower you according to his command to "be filled with the Spirit" which actually means to be constantly and continually controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit.

According to His *promise*, God hears you and grants your request because you pray according to His will. I encourage you to continue to claim his love, forgiveness and power by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him moment by moment.

You can get off your spiritual roller coaster, cease to be a worldly or carnal Christian, and become a Spirit-filled believer by practicing Spiritual Breathing. If you are breathing and inhaling by appropriating the fullness of the holy Spirit by faith - you are a Spirit-filled Christian.

You become a worldly Christian again when you develop (over time) an attitude of unbelief - when you set your heart against believing the promises of 1 John 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:13:

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

You do not become carnal simply by committing one sin or a dozen or a hundred sins provided that you *sincerely* continue to breathe spiritually. You will become worldly only when *you develop and attitude of unbelief* and refuse to breathe spiritually.

You can know right now that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the concept of Spiritual Breathing, you can go through life assured of his fullness. Simply keep short accounts with God. Do not let sins accumulate.

If you try to live the Christian life by your own fleshly effort, it becomes complex, difficult and even impossible to live. But when you invite the Lord Jesus to direct your life; when you know the reality of having been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by faith as a way of life; when you walk in the light as God is in the light in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus simply lives his abundant life within you in all of His resurrection power.

I'm not suggesting that the Christian who walks in the fullness of the Spirit will have no difficulties. Problems of poor health, loss of loved ones, financial needs and other such experiences are common to all people. However, many of our misfortunes are self-imposed because of our own worldly, selfish actions. The spiritual person is spared most of these self-imposed hardships. But when the problems do come, the spiritual person can face them with a calm, confident attitude because he is aware of God's resources which are available to him to deal with adversity.

This is not simply a matter of positive thinking. We are instructed to cast our cares upon the Lord Jesus because He cares for us. The spiritual person knows the trustworthiness of God from experience. The Lord becomes the problem-solver, and the trials and burdens of this world are no longer too great for us when He is carrying the load.

This was at the heart of the apostle Paul's moment-by-moment experience:

I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

There is a throne, a control center - the intersection of one's intellect, will and emotion - in every life. And either self of Christ is on that throne. Let me illustrate.

I like to plan as far in advance as possible, especially for key events. But occasionally I get so busy with the many details of our worldwide ministry that an important item slips through.

With a key conference just a couple of weeks away, I had just realized the need for a set of printed materials that would be a tremendous benefit to the conferees.

As I shared the urgency with the department director responsible for this need, he responded, "Bill, we're full up already. Two weeks just isn't enough time."

I became impatient. Couldn't my associate see that we are in a war for men's souls, that we must seize opportunities when they arise and not limit our efforts to 8-to-5 workdays? I made my point clear to him.

"But if we had more notice..." he protested, "There just is no way we can squeeze in such a huge job with so little time. There's the writing, then the design and typesetting and artwork, then the printing."

It seemed obvious that he did not share my burden for the upcoming event. I pressed my point. "Look, this is an important international conference," I said firmly, my voice rising, "and this is no time for 'business as usual.' Please find a way to finish this project in time for the conference, even if you have to work around the clock."

I could tell my colleague was frustrated. But I reasoned, *We need those printed materials. Whatever it takes, we need them.*

Within a few moments after our conversation, I sensed the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Yes, even in our well-intended service to the Lord, we can stumble - and in the name of godliness I had offended a dear brother in Christ. I had failed to give him and his staff the benefit of the doubt - failed to take into account the tough workload they already were facing each day. Instead of asking him to think through the possibilities with me and helping him rearrange his priorities to accommodate the new task, I had virtually ordered him to get the project done and shown little appreciation for the many late evenings his team was already devoting to their work. I had reacted impatiently rather than in a spirit of love, understanding and teamwork.

At this point I had a choice to make.

On the one hand, I could let it go. After all, doesn't the head of a large organization have the right to ramrod projects through when necessary? Didn't the end (the strategic international conference) justify the means (get the job done no matter what it takes)? And didn't my associate's hesitant attitude warrant a stern talking-to about the urgency of the hour?

By all human standards, I probably could have justified letting the incident go. But deep inside I would have been restless and uncomfortable as the Holy Spirit continued to point out the sin to me, and God would not have blessed my efforts on His behalf as long as this sin remained unconfessed. On top of that, several of my dear co-workers would have continued to hurt as a result of my calloused attitude.

On the other hand, I could deal with the problem by taking scriptural action to clear the slate. The unrest in my conscience was the Holy Spirit cross-examining me as I tried to rationalize my behavior. What I had thought was forceful leadership, He was identifying as the sins of impatience and unjustifiable anger.

I knew that taking scriptural action was the only choice I could make that would please my Lord. I confessed my sin to Him and appropriated his forgiveness.

Then came the toughest part.

I drove down to the office complex where my associate and his team were located and asked their forgiveness. We cried and laughed and prayed together, sensing a fresh outpouring of God's love in our midst. Then we talked through our mutual needs and found a way - as teammates - to rearrange priorities and accomplish the task - on time!

That is what the Christian life is all about - just keeping Christ on the throne. You do this when you understand how to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit came for the express purpose of glorifying Christ by enabling the believer to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for our dear Savior.

As I have said previously, to be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you need to remember two important words: *command* and *promise*. The command is found in Ephesians 5:18,

Be filled...with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by him. (Living Bible)

And the promise is found in 1 John 5:14,15:

Ask him for anything in line with his (God's) will. And ... we can be sure that he will answer us. (Living Bible)

On the authority of God's command you know that you are praying according to His will when you ask Him to fill you - to control and empower you. Therefore, you can expect him to fill and empower you on the basis of His command and promise provided that you genuinely desire to be filled and trust him to fill you.

Remember that the Holy Spirit already dwells within you if you are a believer. You do not have to ask him to come into your life; he is already indwelling you. Your body was a temple of God from the moment you became a Christian. So you simply say to Him, "I surrender my life to You, and by faith I claim Your fullness and power."

Then continue to breathe spiritually, exhaling whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin that you need to confess and inhaling as you go on walking in the fullness and control of the Spirit by faith. Some Christians breathe spiritually faster and more often than others.

Do not depend upon feelings. Tied as they are to your ever-changing circumstances, feelings are unreliable in evaluating your relationship with God. The unchanging promises of God's Word, not your feelings, are your authority. The Christian is to live by faith, trusting in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. A train is a good illustration of the relationship between fact, faith and feeling.



Let us call the train engine "fact" - the fact of God's promises found in His Word. The fuel car we will call "faith" - your trust in God and His Word. The caboose we will call "feelings."

As fuel flows into the engine, the train runs. It would be futile and, of course, ridiculous to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way you, as a Christian, should not depend upon feelings or emotion live a Spirit-filled life. Rather, God wants you to simply place your faith in his trustworthiness and the promises of His Word.

Feelings are like the caboose - they are important but are designed to follow a life of faith and obedience. Jesus promised all who obey Him, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." So, you can expect to have a valid emotional relationship with our Lord when you trust and obey Him. But you should never depend on feelings or seek after an emotional experience. The very act of looking for an emotional experience is a denial of the concept of faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin.

To summarize then, you can know that your are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God - His command and promise - and you can go through life with that assurance.

Be Prepared For Spiritual Conflict

The Bible explains that there are three forces - the world, the flesh and the devil - which constantly wage war against the believer. Let's look briefly at each of these forces.

1. The World

I don't know anyone who loves this world who has ever been used of God in any significant way. There's nothing wrong with money and other material success. However, you must wear the cloak of materialism loosely. You must set your affection on Christ and His kingdom, not on the material things of this world. 1 John 2:15-17 warns:

Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; for all these worldly things, these evil desires - the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance - these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself. And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever.

2. The Flesh

God's Word teaches that the spiritual Christian should be prepared for battles with the flesh. You will have conflict in your life so long as you live. There will never be a time in this life when you are free from temptation. Galatians 5:17 says:

We naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures.

All people, no matter how spiritually mature in Christ, experience temptation and have a tendency toward sin. There is a difference, however, between temptation and sin. Temptation is the initial impression to do something contrary to God's will. Such impressions come to all men and women, even as they did to our Lord, and are not sin in themselves. Temptation becomes sin when you meditate on the impression and develop a lustful desire which is often followed by the actual act of disobedience.

Yet this conflict is largely resolved when you, by an act of your will, surrender yourself to the control of the Holy Spirit and face these temptations in His power. Galatians 5:16 says:

Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

How do you do this? For practical daily living you simply recognize your weakness whenever you are tempted and ask the Lord to take care of the problem for you. When I am tempted, I often remind the Lord that I belong to Him and need His help. I ask him to cleanse my mind and thoughts with his blood and control and empower me with the Holy Spirit so I will not yield to any temptation.

3. The Devil

Satan is a real foe - let there be no mistake about it - and we need to be prepared for conflict with him - alert to his cunning and subtle ways, as well as his obvious attempts to defeat and destroy us. 1 Peter 5:8,9 says:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.

A young minister shared with me one day, "I am afraid of Satan."

I said, "You should be afraid of Satan, if you insist on controlling your own life. But if you are willing to let Christ control your life, you have nothing to fear because the Bible says, 'Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.'"

"Satan was defeated 2,000 years ago," I explained, "when Christ in fulfillment of prophecy died on the cross for our sins. Though Satan has great power to influence man, he has only that power which God has granted to him. That is why, in the face of great persecution, the disciples could pray to God in His sovereignty and power, 'They won't stop at anything that you in your wise power will let them do!'"

My minister friend happened to live in a city with one of the largest zoos in the world. I said, "what do you do with lions in your city?"

He replied, "We put them in a cage."

I said, "That's exactly what God has done to Satan. Visit the cage in the zoo and watch a lion pacing impatiently back and forth. He cannot hurt you. Even if you go up close to the cage, he still cannot hurt you if you are careful. But get in the cage, and the lion will devour you. You have nothing to fear as long as you stay out of that cage."

"Similarly, you have nothing to fear from Satan as long as you depend upon Christ and not on your own strength. Remember, Satan has no power except that which God in His wisdom allows him to have."

The apostle Paul warns us, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand against the strategies and tricks of Satan. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies - the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world."

Although Satan and the forces of darkness are dangerous foes, and you must be alert to the way Satan works, you need have no fear of him - if your life is surrendered to the Lordship of Christ, if you continue to walk in faith and obedience in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though Satan is an expert at deceiving and inducing Christians to disobey God, you need not fear him. Remember, the Scripture says, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." But if you continue to be a worldly Christian, you had better be ready for some real problems in your personal life, your family and your church. There is no more dangerous and vulnerable place a Christian can be than to live outside God's perfect will as a worldly or carnal Christian.

Know Your Resources as a Child of God

If you want to walk in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, you need to know your spiritual heritage. You need to know how to draw upon the inexhaustible resources of God's love, wisdom, power, forgiveness and abundant grace.

It is impossible to walk vigorously and dynamically in the Spirit without spending time, unhurried time, in fellowship with our Lord in His Word - in prayer and in personal study. You must listen attentively to Him for His directions for your daily activities and witness for Christ.

After many years of working with thousands of Christians, I am convinced that one cannot enjoy the full and abundant life, which is your heritage in Christ, apart from the proper balance between Bible study, prayer and sharing Christ with others out of the overflow of an obedient, Spirit-filled life. God calls you not only to experience this great adventure with Christ for yourself, but also to share this good news with others.

A word of caution is in order at this point. You become spiritual and experience God's power as a way of life as a result of faith and faith alone. The Bible clearly teaches that "the just shall live by faith," and "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The practice of spiritual discipline and activities is the *result* of faith. Bible study, prayer, witnessing and obedience are vitally important, but they should be regarded as the result - the overflow - of the life of faith, not as the means of faith, though faith grows as you see the faithfulness of God through an understanding of his Word.

Paul says, "I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you." Jesus Christ, the visible expression of God in whom dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily - to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given - lives in all of us who have become His children through faith in Christ. You do not have any strength in yourself. You must rely totally upon the mighty resurrection strength of our Lord through His Holy Spirit.

As a young man in college and later in business, I used to be very self-sufficient and proud of what I could accomplish on my own. I believed that a man could do just about anything he wanted to do on his own if he was willing to pay the price of hard work and sacrifice, and I experienced some degree of success. Then, when I became a Christian, I was introduced to a whole new philosophy of life that was diametrically opposed to my previous philosophy. A life of *trusting* in God's power replaced by life of *trying* in my own power.

Now I realize how totally incapable I am of living the Christian life - how weak I am in my own strength and yet how strong I am in Christ. As Paul said, "I can do everything through him (Christ) who gives me strength."

In John 15:4,5, the Lord stresses the importance of drawing your strength from him:

Take care to live in me, and let me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from me.

Yes, I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him shall produce a large crop of fruit. For apart from me, you can't do a thing.

In your own strength you are helpless, spiritually impotent and fruitless; you are like a branch cut off from the vine if you try to live your own life, even as a Christian. But if you abide in Christ, and His Word abides in you, it is His life-giving power that is expressed through you and enables you to live and witness for Him.

Jesus explained the importance of a fruitful witness in John 15:8 "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

I have never led anyone to Christ and I never shall, though I have had the privilege of praying with thousands who have received Christ as a result of my witness. The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I cannot boast over much fruit or be discouraged with little fruit. The responsibility for fruit belongs to the Holy Spirit, who works in and through me, producing fruit and changing the lives of individuals. My role is to trust God and obey Him. The words of a great old hymn, *Trust and Obey*, express this well:

When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his Word,

What a glory he sheds on our way.

When we do His good will, he abides with us still,

And with all who will trust and obey.

All that God expects of you is your availability, your trust and your obedience. Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the holy Spirit and laving the results to God. Paul writes:

I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe him. it is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in heaven, far, far, above any other king or ruler of dictator or leader.

Yes, his honor is far more glorious than that of anyone else either in this world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under his feet and made him the supreme Head of the church - which is his body, filled with himself, the Author and Giver of everything everywhere.

The Lord Jesus commissioned the disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, with the promise that he would always be with them. Jesus didn't say to them, "Go into all the world, and good luck." He said, "Be sure of this - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."



Our living Savior, the One whom you serve, is the omnipotent God! He is the One whom the Bible says:

...is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't; the spirit world and its kings and kingdoms, its rulers and authorities; all were made by Christ for his own use and glory...

For God wanted all of himself to be in his Son...In him lie hidden all the mighty untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge...Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said.

For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.

If you have Christ, you have everything you need, for, as Paul writes to the church in Colosse, you are complete in Him. Do you need love? Our Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnation of love. Do you need joy? He is joy. Do you need peace? Christ is peace. Do you need patience? Christ is patience. Do you need wisdom? Christ is wisdom.

Do you need material possessions so that you can better serve Christ? They are available in Him. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and I would remind you of His promise to supply the needs of all who trust Him. Christianity is Christ, and you are complete in Him. HE will provide all you need.

A careful study of the Book of Romans, especially the first eight chapters, can have a revolutionary impact on the life of any sincere seeker after truth. Romans 6 especially reminds us of four truths:

1. We are no longer under sin's control

Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin;

for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from its allure and its power over you.

2. We are alive to God

So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God.

3. We must give ourselves completely to God

Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God - every part of you - for you are back from death, and you want to be tools in the hands of God to be used for his good purposes.

4. We must obey God

Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). The one to whom you offer yourself - he will take you and be your master, and you will be his slave.

One day my wife Vonette and I were wading down a shallow stream in Yosemite Park with our two sons. Because the rocks were slippery, I was holding our five-year-old, Brad, by the hand to keep him from slipping. Suddenly Brad did slip on one of the rocks, and his feet went out from under him. He would have had a serious fall and could have been injured had I not held him firmly until he regained his balance. As we continued out walk, Brad looked up into my face with a radiant expression of gratitude and said "Daddy, I'm sure glad you saved me from falling."

In the flash of a moment, it was as though God had spoken to me, and I looked up to Him and said, "Father, I am so glad that You have kept me from falling!" Oh, this Christian life is wonderful. It is exciting! It is filled with adventure for those who obey God and let Him control their lives - who walk with him moment by moment, day by day, allowing Him to "hold their hands."

This personal, intimate walk with Christ, our Savior and our friend, is Christianity - not the fleshly striving, strain, labor and self-disciplining which is usually characteristic of the average, misinformed Christian. If you desire to walk in the Spirit, be sure to know your resources as a child of God so that you can say with the apostle Paul, "I can do everything through him (Christ) who gives me strength."

Live By Faith

Walking in the Spirit means living a life of faith. God created us with a capacity for experiencing a broad range of feelings. Thank God you have them. But you cannot depend on them to validate your walk with the Lord Jesus. Valid emotions are simply the byproduct, the result, of faith and obedience. While feelings have their place in our lives, God did not intend for them to be emphasized above our faith in his Word. To seek an emotional experience repudiates the command to walk by faith and is, in fact, an insult to God. Let emotions find their proper place in your relationship with Christ.

John 14:21 indicates that the most valid way to have an emotional experience is to be obedient to Christ. One of the greatest acts of obedience is to share Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Since He came to seek and to save the lost and has commissioned you to witness for Him, nothing could please the Savior more. If you want a valid, vital, exciting awareness of Christ in your experience, begin to share Christ with others as a way of life.

To walk in the Spirit, you must live according to God's promise, trusting in the integrity of God Himself. Faith must have an object, and the object of your faith is God, made known through His Word. God has proven himself to be worthy of your trust. There are thousands of promises for you contained in God's word, and no Christian has ever found any one of them to be untrue. When God says something, you can stake your life on it - you can know that He will not fail you.

In Romans 8:28 Paul writes, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Do you believe this promise of God's Word? If so, you logically acknowledge the reasonableness of the command of God in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Have you learned to say, "Thank You, Lord," when your heart is broken because of the loss of a loved one? Do you thank God when your body is wracked with pain? When you receive a letter terminating a love relationship? When you have financial reverses? When you fail an exam? When you are unemployed? Do you thank God when you are discriminated against personally, religiously, or racially?

You may say that only a fool would give thanks to God under such circumstances. Ho, not if you know "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." If God has commanded you to give thanks, there is a reason for it. This is one of the most exciting lessons I have ever learned - the lesson of saying "Thank You" even when things go wrong.

Before I made this discovery I used to lose my patience when things went contrary to my wishes. Closed doors would often be forced open, if necessary. If they did not open

before me, I tried to break them down, I was often tense inside an impatient with other. Then I discovered what a fool I was. Tragically we injure our brothers with our impatience, our criticism, our thoughtlessness. When Christians act this way, the entire Body of Christians suffers.

But God has given you a better plan.. You can relax. You can say "Thank You" when the whole world is crumbling around you because your God is sovereign and omnipotent. He holds the world in His hands, and you can trust Him, He loves you. And He promises to fight for you.

He has commanded you to cast all of your cares upon him because He cares for you. He personally visited this world and took your sins upon Himself, and He is waiting to bless and use you. But he will not bless and use you if you are worried and unbelieving. he will not bless and use you if you complain and criticize and find fault.

Some time ago, a young woman came to our headquarters for one of our training conferences. After one of my messages, she came for counsel. Through her tears she shared how her dearest friend had been killed in an accident. They were coming home from their engagement party, and an oncoming automobile crossed the center line, forcing her off the road into a telephone pole.

The tragedy was compounded by the guilt she felt because she had been driving the car. Her heart was broken.

"What shall I do?" she pleaded.

Months had passed and she had gone to psychiatrists, psychologists, ministers and many other seeking counsel. She said, "If you can't help me, I fear for my sanity."

I asked her if she were a Christian, and after some discussion she said, "Yes."

We read Romans 8:28 and I asked her, "So you believe that all things work for good?"

She said, "Yes, I believe that."

We turned to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. She read it aloud: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

I said to her, "Have you thanked God since the loss of your loved one?" She was shocked and could hardly believe she heard me correctly. Looking at me in disbelief, she said, "How can I thank God when I have experienced such a tragic loss?"

"You do not trust God, do you?" I asked.

"Yes, I trust God," she insisted.

"Then why not show Him that you do?" I asked, "I know it will be difficult and may seem ridiculous at first, but will you pray and tell God that you trust Him and give thanks in everything even though your heart is breaking?"

As we knelt together, she prayed through her tears, "God I don't understand why my dearest friend was killed, but I know I can trust You; and I do say, "Thank You."

When she said, "Thank You," she was saying to God, "I will trust You." The Bible says that without faith you cannot please God, and the best way to demonstrate faith is to say, "Thank You." You may think that you hate God because you have lost a loved one, your inheritance, your money, your business or your health. You may ask, "Why did God do this to me?" But God says, "Give thanks in all circumstances."

That young lady came to my office early the next morning literally bubbling with joy. She said, "Last night I slept without medication for the first time since the accident. And this morning when I awakened, my heart was filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. I just cannot understand it, but I know that it has something to do with what you taught me about saying 'Thank You' to God."

I could share hundreds of similar stories about Christians whose lives have been transformed by learning the simple lesson of saying "Thank You" in all things.

Some years ago we had a desperate need for more than a half million dollars toward the purchase of Arrowhead Springs, the Campus Crusade for Christ International Headquarters. The future of our worldwide ministry was at stake. Because of a technicality, our financial position had taken a terrible turn for the worse, and there appeared to be no hope. The whole ministry was in danger of being destroyed and my own reputation would be shattered.

When a word came to me from a friend that the money which we had been promised was no longer available, I fell to my knees and said, "Lord, what am I to do?" I opened my Bible to look for help and assurance. And I was reminded that all things work together for good to those who love God, that without faith, it is impossible to please Him, and that the just shall live by faith. I read the command from God to give thanks in everything.

So I thanked God in spite of what had happened. I thanked Him through my tears. I thanked Him that in His wisdom and love, He know better than I what should be done and that out of this chaos and uncertainty would come a miraculous solution to our problem.

There on my knees, while I was giving thanks in spite of the disappointment I was feeling, God began to give me the genuine assurance that a miracle was really going to happen. Within ten days God provided an incredible solution to our problem - a true

miracle. he demonstrated again that, when we trust Him, He is faithful and worthy of our trust.

The greatest privilege of life is to learn to trust God, learn how to walk by faith. I am still learning and am confident that one day I shall be able to trust God for infinitely greater things than those for which I am now able to trust Him. What a great opportunity is ours to walk with the King of kings every moment of every day of our lives, from the time that we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night.

For many years it has been my practice to begin my day the night before by reading God's Word, meditating upon the attributes and trustworthiness of our wonderful Lord before I go to sleep at night. Then throughout the nightwatches, when my subconscious mind takes over, I continue thinking about Christ. When I awaken in the morning, my first thoughts are of Him.

I usually awaken with a psalm of praise on my lips and with an attitude of thanksgiving: "Oh, Lord, I thank You that I belong to You. I thank You that You live within me, and I thank You that You have forgiven my sins. I thank You that I am Your child.

"Now, as I begin this day, and as I continue throughout the day, I invite You to walk around in my body, love with my heart, speak with my lips and think with my mind. I thank You that You promised to do greater things through me than You did when You were hereon the earth. By faith, I acknowledge Your greatness, Your power, your authority in my life, and I invite you to do anything You wish in and through me today." Although the words of my daily prayer may differ, my commitment remains the same.

I try to begin each day on my knees as a formal act of acknowledging his lordship. I seek to begin the day walking in the fullness of His power. What an adventure awaits those who trust the Lord!

In summary, may I remind you that if you desire to walk moment by moment, day by day, in the fullness and power of God's Spirit, you must:

1. Be sure that you are filled with the Spirit, by faith - on the basis of God's *command* to be filled and by claiming His *promise* that, if you ask according to His will, He will hear and answer.
2. Be prepared for spiritual conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil.
3. Know your resources as a child of God. Your strength must come from the Lord. You must abide in Him.
4. Live by faith, drawing daily upon the strength of our Lord, upon his wisdom, upon His power and His love, giving thanks in all circumstances.

Why should a Christian desire to walk in the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit moment by moment as a way of life? There are several important reasons: to please and honor the Lord, who delights to have fellowship with His children; to enjoy a fuller,

richer, more exciting life with our Savior and with other; and to be more fruitful in your witness for your Savior.

Sharing Christ with others as an expression of gratitude and as an act of obedience to the Lord is the natural result of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Since every Christian is commanded to be a witness for our Lord, not to be involved and committed is to disobey Him and would indicate that the Christian is not walking in the control of the Holy Spirit.

As you walk in the Spirit and faithfully apply the revolutionary concept of Spiritual Breathing, you too can become a member of the great multitude of fruitful disciples whom God is raising up around the world to work, to plan, to pray and to witness for Christ - to help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in this generation.

Remember, *How You Can Walk in the Spirit* is a transferable concept. You can master It by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20: "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to reach other" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- How do the accounts of the following people demonstrate their walk in the Spirit?
 - a. Paul - Acts 18:4-11 (See Philippians 4)
 - b. Peter - Acts 3:1-26 (See Acts 4:13)
 - c. Stephen - Acts 6:8-15 (See Acts 7:51-60)
 - What does it mean to you to cast your cares upon the Lord? How can you do this?
 - What does the example of the vine and branches in John 15:1-8 mean to you in your Christian life?
 - How would you describe the effects of spiritual fitness as expressed in "spiritual Breathing." (See Romans 14:23, 1 John 1:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 5:14,15)
 - What promise does God make to you in 1 John 2:1-6?
 - List any areas of your life in which "self" is on the throne. List the areas in which Jesus is not on the Throne. What practical steps will you take this week to give Jesus Christ control of those areas where "self" is on the throne?
 - What armor used to defend yourself against the world, the flesh and the devil does Ephesians 6:11-18 describe?
 - What do these verses teach about the role of prayer in the life of the believer?
 - a. Hebrews 4:15,16
 - b. James 5:16
 - c. 1 Samuel 12:23
 - d. James 1:5
 - How can you experience the "abundant Christian life"? Does "abundant" mean that your life will be free from struggles and hardships? Explain.
 - What do these verses promise you as you trust God?
 - a. Job 12:9,10
 - b. Psalm 16:1
 - c. Ecclesiastes 2:24-26
 - d. Isaiah 40: 10,11
 - e. Isaiah 41:10
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- What place do feelings have in a life of faith? What will result if you seek feelings over and above walking by faith?
- What do these verses say about thanksgiving? What would result in your life if you failed to "give thanks in all circumstances?"
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
 - b. Philippians 4:11
 - c. Psalm 95:2
 - d. Philippians 4:6
- How does Romans 8:28 have practical meaning in your life? What are some of the consequences of not applying this verse?
- What does John 14:21 tell you about how to have an obedient walk with Christ?

Group Discussion Questions

- Share a recent personal example of how you have applied Spiritual Breathing in your life. How has this helped your walk with God?
- What is the advantage of teaching your children the concept of Spiritual Breathing at an early age? How can you implement this practice in your own family? How will breathing spiritually change your own family atmosphere? (If applicable).
- In your group, share an example of an area in your life where you are likely to depend on feelings rather than faith in God's Word.
- The Bible says temptation comes to the Christian from the world, the flesh and the devil. Discuss how these sources particularly reveal themselves in today's culture.
- Relate an instance in your life in which you were especially aware that God supplied your needs. How did you give Him thanks?
- Think of some practical ways to develop the habit of praising God. How is developing praise as a habit beneficial to your Christian walk?

No.5

How You Can Be A Fruitful Witness

The Adventure of Witnessing

One of my responsibilities in giving leadership to Campus Crusade for Christ is to meet each year with the ministry directors of each continent.

Frequently in my travels to Asia and Europe I visit with our staff and meet with thousands of pastors and laymen. On one occasion while meeting with a group of Christian leaders, I shared some of the highlights of the great worldwide spiritual harvest that is taking place today. One of the leaders interrupted me.

"I'm thrilled with your report," he said, "but I want to be very frank with you. I have not seen that kind of ministry myself. Why am I not having a more fruitful ministry?"

Perhaps you are asking yourself the same question. In the following pages, I want to share a biblical plan that will enable you to be fruitful in your witness for our Lord wherever you are, wherever you go, and under all circumstances.

But before I share this plan with you, let me call to your attention the fifth chapter of Luke which records an incident in the life of a seasoned fisherman - Simon Peter. He and his fellow workers had spent the entire night casting and gathering their nets but had not caught a single fish.

Jesus observed these men as they were washing their nets and asked Peter to push our a little into the water so He could sit in the boat and speak to the crowds that were pressing around Him.

When He had finished speaking, Jesus made a promise to this fisherman - a promise that I believe Peter, weary from his futile night of fishing, initially thought foolish. Jesus told Peter to go out a little further and let down his nets. If he did so, he would catch fish. Luke records Peter's response and what happened as a result:

"Sir," Simon (Peter) replied, "We worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, we'll try again."

And this time their nets were so full that they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

Jesus told these fishermen who were so awestruck with this demonstration of His power, "From now on you'll be fishing for the souls of men!" They were so overwhelmed with the presence and power of Jesus that they left their occupation to follow Him.

There is no experience in life more exciting and spiritually rewarding than the adventure of fishing for people. As you follow the Lord's instructions, your net too can be filled - even if you have never introduced anyone to Christ - even if you may be skeptical like Peter. But if you are also obedient like Peter, the Lord Jesus will honor you with the response of many people to your witness.

All over the world, I have asked two questions of millions of Christians - young and old, rich and poor, new Christians and people who have been believers for more than half a century. I have asked these questions of some of the most wealthy and famous Christians in the world. The answers are always the same no matter whom I ask.

1. *What is the most important experience of your life?*

"Knowing Christ as my Savior is absolutely the most important experience in my life," is the inevitable answer.

2. *What is the most important thing that you can do to help another person?*

Again, the answer is always the same: "Help him to know Christ."

