

LEE E. EDDY

A Biblical understanding of...

TRULY LOVING



*How to Love using
Spirit, Soul, and Body*

Truly Loving

Lee E. Eddy

TRULY LOVING by Lee E. Eddy
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Dedication

To the most loving person I have ever known, my gracious wife, Roxanne.

Your devotion to me and putting up with my struggles is nothing short of heroic. Your love made the search for how to love worth taking. You have always believed in me and supported me. My gratefulness is beyond my ability to express.

Acknowledgments

My heart-felt thanks for those who put up with me during the writing of this book.

To my congregation who sat through the teachings that made this work.

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To Nancy Lewandoski for great editing.

To Teresa Wiant for proof-reading.

To Charles Solomon who initiated the illustrations.

To Jesus Christ who saved my spirit, is bringing my soul into the salvation He bought for me, and healed my body.

Chapter One

How Things Work

This whole thing started as I was getting set free from pornography. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I knew that I needed something. I was a wreck and was putting myself and everyone I loved in danger being around me. I learned that I couldn't lust after women anymore. It was very dangerous to everything I held valuable. As I was trying not to lust, the only thing that was going to work was to learn how to love.

Great. I had as much chance at that as taking out the Joker with a bat-a-rang.

My whole life I had heard pastors tell their congregations to, "Go out there and love those people! You are required to love them!" I would try to love and would encounter all the worst kinds of people in the world and, obviously, radically failed to love them.

I learned the difference between lust and love. I learned that I could do the one effortlessly and the other not at all. Lust always takes from someone else for my benefit. Love always gives to the benefit of the other person. I made lust an art form and was a complete alien to love.

My heart cried out to the Lord. "Please, help me understand how to love. I can't do it in myself!" I was so

correct. I didn't know how profound I was at the time, but God did. He heard my plea and started me on a journey to fulfill the answer. I had no idea what was entailed in that journey. What a trip I was undertaking!

God wanted to show me how things really work. In that process I learned so much more than just how to love. I discovered an incredible depth of how choices in my life functioned. I learned about me; the good, the bad and the ugly. The greatest thing I learned, though, was that I could help others that were in very deep problems. I could show others why they did the things they did and how to get set free from them. But first I had to honestly examine myself and see why I did the things I did. To help others experience freedom I had to experience it myself first.

I needed to be fixed. I was broken and nonfunctional. How do you fix something when you don't know how it works? I didn't know how things worked in me. I didn't know what was broken and what needed fixing. Wasn't there a manual that showed how I worked?

All my life I had tried to fix things: clocks, cars, locks, lawn mowers and go carts. My dad seemed to be able to fix everything. My brother is incredibly mechanically inclined. I seemed to have a problem. I didn't know how things worked. I needed manuals to take me step by step. If I had the right manual and access to the right parts and tools I could fix anything. But I had to fix me. Boy, did I have a problem.

Then the Lord started taking me through the Word of God in a different way. He was showing me how things worked. He showed me that there is a manual for how

to fix people. It just took a lot of effort, pain, prayer, and honesty. However, I found out that the path was actually exciting. I was getting involved in a mystery that was important, and I was getting solutions. I had access to God's manual and had become a mechanic in the spirit realm. God was fixing me and I was involved in the process. This was really cool.

I saw how the things that I had done and the choices I had made had gummed up the works. The damage that had been done to me by others was still like open wounds with no healing. I had been hurt and then I made the wounds worse. Everyone was in a concerted effort to kill me and I was the greatest participant. Somehow, this didn't seem particularly intelligent.

I had to break the pattern and do things differently. When I saw how my actions and the actions of others affected me and then I saw how it could be changed, I was set on a path of freedom that was unlike anything I had even heard of. I could really get to like this.

I also saw how I could actually help others instead of just sympathize with them or feel sorry for them. Things took on a whole new look. Instead of the bondage I was experiencing, I could actually break out and see freedom happen in just about anyone. Radical.

My method of ministry was changed forever. When I talked to people, I could see how their choices were killing them or at least hindering them. I could tell that there were things in them that were gumming up the works. I could see how past hurts were still current and that they were responding because of them. Even the Word of God took on new meaning. I was learning

the mechanics of the spirit realm. Physics in the Spirit were different than physics in the natural. I was playing in a completely different dimension.

Trying to explain what I have found has proven to be harder than gaining the understanding in the first place. As I try to explain, I will start as basic as possible and build. It is important that you track from the beginning or you will miss the depth of how it all works together.

Adam

Adam was made in the image of God. God is triune and so is man. God has three parts that are all the same being. The trinity is always a fun thing to study. Man also has three parts that are interesting to study. Just as you can't separate the three parts of God, He is all three in one being, the same is true for man. He is three parts but one being.

Adam was made of spirit, soul and body. All three parts relate to something differently. They are all truly that person, but have different ways of functioning and relating to other things. The spirit relates to God. The soul relates to other people. The body relates to the environment. All functions relating to God have to be filtered through the spirit. All functions relating to other people have to be filtered through the soul. All functions relating to the environment have to be filtered through the body.

Adam had a spiritual identity. He had a spirit that is different than everyone else's spirit. This is how he had contact with God. His spirit made him different

from the animals. The three forms of life show the different degrees of life. Plants only have a body, but are still alive. Animals have a soul and a body. They think, move, respond and relate to other beings in some way. People are totally different in that they have a spirit, which affects the soul and the body. Man is able to relate to all things on a higher scale than other forms of life. Being a spiritual being makes man very different from the animals in many ways. There are many studies showing the difference between man and animals. Even though some think we came from animals, that couldn't be further from the truth because of the spirit factor.

Adam had a soulish identity. This part is what needs to be understood more than the others. We can study it, observe it and see how it functions. The soul and the body are very scientifically observable. The spirit isn't. The study of the soul is actually a word very well known— psychology. It comes from the Greek words *psuche* and *logos*. *Psuche* is soul and *logos* is the word or study of something. Psychology is actually the study of the soul. However, if you don't go to the manufacturer for the information of a certain item, how can you study it correctly? The only way to know about the soul is to go to the Word of God and study it the way the manufacturer made it and what He says about it.

The soul is our personality. It is what makes us different from other people. The soul is made up of the mind (how we think), the will (what we want and choose), and the emotions (how we feel). What has happened in our soul is what makes up who we are and how we view ourselves. When we respond to other souls, it causes us to form how we will relate to them and to others after them.

Adam had a physical identity. He was known by how he looked and how he lived in the physical realm he was made in. He could be recognized on sight. Most of us see ourselves in this capacity as being who we are. We are much more than just what we are physically. Everything we do physically must first be understood soulishly. We respond to the physical because of what we understand soulishly.

When I die, my spirit and my soul will leave my body. I am no longer there. My body was just the machine God gave me to ride around in on this earth to be able to interact with others. The physical is not the highest realm. The spiritual is. The soulish must be in the right place for things to work correctly.

The difference between Adam and us is that Adam was innocent. He had no sin in him. He also had another problem. God wasn't in him, either. God was an outside influence. God would walk with him in the cool of the day. God would talk with him and fellowship with him. Sin was also an outside influence and with it the connection with the devil and the world. Adam was a free man able to make his own decisions openly. It would be interesting to know how long Adam lived in this state of existence. So much happened before the fall of man into sin. Adam had a good thing going.

Figure 1 shows how Adam was put together. He was spirit, soul, and body. God was an outside influence as was sin, the devil and the world. God spoke to him and touched him spiritually and in his mind, will and emotions. That was translated into action and behavior happened. He was touched in all aspects because spirit,

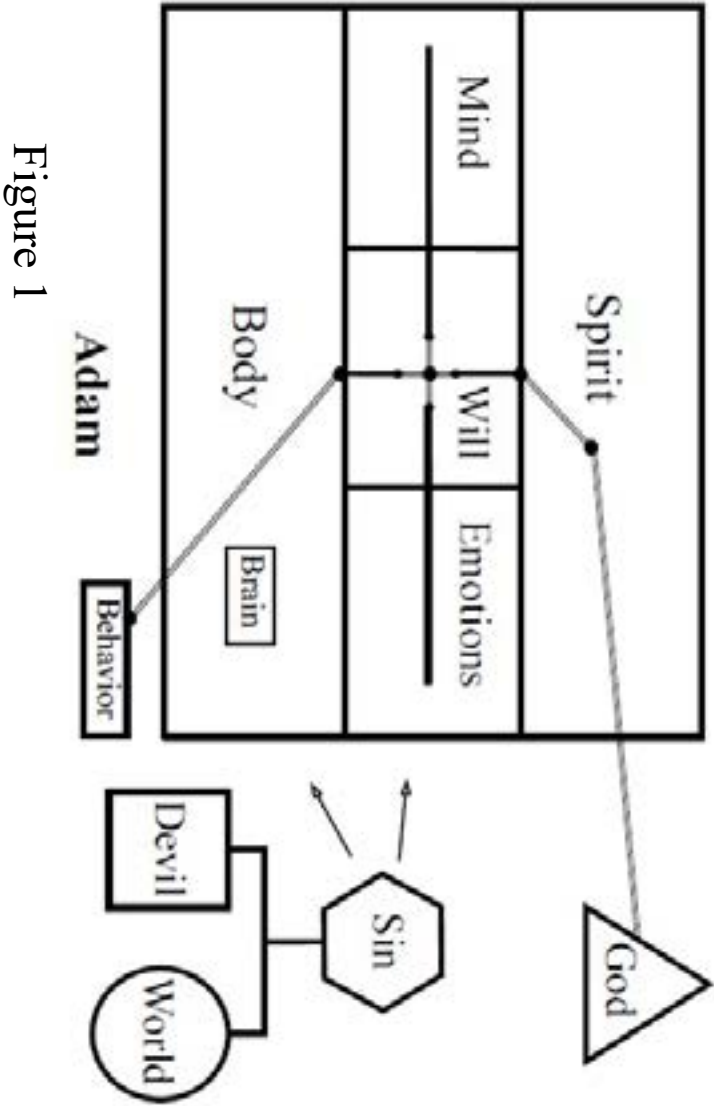


Figure 1

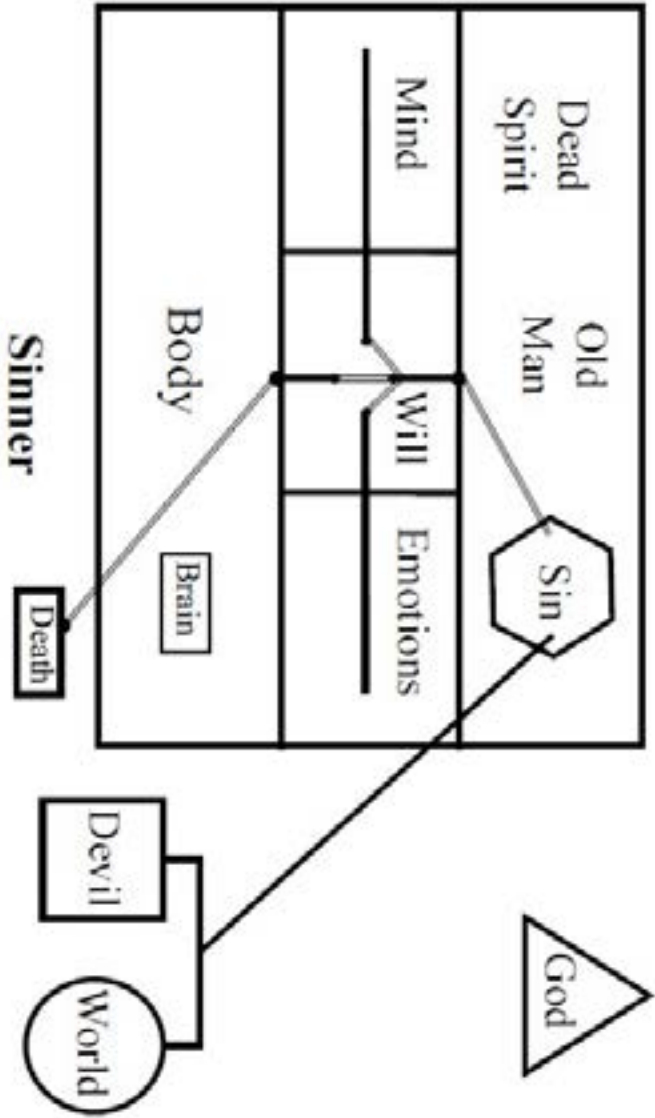


Figure 2

soul, and body were flowing together as one.

Then trouble happened.

The Sinner

Look at figure 2. When Adam chose to sin, he set things in motion that wouldn't end until all earth is destroyed. He was told that in the day that he ate of the fruit that he would surely die. He did.

His spirit died immediately, in that his ability to relate to God was destroyed. His soul entered into death so that the outcome of his relationship with others would produce death. His body started dying immediately. He would be a finite being with nothing to look forward to, but death. Death became part of his life. He died to all that was life to him before. Death is real in all of us.

Sin, however, became very much alive. Sin was no longer an outside influence, but moved right in to the spirit and defined the identity of man. He became a sinner.

Christians make a huge mistake by thinking that sinners should have the same standards as Christians. They can't do it. A sinner can do nothing but sin. Before a person is born again, everything he does is sin. Breathing is a sin. Blinking his eyes is a sin. Giving millions of dollars to philanthropic events is a sin. Why? Because anything that doesn't glorify God is sin. People who are under the hand of sin cannot glorify God. They can't have faith in God and anything without faith is sin (Romans 14:23). This isn't a very good condition to be

in. The only thing they can look forward to is judgment. That is very sad.

Sinners do just that. They sin. God still uses them in many ways and they can do some very good things. However, the outcome of sin is death - always has been and always will be. Sinful mankind is in great need of someone to save them from their condition. They will be held in accountability for what they do and believe and unless something changes, they will be judged and sentenced under the wrath of God.

Sin is a condition, not actions. They sin in action because of the condition of sin. They can't perform well enough to get into heaven. It doesn't have to do with their actions, but their condition. They have sin handed down to them from their fathers all the way from Adam. His sin plunged the world into death that required a savior to bring help. We were all dead in our transgressions and sins. We all deserve to be condemned to hell for eternity. That sentence will be all too true for too many people. Without Jesus Christ and what He has done for us, we are all lost forever.

The devil and the world have a direct influence on the life of the sinner. They are highly affected by it. We can see that in their lives as we learn to watch. It is amazing to me to see how strongly sinners think like the devil or the world system. Most of them are very selfish in all their workings. This is the highest they can attain.

The Will

When looking at my charts you will notice a little

contrivance in the will. This is a schematic symbol for either a switch or a valve, depending on your orientation as either an electrician or a plumber. My background as an electrician causes me to think in certain terms. What I am trying to portray is the fact that the will makes choices. In the will, one can choose to walk either one way or the other. One can choose to walk by the spirit or by the dictation of the body. Much more will be explained about this as we go along.

What you need to know right now is that no matter what the sinner chooses, the outcome is the same. If a sinner chooses to walk in the spirit, the only spirit he can walk in is either a human spirit or a demonic spirit. The outcome is still death.

As we continue you will see that this switch is very important. In the sinner, though, it doesn't really matter. His choice is going to be to walk in sin. The only way that changes is if he makes the choice to die to himself and give his life to Jesus Christ. That choice makes him a believer and no longer a sinner.

The Christian

Let's see what happens when we make that choice. Many things happen all at once. It will take us all of eternity to discover what all happens to us when we are born again. I am hoping to show much of it in my chart. Check out figure 3.

When one is born again, or becomes a Christian, or is saved, no matter what term you want to use, he undergoes a complete transformation. The first thing that happens is the Holy Spirit moves into his spirit. God

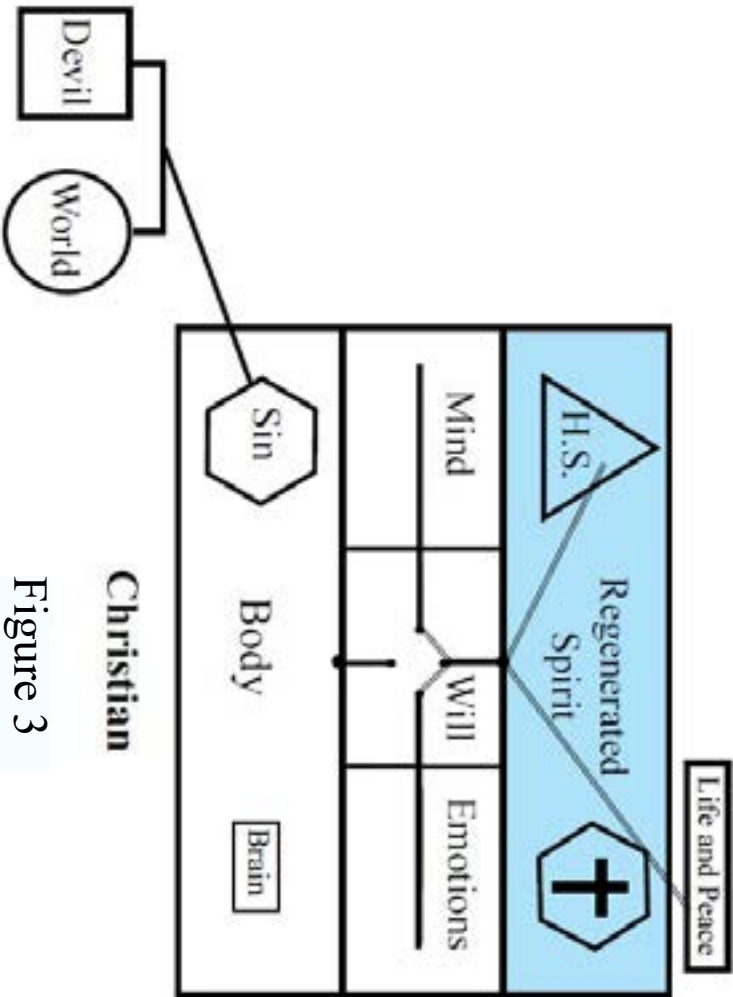


Figure 3

is no longer an outside influence, but a direct, inward influence.

This is one of the greatest mysteries in life. How can a person have God Himself living within him? I don't want to get bogged down in systematic theology, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a profound thing of great importance and huge implication. There is enough evidence of it to write a complete book in itself; in fact, many have been written. Romans 8:9-11 is the strongest passage since it states it straight and without any subtleties. What a deal! God Himself comes into a person to live with him and fellowship with him. Amazing! Gaining true understanding of this is what would cause one to live a life much differently than he would normally live.

The next thing that happens is that the person's spirit is regenerated—born again. The awesome teaching from Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3 shows us that a person must be born again. His spirit dies and is born again into the family of God. God the Father becomes his Father and he is instantly included in the family of God. There are many scriptures that talk about this in depth. Jesus' conversations with His Father show us how personal this relationship is and how deep it can be. This is another subject that many books have been written about.

When we are born again, we are united with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6). Our "old man" is crucified and we are set free from all the condemnation that came with the judgment against us. We actually are united with Jesus in a way that we are also dead and have the penalty against us paid for.

Colossians 3:3 tells us that we have died and our life is now hidden with Christ in God. Galatians 2:20 states that we have been crucified with Christ, but we live, but not us, but Christ lives in us.

All this is true immediately in the spirit realm when we are born again. Our spirit is saved and totally saved. Salvation has been accomplished and it is finished. God's work is done. Our work has only begun.

Notice the switch in the will; it is connected with the spirit. That means that the soul is subservient to the spirit and the body is aligned under the authority of the soul. That is the premiere way things should work. The mind of the Spirit is life and peace. What a picture of the ideal and total work of God in our lives. How we all long for such a perfect way to be.

What happened to the sin in the spirit? It went to the body. Romans 7:17 talks about how it isn't me working things out but the sin that dwells in me. Verse 20 restates it. Romans 6:6 talks about how salvation is supposed to render the "body of sin" useless. Our spirit is saved, our soul is in the process of being saved and our body is to wait for the redemption of all creation (Romans 8:19-23). That means that everything is in flux in our soul and spirit. Things aren't solid yet and there is much that needs to happen.

Maybe you can catch a glimpse of the importance of the switch in the will. With these two opposing forces always operating, the spirit and the sin in the body, we are in the middle of the struggle. Romans 8 tells us about the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. I will be defining flesh later. The battle rages on. It doesn't

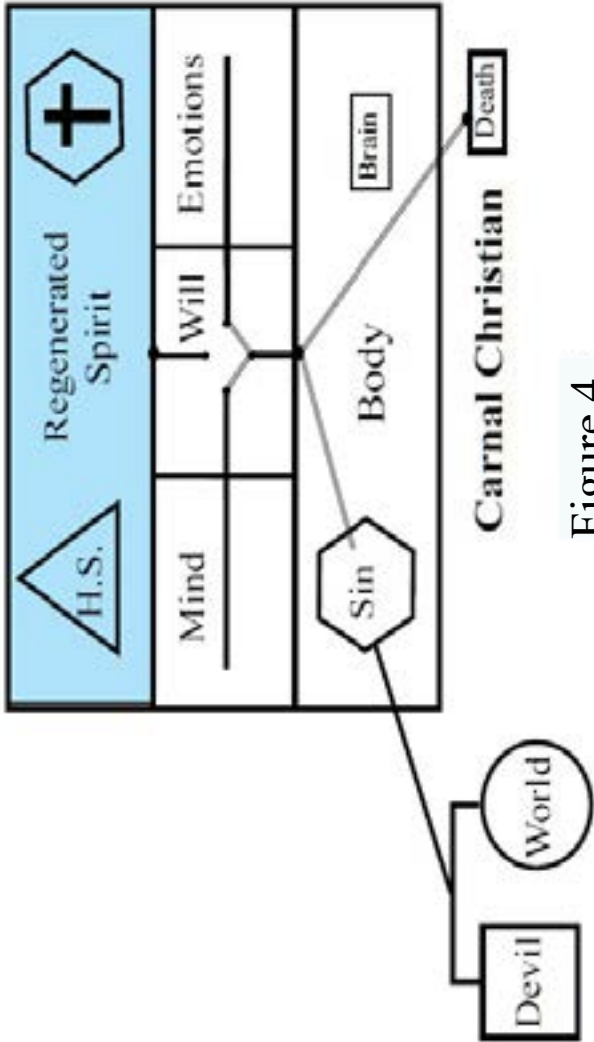


Figure 4

mean that I am schizophrenic, it only means that there are two ways to go. The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit lusts against the flesh. I do not have a dual nature. I don't have to sin. I have the choice. I will be held accountable for the choices that I make. When I sin, it is by choice. When I choose to sin, I have plenty of help getting it done. My flesh, sin, the devil, and the world are all there to help me sin. However, the Holy Spirit is there to help me when I choose to walk in the spirit. I have lots of help either direction. One way is life. The other is death. I choose.

The Carnal Christian

Let's see what happens when one throws the switch to choose the sin in the body. See figure 4.

When sin is chosen, the spirit is cut off from having influence. God still tries to talk to us, usually in the form of conviction. Our conscience is bothered and we know that we are doing what He doesn't want us to do. The problem with the conscience is that it can be defiled, twisted, ignored, and eventually even seared. That is what the scripture says. We can stop listening to the Holy Spirit that lives within us. We can choose to listen to the world and the devil by just shutting off the spirit. That is very dangerous, but way too common.

When sin is chosen, it starts defining our whole soul. When one chooses to sin, his mind is affected in how he thinks, his emotions are affected in how he feels and his will is affected in how he chooses to do things. The downhill slide into sin is very dangerous and self perpetuating. How horrible.

People I have ministered to have shown me how pervasive that is. As one minister stated recently, “sin makes you stupid.” Sin makes our emotions super sensitive to the wrong things and what we feel is mostly about us and what we want. It becomes harder to feel about others. Our desires become more and more focused on just what we want and not about what God wants. The more we focus on ourselves, the less life actually flows through us. It is the kiss of death.

The outcome of a carnal Christian life is the same as the sinner– it produces death. If our spirit relates to God, our soul relates to others and our body relates to the environment, then the death affects us in these areas. Sin messes up our relationship with God. Under sin, our soul causes death in others. Since our soul relates to others and we are producing death, we produce that death in all the relationships we have. With sin reigning, our bodies will be under the stress that they weren’t intended to carry. Choosing the sin causes death in every way. Choosing to walk in the spirit causes life in every way.

Now, perhaps, you can see that our choices in life are very important. God has done a mighty work in us.

Chapter Two

The Problem With the Soul

Studying how things work tends to be so clinical. What makes things more important is applying them to your life. The Scripture has so much to say about this sort of thing, which helps us understand that God wants us to know how they work and why. In this chapter we will be getting into some of those scriptures and finding out how they affect everything we do and the problems we are having with our soul.

Now that you have a better grasp on where the soul and the spirit are and how they interact, you can see that there are some inherent problems that occur on a regular basis. The switch in the will starts to take on great importance in your life.

Let's look in the Word. Romans 8:1-14 has so much information in it that it seems to be glazed over. Let's take it a little at a time and examine it closely. Verse 1 says:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit.

Several things need to be understood in this verse. The first thing is to know that spirit and flesh are shown to be opposites. What is the state of one who

walks according to the flesh as opposed to one who walks according to the spirit? It is the difference between figure 3 and figure 4. When we walk (or operate in life) according to the dictates of the spirit by choosing with our will to submit to Him, we will have the benefit of all the Lord has for us. When we switch to operating according to the dictates of our sin or the sensual drives of our body, we are then walking in the flesh. When we walk in the flesh we are doing what we want to do according to our own will. When we walk in the spirit we are doing what He wants us to do according to His will. The difference is something that we will be examining throughout the book.

Secondly, this verse states that there isn't any condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. When we choose to walk in the spirit, we are living in Him. When we choose to walk in the flesh we are not operating in Him. Therefore, there is condemnation to those who walk according to the flesh.

I have heard many people teach that since we are saved there isn't any condemnation for us. That all depends on how we are operating. When we are operating in the flesh we have chosen to walk outside His protection and have negated His grace. When we negate His love toward us, there isn't anything left but His justice and wrath. That isn't a very good place to be.

That is why He is so strong in telling us how to walk and what happens to us when we chose the other path. All of the things that God has for us are in Christ Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There isn't anything outside of that.

Who is going to be in charge of our lives? We will either be reigning ourselves or we are going to submit to His kingship and authority. There will be benefits and consequences for those choices.

The New International Version has elected to translate “flesh” each time as “sinful nature.” That is a most unfortunate translation that cannot be supported in any way. Sinful nature means that I have no choice, flesh means that I do. Flesh is the Greek word “sarx” and it literally means flesh or meat. That really emphasizes the role my body plays in my desires. It also shows how the sin has moved into my body and is housed there.

Romans 8:2 tells us more

*For the Law of the Spirit of life in
Christ Jesus set me free from the law of
sin and of death.*

There are laws in physics. That means that something is true everywhere under the same conditions and will always operate the same way. The law of gravity means that you will weigh the same here as you do in Germany or China or Africa. Gravity is a constant under the same conditions all over the world. (Unless you are continually eating the cultural foods along the way, and then you will weigh a lot more when you get there than you did here. But that is another subject for another time!)

If you jump off a cliff anywhere in the world you will fall and experience your mortality (or at least medical conditions around the globe). The laws that govern

aerodynamics are at work everywhere. An eagle that so majestically soars over the landscape is a perfect example. If he were to pull in his wings at any given time, his aerodynamic design would be something similar to a rock, and he would drop immediately. But if he were to extend his wings out again, the laws of aerodynamics would overcome the law of gravity and he would fly again. He has a definite advantage over those of us who are shaped more like the rock.

There is another law at work in the spirit realm. Sin is a constant. Everywhere we go and everything we do, we have sin right there with us. It is the law of sin and death. Examining that law shows that they are linked. Where there is sin, there is death. However, another law was established that gives us the power to overcome the Law of Sin and Death. That law is called the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus gives us the ability to overcome the Law of Sin and Death.

When we walk in the spirit, we are given the power to walk in life and not death. We can operate in a law that works in the spiritual realm, which is higher than anything we have had the ability to use before. We can walk in the life that Jesus walked in. The big problem is that they are mutually exclusive. You can't walk in them both at the same time. That is why the "will switch" is so important.

Romans 8:3 and 4 have more information:

For the Law being powerless, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and

concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous demand of the Law might be fulfilled in us, those not walking according to flesh, but according to Spirit.

Jesus came to live like a man in a human body, to show us how to live. Since He did it sinlessly, we were all condemned. Now we are required to walk in the spirit because it was proven that nothing good is in the flesh. But the life we live when we walk in the spirit is being joined to Jesus and we are in Him. There isn't any condemnation in Him. There is tons of condemnation in the flesh. Why is it such a hard choice? We will discover more as we go along about why it is so tough to decide to walk that kind of life. It isn't easy to walk in the spirit. It is way too easy to walk in the flesh.

Romans 8:5-8 goes on to tell us:

For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit mind the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace; because the mind of the flesh is enmity towards God; for it is not being subjected to the Law of God, for neither can it be. And those being in the flesh are not able to please God.

The word for "mind" in this passage is the Greek word *phroneo*. It means the thought process itself. The ones that are according to the flesh have the thought processes of the flesh and the ones according to spirit

have the thought processes of the Spirit. When we walk in the flesh we think the way the flesh thinks. We think like others who are walking in the flesh. When we walk in the spirit we think like the Spirit does. We then think like others who are walking in the spirit.

The way of thinking in the flesh is death. The way of thinking in the spirit is life and peace. It isn't that hard to see in people. Just listen and watch and you will be able to tell when someone is walking in the flesh or not. The Bible states that we speak out of the abundance of our heart. If we are walking in the flesh, our speech will betray us.

There is more evidence of the flesh in this verse. The mind, using the thought processes of the flesh, is in enmity toward God because it isn't submitted to the way God has established things to work. According to the Law of Sin and Death, the mind of the flesh isn't able to function in conjunction with God. It just can't work. It is impossible.

And because of that, it is impossible for a person walking in the flesh, thinking the way the flesh thinks, to please God. Flesh can't please Him. I have seen so many examples of people who tried to do spiritual things with their flesh (including myself) and it has never worked. When people try to prophesy with flesh, or sing with flesh, or even preach with the flesh, the outcome will be death every time. God's laws always work. God requires us to walk in Him. When we do walk with Him, the outcome is always the same— life and peace. Even if they don't receive my message and even hate me, the outcome in me shows that the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus is functioning. These things never fail.

It is the basis of all our understanding.