I am sure that, if you are a Christian, you would give the same answers to these questions. Yet, how sad it is that so few Christians are sharing Christ with others. Obviously something is wrong. If you are typical of the majority for Christians today, you have never introduced anyone to Christ. You would like to do so, however, and you know in your heart that this is what God called you to do. Jesus calls to every believer, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

When you begin to fill your nets with people whom you introduce to Jesus Christ, you will begin the most exciting, joyful and rewarding adventure life has to offer. Perhaps, like the disciples, you will leave the nets of your present student, business or professional involvements to follow Him in this great adventure of witnessing for our Lord in your Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the far countries for the world.

The biblical plan I want to share with you can be divided into two categories - personal preparation and taking the initiative.

Steps for Personal Preparation

Personal preparation is the key to becoming a fruitful Christian. If you follow these steps carefully and prayerfully, they will transform your life and witness for our dear Lord.

1. Be Sure That You Are a Christian

Millions of good, moral, religious people are active in the church but are not sure of their present and eternal relationship with God. They are not sure they will go to heaven when they die. In hundreds of our training conferences, which are attended by the most sincere and dedicated church members in each community, from ten to twenty-five percent usually indicate they either received Christ or they gained the assurance of their salvation as a result of the training.

Let me give you an example. A remarkable young woman came to join our staff. My wife and I were much impressed with her and were confident she would have a great ministry for our Lord. She came from a wonderful Christian family, and had attended a Christian kindergarten, a Christian grade school, a Christian high school and a Christian college. She had been an active leader in church activities and was president of the Christian Women's Association in her area. She had even served as a counselor in several Billy Graham crusades. This attractive, dynamic, young woman demonstrated all of those qualities you would expect to find in a radiant, fruitful Christian.

In speaking to the new staff during a training session, I stressed the importance of being sensitive to the needs of professing Christians who are not sure of their salvation. "Never assume that those who are unsure of their salvation are Christians, even if they have gone through the act of receiving Christ many times," I said. "You should not try to convince those who have doubt about their salvation that they are Christians. Rather, you should assume they are not yet Christians, and you should prayerfully counsel them and lead them to the assurance of their salvation."

At the conclusion of my talk, this young woman said to me, "I don't think that I am a Christian, and I have always had doubts about my salvation."

Throughout the years, she had gone to various Christian leaders for spiritual counsel telling them she was not sure she was a Christian. Since she believed all the basic doctrines for the faith, they assumed that she was a Christian and prayed and encouraged her. Although they prayed with her, she was never sure God heard her prayer. "There has been no evidence that Christ has come in," she said. "I am afraid I will die without Christ."

That day I had the privilege of sharing the good news of Ephesians 2:8,9 with this dear young woman who had been exposed to Christianity throughout her entire life. This time the Holy Spirit enabled her to trust God and His Word. By faith she received the Lord Jesus, the gracious gift of God's love, and her heart was filled with joy and praise and the assurance of her salvation. She was so excited that she called her mother and father, my wife and others, to tell them the good news that she now knew for sure that she would go to heaven when she died.

One of my dearest friends during seminary days was the son of a famous evangelist. He came from a godly home. We met often for prayer. He memorized thousands of verses of Scripture and lived such a disciplined life for God that he was a constant challenge and inspiration to me. I was privileged to be the best man in his wedding.

He existed on a special diet of inexpensive food for days at a time, enabling him to live on twelve to fifteen cents a day, so that he could give more money to missions. He had finished his theological studies for his bachelor's degree and was studying for his doctorate in theology when he telephoned me one day to say, "Bill, I have just become a Christian."

I was amazed. "You're one of the best Christians I have ever known," I insisted. "I'm sure you have had an emotional experience of some kind."

"No," he said, "I have just become a Christian."

He then explained that all through the years, though he had never shared this, he had experienced conflict and uncertainty. Though he had invited Christ into his life numerous times, he had never before been sure that He had actually come to be his Savior. Never before did he have the assurance of his salvation.

Perhaps you have never known the wonder, the joy, the assurance that Christ lives in you, that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God. You may have believed in Christ intellectually for years. You may be active in the church; you may be very moral, religious and godly in the eyes of your neighbors, and yet you have never experienced this new birth.

Becoming a Christian involves commitment of the total person, which can best be illustrated by the marriage relationship. Many years ago, for example, I became aware for a beautiful young woman whom I thought was the most wonderful girl in the world. As we became better acquainted, we fell in love and were married. But we were not married just because we were intellectually involved and admired each other or because we were emotionally involved and loved each other. It was by an act of our wills by faith that we committed ourselves to each other as we stood one day before a minister and became husband and wife. In that moment, because of two words, "I do," we became legally married.

As a result, she left her home, and I left my home, and we started a third home. How, there was no emotion when I said, "I do." The walls didn't shake, nor did lightning flash. As a matter of fact, I felt a little numb. But, we were no less married because I didn't at that moment feel like shouting for joy. Those two words which expressed the desire of our hearts consummated our long engagement of three years. My love for Vonette has grown through the years, and I have told her thousands of times since that memorable marriage ceremony that I love her. But I have not proposed to her one single time since we said, "I do."

So it is in your relationship with Christ. Commitment to Christ involves your entire person - your intellect, your emotions, your will. It is not enough to believe intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; not enough to know that He died on the cross for your sins and was raised from the dead; not enough to be baptized, to be active in the church, and to read your Bible and pray daily. You do not become a Christian until by faith, as an act of your will, you receive the gift for God's grace - His love and forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. When you receive Him by faith, you receive a new nature - you are born into God's family, and you begin to experience the reality of eternal life.

If you have never yet said to Christ, "I do receive You as my Savior from sin and the Lord of my life," I encourage you to do so right now. Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..."

Ask Him to come into your life. Then, on the authority of His promise, thank Him that He has come in as He promised to do. He will not lie to you.

After you have received Him, never insult Him by asking Him into your life again. The rest of your life, begin each day by thanking Him that He is in your life. He has promised to be with you always, and He said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

I made this emphasis on faith at one of our citywide Lay Institutes for Evangelism. At the conclusion of my message, a woman who had reached her twilight years came to me in tears. She said that she had been a Sunday school teacher for forty years.

"Seldom a day has passed during the last forty years that I haven't asked Christ into my life," she said. "But I was never sure that he was there. After tonight and for the rest of my life, I am going to say "Thank You, Lord that You are in my heart. I am never going to insult You again by asking You to come into my life, for now I am sure that You are already there."

Will you do the same? If you have never done so, do it now. Pause for a moment and if the following prayer expresses the desire of your heart, make it your prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord.

Thank You for forgiving my sins. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Thank You for coming into my life. The rest of my life I will thank You that You are in my life and will never leave me. Thank You that I now have eternal life as You promised.

2. Be Sure There Is No Unconfessed Sin in Your Life

If some sinful attitude or action is hindering your fellowship with God, He cannot live and love through you, and you will not be a joyful Christian or a fruitful witness for Christ.

According to Hebrews 10, Christ came as God's sacrifice for your sins. The Old Testament records that the Israelites took their animal sacrifice to the priest where it was slain and the blood was sprinkled on the altar as a covering for their sins. Then in the fullness of God's time and purpose, foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, came to die for you. He came as God's sacrifice to shed His blood on the cross for your sins. As a result there is no further need of a sacrifice to be made for your sins.

You can add nothing to the assurance of salvation and eternal life which Christ accomplished for you on the cross. Tears and self-imposed discipline do not add anything to His complete and perfect substitutionary sacrifice which He made for you on the cross. The only thing you can do to make Christ's death on the cross meaningful in your life is to confess your sins and accept His sacrifice as the full and final payment for all of your sins - past, present and future. The Bible, God's holy, inspired Word, says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (homologeō) means to "agree with" or to "Say along with." What do you do when you agree with God?

First, you acknowledge that the sin which you have committed is wrong. God is holy. No sin can enter His presence. And yet, God, who hates sin, loves the sinner. He loves you no matter what you do, but He hates your sin. When the Spirit of God says to you in that still, small voice, "I am grieved with your conduct - your attitude," you know what you have done is wrong, and you acknowledge - agree with God - it is wrong.

Second, you acknowledge that all of your sins were paid for by Jesus when He shed His blood on the cross for you according to Hebrews chapter ten. Now, thank Christ for dying for your sins.

Third, you repent. The original meaning of the word "repent" is literally "to have a change of mind." You change your attitude toward your sin, which of course - through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit - will result in a change of your actions. You willingly turn from doing what displeases God and begin doing what pleases Him.

You cannot live a holy life and grieve God's Holy Spirit at the same time! Failure to acknowledge sin and judge yourself will result in divine discipline. Because God loves His children, he chastens, corrects and disciplines those who are disobedient. David

records, "I cried to him (the Lord) for help...He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins."

The minute the Spirit of God puts His finger on your sin, confess it. Breathe spiritually. That is, exhale by confessing your sin. Whenever the Holy Spirit makes you aware of sin which you have committed or are committing, be quick to confess it. Confession of sin is essential for a holy life and contagious, fruitful witness for our Lord.

3. Be Filled With the Spirit

One of my dear friends, who is a great Christian scholar, confessed to a group of fellow believers in one of our Lay Institutes for Evangelism that he was not a happy, joyful Christian and he seldom witnessed for Christ. Later I shared with him some of the truths about how to witness in the power of the Spirit. God touched his life. He came back that evening from an afternoon of sharing Christ bubbling over with joy. He could hardly wait to tell us what God had done in his life. He shared how he had talked to two young college students about Christ, and in the process Christ had become more real to him than he had ever experienced.

Perhaps you spend hours in prayer and studying the Bible every day, but you are not joyful. You are not living that abundant life which Jesus promised.

In order to be fruitful in your witness for Christ, you must appropriate by faith the fullness of God's Spirit. Jesus promised, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Being filled with the Spirit involves inviting the Holy Spirit to control and empower you - to enable you to live a holy, godly life and to make you a fruitful witness for Him by faith. Two words and two verses are vital here:

First, remember the word *command*. Ephesians 5:18 says:

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

This means you are to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit as a way of life. It is a command for every believer - not for the evangelist or pastor only, not just for the Sunday school teacher and other Christian leaders, but for everybody who believes in Christ.

Now relate God's *command* to His *promise*, found in 1 John 5:14,15:

We are sure of this, that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will.

And if we really know he is listening when we talk to him and make our requests, then we can be sure that he will answer us.

On the basis of God's command and His promises, if you are willing to surrender the direction and control of your life to our Lord Jesus Christ, you can know that He will fill you when you by faith, as an act of your will, appropriate the fullness of His Holy Spirit.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that you must experience some great emotion. In fact, emotions can be very dangerous. Pour a gallon of gasoline on the ground, strike a match, and it goes up in flame and smoke - then it's all gone. Dramatic, but wasted.

Many people are so involved in emotions and in seeking experiences that they actually insult God. The Bible says, "The righteous will live by faith," and "Everything that does not come from faith is sin." The very act of seeking an emotional experience repudiates the concept of faith.

Many times when I stand in the pulpit or talk to individuals personally, I do not feel any great surge of spiritual power or emotion. Sometimes, because of much travel, speaking and inadequate rest, my body is weary and my mind is dulled by fatigue; yet (if there is no unconfessed sin in my life, and by faith I claim God's fullness) I know that I'm filled with the Spirit even if I do not feel like it. I don't depend upon feelings. I depend upon God's Word - His command and His promise.

By faith you can know that you are filled with the Spirit constantly and continually the rest of your life as you continue to "breathe spiritually" - exhaling as you confess your sins, and inhaling as you appropriate God's power by faith.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit equips you for service as a witness for Christ. We say to our staff who are now serving Christ in 133 major countries of the world, representing 97 percent of the world's population, "Don't go to your assignments unless you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are filled with the Holy Spirit." Only service performed for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is pleasing to God. Service performed for Him in the energy of the flesh is time wasted and dishonors His name, producing spiritual wood, hay and stubble which, on Christ's judgment day, will be burned up.

If at this moment you know that you are not filled with the Holy Spirit and you truly desire to be a man or woman of God, you can pray this prayer right now:

Lord Jesus, I truly desire to be a godly person. I turn from my sinful ways. I surrender the control of my life to You. I hold nothing back. I want You to be my Master and my Lord.

Now, on the authority of Your command to be filled and Your promise that if we ask anything according to your will You will hear and answer us, by faith I receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

If you prayed this prayer in faith, you can know on the basis of His command and on the authority of His promise that you are filled with the Holy Spirit right now! You can know this by faith - with or without emotions - simple trusting God and His Word.

However, according to the promise of Jesus, "The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him." Since Jesus promised to manifest Himself to all who obey, valid emotions result when you live by faith and when you share your faith in Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Be Prepared to Communicate Your Faith in Christ

Keeping Christ on the throne of your life as the Lord of your heart is the best preparation for communicating your faith. 1 Peter 3:15,16 says:

In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Like any other skill, the ability to give the reason for the hope you have in Christ - or "witnessing" - can be done better after instruction and practice.

Let me illustrate. A pastor told me he had been in Christian work for more than twenty-five years, but had never introduced anyone to Christ until after he had participated in one of our training conferences. He said, "Your message on how to witness in the Spirit and understanding of how to present the gospel through the use of the *Four Spiritual Laws* changed my life. Never have I been so happy. Now, I know something of the abundant life which Jesus promised."

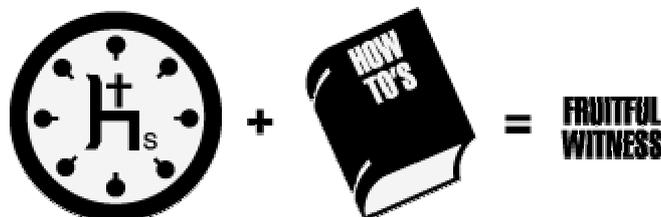
This Christian leader was beaming with new-found joy as he shared how he had, for the first time in his life, introduced not one person, but two people to our Savior.

During that same week of training, hundreds of students and the few lay people in attendance had been used of God to pray personally with more than nine hundred people who received Christ through their witness. Training made the difference.

I thank God for the way He is using theological seminaries, Bible schools and similar instructional Christian institutions, but you don't need to take long years of training before God can use you. Not everyone has the gift of evangelism, but every believer is called to "do the work of an evangelist." You have the privilege and responsibility of

being witnesses for your wonderful Lord Jesus. Christ's Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 is for you.

By learning how to use a simple tool like the *Four Spiritual Laws* in the power of the Holy Spirit, you too can experience effectiveness in your witness.



Some Christians will be more fruitful than others. Don't be distressed if you find that some of your friends are introducing more people to Christ than you are, Just rest in the knowledge that those who come to Christ through the witness of a Christian are coming as a result of the ministry of the Spirit of God who alone enables you to bear fruit. Remember, *success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.*

I am personally convinced that if you give ten Four Spiritual Laws to non-Christians each day, at least one to five will receive Christ, depending on the country or culture.

Taking the Initiative

Personal preparation - being sure you are a Christian, confessing your sins, being filled with the Holy Spirit and being prepared to communicate your faith in Christ - is the first part of how you can be a fruitful witness. The second is taking the initiative.

Four steps are involved in taking the initiative. Let's look at each briefly:

1. Pray

According to God's holy Word, if you ask anything in harmony with His will, He hears and answers you. Do you want your loved ones, your friends and neighbors to come to Christ? Begin to claim them for God.

Follow the example of our Lord, whose high priestly prayer is recorded in John 17: "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me..." Paul and the other writers of the New Testament were frequently requesting prayer for others as well as for themselves.

I have prayed for loved ones with whom I used to weep as I pleaded with them to come to Christ. Then the day came when I realized that God was not willing for them to perish - He loved them more than I did - and so I began to thank God in faith that they

would become Christians. Most of them have already received Christ. But more names continue to be added to that list.

Just as Jesus prayed that the Holy Spirit would do a work in the lives of His disciples, so you can pray that the Holy Spirit would convict non-believers and give them a strong desire for the ways of God. The Scripture promises:

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Sometimes, however, in His mysterious, sovereign timing, He chooses to wait for the prayers of a concerned believer to unleash the Holy Spirit in that person's heart. As someone has said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance - but laying hold of God's willingness."

Although God is not willing for "anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance," His schedule is not always the same as yours. Continue to trust and thank Him for the salvation and spiritual growth of those for whom He has impressed you to pray. From my personal experience and study of God's Word, I can assure you that the starting point in bringing a loved one to Christ is prayer.

Make a prayer list or keep a prayer diary and pray for specific non-Christians and Christians by name and for specific events. As God answers prayer, record the date and describe how God answered your prayers. In a short time you will have a record of God's faithfulness that will encourage and strengthen your faith and the faith of others.

2. Go

One of the greatest barriers in witnessing is the problem of getting going. You hear all kinds of excuses: "I'm too busy," or "I'm waiting for the Holy Spirit to lead me to someone." Don't wait for the Holy Spirit to "lead you." Our Lord Jesus Christ has already commanded you to go tell the good news to all who will listen. Don't wait for them to come to you. As you follow Jesus, He will lead you to people whom He has prepared.

Remember, the greatest thing that has ever happened to you is knowing Christ, and the greatest thing that you can do for another is help him to know Christ. If this is true, you should begin to rethink your priorities. How are you spending your time? Are you taking time every day to share Christ with someone?



You may be encouraged to know that many on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, like myself, are by nature shy. We do not always find it easy to talk to others about Christ. But since Jesus came to seek and to save the lost and since He lives within us, we simply ask Him to give us the courage to speak powerfully for Him.

Whenever I am alone with a person for a few minutes, I assume that I am there by divine appointment to share the good news of God's love and forgiveness.

For instance, while in Atlanta I stopped at a shopping mall to purchase a tie. The store manager offered his services, and while choosing a tie to match the suit I was wearing, I told him I was in town to meet with a number of Christian leaders to talk about ways to bring our nation back to God. Then I asked, "Are you a Christian?"

He said he was not, but that he had considered becoming one. I showed him the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet. As I read through the booklet, I came to Law Four, which explains how to receive Christ and ends with this prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

I asked, "Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?"

He assured me that it did, so I suggested that he pray it aloud, which he did. And as soon as he finished, I prayed for him.

Then I asked him if he knew where Christ was in relation to him. He assured me that Christ was now in his life. I went on to explain how, according to God's Word, he could not only have assurance of eternal life, but grow as a Christian.

As is my practice, I obtained his address to send important follow up material.

On planes, in restaurants, even on elevators, I meet people who are eager to receive Christ.

Wherever I go, across America and in other countries, on planes, in restaurants, on elevators, in lecture halls, on the college campus, or among laymen, I meet people who are eager to receive Christ.

Sharing Christ with others should be a way of life for every Christian. When you awaken each morning, thank the Lord Jesus for living within you and ask Him to use your lips to speak of His love and forgiveness at every opportunity throughout the day.

3. Talk about Jesus

Paul said, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen." Don't just talk about peripheral matters, such as the weather, sports, government and business. Pray and expect God to enable you to introduce His Son into the conversation.



A quiet, loving widow in her early thirties has led dozens of her relatives, friends and neighbors to the Lord Jesus. Nearly every Sunday she brings someone new to church with her. Many of these she has introduced to Christ during the previous week.

Once she was asked, "How do you manage to share your faith with so many people?" She answered, "I ask myself, 'If I don't tell them about the Lord Jesus, who will?' And I don't have a good answer for that."

Today, an ever-increasing number of Christians are constantly being used of God to introduce others to our Savior because they have been trained to talk about Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. They do not get sidetracked to discuss nonessential matters. That's the reason the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet is so effective - it keeps the conversation centered on the person of Christ, away from distracting issues which direct attention away from our Lord. And it makes your presentation of the gospel simple and understandable.

Many people express antagonism toward God and the church - they want nothing to do with religion. But when you tell them about Jesus, they respond.

I recall a taxi driver in Australia who said to me, "I gave up all religion in World War II. I want nothing to do with a God who allows people to kill each other."

"Wait a minute," I said. "You are accusing God of something for which man is responsible. It is the evil in man, his sin, that causes him to hate and steal and kill."

I explained the difference between religion, which is man's search for God, and Christianity, which is God's revelation of Himself in Christ to man. As I talked to him about the person of Christ, this man's entire attitude changed. Soon he said that he would like to pray with me and receive Christ.

Many people today are also antagonistic toward the organized church in general, and if you are going to reach them for the Savior, you must talk first about the Savior, not

about the church. After they receive Christ, most of them will want to become active in the church.

Others are antagonistic toward the Bible as the Word of God. You do not have to prove the Bible - just use it. Use it even with people who say they do not believe it. God has promised to honor His Word.

If you expect God to use you, talk about the Savior - and always encourage those with whom you share to invite Him into their lives. You really haven't "evangelized" until you have given people a chance to respond to the gospel by inviting Christ to be their Savior and Lord.

As you talk to people about the Savior, you will discover that many are ready to receive Him the very first time you talk to them. Some may need to "ripen" a bit.

As a young boy I used to visit my uncle's peach orchard. We would always pick the ripe peaches, but leave the green ones. Two days later, we would return to the same tree and pick more ripe peaches. Every two days we would pick yet more ripe ones. So it is in our witness for Christ. Be prayerfully sensitive to people and their readiness for the gospel. Ripe for harvest, some will readily receive Christ; others, like green fruit, will not be ready.

Do not argue with those who are not ready. Do not browbeat them; do not insult them; do not try to high pressure them into "making a decision for Christ." Give them something appropriate to read (like the *Four Spiritual Laws* or the *Uniqueness of Jesus*), leave them with a prayer, talk to them later - as the Lord gives opportunity - but continue to look for the ripe ones. They are all around you. Thousands, yes millions, of people whose hearts have already been prepared by the Holy Spirit are waiting to receive Christ.

On one plane trip, for example, I talked to two people who were "spiritually ripe." One was an eighty-year-old woman who received Christ as her Savior. The other, the president of a large corporation, had always believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and had died for his sins, but had been too busy with other things to make a commitment to Christ personally.

On the same trip, at Cornell University where I addressed students and faculty, the president of a sizable business approached me. He was visiting his son who was a new Christian of six months.

"I want to thank you for helping my son spiritually," he said.

Then I asked if he had ever received Christ. He replied that he had not, but that he wanted to. We bowed in



prayer and, to his son's great joy, he committed his life to our Savior.

Take the initiative by praying, by going to others, by talking about Jesus, and finally, by expecting God to use you.

4. Expect God to Use You

When you talk about Jesus, expect men and women to respond - not on the basis of positive thinking, but because of God's faithfulness, His love, His sovereignty, His power and His promise that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord Jesus promised His supernatural resources to all who join with Him in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. He told His disciples:

"I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of these - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

You are assured of that same resurrection power and presence today. Our Lord is committed to honor the faithful witness of all who place their trust in Him.

It is interesting to note that while the disciples met with strong and often bitter opposition, the Christian movement experienced phenomenal growth, as was expressed in Paul's letters to the churches in Thessalonica and Colosse:

When we brought you the Good News, it was not just meaningless chatter to you; no, you listened with great interest. What we told you produced a powerful effect upon you, for the Holy Spirit gave you great and full assurance that what we said was true. And you know how our very lives were further proof to you of the truth of our message. So you became our followers and the Lord's; for you received our message with joy from the Holy Spirit...

The same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world and changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard it and understood about God's great kindness to sinners.

One of the greatest lies of the centuries is the attitude among Christians that people do not want to know God personally. Because of this, many Christians approach others with a negative attitude as if to say, "You don't want to become a Christian, do you?" By their negative attitude, they inhibit others from expressing their need of Christ. Let me encourage you to expect that God has already prepared the hearts of those who are eager to receive Christ, and you will find He really has.

After more than forty-five years of sharing Christ with millions of students and laymen, individually and in small and large groups, I can tell you that the Holy Spirit has created a hunger for God in the hearts of multitudes around the world. Millions are waiting for someone to tell them about our wonderful Savior, ready to receive Him as their very own.

For example, at one of our pastors' conferences in Haiti, more than one thousand people received Christ as 550 pastors and lay preachers prayed with them, one and two at a time, during a total of approximately four hours of witnessing.

At Daytona Beach, during an Easter vacation, approximately fifteen hundred Campus Crusade staff members and university students introduced more than thirty-five hundred university students to Christ in one day of witnessing at the beach.

Most of our staff, lay and student volunteers report that from ten to seventy-five percent of the people to whom they make a clear presentation of the gospel receive Christ. The percentage of responses often depends on the country and culture. Yet, we find that the Spirit of God has prepared the hearts of multitudes of men and women to respond to Christ. As Jesus said, "The fields are white for harvest." Not every one with whom you share Christ will receive Him, but God will use you to both sow and harvest in His kingdom as you trust Him.

Success in Witnessing

Expect results when you witness for Christ. But remember, however God chooses to use your faithfulness in witnessing, your responsibility is to present Christ. It is His responsibility to draw people to Himself. As I have said earlier, *success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.*

In these pages I have presented a biblical plan that will enable you to be successful in reaching others for Christ. First you must begin by preparing yourself:

1. Be sure you are a Christian.
2. Be sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life.
3. Be filled with the Spirit.
4. Be prepared to communicate your faith in Christ.

Then, you must take the initiative by:

1. Praying.
2. Going to others.
3. Talking about the Lord Jesus.
4. Expecting God to use you.

Following this plan consistently will enable you to be fruitful for god as a way of life. No other experience in this world can compare to that of witnessing for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you join me in this adventure?

Remember, *How You Can Be A Fruitful Witness* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- What do these verses say about feelings as related to living the Christian life?
 - a. Galatians 3:11
 - b. Romans 14:21,23
 - c. John 14:23
- Do you have an evangelistic prayer list? Will you claim God's promise for answers by pledging with Him to pray for others daily?
- In what sense is sharing the gospel a demonstration of your love for others?
- What are some things that may keep you from talking to others about Jesus?
- Why is it important for you to take the initiative to share Christ instead of waiting for non-believers to come to you?
- Why is it essential to first talk about Jesus rather than other issues (i.e. joining a church, apologetics, etc.)?
- What does God say about His Word? How does this affect your view of evangelism?
 - a. Colossians 1:5,6
 - b. Isaiah 55:11
 - c. Ephesians 1:13
 - d. Hebrews 4:12
- What does John 4:35 mean? How does it apply to you?
- What is one essential ingredient needed to please Christ? (See Hebrews 11:6)
- Each of us has moments when we don't feel like sharing our faith. Identify your feelings - fear, inadequacy, self-consciousness, etc. - that often keep you from witnessing. What steps will you take in the coming week to overcome these feelings?
- What does it mean to "expect results from God" as you witness? What are the consequences of not expecting results?
- List five people you know who have not received Christ as their Savior and Lord. What steps will you take this week to introduce them to Jesus Christ?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Share briefly how you personally received the assurance that Christ had come into your life. What steps led to your trusting Christ? How could this be helpful in sharing Christ with others?
2. List and discuss Scripture verses which you think are especially helpful in giving a person an assurance of his salvation.
3. Discuss the relationship between a consistent daily prayer life and a sensitivity to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Find examples in the Book of Acts where the early Christians were filled with the Spirit. How did their subsequent action demonstrate joy? What was the impact on their witness?
5. People today face tight schedules with limited amounts of time. With your group, think of creative ways that a Christian can maximize his time to give witnessing for Christ top priority.
6. You have heard "Success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God." Share with your group how this statement can be a source of encouragement to you. If you talk to someone in the power of the Holy Spirit and that person does not receive Christ, why should you call that "successful witnessing"?
7. When you are witnessing, why is it important to talk about Jesus Christ? Does this mean that you are never to talk about politics, the church, business or other things when you are telling others about Christ? (See Romans 10:9,14 ; John 1:12)
8. Why is faith on your part important in bringing others to Christ? Discuss how your faith works in the lives of the people you talk to. how do you use faith to fight against your spiritual enemies? (See Ephesians 6:10-18; Hebrews 11:6)
9. Is there any one country, people group, or segment of society with which God has especially burdened you? Share this with your group. In addition to praying faithfully, what are some other steps you can take to reach these people for Christ? Discuss a strategy for teaching these goals.

No.6

How You Can Introduce Others to Christ

You Can Change Your World

"You must bring a lot of happiness into this world," said the young businessman with tears of joy and gratitude in his eyes. He had just prayed with me and received Christ as his Savior and Lord. He and his wife had been looking for God for some time, he said, and now he was eager to take the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet home with him so that he could in turn introduce his wife to Christ.

The words of this joyful young Christian have come to my mind again and again: "You must bring a lot of happiness into this world" by sharing the Lord Jesus Christ with tens of thousands of students and lay people around the world.

The apostle Paul related this experience to the Colossians, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen."

You have the privilege of participating with our living Lord in the fulfillment for His Great Commission in our generation. In my opinion, the only way to change the world is to change individuals. Changed people, in sufficient numbers, will produce changed campuses, changed communities, changed cities, states and nations - yes, in a very real sense, a changed world. Jesus Christ is the only One who can change people from within. you can help to change the world by introducing people to Jesus Christ.

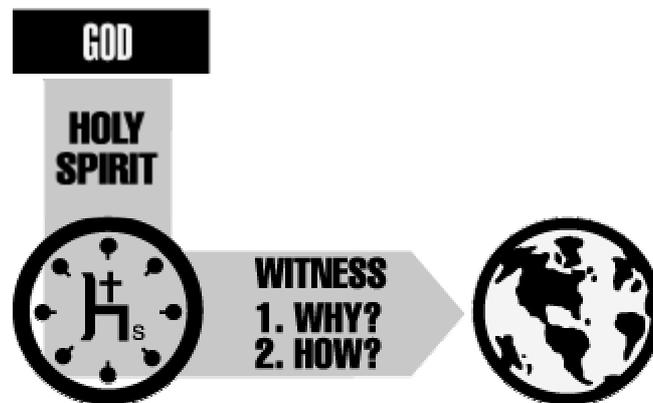


One of the greatest misconceptions of the centuries is the idea so prevalent among Christians that men and women do not want to know God. Wherever I go around the world, I find ample proof that just the opposite is true. The Holy Spirit has created a hunger for God in the hearts of multitudes. From my experience and through much observation, I am fully convinced that the majority of non-believers throughout the world are ready to receive Christ when properly approached with a clear and simple presentation for the gospel by a Spirit-filled witness.

Yet, tragically, most Christians have never introduced a single person to the Lord Jesus. There are two good reasons for this.

First, the average Christian is living a defeated, spiritually impotent, fruitless, worldly (carnal) life. He is not walking in the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit - as one Christian leader explained his reluctance to witness, "My kind of Christianity is worth exporting." If this is true in your life, I encourage you to review my messages on the subjects of *How You Can Experience God's Love and Forgiveness*, *How You Can Be Filled With the Spirit* and *How You Can Walk in the Spirit*.

The second reason is a lack of training. Most Christians have never been trained to communicate their faith in Christ effectively. They have never learned how to begin a conversation about Christ, how to explain the gospel simply and clearly, and how to lead a person to make a decision to receive Christ by faith.



In the coming pages, I want to share with you the reasons Jesus wants you to witness, which relates to your motives; and how you can go about witnessing effectively, which concerns methods.

Eight Reasons Jesus Wants You To Witness

Permit me to give you, briefly, eight reasons God desires all believers to share their faith.

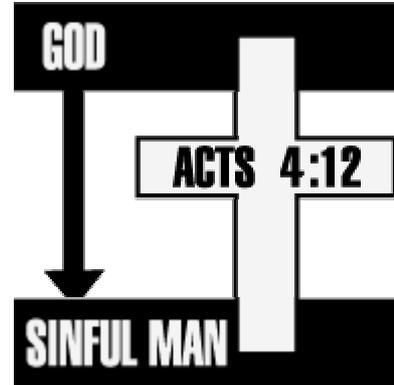
First, as you witness, you bring glory of God. Jesus says in John 15:8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Second, the love of Christ compels us to share our faith. In Paul's words, "The love of Christ constrains us." If you have experienced the love of the Lord Jesus, you will also want to introduce him to others.

Third, sharing your faith is a direct command for Jesus Christ. He says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And, "You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last."

Fourth, people without Christ are lost. Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The Word of God declares emphatically, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Fifth, God wants you to witness because of the benefits He offers to those who receive Christ. When you introduce others to Christ, they become children for God; their bodies become temples of God; all their sins are forgiven - past, present and future! They begin to experience the peace and love of God; they receive God's direction and purpose for their lives; they experience the power of God to change their lives; and they have assurance of eternal life.



Sixth, God wants you to witness because of the benefits to those who witness. Witnessing stimulates your spiritual growth. Witnessing leads you to pray and to study God's Word and encourages you to depend on Christ. As you witness in the power of the Holy Spirit, you sow love and joy and peace. According to the law for sowing and reaping, you always harvest what you sow and even more. For example, if you sow love, you will harvest love. If you sow joy, you will reap joy. If you sow peace, you will reap peace. And always, the harvest is greater than the seed sown.

Seventh, God wants you to witness to experience the tremendous privilege and honor of representing Jesus to the world. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "We are Christ's ambassadors. God is using us to speak to you. We beg you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, receive the love he offers you - be reconciled to God."

Most people consider it a high honor to serve as an ambassador for the head of their country - the president or king - but as a believer in Christ, you are an ambassador for the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

Eighth, God wants you to witness because the Holy Spirit has been given to provide the power for you to do so. Jesus says, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." To fail to witness for Christ is to deny the Holy Spirit His right to empower and to use you to introduce others to our Savior.

How Can You Witness Effectively?

What methods will help you communicate effectively?

As I have already indicated, many devout Christians fail miserably in their efforts to introduce others to Christ simply because they do not know how to go about it.

Knowing how often makes the difference between effective and ineffective witnessing. Before you can introduce others to Christ, you must know:

1. That you are a Christian yourself.
2. The empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life personally.
3. How to present the distilled essence of the gospel so that the one with whom you are sharing will be able to make an intelligent decision for Christ as Savior and Lord.

For many years in our various evangelism training conferences, we asked those who participated in the training to help us list everything they felt a person should know before he or she could make an intelligent decision for Christ.

Usually twenty-five to fifty different suggestions were made, all for which were written on the chalkboard. The list usually included the following, along with many others:

1. God loves us.
2. People are sinful.
3. People are lost.
4. God loved us so much that He gave His Son.
5. Christ died for our sins.
6. Christ rose from the dead.
7. Christ wants to come into every life.
8. We must repent.
9. We must be born again.
10. We must receive Jesus Christ.
11. To as many as receive Jesus, God gives the right to become His children.
12. By grace you have been saved, through faith.

After all the suggestions were exhausted, we asked each participant to read with us a gospel presentation called the *Four Spiritual Laws* and to help us eliminate every point listed on the chalkboard that relates to Law One. These points were then removed from the board. We continued to Laws Two, Three and Four, following the same procedure. At this point, the chalkboard was always clean. The distilled essence of the gospel is contained in the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet.

Originally, the *Four Spiritual Laws* was written only for our staff, who were asked to memorize it as a witnessing tool. As a result, the number of people who received Christ increased dramatically.

The content of the *Four Spiritual Laws* began to crystallize in my thinking during the summer staff training in 1956 at a time when our staff numbered less than fifty.

One of our speakers for our staff training that year was a Christian layman who was an outstanding sales consultant. He emphasized that to be successful in sales, a person must

develop a clear, simple, understandable presentation that can be used over and over again. But then he warned us that when one becomes weary for making the same presentation and develops "presentation fatigue," one often changes the presentation and inevitably loses effectiveness.

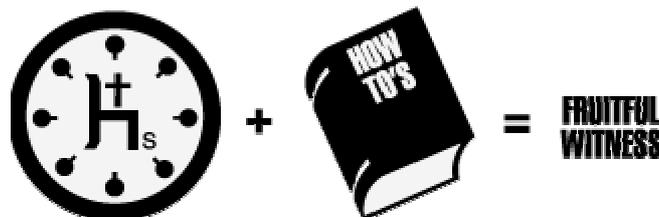
He then compared the witnessing Christian to the secular salesperson. To be effective in communicating our faith in Christ, he stresses, we must develop a simple, understandable, reasonable presentation for the gospel which we can share with everyone. The better and more often you communicate this simple presentation, the more fruitful you will be in your witness for Christ.

He illustrated his remarks by telling of several well-known Christians who had their own special presentations. Then he zeroed in on me, saying, "Bill Bright thinks he has a special message for each of the different groups of students, prisoners and lay people with whom he works. But, though I have never heard him speak, I would be willing to wager that he has only one message for everyone. Basically, he tells them all the same thing."

To say that I objected to such a suggestion is to put it mildly. The longer he spoke, the more irritated I became. I resented the suggestion that I or anyone else who truly desired to serve the Lord was not led of the Spirit to speak with originality to each individual according to that person's particular needs. Furthermore, I resented his using me as an example before the rest of the staff.

But when it was all over and I was licking my wounds, the most serious of which was my bruised ego, I began to reflect on exactly what I did share with various people. That afternoon I wrote down my basic presentation, and to my amazement I discovered my friend had been right. Without realizing it, I had been sharing basically the same message with some variation with everyone. What I wrote that afternoon and later polished is now known as *God's Plan for Your Life*, a twenty-minute presentation for the claims for Christ - who he is, why he came, and how one can know Him personally.

I asked each staff member to memorize it, and we all began to use it in our personal witnessing. The next year, as we concentrated on sharing this simple message in dependence on the Holy Spirit and His power, our ministry was multiplied a hundredfold.



God's Plan was our first written "how-to" material - that is, material which explains simply and specifically how an individual can arrive at a desired goal, and shows how he

or she can, in turn, help others arrive at the same goal. The "how-to" approach is one of the most needed and most powerful approaches to the Christian life and witness. Most non-Christians do not need to be convinced that they *should* become Christians. Rather, they simply need to be shown *how* to become a Christian.

Though *God's Plan* was extremely effective, we felt the need for a shorter version. So I prepared a condensed outline, complete with Scripture verses and diagrams, and each member of the staff memorized it. As more and more people became involved in our training program, it became apparent that we needed to make the presentation available in printed form.

As a result, the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet was born.

We don't claim that the *Four Spiritual Laws* message is the only way to introduce others to Christ or even the best way. But we do know that literally millions of men and women have received Christ through the direct, simple presentation of the gospel contained in this booklet. According to our estimate, more than one billion copies have been distributed in all of the major languages of the world.

Many stories have come to my attention of the effectiveness of the *Four Spiritual Laws*. I'm thinking, for example, of a church whose senior pastor had come to our headquarters for training and was very excited about using the *Four Spiritual Laws*. He went back to share his enthusiasm with his church and with his assistant minister. The assistant was not impressed by the booklet. He disliked tracts, and this looked like just another tract. He tossed it on his desk, not even bothering to read it.

A few days later a city official came by to inspect the church facilities. As she was about to leave after her inspection it suddenly occurred to the assistant minister that he had not talked to her about Christ. He looked around quickly, and the only thing he saw was the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet, which he had tossed aside in disgust some days previously. He gave it to her, saying, "Read this," meaning that she should read it when she got home.

She misunderstood, however, and began to read it aloud in his presence. She read every word, and by the time she got to Law Four, tears were streaming down her cheeks. She came to the prayer and prayed aloud, leading herself to Christ. By this time the assistant minister was so impressed that he came to Arrowhead Springs to find out for himself how he could be a more effective witness for Christ through training and the use of *Four Spiritual Laws*.

Another heartwarming experience demonstrates the effectiveness of the booklet. A man, who was greatly admired in his home town, was not a Christian. In fact, he was known as the town skeptic because he never responded positively to the many who witnessed to him personally.

He had befriended the parents of a Christian friend who felt especially concerned for his salvation. After obtaining a *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet, this friend decided to call on the skeptic and read it to him. As he finished reading, he asked, "Does this make sense?"

The skeptic replied, "Yes, it does."

"Is there anything that would keep you from receiving Christ?"

"No," he said.

The two men then knelt together and prayed, and the "Skeptic" invited Christ into his life as his Savior and Lord.

When they arose, the friend was rejoicing with the man, who then stunned him with this question, "Is this what you and all the other Christians have been trying to tell me for years?"

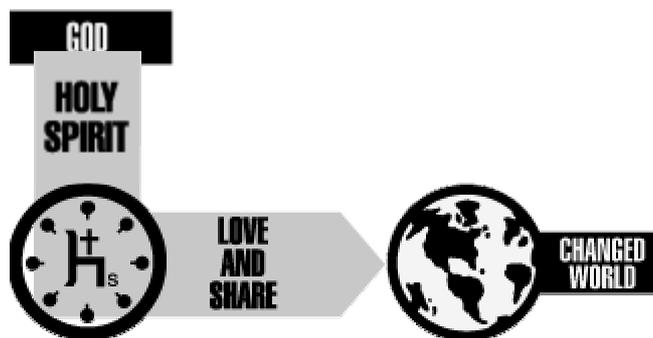
"Yes."

"Well," continued this new brother in Christ, "why didn't you tell me? Any man would be a fool not to receive Christ if he really understood what is involved."

The gospel as contained in the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet had cut right through the barrier of skepticism and indifference so that this man received the Lord Jesus.

Now, permit me to share several simple suggestions that will help you to introduce others to Christ as a way of life.

First, begin every day with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to empower and lead you to those whose hearts He has prepared.



Second, relate to people in a loving, natural, personal way. Avoid being mechanical. Everyone responds to love. As you walk in love, the Spirit of God will confirm to those with whom you are sharing Christ that you are genuine; that you are not simply trying to win an argument or promote a cause; and that you have taken time to talk to them because you truly love them with God's love.

Not everyone will be prepared to receive Christ or even be positive in his response. Some may even be antagonistic. God may want you to sow the seed to use you as an instrument of harvest. Whatever the case, relax and let Him do what He wants to do through you.

Remember, just as all fruit in an orchard is not ripe at the same time, so some individuals will be ripe for harvest and others will still be green - not yet ready to respond to the gospel. Consider every gospel conversation a great privilege and opportunity, not a legalistic responsibility. Think of God's great love, of what knowing Him has meant to you and what it will mean to others when they receive Christ. Make sharing your faith in Christ a way of life.

Third, use a clear, simple presentation of the gospel. There are many benefits which result from using a tool such as the *Four Spiritual Laws*. Let me list some of them:

1. It enables you to open your conversation easily and naturally.
2. It begins with a positive statement - "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life."
3. It presents the gospel and the claims of Christ clearly and simply.
4. It gives you confidence in your witnessing because you know what you are going to say and how you are going to say it.
5. It enables you to be prepared at all times and to stick to the subject without getting off on tangents.
6. It makes it possible for you to be brief and to the point.
7. It enables you to lead others to a personal decision through a suggested prayer.
8. It offers suggestions for growth, including the importance of involvement in the church.
9. And, of special importance, it is a "transferable tool" whereby those whom you introduce to Christ can be encouraged and trained to lead others to Christ also.

Paul exhorted Timothy, his young son in the faith, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

The *Four Spiritual Laws* is such a simple, transferable tool that it enable those who receive Christ to go immediately to friends and loved ones and tell them of their new-found faith in Christ. It also enables them to show those friends and loved ones how they, too, can make their own commitment to Christ.

A well-known Christian leader, highly gifted as a theologian, shared with me his frustration with me over his lack of effectiveness and fruitfulness in witnessing for Christ.

I asked him, "What do you say when you seek to introduce a person to Christ?"

He explained his presentation, which was very long and complicated. The large number of Bible verses he used would confuse most people and prevent them from making an intelligent decision.

I challenged him to use the *Four Spiritual Laws* presentation daily for the next thirty days and report his progress to me at the end of that time. When I saw him two weeks later, he was overflowing with joy and excitement.

He said, "By simply reading the booklet to others, I have seen more people come to Christ during the last two weeks than I had previously seen in many months. It's hard to believe!"

I could quote countless letters and reports from people who have benefited from receiving training in how to use this simple presentation.

A woman who had served with her husband as a missionary in Africa for many years wrote, "You should have seen the transformation in my husband when he returned from one of your training seminars. He wanted to share the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet with everyone. He even shared in the swimming pool with water up to his neck! And the best part of all is that he keeps on doing it."

Another shared, "I was afraid at first, but the Lord has changed my attitude, and now I want to go out witnessing. I thank God with all my heart for this change."

But even a Spirit-controlled person with a tested and trusted tool in his hands can expect barriers of resistance in sharing Christ with others. One of the most difficult barriers to overcome in witnessing is just getting started. No matter who you are or where you are, opportunities are always available. Assume that whenever you are alone with another person for more than just a few moments, it is a divine appointment and as answer to your prayer.

In addition to sharing Christ with students, executives and lay people individually and in groups large and small, I witness regularly to porters, elevator operators, maids in the hotels, taxicab drivers, filling station attendants and people in numerous other types of work, on a plane, it is often easy to engage the stewardess or a seatmate in conversation by having in hand either a Bible, a *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet, or some other piece of Christian literature.

Following a group meeting, whether a church service, a Bible study, a student outreach meeting or some similar gathering, you may wish to introduce yourself to different individuals. Then, after a warm greeting, proceed with the following questions in whatever way is natural for you:

"What did you think of the message?"

"Did it make sense to you?"

"Have you made the wonderful discovery of knowing Christ personally?"

"You would like to, wouldn't you?"

Then ask, "Have you ever heard of the *Four Spiritual Laws*?" and proceed to read them to them. If the individuals indicate they have already heard of the Four Laws, ask their opinion, review the booklet, and give them the opportunity to pray and receive Christ, if they have not already done so.

There are many effective ways of establishing contact with another person. After a cordial, friendly greeting, you can say:

"This booklet is one of the most widely read booklets in history - more than one billion copies have been distributed in every major language. Have you ever heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?"

Or you might say:

"A friend of mine recently gave me this little booklet which really makes sense to me. I would like to share it with you. Have you ever heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?"

Here is another approach:

"The content of this booklet has been used to change the lives of millions of people. It contains truths that I believe will be of great interest to you. Would you read it and give me your impression?"

You could try this one:

"If you died today, do you know for sure that you will go to heaven?"

If the answer is yes, ask:

"On what basis do you know for sure that you are going to heaven? This little booklet, the Four Spiritual Laws, will help you to know for sure that you will go to heaven when you die."

This direct approach can best be employed when you have only a few moments with an individual. If you have a more unhurried opportunity, you may find it helpful to take a few minutes to establish rapport by sharing a few things of personal interest about yourself and asking the other person about himself, his business, profession or family. Then you can explain that you are a Christian and that you have discovered a remarkable booklet that has been a great help to you and that you would like to share with him. Then ask, "Have you ever heard of the *Four Spiritual Laws*?"

In making the presentation, show love. Be casual, friendly, warm, and speak with confidence. You don't need to impress people with your brilliance, but neither should you use a half-hearted, hesitant, negative approach that suggests, "I don't suppose you would like to become a Christian, would you?"

When you share the *Four Spiritual Laws*, you can simply read through the booklet. Generally, you should read aloud from the booklet, holding it so that the person can read along with you. It is also helpful to use a pencil or something similar to point to the lines and words being read to insure better concentration.

At times, the Holy Spirit will lead you to stop and explain something that may be unclear or add a personal illustration. Normally, however, it is usually more effective to read through the booklet before stopping to explain or answer questions. If the person raises questions, you can say, "Let's remember that question and come back to it in a moment after we have finished reading the booklet." Of course, be sure to answer the question later!

Some time ago I was speaking to a group of pastors in Dallas. Skeptical that such a simple approach as the *Four Spiritual Laws* would communicate with college students, a university chaplain asked if I would go with him to the nearby university campus to demonstrate how to use the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet with non-Christian students. He gathered about a dozen students, most of whom were Christians. I gave them each a copy of the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet and asked them to follow along silently as I read the booklet aloud.

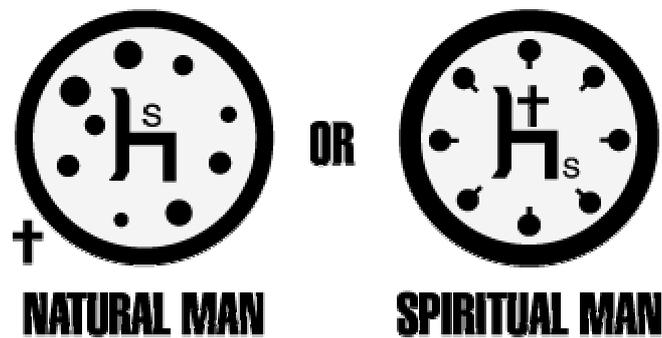
Although I have shared Christ with thousands of students and lay people in individual counseling sessions through the years, I am a rather reserved person and do not always find it easy to witness. As I sat there reading the booklet aloud to the students, I began to receive all kinds of negative impression from the devil who was trying to discourage me and put doubts into my mind such as, "These students will laugh at you. They are too intelligent to be responsive to such a simple presentation. You need a more intellectual approach. Don't go too far; don't be a fanatic. These students will be turned off. They will think you are crazy."

But knowing that I am free from Satan's power as I obey and simply trust the Lord, I could say, "Greater is He (Christ) who is in me than he who is in the world (Satan)." So I kept on reading, knowing from experience that God would honor this presentation as He has on thousands of other occasions, for He has promised to honor His Word. When I came to the prayer, it suddenly seemed that a chorus of voices was saying to me, "You are not going to read this prayer and make a fool of yourself before these intelligent students, are you?" But I read the prayer, and then I said, "If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, pray it with me silently. Make it your own prayer."

Then I read the prayer aloud a second time. when I finished the prayer, I looked up and saw tears running down the cheeks of one of the young women. She came up to say that

she had prayed that prayer and knew that the Lord Jesus had come to live in her heart. Later a young man came to receive Christ. Before I left, the chaplain introduced me to a young woman who had just received Christ, too. As far as I know, all the rest except one were Christians. The remaining one had been reared as an atheist, but was sobered by what he had heard and was also on the verge of receiving Christ. Through the simple reading of the gospel as contained in the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet, the Spirit of God worked in the hearts of these young men and women in a marvelous way. Often this is the experience of any Spirit-controlled person who shares this presentation.

Generally, you will find that most people agree with the first three laws and are not likely to ask many, if any, questions. Thus, you can proceed to Law Four with confidence.



When you come to the two circles, one representing the self-controlled life, the other the Christ-controlled life, ask the question contained in the booklet:

"Which circle represents your life?"

Then ask:

"Which circle would you like to have represent your life?"

In most cases the one with whom you are sharing will answer the first question, "The circle on the left," and the second question, "The circle on the right."

The holy Spirit's work of producing a repentant attitude in a non-believer is a necessary preparation of receiving Christ. This change of attitude will result in a change of action. However, it should be clearly understood that you do not become a Christian because you repent but by the simple act of receiving Christ by faith as explained in John 1:12 and Ephesians 2:8,9.

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

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.

The next crucial point in sharing Christ is to help those who want to receive him as their Savior to know exactly what to do. As you continue to read from the booklet, explain how to receive Christ.

Read the prayer aloud and then ask, "Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?"

If the answer is "Yes," say, "You can pray this prayer right now if you really mean it, and Christ will come into your life as He promised. Then pause for prayer, and suggest that if the individual will pray aloud, you can pray with him or her.

If there is a long silence, you may suggest that the person pray after you phrase by phrase. Be sensitive, however. Don't offend by "forcing" the prayer. Some people wish to pray their own prayer rather than the suggested one. Should someone wish to pray silently, suggest he or she say "Amen" when finished. When he says, "Amen," you pray aloud for the new believer.

If the individual makes no commitment after you have read the booklet through the first time to this point, avoid offending the person. Don't try to argue or high-pressure anyone into making a "decision" for Christ. Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

The important thing is not what you do, but what the Holy Spirit does through you. you and I do not have the ability to introduce anyone to Christ by our own power.

Remember, *success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.*

However, you can do several additional things to help the individual who does not pray and receive Christ when you have reached the prayer in the booklet:

1. Always maintain a positive and loving attitude. You may wish to say, "Quite likely you will want to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior one day. Let me show you what will happen when you do invite Christ to come into your life."
2. Proceed to explain how one can have assurance of salvation by reading the rest of the booklet.
3. If the person responds positively, give him or her another opportunity to receive Christ by inviting the individual to pray with you. You will find that many will be ready to pray by the time you have read the entire booklet.

Some will want to pray then, while others may wish to pray at a later time after they better understand what is involved in receiving Christ. In this event:

1. Suggest that the person reread the booklet later that day and decide to receive Christ at that time.
2. Ask the person to call you as soon as he or she does so. Many people receive the Savior alone after your time together is over.

On one occasion I shared the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet with a famous general who agreed with the content of the booklet but had never received Christ. He wanted to but had not done so. I agreed to pray with him, but he said that he would prefer to receive Christ when alone. I promised to pray for him and said good-bye.

The next morning I called him to inquire, "Did you pray that prayer?"

"I certainly did," he responded warmly and enthusiastically, "just as I promised I would."

Let me suggest two other methods that you might find helpful.

One is to share your own personal testimony and, as the Holy Spirit leads you, give another opportunity for the individual with whom you are sharing to receive Christ. Another is to simply review the booklet, explaining it clearly one law at a time and asking after each law, "Does this make sense?"

Leading the New Christian to Full Assurance

Another important consideration in sharing Christ with others is the necessity of leading the new Christian to full assurance of faith in Christ. All of the material in the booklet following the prayer is specifically designed to aid you in helping the new Christian to be sure that he or she is a Christian.

After an individual has prayed, ask the following questions contained on page 11 of the booklet. "Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise contained in Revelation 3:20, where is He right now in relation to *you*?"

If the reply is, "Well, he is in the world," or "he is in heaven," ask the question again, emphasizing "...but where is He in relation to *you*?"

Explain that, according to Revelation 3:20, Christ said He would come into our lives.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Then ask, "Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer?" Then explain that our only authority is the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. Together read 1 John 5:11-13.

This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Emphasize that we can know we have eternal life on the basis of these promises from God's divinely inspired Word.

Recently I shared the gospel as explained in the *Four Laws* with a man who received Christ but had no assurance of salvation. After reading this particular passage to him, I asked, "What would happen if you died today?"

He replied, "I'm afraid that I would go to hell."

But as I reread the 1 John passage several times, I saw length some to his eyes and radiance to his face. The Holy Spirit had broken through the resistance that he had built up of fifty years, and this man finally saw God's truth and received Christ into his life by faith.

Always explain the importance of faith. Review and explain the meaning of Ephesians 2:8,9. Warn against the danger of depending upon feelings.

One of Satan's great lies is that you must have had some kind of an emotional experience when you received Christ. But the Word of God says you are to receive Christ by faith, and you are to live by faith. This doesn't exclude the importance of emotions. But, according to John 14:21, you are not to seek an emotional experience. *You are to live by faith and obey God's commands.*

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.



Explain the train diagram on page 12 of the booklet and the truth that the Christian life is not lived according to feelings but according to faith in God and His Word. Study this information carefully, and always make it clear to the person with whom you are sharing Christ.

Also read and explain briefly and clearly the four wonderful things that have happened to the new Christian, as listed on page 13 of the booklet.

When the individual is assured, on the basis of God's Word, that Christ is in his or her life, suggest that each of you pray aloud, thanking God for what He has done. The very act of thanking God demonstrates faith and often contributes to the assurance of salvation.

Continue with suggestions for Christian growth and the importance of becoming active in a local church, as explained on page 14 and 15.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of proper follow-up of the new Christian. You should secure the name and address of each individual with whom you pray. This can be done tactfully and without offense if you give the person your name and address first. Then arrange to meet with the new Christian for spiritual counsel and follow-up the very next day, if possible, and certainly not more than forty-eight hours later.

Many receive the assurance of their salvation just by reading and studying the materials that we send them. I recall a new staff member who dropped by to thank me of sending her a series of twelve follow-up letters.

"After receiving Christ," she said, "I was plagued with serious doubts. I decided that I didn't want to be a Christian after all. I even became resentful about you and your letters to me. Then God used your letters to answer my questions and to help me surrender my life to Christ. Now I have made application for staff with Campus Crusade for Christ and have just been accepted. I am so happy, and I want to thank you again for writing those follow-up letters. I wouldn't be here today had it not been for them."

In addition to the use of the follow-up letters, you also have a responsibility to follow up the individual - personally, wherever possible. If you can't meet personally, it will be helpful to the new Christian to receive a personal letter of encouragement from you.

You can help encourage new Christians to grow and to begin to win and build others through personal follow-up, small groups, home Bible studies, Campus Crusade conferences, Sunday school and church.

Campus Crusade for Christ wants to serve you and the entire body of Christ, not only by helping to train you to share your faith more effectively, but also by helping to train and build up those whom you introduce to Christ. In addition to the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet, other materials are available to assist you in your Christian growth and witness for Christ.

Witnessing as a way of life requires training as a way of life. If the secular world depends upon a continuous training program to promote greater effectiveness in various job skills, how much more important it is that Christians participate in a continuous training program through the local church. We want to help you. Training in the most effective use of these practical tools is available at our head quarters and in hundreds of student, lay, pastors, and military training conferences across America and in most major countries of the world.

Thirty Day Experiment

I challenge you to perform an experiment for the next thirty days. Begin each day on your knees asking God to lead you to someone whose heart has been prepared for your witness. Go prayerfully and in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in the spirit of the

apostle Paul, "talk about Christ to everyone who will listen." Present the gospel as contained in the *Four Spiritual Laws*. Expect God to use you.

At the end of thirty days, I am sure that you will be convinced, as multitudes of others have been before you, that there is no greater adventure in life than introducing others to our Savior.

Remember, "you can bring a lot of happiness into this world" by sharing Christ with others.

If the following prayer expresses the desire of your heart, make it your own. "Lord Jesus, I thank you for Your love for me. I thank You that through Your death and resurrection I have been forgiven of my sins and am able to live a fruitful life for You each day. As an expression of my love for You and for all men, and in obedience to Your command, I want to give daily priority to introducing others to you. Thank You for Your promise to make me fruitful if I follow You. Amen."

Remember, *How You Can Introduce Others to Christ* is a transferable concept. you can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20: "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- Explain briefly why you should witness.
- How could you begin a conversation about Christ?
- How can you be personally involved in the Great Commission? (See Matthew 28:18-20)
- From these verses, now would you define fruit in a Christian's life?
 - a. Galatians 5:22,23
 - b. John 15:16
 - c. Matthew 7:15-20
 - d. Matthew 13:18-23

Why do some Christians not demonstrate character qualities that Jesus would have us show?

- How does one become a Christian?
 - a. John 1:12
 - b. Ephesians 2:8,9
 - c. John 5:24
- What benefits result from having a personal relationship with Christ?
 - a. John 1:12
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:19
 - c. Colossians 1:14
 - d. John 14:27
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- What does God set aside for all who accept His Son?
 - a. Peter 1:3,4
 - b. Ephesians 1:13,14
- Why did Jesus Christ come to earth?
 - a. Luke 19:10
 - b. John 10:9,10
- How would you present Christ to a non-believer? Write out the references of the verses you would use and why.