Romans 8: 9-11 continues the thought:

But you are not in flesh, but in Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, this one is not His. But if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of the One having raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One having raised the Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies live through the indwelling of His Spirit in you.

If we don't have the Spirit of Christ we are not born again. If we do, we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and we have all God has for us— salvation, joy, peace, etc. But we still have the sin in our body and that sin is death. Our bodies still house death, but we can experience life. How? By throwing the switch of the will to follow the things of the Spirit. The outcome? Even our bodies will experience the life that comes through the Spirit. What a wonderful thing to have the life-giving power of God living in our bodies. Why is there sickness and disease? God has given us the option of living with the power of God in our bodies. I believe that people don't understand the benefit of the Holy Spirit in our bodies. I believe that living in Holy Spirit powered health is better than seeking healing all the time. We will get into why there is so much sickness later on and how to get rid of it. What a deal!

Therefore, Romans 8:12 and 13 state:

So, then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh, for if you live according to flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

Living according to the flesh will kill you. However, if you will kill the practices of the body (choosing to walk with the switch hooked up to the spirit instead of the sin in the body) you will experience life and that more abundantly. These choices are life and death choices. We are continually putting ourselves in the position of life or death. It makes us wonder why we would ever choose the death and not the life.

Romans 8:14 wraps up this passage by stating:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The key to understanding the flesh is to know who we are. Our identity in Christ is the most important thing for us to know. When I know who I am I will walk correctly. This is a true statement— no one will act differently than he sees himself. If you identify with your flesh, you will walk in it. If you identify with how God sees you, in the spirit, you will walk in that.

How should we choose whether to walk in the flesh or the spirit? Who are you? If you see yourself as a son of the Father God, you will want to walk that way. It won't be easy since we are living in this world

of flesh. Flesh has permeated everything in life for most people. Choosing to walk in the spirit will shake everything we have used as a foundation in our lives. It will be a complete life-style change to walk in the spirit and it will demand us to kill the flesh. There is always a cost. But it will be worth it.

Dividing the Differences

One of the best and strongest scriptures about this matter is Hebrews 4:12 and 13. It reads like this:

For the Word of God is living, and powerfully working, and sharper than every two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; and there is no creature unrevealed before Him; but all things are naked and laid open to His eyes, with whom is our account.

As we open ourselves to the Word of God we need to know that the scriptures are going to do something to us. The Bible isn't a book, it is a person. We must know that when we get into the Word, it must get into us. The Word is Jesus according to John 1:1,2,14 and Revelations 19:11-13. When we open the Bible, it is a flowing conversation with our Lord and our God. It is alive, as alive as the Lord is. It is powerfully working to change us to become like Jesus. We must look in the Word with the idea that we want to change and that the Lord wants to change us. If we see it as a relationship, then we can flow with what the Lord is wanting to

accomplish in our lives.

The analogy here of a double-edged sword is too wonderful. I collect and play with swords. Swordsman-ship and fighting with armor is very interesting to me. Working with a single-edged sword is different than a double-edged sword. A double-edged sword cuts both ways, swinging down and pulling back. The Word is just like that. If we allow it to cut through the first time, then we won't have to have the second cut. The first cut is conviction by the Word. Conviction cuts us open and exposes us, and if we are open to change, then we won't have to have the second cut. The second cut is condemnation. If we allow the change to be made by the first cut, we won't be destroyed by the second cut. I hope we learn.

The Sword of the Word divides us. It cuts us open so we know how things are functioning. This is one of the deepest spiritual principles in the Word. First, it pierces us. In the Greek, the word "pierces" means to be penetrated completely. The Word knows where to poke to get the real results. It cuts through all the junk that we may throw in the way and gets to the core quickly, if we will allow it. Psalm 139:1 uses the English word "search", but it literally is the word "to pierce to the fine point". God pierces us and knows us intimately.

Secondly the Word divides us. The Greek word for "division" means "to separate for distribution". In other words, it divides things so that we can observe what things go where. It cuts us apart so that we can see how each part is working and what to do about it.

The list of things being divided is very interesting.

The first of the list is that the Word divides soul and spirit. That means that when we are exposed to the Word of God, it tells us what is functioning of our soul and of our spirit. Things get very interesting from here on.

Dividing soul and spirit is like dividing Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You can't really divide them, you can only divide them as far as study and observation are concerned. They are forever linked and interactive. However, you can see the differences and how they relate to other things. You can understand the differences and how to relate to them. The same is true about soul and spirit. They are forever linked. However, you can see the differences and see how they relate to other things. That is what this verse is talking about. The Word shows us the differences and what is happening in us and around us.

The Word tells us when our soul is in charge and when our spirit is in charge. We can study and effectively observe what happens when the soul is in control as opposed to when the spirit is in control. That makes a big difference. The soul produces death, the spirit produces life.

The Word shows us the flesh when it reigns and the spirit when it reigns. The switch in the will becomes critical to our very existence. The Word shows us when we are switched to the soul/flesh and that is called conviction. We now have an opportunity to bring change into our lives and allow the Word to do its surgery. When He cuts out the flesh, He replaces it with the things of the Spirit of God. That is His goal. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. Christlike ness is what we are to be looking for.

The next parts to be divided are joints and marrow. What is the difference between joints and marrow? Both are about the bones. Both are completely internal. We can't see the joints, nor can we see the marrow. How do we know they are functioning?

We can actually tell if a joint is functional by looking at the outside. We can't see the actual joint, but we can see the effects of it. If the elbow isn't working, the arm doesn't bend. If you have ever had an injury to a joint you will know that everyone can tell if you aren't up to full functionality. You hobble around or you protect it from outside influences. Your moans and groans are getting on everyone's nerves and they want you better almost as much as you do.

You can't readily tell from the outside if the marrow isn't working, though. A person can be very sick and all you can do is ask what the problem is. It is going to take educated diagnostic work to determine if the marrow isn't functioning. The marrow is where blood cells are made. If the life is in the blood like the scripture says, and you aren't making any, then you have a severe problem.

Soul and spirit are the same way. Soul can be seen by observation. It is obvious when the soul is in charge. When there are problems with the soul, the whole function of the person is hobbled. There is non-stop moaning and groaning and everyone wants you better even more than you do.

Problems with the spirit are life threatening. The spirit is where life or death is decided. A sick spirit is a deadly situation. After a person gets saved, there is life

abiding in him. The biggest problem is when the soul is reigning. The switch of the will determines whether life reigns or death reigns. The joints are easily visible and when the joint is subservient, life works. It seems we should be able to see that our flesh is killing us and that we should be submitting to the spirit to save our lives.

The last thing on the list to be divided is discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. We will be discussing the heart later. What we want to examine right now are the thoughts and intentions.

The word “thoughts” is the Greek word *enthumesis*. It means literally the inner passions, the inward workings of our thought life. We try so hard to believe that God doesn’t know our thoughts and what we feel about things. We want so badly to be alone in our thoughts, but that isn’t the way it is. Psalm 139:2 says that God knows our thoughts from afar off. The Word examines how we are thinking and what we are feeling, the inward passions. The word “intentions” is the Greek word *ennoia*, meaning the inward mind, the tendencies of thinking a certain way. The Word reveals to us how we are thinking, what we are feeling and how to deal with it. It tells us what the truth is, makes us examine our priorities and the things that are manipulating our lives. The Word shows us what is real compared to what is fooling us .

God knows us and He knows how things work. In the Bible, He has given us everything we need for life and godliness. We can find out why we are not doing

so well, as it shows us that we are not living according to the principles that God has set out for His people. We can also find out how to live a better life and how to touch other people with the truth that will set them free.

The Bible is the greatest thing we have on this planet. Through its pages we can find all of life, but it will cost us. Are we willing to pay the price it will cost for our soul? Are we willing to let God do the work that He wants to do in us?

The Battle

There is a fight between the spirit and the soul. When we are walking in the authority of the soul it is called flesh. The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. We can see this so clearly in Galatians 5:16-26.

But I say, Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another; lest whatever you may will, these things you do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under Law. Now the works of the flesh are clearly revealed, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, fightings, jealousies, angers, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and things like these;

of which I tell you beforehand, as I also said before, that the ones practicing such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such things there is not a law. But the ones belonging to Christ crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

There is a lot to talk about in this passage. The first thing it talks about is a principle that could be a standard for us to live by. If we would but walk in the Spirit, we would not fulfill the lust of the flesh. If we would choose with our “will switch” to walk in the authority of the Spirit instead of our flesh, we would have the power to stop the effectiveness of the flesh in our lives. We would also be able to step away from the bondage that the flesh has for us. Cool. This is the power of breaking bondage and addictions. Does it really work? Yes, it does. Every time. The problem is making the choice to walk in the Spirit continually or actually making the right choice minute by minute. We can evoke the authority of the Spirit any time we choose. The problem is in the choosing.

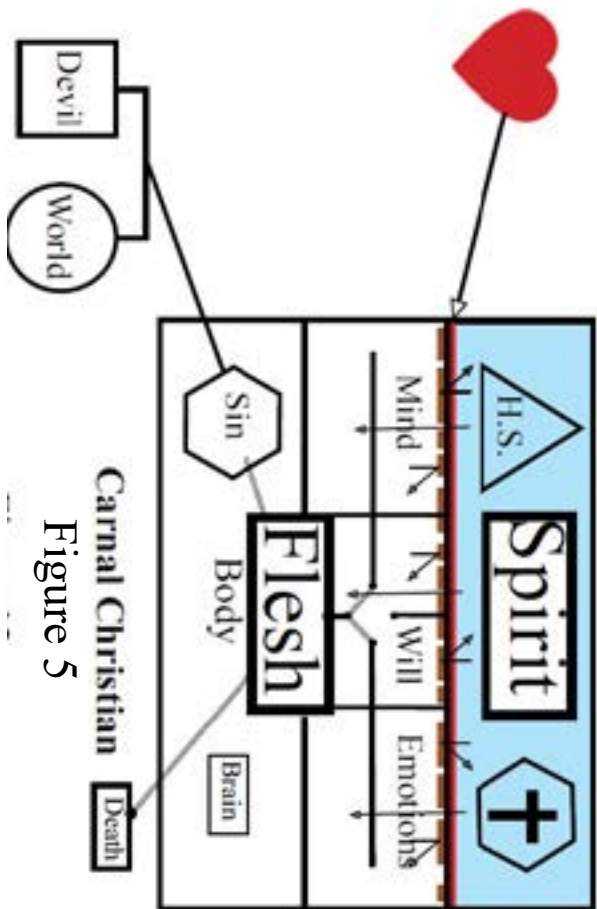
The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. That means that both of them want something for themselves. The flesh wants to gain soulish control and commit the sin it lusts after (figure 5). The Spirit knows that sin is killing us and wants to give us life. The Spirit wants to control us and bring us all the blessings from God. He also knows that as long as our flesh is in control, God can’t give us what we really

need and we will be continually dying. The Spirit wants us for Himself. He knows that when we are in Him, we have complete fulfillment. He also knows that if we do whatever we want, we will forfeit all benefit and it will kill us and those around us. He doesn't want to leave us to ourselves. Since we have done ourselves no good by doing whatever we want, you would think we would want the Spirit to have His way. I don't think we are very smart sometimes.

When we are led by the Spirit we don't have to worry whether we are doing things right. We don't have to worry whether we are accepted. We don't have to worry whether we perform well enough to gain what we need from God. When we are led by the Spirit, He guides us into all truth and freedom.

Paul lists many very bad things and tells us that these are the works of the flesh and that all of them are deadly. It isn't an exhaustive list, but it is comprehensive. There is enough here to make his point about how wrong are works in the flesh. He also states that if we are practicing such things we are not able to have the value of what is gained in the Kingdom of God. Basically he is telling us that we can see the works of the flesh plainly and see them ruling in people's lives. We can see them operating in our own lives. We can also see the damage that they have done and are still doing. As we examine the lives around us (including our own) we should really be concerned about the intelligence we think we have. We want things that are doing such damage and don't want things that will bring such healing and life. Incredible!

Then Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit. These are



Carnal Christian
Figure 5

The spirit that we have access to.
The Flesh that we can choose to walk in

things that will come out of a life that is under the hand of the Holy Spirit. Notice how making a simple choice puts us either in life or death and remarkably so. We will examine the fruit of the Spirit in greater detail later. It is the choice that we need to see here. We have the ability to choose life or death, blessing or cursing, good or evil. He wants us to choose life.

Galatians 5:24 is one of the greatest keys. When we have been united with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection, then we have positionally seen the crucifixion of our flesh. The problem comes in the experiential area of life. Have we experienced the crucifixion of our flesh? We are continually put in situations where we can respond with His life or with our own choice of death and lust. We have to appropriate His life by taking everything to Him and giving it over. When something is triggered in us and makes us want to flip out and get all sorts of angry at someone, that is God giving us an opportunity to bring the crucifixion of our flesh into reality.

Our passions and lusts seem to have quite a hold on us. What is our focus? If we will focus on Him instead of ourselves and what we want, we will find that we are living a fulfilled life and one that isn't always so filled with pressure and stress. The Lord wants us to have life and peace. The decision of what we want to do lies completely with us. He has done all His work. What are we going to do with the choices He has given us? What do we really want?

One of the strongest things that God wants us to see here is that the flesh has already been condemned as worthy of death. Crucifixion was reserved for the worst of the worst criminal that had to be made into an

example. The authorities found them to be guilty of such horrible crimes that a certain and swift death wasn't good enough. They had to be hung up and exploited as an example of what happens when you commit those kinds of crimes.

God has condemned the flesh to the same horrible death. He knows that it is killing His children and wants it dead. Not only does He want it dead, He wants it displayed and shown to be horrible to all who would see. God calls us to understand how horrible our flesh is and how much it has taken from us.

God absolutely hates the flesh. When we choose to walk in the flesh and not in the spirit, we are choosing to walk in our own godhood. We are making ourselves God and God will fight that. He knows we make extremely poor gods and that we are dying because of it. He wants us to walk in the spirit so we can gain everything He has for us. Walking in the spirit brings about the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Everything else is just death. God wants so much more for us because of His love for us.

If we could just see how badly the flesh is destroying everything that is of value, we would choose to walk away from it. We would never choose to walk in the flesh again, if we could only see the truth about it. It is amazing how deeply the deception runs in our lives that we would actually choose to walk in the flesh.

Since the soul is how we relate to others, when we are walking in the flesh we are also damaging to others. That is why the last verse is there in that chapter. *Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another,*

envying one another. When we are in the flesh we will have too much value in our own eyes. We will put down other people and make ourselves better than them. The focus will be all about me, me, me. These are the fingerprints of the flesh being in control and the Spirit being shut off in our lives. This doesn't seem to be a good choice, does it?

The greatest thing we can gain from this passage is to see that we have great power in our ability to choose. God doesn't want robots. He wants people who will choose to walk with Him and trust Him for their lives. He wants people He can work through to bring His message and His power to those who are hurting. The flesh hinders all that and keeps us from having God's best. The issue then is our soul and what we think, feel and want. We must get our souls under control.

Chapter Three

Hate the Soul

There is much in the scripture concerning the soul and how we have to deal with it. Until we have the proper attitude about it, we will not have victory over it. We have a love/hate relationship with our soul. When we walk in the Spirit, we don't like the things of the soul, and this is true the other way around. Let's look at these scriptures about the soul and see what God says about it.

John 12:23-25

In John, Jesus gives us a huge understanding if we are willing to receive it. Let's look at verses 23 and 24

But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, If the grain of wheat that falls into the earth does not die, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Jesus starts this conversation with an understanding about being glorified. There are principles here that He really wants us to understand. He is talking about His own glorification or, in other words, how the Father can bring the glory through Him without hindrance. Jesus wants to give the glory to the Father and

be a complete channel of that glory. So He tells us that there are principles that must be followed to bring this about. Since we are also wanting to bring the glory to the Father, we need to apply these principles to our lives in all areas.

When the Bible says “truly, truly” it is usually a signal that what is being said is very important and should be doubly listened to. One “truly” is important, but two should really get our attention.

If a grain of wheat isn’t planted and put into the ground it is useless for producing fruit. It must be buried so that it will start to decompose. As it dies and starts to fall apart, it becomes part of the soil system. It then starts sending out roots that draw in the nutrients and moisture. As it does that it turns those nutrients into energy to make a shoot that begins to grow toward the surface. The roots grow as the shoot does and soon it will break the surface and become a visible plant.

As it gains sunshine, water, nitrogen and all sorts of other things in the soil, it transforms those things into more heads of grain. One seed produces many more. The words that are usually ignored are the words “it remains alone”. We know about agriculture and how planting seeds really work, but how it works in the spiritual is where we lack understanding.

Why is Jesus telling us about this? We understand! Or do we? He then tells us something that is very profound. John 12:25 says this:

*The one who loves his life loses it, and
the one who hates his life in this world will
keep it into everlasting life.*

The word for “life” here is the Greek word *psuche*. That is the Greek word for soul, not life. If a person loves his soul, he loses it. What does that mean? Taking everything that has just been said, it means that this sentence is of utmost importance. Let’s look at it in close detail to see what He is talking about.

The one who loves his soul loses it. The word for love here is the Greek work *phileo*. It means to be fond of, to have affection for. It is a different form of love than the more well known *agape*. *Phileo* means more to be a buddy to than to love like God wants His disciples to love one another. The word for “loses” is the Greek word *apollami*, which means to destroy fully, from two words meaning “off” and “to ruin”. So this verse literally says that if I am a buddy to my soul, then I will absolutely destroy it.

If I am trying to promote myself and what I feel, think, and want, then I am trying to keep my soul alive as the foremost thing in my life. When I focus on myself and all that I want, I then bring my soul to the point of being god to me. That will cause me to bring death and destruction to my soul and the soul I will end up having is the twisted soul that is far from the soul that God intended. The battle is for the soul. The key is who is in charge of the soul and what it is supposed to look like and be like.

This verse shows the battle. If I am a buddy to my soul and am run by it, I will destroy everything that is good about it. You know people that you don’t like being around because of their continual focus on themselves and their problems. The longer they focus on themselves, the worse they get and the more people

run from them. Most of the Christians I have met have the same problem and the church is helping them focus on themselves.

God is trying to get us to understand that our love affair with ourselves is absolutely deadly to the cause of Christ in our own lives. We are promoting something that isn't the life giving thing that God intended. Our personality is not what God wanted it to be because of the wounds and choices that we have made. We are showing something that isn't real because we are trying to defend ourselves or preserve ourselves from further harm. The lies we have believed are shaping our personalities to be something that isn't really us, or at least the real us that God knows us to be. Most of us haven't even met the person we are supposed to be. We have been choked up with the junk that makes us try to be something else and it is destroying the kind of person that God created us to be in the first place.

John 12:25 goes on to tell us that the one who hates his soul in this world will keep it to everlasting life. The word for "hate" here is the Greek word *miseo* and it means to actually detest or hate. That is a little hard to understand until you actually examine it closely. He is not trying to get us to be self haters and beat ourselves up or flagellate ourselves. He is actually trying to set us free from the self rule that has been killing us. We have to get to the point where we hate the soulish gains we thought we were getting and hate the self rule that puts us in total control. We have to hate the way we have defended ourselves and promoted ourselves and the way we were thinking of ourselves either in pride or false humility and condemnation.

The pain we usually have in our soul caused by the things we have had to go through in life has warped our self perception. We see ourselves as junk, needing to defend ourselves, or needing to promote ourselves in a way that will not hurt us, or some other warped way of thinking. When the pain is healed, we can see ourselves the way God sees us. When we are fully trusting in Him, we can become the person He has created us to be. Until then, we are swayed by our own self perception until we just can't function correctly and the outcome is death and destruction of who we really are. We have a living arrangement with our damaged souls and that is safe for us. We have loved our soul and are destroying it fully. We need to hate that whole scenario. We have to hate the selfish gains we are getting. We have to deny our selfishness and give it over to God so He can bring His change to it.

It says that if we hate our soul we will keep it. That is the Greek word *phulasso* and it means to watch or be guard over it. If we hate it, we will then watch over it to keep it from becoming the monster it was before. We can actually guard it from the harm and hurt that had ruled it before. We can continually keep a watch over it to keep it safe and to become the soul that God wants it to be. That is a beautiful thing. We can go through life and, no matter what happens, we can see the power of God work and keep us on the path to become who He intended us to be in the first place.

When is that supposed to happen? The verse tells us that this transformation happens in this world. It is something that we are to do here to bring us into what God wants us to be. This is the process of becoming Christlike. How do I know that? The rest of the sentence

is “into eternal life”. The Greek word *eis* is used here and it always shows action from the outside to move inside. The Lord is telling us that if we will hate our soul we will be able to move from the outside of eternal life into the inside of eternal life. We will see eternal life happening in our lives while we are still in this world. That is exciting.

What was the context of this whole passage? To be like the grain of seed that falls into the ground and dies. Then we can have the fruit of our death to self that grows into the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. We can't produce the fruit until we aren't hindering the work with our own rule. We must die.

Matthew 10:34-39

The next passage on the subject is in Matthew. There are some similarities and some differences. Let's look at it. Verses 34-38 say:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. I came to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. “Ones hostile to the man shall be those of his own house.” The one loving father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one loving son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

The beginning of this passage is troubling. I re-

ally enjoy giving this passage to students to teach. At first look, it is completely out of character for the Lord to say such things. However, it is chock full of things that we need to know.

Jesus didn't come to bring peace to the present situation. He came to completely stir things up. He wants to break the way we were thinking and give us the truth instead. He isn't into blessing our mess. He wants to change it and bring it into the Kingdom of God.

When we look at our households we can see the truth to what He is saying. There is so much deceit and pressure on each other that it is impossible to come out of it unscathed. How we see our parents is crucial to how we live our lives. How we think others think about us sways everything we do. We are absolutely in bondage to our families and how they think of us and what they have done to us. Everyday I come across people who are being controlled by how their families perceive them. Either their families have put pressure on them to be a certain way, or they have been damaged by hurts and trauma related to their upbringing, or some other way that has bent them to be who they are promoting today. This isn't of God. God wants us to find out who we really are and to set us free from all the hurts of the past that have shaped how we see ourselves today.

God wants to use a sword to divide that bondage between us that is manipulating us. He came to separate us from those relationships that have twisted us for so long. He doesn't want to isolate us from our families; on the contrary, He wants to use us as His representative to our families. He just doesn't want us controlled by them and not able to walk with Him in total unity. He

wants to speak into our lives, and He can't when we are so consumed by what others think and the pain we are living, that we can't hear Him.

The sword He is using is the sword out of Hebrews 12 that divides our soul and our spirit so we can see who is in control. When I am examined by the Word of God, it shows me whether I truly love people or whether I am using them or abusing them. It shows me whether these are lust relationships or love relationships. Am I in this relationship for what I can get out of it, or am I in it to bring the blessings of God to it? That is the sword that God is using in my relationships to sever what my twisted soul is gaining out of it and causing death.

The relationships that are killing us need to be exposed for what they are. When I am walking in the flesh I am bringing death to everyone around me. When I die to myself and God is able to work through me, I bring life to those relationships. I have to understand what is going on in those relationship for me to bring the power of God to them. I have to die to what I would gain out of those relationships and then I can allow the life to work through me to others.

For example let's look at the first relationship in this passage— the father/son. If a man has been wounded by his father, he will have a judgment against him. He will always be looking for the healing of that relationship. He may be affected by what he thinks his dad thinks of him or may keep trying to be accepted by him. As long as his focus is on that wound, he will be affected by it. When God comes in and gives understanding to him about what he has been doing in that relationship, he can then release his dad and start to focus on the Lord

instead. If he never submits this relationship to the Lord, that relationship will keep him from becoming the person he needs to become. His soulish gain (which is really nothing, but feels like everything) is keeping him in the death. But if he allows the Word to expose him and he submits to it, he will have died to selfishness and will be able to gain the healing. Then he will be able to bring life to the relationship. The intensity of the problem will be alleviated and he can start letting the soul that God first created in him to manifest and he will be able to see life happen all around him.

If these relationships cause us to focus more on them than on the Lord, then we love them more than the Lord. We can actually hate them, but if our focus is on them, we love what is happening between us more than we love what would be happening between us and the Lord. These verses show that if this is happening we are unworthy of what the Lord wants to do in and through our lives. We must give up these people to the Lord and let Him be in charge of bringing them what they need. We can't let them rule our lives nor can we rule their lives. This all has to be given to the Lord. The key is how much we focus our lives on them and how much they own us through our relationship with them.

The next part of this passage tells us that we need to take up our cross and follow Him or we are not worthy of Him. This is crucial. According to this we must take up our death implement by which we are going to die and follow Him. The cross is an execution tool. The ones who died on the cross were criminals condemned to the worst kind of punishment. We must put our flesh on that cross and condemn it to death, not try to keep it alive and justify its existence. He was willing to die to

Himself to bring life to others and that is exactly what we are being asked to do. If we don't, then we aren't worthy of Him since He was willing to do it for us.

After all that, verse 39 says this:
*The one finding his soul shall lose it.
And the one losing his soul on account
of Me shall find it.*

This passage is like the one in John in many ways. The differences are interesting. The word for "finding" is the Greek word *heurao* meaning "to find." The word for "lose" is the same as in John, "to destroy." The adverse words are the same as the beginning. This verse says exactly what it means. The one finding his own selfish soul will destroy it and the one who purposefully destroys his soul will find the one that God created for him in the first place.

We have the responsibility to die to ourselves and therefore be able to bring life to those around us. It is required of us to die to self so that God can live through us. He isn't asking us to do anything He didn't do. He is actually asking us to be part of the whole plan and to become God's hand on this earth. He knows that if we don't, we will never be able to fulfill our true destinies. He knows that our reliance on our ability to deal with the pain won't work. He knows we are hung up on the pain and lies in our lives, and that we need to get rid of them to be able to be the Christians He has called us to be.

The last part of this passage is that we are doing it all on account of Him. He is not just telling us to do

something, He is actually living in us and through us to accomplish it. The only thing He truly requires from us is obedience. The only reason to do it is for Him. We might gain help and benefit from it, but the reason we do it is for Him. That should be enough for us.

Matthew 16:24-26

This passage has a few differences from the first ones. Let's look at it. It says:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, If any-one desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and let him bear his cross, and let him follow Me. For whoever may desire to save his soul will lose it. But whoever may lose his soul for My sake will find it. For what will a man be benefited if he should gain the whole world, but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give as an exchange for his soul?

The words here are inescapable. If a person wants to become a true disciple of Jesus, he must first deny himself. This means you should deny yourself the living of your life for you. If you are willing to live for Him to the point where you gain no personal benefit and are willing to die to yourself, then you are allowed to follow Him. This is a little different than what we are like on Sunday mornings. We will do just about anything to get someone to walk down the isle and "give their life to Jesus." Do we ever help them count the cost? Do we tell them that they are coming down to die? Are we so "seeker friendly" that we aren't helping them die to themselves and take up their cross?

The word here for “save” is the Greek word *sozo* meaning to save, rescue, the root of the word for salvation. The word for “lose” is the same one— destruction. If we try by our own efforts to save our soul we will destroy it. Whoever desires to fully destroy everything he would personally gain from his selfish soul will find the soul God has been trying to bring him since the foundations of the world (at least since you were conceived).

The big difference is what follows. What will a man profit if he should gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? The soul that God wants us to have, the one He designed for us before the world began, is of greater value than the entire world. If you don’t have the soul working that God created, your possession of the whole world would not be fulfilling or satisfying. What incredible freedom we have when we gain His soul for us. We can actually own nothing and our lives can be fulfilled and our destiny can be realized. What a difference in priorities to what the world tells us. No wonder God had to tell us so many times and in so many different ways!

Our lives are of such great value, yet we seem to be able to give them away in a heartbeat. We try too hard to defend ourselves and justify our actions instead of just confessing to the Lord the problems we have. When will we learn to do what is uncomfortable and humble ourselves?

Mark 8:34-38

What this passage has to offer in contrast to the others is interesting. Here it is:

And calling near the crowd with His disciples, He said to them, Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take his cross, and let him follow Me. For whoever desires to save his soul, he shall lose it. But whoever shall lose his soul for My sake and the gospel, that one shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what shall a man give as an exchange for his soul? For whoever may be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father, along with the holy angels.

The theme stays the same throughout this passage with the denying self, taking the cross, and following Him. It tells of trying to save your soul and destroying it, of destroying it for His sake and the gospel, and saving it. There was a little difference there. The same goes for the forfeiting and exchanging principles. The difference here is the part about being ashamed of Him. This is tagged along with the other part. It is interesting that the Lord thinks that my trying to keep my own soul is the same as being ashamed of Him. It shows that we have shame in front of the wrong people.

We are ashamed to talk about our pain and the things that have happened to us and how we should forgive and grow out of our pain. We don't want to talk about the things we have done wrong and how we should repent from doing them. We are ashamed and don't want to see them. That is false shame. When we

don't bring them to Jesus then we are ashamed of Him.

I don't want Him to be ashamed of me when He comes. I want Him to be proud of me and say things like, "Lee, I am proud of you. You died to the things of your own soul and allowed Me to live through your soul to others. Thank you." What a difference! If this thing is truly relationship, then what I do with that relationship will determine everything for eternity. That makes my decisions very important in this life. The stakes go up for the importance of our decisions.

Luke 9:23-26

And He said to all, If anyone desires to come after Me, Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily. And let him follow Me. For whoever desires to save his soul, he will lose it. But whoever loses his soul for my sake, this one will save it. For what is a man profited gaining the whole world but destroying himself or suffering loss? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that one when He comes in His glory, and that of the Father, and of the holy angels.

The main difference in this passage is that it uses the word "daily" when telling about taking up our crosses. That means that we are in the fight every day. We need to die to ourselves every, single day, in every, single relationship or situation. We must be continually dying to ourselves. That is quite a thought.

The Lord is warning them about the end times. Then

He tells them:

Luke 17:33

*Whoever seeks to save his life, he will lose it.
And whoever will lose it, he will preserve it.*

The word “preserve” is the Greek word *zoogoneo*. It means to engender alive, to rescue, save from death. To destroy your old twisted soul is to save it by putting life within it. That is exciting.

Luke 14:26-27

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and besides even his own soul, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple.

I wanted to include this passage even though it doesn't talk about seeking, saving, destroying and gaining like the other passages did. But it does have something very unique and important in it.