- What does it mean to show God's love to someone?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in evangelism?
 - a. John 6:63
 - b. Romans 8:16
 - c. Romans 8:26
 - d. 2 Corinthians 3:17
 - e. 1 Peter 3:18
- Explain John 3:16. Why could it also be called the whole gospel in a nutshell?
- What is repentance?
- What does 1 John 2:1-5 tell you about how you can know you are a Christian?
- What promises do you find in 1 John 5:11-13? Why are they important?
- List at least five people with whom you will talk personally about Jesus Christ in the next month. What steps will you take to introduce them to Christ?

Group Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to "talk about Christ to all who will listen?" (See Colossians 1:28) Share briefly some places it is difficult for you to talk about the Lord.
- People are hungry for God. Think of some experience you have had that substantiate this. Discuss these incidents with your group.
- As an ambassador for Christ, you have a tremendous opportunity to serve Him. Reflect on the duties of an ambassador. Share with your group how these relate to the Christian life and to witnessing about your faith in Christ. (See 1 Corinthians 5:18-21)
- How should you handle an antagonistic response when sharing the *Four Spiritual Laws*? Discuss how God's love can be shown through such difficult situations.
- Discuss practical things you can do to overcome the problem of getting started in witnessing.
- Turn to the train diagram on page twelve of the *Four Spiritual Laws* booklet. Explain why it is so important to make this concept clear to the new believer. Share ways to encourage the new Christian in his or her faith.
- Discuss practical plans for following up on a new Christian with your group. Make a list of different suggestions by other group members that you could use.

No.7

How You Can Help Fulfill the Great Commission

The Greatest Challenge Ever Given

Today I lay before you the greatest challenge ever given to man by the greatest person who has ever lived. No matter how wealthy, famous, brilliant or powerful you may be, you will never give yourself to any cause that can compare with this life-changing, even world-changing, call of God.

No matter how many honors, awards, or achievements may be placed in your hands, nothing can even begin to compare with this command of our Lord Jesus Christ to help take His message of love and forgiveness to every person in every community, in every city, in every country of the world and make disciples of all nations.

Today we live in a world of rapid and radical change. Men's hearts are filled with fear and dread, frustration and despair. Mankind has proven incapable of coping with the pressing problems of our time - the population explosion, the pollution of the environment, the rising tide of crime and violence, sexual rebellion, alcoholism, drug addiction, abortion, pornography, urban sprawl, and wide spread political, social and moral decay.

Oh, what an hour for Christians to become involved in the greatest spiritual harvest since Pentecost! This dark and desperate hour in the affairs of mankind is an hour of destiny, a time of unprecedented opportunity for Christians. This is the hour for which we were born - to set in motion a mighty, sweeping spiritual revolution that will turn the tide and reveal to mankind that the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ offers the basic solutions to every problem facing mankind.

If such a statement sounds simplistic or melodramatic, just apply the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule and other teachings of Jesus such as His command to love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul and with all of your mind, and your neighbor as yourself - even your enemies - to each of these problems, and watch them evaporate before your eyes.

If I had the privilege of writing a news story about the greatest events of all the centuries, one of the most important would be a meeting on a mountain near Galilee where a small group of men were given a global strategy for carrying God's love and forgiveness to a lost and dying world. On this mountain these men received that greatest challenge ever given to mankind, to which I referred, by that greatest Person who ever lived, concerning the greatest power ever revealed and the greatest promise ever

recorded. I refer, of course, to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He gave to His disciples and through them to us. He said:

"I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world . "



Later, on the Mount of Olives, our Lord gave His final word to His disciples and to us before He ascended to the Father. He said:

"When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection."

Had these meetings not been held and had our Lord's command and promise not been given, you would not now be experiencing the love, forgiveness, joy and purpose of God's matchless grace available to all who believe in Christ. In fact, I would not be writing this message.

A Vision for the World

The Great Commission has been the focus of my life ever since one midnight hour in the spring of 1951 when God spoke to me in a sovereign, unique, supernatural way concerning my role in helping to fulfill His command. The vision embraced the entire world and resulted in the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Since that time we have grown from a staff of two - my wife Vonette and me - on the campus of UCLA to more than twenty thousand full-time and associate staff and volunteers serving our Lord in 133 major countries representing 97 percent of the world's population. Tens of millions of people have received Christ as their Savior and Lord through this ministry, and millions of these have been discipled to win and disciple others - spiritual generation after generation.

I try to evaluate everything I do every day in light of how it will contribute the most to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Sometimes I am asked the question, "Are you surprised at the phenomenal growth and success of Campus Crusade for Christ?" My

answer is "No," for according to that original vision which God gave me in 1951, we have only begun to see what God is going to do. The best is yet before us!

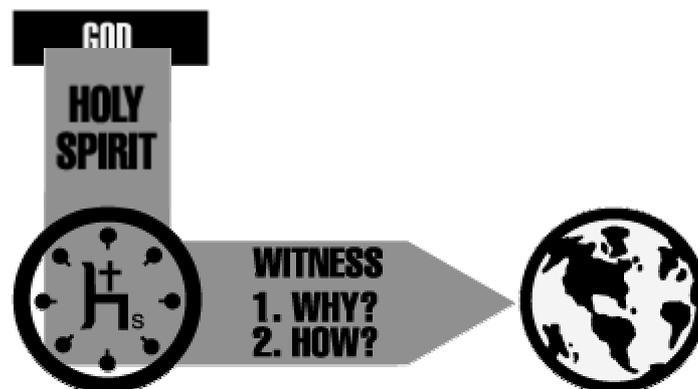
I am truly humbled and deeply grateful for the privilege of serving this ministry. Yet, I am not surprised at the miracles of God's grace during the last four decades in light of the dramatic vision God gave me of the world, and what was to happen in terms of spiritual harvest.

Our Lord's Great Commission is for every believer, not just the staff of Campus Crusade and a few missionaries and pastors who love our Lord. Every Christian is commanded to be involved in helping to reach the world for Christ. Each of us has an important, God given role to play in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

A Global Strategy

In one of my first classes in journalism, I learned that the lead paragraph in a good news story usually answers six basic questions: *Who? What? Why? Where? When?* and *How?*

In this booklet, I want to share with you a positive and practical strategy which answers these six basic questions.



1. Who Gave the Great Commission and to Whom Was It Given?

Who but our Lord Jesus Christ could possibly say, "I have been given all authority in heaven and earth?" Jesus is the unique Son of God. His miraculous birth, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection are the most important events in human history. God became man. He died on the cross and was raised from the dead to save people from sin and to give eternal life to all who receive Him. The result was a spiritual revolution that changed the first century world and dramatically altered the course of history.

Jesus of Nazareth, the greatest person who ever lived, has caused the most changes for good in the entire history of mankind through changing the lives of hundreds of millions

of men and women. Historian Phillip Schaff said, "Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, He spoke words of life such as were never spoken before nor since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet. Without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, works of art, learned volumes and sweet songs of praise than the whole army of great people of ancient and modern time. Born in a manger, crucified as a malefactor, He controls the destinies of the civilized world and rules a spiritual empire that encircles the globe."

Christ changes men, women and nations. Wherever His message goes, lives are transformed. It was said of our Savior by the great missionary statesman, Dr. Samuel Zwemer, "The gospel not only converts individuals, but changes society. On every mission field from the days of William Carey, the missionaries have carried a real social gospel. They established standards of purity and hygiene, promoted industry, elevated womanhood, restrained antisocial customs, abolished cannibalism, human sacrifice and cruelty, organized famine relief, checked tribal wars and changed the structure of society."

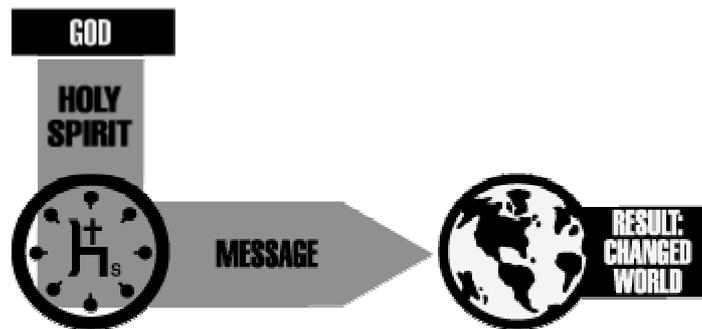
To the Colossians Paul writes; Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth...In Him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge...in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.

When you represent the Lord Jesus Christ as His disciple, you can be assured you are representing the one Person who possesses all power, wisdom and authority. You have everything when you have Him. Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

No power can resist you as you go in obedience and faith as His ambassador. You have the promise, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Also, you are assured that even the gates of hell will not prevail against you. The more you understand who Christ is and all that He has done and will do for you and through you, the more completely you will want to trust, obey and serve Him.

To whom did Christ give the Great Commission? Jesus gave the Great Commission not only to His eleven disciples, but to every one who has believed in Him through the centuries. Therefore, every Christian should be vitally and continually involved in helping to fulfill the Great Commission as a way of life through the investment of their lives, their talents and their treasure.



Shortly after Jesus gave the Great Commission, God the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, transformed and empowered the lives of the same disciples who, during His trial and crucifixion, had denied our Lord and for the most part had deserted Him. Following Pentecost, they went out boldly and courageously, willing to risk their lives to proclaim the message of God's love and forgiveness in Christ. In fact, all of the disciples died as martyrs preaching the gospel, except for John who died in exile on the Isle of Patmos after he survived being burned in a vat of oil for his faith.

Somehow we have gotten the idea that the early Christians were different from us - that they possessed a quality of life to which we can not attain. But it is a fact of history that the people to whom Jesus gave His Great Commission were common, ordinary, working people plagued with the same weaknesses that we have. The only difference between most of them and the majority of us is that two outstanding things had happened to them.

First, they had complete confidence in a resurrected Lord triumphant over death. One who lived within them and was coming again to reign on the earth.

Second, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Today, if enough Christians were completely committed to our resurrected and returning Lord and were controlled and empowered by His Spirit, we would turn our world upside down and experience a mighty spiritual revolution like that in the first century.

2. What is the Great Commission?

The Great Commission is our Lord's command take the gospel to every person throughout the world and to make disciples in all nations. It involves building and multiplying disciples in all nations so that they can, in turn, saturate their nations with the Good News and train other disciples to do the same generation after generation through the process of spiritual multiplication.

Christ did not commission us to Christianize all nations; He called us to disciple and evangelize them. Our responsibility is to preach and teach Christ's dynamic gospel; it is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to make our witness effective. With the responsibility, however, Christ also gave us everything necessary for success.

3. Why Should You Help Fulfill The Great Commission?

There are at least four good reasons.

First, *Christ commanded us to do so*. A good athletic coach presents a list of rules and standards to the athletes and says, "These are the things you must do if you expect to be a part of the team." The athletes subscribe to and obey these rules, or they don't make the team.

The employer says to the employee, "Here are the rules," and the employee follows those rules, or he loses his job.

In time of battle the commanding officer issues specific orders. The soldier obeys, or he will be court-martialed and quite likely sent to prison - or executed, depending on the seriousness of his offense.

Our Lord has issued a command, "Go," and no true believer can take His order lightly.

But most Christians have never taken this command of our Lord seriously. We have been playing games while our world is in flames. We are like men and women who are straightening pictures on the walls of a burning building. We are dealing with peripheral issues when it is the hearts of people that need to be changed. The problems in the world that are threatening to engulf humanity can only be solved through faith in Christ and obedience to His commands.

If we take our Lord seriously, we must dedicate ourselves fully - time, talent and treasure - to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, not out of a sense of legalistic duty, but out of love and gratitude for what Christ has done for us. If we want to obey Him, He says, "Go" And that is sufficient reason for going. Mark 8:34-38 records our Lord's command to all who would be His disciples and, along with Mark 10:29,30 and John 14:21, promises rich rewards and great blessings to all who trust and obey Him.

He called his disciples and the crowds to come over and listen. "If any of you wants to be my follower," he told them, "you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross, and follow me closely. If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.

"And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process? For is anything worth more than his soul? And anyone who is ashamed of me and my message in these days of unbelief and sin, I, the Messiah, will be ashamed of him when I return in the glory of my Father, with the holy angels.

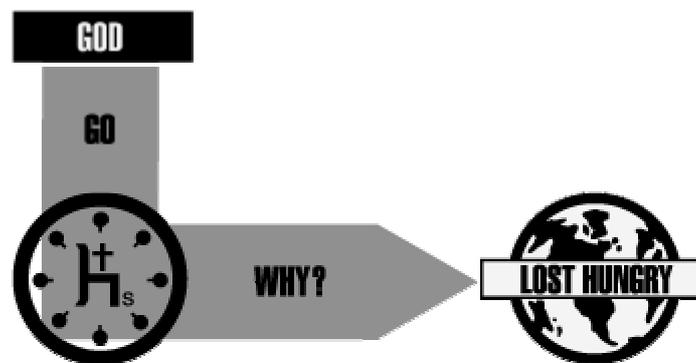
"Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything- home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or property - for love of me and to tell others the Good News,

who won't be given back a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land - with persecutions!"

"The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him."

Second, *men are lost without Christ*. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

That may sound narrow, bigoted, unloving and intolerant, but that is what the Lord Jesus said, and Jesus Christ is God! For many years I have asked people all over the world if they have found God. Apart from those who have met Christ in a personal, vital encounter, the answer in general is, "I am looking for God; I hope to find Him, but I haven't found Him yet!"



No person will ever find God until he receives Christ. Do you really believe that people without Christ are lost? Has it occurred to you that some of your family and friends, your neighbors and associates who do not know Christ are spiritually lost? The Word of God is emphatically clear:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

All men, women, boys and girls are lost without Christ.

Third, *people everywhere are hungry for God*. The hunger of people for God has been demonstrated in thousands of ways since the creation of man. This has been our personal experience since the beginning of the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. As a part of our worldwide training program, we spend several hours each week in actual person-to-person evangelism in the local communities, at the beaches and in public gatherings.

Frequently, thousands pray to receive Christ in a single afternoon. For example, on one occasion when ten thousand Koreans at a Leadership Training Conference in Seoul went out to share Christ, more than sixteen thousand people prayed and received Christ.

And during one three-day Easter holiday, at least seventeen thousand heard that they could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ from 155 nationals in Mexico and twenty-five Latin American Campus Crusade staff; 1,245 indicated that they had received Christ. Campus Crusade staff in India prayed that five thousand students would receive Christ in a single year, and God answered with more than five thousand new believers.

During a period of approximately six months, four Campus Crusade athletic teams, two singing groups and André Kole, a well known illusionist, presented the claims of Christ to 351,887 students in 629 appearances. More than fifty thousand indicated that they had received Christ as their Savior. Many thousands of additional students and laymen have made commitments to Christ through the ministry of other staff members and the thousands whom they have trained.

And tens of millions around the world have indicted salvation decisions after viewing the "JESUS" film in their languages.

I recall a porter with whom I shared Christ in a hotel where I was staying. He was very discouraged.

"Porters aren't very important," he sighed. "Everyone looks down on porters."

I put my arm around his shoulders and said, "I want you to know that God loves you, and I love you. In His sight you are just as important as the most famous person in the world."

The Holy Spirit had prepared his heart for the "Good News," and soon he received Christ as his Savior as we bowed in prayer.

All over the world people are hungry for our Lord Jesus.

Fourth, *there is an urgency to complete the task while the doors of opportunity are still open.* Never have the spiritual fields been so ripe for harvest. We dare not miss this unprecedented opportunity. If ever you plan to do anything for Christ and His kingdom, do it now before the harvest ends.

4. When Will The Great Commission Be Fulfilled?

The Great Commission is our Lord's idea, and only He in His sovereignty and omniscience knows when and how it will be fulfilled. However, since He gave us the command and has promised to equip us to do His will, we must assume that He intends us to fulfill the Great Commission in each generation.

Today every nation in the world is receiving the gospel either through trained disciples, radio, television or literature. But even though there is a witness for Christ in every

nation, the Great Commission is not fulfilled, and it will remain unfulfilled until there are sufficient numbers of disciples in every nation to saturate their country, and all the diverse ethnic and people groupings in it, with the gospel. We must become as interested in making disciples as we are in conversions, more interested in spiritual multiplication than we are in spiritual addition.

Fulfilling the Great Commission does not mean that every person will respond to the gospel in our generation. Some, because of spiritual hardness of heart, will even refuse to hear the gospel; others are mentally or physically incapable of responding. But it does mean that we should seek to make a prayerful, intelligent, aggressive presentation of the gospel to every living person and leave the results to God.

It does not mean that the majority who hear the gospel will become Christians, but it does mean that they will at least have a chance to hear and believe. We believe that every man, woman and child on earth should have the chance to say "yes" to Christ after hearing a clear, culturally relevant presentation of the gospel. It is not fair for millions of Americans to hear the gospel thousands of times when more than two billion people have not heard the gospel even one time.

If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled in our generation, now is the time for action. We must begin now and dedicate ourselves daily - as a way of life - to communicate God's love and forgiveness to everyone we meet. From the time we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night, our number one priority should be sharing "the most joyful news ever announced."

5. Where Must We Go To Fulfill The Great Commission?

We must go to the whole world. However, Jesus Himself gave us a strategy to follow. Just before He ascended into heaven, He told the disciples:

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The original meaning of this command suggests that we are to be involved in helping to reach each area at the same time, from Jerusalem to the ends of the world. I encourage you to begin sharing Christ as a way of life in your Jerusalem - your home, your neighborhood, your campus or classroom, your office or factory. Seek ways to present Christ in your community, your state, your nation, which is your Judea, and to the rest of the world.

God wants you to help spread His good news to the entire world through your prayers, your financial investments and your personal involvement, or through all three.

6. How is the Great Commission To Be Fulfilled and How Can You Help?

This is the big question for most people. Perhaps you are thinking, "I'm convinced that men are lost without Christ and that multitudes are ready to receive Him. I want to obey our Lord Jesus Christ by helping to fulfill the Great Commission, but what does God want me to do? How do I begin?"

This great task can be accomplished only as millions of Christians work together, pooling their resources to complete the task. Also, millions of Christians need to develop a personal strategy that ties in directly to the global strategy of our Lord.

The Campus Crusade for Christ overall strategy for helping to fulfill the Great Commission is called New Life 2000. The plan calls for mobilizing millions of Christians in thousands of churches of all denominations and hundreds of various missionary organizations to help saturate the world of six billion people with the gospel by the year 2000.

This plan, which is supported by thousands of Christian leaders on every continent, has divided the world into population areas of one million people. Presently, we are in the process of establishing five thousand New Life Training Centers. These centers are being staffed with trained leaders dedicated to training spiritual multipliers and ten thousand "JESUS" film teams utilizing the film and other tools of evangelism to help saturate each of the one million population areas with the gospel. In cooperation with thousands of Christians of all denominations, it is our prayer target and goal to:

1. Present the gospel to more than six billion people by the year 2000.
2. Introduce one billion of them to Christ.
3. Start at least five million New Life home follow-up groups which will minister to and help to disciple more than two hundred million new Christians.
4. Establish ministries on eight thousand college and university campuses in strategic metropolitan areas worldwide to reach students and professors for Christ.
5. Plant one million churches throughout the world among every people group on earth.

By 1990 the "JESUS" film was translated into more than 164 languages and viewed by more than 425,000,000 people. Tens of millions have already received Christ. It is our goal by 1995 to translate the "JESUS" film into three hundred major languages and one thousand dialects.

Through New Life Thailand, the gospel has been proclaimed to more than six million people in Northeast Thailand through six New Life Training Centers. More than two million people have registered salvation decisions; more than twenty thousand New Life follow-up nurture groups have been started in homes; and more than three thousand new churches have been planted. We pray that similar models will be duplicated in the five thousand "million population centers" throughout the world.

Through a multiplication strategy of winning people to Christ, building them in the faith, and sending them to the world with the good news of God's love and forgiveness, tens of millions of people have been introduced to our Lord Jesus Christ through the various ministries of Campus Crusade for Christ since 1951.

Every conceivable method of winning people to Christ is used - personal evangelism, large evangelistic meetings, evangelistic home Bible studies, small groups, telephone surveys, films, cassettes, radio, television, direct mail; evangelistic coffees, teas, breakfasts, luncheons and banquets for both men and women; the "JESUS" film; and wide-scale literature distribution.

Building people in the Christian faith includes getting them involved in the fellow ship and instruction offered through the local church, home Bible studies and small groups. Christians are taught how to study God's holy, inspired Word, how to pray, and how to walk in the love of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. They learn about God's unconditional love and His total forgiveness and acceptance made possible for us in Christ because of His death on the cross for our sin. They also learn about His resurrection power available to us, enabling us to live a joyful, victorious, fruitful life.

Christian growth is accelerated rapidly as individuals are taught how to share Christ with others and are encouraged to share their faith in Him regularly as a way of life.

Sending people to the world is the inevitable result of a proper emphasis on winning and building. The individual who rightly understands the love and forgiveness of God and who has been properly taught how to communicate his faith in Christ will not be satisfied to be merely a worldly (carnal), spiritually impotent, fruitless, mediocre Christian. Like the disciples whose nets were miraculously filled with fish, such an individual will "for sake all and follow Christ."

Any successful strategy to help evangelize the world must make prayer a high priority. To this end, millions of faithful prayer disciples are urgently needed for daily prayer. We are asking God to raise up millions of Christians to become a part of the Great Commission Prayer Crusade, prayer soldiers who will faithfully intercede daily for a mighty spiritual awakening throughout the entire world.

Your Personal Strategy

The Great Commission can be accomplished as millions of Christians develop a personal strategy that ties in directly to Christ's global strategy. One Christian with a personal strategy, focusing all his efforts, can magnify and multiply his fruitfulness beyond measure.

"But," you may ask, "what is a personal strategy?"

A personal strategy is a deliberate plan of action by an individual to accomplish a specific goal. Since the goal of every sincere believer should be to help fulfill the Great Commission, his personal plan should include evangelizing and discipling, adding and multiplying.

When you personally introduce another to Christ, that is spiritual addition. But when you deliberately disciple the new Christian and help him to win, disciple and send others who will do the same to win and disciple others, generation after generation, that is spiritual multiplication!

Let me illustrate. During a Campus Crusade for Christ banquet in Manila, the director of our Great Commission Training Center introduced a medical doctor whom he had introduced to Christ and discipled. The doctor stood and gave his testimony, then introduced one of the persons whom he had introduced to Christ and discipled. This man in turn gave his testimony and introduced one of the medical students whom he had introduced to Christ and discipled.

This went on for ten generations of a ministry that had begun with one of our American staff who had poured his life into the discipling of men who in turn discipled others.

Recently, I traveled to Thailand where I met many spiritual multipliers, one of them a man who is the spiritual father of twelve generations. He has led more than fifteen hundred people to Christ in the past four years. While I was there, he introduced me to one of his disciples, who introduced me to one of his disciples, and so it went on down a line of twelve men and women. The last disciple in the chain had been a Christian only six months and had already introduced twelve people to Christ and was in the process of discipling several of them.

These believers in Thailand know that it is not enough just to lead others to the Lord and to say, "Isn't that great?" - then forget them. Rather, they win people and disciple them, training these new Christians to win and disciple others so they, in turn, will win and disciple still others.

How would you like to introduce hundreds - even thousands - of men and women to our Lord Jesus Christ? You can.

If you were to introduce just one person to the Lord Jesus every month for the next twenty years, you would have introduced 240 souls to Christ. This is the principle of addition and very few Christians have such a fruitful witness.

However, if you were to disciple each of those 240 new believers so that they in turn would win and disciple others, generation after generation, many millions would be introduced to Christ in the same number of years.

The apostle Paul was referring to spiritual multiplication in his second letter to Timothy. "You must teach others those things you and many others have heard me speak about," he said. "Teach these great truths to trustworthy men who will, in turn, pass them on to others."

Beginning with only two persons and using this simple, continuous cycle of discipling, or spiritual multiplication, the entire world could be totally evangelized and saturated with the gospel in only thirty-two subsequent steps because two, multiplied by itself thirty-two times, equals the population of the world!

As each of us develops a personal strategy, God can use us to play a vital role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

It all boils down to this simple equation:

GOAL – PLAN + ACTION = DREAM

GOAL + PLAN + ACTION = REALITY

But you may wonder how to develop a personal strategy. Let me make some simple, scriptural suggestions:

1. Be Sure You Are Committed to Christ and Filled With the Spirit
2. Pray for Guidance
3. Outline the Strategy God Reveals in Answer to Your Prayers
4. Seek Training
5. Take the Initiative

1. Be Sure You Are Committed to Christ and Filled with the Holy Spirit

In Romans 12 the apostle Paul encourages, "Give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy - the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think."

My wife and I were materialistic and selfishly ambitious before we became Christians. After we received Christ, we grew in the fellowship of the church, and the more we studied the Bible and the more we became aware of the love and grace of God, the more we loved Jesus, and the more we wanted to serve Him.

One day, in the spring of 1951, we knelt in our home in the Hollywood Hills of California and signed a contract with the Lord as a formal act of relinquishing the title deeds of our lives to Him. We each made a list of all the things that we had desired before we fell in love with Christ and really began to follow Him. We had very luxurious appetites!

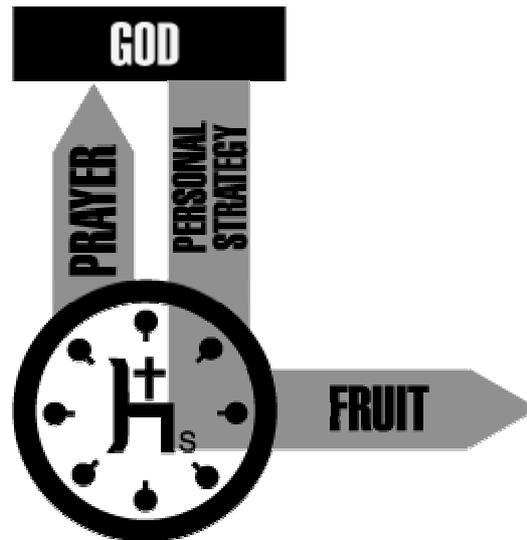
"Lord," we prayed, "we want to surrender all of our own ambitious, worldly, materialistic plans and desires to You. By Your enabling grace and power we are turning our backs upon the things that have encumbered us in order that we might serve You, the living God, more effectively and fruitfully. You have commanded us to seek first the kingdom of God and lay up our treasures in heaven. Now we want to seek You and Your way above every thing else. We want our treasures to be used for your glory. We want to serve You and do whatever You want us to do and go wherever You want us to go, whatever the cost."

Opening his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul wrote, "This letter is from Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, chosen to be a missionary, and sent out to preach God's Good News." In the words of Paul, Vonette and I became Christ's slaves as we made our commitment to the Lord Jesus.

It was only a short time later that God gave me the vision to help reach the world for Christ to which I referred earlier. We call that vision *Campus Crusade for Christ, New Life World*.

Today, we own every little of this world's goods - mostly personal items. We don't own our home, which we rent, nor do we own a car, though transportation is provided for our ministry. We literally live as God supplies our needs from day to day. But, oh, what adventure to live for Christ- to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords without the hindrances and encumbrances of possessions which possess us and rob us of our power with God and others!

This may not be what God will call you to do. But whatever your situation, you can trust a loving God when you surrender every life ambition to Him. No experience in life compares with seeking first the kingdom of God, laying up treasures in heaven, keeping Christ in control of your life, doing what He calls you to do, and being an instrument through whom He changes lives. This is real living life at its highest and best. Every morning and evening we kneel in our Lord's presence, together whenever possible, to acknowledge His lordship. We invite Him to be Lord over every area of our lives and claim by faith the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit in order that we may live holy lives and be more fruitful witnesses for our dear Lord.



2. Pray for Guidance

Pray in faith that God will guide you in developing your personal strategy to reach your immediate area of influence for Christ. You do not have to design your own strategy you are simply discovering the plan that God has already designed.

Jesus was a perfect example. While on earth, He discussed every major decision and turning point in His life with His heavenly Father. And remember, as you pray, to expect God to provide the best strategy and whatever is needed to begin to put your plan into action. Expectant faith pleases God.

3. Outline the Strategy God Reveals in Answer to your Prayers

Make lists of specific people with whom you wish to share Christ. Consider specific groups in your life and develop a strategy to reach each one. Begin with your family. Remember that in your home, more than in any other place, your life will be your testimony. Trust God continually to fill you with His Spirit so that your actions - the fruit of the Spirit - will bear witness to what Jesus has done in your life.

Plan how you can reach the people with whom you work. Seek out those whom you know are Christians, and ask them to join with you in evangelizing your office. In your church, make yourself available to your pastor. Offer to teach Sunday school, and especially to be a part of the visitation evangelism team. Encourage other members of your church to develop their own strategies.

Invite your neighbors for an evangelistic coffee or tea or dessert, or start a neighborhood evangelistic Bible study. Tell your friends what Christ has done in your life and that He can do the same for them.

Pray for those with whom you want to share the gospel. Then go to them. Tell them of God's love and forgiveness, available through Jesus Christ. Give them opportunity to receive Him.

Share your faith as a way of life - talk about Christ wherever you go. As people trust Him as Lord and Savior, begin to disciple them and involve them in the cycle of multiplication. Invite them to join you in an effort to saturate your entire community with the message of Christ.

4. Seek Training

Learn everything you can about how to accomplish your personal strategy to help fulfill the Great Commission. Millions of students, lay people and pastors are taking advantage of the training and materials available through Campus Crusade for Christ. This training will give you techniques for winning people to Christ, building them in the faith and sending them to the world with the good news of God's love and forgiveness.

A new six-hour video training series, *Reaching Your World*, is available to help you reach your neighbors and loved ones for Christ. The series also shows you how to use the "JESUS" video evangelistically in your own home or office.

I encourage you to write out your personal strategy today. Make a list of those with whom you want to share Christ. Make another list of individuals whom you can disciple by training them to experience and share the abundant life in Christ. Begin immediately to work out your strategy.

5. Take the Initiative

Take the initiative to help fulfill the Great Commission where you live in your Jerusalem. This should be your priority. Claim your relatives, friends, neighbors and business associates for Christ in prayer. Then present His claims to them. As you implement this personal strategy, think beyond your local goals to the worldwide goals for fulfilling the Great Commission. This will prevent your becoming side-tracked on time-consuming and relatively unproductive tangents.

Under the Holy Spirit's guidance, you can proceed with complete confidence to plan your work and work your plan. Every Christian, whether a student, homemaker, businessman, pastor or missionary, needs a personal strategy to help reach his own community or area of influence for Christ.

You Can Help Change the World

In this changing and chaotic period of history, sincere, thinking Christians cannot be satisfied with business as usual.

Dr. James Stewart of Scotland, one of the most famous New Testament scholars of our time, has said, "If we could but show the world that being committed to Christ is no tame, humdrum, sheltered monotony, but the most exciting, thrilling adventure the human spirit can ever know, those who have been standing outside the church and looking askance at Christ will come crowding in to pay allegiance; and we might well expect the greatest revival since Pentecost."

This statement has had a profound impact on my life and ministry since I read it in 1947. I believe millions of Christians like ourselves are discovering the importance of being involved in our heavenly Father's business. As I observe God's working in the lives of men and women around the world through many movements, I am persuaded that the greatest spiritual awakening since Pentecost has already begun.

Some time ago, I was visiting Rome. One evening as I sat in the Roman Forum, I saw and heard portrayed, through the medium of light and sound, the drama of that ancient Empire.

The Forum vibrated with history, and I was enthralled as I sat there. For almost a thousand years, Rome ruled the world. Into this Forum had come the conquering generals to receive their laurels. Here the senators had met to legislate the laws that governed the Empire. Here Julius Caesar had been assassinated. Earlier that afternoon, I had visited a dingy dungeon cell across the street from the Forum where it is believed that the apostle Paul, imprisoned for his faith, had spent the last few months of his life until his martyrdom. Had I been living in those days, and had I visited Paul in that dungeon, it is not likely that I would have been as impressed with this "bond slave of Christ" as I would have been with many of the leaders of Rome. Paul was probably neither a commanding figure nor an eloquent speaker according to his own admission; but here was a man with a brilliant mind, a flaming heart and an anointed pen - a man who had linked his life with the risen Christ. He was a man chosen and anointed of God. He shared Christ's vision and burden for the world, and he was committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

What God did in that cell had far more significance for the good of mankind than anything that happened in the Roman Forum. God took a life that was yielded to Him and used it to help change the course of history. Today millions of Christians are worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ, in large measure because of what God did through this dedicated apostle, a "bond slave" of Jesus Christ.

Just as God has used Paul and millions of others like him through the centuries, so is He looking for men and women in our time through whom He can accomplish mighty exploits for His kingdom.

Jesus said, "Go...and make disciples in all nations." In order to make disciples, you must be a disciple yourself. The person who is committed to Christ, who understands how to walk in the fullness of the Spirit, is going to influence and help to produce the same kind of Christians.

Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Jesus also says, "Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters yes, more than his own life - otherwise he cannot be my disciple."

For some, such a call to discipleship may sound too hard. Perhaps this thought was in Peter's mind when he said to Jesus, "We've given up everything to follow you." And Jesus replied, "Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything - home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or property for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who don't be given back, a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land - with persecutions. All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life."

That this promise has been fulfilled in the lives of all who seek first Christ and His kingdom has been attested to times without number - not always in material things, of course, but in rewards far more meaningful and enriching.

I shall never forget Vonette's concern when I explained to her at the time of my proposal that, though I loved her dearly, I loved Jesus Christ more than I loved her and that He would always have first place in my life and in our home.

Although she did not understand such a "fanatical" attitude on my part at that time, she later surrendered her life to Christ and now says with me, "Christ is first in my life."

It is because of our individual commitment to and love for Him that we love each other and are more considerate of each other all the more. Truly Christ has enriched our individual lives and our ministry far beyond anything we could ever have dared to dream. We say with the famous missionary statesman, C.T. Studd, "If Christ be God and died for me, there is nothing too great that I can do for Him."

You and I have the privilege of being part of the most significant world-changing movement of all the centuries, the movement to help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in this generation. Will you surrender your life totally and unreservedly to Christ today and make yourself available to obey our Lord's command? It may mean sacrifice. Even martyrdom. But can you think of a greater leader to follow than the Lord Jesus Christ? Is there a greater cause than His to which you can give yourself? Will you, as an

expression of your love and gratitude to Christ for what He has done for you and as an act of obedience to His command, help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation?

If it is your desire to commit yourself to help fulfill His command, make the following prayer your prayer:

"Dear Father in heaven, I stand at attention. I make myself available to You to do with as You wish. I surrender my life to the lordship of Jesus Christ totally, completely and irrevocably. I desire to be a man (woman) of God through whom You can bring Your message of love and forgiveness in Christ to all men everywhere.

"I invite You to cleanse me, to empower me, to lead me, to inspire me, to teach me, to enable me to do that which will bring the greatest honor and glory to Your name.

"Enable me by Your Holy Spirit to contribute my maximum time, talent and treasure to the fulfillment of the Great Commission in my time. I ask this in the wonderful name of the Lord Jesus. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer, you have made your commitment to Jesus Christ. Through the investment of your time, your talent and your treasure, you will help fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord in this generation. Remember, through the power of the indwelling Christ and the enabling of the Holy Spirit, you will help to change the world.

Remember, *How You Can Help Fulfill the Great Commission* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20: "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

1. Many have argued that the Great Commission was only for the apostles to whom it was originally given and is not for us today. Name two things in Matthew 28:20 that prove the Great Commission is intended for Christians today.
2. Why is it important that Jesus is who He said He is, the Son of God? How would you describe His character?
3. How does Ephesians 1:19-23 express God's power? What additional fact does Jeremiah 32:17 bring out?
4. List some reasons that the New Testament church had such a great impact. (See 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10)
5. What does it mean to be Christ's ambassador?
6. What does John 14:6 say? Why is this important?
7. Why should you be involved in telling others about Christ?
8. Why is it critical that we take the news of Jesus Christ to every land?
9. What does the word "witness" mean? How is it used in the Bible?
 - a. Proverbs 14:5
 - b. Isaiah 55:1-7
 - c. Luke 24:48
 - d. Acts 1:18
 - e. Acts 2:40
 - f. Acts 8:25
 - g. Acts 20:17-24
 - h. Acts 23:11
 - i. Acts 28:23
10. How would you describe Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria in relation to your world today? (See Acts 1:8)
11. What is involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission? Explain the role of both evangelism and discipleship in its fulfillment.
12. What place does prayer have in the fulfillment of the Great Commission?
13. What personal strategy of evangelism did Paul exhibit in Acts 13 and 14? What additional strategy did he employ in Acts 18:1-11?
14. What are the essential ingredients of a personal strategy? What personal strategy do you (or will you) use?
15. How does Matthew 6:33 apply to your life in relation to helping fulfill the Great Commission?
16. List five people whom you would like to train (disciple) to share the gospel, or one person whom you can ask to disciple you.
17. What commitment will you make regarding your answer to Question 16?

Group Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the relationship between the Great Commission and the biblical principle of obedience. (See Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Colossians 3:22; John 14:15; Acts 5:29)
2. Modern communication technology has brought the world into our homes and workplaces. Share with your group the evidences which you have seen in the last week that there is a global need for the gospel.
3. In your group, share the name of at least one person whom you know who needs Christ. Spend time praying as a group for each unbeliever mentioned.
4. People around the world are spiritually hungry to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Discuss with your group how people on your campus, in your neighborhood or community are coming to Christ.
5. What barriers do Christians need to overcome to make the Great Commission first priority in their lives? What do you think will happen when these barriers are turned over to Christ?
6. All of us have resources and talents that can be used to accelerate the fulfilling of the Great Commission. Share with your group one special resource that you believe God has given you.
7. "Goal plus Plan plus Action equals Reality." Formulate a strategy with your group to help reach your community for Christ.
8. Now that you have formed a group strategy, it should be easier to develop a personal strategy to reach your friends, neighbors and loved ones. Share with your group what you envision one phase of your personal strategy will be.

No.8

How You Can Love By Faith

The Greatest Power Ever Known

The beautiful ballroom of the Marriott Hotel in Chicago was crowded to capacity with more than thirteen hundred college students and Campus Crusade staff. They seemed to hang on to every word as I explained one of the most exciting spiritual discoveries that I had ever made - how to love by faith.

For years I had spoken on the subject of love. I had a simple four-point outline:

1. God loves you unconditionally.
2. You are commanded to love others - God, your neighbors, your enemies.
3. You are incapable of loving others in your own strength.
4. You can love others with God's love.

But, as in the case of most sermons on love, something was missing. Then some years ago, in an early hour of the morning, I was awakened from a deep sleep. I knew that God had something to say to me. I felt impressed to get up, open my Bible and kneel to read and pray. What I discovered during the next two hours has since enriched my life and the lives of tens of thousands of others. I had learned how to love.

With this discovery, God gave me the command to share this wonderful truth with Christians around the world. In that life-changing time of fellowship with the Lord, I was given a fifth point for my sermon on love - *we love by faith*.

Love is the greatest thing in the world - the greatest privilege and power known to man. Its emphasis in life and word changed the course of history as the first-century Christians demonstrated a quality of life never before witnessed on this earth. The Greeks, Romans, the Gentiles and Jews hated one another. The very idea of love and self-sacrifice was foreign to their thinking. When they observed Christians from many nations, with different languages and cultures, actually loving one another and sacrificing to help each other, they responded in amazement, "Behold, how these people love one another!"

I challenged the students at the conference to become part of a revolution of love. I suggested that they make a list of all the individuals they did not like and begin to love them by faith.

Early the next morning, a young woman with sparkling eyes and face aglow said to me, "My life was changed last night. For many years I have hated my parents. I haven't seen them since I was seventeen, and now I am twenty-two. I left home as a result of a

quarrel five years ago and haven't written or talked to them since, though they have tried repeatedly to encourage me to return home. I determined that I would never see them again. I hated them.

"Before becoming a Christian a few months ago," she continued, "I had become a drug addict, a dope pusher and a prostitute. Last night you told me how to love my parents, and I could hardly wait to get out of that meeting and call them. Can you believe it? I now really love them with God's kind of love and can hardly wait to see them."

Everybody wants to be loved. Most psychologists agree that man's greatest need is to love and be loved. No barrier can withstand the mighty force of love.

There are three Greek words translated into the one English word "love"; eros, which suggests sensual desire - it does not appear in the New Testament; phileo, which is used for friendship or love of one's friends or relatives - it conveys a sense of loving someone because he is worthy of love; and agape, which is God's love: the purest, deepest kind of love - it is expressed not through mere emotions but as an act of one's will.

Agape is God's supernatural, unconditional love for you revealed supremely through our Lord's death on the cross for our sins. It is the supernatural love He wants to produce in you and through you to others, by His Holy Spirit. Agape love is given because of the character of the person loving rather than because of the worthiness of the object of that love. Sometimes it is love "in spite of" rather than "because of."

God underscores the importance of this kind of love through the inspired pen of the apostle Paul, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 13. In this beautiful and remarkable passage of Scripture, Paul writes that, apart from love, anything that you might do for God or others is of no value. Consider these words:

If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages without learning them, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making noise.

If I had the gift of prophecy and knew all about what is going to happen in the future, knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would it do? Even if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, I would still be worth nothing at all without love.

If I gave everything I have to poor people, and if I were burned alive for preaching the Gospel but didn't love others, it would be of no value whatever"

In other words, no matter what you do for God and for others, it is of no value unless you are motivated by God's love.

Five Truths About Love

But what is *agape*? How does this kind of love express itself?

Paul gives us an excellent description:

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. it is not irritable or touchy. it does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.

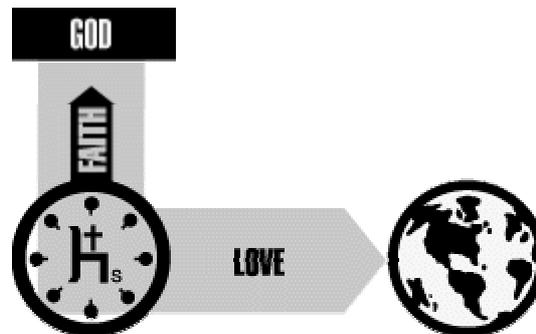
It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. you will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.

All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever...

There are three things that remain - faith, hope, and love - and the greatest of these is love.

In the next chapter the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, admonishes: "Let love be your greatest aim."

Let me share with you five vital truths about love that will help you understand the basis for loving by faith.



1. God Loves you Unconditionally

God loves with *agape*, the love described in 1 Corinthians 13. He loves you so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for you, that you might have everlasting life. His love is not based on performance. Christ loves you so much that while you were yet a sinner, He died for you.

God's love for you is unconditional and undeserved. He loves you in spite of your disobedience, your weakness, your sin and your selfishness. He loves you enough to provide a way to abundant, eternal life. From the cross Christ cried out, Father, forgive

them for they know not what they are doing." If God loved those who are sinners that much, can you imagine how much He loves you - His child through faith in Christ and who seeks to please Him?

The parable of the prodigal son, as recorded in Luke 15, illustrates God's unconditional love for His children. A man's younger son asked his father for his share of the estate, packed his belongings, and took a trip to a distant land where he wasted all of his money on parties and prostitutes. About the time that his money was gone, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He finally came to his senses and realized that his father's hired men at least had food to eat. He decided, "I will go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and am no longer worthy of being called your son. please take me on as a hired man.'"

While he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming and was filled with loving pity. he ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. I think that the reason he saw his son coming while he was still a long distance away was that he was praying for his son's return and spent much time each day watching that lonely road on which his son would return.

Even as the son was making his confession, the father interrupted to instruct the servants to kill the fatted calf and prepare for a celebration - his lost son had repented; he had changed his mind and had returned to become part of the family again.

God demonstrated His love for us before we were Christians, but this story makes it obvious that God continues to love his child who has strayed far from Him. He eagerly awaits his return to the Christian family and fellowship.

Even when you are disobedient, he continues to love you, waiting for you to respond to His love and forgiveness. Paul writes:

Since by his blood he did all this for us as sinners, how much more will he do for us now that he has declared us not guilty? Now he will save us fro all of God's wrath to come. And since, when we were his enemies, we were brought back to God by the death of His Son, what blessings he must have for us now that we are his friends, and he is living within us!

The love that God has for you is far beyond our human comprehension. Jesus prayed, "My prayer for all of them (the disciples and believers of all ages) is that they will be of one heart and mind, just as you and I are, Father...I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one - so that the world will know you sent me and will understand that *you love them as much as you love me.*"



Think of it! God loves you as much as He loves His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus. What a staggering, overwhelming truth to comprehend! You need have no fear of someone who loves you perfectly. You need never be reluctant to trust God with your entire life for He truly loves you. And the almost unbelievable part of it is that He loves you even when you are disobedient.

Even on the human level, loving parents display such love. I loved my sons as much when they were disobedient as I did when they were good. For their sakes, because I do love them, I sometimes found it necessary to correct them. So it is in your relationship with God. When you are disobedient, He disciplines or corrects you because He loves you.

Hebrews 12 teaches about the love that motivates God's discipline:

Have you quite forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you, his child? He said, "My son, don't be angry when the Lord punishes you. Don't be discouraged when he has to show you where you are wrong. For when he punishes you, it proves that he loves you...Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. whoever heard of a son who was never corrected?"

Since we respect our fathers here on earth, though they punish us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to God's training so that we can begin to really live?

Our earthly fathers trained us for a few brief years, doing the best for us that they knew how, but God's correction is always right and for our best good, that we may share his holiness. Being punished isn't enjoyable while it is happening - it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in grace and character.

Christ's death on the cross has once and for all satisfied the wrath and justice of God for the believer's sin. God chastens and disciplines you to help you grow and mature spiritually.

The early Christians endured persecution, hardships and unbelievable suffering. Yet Paul wrote to them:

Who then can ever keep Christ's love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because He doesn't love us anymore? And if we are hungry, or penniless, or in danger, or threatened with death, has God deserted us? No, for the Scriptures tell us that for his sake we must be ready to face death at every moment of the day - we are like sheep awaiting slaughter; but despite all this overwhelming victory is ours though Christ who loved us enough to die for us.

For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away.

Our fears for today, or worries about tomorrow or where we are - high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean - nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when He died for us.

Such love is beyond our ability to grasp with our minds, but it is not beyond our ability to experience with our hearts.

2. You Are Commanded to Love

A certain lawyer asked Jesus, "Sir, which is the most important command in the laws of Moses?"

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: 'Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.' All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets stem from these two laws and are fulfilled if you obey them. Keep only these and you will find that you are obeying all the others."

At one time in my Christian life I was troubled over the command to love God so completely. How could I ever measure up to such a high standard? Two very important considerations have helped me to desire to love and please Him completely.

First, the Holy Spirit has filled my heart with God's love, as promised in Romans:

We know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

Second, by meditating on the attributes of God and the wonderful things He has done and is doing for me, I find my love for Him growing. I love Him because He first loved me.

How could God love me so much that He was willing to die for me? Why should God choose me to be His child? By what merit do I deserve to be his ambassador to tell this good news of His love and forgiveness to the world? On what basis do I deserve the privilege of His constant presence and His in-dwelling Spirit, of His promise to supply all of my needs according to His riches in glory? Why should I have the privilege - denied to most of the people of the world who do not know our Savior - of awaking each morning with a song in my heart and praise to Him on my lips for the love and joy and peace that He so generously gives to all who place their trust in his dear Son, the Lord Jesus?

I was a new Christian when I proposed to Vonette, who is now my wife. She had been an active church member, although - I discovered later - she was not a Christian at that time. Imagine her distress when, in my zeal for Christ, I explained to her that I loved God more than I loved her and that He would always be first in my life. I failed to

explain, nor did I even realize at the time, that it was exactly because of my love for God that I was able to love her so much. Later, before we were married, she too experienced God's love and forgiveness and became His child.

Through the years He has become first in her life also, and because He is now first in each of our lives, we enjoy a much deeper love relationship than we could otherwise have known. Though my responsibilities in His service take me to many parts of the world and I am often away from her and our home, we both find our joy and fulfillment in Him. The times when we are privileged to be together are all the richer because of our mutual love for Him and His love for us.

The one who has not yet learned to love God and to seek Him above all else and all others is to be pitied, for that person is missing the blessings that await all who love God with all their heart, soul and mind.

It is natural for you to fulfill the command to love your neighbors as yourself if you truly love God with all your heart, soul and mind. If you are properly related to God on the vertical plane, you will be properly related to others on the horizontal plane.

For example, billiard balls, rolling freely on a table, naturally bounce away from each other because of the nature of their construction. But if we tie strings to several balls and lift them perpendicular to the table, the balls will cluster together.

When individual Christians are vitally yoked to Christ and related to God and are walking in the Spirit, loving Him with all their hearts, souls and minds, they will fulfill God's command to love others as themselves.

The apostle Paul explains:

If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him. And you won't sin with his wife or want what is his or do anything else the Ten Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Love does no wrong to anyone. That's why it fully satisfies all of God's requirements. it is the only law you need.

It is love for God and for others that results in righteousness, in fruit, and in glory to Christ.

Also, you were commanded to love others because such love testifies to your relationship with the Father. You demonstrate that you belong to Christ by your love for others. The apostle John practically equates your salvation with the way you love others when he says that if you don't love others, you do not know God, for He is love.

John says:

If someone who is supposed to be a Christian has money enough to live well, and sees a brother in need, and won't help him - how can God's love be within him? Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.

Jesus says:

I demand that you love each other as much as I love you.

As a Christian you should love your neighbor because your neighbor is a creature of God made in the image of God; because God loves your neighbor; and because Christ died for your neighbor. Following the example of our Lord, you should love everyone, even as Christ did. You should devote your life to helping others experience His love and forgiveness.

Jesus also said:

There is a saying, "Love your friends and hate your enemies." But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too.

If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathen do that.

When Christians begin to act like Christians and love God, their neighbors, their enemies and especially their Christian brothers - regardless of color, race or class - we will see in our time, as in the first century, a great transformation in the whole of society. People will marvel when they observe our love in the same way people marveled when they observed those first century believers saying, "How they love one another."

I counsel many students and older adults who are not able to accept themselves. Some are weighted down with guilt because of unconfessed sins; others are not reconciled to their physical handicaps. Still others feel inferior mentally or socially. My counsel to one and all is, "God loves you and accepts you as you are. You must do the same. Get your eyes off yourself! Focus your love and attention on Christ and on others. Begin to lose yourself in service for him and for your fellow man."

God's kind of love is a unifying force among Christians! Paul admonishes us to "put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" that our "hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love." Only God's universal love can break through the troublesome barriers that are created by human differences. Only a common devotion to Christ - the source of love - can relieve tension, ease mistrust, encourage openness, bring out the best in people, and enable them to serve Christ together in a more fruitful way.

One mother shared that the discovery of these principles enabled her to be more patient and kind to her husband and children. "The children were driving me out of my mind with all of their childish demands," she confided. "I was irritable with them, and because I was so miserable, I was a critical and nagging wife. No wonder my husband found excuses to work late at the office. It is all different now - God's love permeates our home since I learned how to love by faith."

A husband reported, "My wife and I have fallen in love all over again, and I am actually enjoying working in my office with men whom I couldn't stand before I learned how to love by faith."

3. You Cannot Love in Your Own Strength

Just as surely as "those who are in the flesh (the worldly, carnal person) cannot please God," so in your own strength you cannot love as you ought.

You cannot demonstrate *agape*, God's unconditional love for others, through your own efforts. How many times have you resolved to love someone? How often have you tried to manufacture some kind of positive, loving emotion toward another person for whom you felt nothing? It is impossible, isn't it? In your own strength it is not possible to love with God's kind of love.

By nature people are not patient and kind. We are jealous, envious and boastful. We are proud, haughty, selfish and rude, and we demand our own way. We could never love others the way God loves us!

4. You Can Love With God's Love

It was God's kind of love that brought you to Christ. It is this kind of love that is able to sustain and encourage you each day. Through His love in you, you can bring others to Christ and minister to fellow believers as God has commanded.

God's love was supremely expressed in the life of Jesus Christ. You have a perfect, complete picture of God's kind of love in the birth, character, teachings, life, death and resurrection of His Son.

How does this love enter your life? It becomes yours the moment you receive Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell your life. The Scripture says, "We feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." God is Spirit and the "fruit of the Spirit is love..." When you are controlled by the Spirit, you can love with God's love.

When Christ comes into your life and you become a Christian, God gives you the resources to be a different kind of person. With the motivation, He also gives you the ability. He provides you with a new kind of love.

But how do you make love a practical reality in your life? How do you love? By resolutions? By self-imposed discipline? No. The only way to love is explained in my final point.

5. You Love By Faith

Everything about the Christian life is based on faith. You love by faith just as you received Christ by faith, just as you are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith, and just as you walk by faith.



If the fruit of the Spirit is love, you may logically ask, "Is it not enough to be filled with the Spirit?" This will be true from God's point of view, but it will not always be true in your actual experience.

Many Christians have loved with God's love and have demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit in their lives without consciously or specifically claiming His love by faith. Yet, without being aware of the fact, they were indeed loving by faith; therefore, they did not find it necessary to claim God's love by faith as a specific act.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "without faith it is impossible to please Him." Obviously there will be no demonstration of God's love where there is no faith.

If you have difficulty in loving others, remember that Jesus has commanded, "Love each other as much as I love you." It is God's will for you to love. He would not command you to do something that He will not enable you to do. In 1 John 5:14,15, God promises that if you ask anything according to His will, He hears and answers you. Relating this promise to God's command, you can claim by faith the privilege of loving with His love.

God has an unending supply of His divine, supernatural, agape love for you. It is for you to claim, to grow on, to spread to others, and thus to reach hundreds and thousands with the love that counts, the love that will bring them to Jesus Christ.

In order to experience and share this love, you must claim it by faith; that is, trust His promise that He will give you all that you need to do His will on the basis of His command and promise.

This truth is not new. It has been recorded in God's Word for two thousand years. But it was a new discovery to me that early morning some years ago and, since that time, to many thousands of other Christians with whom I have shared it. When I began to practice loving by faith, I found that problems of tension with other individuals seemed to disappear, often miraculously.

In one instance, I was having a problem loving a fellow staff member. It troubled me. I wanted to love him. I knew that I was commanded to love him; yet, because of certain areas of inconsistency and personality differences, it was difficult for me to love him. But the Lord reminded me of 1 Peter 5:7, "Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you." I decided to give this problem to Him and love this man by faith. When I claimed God's love for the man by faith, my concern lifted. I knew the matter was in God's hands.

An hour later, I found under my door a letter from that very man, who had no possible way of knowing what I had just experienced. In fact, his letter had been written the day before. The Lord has foreseen the change in me. This friend and I met together that afternoon and had the most wonderful time of prayer and fellowship we had ever experienced together. Loving with God's love by faith had changed our relationship.

Two gifted attorneys had great professional animosity, even hatred one for the other. Even though they were distinguished members of the same firm, they were constantly criticizing and making life miserable for each other.

One of the men received Christ through our ministry and some months later came for counsel.

"I have hated and criticized my partner for years," he said, "and he has been equally antagonistic toward me. But now that I am a Christian, I don't feel right about continuing our warfare. What shall I do?"

"Why not ask your partner to forgive you and tell him that you love him?" I suggested.

"I could never do that!" he exclaimed. "That would be hypocritical. I don't love him. How could I tell him I love him when I don't?"

I explained that God commands His children to love even their enemies and that His agape, supernatural, unconditional love is an expression of our will which we exercise by faith.

For example, the 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love is:

... very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost., You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.

"You will note," I explained, "that each of these descriptions of love is not an expression of the emotions, but of the will."

Together we knelt to pray and my friend asked God's forgiveness for his critical attitude toward his law partner and claimed God's love for him by faith.

Early the next morning, my friend walked into his partner's office and announced, "Something wonderful has happened to me. I have become a Christian. And I have come to ask you to forgive me for all that I have done to hurt you in the past and to tell you that I love you."

His partner was so surprised and convicted of his own sin that he responded to this amazing confession by asking my friend to forgive him. Then to my friend's surprise, his partner said, "I would like to become a Christian, too. Would you show me what I need to do?"

After my friend showed him how through the *Four Spiritual Laws*, they knelt together to pray. Then they both came to tell me of this marvelous miracle of God's love.

A special assistant to a former governor of California once visited our headquarters at Arrowhead Springs, and during his visit he received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. He began to discover how to love by faith. Recently his son had left home after they had had an argument. Contemplating the problem, this new Christian realized that he had never told his son that he loved him. On his way home from Arrowhead Springs, he asked the Lord to bring his son home so that he could make things right. He wanted to express his love for him. As he neared his home, his heart quickened. The upstairs light was on indicating that the son had come home! Soon, father and son embraced, became reconciled, and established a new relationship founded on God's forgiving love.

A young college football player, who had been raised in a community where blacks are resented, had always found it impossible to love blacks. One evening he heard me talk to a group of racially mixed students about loving by faith, especially in reference to loving those of other races.

"As you prayed," he told me later, "I claimed God's love for the black man. Then, as I left the amphitheater, the first person I saw was a black man, and he was talking to a

white girl. Now that is about as explosive a situation as you can imagine for a man who hates blacks. But suddenly I felt a compassion for that black man! At one time, I would have hated him and probably would have been rude and angry with him. But God heard my prayer."

That same evening a young black couple approached me in the lobby of the Arrowhead Springs hotel. They were radiant.

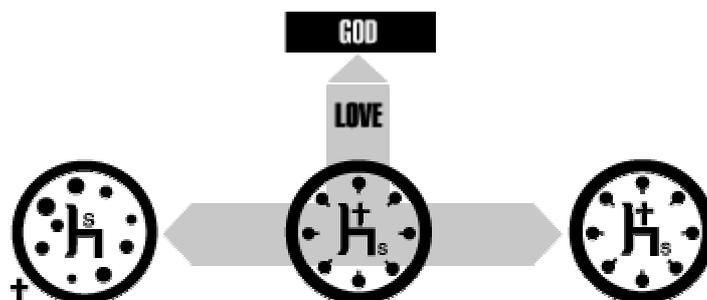
"Something wonderful happened to me tonight," the young woman said. I was liberated from my hatred for the white man. I have hated whites since I was a little girl. I have known that as a Christian I should love white people, but I couldn't help myself. I hated whites and wanted to get revenge. Tonight I have begun to love whites by faith, and it really works."

The young man added, "It worked for me, too; now my hatred for whites is gone. Thank you for telling us how to love by faith.

Whites who have hated blacks and blacks who have hated whites have discovered God's supernatural love for each other. Christian husbands and wives who were living in conflict have claimed God's love by faith, and miracles have resulted. Parent-child struggles have been resolved and generation gaps have been bridged through loving by faith. Disputes in working situations have been resolved. Enemies cease to be enemies when you love them by faith. God's love has a way of dissolving prejudice and breaking down barriers.

Love is the greatest power known to man. It changed the course of the first-century world, and God is using it to bring a great revolution in the twentieth century. Nothing can overcome God's love.