We have already talked about how we put importance of our relationships over the Lord. Here He even goes as far as to state that we must actually hate the benefit we were getting out of those relationships. As long as we have them as our focus, we will never be able to become the disciple that Jesus needs us to be. We must make relationship with Him the most important thing in our lives. Only then can we truly love with His

love. We will be getting into this in great depth in a later chapter. It is of utmost importance that we have our priorities straight.

The big difference, though, is when it says that we must hate our own soul. I must truly hate the soul-
ish benefit I get out of using people. I must truly hate the lust relationships I have. I am not that way in the spirit. I am that way in the flesh. God is telling us that we must truly hate that for us to walk in the spirit the way we need to.

This isn't a popular message. This isn't even very much fun. It does produce piles and piles of joy when we are coming out the other side. The time spent dealing with our wounds and choices is grueling and painful. The outcome, however, is so well worth it. The benefits, then, are awesome to behold.

I can look at my life and tell the times that I have spent dealing with the things that were hindering me. I had to get to the point where I was actually seeing the damage that I was doing to me and to others for me to really want to go through the process that I needed to for change to happen. I had to make it a priority. This isn't just for full-time preacher types. This is mandatory for all Christians who want to walk with the Lord in victory and freedom. He has given us the path. Now He wants to accompany us as we walk it out. It will be worth it.

Chapter Four

The Salvation of the Soul

Until I started studying the soul, I had no idea that the salvation of the soul was different than the salvation of the spirit. It never occurred to me that there was more to understand when discussing salvation. I knew what salvation was. That was what we heard every Sunday in every message. The problem was that we didn't understand that God was doing more work that we had even understood that we needed.

The scripture has some very important things to say that we need to understand. Let's look at the various passages that talk about this subject.

Hebrews 10:35-39

Then do not throw away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of patience, that having done the will of God you may obtain the promise. For, yet a very little while, and the One coming will come, "and will not delay." "But the just shall live by faith," "and if he draws back," "My soul is not pleased in him." But we are not of those withdrawing to destruction, but of faith, to the preservation of the soul.

This passage shows that we are needing to obtain

the promise, but the only way to get it is by faith. We must live by that faith and not draw back from it. The promise is in the relationship we have with the Father. We must not draw back from that relationship. We must believe in the walk we have with Him and that it is a personal thing between us and Him. That promise that we are trying to obtain must be obtained by faith that what we are doing in God is valuable and eternal. If we draw back it will be ultimately destructive to us. What a warning we are hearing in this passage. Everything we are and have in the world is dependent on our faith in the relationship with God the Father.

But we are not those who are drawing back to destruction; we can have the faith in the relationship that will bring about something of great power. The end result that God wants for us is shown here in a profound statement— to the preservation of the soul!

In the Greek it is best told like this: our faith is bringing us into the acquisition and preservation of the soul. The Greek word *peripoiesis* means the acquisition (the act or the thing), by extension, preservation. That means we are acquiring and keeping the soul that God intended us to have, the personality and way of living that God designed us to have in the first place.

This passage isn't talking to non-believers. It is telling us that there will be pressure and diligence to obtain what God has promised us. We must continually be pursuing the goal and that is to become what God has called us to become. We are not to live with our soul in command, but our soul is to be in submission to the Spirit of God. Only that way can we gain who we are supposed to be and then preserve it and keep it until

the day of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word *eis* is just before the word for “preservation.” It means that something is on the outside and moving inside. It shows action moving into something. That means that our faith is moving us into the acquisition and preservation of the soul that God intended us to have. We are on the outside and our faith is moving us into what we need. This word is one of the most important words I have ever studied. I know what it is like to be on the outside and by faith have the Lord move me inside. What a difference. I see what it means to actually have my faith move me to be changed. When the process is working, He is moving me into His power, will and delight. That is wonderful!

James 1:21

On account of this, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of evil, in meekness receive the implanted Word being able to save your souls

The context clarity is held in verse 18. He purposed, having brought us forth by the Word of Truth, to be a certain first fruit of His creatures. He brought us forth by the Word of Truth for a purpose. He had a plan in the first place for each of us and that plan is eternal. For us to fit into that plan there must be something done to us. We must be made able to become what He meant for us to be. How is this going to work? How do I do that? He tells how.

Since that is true that we were brought forth by the Word of truth to become something special, then we

are to put away all filthiness and the overflowing of evil. This is a choice. We must want to have what God has and not want what the world has. We have to make a choice to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh.

We can choose to let go of the filthiness that we have walked in. We have to get to the point where we don't want it. How do I resist temptation? By not wanting what the temptation offers. If I don't want it, it doesn't tempt me. You can't tempt me with something that I just don't want. You can't tempt me with cottage cheese. I don't want any. Gross!

When I see the damage that things do, I can choose to not do them because I hate them. They have no hold on me. I can put away the filthiness and choose to walk in cleanliness of soul. I don't want the junk, I want the beauty.

The same thing works with the overflowing of evil. I can either choose to let it affect me or choose to not let it affect me. I can live in this world and see the overflowing evil everywhere, and still walk in the glory of God.

Then it says to do something in meekness. This word is one of the most misunderstood words in our vocabulary. People think that meekness is being weak or gentle to the point of being a spineless wimp. That couldn't be further from the truth. Meekness means to be totally submitted to an authority and empowered by that authority. It means having no agenda of your own and working diligently for the agenda of the one you are submitted to. It is as if you were their representative and ambassador. You live for them and walk in their power

and authority as if it were your own.

When I have meekness, I am living in a way as to not care about what I think or feel or want. I am only concerned with what the authority I'm submitted to cares about, feels, and wants. That way I cannot be made to be angry about personal slurs because they don't matter to me. The only thing that matters is what my authority wants. Total submission, slavery, if you will, is what will be the agenda for each day.

If I have meekness, then I am going to submit to what my God given authority wants to do in my life. I will do what He wants to do and follow the process that He wants to follow. James 1:21 tells us to be meek about letting the Word of God do something. I have to receive willingly what the Word of God wants to work in me.

In meekness receive the implanted Word. Where is the Word implanted? In my spirit. Jesus is the Word. The Holy Spirit lives in my spirit. When I submit to what the Lord is doing in my spirit, then it will have effect in my soul. When I submit to the Word, which is dividing me to show me what is soul and what is spirit, then I will be able to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh. What is the outcome? The salvation of my soul.

What is meant by that term? The salvation of my spirit is moving into my soul and my soul is being affected and changed. My will is becoming saved so that my choices are like His choices. My emotions are being saved so that I am feeling what He is feeling. My mind is being saved so that I have the thought processes of the spirit instead of the flesh. My soul is being saved to be like the soul He first intended it to be. The Word

is making me more like Jesus who is the Word. The salvation of my soul is the goal. It can't happen unless I submit in meekness to the process.

People talk about winning souls. The soul is involved in our initial salvation experience because it takes our mind, will and emotions to come to the Lord. But my soul isn't saved then. My spirit is. My soul is in the process of becoming saved. Salvation happened to my spirit. It is saved completely. The Holy spirit has moved in and dwells in my spirit. It is so totally saved that the presence of God is able to abide there. However, my soul is in great need of being changed. It will take me the rest of my life to work on the salvation of my soul. Every time I think I have obtained something, the Lord shows me another area in my life that needs the work to continue. The further I get the further I see that I need more. The more mature I get, the more I see the things that have been ruling my life and the less I see that I have the salvation of the soul. Maturity is an amazing thing. The more I get the more I see I need. That is the power of Philippians 1:6— He who began a good work in me will continue to do it until the day of Jesus Christ. And it will take that long!

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He according to His great mercy having regenerated us to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in Heaven for you the ones in the power of God being guarded

through faith to a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; in which you exult; yet a little while, if need be, grieving in manifold trials, so that the proving of your faith, much more precious than perishing gold, but having been proved through fire, may be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, you love; in whom, not yet seeing, but believing, you exult with joy unspeakable and being glorified, obtaining the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

We have been saved for something. This passage says we have been regenerated to a living hope. That is a greater life than most Christians even understand. I have absolute hope that my life is going to count for something, that the Lord will always be there for me and take me home when the time comes. I have hope. It is alive. I have an inheritance that can't be taken away or damaged that is being guarded for me in Heaven. It is being guarded through faith and it is bringing to me a salvation that is going to be revealed in the last days.

That means that there is a different salvation being brought to me. Not just spirit salvation, but something that is even more outlandish, something unheard of. It is something that is worth going through manifold trials and the proving of my faith to obtain. It will cause in me greater praise and exultation of Jesus Christ. It is the end result of my faith, the culmination of my relationship with the Father God and the Lord Jesus Christ. And then it is revealed to me- the salvation of my soul.

God is wanting to do a work in me that is unheard of. He wants to actually change my soul until I am walking like Him on this earth. He wants me to live like Jesus did. He wants me to be totally dependant on Him and to be totally obedient and usable the way Jesus was. Wow. How is that going to happen?

It is going to take my faith to the absolute. I will have to actually die to myself to live like that. What? Isn't that the whole point of the crucifixion of my flesh? God wants me to die to me and live for Him. That has been the plan all along. Why is it so hard for Christians to understand? We are still trying to live the way we want to and give a portion to the Lord on certain days, but we don't want to actually die to ourselves. And because of that, we aren't going to see what the Lord wants to do through us.

My walk with the Lord is something that He has far more interest in than I had first thought. He isn't interested in just me going to church and reading my bible a little everyday. He has far greater plans for me and for everyone who believes in Him. He wants us to actually serve Him on this planet and do what He tell us to do. He wants to use us in the greatest work that has ever been done. He wants to live through us and accomplish salvation on this planet. What a calling we have.

1 Peter 1:10-16 goes on to say:

About which salvation the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you. Searching for what, or what sort of time the Spirit of

Christ made clear within them; testifying beforehand and of the sufferings belonging to Christ, and the glories after these. To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they ministered the same things, which now were announced to you by those having preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven; into which things angels long to look. Because of this, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, perfectly hope on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves to your former lusts in your ignorance, but according to the Holy One who has called you, you also become holy in all conduct; because it has been written, "Be holy," "because I am holy."

It is about soul salvation that the prophets sought out information. It was amazing to them that God would actually be interested in saving peoples' souls and walking in this world through them. The prophets had the Lord ON them, but didn't have Him IN them. They understood salvation from sin and Hell. That was in everything they knew and heard. Salvation of the soul, however, was a complete mystery and something that was overwhelmingly profound. What made it work? The sufferings of Christ being lived out through us as we suffer to bring about the salvation of our soul. The outcome? The glories after the suffering!

It will take suffering to bring about the salvation of our souls. It doesn't have to be horrible; it all depends

on how we respond to the things that happen in our lives. If we suffer and find out what is a problem in our soul, then push to change it or have it healed, then the suffering will be brought to a minimum. However, if we struggle with the things that we find to be weaknesses, and don't desire to change them or grow in them, but decide to keep them, then the suffering will be prolonged and things can get very tough. God is really into showing us the things that we need to deal with. If we don't deal with them, we can't be who He has called us to be. We are restricting how He can flow through us to others. He needs to show us our hindrances and get them out of the way so that He can shine through us to others.

The next verse tells us that the prophets of old were looking forward to us to see this kind of salvation. They knew it would be for another time that this would be ministered. We are in the position of such grace to be the ones to whom God has offered this great salvation of the soul. It will take the inner working of the Holy Spirit to bring it about. The Angels are even blown away at the prospect of us becoming more Christ like and having the power of God working through us into other people.

Then it talks about how we should gird up the loins of our minds, which means that we must get our minds ready for the battle. We have to have perfect hope that God is going to bring us the grace to handle the process. We have to submit to the process and be obedient. We have to keep ourselves from being trapped by our former lusts. We have to see our calling and be Christlike in all conduct, becoming like God, in that we wish to emulate His holiness. We are to be holy in all conduct because He is holy and He is living in us and through us. This is an extremely heavy revelation.

We cannot do what God wants us to do if we aren't submitting to the salvation of the soul. Our soul is how we relate to other people. How can God get through to them if we won't let Him live through our souls to them? The only way for God to get through to this world is if we allow Him to keep changing us until He is living out through us. What a calling!

If we submit to the process that God wants to use to change us, then we will be the holy children He is looking for. If we want to do whatever we want to do, then we can sabotage the process and we will find death instead of life. Holiness isn't a restrictive set of rules to follow to become holy. It's a process by which we submit to God and let Him make us in His image in the inner man and become holy in all conduct because we are living His life through us. When you change the soul, you change the behavior. It doesn't work the other way around. You can't change the behavior to gain holiness. It has to be a work of the Holy Spirit on the inner man. Then holiness manifests outwardly. How cool!

All of this comes through a relationship with the Father. Holiness is the end result of our faith in believing Him and letting Him work; we receive the salvation of our souls. It is a life-long work and a process that will take our whole lives. But the good news is that we can start now and the effects will be starting immediately to manifest His life through us and in us. Start the process and the benefits will also start. That is real hope.

Chapter Five

Humble the Soul

It is very difficult to talk to people about the soul because we are filled with pride about it. If our soul is who we think we are, and focusing on it is selfishness, then it is pride in all its glory. We worship our souls and the outcome isn't pretty. It makes us God to ourselves and that is idolatry.

God isn't silent about this. It seems that He is really wanting us to understand a high principle here. Just looking at the title of this chapter is enough to send some folks either closing the book and running away or looking to the next chapter. Please don't run. This part of the teaching is of utmost importance. The principles in this chapter are hard, but crucial to the outcome that God wants. Don't worry, the outcome will be worth it!

Matthew 11:25-30

Verses 25-27. Answering at that time, Jesus said, I praise You, Father, Lord of Heaven and of earth, because You hid these things from the sophisticated and cunning and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for so it was pleasing before You. All things were yielded up to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and the one to whom the Son purposes to reveal Him.

Jesus had just been talking about the cities where He had been ministering and how they hadn't received Him and His ministry. Then He started talking to the Father about the plan to get the ministry of God at work on this planet. He was speaking to the Father in a way that the disciples could hear Him and be taught on the side. He praised the Father because He hid things from those the world thinks has all the answers and gave the revelation to those the world wouldn't expect to have it. When we become babes in the Lord and totally dependant upon Him, then He can reveal things to us.

Then Jesus turned to the disciples and told them that God had already given Him access to everything. He told them that no one can gain that revelation in their flesh; it has to be given to them by the Holy Spirit. This kind of knowledge has to be revealed to be understood. It is up to Jesus who He purposes to gain that knowledge. And who would that be? Jesus shows us that it comes to those who submit to the process and come to Him for it.

Verses 28-30 tells us this:

Come to me, all those laboring and being burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, "and you will find rest to your souls." For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

Jesus wants all who are tired of working and being burdened by others to come to Him and He will give them rest. He didn't stop there. He goes on to tell how that rest is going to be given. He isn't going to just

indiscriminately give out rest like candy, to everyone. There are principles involved here that must be applied.

The first thing is that you must take up His yoke. For the people of that time and culture it was a completely understood statement. They worked with yokes or at least knew of their day-by-day operation. Yokes were very common place and an obvious object. To use the words “take up My yoke” meant that He was in a yoke Himself. He has already limited Himself to a certain set of rules and parameters. He was the lead yoke fellow in a team of oxen.

When He said “and learn of Me” He was telling them something of common significance. When a person wanted to train a new yoke ox, he would take the young bull and hook him up to a yoke with an old, strong, well trained bull. No matter what the young bull did, he had no effect on the old bull. The old bull out-weighed him and could easily over power him. He soon found out that it wasn’t easy fighting to have his own way; it was much easier to just do what the old bull was doing. After a period of time the young bull had learned all there was to know about pulling a plow. After he had died to his aspirations of being a free bull doing whatever he wanted to do, he was then able to be used to pull the plow without the old bull being there to drag him through the process. He had to die to himself and live to the purpose and will of the one whose hand was on the plow. In that way he learned how to have significance and purpose and fulfill his destiny. Only then was he truly valuable.

Jesus was telling them that they had to submit to the process and put themselves in the yoke to learn

how to become someone of value and purpose. What was He trying to teach them about the principles in how to gain rest? Die to your ambitions and learn the ambitions of the Father.

Jesus told them that He was meek and lowly in heart. This is very important. The values of the old ox that they needed to learn was that they need to be meek and lowly in heart. They had to submit to the process and die to self. They needed to be humble.

The word “meek” here is the Greek word *praos* and it means to be completely submitted to an authority and empowered by that authority. You need to have no agenda of your own and be completely committed to the agenda of the one you have submitted to. That is one of the greatest secrets of Jesus’ life. He had no personal agenda and was totally committed to fulfilling the agenda of His Father. For one to find rest he must be completely free from his own agenda. What a concept.

Do you know anyone who doesn’t have his own agenda? That person is at rest. There is no stress to fulfill his own agenda. He is free to just live. If he is submitted and committed to the Agenda of the Father, then he has true purpose in his life and he can just rest on the Father and do what He wants him to do. If only we would learn this lesson.

The second part was to be “lowly in heart.” That means that you are not seeing yourself as more important than you really are. You are not trying to lift yourself up or promote yourself. You are humble and willing to serve others. Jesus said that He wasn’t here to be served but to serve others and give Himself as a

ransom for many. This is the attitude that He wants us to learn as we are learning to be in His yoke and gain the rest that comes from it.

Then comes the real revelation of this passage. The place you will gain this rest is “rest to your souls.” Our souls can have this rest He is talking about. My mind will be at rest from all the thoughts and the fight that comes with them. My emotions will be at rest and all the turmoil that comes with them. My will will be at rest and all the pressure of decisions and desires that I am trying so hard to fulfill. Having my soul at rest seems to be very difficult and yet valuable.

Just think. No personal agenda to fulfill. No promoting myself in a dog-eat-dog world. No being overwhelmed with how to figure everything out. No emotions chewed up with all the fighting, needing healing. No life being run by desires that are out of control. Doesn't that sound like some kind of paradise? It is. It is called “rest.” That is what Jesus is wanting to give us. It comes from humbling ourselves.

Jeremiah 6:16

So says Jehovah, Stand by the ways and see, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it.

God the Father is talking here. He is telling us that we should stand off the paths that we are walking in and look at them. Examine how you have been walking. Then ask for the ancient paths, the ones that God

had determined from the beginning. They are the good paths. They were made by the Lord to take us where we were supposed to go. They were designed to actually bring us to the end result where we and God are one. If we were to walk in those paths we would find rest for our souls.

The lesson is obvious. The paths we are walking on now aren't working very well. We aren't finding rest for our souls. We are finding stress and turmoil. You would think we would really want to find and walk on those ancient paths, but instead we are finding ourselves fighting against going down those paths. What is the outcome? Stress, pressure, ulcers, damaged relationships, pain, suffering, sickness, disease, and a host of other problems. Why do we live like that? We can't seem to humble ourselves and walk the ancient paths. It doesn't make us look very smart, does it? All because we want to worship ourselves. And what poor gods we make.

James 4:1-10

From where do wars and fightings among you come? Is it not from this, from your lusts warring in your members? You desire and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and are not able to obtain. You fight and you war, and you do not have, because you do not ask. You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order that you may spend on your lusts. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whoever, then,

purposes to be a friend of the world is put down as hostile to God. Or do you think that vainly the Scriptures says, The spirit which has dwelt in us yearns to envy? But He gives greater grace. Because of this it says, "God sets Himself against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones." Then be subject to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners! And purify your hearts, double minded ones! Be distressed, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy into shame. Be humble before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

I know that is a long passage, but look at what it says! It says that we have the stress we are living because of our lusts. Lust is when we take from others for our own selfish gain. We are trying to get things from others no matter what it costs them. It doesn't matter what happens to others as long as we get what we want. Even when we ask for things from God, it is for the purpose of spending it on ourselves. This is a friendship with the world and the Lord is highly jealous. He wants us for Himself, so much so that He tells us this friendship with the world is idolatry. God always fights other gods. Look what happened to the Egyptians. All the plagues in Egypt were against the gods of Egypt. If you set yourself up as a god, God will fight you, too.

"God sets Himself against proud ones." The Greek word for "sets against" is the word *antitassomai* and it means "to be against the order of." God will be

personally against those who set themselves up as God. That is a sure way to lose. Fighting God isn't very intelligent, as God always wins.

The good part is that God Himself gives those who humble themselves and put themselves in His hand the grace they need to live. What a deal.

Which seems to be the better choice, having God fight you personally or having Him give you the empowerment of grace to live? It doesn't stop there, either. If you submit to God, then you have the authority to resist the devil and he will flee from you. Wow! Now there is a benefit! If I draw near to God, He will draw near to me!

Verse 8 has something in it that is very interesting. Sinners are given the ability to clean their hands. That is extremely wonderful. But that isn't all. Hearts can be purified. That is incredible. But to whom does it say to purify their hearts? The English translations which say double minded are not exactly the best translation. It is the Greek word *dipsuche* and literally means double souled.

Those who are lifting themselves up are causing something to happen in themselves that isn't a good thing at all. It is causing them to have two minds about things, two sets of emotions and two wills. Having two souls in the same person is a setting for conflict. It is also a setting for complete lack of peace.

The bible warns us that if we become different than God designed us to become, it will warp and twist the creation into something unnatural. I meet and min-

ister to people on a daily basis who have this problem. They are chewed up and can't seem to get a grip on their lives. Most of the problems they are dealing with are because they have become judge over others- lifted up what they feel over them- and condemn them to a death of some kind. As a result, they judge themselves as worthy of the same condemnation and their bodies begin fulfilling the execution. They come in with cancer, ulcers, allergies and all sorts of other diseases. All because they have set themselves up as God over others in some way.

Since they have lifted up what they think over what God thinks, God Himself is fighting them. They are powerless because they don't have the grace of God to handle things in life. The whole scenario is bad and their lives show it. When they eventually walk through a process where they let go of their judgments and submit to God, they are given peace and grace to handle things and they are healed physically from the maladies they called in on themselves. It is truly amazing.

That brings us to the last verse in that passage. Be humbled before the Lord, and He will exalt you. If we will bring our souls under His hand, He will lift us up to the place He wants us to be and it will be a good place. When He exalts people, they will be in the place where they will shine and find purpose in life. It is a place of fulfillment.

To support that word, it says in James 1:6-8 that those who ask without faith are also double-souled. So many times when we pray we have a perverted agenda. We look good on the outside, but on the inside we are twisted and damaged by wounds and choices. When

we pray without a true relationship with the Lord and aren't really trusting Him and looking for His will, then we are asking without faith. That will mess things up in a hurry.

1 Peter 5:5-7

Likewise, younger ones be subject to older ones; and all being subject to one another. Put on humility, because God sets Himself against proud ones, but He gives grace to humble ones. Then be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in time; "casting all your anxiety onto Him," because it matters to Him concerning you.

This passage quotes the same passage out of Proverbs 3:34 as James 4 does. One thing that is different about this passage is that it shows things will take time to work through. When we humble ourselves we will be exalted in time. Just humbling ourselves isn't enough. It isn't an event, it is a life-style. It takes time to truly humble ourselves and submit to the process that God has in mind for us.

However, the good thing is that it isn't just throwing ourselves into oblivion. It really does matter to our Father concerning us. We can trust Him to handle our anxieties. He is good for it. Not only can He handle them, He is the only one who can. He is the Prince of Peace. He is the only one with the authority and jurisdiction of peace. He can order it. He can bring it. It obeys Him. It is good to have Him on our side. The peace is something that only comes when we are submitted to Him. Everything else brings turmoil and trouble.

Matthew 23:13

And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.

In this passage the Lord is telling His disciples how to treat each other since they were watching the Pharisees and how they acted. Jesus was showing them that posturing for position was useless. He showed them the futility of trying to gain places to be seen of men. He told them the empty waste of gaining men's applause.

What a principle to learn. God is intimately involved in our lives. This happens each and every time. When we exalt ourselves, God is right there to bring us down to the right level. He doesn't want us being worshipped by others or ourselves. However, He will take us to heights that we have no idea about if we will only humble ourselves and let Him.

In Luke 14:11, He says the same thing but the story is a little different. He tells them that when they go to a wedding, don't take the high seat, but the lower one. That way people can put you in the proper place, but if you are lifting yourself too high, you will be humiliated. A little humbling will pay for a lot of humiliation. There is a difference.

He again tells them the same thing but with a different story in Luke 18:14. There was both a Pharisee and a tax collector coming to pray. The tax collector wouldn't even look to heaven but humbled himself and admitted to God that he was a sinner. The Pharisee judged himself as righteous and judged the tax collector

as condemned scum. Jesus said that the tax collector went home cleansed, but the Pharisee didn't and didn't even know it. Even in our private prayer life we need to be humble in order for the Lord to lift us up to the place He wants us to be.

Philippians 2:5-9

For think this within you, which mind was also in Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, having become in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even the death of the cross. Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name...

This is a very important passage because of the subject matter- Jesus Himself.

Jesus understood the principle very well indeed. He knew the price that needed to be paid to bring us salvation and redemption. He didn't hang on to the position He had, but humbled Himself while He was still with the Father before time began. He emptied Himself. He became a man. Wow! What a distance to fall. It would have been futile if He didn't understand the value the Father put on people. So He submitted to the plan of the Father to bring salvation to these people.

The problem was that when He became a baby,

He became a true baby. He didn't know anything. He didn't understand anything. He was totally dependant on His earthly parents for absolutely everything. He was cold, hungry and felt everything every human baby ever felt, including the need for a diaper change.

He grew up at the same speed as everyone else. He had skinned knees and splinters. He was taught how to eat properly and how to greet visitors and when to go to bed. But as He grew He received revelation from His heavenly Father. It was a progressive revelation. He didn't get it all at one time. He got it in pieces.

With every piece came the need to respond to it. How did He respond? Every time He responded with humility. He continually was put in the position of needing to submit and He continually made the decision to submit.

At one point in time He figured out that He was the Son of God and submitted to it. He eventually understood that He would have to go about His Father's business, and at 12 He was doing so in the Temple, learning from the Priests and Scribes. Along the way, He understood that He was going to die and submitted to that part of the plan. Then He found out that He was going to die the death of crucifixion. He humbled Himself and submitted to the plan. He had to go through Gethsemane to get His head straight just before His crucifixion, but submitted to the will of the Father even though He had to deal with His own will in the process. He laid down His will so that the will of the Father could be accomplished.

What was the outcome? Every time He humbled

Himself, the Father exalted Him even higher. Now He is exalted above every name. He is at the highest high because He humbled himself to the lowest low. That is what He wants for us.

Chapter Six

How to Love

“You get out there and love those people. That is how you prove you are a Christian. You have to love everyone unconditionally. If you don’t you aren’t a very good Christian!”

I had heard that so much that it made me a wreck. The entire time as I was growing up I heard these messages from the pulpit that told us to go love people and I would go try. Oh, how I would try. The first thing I would do is run into someone that was very difficult to love. I would try to love him and be defeated soundly. The next week I would come back to church whimpering like a whipped puppy. The self condemnation was complete. I was a complete failure as a true Christian. I couldn’t love.

As I have grown in the Lord I have found that I was not alone in that endeavor. I have found very few people who were loving and knew how to love everyone they came in contact with. It drove me to find out how to love. If I couldn’t figure out how to love people, then the Word wasn’t working for me. There had to be an answer.

As a pastor, I found myself trying to teach people to go out and love, but still didn’t have the answer as to how. I found myself in the same predicament as the pastors I had growing up. I had the need to do it and the

scripture injunctions to do it and the drive to get others to do it to fulfill their Christian walks. I didn't want to do what was done to me. I started a search that just about killed me before the revelation came. When it came, there couldn't have been a better time.

I had been working on my ministry to those in lust and pornography. I had found the key to getting men set free from lust. I had found that whom you lust you cannot love and whom you love you cannot lust. Lust is taking from that person what I want for my gratification. Love is the opposite. Love is giving to that person what it is he/she needs to benefit. I can't give to them what they need and take from them what I want at the same time. Love was the key to breaking lust. Now I had a real dilemma. How can I get men set free from lust if I can't show them how to love. My crying out to Jesus increased in severity and frequency. I couldn't get it out of my mind.

I was on my way to Christ For the Nations Institute in Minsk, Belarus, to teach a class on the value and need to love and how love worked in the scripture. As I was teaching with the help of an interpreter, the Lord started opening my understanding. I did something really stupid at that time. I tried to teach my revelation while I was getting it. It suddenly occurred to me that my interpreter hadn't said anything for a while, so I asked him, "Aren't you going to interpret this?" He responded with, "When you complete a sentence I'll tell them about it." I didn't make much sense that night.

Greater Love

There is a verse that is quoted so often it is amaz-

ing. I bet you can quote it if you have been in the church any length of time or have at least seen Mel Gibson's movie The Passion of the Christ. It is John 15:13 and it starts like this: Greater love has no man than this... Can you complete it? The chances are you continued with the words: than a man lay down his life for his friends. That is the way it is translated in every bible I have ever found.

However, that isn't the way it says it in the Greek. When I saw the Greek, it blew my mind. I was stunned. We had missed the complete understanding because we trusted the translation. Deeper study was needed for deeper revelation.

The word for "life" in that passage is the Greek word *psuche* which means the soul. What a huge difference! If the way I have greater love is to lay down my life then I will have only one friend and I will have them for a very short time. If I have to prove my love by dying for someone, then I have a problem having greater love for other people in my life.

The word there isn't life, though. It is soul. The literal translation of that verse would be: Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his soul for his friends. So, if I knew what it meant to lay down my soul, I could have greater love. Now I am getting somewhere.

My soul is made up of my mind (how I think), my emotions (how I feel) and my will (what I want or choose). Laying down my soul means that I lay down what I think, feel and want for the benefit of another. Interesting.

Let's say I have a friend named John. If I want to love John, then I will lay down my soul for him. That means that what I think is laid aside for what John thinks. What I feel is laid aside for what John feels. What I want is laid aside for what John wants. Doesn't that make sense? NO!

What if I am thinking godly thoughts and John is thinking lustful thoughts. Do I lay down my thoughts for the thoughts that John has. What if John is feeling hate and anger. Do I lay down feelings of peace and joy for that? What if John wants to hurt people or go do drugs. Will I lay down godly desires for those kinds of horrible desires? I don't think that is what God had in mind.

The key to that is the fact that you don't lay down your soul TO our friend, but you lay down your soul FOR your friend. Then the question is begging to be asked, "Where do I lay down my soul and what does that look like?"

This question shows that there must be something else that God had in mind. I started complaining to the Lord about why He didn't teach on this subject since it was so important. He said He did. So I said, "I know You probably taught the disciples, but why didn't You have it written down in the Word so we could all get it?" He said He did. Really? Where? We had just missed it.