In the first century there was a wedding of love and faith resulting in a great spiritual revolution throughout the known world. Then both were lost during the Dark Ages. The realization of Martin Luther and his colleagues that the "just shall live by faith" ushered in the Reformation and another mighty movement of God's Spirit. But there was little love. In fact, there was often great conflict.



Today, God is bringing back to our remembrance the biblical wedding of the two - faith and love. Through faith, that supernatural, divine love of God will reach out where

nothing else can go to capture men and women for Christ. The love which results from that faith will captivate people everywhere so that, as we live and love by faith, we will spread God's love throughout the world. This love is contagious, attractive and aggressive. It creates hunger for God. It is active - constantly looking for loving things to do, people to uplift, and lives to change.

Leonard is an example. The night he received Christ as his personal Savior, his heart was filled with love, and a great change came over him. Until then he had hated everyone and everything.

Often when he came home drunk at night, he would kick his dog to get him off the porch. In the process, the dog would bark, growl and try to bite him. Reeling and rocking under the influence of alcohol, Leonard would chase the dog around the table outside.

Soon his wife would get into the fray. They would curse each other and fight. Eventually, he would kick the dog off the porch, scattering chairs and flower pots in all directions.

"But the night I received Christ," he relates, "I was so filled with love I think even the dog sensed I was different. He raised himself on his belly and crawled toward me, then lay down on the same feet that had kicked him all the other nights."

Take The Step

Agape love frequently expresses itself as a flow of compassion. Jesus said, "Rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me."

Compassion is one of these rivers. It is a gentle stream of tenderness and concern for another person's need. Such love compelled Jesus to feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowing, heal the sick, teach the multitude, and raise the dead.

Most of us at some time in our lives have experienced this flow of love toward someone.

Perhaps you felt it while washing the dishes, or while working on the job, or driving down the freeway, or sitting in a classroom. You couldn't explain it, but your impulse was to do something special for that person.

I encourage you to take the first step; start loving by faith and follow that flow. It is God's compassion streaming toward the one in need. The tug of love within you means that He is filling you with godly compassion and that He has chosen you to minister to that individual.

Ask God to manifest His tender compassion through you in some way today. As you pray, ask Him to lay someone on your heart. When you sense God's love flowing through you to that individual, find out his need and begin ministering to that need. By

following the leading of God's Spirit, you can help those whom the Lord has prepared for His transforming touch, and you will become part of His miraculous provision. When God leads you to help someone, He will enable you to do what He leads you to do.

A Japanese magazine has a picture of a butterfly on one of its pages. Its color is a dull gray until warmed by one's hand. The touch of a hand causes the special inks in the printing to react, and the dull gray is transformed into a flashing rainbow of color.

What other things can be thus changed by the warmth of your interest and *agape* love? Your family? Your church? Your city? This hurting world is hungry for the touch of someone who cares - who really cares! Through God's *agape* kind of love, you can be that someone.

Make A List

But what about those who seem unlikable? People with whom you may have difficulty getting along? Individuals whose attitudes rub you the wrong way? I encourage you to make a list of people you do not like and begin to love them by faith. Perhaps you will place yourself on the list. Have you thought of applying the truths of 1 Corinthians 13 to yourself by faith? Ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you. You have no reason to dislike yourself when your Creator has already forgiven you and demonstrated His unconditional love by dying for you!

If Christ is in you, you are complete because Christ Himself is perfect love, perfect peace, perfect patience, perfect kindness. He is all goodness, and He is in you! Whenever Satan tries to attack you by reminding you of sins which you have already confessed or by magnifying your weaknesses and shortcomings claim in faith the forgiveness and righteousness of God, and thank Him that, on the authority of His Word, you do not have to be intimidated by Satan's accusation. Thank God that you are His child and that your sins are forgiven. Thank God that Satan has no control over you except that which is allowed by God. Then cast this care on the Lord as we are commanded to do in 1 Peter 5:7.

Perhaps your boss, a fellow employee, your spouse, your children or your father or mother is on the list of those whom you will love by faith. Pray for each person. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with Christ's love for all of them. Then, seek to meet with them as you draw upon God's limitless inexhaustible, overwhelming love for them by faith. Expect God to work through you! Watch Him use your smile, your words, your patience to express His love for each individual.

Love by faith every one of your "enemies" - everyone who angers you, ignores you, bores you or frustrates you. People are waiting to be loved with God's love.

A homemaker who, through a long cold winter, had seen her family through mumps, measles, a broken nose, three new teeth for the baby and countless other difficulties, reached the point where these pressures and demands became too much for her. Finally, on her knees, she began to protest, "Oh Lord! I have so much to do!" But imagine her surprise when she heard herself say, "Oh Lord! I have so much to love!" You will never run out of opportunities to love by faith.

Remember, the *agape* kind of love is an act of the will, not just an emotion. you love *by faith*. By faith, you can claim God's step by step, person by person.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love..." Like fruit, love grows. Producing fruit requires a seed, then a flower, then pollination, then warm sun and refreshing rains, and even some contrary winds. Similarly in daily life, your love will be warmed by joy, watered by tears and spread by the winds of circumstances. God uses all that you experience to work His will in your life. He is the one who makes your love grow. It is a continual, ever-increasing process. As Paul says, "May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow to each other and to everyone else..."

Let Love Motivate You

Now, how does loving by faith motivate you to engage in aggressive personal evangelism and contribute to the fulfillment of the Great Commission?

When you begin to truly love God by faith with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbors as yourself, you will begin to see men as God sees them - as individuals of great worth, as those for whom Christ died. As a result, we shall be motivated by the same love which constrained the apostle Paul who said, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen."

Love, God's kind of love, causes the Great Commission to become a personal responsibility and privilege. When non-Christians observe believers not only saying that they love one another, but also proving it by their actions, they, like their first-century counterparts, will marvel at "how they love one another" and will be drawn to receive and worship our Savior with us.

How exciting it is to have such a dynamic, joyful force available to us! And it all comes from our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, who explicitly promises in His Word all that you need. You need not guess, nor hope, nor wish. You can claim this love by faith, right now, on the basis of God's command to love and His promise to answer whenever you pray for anything according to His will.

Why not make this prayer your own: "Lord, You would never have commanded me to love had You not intended to enable me to do so. Therefore, right now, on the authority of Your commands for me to love and on the authority of Your promise to answer if I

asked anything according to Your will, I personally claim Your love - the 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love - for You, for all people, and for myself. Amen."

Remember, *How You Can Love By Faith* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- How would you explain the difference between eros, phileo and agape love?
- What is unconditional love? How do you show this kind of love to others?
- What does Romans 8:35-39 tell us about God's love?
- Is the depth of God's love real to you? If so, what affect does that realization have on your life? If not, what can you do to increase your realization of His love?
- How would you obey the command of John 13:34?
- How does 1 John 3:16-19 and 4:14-19 define real love?
- How could you express love in the following situations?
 - a. At home
 - b. At school
 - c. At work
 - d. At church
 - e. At a sporting event
- Why is it important to love yourself? How do you do this? What often keeps a person from loving himself? How does this affect his love for others?
- How and why is love powerful enough to overcome prejudice, hatred, rebellion, anger, fear, or jealousy?
- Why do you feel love? (See Romans 5:5)
- How can you claim God's love? Why is faith important in love?
- What resources can you cling to when you find it difficult to love someone?
 - a. 1 Peter 5:7
 - b. Philippians 4:13
 - c. Colossians 3:2, 13
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13
- How is love expressed in Colossians 1: 28?
- How can you relate the promise in 1 John 5:14, 15 to claiming God's power to love others by faith? How does it relate to your own involvement in personal evangelism?

- Make a list of people you do not like and begin to love them by faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with Christ's love for each of them. Pray for each person. Think of ways you can demonstrate Christ's love to them this week.

Group Discussion Questions

- List and discuss the characteristics of God's love found in 1 Corinthians 13. Name a synonym for or give a short description of each characteristic. Share what each quality means to you.
- Discuss ways in which the church as a body of Christian believers can express its love for God and one another.
- Have each member of your group share about a person in their life whom they consider a "neighbor." In what way can you show love to that person?
- Most of us have at least one weakness in our lives that we find difficult to love. Share this concern (if appropriate) with your group. How does God's love apply to loving yourself in this area?
- Think of an occasion when you had to claim God's power to love your enemy. Share what happened. If there is someone in your life now who seems unlovable, what will you do this week to change that situation?
- What are the basic elements of the command given to believers in Matthew 22:36-40? Share what each element means to you.
- What roles do God's command, His promise and your will play in loving by faith? (See 1 John 5:14,15)
- Loving is a growth process. Share some areas in which God is challenging you to love by faith today.

No.9

How You Can Pray With Confidence

You Can Change The Lives of Men and Nations

Have you ever considered that you have immediate access to the most powerful Person in the universe?

During the last forty years, I have had the honor and privilege of meeting several presidents of the United States.

Every president has a very heavy schedule and tens of thousands of friends and supporters who would like to be invited to meet with him. Because of limited time, only a few are invited. Those who are, must go through meticulous security checks before they are allowed to meet the president.

As a child of God you have the opportunity for an instant audience with the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the President of presidents. Whatever the need, whatever the time, His calendar is cleared to be with you; His schedule is open for your appointment; His full attention is devoted to you.

Not only do you have the ear of the greatest Person in the universe, but has it ever occurred to you, as you kneel in your place of prayer, that you have been given the privilege of being used of God to help change the lives of individuals and nations. God has literally made available to you His vast reservoir of power, wisdom, love and grace, if only you are willing to believe him, to trust and obey Him.

Why are we so spiritually impotent and fruitless today compared to the first-century Christians? I believe the answer is found in the word *unbelief*.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned us, as a demonstration of His loving concern and compassion for the world, to go and share the good news of the gospel everywhere. But we huddle in unbelief in our little prayer meetings and talk of peripheral, superficial matters. We are content to see accomplished in the name of Christ only what we are capable of accomplishing through our own intellect eloquence and organizational skills. Instead of calling upon the mighty God of the universe and believing Him for the supernatural, we go aimlessly on our way - spiritually impotent, unbelieving and fruitless.

The disciples knew and prayed to the omnipotent Creator God. In response to their prayers and dedicated lives, He used them as ambassadors of Christ to turn a wicked Roman Empire upside down. Read their prayer as recorded in Acts 4:

Oh Lord, Creator of heaven and earth and of the sea and everything in them - you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor King David, your servant, saying, "Why do the heathen rage against the Lord, and the foolish nations plan their little plots against Almighty God? The kings of the earth unite to fight against him, and against the anointed Son of God!"

That is happening here in this city today! For Herod the king, and Pontius Pilate the governor, and all the Romans - as well as the people of Israel - are united against Jesus, your anointed Son, your holy servant. They won't stop at anything that you in your wise power will let them do. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and grant to your servants great boldness in their preaching, and send your healing power, and may miracles and wonders be done by the name of your holy servant Jesus.

Is it any wonder that God used these first-century Christians to change the course of history? They knew and served the mighty, all-powerful, sovereign, loving God of the universe. The God whom you worship and serve is the same all-wise, all-powerful, loving God and Father whom they loved and served. His power has not changed - He longs to do the same through you and me that He accomplished through those first-century believers.

For more than a year before Campus Crusade for Christ began, I led church teams into college dormitories, fraternities and sororities in the Los Angeles area; yet, to my knowledge, not a single person committed his or her life to Christ at any of these meetings.

But when God called this ministry into being in the spring of 1951, we immediately formed a twenty-four-hour prayer chain and divided the prayer time into ninety-six, fifteen-minute periods. Scores of Christians invested fifteen minutes in prayer every day on behalf of our new ministry at the University of California at Los Angeles.

During the very first sorority meeting at UCLA after the prayer chain began, more than half of the sixty women present expressed a desire to receive Christ. Over the next few months, more than 250 students at UCLA - including the president of the student body, the editor of the newspaper and a number of top athletes - committed their lives to Jesus Christ. So great was their influence for Christ that the campus chimes began to play Christian hymns at noon each day!

This unprecedented demonstration of God's blessing was no accident. God was responding to the prayers of many of His children. His blessing continues to this day as He is using Campus Crusade for Christ to help introduce tens of millions of people to our Savior and then build disciples in all the major countries of the world. Prayer continues to be our major emphasis.

Answers To Your Questions On Prayer

1. What is Prayer?
2. Who Can Pray?
3. Why Are You to Pray?
4. To Whom Do You Pray?
5. When Should You Pray?
6. What Should Be Included in Prayer?

We have learned through the years that the average Christian does not know how to pray. A friend of mine who has been a Christian for more than fifty years told me, "I never pray in public, and I know very little about prayer of how to pray." Because so many Christians - new and old alike - know so little about prayer, I wish to share with you some simple, basic truths and answer some vital questions about prayer.

1. What Is Prayer?

Someone has said, "Prayer is a dialogue between two people who love each other - God and man." Simply put, prayer is communicating with God. Every Christian has a direct line of communication with God, available at all times. But most Christians never lift the phone off the hook and often forget the line exists until an emergency arises.

Prayer is much more than words, however. It is an expression of the heart towards God. It is an experience, a relationship, not an activity.

As a child of God you are invited to come boldly before His throne. "Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," Paul writes, "let us...then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Because the one to whom you pray is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Creator of heaven and earth, you come into His presence with reverence. But He is also your loving heavenly Father who cares for you and delights in having fellowship with you. Therefore, you can enter into His presence with a relaxed joyful heart, knowing God loves you more than anyone else has ever loved you or will ever love you.

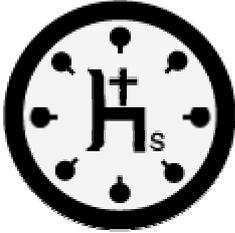
To me, real prayer is simply communicating with God, inviting Him to talk to you as you talk to Him. There is more to prayer, but this is basic to true prayer.

2. Who can pray?

Anyone can pray. However, only those who walk in faith and obedience to Christ can expect to receive answers to their prayers. On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus promised to those who belong to Him, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

GOD

PRAYER



Man instinctively prays whenever He is faced with tragedy, heartache, sorrow or danger - even if only to false gods made of wood, stone, or His own fallen imagination.

But serious danger exists in this. People always assimilate the moral character of the objects they worship. Those who worship gods of lust, for example, become morally degenerate. Those who pray to gods of blood, fire and war, become militaristic, ruthless and sadistic. Those who bow to the god of materialism become greedy and self-centered. Prayer to anything or anyone apart from God through our Lord Jesus Christ is forbidden. God's Word declares:

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...

Paul writes that "anyone who comes to Him (God) must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." By coming to Christ and worshipping Him, you are changed into His image:

We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

This explains the scriptural emphasis on the worship of and prayer to the only true righteous, holy and loving God.

According to the Scriptures, "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men..." Jesus Himself claims to be the only way to God. He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Does this sound too exclusive? No. Jesus Christ came to die for all people in all lands. He promises rest for all who are weary and heavy-laden. Many people who have ignored God for a lifetime come to a difficult situation near the end of life and are too embarrassed to turn to Him in prayer. They reason, "I've ignored God all my life - it's too late now."

Do not feel this way. God listens to the prayer of any truly repentant individual. He proved His love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still in our sins. There is nothing that you or I can do that will cause God to stop loving us.

The fact still remains, however, that you cannot expect God to answer your prayers unless you come to Him in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus as your only mediator and confess your sins and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

Those who have clean hearts can pray. You must not only ask in the name of Jesus. You must also come with a clean heart. The psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear: Therefore, you cannot expect God to answer your prayers if there is any unconfessed sin in your life. Just as the omission of one ingredient in a cake recipe can result in failure, so the omission of confessing any known sin can result in prayer failure.

Those who have a forgiving spirit can pray. One of the most frequent hindrances to prayer is an unforgiving spirit. Jesus said, "When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive Him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." In our Lord's prayer, the words "give" and "forgive" occur in the same context: "Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." No prayer except the prayer of confession can be answered by God unless it comes from a heart that is free of unforgiveness and bitterness.

The well-worn compromise, "Well, I can forgive, but I can't forget," only defeats your prayers. What if that were God's attitude? His love has prompted a wonderful forgetfulness in which He has pledged to put all of your sins behind His back and remember them against you no more. You and I must come to God with a forgiving heart if we are to receive the Christian's legacy of power in prayer.

Those who pray in faith can pray. You must also have a believing heart if your prayers are to be answered. The same Lord who says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" and, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" also says, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" and, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" and, "According to your faith will it be done to you." Yet few of us take seriously these words, and few dare to claim what God has so generously promised us.

3. Why Are You to Pray?

You pray because God commands you to pray. The New Testament commands to pray are many. Here are a few; Pray continually.

Watch and pray. Pray with thanksgiving. Pray in the Spirit. Always pray and not give up. Pray for those in authority. Pray for utterance. Pray for boldness.

You pray because of our Lord's example. Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, was obedient in prayer. Although His day was filled from morning to night with many pressures and responsibilities - addressing crowds, healing the sick, granting private interviews, traveling and training His disciples - He made prayer a priority. If Jesus was so

dependent upon this fellowship in prayer alone with His Father, how much more should you and I spend time alone with God!

You pray because of the examples of the disciples and others. The lives of the disciples and the biographies of Christians who have been mightily used of God through the centuries all testify to the necessity of prayer. They, too, are examples of obedience to His command to pray.

I'm not suggesting that you need to spend long hours each day in prayer, though some are called to this high privilege. But you can "pray continually," bringing everything to God in prayer. Those who obey God's command to pray are mightily blessed and used of God.

You pray to have fellowship with God. God waits anxiously for you to come to Him in prayer. Proverbs records, "The prayer of the upright is His delight." This should motivate you to spend more time with our Lord because you wish to please and delight Him.

My own sons help me to realize the importance of this fact. No matter how busy I am, when Zachary or Bradley want to talk with me, I gladly put aside everything else just to have fellowship with them. I long and love to be with them, and I am always grateful when they want to be with me.

One day, many years ago as I was studying in our home, Zachary appeared with a stack of books and sat down across from me at the table. Although neither of us spoke, I sensed the warmth of His love.

I finally broke the silence by saying, "Zac, I want you to know how much it means to me that you have come to sit with me." He replied, "Daddy, that's the reason I came. I just want to be near you.:"

For the first time in my life, I really understood how the great heart of our loving God delights in us and longs for our fellowship.

You pray to communicate with God. He said, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." Prayer is not just an "escape hatch" for you to get out of trouble, please yourself or gain your selfish ends. It is your line of communication with God. As His child, you have direct access to His throne. He loves you so much that He has made Himself available to you at all times. Through prayer you talk to God and He responds to you.

You pray to receive spiritual nurture. Just as a child needs food to grow physically, so you need food to grow spiritually. You can miss a meal and not feel any ill effects, but if you go without food for a week, you begin to weaken and run out of energy. So it is with your spiritual life. You can go through one day without any apparent ill effects, but if

you continue this practice, you will become undernourished, losing the strength to live a victorious life and to maintain the boldness necessary for a vital witness for Christ.

You pray to obtain results. Genuine, biblically-based prayer does change things. It so changes those who pray that God is free to reveal His will to them. Prayer also releases God's great power to change the course of nature and people and nations. The faithful prayers of Spirit-filled, believing Christians have proven this many times over.

Many buildings on the grounds of Arrowhead Springs, our international headquarters, including the bungalow where Vonette and I live, came extremely close to being engulfed in flames during a terrible brush fire several years ago. Seven of the buildings were destroyed.

After evacuating the grounds, a group of people who remained to fight the fire prayed earnestly at about two-thirty in the afternoon that God would turn the ninety mile-per-hour winds away from the buildings. Precisely while they were praying, one of the firefighters observed the flag snapping violently in the wind. Suddenly, the flag began to turn and within moments was flapping in the opposite direction. They all were awestruck at what God had done before their very eyes.

Urgent word also came to Vonette and me at about two-thirty that the flames had enveloped the campus of our headquarters including our bungalow. We, too got on our knees and began to pray that God would turn the winds.

Those who were fighting the fire reported that the heat and smoke became so intense, they were forced to lie on the ground in order to breathe as they sprayed water on the buildings. At about two-thirty they were at the point of abandoning our bungalow to the flames surrounding it on three sides - when suddenly the winds miraculously shifted and swept the flames in another direction. Many similar, dramatic answers to prayer could be shared. Yes, prayer truly changes.

You pray to become a fruitful witness for Christ. The divine order is first to talk to God about men and then to talk to men about God. Witnessing is simply gathering the results of prayer, both the prayer of the one who is sharing Christ and the prayers of other. I am convinced that the single most important factor in my becoming a Christian was the prayers of my godly mother.

4. To Whom Do You Pray?

You pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says:

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.

Your prayers are validated by Jesus Christ and are interpreted to God the Father by the Holy Spirit. But since God is one God, manifested in three persons, it is perfectly acceptable to pray to Jesus or to the Holy Spirit. There is no jealousy between the three persons of the Trinity. But the scriptural pattern which Jesus taught addressed the Father.

It is meaningful and encouraging to realize that as you are praying, both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are interceding. Paul tells us in Romans 8:34, "Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

Earlier in Romans 8 Paul wrote, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."



5. When Should You Pray?

There is a sense in which I pray without ceasing, talking to God hundreds of times a day about everything. I begin my day on my knees in prayer, worshipping, praising and adoring our great and gracious Creator, God and Father. I acknowledge Jesus Christ as my Lord and Master. By faith, as an act of my will, I appropriate the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I pray for wisdom about the numerous decisions I must make that day. I pray for the salvation of friends and strangers, the healing of the sick, and the spiritual and material needs of the Campus Crusade for Christ ministry, as well as the needs of various members of the staff and leaders of other Christian organizations and their ministries. I pray for our leaders and for those in authority over us. I even pray about small personal matters that are of concern to me alone. And God answers!

I then like to spend whatever time is appropriate reading and meditating on God's Word. I often kneel quietly before the open Bible and talk with God. I ask the Holy Spirit, who inspired its writings, to make my reading meaningful and edifying to me.

As I read, I pause to thank God for His loving salvation and provision, to confess any sins in my life that the Scriptures may reveal, to ask Him for the boldness and faith His apostles displayed, and to thank Him for new insights into His divine strategy for teaching the world with the good news of His love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. I often pause to pray about some special truth or claim a promise.

In the evening I kneel once again to worship my Lord, to read His Word and to ask of Him, "Lord, is there anything in me that is displeasing to You, anything I need to confess?" If the Holy Spirit reveals any sins and weaknesses, I confess them and claim by faith God's victory for my life. Then I can know that since my last conscious thoughts are of Him, my subconscious thoughts will continue to worship Him all night long. Thus when I awaken, my first thoughts will be of our dear Lord.

Group prayer also is vital to the Christian's prayer life and yet few meetings are more dull, unattractive and boring than the average group prayer meeting. The reason is simple. The majority of Christians involved in the group have not spent time with God in private worship and prayer; consequently, they have nothing to say to Him in public except memorized prayers patterned after older Christians who have learned their way of praying from still others.

How much more exciting it is to teach the group to talk to God as though He were actually present, as indeed He is. This permits spontaneous, Spirit-directed prayer in which one area of praise or petition at a time is brought to Him as the Spirit brings subjects to mind. One very rewarding way to pray in small groups is to pray through favorite passages of Scripture verse by verse with each person limited to a thirty-second-or-less prayer. But there are special times of Spirit-directed and anointed prayer which may last for hours but seem like only minutes.

6. What Should Be Included in Prayer?

Certain basic elements should be included in prayer. These can be easily remembered by the word "ACTS," an acronym for the following words:

However, "ACTS" is merely a guideline and not a rigid sequence which you must follow in your prayers.

Let's consider each of these words.

Adoration. To adore God is to worship and praise Him, to honor and exalt Him in your heart and mind and with your lips. Prayer is often misunderstood as a vague, mystical element in one's relationship to a holy, awesome God. But the Word of God does not teach this. Rather, it teaches that God, our Father, desires the fellowship of His children.

ADORATION

CONFESSION

THANKSGIVING

SUPPLICATION

Your relationship to your heavenly Father should be one of complete trust, faith and obedience. Likewise, your prayer should express your complete trust in Him and reflect your confidence that He hears you. As a result, you approach Him in adoration and praise, with reverence and awe, with love and gratitude.

Reading aloud psalms of praise and other similar portions of Scripture can greatly enrich your prayer time. A cold, ungrateful heart will soon be warmed, and praising God will come easily.

Personally, I cringe at such references to God as "the Man upstairs," for the God whom I worship is one whom I also honor and reverence. He is the omnipotent, holy God, creator of all things. Yet, I feel perfectly free to open my heart to Him - to share my deepest heartfelt needs, knowing that He is not only the omnipotent, holy God, but He is also my loving heavenly Father. He loves me more, understands me better, and believes in me more than anyone else in all the world.

I happen to pray in just about every conceivable posture: with my eyes open or my eyes close, while I am walking, while I am lying in bed, audibly and silently. But my favorite posture is on my knees. The first thing I do when I awaken in the morning is to kneel and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus is in control of my life and thank Him that He loves me and is living His life in and through me in all of His resurrection power and presence. I invite Him to continue His ministry of "seeking and saving the lost" through me, to use me in whatever way is pleasing to Him.

Confession. The Christian who needs to be restored to fellowship with Christ should begin with confession. Isaiah declares:

Listen now! The Lord isn't too weak to save you. And He isn't getting deaf! He can hear you when you call! But the trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God. Because for sin He has turned his face away from you and will not listen anymore.

If your discipline of prayer begins with worshipful adoration of God, the Holy Spirit will reveal any sin in your life that needs to be confessed. By seeing God in His purity, His holiness and His love, you become aware of your own sin and unworthiness. As the Holy Spirit makes you aware of sin, you will want to confess it.

Always be totally transparent with God. Don't wear a facade or put on an act. He already knows everything about you. So tell Him exactly how you feel at all times. If you do not feel spiritual, tell Him so. If your heart is cold, confess it. If you have been disobedient, confess it and receive His forgiveness and cleansing which will restore you to fellowship with Him.

Thanksgiving. Nothing pleases God more than your consistent expression of faith. And there's no better way to demonstrate your faith than to say, "Thank You."

The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that without faith it is impossible to please God. God's Word commands, "Give thanks in all circumstances," because "this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." To fail to give thanks is to disobey God.

If you are filled with God's Holy Spirit and recognize that He controls all things, you can thank God not only for the many blessings of each day, but also for the problems and adversities. James says, "Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow." The apostle Paul records, "we can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know that they are good for us - they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady."

May I suggest that you meditate quietly on all of your daily blessings, such as your salvation through knowing Christ, assurance of sins forgiven, the opportunity to serve Christ, the chance to go to school, your good health, family of loved ones, a good job, food and clothing? Thank God for each one of them.

Then make a list of each problem, disappointment, heartache or adversity which concerns you, and thank God in spite of each one of them as you are commanded to do. Giving thanks demonstrates that you really do trust God. Expressing your faith pleases God and enables Him to make Himself strong in your behalf; whereas a critical, unbelieving spirit displeases God and hinders His efforts to bless and enrich your life and to use you for His glory.

Supplication. For many Christians, prayer is like window shopping - they spend much time looking but never buy anything. Supplication includes petition for you own needs and intercession for other. you are to pray for everything and in specific terms. Paul admonishes:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

As you talk to God, pray that your inner person may be renewed and quickened - be made alert and alive, vital, refreshed, always sensitive to and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Pray about your problems, pray for wisdom and guidance, pray for strength to resist temptation, pray for comfort in time of sorrow - pray for everything. There is nothing too small or too great to bring before the Lord.

Then pray for others. Christians often do not realize the importance of intercession. The apostle Paul continually prayed for his converts. He also asked them to pray for him. You should pray for other Christians and encourage them to pray for you.

Let me illustrate the importance of this. In 1960 the Mau Mau uprising gripped Kenya in terror. During that time, missionaries Matt and Lora Higgins had to drive through the heart of Mau Mau territory on their way to Nairobi. They were well aware that both

Kenyans and missionaries had met violent death at the hands of Mau Mau terrorists in that very area.

After dark, about seventeen miles from Nairobi, their Land Rover stalled. Matt tried in vain to repair the vehicle in the darkness. Fearfully, the couple locked themselves in the car and tried to sleep. Together, they prayed Psalm 4:8 aloud, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

When they awoke, Matt repaired the Rover, and they were soon in Nairobi. The following week, a local pastor told the missionaries what had happened while they slept. Three terrorists had crept up to their car, intending to kill them. But when the Mau Mau saw sixteen men surrounding the Rover, they fled in gear!

Matt and Lora were thrilled - and puzzled. "What sixteen men?" they wondered.

Weeks later, back in America, the rest of the story came to light when a friend asked them, "Have you been in any danger lately?"

Matt told Him about the Mau Mau, the stalled car and the sixteen men. The friend nodded excitedly. "On March twenty-third," He said, "God burned my heart for you. I called the men at our church, and sixteen of us met together for emergency prayer on your behalf!"

No doubt heaven will reveal endless accounts of how God has used intercessory prayer to protect His people and to advance His kingdom.

Always pray daily for your husband or wife, for your children and for your parents. Then pray for your neighbors and friends.

Pray for various other Christians to whom God has given special responsibility. Pray for presidents and kings and for all those in authority over you.

Pray especially for the salvation of souls, for a daily opportunity to introduce others to Christ and to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation. Begin with your campus or your community. Pray for and seek to find one or more Christian friends with whom you can establish prayer partnerships.

Don't underestimate the power of intercessory prayer for the salvation of souls. My mother and father were married for thirty-five years before He received Christ. Their love for each other was strong, but dad's indifference to the Lord must have caused my mother to experience much heartache and shed many tears. Nevertheless, she kept praying - for Him, and for my brothers and sisters and me - until finally she began to see results, and our entire family had received the Lord.

I prayed for several years for my fiancée, Vonette Zachary, to receive Christ. When we became engaged, I just knew she was God's choice for me. She had been very active in the church from her youth, and I assumed she was a Christian. As time passed, however, I began to realize that Vonette was a church member but probably not a Christian. There was very little evidence that she had given her life to Christ. So I prayed earnestly for her salvation. Since I had surrendered my life to the Lord before I proposed to Vonette, I dared not marry an unbeliever. Doubts grew and I began to wonder if it was really God's will for me to marry this wonderful and beautiful young woman to whom God was not a reality, even though I loved her dearly.

Then one summer day at a Christian retreat to which I invited her, Vonette surrendered her life to Jesus. My prayers were answered; we were married soon afterward; and we have since spent more than four God-blessed decades together in a wonderful, Christ-centered marriage.

So I can identify with you if you have been praying for a son, daughter, spouse or friend and have not yet seen results. And I encourage you to trust in God's timing. Although I wanted Vonette to receive Christ right away, God chose to wait three years - different time table - one that brought greater glory to Himself. He is sovereign and will answer your prayer in His special way, at His special time.

I encourage you to receive this special word of assurance from God: He desires the soul of your loved one, friend or neighbor even more than you do.

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.

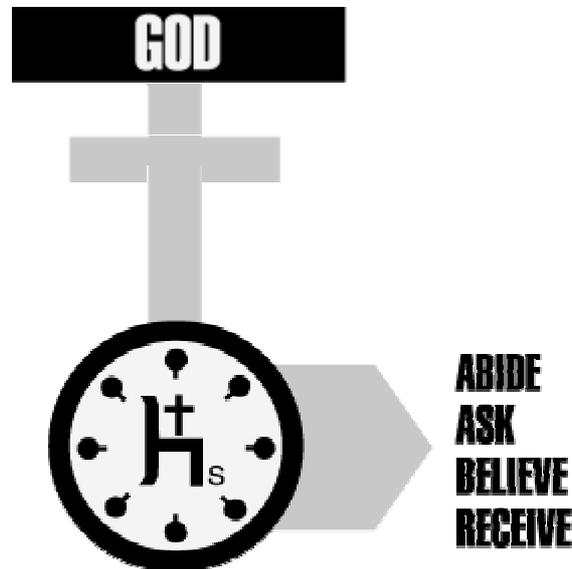
The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Just claim the promise of 1 John 5:14,15, "We are sure of this, that He will listen to us whenever we ask Him for anything in line with His will. And if we really know He is listening when we talk to Him and make our requests, then we can be sure that He will answer us." Then pray for your loved ones and friends with confidence that He will hear you and answer your prayers as He promised.

The ACTS pattern - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication - has helped many Christians to develop a more well-rounded prayer life in communication with their loving God and Father.

How You can Pray with Confidence

How can you expect answers to your prayers? Four imperatives must be followed: abide, ask, believe, receive. Let's look at each of these for a moment.



Abide. Jesus says abiding is the key to successful praying. "If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." in other words, if you are abiding in Christ - if your life is totally yielded to Him and His Word is abiding in you so that you know His will - you can ask anything you want because your will is to do His will.

Abiding, then is simply living a life of faith and obedience in the fullness for the Holy Spirit, surrendered to the Lordship for Christ with no unconfessed sin, and being totally available to God.

Ask. If you expect answers to your prayers, you must ask. James says: "You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Jesus says, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."

In His sermon on the mount, Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seek finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

The unsolved problems in the world are so great they are almost without number. People are still sick; souls are yet unreached for Christ; evil people still wield ungodly political and financial power; and many injustices continue - largely because the children of God do not ask!

Believe. Jesus promises in Matthew 21:22, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Believing is at the heart of answered prayer. But how do you get this faith to believe? Should you try to work up some kind of state of mind that will in some way equal faith? Of course not.

God does not require you to have great faith. You simply are to have faith in a great God. Jesus says:

*If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain,
"Move from here to there" and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*

James instructs you to "ask in faith without any doubting" for the double-minded person cannot expect God to answer His prayers.

You see, it's the quality, not the quantity, of the faith that is important.

Faith comes from God. it is not something you try to muster on your own. A life for faith is experienced only by those who walk in obedience. you cannot be on the throne for your life and still pray in faith. You will never meet a person who has great faith in a great God who refuses to obey the God in whom he is commanded to place his trust.

The Holy Spirit uses three basic means to produce faith in the one praying.

First, *He uses the Word of God.* As you study the Scriptures you learn more and more about the character of God - His love, His wisdom, his power, his works, His sovereignty. The more you know of God, the more you trust Him. "Faith," Paul writes, "comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

Second, *He uses fellowship with other Christians and various circumstances and experiences.* For example your faith in God grows as you observe a friend being used of God to introduce others to Christ. When he shares his experience with you, this encourages you to believe that God can use you, too.

Third, *He uses strong impressions or convictions.* Paul recorded in Philippians 2:13, "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

For example, five young high school students began to sense their responsibility to God according to Matthew 28:18-20. Each of these students felt impressed to make a list of three friends whom he wanted to claim for Christ. The first week they met daily to pray that these friends would sense their need of God. The second week they prayed to be instruments of God. The third week they prayed for opportunities to speak to their friends about Christ. That week fifteen students received the Savior.

Receive. By faith, claim the answer to your request. If you know your are abiding in Christ and are controlled by the Holy Spirit and are praying according to the Word and will of

God, you can expect God to answer your prayer. So be prepared to receive the answer. Imagine right now that you are receiving the answer to your request, and begin to thank God for it.

In 1954 Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile. It had never been broken in all the centuries of recorded history, but Bannister believed it could be done. He developed a mental picture of himself breaking the four-minute mile record, and he did it. Since 1954, several hundred other athletes have broken the four-minute mile, simply because Roger Bannister proved that it could be done.

If an individual with only human resources is able to accomplish outstanding success, how much more can you accomplish when you place your faith in the omnipotent God and draw upon His supernatural, inexhaustible resources?

It is a simple fact that whatever you vividly envision, ardently desire, sincerely believe and enthusiastically act upon must inevitably come to pass - assuming, of course, that there is scriptural authority for it.

Consider, for example, the Great Commission. For many years since that memorable moment when God gave me the vision for his ministry and for the world, I have been strongly impressed that the Holy Spirit wants the Great Commission fulfilled in our generation. Since that original deep impression in 1951, the Great commission has been my number one priority as an expression of my love for our Lord and my desire to obey Him.

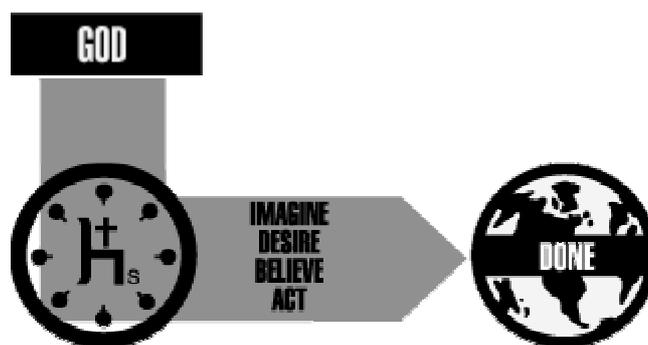
I have a vivid mental picture of what fulfilling the Great Commission will involve - saturating a world of more than six billion people; discipling tens of millions; training key leader representatives in every one of the 210 nations and protectorates of the world; and using every modern means of technology - science, radio, television, satellites, jet travel, high-speed presses and audio-visuals in all forms - to communicate God's love worldwide.

Our strategy of accomplishing this goal is called New Life 2000. Christians from North America, Europe and more than 150 nations around the world are a part of this comprehensive plan for world evangelism. Millions of believers within thousands of churches, denominations, organizations and mission agencies are uniting to make New Life 2000 a priority for their evangelism and discipleship ministries at home and abroad.

I see clearly with my mind's eye a day in the immediate future when billions of people on earth will become aware of the great truths concerning God's love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ and will crown Him Lord of lords. I know that the fulfillment of the Great Commission is the will of God because it is His command and the desire of His heart, and I ardently long to have it come to pass.

Furthermore, I sincerely believe that the Great Commission will be fulfilled because it is God's idea, not man's. It is inconceivable to me that our Lord would have given us the command without giving us the needed resources with which to fulfill his command.

And finally, because I so vividly imagine, ardently desire, and sincerely believe in the fulfillment of the Great Commission in my generation, I can enthusiastically act upon it by giving myself completely to the task and helping to mobilize millions of others toward its fulfillment.



In your own life - your own home, community, state, nation and the world where you personally are concerned - determine, on a clearly scriptural basis, what God would have you vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Tapping the Source of Power

It may be that, in addition to your own personal ministry, God would have you pray for the personnel of a radio or television station or a newspaper to be an influence of righteousness. It may be that He would have you claim for Him a high school campus, a college campus, an office, or a community; or that every person within the radius of a mile of your home, or every home within the entire city would be personally visited by trained workers who would lovingly, prayerfully and intelligently present the claims of Christ.

Remember that, as you bow in prayer, you are tapping a source of power that can change the course of history. God's mighty power, His love, His wisdom and His grace are available to you if you will but believe Him and claim them. Remember always, Jesus promised that you would do the same miracles which He did, and even greater ones.

Will you join with us in praying for the Lord of the Harvest to send forth millions of disciples to work with thousands of local churches of all denominations and with various movements and organizations who desire to see the Great Commission fulfilled in this generation?

Will you pray also for a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon the entire world and for the money and material needed to fulfill this God-given task?

Prayer is the greatest privilege of the Christian life and the most revolutionary source of power known to man. If you were to take seriously the promises of God and begin to claim by faith in prayer all that you have been promised, miracles would attend your way, multitudes would be introduced to our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole course of history would be changed, and you would help to fulfill the Great Commission during your lifetime.

Remember, *How You Can Pray With Confidence* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:29: "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach other" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

- What is prayer? Why is prayer important?
- Whom does God hear when they pray?
 - a. John 9:31
 - b. Psalm 66:18
 - c. Mark 11:25
 - d. Proverbs 15:8,29
- Why would unconfessed sin hinder or halt your prayer life?
- What do these verses teach about how to pray?
 - a. Psalm 145:18
 - b. Matthew 6:5-7
 - c. Matthew 21:22
 - d. Philippians 4:6
- What vital elements of prayer are found in Acts 4:24-30?
- What vital elements of prayer did Christ include in his prayer in John 17?
- What part does prayer have in witnessing?
- How would you explain the elements of the model prayer Christ gave his disciples in Matthew 6:9-13?
- When should you pray? Is one time "better" than any other?
- What are some of the promises Christ makes to you when you pray?
 - a. Matthew 6:6
 - b. Matthew 18:20
 - c. Luke 11:9-13
 - d. John 14:13,14
- What are the four parts of prayer in 1 Timothy 2:1? Explain briefly what each one means.
- What important prerequisites to effective prayer do you find in these verses?
 - a. John 15:7
 - b. James 4:2,3

- c. John 14:14
- d. Matthew 21:22
- e. James 1:6

- What part does the Holy Spirit play in prayer? (See Romans 8:26,27)
- What does it mean to be prepared to receive God's answers to your prayers?
- What promise does James 5:16 give us?
- A prayer journal is an effective way to record God's faithfulness in answering your prayers. Start a journal this week by recording your daily requests. Then enter God's answers as they come.

Group Discussion Questions

- Review the importance of prayer in the founding of Campus Crusade. What project is your group currently initiating (or already involved in)? How can you effectively mobilize your group to provide the prayer support you need?
- The Scripture commands us to "pray continually" (See 1 Thessalonians 5:17). Discuss with your group how you can make this a habit in your daily life.
- Share some of your creative ideas for quiet times and personal prayer times.
- Prayer changes things - and people. By way of encouragement, share with your group an answer to prayer which you have experienced that has changed a situation or person.
- What are some specific prayer requests you want to believe God for? Share these with your group and identify some promises from Scripture that you can claim for each request.
- With your group, devise a prayer strategy to help fulfill the Great Commission in your community.

No.10

How You Can Experience the Adventure of Giving

Preparing for the Adventure

What does the word "adventure" mean to you?

Is it shooting the rapids on a hot summer day...

Or speeding around a rave track at two hundred miles per hour...

Or climbing a sheer cliff in the Alps...

Or trekking through a wilderness on safari?

Permit me to share with you one of the most exciting adventures you can experience - the adventure of giving by faith.

Most people don't relate adventure to the act of giving. In the following pages, I want to show you how to turn your giving into a thrilling personal adventure. But first, let me tell you about Deborah, just one of God's children who has made this wonderful discovery.

Not long after her arrival back in the United States for her scheduled home leave from overseas missionary work, she learned that one of her neighbor's sons had been seriously injured. The family had no insurance and was suffering financially as well as physically.

Concerned about their urgent need, Deborah went into her bedroom to pray. "Lord," she asked, "what would You have me do?" She sensed a nudge from the Lord to give her neighbors some money. Checking her bank account, she realized that her bank balance was a mere \$200.

"Lord, how about \$25?" she prayed. With \$175 left over, she thought she could survive the rest of the month. Quietly waiting on the Lord, however, she felt the Lord say, "No, I want you to give \$100."

"I choked a bit," she says. "That was half of what I had. As I continued to question the Lord, I had no peace about anything less than \$100."

Finally, she wrote out a check, breathing a prayer. "Lord, I've done what You said, so You'll have to take care of my needs."

With a sense of joy and expectancy, Deborah took the check across the street. By this act of sharing, she greatly encouraged the family, and God blessed her abundantly. Two days later a check for \$100 came in the mail.. Three days later a woman dropped by her home with a check for \$200.

"Within five days of writing my check, I received from unexpected sources a total of \$500," Deborah says. "I stood in awe of God and His ways."

Like Deborah and many other Christians who have learned to obey God's principles of stewardship, you can know and experience this wonderful adventure of giving by faith.

As with any adventure, we must prepare for our journey. In the next few pages, I want to share how you can equip yourself for your adventure. I urge you to read this booklet prayerfully and carefully, underlining significant points and making notes in the margins for quick, easy reference. Then pass these principles on to you spouse, a close friend, and other Christians whom you know, especially to those whom you are discipling.

1. Understand Stewardship

To start on you adventure, you first must understand the meaning and importance of stewardship.

In the New Testament, two different words describe a steward. One emphasizes guardianship over children and the administration of a master's household. The other stresses the role of a manager over property. In either case, a steward oversees the affairs and property of another person.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of stewardship. Stewardship over all that God entrusts to us in life is foundational to giving. All that we have, we enjoy because of God's grace and goodness. He has put into our hands the administration of all that He owns. As your preeminent master, He holds you accountable for how well you manage what He has entrusted to your care.

This divine perspective helps us understand much of our purpose for living as Christians. We are here to glorify God thorough the wise investment of our time, our talents, and our treasure. Our Lord came to seek and to save the lost. he has commanded us to continue His mission by helping to fulfill the Great Commission in our generation.

My goal is to help you fulfill God's purpose of your life by showing you the biblical way to invest wisely in God's kingdom and thereby increase your fruitfulness for Christ.

2. Be Faithful

Faithfulness is another quality that will equip you for your adventure in giving. The apostle Paul says, "It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." Faithfulness is dependability - a steady, day-by-day obedience to God in what He has given you to do.

A trustworthy steward will evaluate his opportunities and invest what God has given him in such a way that it will produce the best possible results.

3. Adopt a Godly Attitude

The attitude of a steward is vital. Paul admonishes, "Let everyone give as his heart tells him, neither grudgingly nor under compulsion, for God loves the man whose heart is in his gift." Or as the Living Bible renders it, "Cheerful givers are the ones God prizes."

The Greek word translated "cheerful" is *hilaros*, from which we get the word "Hilarious." Supernatural, Holy Spirit-directed stewardship is giving with expectation, excitement, joy, praise - even laughter. Indeed, God prizes "hilarious givers" because they are the ones who have discovered the exciting adventure of giving.

4. Recognize and Fulfill Your Stewardship Responsibilities

One of the major responsibilities - and privileges - of a fruitful steward is to share the life-changing message of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Our Lord has given to every Christian the command to "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere" and to "make disciples in all the nations." This command, which the church has historically called the Great Commission, is the privilege and duty of every man and woman in every generation who confesses Christ as Savior and Lord.

If you and I and Christians everywhere will simply obey our Lord's call to the stewardship of our time, talents and treasure, we will release not only vast sums of money to advance His kingdom, but all other resources needed to reach billion of people for Christ and, thus help fulfill the Great Commission in this generation.

Matthew 6:21 records perhaps the simplest truth about your commitment:

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

One can determine much about a Christian's spiritual life and how faithfully he fulfills his stewardship responsibilities by what he treasures. Your use of time, talent and money clearly shows your spiritual commitment because you invest in what your heart values most.

Enjoying God's Abundant Blessing

Giving by faith is meant by God to be an exciting privilege. When you honor and praise God through your commitment and obedience to stewardship, He showers you with joy. He turns your giving into a thrilling adventure in Christian living.

Would you like to enjoy such an experience?

Let me share six steps you can take to appropriate God's abundant blessings through your faithful stewardship.

1. Recognize That Everything You "Own" Actually Belongs to God

All that we have, we possess by the grace and gift of God. Everything belongs to Him. The psalmist records, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." God's ownership is eternal and unchanging. He never has given up this right - and never will.

As Christian stewards we must realize that in Christ "we live and move and have our being." Jesus Christ created us. He bought us with His precious blood. And God anointed Him as our Lord. Thus, the whole of our life - our personality, influence, material substance, everything - is His, even our successes.

God has placed in our trust a measure of time, a unique set of talents, and sufficient treasure to carry out His will for our lives. Our task as faithful stewards is to manage those blessings to bring the maximum glory to His name.

2. Realize It Is More Blessed to Give Than Receive

The Book of Acts records the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I first heard this as a growing boy, then as an agnostic and later as a young Christian. Then, I could not comprehend how giving could be better than receiving. Now that I have been a Christian for many years, I truly understand from my own experience and through observing many others why it is "more blessed to give" than receive.

Giving produces abundance. When you give freely of yourself and of your possessions as a material expression of your spiritual obedience to Christ, God in turn meets your needs abundantly. This is true whether you are rich or poor, whether you serve God in a land that is blessed with great material wealth or in a poverty-stricken part of the world. The apostle Paul records:

If you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really

wants to, for cheerful givers are the ones God prizes. God is able to make it up to you by giving you everything you need and more, so that there will not only be enough for your own needs, but plenty left over to give joyfully to others.

For God, who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on, good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest.

Yes, God will give you much to that you can give away much, and when we take your gifts to those who need them they will break our into thanksgiving and praise to God for your help.

Most Christians have not learned to give, either out of their abundance or out of their poverty, and therefore, are not experiencing the reality of that promise. As a result, they feel unfulfilled and don't understand why.

You can never outgive God. It is a law of God that His blessings back to you always greatly exceed what you give to Him.

The truths of God's holy, inspired Word are universal. The principle of abundant blessing is just for the rich and famous or for those who live in a land of wealth and opportunity; it is for everyone everywhere who obeys God and follows the principles of blessing given in His Word. I will share more on this later.

Giving begins an endless circle of joy. God gives; you receive. You give; He receives, He then multiplies your gift back to you in the form of additional supply. It is important to remember that God is the one who initiates this process of blessing. The purpose of the return is not just to reward you for giving, thus completing the circle again and again.



Although God owns all the wealth in the universe, few people are willing to share the portion of resources which He has entrusted to them. When someone does begin to give, God releases additional abundance to them so they can give even more. If we break this process on the receiving end of the circle, He is likely to look for someone else

whom He can trust and through whom He can channel His blessings. The Book of Proverbs records:

One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

My good friend Don Preston considers himself an average person. At the age of twelve, he found his first job working in a small grocery store after school. From the beginning, he gave at least 10 percent of his income to the work of the Lord. Through the years, Don worked hard, and God blessed him abundantly.

Don married young, and he and his wife raised their three children while Don grew in his career. At age 29, after eleven years of managing supermarket meat departments, he began his own wholesale/retail meat business. At that time, he and his wife and children made a family decision to give at least 15 percent of their \$6,000 yearly earnings to the Lord.

God began to increase their income immediately from \$6,000 to \$21,000, then \$37,000, \$62,000, \$85,000, \$100,000 and more a year.

"Fifteen years later we sold the meat business to a larger company, wrapped up our assets in nice, neat investments and went into self-supported Christian ministry for two years," Don says. "We later heard of the evangelistic work of Christian nationals in foreign countries. Their work is flourishing, and it takes little to maintain national families in full time ministry compared to our own - less than \$100 per month in some countries.

"A little fasts meat-market math convinced me that I could go back into business, earn money to support these nationals, and multiply myself fifty to one hundred times. By giving \$50,000 a year, I could contribute a million dollars to God's work within just twenty years."

With his family's enthusiastic support, Don put aside his plans to join the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ and began instead to pursue this twenty-year course of earning to give. This time around, he and his son started a machinery business in Greenville South Carolina, and true to his commitment, Don began giving away 50 percent of his income, paying 33 percent in taxes and living modestly on the rest.

Things worked out much better than he expected. He fulfilled his million-dollar commitment in just ten years, channeling the bulk of his funds into New Life 2000, a comprehensive plan for world evangelism designed to help reach the millions who have not yet heard about Christ. Don's wife, Virginia, died in 1987. Now he and his second wife, Jeanne, have begun to work on a second million to give to the work of the Lord, and their goal is to find a hundred or more other men and women who will do the same.

God's promise in Proverbs 11:24,25 is for everyone. Whether rich or poor, you, too, can give to receive to receive to give again. God knows your heart and whether He can trust you to end the process, as Don Preston emphasizes, on the right word: give.

Permit me to give you a word of caution here. Do not be disappointed if God doesn't provide you with an immediate financial return as He did with Deborah or Don. The various possibilities of Gods' blessings are endless. He may have a different plan for you. God know your true needs, and you must give Him the freedom to do His very best work in your life. He may give you improved health and strength to do your work. He may lead you to a better job, help you decrease your expenses, or change your spending habits so you can live better on your present income. Or He may teach you to be content with what you have so you can enjoy a greater sense of fulfillment in life. Paul affirms this:

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Many Christians misunderstand the meaning of blessing. Like Paul, Job was a man who experienced both prosperity and deprivation. True prosperity is living and giving at the level to which God has called you with all your needs met by His supply.

3. Give By Faith

Simply defined, giving by faith is taking God at His Word and giving generously in anticipation of His faithful provision.

The premise of this concept is three-fold. First, God is the absolute source for your supply. Second, giving is based on His resources, not your own. Third, Christ is your link to God's inexhaustible riches.

The apostle Paul includes these precepts in his letter to the Christians at Philippi in which he says:

My God shall supply *all your need* according to His riches *in glory* by Christ Jesus.

Let's look at each for a moment.

God shall supply. Living in a humanistic society, it is easy to believe that man is your source of wealth. When in need, it's easy to look to people and institutions for help. Indeed, God uses them in His process of provision, but they are only the instruments - not the source - of your supply.

According to His riches. Our heavenly Father holds the treasures for heaven and earth in His hands. Jesus Christ claimed all authority in heaven and on earth. Our Lord's supply is not based on the size of your need, but on the enormity of His riches and His authority to disburse them. In good times and bad, His reserves remain stable and inexhaustible.

By Christ Jesus. You claim God's abundant blessings through Christ. Our Lord laid aside His riches in heaven to identify with you in every area of your human need, ultimately dying on the cross for your sins. When He returned to His Father, God reinvested Him with all that He had laid aside, including His inexhaustible riches.

4. Realize That What You Sow, You Will Reap

On the third day of creation God commanded, "Let the earth burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant, and fruit trees with seeds inside the fruit, so that these seeds will produce the kinds of plants and fruits they came from."

This principle applies spiritually as well as physically. Paul writes, "A man reaps what he sows. 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."

The apostle makes it clear that the law for sowing and reaping applies to the use of our material goods as well, as previously examined in 2 Corinthians 9. This law embraces four basic principles.

First, *to reap anything, you must first plant a seed.* Whether your gift is measured in cash or goods or any other medium of exchange, whatever you give will return to you because what you give is a seed that you sow.

Second, *to reap a bountiful harvest you must sow your best seed.* Merely sowing for the sake of reaping is not enough. God asks for your finest because He uses what you give as the basis of His supply. There is no second best with God. His provision in response to your obedience is perpetually perfect and always abundant. Since He gave you His very best - His only Son - you grieve the Spirit of God when you do not give Him your best.

This means that the best of your life - the best of your time, the best of your talents, the best of your treasure, the best of everything you have - should be on the altar of sacrifice to God.

In some cultures, the seed may be the first and best of one's produce or other tangible foods. For example, Abraham willingly gave a tenth of all his spoils of war to Melchizedek, the king of Salem and high priest for the Most High God, as a testimony to God's faithfulness in giving him the victory. No doubt these spoils included a wide variety of valuable treasures. On another occasion, after Moses sanctified the Tabernacle

in the wilderness, the leaders of Israel brought covered wagons drawn by oxen as gifts to the Lord.

Third, *whatever you give, you reap according to the amount you sow*. This biblical principle is basic to life and it applies in every culture and economic custom, whether free enterprise, socialism, or a system where tangible goods are bartered.

Fourth, *an abundant harvest springs from the most fertile soil*. No intelligent farmer would think of planting inferior seed in poorly prepared soil using worn-out equipment. Rather, he would buy the choicest seed and prepare the soil thoroughly with the finest equipment and fertilizers he could afford.

Like planting good seed in fertile ground, your task as a steward is to seek the greatest possible return for the sake of God's kingdom. You cannot appraise good stewardship by the amount of your gifts, but by how wisely you invest your resources. Good stewardship of any gift is determined by how well it reflects the will for God.

In making decisions, I believe in using the "sound mind" principle of Scripture recorded in 2 Timothy 1:7, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The "sound mind" referred to in this verse means a well-balanced mind, one that is under the control for the Holy Spirit, "remade" according to Romans 12:1,2:

Therefore, my brother, I implore you by God's mercies to offer your very selves to Him, a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for His acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern for the present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God and to know it is good, acceptable, and perfect.

There is a vast difference between the inclination of the natural or carnal man to use "commonsense" and that of the spiritual man to follow the "sound mind" principle. One depends upon the wisdom of man without benefit of God's wisdom and power; the other, having the mind of Christ, receives wisdom and guidance from God moment by moment through faith.

I encourage you to use the "sound mind" principle to help determine where to invest in Christ's kingdom. Avoid emotional giving. Giving on impulse just for the sake of giving or contributing where your gifts are likely to be misused or wasted is not only poor stewardship, but is also contrary to the will for God and grieves the Spirit. Perhaps you have received requests from organizations inviting you to invest in their various projects. Carefully evaluate the worthiness of the ministry you choose and the sincerity of the people involved, and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Find out the conditions of the "soil". Investigate the financial soundness and integrity of the organization soliciting your support; determine what percentage of your donation will actually go to the project and whether your gift will really be used for the glory of God. I also encourage you to evaluate - in terms of discipleship and evangelism - the fruitfulness of the church or other organizations which invite your contributions.

5. Give to Glorify God

As a steward for God's resources, you have but one purpose - to glorify Him. It is easy to let the day-to-day demands on your finances turn your eyes from this aim unless you clearly define your priorities. God's holy Word does this for you.

Your number one priority is God. Your second priority is your family. Since the family was the first institution formed by our Creator, no conflict exists between the preeminence of God and the priority of family. Rather, meeting the needs of your family is a scriptural mandate and an evidence of faith. Helping nonbelievers see the life-changing power for Jesus Christ as a result of your caring for the poor, the orphans and the widows and your gifts of time, talent and treasure to agencies concerned for the welfare of the community glorify God as well.

But your top priority is to love, obey and glorify God. Putting God and the fulfillment of our Lord's Great Commission first in your time, talents and treasure must be the priority goal of your stewardship. This involves giving to the kingdom of God through your local church and mission organizations which faithfully exalt our Lord, proclaim His holy, inspired Word and actively work toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is poor stewardship to invest resources which God has entrusted to you in any church or mission cause which is not directly related to discipleship, evangelism, and the fulfillment of our Lord's commands, including the Great Commission.

6. Give From the Heart

Good stewardship involves more than the mere knowledge and application of the principles and priorities for giving. Motives are an essential part of the picture as well, for they determine your reasons for giving.

Godly motives stem from a cheerful, loving heart for God. We give to please God and express our love to Him. We give out of obedience to our Lord's command to lay up treasures in heaven. We give to be a channel of God's abundant resources to a desperately needy world. We give to help fulfill the Great Commission and, thus, help reach the world for Christ. Maintaining right motives through the power for the Holy Spirit is essential if we are to accomplish this objective to the glory of God.

Why is it, then, that we so often fail in this goal? It is because we follow our deceitful hearts and live self-centered lives. Bowing to this materialistic world, we fail to use the

keys which unlock God's abundant blessings in our lives and, as a result, plunge into financial bondage.

How can you avoid this? In the following pages I want to show you how to manage your finances and release your faith to experience the adventure in giving which God intended for every Christian.

God Wants You To Be Financially Free

Perhaps you have seen enticing advertisements in you newspaper or on television promising you financial independence. What a wonderful prospect! Although God has blessed many of His children with wealth, most of us can only dream about financial independence. Financial *freedom*, however, is for every Christian steward who faithfully follows God's plan for giving, saving and spending.

Financial freedom means *having enough to provide adequately for your household and to give generously and joyfully to God's work.*

God wants you to be financially free so you can put Him first in your life and be sensitive to His voice, ready to follow Him whenever - and wherever - He leads.