John 10:1-18

Truly, truly, I say to you, the one not entering through the door into the sheepfold, but going up by another way, that one is

a thief and a plunderer. But the one entering through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. Jesus spoke this allegory to them, but they did not know what it was which He spoke to them. Then Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you that I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and plunderers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in, and will go out, and will find pasture. The thief does not come except that he may steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

Verses 1-10 set the scene and help us understand what the Lord is talking about

Jesus is using the commonly understood reference of shepherds and sheep to teach here. He knew they understood things that were plain, common knowledge. By using simple, everyday things, He could bring to them depth of teaching in ways they could understand.

He starts by showing the way of God in our lives. If anyone gets in by any other way, they are a thief and a plunderer. He uses God the Father and Himself interchangeably here. At first the Father is the door and

Jesus is the shepherd. The doorkeeper opens the fold to Him and the sheep are safe. When they go out, the shepherd calls them by name and He leads them out. Then He goes in front of the sheep and they follow Him because they know His voice.

That sounds good except for the fact that sheep don't follow the voice of the shepherd. If you have a western understanding of sheep in any way you will know that sheep need to be herded from behind them and driven to the right place. That is why God made Border Collies. This parable doesn't seem to make sense. Again it is because we don't study the right things.

The main type of sheep at this time in Israel was Karakul sheep. They are different than the sheep that we think of normally in our western mind-set. This type of sheep is raised differently than the kind we are used to. You need to be there when they are born and speak or sing or whistle to them. They need your care instantly and you must build a relationship with them. From that day on they will respond to your voice. They will be totally dependant upon you. You have to care for them. If you try to herd Karakul sheep, they will freak out and possibly even die of a heart attack. You must lead them, not force them anywhere. Because they know the voice of the shepherd personally, they trust the shepherd and will not follow anyone else. They won't follow the voice of a thief. They will only follow the one they have a relationship with.

The analogies here are amazing. When we are totally dependant on Jesus and have been born again, He speaks to us and builds a relationship with us. As we depend on Him, we are able to hear His voice and

follow Him. If we are forced to follow another path it will completely freak us out (which is what happens in many churches as they force people to follow legalism, heresies, men or other false teachings) and will incapacitate us, possibly even to death.

When I am talking to people who just can't hear His voice and don't know how to follow Him, I know that there is something wrong somewhere else, it isn't that Jesus isn't talking. Perhaps they have been damaged by Christians or have a judgment against God. Maybe they are even just, plain disobedient and the Lord isn't telling them anything more until they do what He told them to last time. Whatever it is, I know that the shepherd is speaking and leading, there must be a problem in their hearing or obeying. Whatever it is, there is healing and hope to come to the point where they can hear and obey the voice of the shepherd.

In verse 11 Jesus shifts gears a little and tries to explain it in a more simple way since they weren't getting it. He shows Himself as the door of the sheep. At that time when a shepherd had a sheepfold, he stood at the only opening and inspected each sheep as they came in for the night to see if they had cuts and bruises or burrs or things that needed to have taken care of. Once the sheep are in the fold, the shepherd actually lays down in the opening and becomes the door of the fold. No one goes in or out without the shepherd knowing about it. He knows that anyone who would try to get in the fold would have to be a thief or a plunderer.

The sheep would not follow the voice of a thief. The sheep that are under the care of the shepherd will come in and go out; and they will be saved and find good

pasture. What an awesome promise for us.

Jesus shows the nature of the thief to be that he will only kill, steal or destroy. One of the best ways to know who we are listening to is by their fingerprints. Is it killing you, stealing from you or destroying you? That is the evidence of being in the hand of the thief. How do I know when it is Jesus? It brings life and that life isn't just a little, but life abundantly. Asking these questions really works for me.

All of this was set up for what He is about to teach us. This is the foundation for what comes next.

Verse 11 tells us so very much. It has the same problem that John 15:13 had. The word for "life" here is also *psuche*—the soul. He is saying the Good Shepherd lays down His soul for the sheep. Jesus is setting an example of what it means to lay one's soul down. A good shepherd will lay his soul down.

In the next couple of verses, Jesus shows us the difference between a true shepherd and a hireling. When a wolf comes the hireling will flee. He is more concerned about himself than he is for the sheep. The shepherd is more concerned for the sheep than he is for himself. His reward isn't the money that comes to a hireling. The difference is life and death for the sheep. As one of God's sheep, it really matters to me who is watching over me. Are they shepherds or hirelings? Will they truly fight for my life or will they run away when things get tough? This sounds like the difference between lust and love. The hireling is in it for what he can get out of it. When it starts to cost him anything, he is long gone. When one loves, the object of his love

is most important. How does he get that kind of love? It comes from somewhere else and not within himself. Flesh cannot do any better than be a hireling. It requires something out of this world to make love happen.

We learn in verse 14 that Jesus is the Good shepherd and that He knows those that are His and He is known by the ones that are His. He has a relationship with them. He knows the dangers they are in and the prospect of their future. They have value to Him and are of such worth that He is willing to pay any price for their safety.

Then He says something astounding. In verse 15 He states that He knows the Father in the same way the Father knows Him. He has a relationship with the Father that is intimate and open. He relates His relationship with the Father and His laying down His soul for the sheep. Where does He lay down His soul? He lays it down at the foot of the Father. He laid down what He thought, felt and wanted at the foot of the Father and picked up what the Father thought, felt and wanted. He laid down His soul and picked up the soul of the Father. He got a supernatural love for the sheep from the One who is Love. God is love. When we pick up His attitude for someone it will always be love. That is who He is, not just what He does. Since Jesus was operating as a spirit-filled man, He showed us that we must also lay down what we want for what the Father wants.

He goes on to tell us that it wasn't just for the disciples that He was willing to do this, but for others. He had more to lay down His soul for, other common people, even the Pharisees, the rest of the Jewish nation and, yes, even the Gentiles. With that statement

He was telling us that we can love all those in the world and not just the ones we had a natural affection for in the first place. We can actually love those outside our little comfortable box of acceptance and lay down our soul for them. We must lay down our soul and pick up the soul of the Father for more people. This is something that we can do for anyone if we will but choose to.

He is even giving others the same full status that the disciples had. One flock, one shepherd. I am sure they didn't understand what was being said. This is mind blowing.

Think about anyone in the world. Think of the person who would be hardest to love, maybe sinners like prostitutes and drug dealers, rapists and murderers. Maybe you have a problem loving terrorists and extremists. Maybe it is people of a different race or color that bother you. How about people who stink and are poor and ugly? There isn't a person on the planet whom you can't love if you would go to the Father and lay down your soul for them.

How does it work? If you will go to the Father and lay down what you think of them, actually admit it and take your fingers off of the right to think that way, and stay long enough to pick up what the Father thinks of them, what do you think will happen? He will actually give you His thoughts for them. If you will lay down what you feel for them and pick up what the Father feels for them, what would be the difference? Are you willing to pay the price of actually feeling the Father's emotions for someone? Jesus had to do this for you. What would happen if you laid down your will at the feet of the Father, everything you want for that person, good or evil, what

you want to see done to that person? Would there be a difference in what He wants and what you want? What do you think Jesus was doing in Gethsemane? He was saying to the Father, "Not my will, but Yours be done." It doesn't matter what I want, only what You want is important. Do you see the significance?

Laying down our soul at the feet of the Father and taking up His soul is profound. It isn't easy. It costs me my selfishness and opens me to feel the hurt and heartache the Father is feeling. I will be vulnerable to feeling other's pain. I will be opening myself to all their hurts, anxieties and fears. It will be a heavy price. But when I do, I am putting myself in a position to truly help people so they are truly benefited. That is love. Everything else is lust.

I hope now you can see why Jesus said that others will know we are Christians by our love for one another. He also told us the greatest commandment is to lay down our soul about the Father and pick up His soul in relationship. We must do it by totally loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Why? Because only then will we have the relationship with Him to sufficiently be able to love others with His love. He is love.

One of the biggest problems I had in ministry is trying to explain to men how to love their wives, since that is the foremost commandment for husbands. Now I know how. Each husband must spend the time in front of the Father laying down his soul for his wife and taking up the soul of the Father for his wife so that he can accurately portray the role of Jesus in the home. Most men are fighting for their identity and their manhood.

The real thing he must do is to go to the Father and humble himself, lay down what he thinks, feels, and wants about his wife and pick up what the Father thinks, feels, and wants. Then his relationship with his wife won't be one of trying to get what he can from her (lust— and it isn't always sexual), but one of servant hood authority, serving her and the family to the best of his ability. Only then will he actually feel fulfilled in his relationship instead of cheated.

What Jesus said next is one of the most outlandish things I have ever heard. Verse 17 says: For this reason my Father loves Me, because I lay down my soul... What! The Father had to have a reason to love Jesus? That doesn't sound right. But that is what it says. When I got understanding on this one it really tickled me.

Jesus didn't have revelation of the love of the Father for Him until He actually laid down His soul. When He picked up the soul of the Father, He also picked up how much the Father loved Him. Here is how it was explained to me.

One day I heard this statement in my spirit, "Water pipes get wet." I know it doesn't sound like much, but it thrilled me. Here's why. Let's say you have a garden which needs to be watered. You have a water tank, but it is several yards away. What do you do? You run some water pipes from the tank to the garden. You put a valve on the end of them and there you have access to water for your garden. When you turn on the valve, water flows from the tank to the garden and doesn't waste any in between. What is wet all the time? The inside of the water pipe. Just because we don't see the

water on the outside, we forget that on the inside, the pipe is constantly wet.

What the Father was telling me was that whatever He can get through me, He can get to me. If I will become the channel of His love for others so that He can water their gardens, then I will also receive His love in a way that affects me. The same things work for finances. If I can be the channel of finance to others, then the Father can get the finances to me to do it. However, no matter what it is He is trying to get through me and to me, if I don't turn on the valve, the flow cannot happen.

So many people I know have no clue about the love of the Father to them. They are so stuck on thinking of themselves, that they cannot let the love of God through to others. Because of that they can't seem to get a grip on the love the Father has for them. Jesus understood the love of the Father for Him because He was willing to lay down His soul for the sheep.

Then Jesus shows us how much our choices weigh in the mind of the Father. Jesus says that He lays down His soul that He may take it again. The soul He takes up again is a soul that is in unity with the Father. But He says that no one can take it from Him. No one can force anyone to lay down their soul. It has to be a choice. I have to willingly lay it down. I can't make anyone love. I can only point the way. Jesus said that He laid it down from Himself. He chose to lay it down and take it up again. Each of us has authority to lay down our soul and we have authority to take it up again. The invitation to do it has been extended to you. What are you going to do with it?

The last part of verse 18 is very insightful. Jesus said that He received this commandment from His Father. Yes, it is our choice, but it is also a command from the Father that we do so. He is commanding us to lay down our souls and take up the soul of the Father. Only in this way can the Father get His love to people on this planet. We must obey, even though the cost is high. It will cost us what we think, feel and want. It will cost us our selfishness. It will cost us what it cost Jesus. He was willing to pay the cost. Are we?

John 13:37-38

By this we have known the love of God, because that One laid down His soul for us; and on behalf of the brothers we ought to lay down our souls.

Did the disciples get it? When Jesus taught it to them at the time of John 10, did they understand? They understood enough to try to use it incorrectly.

In John 13:31-36, Jesus is leaving the Last Supper, the Passover meal just before He went to Gethsemane and then the cross. He is talking to the disciples and tells them that He is going away. He says, "Yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me and, as I said to the Jews, Where I go you are not able to come." Then He gave them a huge command that I hope you have a better understanding of now. He commanded them to love one another. Peter didn't make it all the way to the conclusion. He got stuck on the first thing Jesus said. He said, "Lord where do you go?" Jesus responded graciously knowing where Peter's head was, "Where I go you are not able to follow Me now, but afterwards

you shall follow Me.”

Peter’s response to that gives me cause to believe that he had understood the term but didn’t get revelation of the truth in it. He tried to prove his love for the Lord and therefore his ability to go wherever the Lord was going. “Why am I not able to follow You now? I will lay down my soul for You!”

Jesus answers in a very unique way. He actually challenges Peter’s statement. “Will you really lay down your soul for Me?” Are you truly going to die to your self and live for me? Are you going to lay down what you think, feel and want and take up what the Father thinks, feels and wants?” I can just hear Jesus telling him, “Indeed you will, but you aren’t ready to do so right now. Instead you are going to have to come to the end of your self. You are going to have to see that what you think, feel, and want are not right. So, to help you get there, you will have to go through the process of denying me three times and seeing that you aren’t all that tough right now. You can’t do it in your flesh. You will have to learn that.”

I wonder what we will have to go through to be able to truly lay down our souls for the Father’s. How much will we have to see of our inability to do it before we are truly willing to lay down our souls. That is an interesting speculation. The truth is that the Father is very interested in taking up, through whatever He needs to, for us to come to that point. Are you ready for the ride?

The total call

You know what John 3:16 says. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That is absolutely awesome, and the story doesn't end there. Look at what 1 John 3:16 says. That is the rest of the story.

We are to be held accountable to walk like Jesus walked. In 1 Peter 2:21 it says, "For you were called to this, for even Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving behind an example for us, that you should follow in His steps." That one laid down His soul for us and we ought to lay down our souls for the brothers. That is really simple. Not easy, but simple. By doing what we are supposed to do we complete the gospel message. What started in John 3:16 is fulfilled in 1 John 3:16.

After seeing what Jesus taught in John 10, the response of Peter in John 13 and the incredible things spoken by John in John 15, we should be able to see that we have a godly commission to go through the process of laying down our souls. As a command from the Father, I don't see it as optional, but required.

In Revelation 12:11 it says this:

Even as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His soul a ransom for many.

It seems that even our warfare with the enemy is affected by laying down our souls. When I have my soul laid down, there is nothing the enemy can do to me. God has all of me and it only matters what God thinks,

feels and wants. That makes me dead to me and alive to Him. There is nothing that makes the enemy so useless and weak than that. It makes the weapons of my warfare divinely empowered. I win. I like that.

The proof that Jesus knew what He was doing, and that it is very important, is in Matthew 20:28 which says:

And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and will all your mind."

He knew that He had to lay down His soul and make it the price that would set many free. We have to make the same commitment. We can see many others helped if only we will be willing to lay down our soul and actually love them with the love of the Father. What a calling! What a concept!

Chapter Seven

What About the Heart?

One of the greatest dilemmas in trying to understand spirit, soul, and body is where to chart the heart. It has been a real problem for me, because I desire to understand things fully, so that I can help people. The heart has been very elusive and hard to get a grip on.

For several years I asked people what they thought. I had many ministers who really knew the Word stumped on this one. The debate raged for several years with many people and the answer seems no closer to being resolved.

Many thought the heart was the spirit. That worked for many verses, but really didn't work for others. Why was I commanded to love the Lord with all my heart if He has already taken over my whole spirit? My choices weren't affecting my spirit, only my soul. Once the Holy spirit moved into my spirit all of it became a moot point. I will love Him with all my spirit. The problem was walking the Spirit out through my soul. That made the commandment useless. The command is for believers, not just unbelievers to become believers. Then came all the verses about hardness of heart. Could I harden my spirit? Doesn't the bible say that what comes out of my heart is what defiles me? If that is my sanctified spirit, then I am in trouble.

So, many thought that the heart was the soul.

That makes things interesting since the love of God has been poured out in my heart. If the love of God has been poured out in my soul, then why does He command me to lay down my soul so the love of God can touch other people? If it was already done in my heart, then why would I have to do it with my soul? Thinking the heart and soul were the same thing answers some verses, but really makes things bad for other verses. That just doesn't work.

It bothered me so much that I decided to work on it almost exclusively for a while. I looked up every verse that had the heart in it. Then I wrote them all out. I wanted to know what the Lord had to say about the heart, and it took me a major part of two years to do. I felt like a tenacious bulldog pulling and gnawing on the end of a rope. There didn't seem to be an answer to this dilemma.

Then one day it occurred to me that there was another way of seeing it. The heart seemed to be both spirit and soul while not being all of both of them. It wasn't the entire part of the being other than the body. But it did seem to have a part in how the spirit and soul interacted. Because of my penchant for charts, I was thinking of a chamber or major box. I wasn't thinking of a line.

As I worked with it, it became more and more apparent that I was missing the point because I was limiting my expectations. The heart was something absolutely important to the function of spirit and soul and affected how both of them worked in me. Then I saw it.

The heart is the connection between the spirit

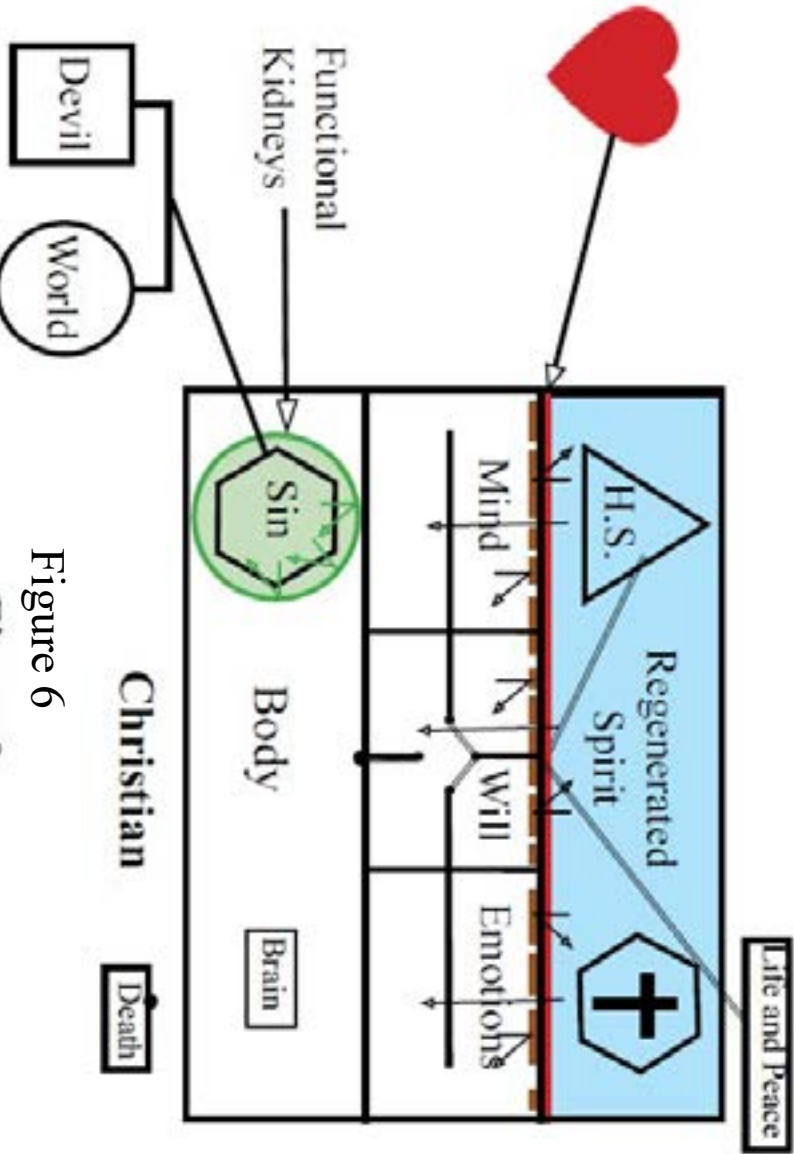


Figure 6

and the soul. There are two sides to it, the spirit side and the soul side. As I went through the scriptures, the answer I had been looking for made the scripture open up to me in ways I had never expected.

The heart is a filter. It is the membrane, if you will, between spirit and soul that has the power to keep the things of the spirit from coming into my soul, or it was the channel by which the things of the spirit could come into my soul. This makes my heart very important, so the entire life of the Spirit of God could be brought to me personally, and actually bring me change. The mystery in my chart was a simple line. And it explained everything.

Let's look at several scripture and see how this understanding affects us and how we walk.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Because this is the greatest and foremost commandment, and the first four of the Ten Commandments are contained and fulfilled in it, it would seem to be of utmost importance. As I meditated on this one it seemed to open my understanding about spirit, soul and body.

The heart has two sides to it– The Spirit's side and my side. He is pouring out the love of Jesus on His side. My side seems to have a problem in that I have to make the decision to walk in the spirit for me to gain the

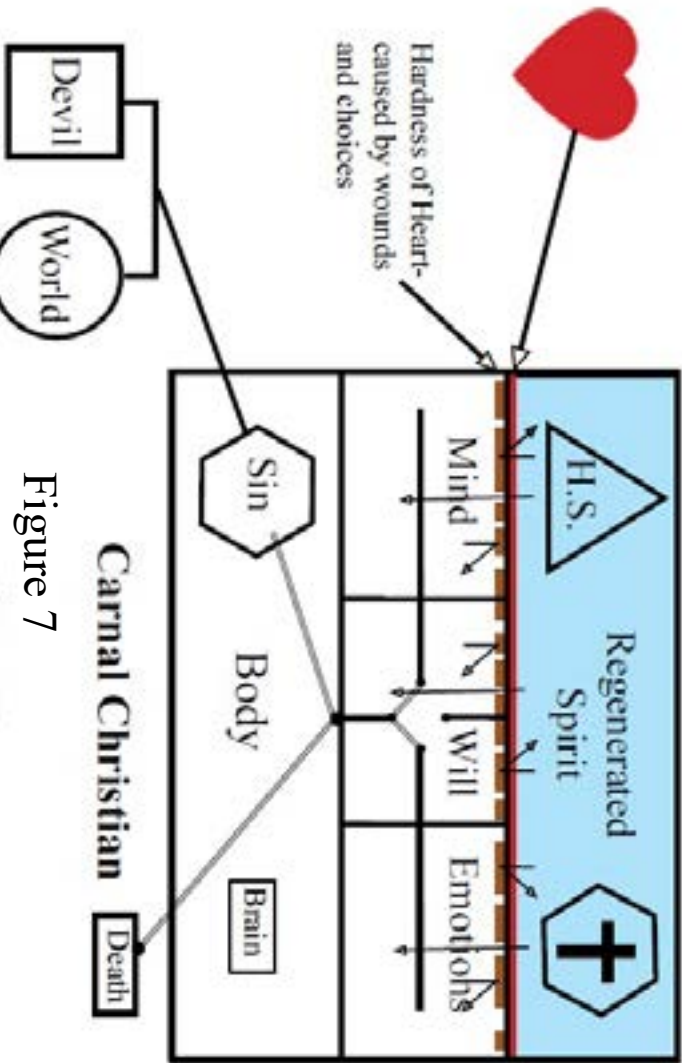


Figure 7

value of what is on His side. As God is wanting to have my whole heart, that would mean that everything in my soul that touches the things of the spirit, God desires to become His. Everything I am hanging on to would be totally against everything that the Lord wants to do in my life. His command is for me to lay down everything that is in my heart. Therefore, the heart functions differently than the soul.

The Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45). It says that I have a treasury in my heart and I store things there (Matthew 6:21). When my heart is open to the things of God, He can walk through me to bring life to me and to others through my relationship with them, which is the function of my soul. When my heart is junked up with all sorts of other things, the things of the Spirit can't get through and I am stuck trying to walk without the power of the Spirit working through me. Not good.

God wants it all. He knows that everything that keeps Him out of my soul is killing me and producing death in others. He wants to produce the salvation of the soul, but hindering that process is what I have stored up in my heart, which keeps the things of the Spirit from working in me. The importance of the soul has just increased with the addition of that understanding.

It isn't just me letting Him touch my soul, but He actually wants me to lay down all of my heart and all of my soul in a way that will cause me to love Him with all of it. It isn't only my reluctant submission to the process, but actually loving Him in it. What a difference that is to the normal Christian life. That increases the importance of the relationship with Him.

Look at figure 6. All the things of the Spirit must pass through my heart. When my heart is open, I can have it all. That is the problem. My heart isn't completely open to Him. I have areas where I am hardened in my heart. Look at the difference in figure 7.

What would cause the things of the Spirit to not be able to enter my soul? Wounds and choices. When I am wounded in my past, and it causes me to see myself differently than the Lord sees me, I am not open to what the Lord says about me. I will receive a lie that affects my whole outlook on life. Wounds are very important to me. I will do what I need to do to keep them from happening to me again. I will protect myself from the pain I have felt. When my walls go up to protect myself, I even keep God out.

I have found that wounds are always current. The old expression "Time heals all wounds" is a lie from the pit of hell! Time doesn't heal anything. Wounds from my past are as current as if they happened yesterday. The lies I received from those wounds speak to my self image and cause me to react to things that happen. I may really get mad over something very simple and not understand why I am so angry. It isn't the present situation I am reacting to. It is anger being triggered by the lie that I have been fighting all my life.

For example, let's say someone walks up to me and makes a joke about my clothes. It isn't a big deal, but I feel angry about it. Everyone who heard it is amazed that I am getting upset since it wasn't what they meant to say, they were only joking. But, somewhere in my past I was ridiculed about the way I dressed and I received the lie that I was scum and not worthy to be

in the same room with everyone else. Then someone jokes about my clothing in the present and I feel the same feelings I had when I was a kid and was being ridiculed. I have the same anger over a severe injustice, but it is manifesting over a simple joke. My wound is still current, it hurts and affects how I relate to people even now. My wound is keeping the things of the Spirit from coming into my soul.

Also hindering the things of the Spirit are my choices. I do things that aren't worthy of God. It is called sin usually. I have to decide to sin. Sin is always a choice. I don't have to sin, I don't have a sin nature. I have been born again and the Spirit of God lives within me. I am born into the family of God. I have a new nature. However, I have old habits and there are things that tempt me. I can choose to sin or I can choose not to. When I choose to sin, I harden my heart against the things of God and purposefully cause them to be unable to enter my soul. That is why willful sin is so damaging. It is why the Lord God hates sin so much, because it is killing us and keeping us from having the beauty and power that He wants us to have.

Most wounds have choices with them. When someone hurts me, I have to choose whether to forgive him. Choosing to keep unforgiveness is a sin. When people hurt me, and I am not healed of it, I have a blockage in my heart and then if I choose to not forgive them, I have caused another blockage in my heart. Keeping my heart open doesn't seem to be a very easy thing to do.

We will revisit this theme many times as we look at the scripture and what else the Lord has for us.

Matthew 5:8

*Blessed are the pure in heart!
For they shall see God.*

If you have a pure heart, then you will be able to perceive God in all that He wants for you. You will be totally open to Him and the things He has for you.

All of the beatitudes are wonderful, but this one sticks out to me. What a concept to actually have a pure heart with nothing at all hindering the things of God from making it into my soul and affecting me in major ways. I would be totally free to be who God has made me to be. To be pure in heart is to be making the right choices all the time. If that happened I would be seeing God do all the things He wants to do on this planet. I would be the vessel He is looking for to do what He truly wants to. Pure in heart is the greatest goal. We can obtain it if we truly listen to Him and want it. It is what His Spirit is trying to get done in our lives daily.

Matthew 6:19-21

Do not treasure up for you treasures on the earth, where moth and rust cause to perish, and where thieves dig through and steal. But treasure up for you treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust cause to perish, and where thieves do not dig through and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Our heart will be wherever we think the value is.

Wherever our treasure is, that is where our heart will be. Have you examined your priorities lately? What do you treasure? I can guarantee that most of us have incredibly selfish values. We value what we think of ourselves much higher than we value others. We have a strong tendency to be totally selfish. What we think about is what we worship. What we feel is of utmost importance and what we want are the only things that matter.

When we are changed to start thinking that the things of God are more important than the things of self, then the things of God can make it through our heart. When I am focused on the things I want, I am not focusing on the things of God. In fact, God has to break through to my reality to get me to do what He wants done. What is truly valuable? That is where our heart should be. Is it there?

Luke 6:43-45

For there is not a good tree that produces bad fruit, nor a bad tree that produces good fruit. For each tree is known from its own fruit. For they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. The good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart. And the evil man brings forth evil out of the evil treasure of his heart. For his mouth speaks out of the abundance of his heart.

Again in this passage it talks about treasuring things

in our hearts. The word “treasure” in the Greek is *thesauros* and it means to deposit something of value for keeping. We get the English word “thesaurus” from that word. A thesaurus is a treasury of words, a collection to make your language rich. Look at what this says:

Matthew 15:15-20

And answering, Peter said to Him, Explain this parable to us. But Jesus said, Are you also still without understanding? Do you not yet perceive that everything entering into the mouth goes into the belly, and is thrown out into the waste bowl? But the things which come out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and these defile the man. For out of the heart come forth reasonings, evil things, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, lies, blasphemies. These things are the things defiling the man. But eating with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

The topic of conversation here is the fruit that is produced. Whether a tree or a man, what comes from them is what is inside them. I pick fruit off of a tree because it is a good tree. I don't have to examine the tree to see if it is good or bad, I just look at the fruit. It is the same for men. I don't have to closely examine a man, I only have to listen to him. I will be able to know what is happening in his heart by what is coming out of his mouth.

People tell me, “You don't know what is in my heart. Only God knows that.” That isn't what the scripture says. It says that I should be able to see what is in

a man's heart by what comes out of his face. Why is it coming out of his face? Because it is what is important to him, it is his treasure. He has been putting that into himself for a long time. I will know how he sees himself and what he values by what he says. I will know if he values other people or not. It isn't magic or even tricky. It is obvious.

It also is very irritating. People don't like it when someone actually listens to what they say and holds them accountable for it. The people we really love will be the ones we want to help in this way. We don't want people to be dying. It is obvious who is dying and who is walking in victory by what they say. We really can know the condition of the heart.

Jesus tells us here that what is in the heart is the problem in man. He mostly reiterates the truth out of Jeremiah 17:9 that says that the heart is deceitful above all and is incurable. In man's strength that is totally true. The heart is full of everything that we value, even the things that are disgusting. Men don't just act wrong, what they do wrong also comes out of their mouth. James calls the tongue an unruly fire that cannot be tamed. When I actuate the things of my heart to the point of speaking them, the defilement is thorough. I defile myself. There is no getting away from it.

The only hope for a defiled heart is to have the heart changed. Only Jesus can change a heart. How does He do that? He starts by showing us that we can't do it alone. We need Him. He is the only hope. Then Jesus starts healing the wounds. He brings to mind the choices we've made and convicts us of them. He is working hard at cleaning up the things that are in our

hearts. When He has them cleaned out, we can then have a heart that will speak the glories of God instead of the defilement that we used to speak.