If this is God's plan, why do many Christians live in financial bondage? The reasons are basic. Not understanding or obeying scriptural principles of stewardship, they succumb to the world's philosophy of money. They burden themselves with the material concerns of life and make little or no commitment to God's work.

I believe that materialism is the greatest hindrance to the worldwide propagation of the gospel today. Perhaps in no other area of our lives are we more guilty of rationalizing. When it comes to material possessions, we seem quite capable of not only convincing ourselves that we need them, but that we also deserve them.

This is not to say we shouldn't enjoy life. In fact, Jesus promised an abundant life to all who trust and obey Him. The Spirit-filled Christian enjoys life more than anyone else. What I am asking you to consider is this: What material possessions in your life are consuming too much of your time in order to secure and maintain them?

Materialism is not just a Western problem. People in all countries and cultures - from New York to Paris to Calcutta to Nairobi to remote villages along the Amazon - wrestle with some form of materialism.

Bailey Marks, vice President for International Affairs for Campus Crusade for Christ, relates a story which illustrates this:

One day a friend of mine was visiting a pastor in a remote African village. His house was very plain. Built of sticks and mud, it had only a dirt floor and its sparse furnishings were crudely constructed.

My friend asked the pastor, "What is one of the most difficult problems you face in your ministry?"

Without hesitation, the pastor slapped his hand on the table and exclaimed, "Materialism! If my people have one pig, they want two. If they have two pigs, they want a cow, or several cows..."

When I first heard the story, I had a good laugh. But then I realized how true this is of all of us.

It is in the faithful stewardship of that which God entrusts to you, not materialism, that you find fulfillment and true meaning to life.

Let me share with you six specific things you can do to ensure financial freedom for you and your family:

1. Know and Obey God's Will for Investing Your Money

God's will about money is not a mystery. Biblical principles of stewardship give you a clear revelation of his plan. By basing your decisions on these precepts, you will experience lasting financial freedom.

Every investment of your time, talents and treasure, unless otherwise directed by the Holy Spirit, should be determined by the "sound mind" principle which I mentioned earlier. Additionally, you should see the wise counsel of godly people who have successfully applied biblical principles in their financial giving.

There will be times in your life, however, when difficult situations arise for which no scriptural principle or human counsel offers specific direction. You may wonder, *Which course should I take? How do I know for sure that my decision is right?* Even then God makes provision for guidance.

The apostle Paul instructs, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace." What does this mean?

Peace is a gift and a calling. The Holy Spirit guides you by the presence or assurance of peace in your heart. When you make the right decisions, you will sense calm even in circumstances that are very difficult. When your actions do not coincide with His plan, however, you will feel restless and uncertain.

No better way exists for you to know God's will in your financial decision than to base your actions on the principles of His Word, and then to invite God to guide you with His peace from within.

2. Breathe Financially

True financial freedom requires spiritual health. For many years, I have taught the principle of "Spiritual Breathing." In *Spiritual Breathing*, I explain, you exhale the impurities of sin by confession. The Bible promises that if you confess your sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive you and to purify you from all unrighteousness.

To confess your sins is to agree with God about your sins. This means you agree that your sins are wrong and grievous to God; you recognize that God has already forgiven your sins through Christ's death and the shedding of His blood on the cross; and you repent - change your attitude: Through the strength of the Holy Spirit, you turn from your sins and change your conduct.

Then, I explain, you inhale the purity of God's righteousness by claiming the fullness of His Spirit by faith on the basis of God's *command* in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14,15. In this way you invite Him to direct, control and empower your life.

As *Spiritual Breathing* sustains your spiritual health, so "*Financial Breathing*" preserves your financial freedom and well being.

You exhale financially by confessing your sin of claiming personal ownership of the resources God has entrusted to you and of withholding those resources from God's work - as though, because you earned them, by right they actually belong to you.

You inhale financially by acknowledging His lordship over all your time, talents and treasure and by sharing with others the abundance God provides.

This simple act of faith calls for a total, irrevocable commitment to the ownership of God over every area of your life.

3. Develop a Financial Plan

A written financial plan gives you the framework for your economic decisions and enables you to measure your progress toward financial freedom.

Developing a plan is not difficult. The family budget serves as a starting point. Easily identifying your needs, wants and desires, the plan provides a vehicle for setting priorities and forming strategic short-range and long-range goals to govern your spending. Furthermore, the budget enables you to think before you buy, thus keeping your spending on target, enabling you to live modestly and effectively manage credit.

Let me suggest a sound approach to accomplish this goal:

In developing a budget, you will need to calculate your normal monthly cost of living, including insurance, plus seasonal expenses such as vacation and Christmas and long-term needs such as your children's education and your retirement.

Once you have established a budget, make a commitment before the Lord to live on that amount. Of course, the budget may need to be adjusted from time to time to provide for inflation of changes in circumstances.

Any income over and above what you need according to the budget can be designated as surplus. For example, if you receive a special bonus during the year but you already have enough resources to cover your budget, assume that God has given you this to help others or invest in His work. Any salary increases beyond what your needs require can be passed on as well. By setting a limit on personal needs, you will not only begin to enjoy financial freedom, but you will be able to give substantially to the work of the Lord as God blesses you.

I am not suggesting that you set your needs so low that you cannot adequately live in the society in which God has placed you. I caution you, however, to be careful not to mirror the values of those around you for whom increased income automatically means increased spending on self. God doesn't necessarily reward us as we progress in life by allowing us to increase our standard of living without reference to some set guidelines on what our needs are. He blesses us so that we will have enough for our needs with "*plenty*" left over to give joyfully to others." This would, of course, include laying up treasures in heaven to help fulfill the Great Commission.

4. Master Your Credit

Good stewardship requires that you live modestly and effectively manage credit.

Paul admonishes, "Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others." Many Christian leaders take this to mean that one should never be in debt for anything. I disagree. A young couple will frequently incur monthly obligations while establishing their home. Throughout life the purchase of large dollar items - such as a house or a car - usually requires indebtedness. The real danger does not lie in the provision of needs, but in self-indulgence, poor planning, lack of discipline, and the passion to satisfy one's greeds.

Satan aims to drive Christians into debt so he can drain them with worry or despair and keep them spiritually impotent and fruitless. For this reason, a faithful steward will never obligate himself to the place where he cannot, through control of his income, make a reasonable payout.

5. Invest in God's Kingdom

Every Christian should consider how he can give to help win and disciple the largest possible number of people for Christ. But don't be discouraged if you do not have large financial resources to give.

God measures the value of your gift by the total of your resources. As with the widow who gave her two mites, He is pleased and honored when you give sacrificially and will supernaturally multiply your gifts to meet your needs as well as the needs of others. God also is pleased when you give generously out of the abundance He has given you. You can use these resources to give strategically to help take the message of Jesus Christ to millions who have not yet received Him.

Let me suggest giving a minimum of 10 percent of your income to the work of the Lord *as a realistic starting point* for a steward who wants to honor and glorify God with the resources with which he has been entrusted.

The practice of giving 10 percent is called "tithing," and is common among many Christians today as a systematic method for giving. The word *tithe* itself comes from an Old English term simply meaning *a tenth* and usually refers to giving 10 percent of one's income or resources to the kingdom of God. Tithing, or proportional giving of even more, should play a critical role in our stewardship as we seek to obey our Lord's command to help fulfill the Great Commission.

God established the tithe during the Mosaic period of the Old Testament. Many argue against tithing for today on the grounds we are no longer under the law which required tithing but now live by grace. They assert that, if under law the Israelites gave at least a tenth, under grace we should surely do more as God prospers us. On this basis, many advocate proportional giving, but not necessarily a tenth. I agree. For most people, however, a tenth is a good starting point.

Let me illustrate. A friend who was just beginning to experience the reality of his salvation asked his pastor if God would be satisfied with 5 percent of his income instead of 10 percent. The pastor replied, "Would you be satisfied with 50 percent of your salvation and all the other blessing which God has available for you?" From my perspective, it is unthinkable from the stand point of Christ's great sacrifice on the cross that anyone would give less under grace than the Jews gave under law. So in discussing the matter of tithing, I am referring to giving at least a tenth of your income or resources to God's work, not as a matter of law, but as an expression of grace.

The provision of God under grace is based on the principle of the harvest: What we sow we will reap. The apostle Paul says, "If you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much." Giving too little to the work of the Lord would amount to "robbing God" just as much today as it did in Malachi's time. To the children of Israel, the Lord said:

"Will a man rob God? Surely not! And yet you have...robbed me of the tithes and offerings due to me. And so the awesome curse of God is cursing you, of your whole nation has been robbing me.

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so that here will be food enough in my Temple; if you do, I will open up the windows of heaven for you and pour out a blessing so great you won't have room enough to take it in!"

Although Christ has "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us," God has His ways of chastening us for lack of giving or rewarding us for faithfulness in stewardship. Consider what He said to the leaders of Judah through the prophet Haggai:

"Why is everyone saying it is not the right time for rebuilding my Temple?" asks the Lord.

His reply to them is this: "It is then the right time for you to live in luxurious home, when the Temple lies in ruins? Look at the result: You plant much but harvest little."

You have scarcely enough to eat or drink, and not enough clothes to keep you warm. Your income disappears, as though you were putting it into pockets filled with holes!"

Have you ever had that feeling? You seem to be on a financial treadmill. You are working harder, yet getting farther behind. Your checking account seems to have sprung a leak. God has not changed. In the time of Haggai, He considered it a top priority to reestablish His physical presence among the people of earth by having the people of Israel rebuild His Temple in Jerusalem. In the Church Age in which we live, God's physical presence among mankind is spread as His Church grows and spreads. How does this occur? By evangelism and discipleship, by helping to fulfill the Great Commission in obedience to our Lord's command.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me in my entire life?
2. What is the greatest thing I can do to help others?
3. Since our Savior came to seek and to save the lost, is the spread of the gospel still a top priority for God today?
4. Does God expect me, as a Christian, to be involved in spreading the gospel to the world and thus help fulfill the Great Commission?
5. If opportunities to give to evangelism and discipleship exist, does God expect me to give to them?
6. If I ignore the opportunity to give significantly to God's top priorities, is it reasonable to believe that He is well-pleased with me?
7. If He is not well-pleased with me in the way I handle the finances which He has entrusted to me, what might He do to get my attention?

Even though we live in an age of grace, the principles of Haggai are still true.

What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And how do we glorify God? Jesus explains that in John 15:8, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

In other words, the most important thing you and I can do as believers is to help take the most joyful news - the good news of God's love and forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ - to everyone who will listen through the investment of our time, our talents and our treasure.

Under grace, the love of Christ constrains us. We cannot misuse or abuse our New Testament liberty. We must remain sensitive and accountable to our just and righteous God.

Obedience to His commands in every facet of our lives is the key to experiencing the presence of Christ and the joy of heaven. Jesus says, "The one who obeys me is the one who loves me...I will only reveal myself to those who love me and obey me. The Father will love them too, and we will come to them and live with them.

Are you experiencing the presence of Christ in your life? Do you know His joy, His love, His peace, the sense of His direction? If not, could it be that you are not obeying His commands? When you withhold the resources that God has entrusted to you for His work, He has little with which to bless you, and your life becomes unfruitful and unhappy.

I personally know of no greater joy than that of being an instrument of God to communicate the good news of the gospel to others. And that takes money. We are not our own anymore; we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our time, talents and treasure are our way of expressing gratitude to our great and glorious God and Father for all that He has done to fill us with His presence.

Since under grace everything we have belongs to God, we tithe - or even give a greater percentage - not as a requirement of law, but as an act of loving obedience and worship. I believe that we disobey God when we ignore our responsibility in giving and stewardship. And just as God disciplines His children under grace when they are disobedient because He loves them, the unfaithful steward should be prepared for discipline as well. let me illustrate.

I love my sons dearly. I remember when I first held them in my arms. I felt my heart attach itself to them as I embraced them. But through the years while they were young, I found it necessary to discipline them. On each occasion before and after their punishment, I explained to them that I loved them and that the correction was for their good.

To make sure they understood, I would ask, "Why did I discipline you?"

Each time through their tears they would respond, "Because you love me."

The fact that I reproved them when they were disobedient did not mean that I loved them less, but more.

So it is with obedience in stewardship. it is vital that we do not allow anything to take precedence over giving out tithes and offerings. I would rather miss my meals and not meet other obligations than to rob God - even though I am under grace, even though I know that He loves me, even though I know that my relationship with Him is vastly different from that of Old Testament believers because of the cross and the empty tomb and the reality of His indwelling presence in my life.

To fail in our accountability to God would be a misunderstanding of grace. Jesus said, "You should tithe." Since everything we have we enjoy as a gift of God, not returning a percentage of what He has given us to the work of the Lord as an expression of our gratitude and love is disobedience and can result in discipline.

Just as in Malachi God promised to abundantly bless Israel for faithfulness in tithing, I believe God will abundantly bless those today who tithe or give more in a regular, systematic way. The New Testament verse, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows," lies in the context of giving to one's spiritual teachers. An attitude of obedience when you tithe - or give generously in a systematic way - softens the soil of you heart for fruitfulness and thereby gives God opportunity to bless you.

I believe this is the spirit of the Malachi principle.

The premise of tithing as an expression of grace is three-fold:

First, *tithing acknowledges God as the source and owner of all that we possess.* Tithing performs a role separate from that of unsystematic giving, which suggests that we believe we own all that we possess. Through tithing we acknowledge that God created our increase.

Second, *tithing is a voluntary act of worship.* At Bethel Jacob said:

If God will help and protect me on this journey and give me food and clothes, and will bring me back safely to my father, then I will choose Jehovah as my God! And this memorial pillar shall become a place for worship; and I will give you back a tenth of everything you give me!

If you don't already, you too should consider tithing - or giving more - as an act of worship. Through this act, you keep your focus on the heavenly Father and testify to His kindness and generosity toward you.

Third, *tithing teaches us to put God first*. Moses said, "The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives."

Tithing as a systematic, purposeful plan for consistent giving enables you to circumvent the emotions and circumstances that would hinder you from being a faithful steward and, thus, from putting God first in your life. This prioritizing releases you from the tyranny of materialism and clears the channel for God's additional and abundant blessings.

Don Myers, Campus Crusade for Christ Director of Affairs for Southern Africa, relates how he and his wife, Sue, learned to put this principle into effect in their lives.

"During our first two years as Christians, Sue and I devised a plan to become tithers. The plan entailed a one-percent-per-year increase in our giving until we reached the magic 10 percent. Since our giving at that time was an anemic 4 percent, we were looking at a long laborious process. We tried that plan for two years, but it was life pulling a tooth *slowly!*

"At that point, we made a radical decision to jump our giving from 6 percent to 10 percent in one leap. This proved to be a relatively painless procedure, and it yielded a financial liberty and sense of peace in our marriage beyond our precious experience. We were encouraged to try new 'quantum leaps.'

"As staff members from 1968 to 1972, we managed to maintain a modest 'beyond tithe' level of giving. Then as we prepared for our move to Africa in 1973, we listened to a message at a staff conference that changed our lives. The speaker said that the best faith response to a financial crisis would be to *increase* one's level of stewardship.

"After prayerfully considering this radical principle, we decided to follow it during our Africa career. We encountered severe financial crises on six occasions during the sixteen years we served in Africa. Each time, by faith, we *increased* our level of giving. And each time the Lord solved the crisis. By the time we left Africa, our giving level was 38 percent!"

Does the principle of tithing apply equally to your time and talents as it does to money? I am convinced that it does.

Giving at least 10 percent of your time to God is not a burdensome task. Many of God's children give far more.

Opportunities to devote your time and talents are limitless. Do you sing? Play a musical instrument? Bake? Perhaps you are an executive, a professor, secretary, childcare provider, carpenter, landscaper, mechanic or bookkeeper. Ask God to show you how to use your talents for His glory. And check with your pastor or the leaders of Christian

organizations in your area for opportunities to invest your time and talents for the cause of Christ.

I challenge you to give generously of your time and talents as well as your treasure for six months to see how God will multiply the fruit of your gifts in the lives of others. What an exciting privilege to watch your resources touch lost and hurting people around the world for the glory of God!

6. Give While You Live

Since everything we possess actually belongs to God and He has made us temporary stewards, we do not leave our money behind when we die; we leave God's money. Then someone else assumes responsibility for our estates and reaps the rewards which God intended for us who accumulated the assets in the beginning.

Many Christians work hard and leave their estates to heirs who are unfaithful to their trust. But a faithful steward, after providing for the present and future needs of his family, invests in God's work while he still lives.

A Christian friend recently shared how he had been appointed the executor of a woman's sizable estate and would be responsible to give her money to Christian ministries after her death. Instead, my friend encouraged her to give the money away while she could observe first-hand the benefits of her investments.

They prayed together, and with his counsel and the help of others, she began to give her money to many worthy Christian projects - to missionaries and mission organizations, struggling churches, and Christian schools. As she gave generously, God blessed her abundantly and made the final years of her life the most exciting and fruitful of all.

The principle of giving while we live applies equally to those with modest means as well. God deals with us individually. I cannot suggest your lifestyle nor give you a specific plan for investing in the cause of Christ. But I do urge you to use your resources for the kingdom while you can direct them in the way God leads you instead of relying on the wisdom of your heirs. Consult an attorney, certified public accountant or financial planner, or trust officer for specific information on how you can give your life savings while you are still alive. Only as a last resort should you leave the responsibility for the distribution of your estate to your heirs or executors. My "giving while you live," you will be involved in winning and discipling others for Christ while you are still alive. As a result, our Lord will manifest Himself to you as He promised in 1 John 14:21.

How to Trust God for Your Finances

Changing economic conditions exemplify the instability of finances throughout the world. Instead of placing their trust in the Lord who promised to meet all of their needs, most Christians trust in their investments, savings and retirement plans to ensure security and happiness - only to find their hopes dashed when reverses deplete their assets. Many are wasting their lives trying to achieve financial security in a volatile world.

Our heavenly Father, on the other hand, wants us to enjoy a full, abundant life free from the cares and stresses that confidence in money and other material possessions brings. Rather than trusting in a worldly system that cannot assure our welfare of relying on our own weak capabilities to provide for our own needs, He calls us to depend entirely on Him.

Permit me to suggest a plan that will help you release your faith in God and develop your trust in Him for your finances.

1. Recognize That God Is Worthy of Your Trust

The psalmist wrote, "The words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times." You can count on God to do as He says because the One who created the heavens and earth and who established the laws that govern the universe actually owns everything and is far more capable of providing for your needs than you could ever imagine. The writer of Proverbs says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart...in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." I encourage you to make our Lord and His promises the foundation of your financial security.

2. Realize That God Wants You to Live a Full and Abundant Life

Our Lord promises to give every obedient Christian an overflowing, joyous life regardless of his financial position. Jesus told His followers, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." This generous assurance includes financial freedom.

3. Substitute Faith for Fear

One emotion that can undermine your faith and throw you back into financial bondage is fear. When anxiety over the future grips you, you lose the ability to trust God for your needs.

By obeying God's will for your life, however, you establish your faith firmly and open your life to His abundant blessings.

The apostle Paul records, "God has not given us a spirit of fear..." I encourage you to surrender your fear and place your future into His capable hands. Then put into action the principles of God's Word for financial freedom.

4. Ask God to Supply Your Needs

The apostle James observes, "You do not have because you do not ask." Our Lord says, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." Faith requires action. Ask God, as an act of your will, to supply your needs. Then expect Him, as an expression of your faith, to provide for your needs. God's Word says that whatever we ask according to faith and in harmony with His will, he promises to answer.

5. Keep Your Heart and Motives Pure

To truly trust in God for your finances, you must also keep your heart and motives pure. Even if you ask by faith, you will fail to receive if you ask out of wrong motives. James also says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you spend it on your pleasures." I encourage you to "breathe spiritually" when motives displeasing to our Lord creep into your heart. Confess these wrongful attitudes, then claim the power of the Holy Spirit to help you rely on Him to supply your needs.

6. Take a Step of Faith

Sometimes God requires of us a further step of faith. Dr. Oswald J. Smith, the famous Canadian evangelist and missionary statesman, had a burning, driving passion "to bring back the King through world evangelization." The entire ministry of the People's Church, which he pastored in Toronto, centered on this vision. The high point of each year was the four-week annual missionary convention. To Dr. Smith, raising support for missions was the prime duty of every individual - children and adults, filing clerks and millionaires, homemakers and retired seniors.

Each year, he would challenge them to decide on a "faith promise," which they felt God would put into their hands to give to missions above their regular giving - even if they could not see a way in their budget. No one received a reminder, and miraculously each year more than the amount promised came in. As a result, tens of millions of dollars have been given to missions through his example and teaching.

A "faith promise" is not a pledge that must be "paid." Rather, it is a voluntary "promise" based on your faith in God's ability to supply out of His resources what you cannot give out of your own. You give as God supplies.

Permit me to give another word of caution here: God does not want you to "promise" what you do not yet have as a substitute for giving what He has presently entrusted to you. Your present possessions are a kind of test as to whether or not you are worthy of

being entrusted with more and greater resources. While the concept of "faith promise" giving is not explicitly developed in Scripture, it is based on scriptural principles and serves as a practical strategy for designating future resources to God's kingdom.

As your faith in God and His love and trustworthiness grows, let me encourage you to prayerfully make a faith promise - one that is greater than you are capable of fulfilling according to your present income. Take God at His word to supply from His unlimited resources. Make a generous faith promise to help fulfill the Great commission thorough your church or an organization which is committed to this cause.

In taking such a step of faith, you link your finite life with the infinite God - the God of love, power, wisdom and sufficiency. You begin to draw upon His inexhaustible supply. you become His instrument for helping to change the world.

Recognizing God's Priority for Missions

As I have studied God's Word for the past forty-five years and, together with our staff, have ministered in countries representing 97 percent of the world's population, I am convinced that every individual or church experiencing God's maximum blessing is directly involved in helping to fulfill the Great Commission (John 14:21-24).

I am deeply concerned that so little of the financial blessing which God has given to Christians is used to help reach the billions of men, women and children who have never heard the name of Jesus.

In Matthew 28:19,20 Jesus gives us a specific command, "Go and make disciples in *all the nations*, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this-that I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (TLB). The nations that have the greatest resources to help build God's kingdom have not obeyed this command fully.

Oswald Smith said, "If you see ten men carrying a heavy log, nine of them on one end and one man struggling to carry the other, which end would most need your help? The end with only one man." This illustrates how inequitably the evangelized nations have been using their resources to help fulfill the Great Commission.

For example, the United States has a gross national income of four trillion dollars. Of this, three trillion is personal income and one trillion corporate income. How much of this vast wealth do Americans give to missions? Only .5 percent. Think of it! That's just 50 cents for every one hundred dollars.

According to the latest figures, the Christian world spent 140 billion dollars on its own church budgets and home missions while sending only 7.5 billion overseas. In literature distribution, non-Christian nations received a mere 1 percent of all Christian books and

publications; in broadcasting, 99 percent of all Christian radio/TV dollars were spent in evangelized countries. An estimated 95 percent of all money raised for church budgets in North America goes to domestic use, 4.5 percent goes to established missions, while only .5 percent is sent to frontier missions.

This grieves our Lord, and we cannot expect His greatest blessing as individuals or as a church until we fully obey His command to help fulfill the Great Commission throughout the world.

I believe it is an insult to God for a church to give less than 10 percent of a tithe of its budget to foreign missions. More than that, my personal conviction is that from 25 to 50 percent of every church budget should go overseas. Some churches such as the Peoples Church in Toronto and Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, for example, seek to invest at least 50 percent of their resources in missions as an act of obedience to help fulfill the Great Commission around the world.

Imagine how individuals and churches could impact the world if they committed substantial portions of their resources where they are needed most! Generous gifts to foreign missions could help provide God's holy Word, good Christian books, and training materials to introduce people who have never heard the name of Jesus to our Savior. Increased media time could be devoted to broadcasting the gospel into areas that have little or no Christian witness and into countries that are not open to mission groups.

Check you church missions budget to see where an increase to foreign missions could be made. look for special projects overseas in which you could have an impact in introducing unreached people for Jesus Christ. Then expect God to honor this expression of your faith and obedience to Him to help reach the multitudes of earth with the "most joyful news ever announced."

Experiencing the Adventure

Vonette and I are more excited about our Lord and the privilege of serving Him now than when we made a very special commitment to put Him first in our lives nearly forty years ago. By the spring of 1951, while I was in my senior year at Fuller Theological Seminary, a deacon in the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, and directing my business interests, we had become increasingly aware that living for Christ and serving Him was our major goal in life. So we decided to sign a contract with our Lord Jesus Christ in which we yielded our lives and all our material possessions to Him, including the giving of our finances.

As a result, today Vonette and I personally own very little of this world's goods. We are missionaries for our Lord, and like every other staff member with Campus Crusade, we trust God to provide our financial needs each day through godly people whom He

impresses to invest in us and our ministry for Him. Although we seldom have more than enough to meet our needs for a few days or weeks at a time, we have always enjoyed the blessings of God which He promised to all who trust and obey Him. We would rather trust *Him* for all of our needs than all of the financial institutions of the world combined.

Right now, Vonette and I are embarking on one of the most exciting adventures in giving of our lives. It all started in 1946 when I heard Dr. Oswald Smith challenge approximately one thousand college students and young singles at a Forrest Home student conference to commit their lives to helping fulfill the Great Commission. He asked each of us to place our name on a country and claim it for our Lord through prayer and finances as God would lead - if necessary, even to give our lives to help reach that country for Christ. I put my name on the Soviet Union and began praying for God to do a great and mighty work in that country.

When Vonette and I were married, she joined me in praying for the Soviet Union. In recent years we and our staff have ministered to the Soviet people with fantastic results, helping to train thousands of pastors and laymen in various republics of the Soviet Union.

A few months ago, a Christian leader from the Soviet Union visited our headquarters and asked us to start a New Life Training Center in Moscow. Through a series of circumstances sometime later, the thought flashed through my mind: *Could God work through me by using my retirement pension to help establish such a training center?* My years of praying for the Soviet people and several visits to their country had given me a special love and burden for them. By starting a New Life Training Center with the proceeds of my pension, I could have a rare opportunity to help reach many thousands of them for our dear Lord Jesus Christ!

I had no idea how much my pension totaled, but the cost of launching one discipleship training center would be \$50,000 for the first year. Joyfully, I considered the prospect.

First, though, I had to discuss my idea with Vonette. After thoroughly listening to what I thought God was leading us to do and asking a few pertinent questions expressing her concerns, she responded enthusiastically. We prayed and agreed to trust the Lord to provide for our older years.

I checked to find out how much money had accumulated in my pension fund. To our amazement, I had almost the exact amount needed to fund the training center for the first year. Joy and excitement still floods my heart today as I share this story with you. The very thought that God could use my retirement pension to help introduce many thousands of people to Christ overwhelms me. Our present plans are to start the New Life Training Center at Moscow University. I cannot thank God enough for the privilege of making this contribution of my time, talents and treasure to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Have you made your commitment to help fulfill the Great Commission in our generation. He reserves a special blessing for those who give generously of their time, talents and treasure to His word,

It is not likely that God will lead you to give your retirement funds for the cause of Christ. He wants to be original with each of us. Vonette and I have simply responded to his particular call on our lives. But for maximum blessing and fruitfulness of the glory of God, you will want to obey His will and leading as you follow His plan for your life.

I urge you to develop a personal strategy for giving that will enable you to invest wisely and significantly in the kingdom of God and thus increase your fruitfulness for Christ. Acknowledge God as the source and owner of your possessions, and be ready to give an account of your stewardship to Him. Offer your gifts to the Lord Jesus as an act of praise and worship. Put God first in your giving. And manage your time, talents and treasure to bring maximum glory to His name by laying up an abundance of treasures in heaven. In so doing, you too will experience the wonderful adventure of living and giving by faith.

Remember, *How You Can Experience the Adventure of Giving* is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Self-Study Guide

1. Make a list of people you know who give faithfully to God's work. Ask them to share their experiences of joyful giving.
2. Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and meditate on it whenever you feel unthankful.
3. Memorize Matthew 6:21. Evaluate your giving and spending habit to see where your treasure lies.
4. Think of an instance in your life that illustrates the reasons giving is better than receiving.
5. Memorize Philippians 4:19. Remind yourself of this verse each time your faith to give is tested.
6. How have you been giving your time, talents and treasure to help fulfill the Great Commission? How do your gifts reflect a desire to see others accept God's love and forgiveness?
7. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to help you set financial priorities. Write them down and review them each time you pay your bills or do your accounting.
8. Examine your giving to missions to see if it reflects the priority you have set for it.
9. In which areas of your life do you feel greedy or materialistic? How have these feelings affected your spiritual well-being?
10. Is there any part of your finances that you have not completely surrendered to God? If so, why? What course of action do you plan to take to correct this matter?
11. List ways to tithe your time and talents. How can you work them into your present schedule?
12. Outline 1 John 2:15-17. How does this relate to your stewardship?

Group Discussion Questions

1. To encourage one another, share with your group how God has blessed your giving.
2. Do a group study of the parable found in Matthew 25:14-29 and list the characteristics you find in the good and bad stewards. Apply these to the way people live today.
3. Share one way in which Satan tempts you to give less. Be specific. How can you overcome this temptation in the future?
4. With your group, list several ways in which you can share your abundance with others in both material and non-material ways.
5. Discuss with your group: Suppose a new Christian confides in you that he is afraid to give God control over his giving. How would you advise him?

Website

The Transferable concepts are available online at:

www.transferableconcepts.com