Romans 10:6-10

For Moses writes of the righteousness which is of the Law: "The man doing these things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith says this: "Do not say in your heart, Who will go up into Heaven?" (That is to bring down Christ); or, "Who will go down into the abyss?" (That is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what does it say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the Word of faith which we proclaim). Because if you confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation.

How do we get rid of the defilement? Confession and belief. My heart is completely incurable by everything else except the Lord. But with Him it is totally curable. When I believe in Him, confess my inability and trust completely in Him, the miracle happens that sets me free. The initial work sets my spirit free and gives me a new heart. Before becoming a believer we have a heart of stone. Nothing gets through it. When I come to the Lord, He takes away my heart of stone and gives me a heart of flesh. That means it is pliable, but damageable. I have to actually tend to a heart of flesh. I have to take care of it because it is able to be hurt. By believing continually that I am being brought

to the point where God is curing my heart and cleaning out the defilement, it is a work of His grace to me.

I have to then actually confess everything. I have to confess my inability. I have to confess the lack of strength to do the work. Confession alone isn't enough. I have to believe that everything I confess, He is able to cover. That means that everything in my life is based on the relationship I have with Jesus Christ. He alone can help me. Without Him involved, I am totally destroyed.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flows the springs of life.

Knowing that we must tend to our hearts makes this verse so very important. With all your strength and understanding, guard your heart. Be very careful what you put in your treasury. The very issues of life are coming out of your heart. What you allow into your heart is what you will have to deal with eventually. That will determine what you do and how much you can be used of the Lord. The war for your heart has begun. How will the battle go? Will you fight the Lord or fight with Him for your heart? The choice is yours.

Chapter Eight

Heart of Love

Now that we have a grip on what the heart is, we can go on to how it works. The scripture is full of things we need to know about the heart. We can also see that the things of the Spirit are vitally important to the way we live. Our interaction with the spirit through our heart is also very vital. Our wounds and choices make or break the work of the Spirit in our lives.

Our heart has two sides, our side (the side of the soul) and the Lord's side (the side of the spirit). We both have a vested interest in the heart. Because the Lord really wants us to have life, He is intimately concerned with what happens with our hearts. That is why He is continually telling us things about our hearts in the scripture.

When we love, we have to lay down our soul. We have to lay down how we think, how we feel and what we desire for a person. It isn't very easy to lay down our soul when we have all these wounds and choices polluting our side of our heart. Those wounds keep us pretty much self-focused. When all we think about is the pain that we have when we come in contact with people, it won't be very easy for us to want to love them, will it? Our wounds keep us from wanting to lay down our soul. Our protection of our soul is of utmost importance when all we can focus on is the pain.

Every person I have talked to has had their own set of wounds that they are having to deal with. Each of those wounds keep us from who we are in Christ. Each one has its own set of messages to us about our identity. Each one causes us to fight for our own protection. Each one causes us to put up our shields of defense. When we do that, we shut out more than just the ones who hurt us, and we tend to alienate others.

Our choices do the same thing. We don't want to hear that we made a bad decision or that we are guilty of anything, so we justify what we did and shield ourselves from the accusations or the responsibility of our actions. Wanting to keep either our wounds or our choices will keep us from having an open heart to allow the things of the Spirit from entering our soul and changing us to be what we need to be.

One of the quickest ways of finding if people have wounds that are affecting them is to ask them about their former churches and what happened in them. That can be a wealth of wounds ready to relive the pain. People in churches are usually people who have been wounded by churches. That isn't to say that all churches are bad, they are just filled with people who are trying to have relationships with others and flesh coming into contact with flesh usually causes damage.

Another one is the relationship we have with our parents. Most wounds happen in the formative years, from one to about seven years old. Most of our understanding of our identity comes from that time.

The Lord hates those things in our lives that are keeping us from having a close relationship with Him

that is open and interactive. That is why He has done everything He can to show us the problems that are in our hearts. The commands of God are there to show us the things in our hearts that are keeping us from doing them. Most of the time when we fail we are just beating ourselves up and judging ourselves as unworthy instead of examining why we are having problems and trying to deal with them. We have the idea that God is showing us these things to beat us with them. Nothing could be further from the truth. He shows us these things so that we can actually do something about them.

The Lord is really into healing our hearts. He isn't into condemnation, He is into redemption and restoration. He doesn't want us stuck with our wounds and choices forever. He wants us free from them. One of the passages that illustrates this is the greatest command of them all.

Matthew 22:35-37

And one of them, a lawyer, questioned Him, testing Him, and saying, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all Your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

The number one greatest commandment is that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart. What? How can we do that? It is simple, but not easy. I have to take everything in the Spirit and allow it into my soul without hindrance and choose to reverse it back to God in every way. That means that there must be

nothing in my soul that would hinder the things of the Spirit. No wounds. All the wounds need to be healed. No wrong choices. All my wrong choices need to be repented from and turned over to Jesus for correction. For that to happen, I have to believe that Jesus wants every wound healed. There is no reason I have to stay wounded my whole life. I have access to Jesus and He wants to heal me.

This can only happen if I have a relationship with Jesus, and everything must be done by faith. Faith isn't knowing what God can do, it is knowing what God will do. The only way I know what God will do is by either hearing it from Him as He tells me or by understanding who He is by knowing the character of God from the Bible. Either one requires that I have a relationship with Him that is both personal and intimate. I have to believe that He wants me healed because it is His command that I am to love Him with ALL my heart. He never commands us to do something we can't do. In every command comes the enabling power of His grace to get it done. He wants all of my heart.

Faith is always a risk-taking situation. I am going to have to trust Him with all my healing and my protection. What will it cost me? My own selfishness. It will also cost me my pride.

He wants all of my soul, too. Everything I am I must give over to Him. If I am protecting myself and I am self focused, I can't give myself to Him. I am too busy trying to find out who I am and fighting for my identity. If I am to love Him with all my soul, then I need access to the spirit with all my soul. That means that every hindrance must be eliminated.

If I am to love Him with all my mind, I am going to have to submit to the process of the renewal of my mind. I will need to give up my right to understand everything, before I can give it to Him. I am going to have to let the mind of Christ take over my way of thinking and take on the thought processes of the Spirit of God. This is going to take a lot of work. But it is in this process that God works with me and I gain revelation of who He is and who I am in Him. That is the plan.

Where am I going to get this love to love Him with? 1 John 4:19 it states that we love Him because He first loved us. When the love of God comes to a man and he receives a portion of it, it gives him love that he then can turn around and love God with. When he does that, he gains more revelation of the love the Father has for him. That gives him more love to love the Father with, which gives him more revelation of the love of the Father for him. That gives him more love to love the Father with, which gives more revelation of the love of the Father.

Where do we get this love for Him? From Him. All we have to do is start and He fills in the rest. If we will continually seek Him, He will continually give us more than we can possibly hope to understand. He gives us a command, then He gives us the love and grace to fulfill it. That is the God I know.

God even helps me find the love of God. Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:4-5.

But we are persuaded in the Lord as to you, that whatever things we have commanded you, you both do and you will do. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

God will direct our hearts into the love of God. If we will let Him, He will show us the love that He has for us. How does that work? If I will let Him, He will show me everything that is in my heart that is a hindrance, every wound and every choice that stops me from walking in the spirit. He will direct me to see that I have those hindrances, then He will help me get the healing for them, which will direct me to the love He has for me that I hadn't been able to see before. It is all based on faith and trust in Him.

It is reinforced in 1 Timothy 1:5. Paul is telling Timothy that he needs to be careful about other doctrines that people will be trying to teach and about genealogies which will only get peoples eyes off of what the Lord has done, and on to how they are better than others. Then he states:

*But the end of the commandment
is love out of a pure heart and a good
conscience, and faith not pretended.*

When God gives a command, it always has a purpose. The purpose of His command is to bring us to the point where we love others out of a pure heart. To do that we must have the hindrances that keep the things of the spirit from working in our soul taken out of the way, allowing the love of the spirit to work out through our soul. This is an ultimate goal that can be incrementally reached by each part that is being dealt with. We are in a relationship and relationships take time to develop. The Lord will continually work on us to bring about the goal of being Christlike. Praise God.

Romans 5:1-5

Then being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have had access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast on the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we boast also in afflictions, knowing that affliction works out patience, and patience works out proven character; and proven character, hope. And the hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.

This passage shows a progression that happens in our lives when we come to the Lord. The first thing that happens is that we are justified by faith and have been given peace with God. We have a judicial peace so that we are no longer at war with Him. We have a relationship with the God of the Universe and He isn't trying to judge us worthy of destruction. It is all covered under the grace of God through Jesus Christ. He paid for it all, praise God! That makes us able to boast in the glory of God. It isn't because of us, but because of Him and what He has done for us.

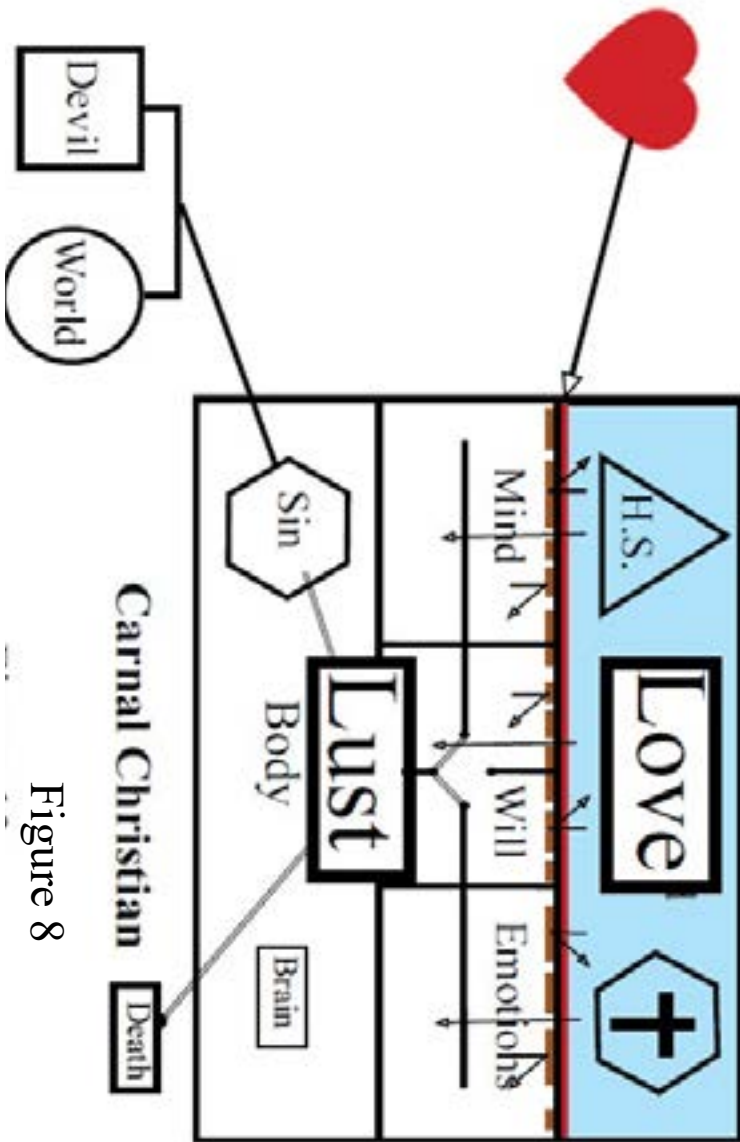
Then we can start doing something outlandish for sure. We can boast in afflictions. We can boast in what we have to go through because of the effect it will have in our lives. The affliction will work out patience in us. Patience means that we can go through something and know that God is going to be there for us and take us through. We can rest and relax in Him knowing that

we are going to be able to come out the other side.

Going through affliction and learning patience tempers us to be able to have our character changed. Because we were able to go through it, others will be able to see in us qualities that won't show up in people until they have gone through the fire. That proven character brings us the confidence that we can go through things and they don't have to destroy us. We have hope for any situation we could go through because we have proven that the Lord is there with us and gives us the strength to handle things. Hope is a powerful thing to have in our arsenal. We can relax and have peace because we know we have hope. We have a future, things are not in the unknown. We may not know what the future holds except for the fact that we can trust God for it and that we will come out victorious.

The really powerful thing to see in this passage, though, is the last verse. Hope does not disappoint us. It does not put us to shame. We will not be ashamed that we had hope. Why? Because the Love of God has been poured out in our hearts.

God pours out His love for us in our hearts. He is talking about His side of the heart. In the spirit, where the Spirit of God lives in us, the love of God is poured out. As we access the spirit to bring about change in our soul, we are given the character qualities of God to pour out on others. He has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness, and then tells us to give it to others. When He commands us to love Him with all our hearts, He is calling us to become the channels of the love He poured into our hearts. He wants us to submit to that love, let that love come out of our spirit and show up in



**The Love of the Spirit stays
in the spirit if not allowed out.**

**When the Love of the Spirit is not allowed
in the soul, the outcome is lust.**

and through our soul. That is the salvation of the soul. When we love, the love that is in our spirit through our souls, it has other effects, too. In 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 it says:

And may the Lord make you to increase and to abound in love toward one another and toward all, even as we do also toward you, in order to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

When the Lord can use us to love others, it actually establishes our hearts to be blameless in holiness. That means that there isn't anything that we can be accused of. We are made holy and the holiness of God is being carried through us to others. When something is established, it can withstand pressure and scrutiny. That is very valuable.

In 1 Peter 1:22 we are told even more of the picture. The difference here is the role we have to play in the matter.

Having purified your souls in the obedience of the truth through the Spirit to unpretended brotherly love, love one another fervently out of a pure heart, being regenerated, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the living Word of God, and remaining forever.

We must be a participant in the purification of our souls. How? By obeying the commands of the truth.

How? By the power of the Holy Spirit, being submitted to the Spirit in our spirit. What is the outcome? Unpretentious brotherly love that we use to love one another fervently. How does that work? Out of a pure heart. The pure heart comes from the purification of our soul that had polluted our heart. Once we have a pure heart, we can have the love of the spirit working through our soul.

If we don't allow the spirit to come into our soul, because of the wounds and choices, the outcome is devastating. God is love (1 John 4:8,16). When we don't allow the Spirit to work out through our soul, we only have the flesh (Figure 5, page 33). It is the same thing, then, to show that what is spirit is love, and what isn't spirit is lust. Look at figure 8. We can't love with our flesh. Our selfishness doesn't love. We have to lay down our soul to love. When we do, we allow the Holy spirit to work through us to love others with who He is. When we let God shine through, we are channels of His love to others and they benefit. When we don't, the only thing we have is a relationship through which we have to get something from people for our own benefit. That is lust. Lust isn't always sexual, but it can be. Lust is getting something from people for us and our selfishness. Love is when we give to others for their benefit. Only God can love because He is love.

That is why it is so important to know how to love. It is the single most important thing we can do as humans on this planet. Why is it so difficult? It requires the breaking of our pride and the submission of our soul to the hand of the Lord. That isn't easy.

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named, that He may give you, according to the riches of His glory, by His power to become mighty in the inward man through His Spirit, that through faith Christ may dwell in your hearts, having been rooted and founded in love, that you may be given strength to grasp, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the surpassing knowledge and love of Christ, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God. Now to Him being able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think, according to the power working in us, to Him be the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen.

This is one of the most powerful prayers ever heard in heaven. Paul is asking that those in Ephesus would be given power to become mighty in the inward man through His Spirit. The inward man is the soul. When I am mighty in my inward man, I am realizing the full potential of His power through me and in me so that I am becoming Christlike in my soul. That is amazing. What is the outcome of such a state? Christ may dwell in my heart through faith.

What a statement! I have a relationship with Jesus Christ in such a way that I have I am trusting Him for everything. I am so submitted to Him that He is able

to live His life through me to others. I am just a channel for Him to live through. Am I seeing that happen in my life? Not as much as I would like, but more than I have ever imagined possible. How does this come about? When I am rooted and founded in love.

When the love that He is, is all I trust in and live for, I gain all the benefits that He has. I become less of me and more of Him; I must decrease and He must increase. When that happens, I then have the strength to gain more revelation of Him and His love. Paul is praying that they and all the saints (you and me) will have the strength to grasp something of great importance: that we would be able to understand the breadth, length, depth, and height and the surpassing knowledge of the love of Christ.

What is so difficult to grasp? The more I look into it, the greater it becomes. Let's look at them.

The breadth of the love of God means how far His love extends sideways. He loves all of us, without question. He loves my neighbor as much as He loves me. He loves the people in China, Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas the same. He loves believers and unbelievers. He loves little, old grandmas and serial rapists. We think we know this until we are confronted with having to love them ourselves. Do we love the homosexual equally with the kids in our Sunday School classes? Do we love people who smell badly as much as we love our own family? It will take revelation and submission to be able to go that far.

The length of the love of God means that it is always consistent. He has always loved and will al-

ways love. He loved the Romans and the children of Israel. He loved The crusaders and the inhabitants of Jerusalem whom they fought. He will love this country right up to the time when it is no more. He has always loved. People haven't always responded to that love correctly. We can count on the fact that He will love the people whom we come in contact with and that He will come to them if they call on Him. Every time. Without fail. Do we know that?

The depth of the love of God is the concept that nearly destroyed me. As I sought His face concerning this very issue, He showed me a glimpse of the depth of His love. How low did He come to bring me His love? That is beyond my comprehension. Every time I meditate on this it blows me away. He paid a debt He did not owe. Oh, how He loves me. How deep is the love of God to me that He would humble Himself so far to bring me that love? The more revelation I get on this one the more I know there is more to know.

The height is a hard one to understand because of our limited capacity to see. This is why Paul had to pray that we gain strength to be able to grasp this. How far up will He take us? How high will His love go to bring us to Himself? We are so limited, we cannot see the glories that He has in store for us just because of the love He has for us. Oh, pray for strength in our puny, little minds. Then he goes further by praying that we know the surpassing knowledge of the love of God. That is the whole reason for this book. It is only scratching the surface.

Lastly, he prays that we may be filled to all the fullness of God. That can only happen if we are completely

yielded to His Spirit in our soul. When our soul is free to receive all that He has for us in our spirit, we will be filled with the fullness of God. The outcome is to become what He created us to be in the first place. Being filled with the fullness is more than we can comprehend. What does that look like? Has there ever been anyone who has so completely emptied himself to that extent? I don't know of anyone, other than Jesus Himself.

Paul ends this passage with a verse that is so commonly misquoted. People usually stop with, "To Him being able to do exceedingly above all that we ask or think." I have heard people say, "I can ask pretty high, I can think to the heavens." They don't understand what they are talking about because they didn't finish the verse, "according to the power working in us." God is wanting to do a work in us that is beyond what we can ask or think. How can we ask or think to the extent of the very character of God Himself? God is showing us that if we were to completely comply to the urging of the Holy spirit and submit to Him, that we would have access to the very nature and character of God. We don't have the capacity to think that high or to even understand how to ask.

The one thing that is certain is that He is to get all the glory for it. There isn't anything we can claim in these proceedings. However, we can participate and see the Hand of God working higher than we had ever thought possible. We can participate in the praise and glory of the Most high God!

May we submit to the love of God and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us a higher work than we could possibly know! Praise to the God Most High!

Chapter Nine

Dealing With Defilement

In my interest of trying to find out about the heart, I came across some things that really bothered me. I know the Lord was giggling at me as He was guiding me into something that I had no idea was there, let alone had tried searching for.

Many years ago, I had studied defilement and how it affected our lives and what the scripture had to say about it. It was a fascinating study. There are 33 Hebrew and Greek words translated as defilement. The meanings are diverse and varied, everything from making something dirty to actually wounding it, piercing it deeply. I had studied it because I had seen the effect in people's lives and was gaining a very healthy hatred for it. I had lived it while being addicted to pornography and I had personally seen the effects on my wife and my own life. I truly hated it.

As I studied defilement I grew ever more disgusted with it. I saw the beauty of holiness and the way God intended us to be. I saw how defilement splattered what was holy to make it something common and unclean. I saw how we had taken the awesome gift of God and made it into something that didn't even resemble what God had created. I saw so many things being polluted and tainted to the point that people didn't know what to even look for in the church.

With that background still in my mind and still a subject of meditation, I started my search for the meaning of the heart. What I found was blowing my mind. It took some real thought to come up with what the Lord was trying to show me. It caused some very interesting conversations between the Lord and me.

One of the main scriptures about the heart had an added element that I didn't understand. I had been meditating on the aspects of the heart in this verse and tried to ignore the rest until I had milked it for all I could get. Eventually, however, I had to deal with the part I didn't understand and that threw me into something bigger than I had anticipated.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurable; who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

This verse has been quoted by so many people without them finishing it. They quote it to prove that we are so bad and that we are incurable sinners. We are the lowly, depraved sinners, who should be flogged. There is no hope that we can walk in any type of victory from sin. That isn't what the Lord is trying to say. Verse 10 answers the question of verse 9. The heart is incurable for men, but not for God.

As we have discovered, the Lord is absolutely interested in what is happening in our hearts. He wants

us to have pure hearts that let the power of God through, so that our souls can live out God's love for us (Figures 6 and 7, pages 92 and 94). That means that we do have hope that we can live free from the sin that had been so pervasive in our lives. We don't have to sin. We can actually get to the point where God can show us the things that are in our hearts and get them healed. We don't have to have hard hearts. They are totally incurable by the flesh, but they are totally curable by the Spirit. The Lord is intimately involved and interested in the healing of our hearts.

But the verse goes on to say that He not only searches the hearts, but He tries or tests the reins. OK. What are the reins? That didn't make any sense at all. Are these like reins we put on horses? What a discovery to look that one up.

The word translated as "reins" in the King James and "mind" in most modern translations is the Hebrew word *kilyaw*. When they describe the slaughtering of the sacrifices for the priests in Leviticus, they use this word to talk about cutting the fat from around the kidneys. The best definition of this word in every Hebrew lexicon I have found is "kidney." Kidney? I have a spiritual heart and now I have kidneys? What's next, pancreas?

I said to the Lord, "Come on, Lord. Kidneys?" All He had to do was ask the question to me, "What do kidneys do?" "They filter." "What do they filter?" "The junk from the bloodstream." I got it! The kidneys are there to filter the defilement from the life flow.

Remember way back in Figure 3 (page 12) that sin moved from the spirit to the body? That gave us a

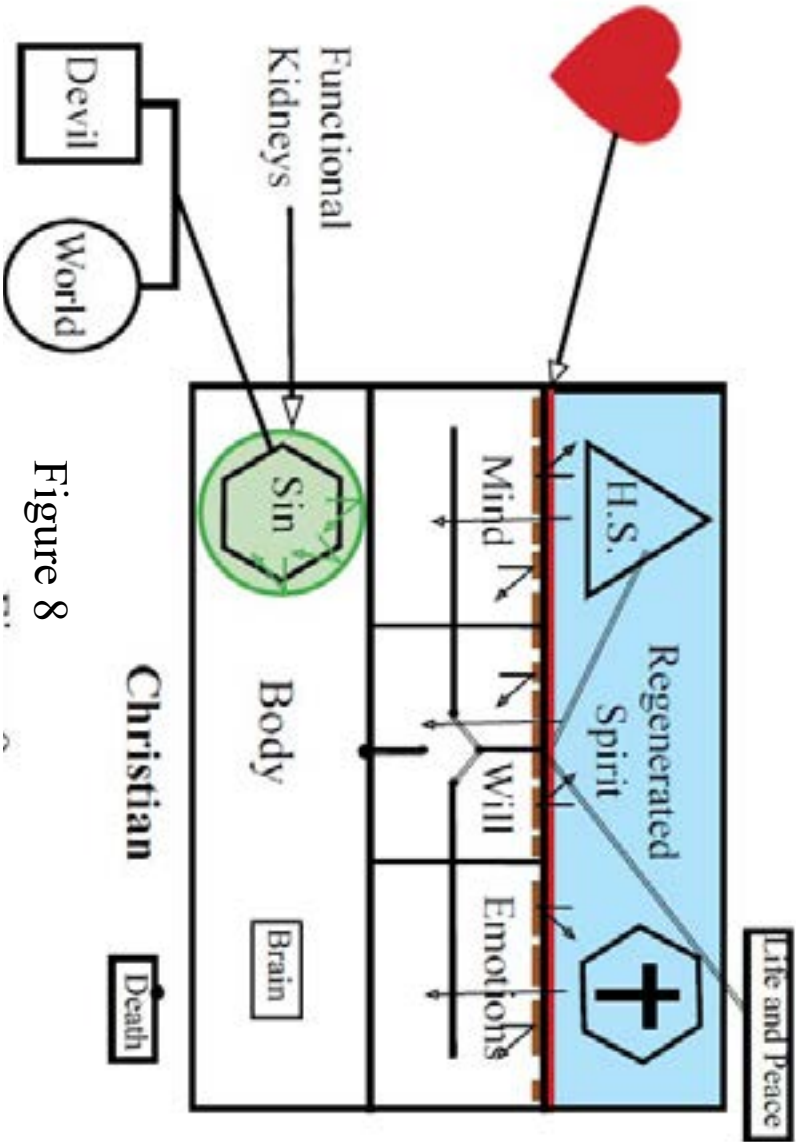


Figure 8

huge problem. What do we do with the defilement that is in our body? Does that mean that our bodies are unclean and can never be pure or holy? By all means NO!

What it means is that we have even a greater responsibility than we had ever understood before. God has given us something that is a grand gift, but is tender and easily damaged. God has given us the ability to filter the defilement that was caused by sin and has polluted everything in our lives. God provided a way for us to walk completely free from sin, even the sin that is in our bodies because of the fallen state of man through Adam.

When we walk by choice in the spirit, the sin in our bodies is kept useless and ineffective by the spiritual kidneys He has given us. The adverse is also true. When we walk by choice in the flesh, we effectively cause spiritual kidney failure and we are poisoned by the sin that we have in our own bodies.

When a person's physical kidneys stop working, the defilement in his blood will start poisoning him. His own body will poison them to death. There is no difference between physical and spiritual. In the soulish realm, if we choose to walk in the flesh, we effectively stop our spiritual kidneys from working, and our own defilement will poison us to death in spiritual ways. God knew this. He provided physical kidneys that filter the physical defilement. He also provided spiritual kidneys that filter the spiritual defilement. He is awesome and is to be praised.

In figure 8 (page 120), even though the kidneys

are there, the choice to walk in the flesh causes the defilement to affect the mind, the emotions and the will. Sin makes us stupid, unbalanced and hard to get along with. In figure 9 (page 126) the effect of containing the defilement is shown when we walk in the Spirit.

In Jeremiah 17:10, the Lord says that He searches the heart and tries the kidneys. The word there for “tries,” means “to test, like a metal to see what it is made of and its effectiveness.” Jehovah is continually testing our kidneys to see if they are effectively working. When God tests something it isn’t because He needs to know, He already does. He tests it to show us if it is working. Are we paying attention to the results? Can we tell when the defilement is killing us? Can we see how our choices to walk in the flesh are poisoning us and those around us? Are we listening to the voice of God telling us to walk out of the death we chose to walk in?

Isn’t it interesting that we blame God for these things, but in reality He has provided everything we possibly need to walk the way He has commanded us to walk?

Let’s look at some of the other scripture about this subject. I found that the Lord isn’t very silent about it. It amazes me that I didn’t see it before, considering there is so much about it.

Psalms 7:8-10

Jehovah will judge the people. Oh Jehovah, judge me according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity on me. Oh let the evil of the wicked come

*to an end; and You will establish the just;
for the righteous God is a trier of hearts
and kidneys. My defense is on God, who
saves the upright of heart.*

David knew that when he trusted God for everything, he was very well able to withstand scrutiny for the righteousness he had in the Lord. He knew God could test the metal of his soul and find he was valuable for the Master's use. He understood God's grace better than anyone I have ever known. He was totally dependent on God's grace and mercy. He knew that if he stood before the Lord, his dependence on God would carry him, his faith in what the Lord was doing would save him.

It is true in many passages that David wrote. He had a complete trust in what the Lord had already accomplished in his life. That is why he states in the last verse here, that his defence was on God. Then he states why. He understood the character of God. He saves the upright of heart. David knew the Lord personally. Therefore, he trusted Him.

Psalm 26:1-3

*A Psalm of David. Judge me, Oh
Jehovah, for I have walked in my integrity;
I also have trusted in Jehovah; I shall not
slide. Examine me, Oh Jehovah, and
prove me; purify my kidneys and my heart.
For Your mercy is before my eyes; and I
have walked in Your truth.*

In this passage, David is asking the Lord to not

just examine him and judge him according to his integrity, but he asks the Lord to purify his kidneys and his heart. He knows that he isn't perfect, but he also knows that God knows his state, and is the only one who can do anything about what is in his heart and kidneys. He needs help in purifying his heart and kidneys. He needs God to do that work.

Then he states that he rests on the Lord's mercy. Good plan. That takes care of the areas where he might fail. He knows that he has worked on this since his youth, but he knows he can fall. He is completely trusting in God's mercy and ability to help him. Are we there yet?

Jeremiah 12:1-3

*Righteous are You, Oh Jehovah,
when I might complain to You, yet let me
speak with You of Your judgments. Why
does the way of the wicked prosper? Why
are all those dealers of deceit at ease?
You planted them; yea, they take root, they
grow, they even make fruit. You are near
in their mouth, and far from their kidneys.
But You know me, Oh Jehovah. You have
seen me and tried my heart toward You.
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,
and devote them to the day of slaughter.*

This is a common complaint. Why do the wicked prosper and those of us that are really trying to walk in the Spirit are struggling to make ends meet? There are some wrong assumptions being made here. We assume they are getting away with it. They aren't. Payment

might not be here. It might be later. God really knows. We don't and it is OK.

The reality is that God is near their mouth. They sound good, but it doesn't go any deeper. God is far from their kidneys. He isn't keeping the defilement from killing them. They aren't trusting God for that. They don't even know that the defilement is affecting them in any way. They think they are getting away with it. What a wake up call they have coming.

Jeremiah understood that God was continually examining him and knew what was happening in his heart. He might not be seeing the physical blessings, but he really understood the spiritual blessings in his relationship with the Lord.

The Lord is going to take care of it. I am glad He is close to my kidneys and wants to help me in this area.

Jeremiah 20:12

*But, Oh Jehovah of Hosts, who tries
the righteous, who sees the kidneys and
the heart, let me see Your vengeance on
them; for I have revealed my cause to You.*

The Lord sees the heart and all its little secrets and wounds. It would seem that this would be sufficient, but He also sees what is happening in the kidneys. Just shutting off the kidneys so they aren't filtering the defilement from our system anymore is a very nasty sentence of judgment. Just think of how that works. All God has to do is not let the spiritual kidneys function and we let

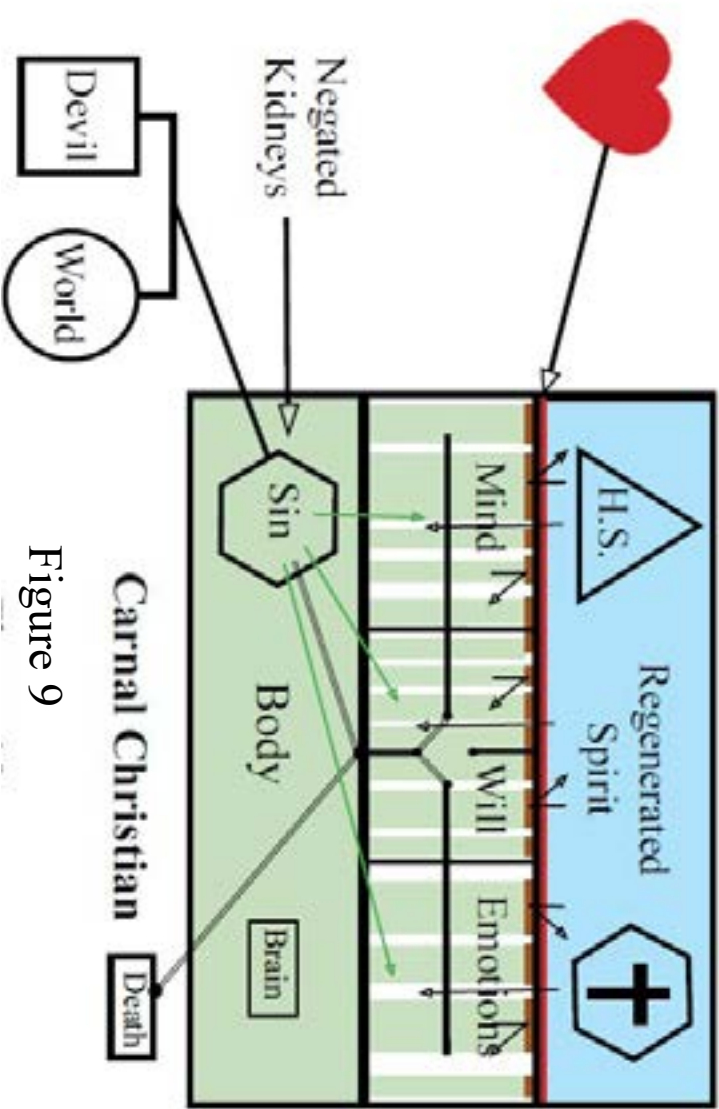


Figure 9

loose all the judgment in our own lives. Our own defilement judges us. That is effective vengeance.

Doesn't that make you want to set things right and get your kidneys functional? It scares me. That makes me want to trust in Him and put things in His hands. It makes me really want to choose to walk in the Spirit.

Revelations 2:23

But I have a few things against you, that you allow the woman Jezebel to teach, she saying herself to be a prophetess, and to cause My slaves to go astray, and to commit fornication. And she did not repent. Behold, I am throwing her into a bed, and into great affliction those committing adultery with her, unless they repent of their works. And I will kill her children with death; and all the assemblies will know that I am the One searching the kidneys and the hearts. And I will give to each of you according to your works.

For those who need to know that this is in the New Testament also, here is the proof. It also has some very intense things to say.

When someone comes into the church and is causing damage by self-promotion, God will fight him or her. He takes it very seriously when people are hurting His children. We must be very careful with what we do in the church. God has some very nasty things to say about this woman, Jezebel, however I am not going to get into teaching about the Jezebel spirit here. All we

need to know is what He is saying about the kidneys.

God will judge those who are causing damage, it isn't up to us. The thing we really need to see is that He is the one who searches the kidneys and hearts. The word for kidneys here is the Greek word *nephros*. We get the English word nephrotic, which means "as pertaining to the kidneys."

God takes it so seriously He says that he will give to each according to what He finds there. What happens in our kidneys and hearts is what will be in our actions. He says He will give to each according to his works. The inner workings will always manifest outwardly somehow. It will show to those who are willing to look. No one could see it happening in my life because they weren't looking. I could see it. I knew it was killing me.

God in His grace has given to us a glorious gift to keep the defilement from killing us. He gave us kidneys.

I will be teaching more on the kidneys in later chapters and showing more of how they work in our lives. What I want to show now is that we have them. They are very susceptible to our decisions. To bring healing to people's lives, we need to see how they work or how they affect people when they aren't functioning.

Chapter Ten

Hardness of Heart

One of the most painful things to think about is the case of the hardened heart. Once you understand what is meant by hardness of heart you will never want it to be true in your life. Since we have been looking at the heart and how it works, it is a good idea to look at the scripture that talks about this condition known as hardness of heart.

God has talked about hardness of heart in many places and for many reasons. The main idea is that God hates the heart that is hard. He cannot work with it. He has done everything possible to get rid of it and to make it something He can work with. Hardness of heart is one of the worst things that could happen to someone. I pray we get understanding.

Ezekiel 11:17-21

So the Lord Jehovah says this: I shall gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the lands, in those where you were scattered, and I shall give to you the land of Israel. And they will come there, and they will remove all its hateful things and all its abominations from it. And I shall give to them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh,

so that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments, and do them. And they shall be to Me for a people, and I will be to them for God. And as to those whose heart is going after their hateful things, and also their heart is after their disgusting idols, I will give their way on their heads, declares the Lord Jehovah.

This is a strong statement from the Lord. He is committing Himself in covenant language to bring a people to Himself if they will just not walk in idolatry. He is bringing the people back from exile to inhabit the land of Israel. He wants them to go and tear down all the places of idol worship that have defiled the land. But that isn't all. He wants to do something uniquely powerful and meaningful. I'm not sure we can understand everything He says here in His commitment to people, but we will start.

He says He will give them one heart. That is amazing. When I have my soul submitted to the spirit and someone else has submitted his soul to the spirit, we will have one heart. The Spirit of God will be the one I am in submission to and the same for the other person. Our hearts will be in agreement because we are both in agreement to the Spirit of God. This is a very strong principle. This is the key to being in agreement.

My wife and I have committed to doing nothing that we aren't in agreement about. We tried all the other forms of getting into agreement that wasn't truly agreement. We thought lack of fighting was agreement. My flesh says, because I am a knowledgeable, intelligent, and resourceful man, it would make sense for her to

just submit to me and do what I say. That is agreement, right? No. That is when I am trusting in the flesh and have cursed the entire situation. Is it agreement when one of us just acquiesces and gives in to the stronger argument of the other one? No. Is it agreement when one has an expert opinion and the other doesn't really care? No. What is agreement then? It is when both of us have gone to the Father and heard from Him. God always agrees with God. If I hear from Him and my wife hears from Him, then we will be in agreement.

If we go to the Lord and come together and are not hearing the same thing, then she must be wrong, right? It is probably the other person involved that is wrong. However, what we need to do is not find fault, but both go back to the Lord and ask again. When we have the same answer, we are in agreement. That is a full marriage seminar in a couple of paragraphs. Do that and live.

When two people have the Spirit of God living through them, they are in agreement and have one heart. How beautiful is that? Easy? No. Simple, but not easy. It takes a lot of hearing from God and dying to self. But from what I gather, that is the way it works.

Then He says He will put in them a new spirit. This is one of the first times in the Old Testament that He mentions He is going to do a work in the spirit of man. Wow. A new spirit. When is He going to do that? When a person comes to Jesus. But this is in the Old Testament! That is right. This is a prophecy telling about what will happen to a person who gives his life completely to the Lord God. He will have a new spirit and will be able to have one heart with someone else who is submitted to that spirit.

Faith in the Old Testament is a faith that is looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. Faith in the New Testament is looking back to what the Messiah who came has accomplished. God knew who had faith in the Messiah in the Old Testament and that is why in Luke 16 there was a separation between the parts of Sheol—paradise and torment. After the death of Jesus on the cross, He went to the torment side just long enough to pay the penalty for our sins. He didn't stay there. He couldn't. The penalty had been fulfilled. He then went to the other side and preached to the souls there about the fulfillment of the prophecies and the salvation that had been purchased. He then led captivity captive and took them to heaven to present them to the Father.

From then on, when a person turns to the Lord by faith, the Father gives him a new spirit and the ability to walk in one heart. That is awesome.

The next part of that verse says something extraordinary. Talking about this new being He will be making, He says He will take out of them the stony hearts and give them hearts of flesh. That sentence has always bothered me until I gained understanding of what is happening here.

The first thing is that He takes out the stony heart. There is nothing harder than a stone. A stony heart is totally hard. Nothing can get from the Spirit of God into the soul. It is a barrier that God wants removed so He can communicate to the person in an intimate way. That is wonderful.

The bad news is that He didn't give us a heart of

spirit, but a heart of flesh. This means that the heart He puts within us is a heart that needs to be taken care of. It is a heart that can be damaged, but it is a heart that can feel and that is alive. Now we are held accountable for what we do with that heart. It is important what condition that heart is in. A hard heart is deadly. But a soft and tender heart can communicate with the Lord God in a very tender way.

The problem is that a heart of flesh can be hurt. God knew that. He had a plan. He knew that if a heart got hurt that the person with that heart would have to come to Him and get it healed. That would make us totally dependent on Him in every situation. That would make a relationship with Him as part of the plan. How intimate? Extremely. That is what He wants. How do I know that? Look at the next verse.

Verse 20 says He did that so that they may walk in His statutes and keep His judgments and do them. When I have a soft heart toward God I will want to do what He wants to do, not what I want to do. My actions will show the condition of my heart. It isn't all that difficult to see the hardness of heart in people. I can see it in me very, very easily. Can't you?

The goal is for the people to be a people in relationship to God. This covenant language shows that we will have the Lord God of the Universe as a covenant partner in life. We win. That is incredible, beyond understanding or valuation.

The last part of this passage states some very disturbing things. For anyone who chooses to go after hateful things and disgusting idols, God will give their

way on their heads. They will carry the full force of the implications of their actions. They will be under the strictest scrutiny of justice. That isn't a good place to be. Hardness of heart is horrible and the outcome is of utmost severity. Are we learning yet?

Ezekiel 36:24-29

For I will take you from the nations and gather you out of all the lands and bring you into your land. Then I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your defilement and from all your idols. And I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgements and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. And you shall be a people to Me, and I will be God to you. I will also save you from all your defilements, and I will call for grain and increase it, and I will not put a famine on you.

This passage is much like the last one with a few differences that I want us to see. The first is that God will sprinkle the people with clean water and cleanse them from their defilements. The only time water is used to clean like this is when God was setting up the priesthood. That is a permanent, lifetime calling that wasn't offered to anyone but the Levites. In the New Testament it is offered to every believer.

The second thing is that He states He will put His Spirit in them. That only comes in the New Testament at the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is also a major theology that is very deep and far from comprehensibility. The mystery of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is something that we will be looking into for all of eternity.

The third thing is that God will save us from all defilements. Seeing the depth of defilement we cause when we worship ourselves, I would say that is an amazing thing. I rest completely on the grace of God for all He gives and that it isn't anything I can do. I am very blessed.

I am going to look now at several passages that deal with the hardness of heart. Hardness of heart is something that we can cause to be worse or we can see healed. The only reason it would be fatal is if we wouldn't deal with it. But the Lord has much to tell us about that.

Mark 3:1-6

And again He entered into the synagogue. And there was a man who had a withering of the hand. And they watched Him, whether He will heal him on the sabbaths, that they might accuse Him. And He said to the man who had a withering of the hand, Rise up into the middle. And He said to them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbaths, or to do evil? To save a soul, or to kill? But they were silent. And having looked around on them with anger, being greatly grieved over the hardness

of their heart, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand! And he stretched out and his hand was restored sound as the other. And going out, the Pharisees at once took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Hardness of heart is rampant in the religious. Jesus was part of what was happening in the synagogue. He wasn't against the things that were there for bringing people closer to God. He was appalled by the condition of their hearts. They were worried about outward expression without it touching the inner man. They had no compassion for those in trouble. They didn't want Him doing something on the sabbath that was different than what they believed for the keeping of the law. But a higher law was at work; people are more important than liturgy.

The picture of Jesus that most people see through the media is one of a quiet little wimp that wouldn't ruffle a feather on anyone. That isn't the Jesus I know. In this passage He actually looked around Him in anger. The hardness of heart that He saw there was horrible. It grieved Him to see people ready to throw someone away for the sake of their religious trappings. That was a perversion of what He knew of the life that should have been in the synagogue.

What are we to learn from this passage? When we are willing to throw people away for the sake of our own selfishness, we are no better than they. It is this kind of attitude that grieves the heart of God. It proves that we have a hardness that is keeping God from manifesting to others through us and it actually causes

damage to people whom we are supposed to be bringing healing to. Hardness of heart perverts the plan of God on earth. It twists our relationship from a religion that is healing to one that is damaging. My looking good is not a high priority to God. My prestige is an abomination. He wants me humble and wants to use me to bring healing to others.

Was the hardness of heart only in the Pharisees? Hardly. It is a problem with all people, even the disciples. They had to deal with it on a regular basis. Look at this passage.

Mark 6:48-52

And He saw them being distressed in the rowing, for the wind was contrary to them. And it was about the fourth watch of the night when He came toward them, walking on the sea. And He willed to go by them. But seeing Him walking on the sea, they thought it to be a phantom. And they cried out. For all saw Him, and were troubled, And immediately He spoke to them and said to them, Have courage, I AM! Do not fear. And He went up to them into the boat, and the wind was cut off. And they were amazed, exceedingly beyond measure within themselves, and marveled. For they did not understand about the miracle of the loaves, for their hearts were hardened.

This doesn't seem right. They were out trying to row against the wind and Jesus comes by walking on

the water, headed for the other side. They freaked out thinking it was a ghost. Jesus sees their fear, it is freaking them out and tells them it is He and He walks over and gets into the boat. Immediately the wind quits. In a matter of seconds everything is totally different. They are blown away. But what is the problem? Wouldn't you be blown away? I'm sure it would be a little hard for me to handle.

The real problem, though, is the condition of their hearts. They had just come away from the feeding of the 5000. He has asked them to feed the crowd and they couldn't. That should have shown them something about themselves. Jesus then proceeded to feed the 5000 with just a few loaves and a couple of fish. They should have realized that they had something in their hearts that was keeping the things of God from working out through them. Jesus didn't have that problem. They should have looked within themselves for that hindrance.

Because they didn't, they also didn't grow through the experience the way the Lord wanted them to. Because of the hardness of their hearts with the loaves, they weren't in position to respond correctly to the other miracles of walking on the water, calming a storm and such things that are commonplace with God and very impossible with man. The Lord was trying to get them to see the supernatural as something they were to walk in regularly. The supernatural was to be natural to those who are walking in the spirit. Instead they went where they normally went to, the way of thinking like the world does. What God wanted was to change their way of thinking to be like God's and not man's. Hardness of heart causes us to think like man thinks. It keeps us from the miraculous way God wants to deal with situations

Mark 8:13-21

And leaving them, again entering into the boat, He went away to the other side. And the disciples forgot to take loaves. And they did not have any with them, except one loaf in the boat. And He charged them, saying, See! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned with one another, saying, Because we have no loaves. And knowing, Jesus said to them, Why do you reason because you have no loaves? So do you not yet perceive nor realize? Have you still hardened your heart? "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?" And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves to the five thousand, how many hand baskets full of fragments did you take up? They said to Him, Twelve. And when the seven to the four thousand, how many lunch baskets did you take up with the fillings of fragments? And they said, Seven. And He said to them, How do you not understand?

Jesus had just had an encounter with the Pharisees and the Herodians. It was a very strong confrontation. He was still thinking of that when He entered into the boat. He warned the disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees and those of Herod. The disciples weren't seeing the greater things of life, just the mundane and immediate. They were worried about how much bread

they had with them. Since they had been talking about that, Jesus' analogy of the leaven that spreads throughout something and corrupts it, was lost on them. They took it personally about not having enough lunch. Jesus asked them to go deeper.

Is this about bread? No, it's about spiritual corruption and what will pervert the things of God in our lives. What was the factor that Jesus was pointing out to them that made the difference between seeing the major things and seeing the minor? Have you still hardened your hearts?

Hardness of heart makes us think of our own pettiness instead of the greater picture of the things of the Spirit. When people can only think of themselves and their own pettiness, it is because of the hardness of their hearts. They cannot let the things of God into their soul. They are too consumed with thoughts about themselves and what they want and need. Until they are healed in their wounds and choices, they will never let the things of God flow into others. Hardness of heart makes us hypersensitive to things about us and numb about the things of others.

This is something that we have to fight our whole lives. The disciples didn't get it quickly or easily. For evidence of that we will look further on.

Mark 16:12-14

And after these things, He was revealed in a different form to two of them walking and going into the country. And going, those reported to the rest; not even

did they believe those. Afterward, as they reclined, He was revealed to the Eleven. And He reproached their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him, having been raised.

After the crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples were again thinking of themselves. They had forgotten all the things that He had told them about how He would be raised. They could only think of how He was gone and they didn't know what they were to do. They were stuck thinking of themselves again. Were they trusting God or were they afraid and insecure?

Jesus shows up right in the middle of them and again freaks them out. It seems that He likes doing that. What did He have for them? A rebuke. About what? Their unbelief and hardness of heart.

It showed that they had closed off the things of the Spirit of God and were thinking of the things of the flesh. Hardness of heart will make you miss the things that God has for you. They had missed the beauty and excitement of the resurrection! They had been consumed in self worry and doubt. That is what hardness of heart will do to you; by focusing on your flesh, you will miss the beauty of what God has in store for you.

Now I am going to get into trouble. I am certain that there will be those who will read this and get angry. I must first preface what I am about to talk about with a little about my marriage and ministry.

My wife, Roxie, and I have been ministering

about marriage for many years. We were International Directors for a few years in Russia for Marriage Ministries International. We traveled all around the former Soviet Union teaching about marriage. We have been in the thick of controversial teaching for a long time and have had to come to a firm understanding about what the scripture teaches as opposed to what man wanted to teach concerning marriage. Whenever we taught about marriage we knew it was going to be an emotional response. Teaching the scripture wasn't good enough for most, the responses were too emotional. People wanted us to condone their behavior based on what they felt instead of what the scriptures said. They wanted us to give them scriptural basis for what they had already done and didn't want us to show them that they might have been wrong. Bringing them into repentance was really difficult and we lost some people. The good part is that we were able to bring many into the blessings that God wanted them to have. That being said, let's look at the scripture.

Matthew 19:3-9

And the Pharisees came near to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason? But answering, He said to them, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning "created them male and female"? And He said, "For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate. They said to Him, Why then did Moses com-

mand to “give a bill of divorce,” “and to put her away”? He said to them, In view of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, if not for fornication, and shall marry another, that one commits adultery. And the one who marries her who was put away commits adultery.

Jesus points out that God invented marriage and that they were one flesh and not to be separated. Period. Men wanted to be able to divorce their wives for any reason, just give them certificates of divorce, put them away and everything was hunky-dory. Jesus wasn't playing their game. He said that it wasn't that way from the beginning. And then He says something that fills my heart with terror.

They asked him why Moses gave them a certificate of divorce if it was so bad. He answered that it was because of their hardness of heart. That is tragic. Because of hardness of heart, they couldn't hear the heart of God. They only wanted what they wanted in the flesh and were very willing to forfeit the things of God to waste their lives any way they wanted. What a horrible indictment.

When I am dealing with a divorce situation I try to explain that the divorce is imminent because of hardness of heart. To me, that is deeply profound and to be avoided at all costs. What is the normal response? “Oh, OK. That is no big deal. I want a divorce.” We even have a hardened heart toward having a hard heart. It

doesn't seem to bother us anymore.

I push for the healing of the wounds and repenting of the choices and bring healing to the marriage. If I can get one of the spouses to want the things of the Spirit, I can see the whole marriage healed. But one of them has to want the healing and be willing to go through the self sacrifice to get things done.

What about the clause that Jesus spoke saying, "except for fornication"? In the Greek it is the word "fornication" and not the word for "adultery". Adultery is the specific sin of having sex with someone else while you are married. Because He didn't use that word, it means that if one of the spouses has adultery, it isn't means for a divorce. What it means is that if on the wedding night it is discovered that one of them isn't a virgin, then the marriage can be nullified for the sake of raising a pure seed. If something isn't said on that night, or at least in the morning, then they are married for life, no matter what.

What if there is adultery? That is a very bad thing, but it isn't the unforgivable sin. There is hope for the healing and cleansing of that in their lives. Let's do that and not get the divorce.

This isn't a book on marriage and it could turn that way very easily. The biggest thing I want understood is that hardness of heart will destroy all the good things we have. We must fight it to bring about the healing that God wants to do in our lives. I have seen it done the right way too many times for it not to be the focus in tough marriage situations. We believe God can heal bodies, but most of the time we don't believe that God

can heal a marriage. I believe.

Romans 2:4-5

Or do you despise the riches of His usefulness, and the forbearance and the long-suffering, not knowing that the usefulness of God leads you to repentance? But according to your hardness and your impenitent heart, do you treasure up to yourself wrath in a day of wrath, and revelation of a righteous judgment of God?

This passage is usually translated differently. The word “useful” here is right. Some translations use “kindness.” This literally means that finding out that God is the only one who can do something about sin makes us want to come to Him about our sin. It leads us to repentance. Repentance is the way God deals with sin. What would be the problem to that process? The heart.

It tells us here that there are two conditions of the heart that are enemies to repentance— hardness and impenitence. I don’t want to humble myself and I don’t want to bow to the way God wants things done. This shows that hardness of heart will keep us in the sin. We can’t be set free if we don’t want to be.

What is the outcome? Treasuring up wrath for a day of wrath. What? When we have a hard heart, we don’t deal with the junk in our lives. If we are impenitent, we won’t get rid of the sin in our lives. This kills the love of God that wants us to get rid of it. When we negate the grace and love of God, the only thing we have left

is the wrath. Which would be better to stand in front of God with, His grace and love or His wrath and justice? I would much rather have His grace and love.

It is amazing to me that we do this to ourselves. We can't blame God. He has done everything to bring us to Himself. The only one we can blame is ourselves. There isn't anything else left. Either we do what God wants us to do or we will be in the position of receiving whatever is left. I don't like the sound of that. Hardness of heart is a horrible condition. Have we figured that out yet?

Ephesians 4:18

Therefore, I say this, and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk even as also the rest of the nations walk, in the vanity of their mind, having been darkened in the intellect, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them because of the hardness of their heart.

This passage is straight forward and pulls no punches. What are the effects of a hard heart? Vain thinking (futile, empty thinking), darkened intellect, and alienation from the life of God. That doesn't sound good, does it?

I have seen this so many times and it never ceases to amaze me. I go to discuss something with an unbeliever or a believer in sin and they don't have much in the way of intellect to use. Some of the arguments that I have heard are silly and unfounded as if

that person can't seem to get their thoughts together. A hard heart keeps the mind of the Lord from working in us. If all we have left is our tiny, finite minds, then we are not dealing with a full deck.

I have long figured out that I don't need to figure it all out. I don't have to worship my intellect. I can trust God for things without having to completely understand it all. However, the good thing is that when my heart is soft and open to Him, my ability to understand is heightened. I have a much better ability to grasp things when I have no personal agenda and trust Him for things. And there is no pressure with it. I win.

Hebrews 3:7- 19

Because of this, even as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, There where your fathers tempted Me, testing Me, and saw My works forty years. Because of this, I was angry with that generation and said, they always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways; so I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest." Watch, brothers, lest perhaps there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in withdrawing from the living God. But exhort yourselves each day, as long as it is being called today, that not any of you be hardened by the deceit of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if truly we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the

end; as in the saying, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation." For hearing, some provoked Him, but not all those coming out of Egypt through Moses. But with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with the ones sinning, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did "He swear" "they would not enter into His rest," except to those not obeying? And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

What an amazing passage! God has put the responsibility of the hardness of our hearts on us. He calls us and tells us to not harden our hearts. The children of Israel did. During the time of testing to see if they would follow the Lord and actually go into the land, they chose to not trust God but their own understanding. They weren't obeying God, but instead they wanted to do what they wanted to do and ignore what God wanted. That is called hardness of heart.

Then came the waters of Meribah and they grumbled against God's ability to provide. Does this sound like you in any way? Do you resist the will of God? Do you grumble at the way He is providing for you? Are you more consumed with what you want than what the Lord wants? That is called a hard heart and you will not have the benefit of having His peace. You will not be able to enter into the rest that He wants for you. Too bad.

Then He tells us something of great importance. He tells us to watch in ourselves and in one another

for an evil heart of unbelief because it will cause us to withdraw from the Living God. When we do that we effectively stop the hand of God from working our lives. What is in our hearts? Are our hearts bringing in the power of the Holy Spirit or keeping Him out?

Then much more information is given about this subject. He tells us to exhort one another every single day that not any of us be hardened by the deceit of sin. That is the key to the whole thing. Sin is deceitful. When we want to do the sin instead of obey God, we deceive ourselves into thinking it will be good or fun, but it will kill us. Deception is deadly. No one deceives us like we deceive ourselves. To choose the sin means to automatically deceive ourselves.

It is both the wounds and the choices that we have to worry about. The wounds are the sins of others that deceive us. How we respond to them is how we deceive ourselves or receive the deception of others. Our wrong choices deceive us into thinking all sorts of wrong things. Sin will always deceive. That is its nature. Sin was born of deception in the Garden of Eden. The Lord God has continually been bringing in the truth to break the power of sin. Jesus came to undo the works of the evil one. He came to set us free from sin and the power it has over us.

When we receive the sin and choose it, we effectively keep God and His blessings and benefits from being in our lives. When we disobey Him, He has set in motion the law that keeps us from entering into His rest. This means that we will have to operate according to God's plan. Nothing else will work.

It doesn't matter who we are. Every person who has ever lived will be held accountable to God for what he or she has allowed in his or her life. None of us can blame anyone else. God has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness in the revelation knowledge of Jesus Christ. When we cancel all the grace and decide to sin, we stop the beauty God has wanted for us. We have no one to blame but ourselves. God doesn't even want us to condemn ourselves. He wants us to walk in complete forgiveness from the Throne. All He wants is for us to come to Him, trust Him for everything, enter into relationship with Him, let Him do the work in our lives and be obedient. We get all the benefits from God that way and the greatest of them is to enter into His rest. What could possibly beat that?

Hebrews 4:1-11

Therefore, let us fear lest perhaps a promise having been left to enter into His rest, that any of you may seem to come short. For, indeed, we have had the gospel preached to us, even as they also; but the Word did not profit those hearing it, not having been mixed with faith in the ones who heard. For we, the ones believing, enter into the rest, even as He said, "As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest", though the works had come into being from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken somewhere about the Seventh day this way, "And God rested from all His works in the seventh day." And in this again, "They shall not enter into My rest." Therefore, since it remains for some

to enter into it, and those who formerly had the gospel preached did not enter in on account of disobedience, He again marks out a certain day, saying in David, Today (after so long a time, according as He has said), "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua gave them rest, then He would not have afterwards spoken about another day. So, then, there remains a sabbath rest to the people of God. For he entering into His rest, he himself also rested from his works, as God had rested from His own. Therefore, let us exert ourselves to enter into that rest, that not anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.

Let us fear unless someone seem to come short of the promise of entering into His rest. The key to it is mixing the message with faith. We have to trust Him and build a relationship with Him. When we do that we will enter into the sabbath rest that God has promised us.

We don't have to work. We will enter into the rest like He did, not having to do any more work. I don't work for anything from God. It all comes by grace. He has accomplished everything. I come to Him helpless and with nothing to offer. He takes care of it all. But in my coming, I only have to obey. Obedience is everything. When I don't have to work for something I can be at rest. When I have to work for something I am always trying to make it and there is no rest. Rest is a lot better than no rest.

It is a sabbath rest for the people of God. It is a day when all work has been accomplished and there is nothing to do. How freeing that is! I have no work to do, but the work He tells me to do. I don't do it to be accepted. I am accepted and I love doing things for Him. The time I fall from that is when I am disobedient.

The thing that kills me is the hardness of my heart that keeps me from the grace of God. God has done the work. If my hard heart is keeping the Spirit out of my soul, then I am left with having to do it all for myself and that doesn't work. It has no peace with it, only turmoil. My hard heart makes me god. I am not a god worthy to be worshipped. I am a very lousy god. But when I am god, I have to do it all. As things fall apart in front of me and all around me, I can't keep up with it all. Disaster is the only forecast for that scenario.

I will wrap up this part with this verse out of Proverbs. It pretty much explains it all.

Proverbs 28:14

Blessed is a man who is in awe constantly! But he who hardens His heart falls into evil.

Chapter Eleven

Manipulating Death

Now the question becomes how do I make this more practical? How can I use this understanding of the heart to effectively make my life more victorious? Is this just theology or is it in some way practical?

I have found that theology has to be practical. What good does it do me to know things that don't really affect me? I asked the Lord a long time ago, "Please, make my theology practical." There has to be a practical application to what I believe and what I find in the scripture.

This understanding of Spirit, Soul, and Body has to be even more readily practical than anything I had previously encountered. The matter of the soul is very practical. I must be humbled, I must be able to lay down my soul and actually love others. I must be able to do something about the hardness of my heart. I have found that this teaching is of utmost practicality. It is actually simple. However, it isn't easy.

This chapter is about putting understanding into practice. I have to be able to deal with people in the middle of their accusations and during the heat of battle. Dealing with marriage issues all the time, I had to learn how to deal with a full blown argument. What do I do in the midst of the fight? How do I tell a wife to respond in the middle of being verbally assaulted? What can be

done as a person is receiving verbal abuse?

That question is very emotional and real for many, many people. What the Lord has shown me is vastly effective and works every time. Sound too good to be true? What you need to know is that even though it works effectively 100% of the time, it isn't easy and is, in fact, quite difficult. The difficulty lies in our selfishness and the way we have been taught by society to respond. If we can retrain ourselves to respond differently, we will be able to change the way difficulty affects us and the way we can affect others.

The first thing we need to know is the principle that God has initiated. If we first understand the principles at work, then we can know how to operate. I was amazed when I found this passage. It opened up so much and made things clear as to why things happened in my life and the lives of others.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

So says Jehovah, Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and who makes flesh his arm, and who turns aside his heart from Jehovah. For he shall be like a juniper in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall live in parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land that is not inhabited.

Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah, and Jehovah is his refuge. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters. It sends out its roots by the stream, and it will not fear when the heat comes; but its foliage will be green; and it is not anxious in the year of drought, nor will it

cease from yielding fruit.

Who is talking here? Jehovah, God of the universe. He has established a firm principle, a law of function if you will. This law will work every time in the same way under the same conditions. This law has been functioning in our lives even though we didn't know it was there or how it worked. Just like the law of gravity doesn't need to be understood for it to be in effect, the same applies here with this law. It is always working.

Every time someone trusts in himself, he walks into the curse. We curse the things we do, and the relationships we are in, because we don't trust in Jehovah. When we turn our hearts away from Jehovah we effectively curse everything. This is a principle from God Himself. Trusting in oneself is deadly. It never works. It has never worked. Every time we have done it, it has turned out to have eternal consequences that aren't very good.

It says that someone who does that is like a juniper, or a bush, in the desert that can't even see when good comes. How many times have you not seen the good that is around you? When we are consumed in our problems and are only trusting in ourselves to deal with it, we put ourselves in the position of not even being able to see when good comes. We become self focused and that is all we are concerned about. What about me? What about my problems? When will someone help me?

This passage also tells us that the person who trusts in himself is living in a parched place in the wilder-

ness, in a salt land that is not inhabited. That doesn't sound very inviting. If we are living in a land that isn't inhabited, that makes us pretty lonely. Can't you see the scenario? If everyone is trusting in themselves, then they are all living alone, focused on themselves and totally alone. Alone in a crowd, we are surrounded by a sea of people who are also consumed in their own problems and just as lonely. How does it feel in the middle of an argument? Alone? No one is listening? I can't get the point over?

It feels just as lonely after the fight. The ones you should be wanting to be around are the very people that don't want to be with you. How does it feel? Feel like you've been cursed? You have. Others aren't responsible for your being cursed. You are. You brought it on by trusting in yourself. The solution? The Lord wants to be involved in your life and He wants you to trust Him.

The principle works toward the good just like it works toward the bad. When you trust in the Lord, you are blessed. Your trusting God blesses the whole affair just like trusting in yourself curses the whole affair.

God made the law of trust work for you. If you will trust Him and make Him your refuge, then you are a blessed person. The benefits of being a blessed person are huge and beyond calculation.

The blessed person is like a tree planted by the waters. That tree has no worries. Let the heat come (and it will). No problem. No fear. The leaves are always green showing that it is alive and well. The root is deep and well nourished. That tree won't be anxious even in a prolonged drought. That tree will always bear

fruit for the owner.

Remember it is planted by the stream. This is no accident. The owner knows where to plant the tree so that it is highly benefited and functional. The owner knows how to produce the right fruit through the tree. That is just like the Lord, who knows how to make things functional in our lives. The key is that we will have to trust Him and not ourselves. Like I said, it is simple, but not easy.

When I found this passage it opened my eyes to how things have been in my life. I didn't trust Him. I tried to do everything for myself. Now it was time to examine things. It wasn't pretty. I was a person eaten up by fear, I couldn't see when good was right there. I was extremely alone. No one understood me and no one listened. The message from the Lord? Trust Me in everything. What a difference it made in my life.

Just learning that principle made a huge difference in my life. But I wasn't seeing the victories in my personal battles with people. I was missing something. What a phenomenal ride the Lord had for me to show me freedom.

Hebrews 2:14-15

Since, then, the children have partaken of flesh and blood, in like manner He Himself also shared the same things, that through death He might cause to cease the one having the power of death, that is, the devil; and might set these free, as many as by fear of death were subject to slavery through all the lifetime to live.

Has it ever bothered you trying to understand how the devil works? This passage tells us that the devil has the power of death. Does that mean he can kill us anytime he wants to? No, praise God! He can't kill anyone without permission. It didn't say he could kill people, it said he had the power of death. There is a grand difference.

The key to that is in the next verse when it says that the people that he is working on have a fear of death. As long as someone has a fear of death, the devil can manipulate that fear and keep that person in slavery his whole life. Am I afraid to die? Maybe. It isn't necessarily talking about physical death however. There are many ways death can affect my life and keep me under the hand of bondage. There is social death. When I won't do what the Lord wants me to do because I am afraid of what others will think of me, I am afraid of dying socially. Ouch. What a bondage! When I have that fear, the devil keeps me off balance so much that I can't obey what the Lord wants me to do. Perhaps it is in the area of witnessing. The same thing works in teaching Sunday School, prophesying, preaching, just about anything where I won't do something because I am afraid of what people will say.

How about familial death? I won't do anything that goes against what my family believes because I will be cast out. I have a fear of the family's power over me. Academic death? I won't promote that I am a Christian in the academic world because they know that Christians can't think correctly and are mentally damaged or they wouldn't be a Christian.

Just about any fear we have is a fear of some kind of death. Physical death is a big one, but most of the time is unreasonable. I know people who are afraid they will die from cancer. What do you suppose is actually happening to them right now? They are dying of cancer. Fear is a negative faith in the wrong things. What a trap! What a bondage!

This isn't God's will or plan for us. This verse tells us that Jesus became a man and died so that He could take away the devil's power of the fear of death. 1 John 3:8 says that the reason the Son of God was revealed, was that He might undo the works of the devil. This is the biggest way to take away the power of the fear of death.

Why am I afraid? I don't have a relationship with the Lord in such a way as to trust Him. It always comes down to this issue. Do I trust Him? The question comes to mind: Do I know His love for me? In the areas where I don't know His love for me, I don't trust Him. If I don't trust Him, I will try to take care of myself. Now I am very afraid. Experience tells me that I haven't been able to trust myself in most areas. The evidence is that I have cursed things when I trusted in myself. That makes me fearful.

1 John 4:18 says there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has punishment; the one fearing has not been perfected in love. When I know He loves me, I can trust Him. When I trust Him, I have no fear and the enemy can't use the power of death on me. The issue is trust, and love. Do I know His love for me so much that I am not trying to get love

from others? That is the main problem.

Let's say I am walking along in life, minding my own business (as if that is really true with any of us). Along comes someone accusing me. It doesn't even matter if it is true or not, the accusations come. What is the natural response? Defend myself! Throw up the shields! Don't let anyone shoot the flaming arrows of death at me. I have to protect myself. If I don't take care of number one, who will? We have heard that statement so often. The problem with that statement is that in the natural it is totally true. No one really cares for my situation but me.

But what really happens when I do that? I throw my "I take care of me" shield up and immediately curse the situation. Cursed is Lee who trusts in Lee and turns his heart away from Jehovah. Something interesting to note here is that the shields aren't like the ones on the battlefield where I only shield myself from that one direction, it is more like the Star Trek shields that are all around me. When I am under attack, I retreat into my shield and no one can get in, not even God. I am my refuge.

This is a pretty lonely place to be, but it is a familiar place. I have cursed myself and there isn't much help for me in this situation. It is so normal and something that everyone does, so it feels right to do it. However, it is against the way God works. And it doesn't work. I'll show you why. Trusting in the flesh is death. The way of thinking of the flesh is death. When someone shoots arrows of death at me, I defend myself with trusting the flesh, and that is death. Death isn't stopping death very well. I have actually helped the people who are shoot-

ing at me by helping them bring death into my life. It doesn't seem to be working well for me.

In any argument or fight, two people, both defending themselves and trusting themselves are throwing arrows of death at the other one. Who wins? Neither one. The outcome is death no matter what. No wonder it hasn't worked very well for us. Both people get hurt by what is said and the image we have promoted in the other one is damaging at best. The thing that is dying is the relationship. Everyone loses. In a marriage with strife, the kids really lose.

Death cannot stop death, it can only add to it. The death I am promoting cannot stop the death someone is shooting at me. Since I have fear of death, I defend myself. My fear of death causes more death to happen. The enemy knows how to win by using the power of death in my life. All he has to do is get me defending myself and the whole scenario falls apart. He doesn't even have to be there the whole time, just get things moving and let them happen naturally. Actually, the enemy has very little to do with it, the flesh is fully capable of destruction on its own. We usually give the enemy way too much credit for things that he had little part in.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. The Lord has a much better way.

Here I am walking along in life and someone shows up to accuse me like he did before. What should I do now instead of defending myself? What happens when someone doesn't defend himself? He gets shot. That is your plan, Lee? Just go ahead and get shot? Yes! But that isn't all of it.

What is the one thing that the Father has been trying to do to me from the beginning? Kill me. He has wanted me to die to my flesh by crucifying it like it says in Galatians 5:24. He has been wanting me to die to myself all along. Ever since I have been born again, I have been going through a process that is working very diligently on dying to myself. But there is a difference in how this happens. It isn't just me dying that is the goal, it is me uniting with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. Instead of me trusting in me to defend myself, I have to learn to trust Him in taking care of me.

In essence, I am allowing the arrows of death to come in and kill me. I must die socially so I can be free to obey Him in everything. I must die familially so I can receive His love for my family and therefore have the power to actually bring them life. All of those forms of death are actually good for me. I will stop trusting myself and cursing myself. I will actually start trusting Him for everything and therefore put myself in the blessing.

When the arrows come, I must turn to Him and have faith. I take the arrows of death and let them pass through me to Him. It helps me die to myself and to trust Him for the outcome. When someone accuses me, I have to trust the Lord for my vindication. I bring the arrow of death to Him and then I can see what He wants to do with it. I am dead to me and alive to Him.

Then it doesn't matter what they are saying. It doesn't bother me. If they are speaking the wrong things to my identity, I take them to the Lord and He speaks the truth to my identity. I don't receive what they are saying personally and that takes all the sting out of their words.

They actually have no way of hurting me anymore. Since I am dead, it isn't about me. It is about the relationship and how I can help them. It is about me laying down my soul in the heat of battle and receiving the love of the Father for them, being more concerned with their pain than being right.

When that happens, I am walking in the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit is life and peace. I have peace in the situation and I have life to sustain me. I am shielded by faith in Him. That is the shield of faith by which I can quench the fiery arrows of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16).

What is the outcome of the death of Jesus? It didn't stop there. He went on to burial and it didn't stop there. It went to the resurrection and that finalized everything. When I die and crucify my flesh in the heat of battle, what kind of outcome can I expect? Resurrection power! The power of Jesus in resurrection is available for me to bring to the person who is accusing me. It isn't about me, it is about bringing the power of life to another.

The scripture is alive with this thought. Look at these passages and see that the theme of dying to myself has been the very forethought of the principles in the Word.

2 Corinthians 1:9

But we ourselves have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust on ourselves, but on God, the One raising the dead.

We must be dead to our own dependency on ourselves. We must be dependent on God and Him alone. When we are dead to ourselves we are in a position of not having to defend ourselves. We are already dead. The whole idea is to trust in God. When we trust in ourselves we curse ourselves. No wonder it never works to defend ourselves. When we trust completely in the Lord we bless the situation. When we don't defend ourselves, but trust in God, we have the power of the resurrection working in our lives. This is confirmation of dying to ourselves.

2 Corinthians 4:10-12

(We are) always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus in the body, that also the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body. For we who live are always being delivered up to death on account of Jesus, that also the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh; so that death indeed works in us, and life in you.

Dying to self on a regular basis is the key to living the full Christian life. Always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus is a serious thing. Everything delivered up to death, on account of Jesus, brings about the life of Jesus in that situation. We have not seen the life of God being accomplished because we have been unwilling to die to self continually. If we were to do that, we would exhibit the life of God for all those who are in contact with us. When death works in me, it produces life in others around me. Why would I be afraid to die to self? The outcome is amazing.

John 12:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, If the grain of wheat that falls into the earth does not die, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

This passage really bears out what is said in Jeremiah 17. If a grain of wheat doesn't die, it is alone, just like the juniper in the desert that is inhabiting an uninhabitable land. But if it dies, it bears much fruit, just like the tree planted by the water. If I don't die to me, I kill the whole purpose of my life. God can't fulfill my destiny if my destiny is in my hands. I have to die to me to let that happen. This is especially true as I touch the lives of others.

And last, but not least, is the verse that says it all most succinctly. It is too simple, I guess, but deeply profound. Sometimes the Lord has to be this blunt with me.

1 Corinthians 15:36

Foolish one! What you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

All this time we have been doing in the natural what we've been taught. Take care of number one. Survive. Blast others when they come against you. Stand up for yourself. Don't let anyone say anything against you. But all that advice has done nothing but keep us alive and ineffective.

God has a different plan. Die. Trust Him to take care of you. Take care of the Lord's business, not your own. Forgive others and bring life to them. Do not blast them. Be humble. Don't worry about what others say; they really don't have the power to speak into your identity. What does the Lord say? Bring the power of the resurrection to bear in the lives of those around you. What a concept!

Chapter Twelve

Bringing Healing to the Heart

It is one thing to examine and understand how the heart works, but it is something else altogether to bring healing to that heart. Healing is something that only the Father God can really do. It comes from having a relationship with Him. We must actually submit to the process to gain the help.

I understand that many have been helped by doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and the like, who are trained in helping folks. There is a big difference in being treated and being healed. What Jesus did was healing. He is still in that business. How do we deal with the wounds and choices that have gummed up our hearts so that the things of the Spirit can't manifest in our souls?

As a pastor, I have done so much counseling that it boggles the mind. I was trained in many different methods and teachings. I knew the problems, but I didn't seem to be able to get people to do what they needed to do to get free. I counseled over and over about the same things and there weren't many victories. I searched the scripture for answers and gained much freedom in my own life, but it didn't seem to be something others could apply for freedom. I would teach them, exhort them, and show them things, yet very little effectiveness was being accomplished. I became very frustrated.

I started to develop teachings and ways of ministering to groups of people. I gained insight into the scripture and how to minister it to people, but I still wasn't seeing the effectiveness that I knew was possible. I would hold people accountable for what I taught them and keep hammering it in. I was seeing people grow in their personal relationships with the Lord and many were experiencing freedom, but when someone came to me for one-on-one counseling, I couldn't seem to translate my success.

Then one day as an associate pastor in Colorado, the senior pastor forced us to come to a new training. He wasn't even using this method yet, but saw the benefit of it from another ministry. It was only on a video with no one there to answer any questions. I sat through this training and it really made sense to me. I was very excited to try it out. They gave us no demonstration nor did we experience this being worked on us. We were just told to go out and use it. Out of about 30 people in that room, only around 4 of us started using it. I jumped in feeling like I had been thrown to the wolves, but the result was stunning. I had watched God show up and actually bring healing to a man, not once, but four times in about an hour. The results continued and have never stopped. I was hooked.

However, I was very interested in how it worked on a deeper level. As I studied the heart and how it works, I saw exactly how to bring healing to someone. As I used these principles, I saw astounding things happening on a regular basis. Pretty soon I was keeping busy doing one-on-one ministry and the healings were continually happening. The best part was that I didn't have to know everything. All I had to do was really listen

to the voice of the Lord and let Him speak to them. How fascinating!

The ministry we started with is called Theophostic Ministry. It is a ministry based out of Kentucky and has many places that teach the principles and use them in ministry. The thing that struck me most was how completely Christ Centered it is. It isn't based on the counselor and how much he knows, but on Jesus and what He wants to do and say. Therefore, the freedom comes from Christ and not the counselor. That was major in setting me free in my ministry.

The basics are simple. Everything in our lives that is outside of how we are supposed to be acting and reacting is there for a reason. We have seen that on the chart about the heart (figure 7, page 94). We have had things done to us that have wounded us. In those times we believe things that aren't necessarily true. We believe lies, and anything we believe as true will be true to us. We can try to understand it, but no matter how much we try to get a grip on it with our minds, we still act like we believe it. We try with our minds to deal with our emotions and the emotional messages we have received. It doesn't work.

For example let's say a kid's parents are getting a divorce. That is trauma in a kid's life. He does everything he can do to keep it from happening and to no avail. The family is broken up and he is left without a father for the rest of his life. You can ask him how that feels and he will tell you that it just feels like it is his fault, he should have been able to do something. You can tell him all day long that it wasn't his fault and even in his mind he can get the concept that it wasn't his fault. But

inside of him he will always believe it was his fault and everything that triggers that feeling will bring him right back there. That is a wound that is affecting his life and how he relates to other people.

Trying to convince him that it isn't his fault will be a futile attempt. You can't bring cognitive truth to him when the problem is in his emotions. How he feels is as effective in his life as what he thinks. Even his mind will be divided on the issue. When he feels like it is his fault he will even try to make it true by how he starts thinking in his private thought life. He knows the outer truth when you ask him, but on the inside he knows it was his fault. How do you heal a deeply imbedded lie that affects a person's life and self image? You don't. Only God can heal a man.

Only Jesus knows where the lie is embedded. Our analysis can dig around, but Jesus knows exactly where it is and what is needed to bring him healing. So we ask Him. Jesus shows him a memory of the divorce and when he first decided that it was his fault. As he sees that memory we ask the Lord to speak to what is being thought. Jesus speaks truth to the lie and the lie is dispelled. All He has to say to him is, "It wasn't your fault" and the lie disappears. I could say to him all day the same thing, and it would be truth, but it wasn't being spoken by The Truth Himself. When The Truth speaks, lies must leave.

We then ask our friend how he feels about it now. He will examine it and testify that all the guilt he was feeling is gone. All he can feel now is peace about the situation and the pressure he was feeling is gone. Wow.

That area that had been in his heart and was

blocking the things of the Spirit is now gone. That allows the Holy Spirit to move in that area now and another part of his soul is experiencing the salvation of his spirit.

This really seems simplistic, but it is reality. Why should it be complicated? The problem has always been us trying to do things in our flesh and not allowing God to do it. The basic principles are very simple. Let Jesus show us where problems are and then let Jesus speak to the problem and bring healing. It doesn't get any more simple, nor anymore effective. The things we have seen using these principles are nothing short of miraculous. There isn't anything that the Lord can't heal in this way except when someone doesn't want the healing. We are the only ones that can stop the process. Jesus won't heal us without our permission.

The biggest problem I have had in this ministry is getting people to want to be healed. If they don't want it, they don't get it. Much fear is exposed when people are thinking of digging around in their past and letting God expose them to the areas in greatest need of healing. Many times it is an area of great pain that they have stuffed away so that they don't have to deal with it and think it is dealt with. The problem with this is that the mental container they are stuffing it in leaks. All sorts of things are manifesting and making them react in ways they don't understand. They don't know where it is coming from. They will have to actually pull the tops of their containers and deal with the things they have stuffed in there over the years. Cleaning them out is the only way to deal with them.

The pain they will experience as they are digging around in their container is real. However, it is something

they won't remember as pain after the healing happens. It is only during the process that they will have to revisit it. How do they know it is in there? It shows up in everyday life.

Let's say a couple is talking and all the wife says is, "Why can't I get you to finish cleaning the gutters?" That is a simple, basic question. That isn't what he hears. He hears, "Why are you so inadequate and hopeless? You never can get anything right. You will never amount to anything." What he is hearing is all the times he has heard that in his childhood and has received it as a lie to his identity. Her question just triggered all those feelings he thought he stuffed away. When he blows up and gets all mad and says things he wishes he hadn't said, she is wondering what happened. "All I said was a simple sentence and he flies off the handle." So she says that to him. What does he hear? "See, you can't even handle a simple conversation. What is wrong with you?"

Their problem isn't learning to handle simple conversation, it is getting him healed from the wounds and choices in his heart that he has been needing to deal with for a long time. When he responds wrong, it probably triggers enough stuff in her that she hasn't dealt with and the vicious cycle just continues. She needs healing just as much as he does. It is always a heart issue.

This answers so many of the questions of why we respond the way we do. Why do people get so upset when something so small and insignificant happens? Something has been triggered and it usually doesn't have very much to do with the little things that happen

as much as it does with what is in our hearts that hasn't been dealt with. This gets to be very interesting when we start examining the things that make us react. What are we protecting? What pain are we feeling that we don't even realize anymore? What are we doing just because we are trying to prove something that was spoken against us so many years ago?

There is no way that I am going to be able to train people in this method by reading this book. The Theophostic Ministry provides training and qualified ministers all over the United States to help people in this way. What I am trying to accomplish is the understanding of how we work and what we can do to walk a full Christian walk in the Lord. There is help available for heart issues that need to be healed. We must first understand that we have wounds and choices that have messed us up for a long time. We haven't been able to get rid of these things before and feel completely stuck in the process. We try and try and fail in a repeated cycle of defeat. Why? We didn't understand how to walk away from it and how to gain the healing that the Lord has made for us.

When I talk to people, I hear their pain and the lies they have believed. It is so wonderful to be able to ask them if they want to get rid of these things in their lives. If they do, then help is readily available for them. We can do this right now. I have seen some extremely deep miracles happen in front of people as God sets people free from years of bondage in a matter of minutes as people submit to the process. People are set free in restaurants, in the car going some place, watching kids play sports, across kitchen tables, indoors, outdoors, anywhere the Lord is, people can be set free.

The first time I tried this method was totally experimental. I had seen the videos, but no one demonstrated it or showed us how to do it. The pastor just threw us out there on our own and said to do it. A man came to me and wanted help in a situation at home. I decided to just jump in and see if God wanted to work. I asked the guy a few questions and we were in the thick of things. We saw God completely heal four major areas of his life in about an hour. It was amazing. I was hooked. He had changed right in front of my eyes and has stayed that way for the past 5 years. God knew what was needed and showed us everything we needed to do. That was the end of it.

Since then we have seen several areas in our ministry that needed to be concentrated on and there wasn't much teaching or support in those areas. The only thing I knew to do was to work with it and gain an experiential base that functioned, and then train my people about them. This has been an exciting journey for both me and the people under me. The folks that really like it are the people who have been set free because of it. We are now ministering very comprehensively using the tools that God has shown us.

Areas of focus

The areas we have found that need to be examined in people's hearts to gain freedom are separate and connected all at the same time. There is no formula about which area goes first and how each is ministered. Every person is different. Each person requires that we minister as if he were the only one we had ever ministered to. We strongly resist the temptation to diagnose

people. We let the Lord do that. He shows us things and we obey what He wants to do with them. We facilitate an encounter between the person who comes to us for help and the Lord Jesus Christ. One guy described it as “interactive prayer”.

The first area is the pain and the lies they have believed. This is the basic Theophostic understanding. Basic Theophostic training, however, doesn't emphasize certain things that we have found to be highly important and not to be dismissed. We have developed a teaching or training that shows the other areas we see as important. I will explain these areas later in this chapter

These areas are crucial because of the way they work. There are certain laws of physics that govern our lives in the physical realm. There are certain laws of physics that govern the spiritual realm also. Learning about them is crucial because they affect the very fiber of our lives here as we walk in either the spirit or the flesh. As we study the implications of the spirit realm in our lives, we find that the principles of the scriptures are vastly important, and the physics that are employed work whether we understand them or not. Just like the law of gravity works whether we understand it or not, the principles and laws of the spirit realm always work. The beauty is that the Lord wants us to know these things and has taught us in the Bible how they function.

As we have studied the Word of God we have found certain things that will always work no matter what. When we violate those laws, the consequences are right there, in effect, and have caused us great damage. The good news is that all of them are governed by the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we bring them to

Him, He can reverse things, heal things, change things and make us who He calls us to be. We just have to submit to the process.

Forgiveness

One of the strongest areas of the heart is forgiveness. It is probably the most emotional. As we have seen on the chart, the things that harden our hearts are wounds and choices. The wounds are very important. How we respond to the things others have done to us has determined the quality of life we have now. Unless we deal with those things, we will harden our heart and keep the things of the Lord from benefiting us. It is also the main reason people don't want to get healed. They are afraid to look at the hurt again, or think that forgiving those people lets them get away with it. Isn't anyone going to help me make them pay for what they did to me?

There are several problems with that way of thinking. The first is that we are trusting in ourselves to protect ourselves. When we do that, we bring curses upon ourselves even greater than the hurt that others have done to us. We have to put our trust in the Lord for the blessing to flow. Remember Jeremiah 17:5-8? When we trust in the flesh we curse ourselves. When we trust in the Lord we see the blessing happen. When we trust ourselves to make sure people pay, or to protect ourselves, we are trusting in the flesh. We need to let that go.

The second problem is that as long as we have these judgments against someone, we are stopping God from moving in their lives the way He wants. He tells

us to leave room for His vengeance so He can repay (Romans 12:19). He wants to work in their lives and bring them to the point where they can do nothing but respond to Him. We must give them over to the Lord so He can work on them.

The third problem is that as long as we haven't forgiven people, they are still hurting us, without having to do anything. We keep the wound fresh and raw by revisiting it and looking at it all the time. The person who hurt us owns us and is continually damaging us. I often ask the question to people, "Aren't you tired of them owning you yet?" Forgiveness helps us get free from people and their hurt toward us. God knew we couldn't survive under that kind of pressure, so He gave us forgiveness to set us free from the pain and hurt from others.

The fourth thing is that when we judge someone as worthy of a sentence of condemnation from our court, we bring that sentence of death back on ourselves. The Bible very strongly tells us not to judge others, for the judgment we judge them with is the judgment we judge ourselves with (Luke 6:37 and Romans 2:1-3). We do ourselves such great damage by what we condemn in others and not forgive. We judge ourselves with the judgment on others and we call down on ourselves the condemnation we call upon others out of our hurt. God doesn't want that for our lives, so He has set the principles in place that if we will but forgive, we can be totally free from the damage from others.

The next, and probably the strongest reason to forgive others, is that we can't be forgiven until we learn to forgive. If we don't forgive, we negate the forgiving-

ness of God in our own lives. How can we come to God for forgiveness and not want to give it to others? In Matthew 18:21-35 the principle is very clear. If we don't forgive others their debts they owe us, the Father won't forgive us the debt we owe Him. That is a deep revelation.

The method we use to bring people to their healing in this area is to take them into the courtrooms of their minds. They have already judged people and this is the place where the judgment came from. We have them place themselves behind the bench as the judge. This is the position they have occupied when they judged others, and it is where their authority will be used for freedom. We ask them to call the offender to the bench. Once they see themselves in the place of judgment, over the person who hurt them, we can continue with the healing.

We list the offenses they have against this person. What have they done to them? We write them all down. We keep going until they feel that they have covered it all. Sometimes the list is very long and sometimes it is quite short and to the point. When the list is complete, we can go on.

We ask them if Jesus is in the courtroom. They will look about in their minds for Him and usually find Him in the back. We ask them to call Jesus to the bench. When He comes to the bench, we have them tell the Lord that they have these charges against this person. Then we have them do something of great importance. We have them ask Jesus how He sees this offender through His eyes. This lets us see the offender in the truth and not according to the filter we have been see-

ing them through. We place ourselves in the position of having the Lord take away our animosity toward the offender.

Once they see this person the way the Lord sees him, we have them turn back to the offender and tell him, "This court is illegal. I don't have the authority to judge you. Therefore, I am turning you over to a higher court that has true authority. I am turning you over to the court of Jesus Christ. To do so, I must drop all charges against you. Therefore, I forgive you for..." They go through the entire list of offenses pronouncing forgiveness for each offense. When they are finished, they pronounce that the offender is totally forgiven for all charges and is released from this court. They then turn this person over to Jesus Christ for His determination. The same authority in their lives that judged this person is the authority they use to set them free. When that happens, the hold the offender had on them is gone and they are released.

This is very powerful and it allows people to see the people who hurt them the way Jesus sees them, and to turn over their hurt to Jesus for healing. It works amazingly well. When they see the offender the way the Lord sees them, they will start to have the same emotions for them that the Lord has. They will be laying down their souls for that person (chapter 6, page 73) and that is called greater love (John 15:13). It is a great blessing to watch God work in someone's heart so powerfully that a person goes from hating someone to loving him in a very short time.

If people are willing to humble themselves and go through the process of forgiveness, they will see

freedom in a way they never thought possible. Going to the courtroom is a method that we have used to bring people to the point where they confront their judgments and how they have acted like God over people. Humbling themselves makes them put their trust in the Lord God and not in themselves. That takes away the curse in the situation. There is no downside to this except the death of our flesh, which feels like a downside, but actually is the place where the Lord wants us to go for maturity.

There is nothing that has happened to us that we can't forgive. We must forgive in order to be free from the damage and to gain freedom in other areas of our lives. Forgiveness is a mandatory force in our lives if we want true freedom. I pray that you get the revelation of that truth and will come to the Lord for that freedom. It isn't easy. It is painful. It is emotionally traumatic. It doesn't feel good at the beginning. However, the great value that we get from it makes it all worth while.

Repentance

As you can see in figure 7 on page 94, it isn't just the wounds that make our hearts hard, but also our choices. It isn't just what others do to me that damages me, but the things I have done. My choices have hurt me in ways others couldn't think about hurting me.

Repentance is a tough subject. As soon as people hear that word they get images in their heads of wild-eyed, freaked out prophets in old robes with long beards and straggly hair screaming at people that the end is near. It seems that people really don't know what repentance involves and how it works.

Repentance is really quite simple. It is a method that God has given us so that we can come to Him and get our sins taken care of. We all have done things that we know weren't right. We have broken God's laws and commands. We have done things to others that we know we shouldn't have done. Those actions are called sins. No one can deal with sins except the Father God. If we aren't willing to humble ourselves and come to Him, we carry the consequences of those sins in our lives. The weight of those sins will crush us eventually, and the emotional damage is horrible. Guilt is a constant companion for just about everyone. There is only one way to deal with it.

There is so much we could cover about true repentance and how sin affects the life. It could be a book in and of itself. This book, however, is about the heart and soul and how to get healing. It will have to suffice to just state that the sins of our lives are effectively destroying us and our families. If not dealt with, the damage is permanent with eternal implications. We not only hurt ourselves but those around us, whether we want to or not. Our families suffer because neither parent nor children know how to get rid of the sins and every one of them is trying to justify their actions and pass blame. All we have to do is look around with eyes open to the truth to see that this hasn't worked, nor will it ever work.

When I minister to someone who is hurting, one of the greatest areas that I examine, as the Lord shows us memories, is when that person has acted outside of God's way of doing things. Sometimes it is in response to the pain he has experienced and sometimes it is just

a choice he has made. No matter the reason, it is still causing damage and must be cleaned out.

As a person goes through their courtroom concerning someone, there is still one piece of business that is usually not completed. He must repent for judging the person he has just forgiven. Just the fact that he has acted as judge over that person is proof enough that he needs to do this. Even if the person he has judged is himself, he still needs to repent because it is an illegal court and he doesn't have the authority to judge.

Taking people through repentance is not a complex thing. It is usually pretty simple, but it isn't easy for them. It requires humbling. Just like during forgiveness, humbling ourselves is the key. We can't come to God arrogantly to receive forgiveness of our sins. We can't come trying to justify our actions or impute blame. We can only come as those who are truly guilty of committing these transgressions. We have to actually admit our wrongs. That isn't easy if we are filled with pride.

The process I take people through is quite simple, but none of the parts can be left out. Most Christians think they have a good grip on how to repent, but when examined, they still feel guilty and the sin is still hanging in their lives. There is a reason for that. Let's get to the process.

I first examine practically the memories as they told them. After the Lord has brought truth to their lies, and healing to the hurt in those memories, I point out certain things that stick out in their narrative. If someone has done something to them that has caused the pain, there is usually a judgment made against that person.

I take them through the courtroom to give that person forgiveness. I also have to help them see that they have made the judgment and must repent for it.

As the Lord is in the memory, bringing healing, I have them admit to the Lord that they have done this wrong (whatever it is). They must admit their participation and they must know that it is a sin. They usually see it readily. Then I have them approach the Lord and say to Him, "Lord I did this sin (by name) and I know it was wrong. I don't want it in my life any longer. Would You please forgive me?"

This is the crucial point in the process and the reason why most Christians haven't experienced the freedom. I don't let them go on talking. They must stop and hear from the Lord if He forgave them or not. Just assuming He has isn't enough. Too many Christians I know have gone through a certain process of asking for forgiveness, but haven't stopped long enough to hear the forgiveness given. The rest of their lives they think they have repented but don't feel forgiven. The sin is actively remaining in their lives and keeping them guilty.

I stop people right there. What did He say? So many look at me so strangely. "What?" "What did He say to you? Are you forgiven?" "Well, I think so". "Just ask Him. Lord do you forgive me? Then wait for the answer". Then we have a unique experience in their lives. They hear the forgiveness pronounced over them. The guilt is totally relieved. They not only know they are forgiven, but they feel the release. The joy is amazing to watch.

If people are willing to humble themselves in this

way, they will experience the forgiveness of God in a personal, and deeply effective, way.

The only time I have seen that the Lord hasn't given the forgiveness immediately is when one of the people I am working with knows how to be free and obstinately chooses to sin again. The Lord doesn't give him or her the freedom until he or she is truly ready to get rid of the sin, and not use it as an idol or make provision for the flesh to be able to sin in the future. When a person is truly willing to get rid of the sin, then God totally relieves it. We can't play games with God. He really knows what is happening in our hearts. If we are in this only for a temporary band-aid so we can go on and live any way we want, it isn't going to work. God wants us free more than we do. He isn't a magic box; He is a person who knows everything. When we are serious, so is He. And He follows through on His word.

Blessings and the Curse

Freedom from curses is the last area that we have found to be very real and necessary to address so that people can walk in freedom.

I love saying this to people just to see their reactions. Modern people living in the United States of America don't truly believe in curses. We are, after all, modern and up to date with great technological advances. We don't believe in all that archaic mumbo-jumbo. We are enlightened! Yeah, right.

So often the Lord takes people into their memories of the womb. What memory can they have that they will be able to deal with? What is the problem? Usually

it is because they are living with a curse of the generations. They have had things passed down to them from their fathers or mothers and sometimes through several generations. They have tendencies to do certain things or be prone to their effects. Children of abused parents tend to abuse or be abused. Alcoholics tend to beget alcoholics. I was a victim of a father who had an addiction to pornography and gave it to me. I had a predilection for porn and sexuality. I see it in people all the time.

This is another area in which more books need to be written. Our culture isn't one to bless, but we are one to curse. I started teaching on the blessing and it was amazing the things that came up in people's lives. They were all waiting for someone to bless them and each one knew the effects of the curse in practicality.

Hoping not to shortchange the subject here, we will give the practical process of ministering about the curses and the blessings.

I ask people to give me their last names (or in the case of a married woman, her maiden name) and the maiden names of their mothers. Then I list any other major families that they have had in their lives, if they were adopted, or the families they were under as step children. Then I list the name (or maiden name) of their spouse with the mother's maiden name. Everyone is totally under the influence of both their fathers' and their mothers' families. When they get married, they enter into a covenant and they get everything the spouse has, including debt, problems and curses. I list every marriage they have had, each family name and mother's maiden name. Sometimes I have a very long list, as

they might have been married several times, and might have been under several step parents.

I then write down the name they go by. Let's make an example. Let's say Bill came to me and we see the effects of the curse in his life. I write down Bill's last name, Smith, and his mother's maiden name, Johnson. I write down Bill's wife's maiden name, Jones, and her mother's maiden name, Farquarkinski. I have a list of the families that have had influence on Bill. I write down "Bill" under them.

I draw a bracket on the side of the list of names and another bracket on the side of Bill. I ask Bill a very important question, "Bill, are you born again?" That is a sneaky question. I don't ask if he is a Christian and I don't ask if he is saved. I ask if he is born again. Why? Because if he is born again, he is born into a different family. He has died to his old man and is alive in the family of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If Bill says he is born again, I put a triangle beside the bracket by the name Bill.

Beside the bracket from the family names I write "Adam". Everything from Adam has come down to Bill through these names. These are the names of influence over Bill. These are the families that carry the curse of the generations. As I explain this to Bill, I draw a cross over the word "Adam" and show him that he is united in Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. Because he is dead, he has died to all these families, and he died to the curses that come from these families. There is no curse in the family of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus became a curse for us so that we don't ever have that on us again. The reason we are still under the influ-

ence is because we didn't appropriate it when we were born again. Now it is time to do that.

I walk Bill through the list and with each name we make proclamations. I help Bill with the actual words since he has never done this before. I give him the words to speak, but I admonish him to speak with true authority. This isn't a religious exercise. He must speak it out with faith and authority. Let me give you an example of what I say.

"Bill, repeat after me (and I give him time to speak each one and then go to the next sentence). I am born again. I am washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ. I am in covenant with Him. I am united with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection. Therefore I speak to these families. I speak to the Smith family. I renounce all your curses. You have no hold on me. You have no influence on me. I am under the blood of Jesus and I have died to you. I am in the family of The Father God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and you cannot touch me any longer. I am free from you and release you, in Jesus' name."

I go through the entire list. If there is a family on the list and he doesn't remember the actual name, I just say something like, "And to his mother's family I speak..." That usually covers it, for the Lord knows who it is, and we haven't seen any diminished effects.

When we are completely through the list, we bless the families with knowing Jesus Christ and thank them for bringing life to Bill and his wife. Then we make a general proclamation, "I speak for the spirit realm to know that I am not cursed. I am under the blood of Je-

sus Christ and I am free.” It is fun to see the reaction of people who go through this. Most of the time they are even physically taller as the weight they have been carrying is taken away. That is really awesome.

People will tell me which name had the greatest change. They will feel things happen and it is very exciting. Getting rid of the curse is really great. Almost as great as the next step, but not quite.

My Dad always told me, “When you dig a hole, fill it back in”. There was a lot of charged emotion behind his telling me that because it was usually after he had stepped in a hole I had dug. Still, it is good advice. After a person has had the curses removed, it is time to fill the hole with the blessing. What fun.

There are seven areas in each person’s life that need to be blessed. If there is no blessing, then he is always waiting for it and usually looking for it in other ways. The seven areas are: Conception, in the womb, at birth, as an infant/toddler, coming of age, at the wedding, and in old age. All seven are very important. It isn’t hard to examine and see if there is a blessing or a curse given at those vital times.

Conception. Were they conceived in lust or love? Was their pregnancy received as a good thing or a burden? Were they not wanted? Were they adopted out or abandoned? Was this out of wedlock? Rape? Were there so many that they were forgotten in the mix or just another mouth to feed?

In the womb. Hard pregnancy? Were they not wanted by the father? Were there complications? Was

the mother mocked ("You're a fat cow and I can't stand to see you!"). Was the pregnancy a hardship. Timing wrong, perhaps? Physical abuse? Bad or nonexistent diet?

At birth. Received or rejected? Medical complications? Hard birth. Bad timing? Alone and rejected. This one is hard if it was out of wedlock and alone. Financial burden? One of so many that they were lost in the crowd?

As an infant/toddler. This is the most frequent area to find ministry needs in. This is the time of development of personal image and self worth. Children are like blank slates ready to be written on. What is spoken and done to the children at this time determines so much of their response to the future and other people. It isn't hard to find curses abounding in this part of their lives. Were they abused? Molested? Beaten? Verbally abused? Unwanted? Lost in the crowd? The least favorite? Hated by siblings? There are so many areas where people can be cursed in this time of their lives. I have known very few people who weren't damaged in this time of their lives.

Coming of age. Few people enjoyed that time. It was usually traumatic in some way. I wouldn't go back to Junior High for anything. Was there sexual defilement? Ridicule? Expectations that couldn't be fulfilled? Were they expected to produce what they couldn't do? Abandoned? Kicked out? Rebellious? In trouble all the time? Disappointing or disappointed? Embarrassed? Shamed?

At the wedding. Did one or both sets of parents

disapprove of the wedding? Was there sexual activity before the wedding? Rape? Molestation? Pregnancy? Financial cursing? Mother trying to live her fantasy out through her's daughter's wedding? Forced to get married? Someone involved that hates one or the other of the wedding party? Animosity?

In older age. How many people do you know who are in nursing homes and just want someone to come and tell them their lives have mattered and that their existence is valid? They have so many self doubts and regrets. Their kids are too busy to come and see them. They have stories that no one has ever heard that they want to tell so badly. Have their kids rejected them totally? Are they lonely?

When I find people who have no blessing in their lives, it is a great privilege to be the channel of the blessing to them. It is a huge, emotional source of healing to them. It fulfills something that they know they have wanted and needed for a long, long time. The blessing was designed to impart our self image. When the blessing is denied people, they are continually having to deal with that vacuum in their lives. When you bless them, they have the capacity to see themselves in a way they have never seen themselves before. They can actually start living according to the way the Lord sees them. Speaking the blessing over them is akin to prophesying over them.

When a person wants to be the channel of God's blessing, he is opening himself up to hearing from the Lord for other people and speaking that into their lives. The only difference between that and prophesying over them is that it is more pointed in a certain direction.

When you start to bless someone, you hear from the Lord what He wants to say to them as if you were there at that time in their lives. You are speaking the absolute truth to them. When you speak about their conception, it doesn't really matter what the human element was doing or the motive behind it, what matters is that the Father took that opportunity to create a new life and infuse that life with the possibility of eternal significance. Only God can create a spirit. Humans are different than animals and every other form of life in that they are a spirit being. The love of the Father was in attendance at their conception.

All the bad things that happen to people aren't because the Father didn't love them. They happened because there is sin in the world and people do fallen things in this fallen state. The Father is trying His hardest to bring each person to the redemption He has purchased for mankind. To know that He was there and wooing that person to Himself, that He might be able to redeem that life and bring the healing for all the things that happened, is a huge comfort. To know that the Father was there and didn't want the hurt to happen, but had to allow it because the Lord doesn't stop people from sinning. Why would he stop others from sinning when He doesn't stop us from sinning? He can't. He has to give to each his own choices in life. He gives the standard and then calls us to live it. He even empowers us to live it. But we have to actually make the choice to do so.

So many of the things we blame God for, He didn't do. People hurt people. God doesn't want anyone to hurt anyone else. He records all those transactions and each will pay for their actions. We want God to make

others pay for their actions, but we want God to forgive us and understand why we made mistakes. We usually judge ourselves according to our intentions and judge others for their actions regardless of their intentions. Did God allow those people to hurt us? Yes. He has allowed people to sin all through history. Is it God's fault they hurt us? No. It was their fault. God's plan from the beginning is for men to be His channel of love and character. When men do not choose Him they will pay for it, and will cause damage to other people in the process. It isn't good, but it is reality.

When people receive the blessing and see how God wanted to bless them all along, how He has redeemed their lives and brought healing to them, it gives fulfillment and purpose to their whole existence. That is the beauty of this kind of ministry. We get to see God redeem a life in every aspect. Then people can see how they have been set free from these horrible things that have happened to them, and praise God in a deep, deep way. Everything then is able to make sense. Then they are able to comfort others with the comfort they have been comforted with.

The blessing is the instrument to impart that kind of view of their lives. When we look at everything in our lives as something that gives praise to the Father, then everything in our lives will be blessed and a blessing. As I lay hands on them and speak the blessing, it isn't a rote script that I have written, but a time of freely listening to the Holy Spirit and speaking into their lives the blessing He gives me to speak.

For example, the blessing might go something like this: I bless your conception, for at the time of your

conception, the Father God used that opportunity to create someone He had in His heart from the foundations of the world. He used this joining of man and woman to bring Dale (or whatever the person's name is) into existence. Then He put His finger on you and spoke into your life that you are beautiful and have a great purpose and are designed according to His heart to be someone that is needed in this time and place to be a vessel to carry Him to many people. I bless your conception, for at that time an eternal entity was created to be the expression of God's love in a unique form known as Dale.

I bless you in the womb. The Bible says that God knits us together in our mother's womb. The Father is putting cell to cell and bone to bone. He is creating a masterpiece of wonder and beauty. Every part of you is being made by the very hand of God and is totally beautiful and miraculous. I bless you with love and protection. I praise God for making you and putting his personal touch on your life...

I go on like that through every stage of their lives. You can bless them even in areas where there was known abuse and trauma. Even though there were problems, the Father was there and knew about it. That is what He wants to redeem and heal. The bad things didn't make them less valuable in the eyes of the Lord, in fact they are actually stronger and better able to help others now that they have gone through something like that. They have gone through a fire that makes them a valuable vessel in the hands of the Father.

If someone hasn't been married, I don't necessarily bless his or her wedding. That is something that he or she can look forward to, or sometimes it comes

out that he or she is married to the Lord; and that is very exciting. I don't bless a wedding hoping that he or she will someday get married. That is getting into future predictions and I am very careful about that.

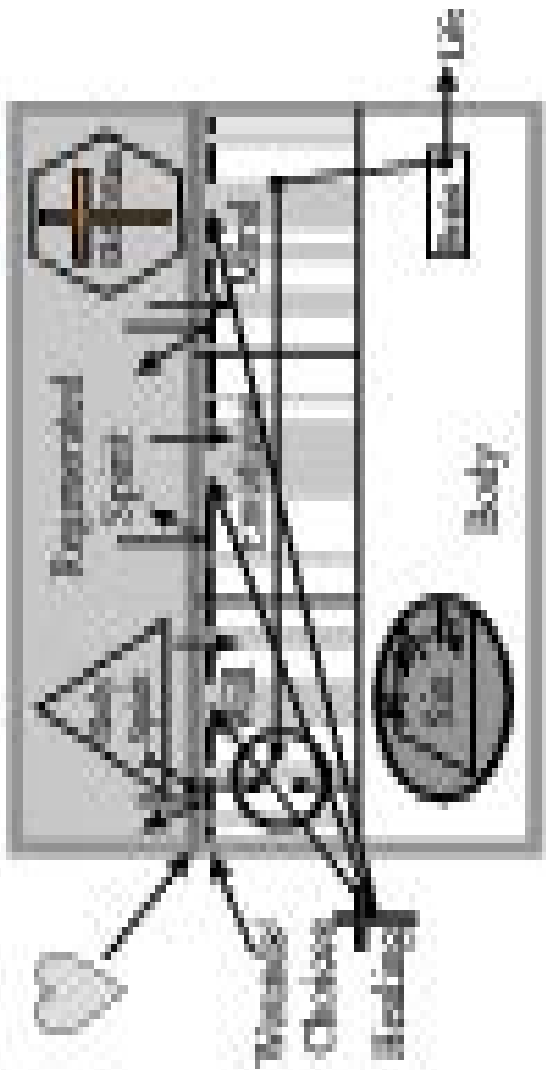
However, I always bless the later part of their lives, no matter how old they are. I bless the end of their lives that it is a fulfilled existence. When the later part is blessed, the life is then fulfilled and they feel that they have existed for a good reason and a good purpose. If they have children, I bless them that their kids will rise up and call them blessed. If they don't, I still know that God raises up spiritual children who will rise up and call them blessed because of what they did in ministry in others' lives.

I hope you can see the value of speaking the blessing in people's lives like this. It really sets them up to see the value they have had in their lives. It gives them a good self image to carry with them. Remember that people will never live differently than how they see themselves. If you can impart to them a Godly image, they will be better able to live a Godly life.

The Priestly Blessing

Like icing on a perfect cake, I always finish the blessing with the priestly or Aaronic blessing. In Numbers 6:22-27 it says this:

And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, In this way you shall bless the sons of Israel, saying to them: Jehovah bless you and keep you; Jehovah cause His face



Healing the Heart bringing Salvation of the Soul

to shine on you, and be gracious to you; Jehovah lift up His face to you, and give you peace. So they shall put My name on the sons of Israel, and I Myself will bless them.

What an awesome job God has given us! We can lay hands on someone and speak the very blessing of God on them and it will be as if God Himself was blessing them. I have really studied this blessing and believe in it. I have trained a lot of people to speak this over people and we do this in church any time we get a chance. It hasn't become religious because we believe in the power of it and it thrills us each and every time. I even have people who have believed in it so much that they speak it over people every chance they get. It has been a mighty tool that has rocked lives and encouraged people with the love of God. What a privilege.

I know this chapter isn't all a person needs to be able to bring healing to others in a comprehensive way, but it should lead a person in the right direction to be able to help. What I really want you to see from this chapter is hope. I want people to see that there is hope for a broken heart. There is hope for healing the wounds and choices we have made. It isn't too late. Every life can be redeemed. That is the blessed hope of what the Lord brings into our lives.

We have seen such miracles. We have seen the Lord turn lives around that had nearly no hope left. The only thing that has stopped the process in any way are the people themselves. They have to want to be healed. We can't fake them into it. They can choose to walk in pain for the rest of their lives if they want. I can't change

that. What I can do is give them the opportunity. I can speak the hope of God into their lives and pray they take it. I can keep loving them until they make the right choice. I can keep offering it without condemnation.

The Lord has given us such great gifts. He has shown us how to bring healing to people's spirits, souls, and bodies. What more could we want? The hard part is having to persuade people to take it. They have to humble themselves to want to have the sin and damage examined enough to bring them the healing. It really takes a humbling process. It is amazing that we have to try to talk people into wanting to be free of the pain in their lives.

Chapter Thirteen

Bringing Healing to the Body

I have believed in healing for many years. I have laid hands on people and have seen very little healing. In the last few years it has even been less. I was starting to get pretty discouraged. I've used oil. I've shouted the name of Jesus. I've rebuked, renounced, blessed, declared, prophesied, and done everything I felt the Lord wanted me to do without worrying about what people thought of me. I used every opportunity to heal people and did not see the results I thought we should be seeing according to scripture.

It didn't deter me, though. I still take every chance I have to pray for the sick and command sickness to leave. I have been through every training I could get to and by every leader who had some semblance of success in these areas.

I have seen the movement that put condemnation on the sick person for not having enough faith. I have witnessed the healing group that put the condemnation on the minister who was told to leave, if healing didn't come within a certain time, for not having the spirituality to bring healing. Both extremes are corrupt as far as I am concerned. None of us need more condemnation from other people than we already have to deal with. I am continually having to bring soulish healing to damaged ministers who have had this condemnation heaped on them. That can't be the answer. I needed to find more.

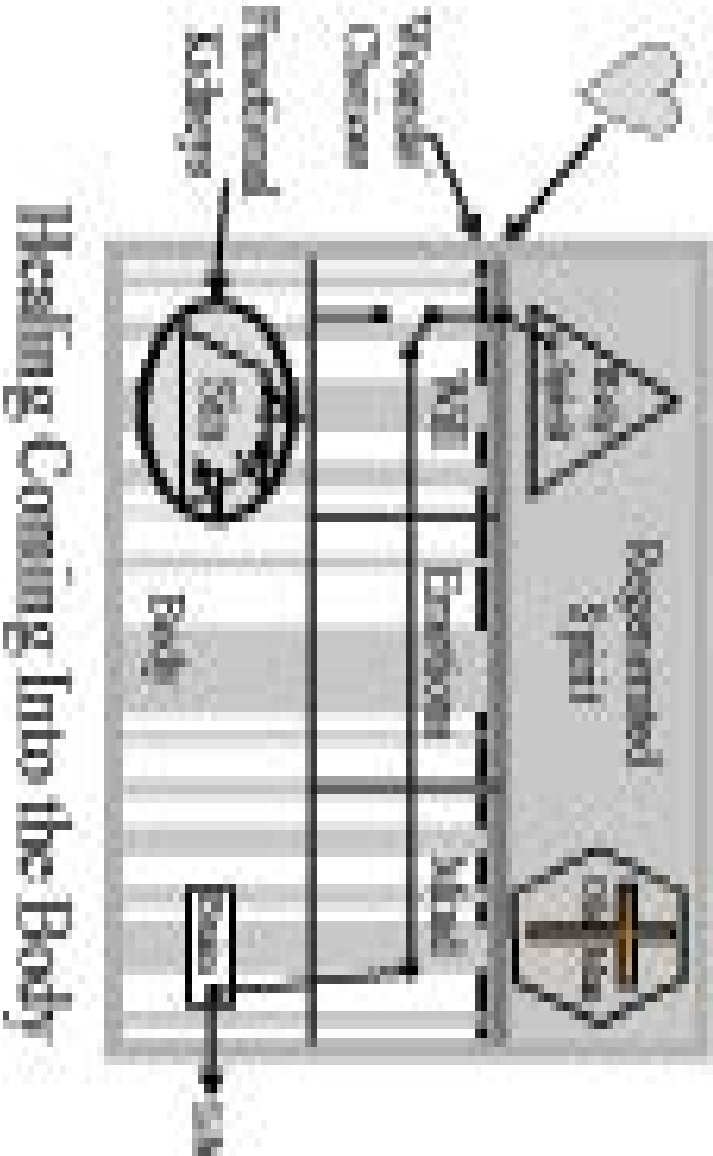
Then I started doing Theophostic Ministry, bringing healing to people, and my job is to be the facilitator for Jesus to do all the work. It occurred to my lightening quick mind (after enough time to make me really wonder about me) that we could do the same thing for physical healing!

That is when the Lord started to really show me what had been missing. The main reason we haven't seen more healings is because we weren't ministering to the root of why the malady is there. Since I already had the attitude of every problem being healable, it was only a short step to bringing physical healing the same way.

I have come to believe that at least 80% of sickness and diseases are soulishly based. Heal the soul and the body should line up with that healing. It seemed to make sense to me. All that was needed was a willing victim. They are not all that easy to find.

During this time, I was on a trip to England to do a couple of my Men's Purity Conferences getting men set free from pornography and lust. I was also teaching at a YWAM base and word had gotten out that I was willing to meet with people to bring soulish healing. After a few very spectacular healings, I was fairly booked in the time I had there. One lady had been really touched by the hand of God in several areas of her soul, but as we were talking over some fish and chips she complained about her allergies.

It occurred to me at the time that we could do the same thing with physical healing, and so I asked my



now famous question, “Do you want to get rid of that?” She agreed to my amazement and we started in. “Lord, would You please take her to the source of her allergies?” Her memory took her to the house she lived in as a little girl. She was sick most of the time she lived there and her life was really restricted because of the severity of her allergies. As we examined her memory of that house, she couldn’t think of anything that happened there that was bad or outstanding. I kept pressing the issue and she responded with some emotion, “There was nothing I tell you, except the molestation, there was nothing!”

Her uncle had molested her in front of her father and her father blew up into a flying rage. He grabbed her from her uncle and in extreme anger marched her to her room, and threw her on the bed and told her to stay right there. He then proceeded to go back to her uncle and had to be restrained from killing his brother. His rage was pointed at his brother, but the little girl took it all personally and felt that she had done something wrong. She judged herself as worthy of sentence and her body started fulfilling that sentence. Her immune system started shutting down and she received the punishment of being so bad.

Jesus came to her in that memory and told her that it wasn’t her fault and He brought total release to her soul. Since the sentence was lifted, her body didn’t have to fulfill her own judgment and she was totally healed of her allergies on the spot. That was pretty exciting. I knew we had found a key here and now I was on a mission to see what else God wanted to do.

Since then, I have told people about it and my

world rather exploded with people who wanted to get free from physical problems. My sister heard the story of the lady in England and was upset that I hadn't approached her about it. She reminded me that she also had allergies for decades and had to rotate her medications because they would stop working. When I told her about what we were finding, she came in from out of state for a session. Her story is worth telling.

The Lord took her back to her college days. But I need to back up a little to get the setting straight. We grew up in a little mountain town in Colorado and were very active in the church there. It was a small denominational church that seemed to have a real penchant for legalism. We were continually condemned from the pulpit and the guilt we lived in was very oppressive.

After Carol left there she went to college in another city in our state. There she joined up with a college campus ministry that took legalism to an art form. She was continually cajoled to do this and don't do that until she just had enough of it. It had started to really affect her thinking. She was very tired of always feeling guilty and trying to live perfectly. She finally told herself, "If I am going to feel guilty, I going to do something to feel guilty about." She then decided to step aside from her standards and she stepped into a life with specific sin in it. Because of her understanding of what a person who does those things should get, her body started fulfilling her own judgment and she started becoming allergic to just about everything.

How many times had she sought the Lord for forgiveness? Unknown. But when the Lord brought up this memory to her, she knew it was the right one. As

we walked through it and she was repenting, the one thing that had been missing is she had never stopped and heard from the Lord her forgiveness. When I asked her if He had forgiven her, she looked at me rather strangely. I had her ask Him, "Have you forgiven me?" She gained revelation of that forgiveness and it was hers. She almost immediately started breathing better. What a joyous occasion!

Two weeks later she called me and reported that all the allergies had disappeared but one. "Why am I still allergic to metal?" "I don't know. Let's ask the Lord. Lord, would you take Carol to the source of the metal allergy, please?"

She received the memory of when she was 13 and thought she had permission to get her ears pierced. When she came home and showed them to Dad, he said, "Who gave you permission to get your ears pierced?" Mom said, "Oh, George, let her. She'll just go out and do it anyway." Carol received the message that she was rebellious and deserved judgment for the flaw in her character. (By the way, she was the most compliant and non-rebellious, overachieving girl in the world. That comment was completely out of line.) The outcome was that she reacted to the metal to the point that anytime metal was in contact with her skin for any length of time, she broke out in a rash.

As we walked through this one in true repentance with the receiving of forgiveness, the metal allergy went away. Since then we have seen this same scenario played out over and over in many people. Allergies don't stand a chance. What we have seen since then is how powerful personal judgments are and how they

have affected the body.

Later, she told me that she had also been healed of her asthma when the allergies disappeared. It was kind of her to tell me, over a year later!

When we judge someone else it is just as if we have judged ourselves. The Bible tells us not to judge because the things we have judged others about are the same things we have been doing. When we judge someone as worthy of death and then do anything even slightly in that same direction, we judge ourselves and the sentence we would put on them (which, by the way, is totally ineffective on them) is the sentence we put on ourselves. We can't fake ourselves out as much as we think we can and our bodies fulfill the judgment made. Complex creatures, aren't we?

There is another ministry out there that looks for the spiritual roots of diseases. They have been doing it long enough that they don't even think they need to seek God about it any more. They have gotten into diagnosing and automatically dealing with certain roots for each specific disease. I have decided not to go that route. I would much rather let Jesus show us where things are that need to be dealt with and go from there. My diagnosis would be flesh at best. And this way I don't have to remember everything and keep things catalogued. It is just a running, three-way conversation between Jesus, the person who is needing to be healed and myself. How fun is that!

I now am totally interested in what Jesus is going to do when someone comes to me. It might be judgments, sin in need of repentance, something that comes from the

curse of the generations (a lot of diabetes comes that way), stress (not trusting in the Lord), curses spoken over someone, bad decisions, or a combination of two or more. The good part is that Jesus is totally interested in healing people.

If someone isn't totally healed the first session, I am not discouraged. Some of these things are so deep that it takes a while to root them out. If there is some healing, but not all, I just continue going back in. Even if it is the same memory over and over again. All that means is that we've missed something and the Lord isn't finished yet.

Sometimes when we are done with the soulish session, I will then lay hands on someone, and he or she is healed. When the Lord doesn't take us anywhere soulishly, we just keep trying. God will break through with the method. I can't heal anyone. It all has to be Jesus or I am toast. This is just a privilege to be part of the way God is bringing the healing to people. The bottom line is God's love for people and His desire to get them free. I really love it.

I never proclaim someone is healed. They have to hear it from the Lord, not Lee. I just let them live and see what happens. If things aren't different, we go back at it. What is the Lord trying to show us? Every revelation is worth tons. And no one is being condemned for lack of anything. We are just seeking God's face and that is worth everything.

I never tell someone to get off their medication. That is for a doctor to do. If they are healed, it will show, and the doctor will want them off the meds. If not, they

may want to get a second opinion to see if they still need to be medicated.

God's healing will stand on its own. It doesn't need me to be a cheerleader and try to convince people they are healed. That is between them and the Lord. He can handle that.

We have seen just about every kind of disease healed: Multiple Sclerosis, fibromyalgia, cancer, diabetes, asthma, arthritis, psoriasis, heart problems, high blood pressure, and the list goes on. What hope this gives for people!

The saddest thing is when someone has a problem, but doesn't want to find out why they have it. They are afraid of what the Lord might show them. They would rather live with the disease than go through the process for healing. We pray for them, lay hands on them, anoint them with oil, agree with them and all the other things we used to do, but we aren't seeing the healings happen in them. That is really sad.

The joy, however, is that people are being healed and not just at some high hyped meetings. People are being treated like people, not cattle, and the Lord is very happy to set them free from things that have been plaguing them. That is the good part and anyone can do it. It isn't them, it is Jesus.

Chapter Fourteen

Turning Things Toward God

Our focus has been on our souls and hearts throughout this book. But we have concentrated mostly on how to get the things of the spirit to work in our lives. We have discussed getting the spirit to produce the spiritual things in us and getting them to move through our being. Now we get to look at things in a different way.

Worship is the one most important aspect of our Christian lives. That said, it is also one of the most misunderstood areas of our Christian lives. There are worship seminars and conferences going on all the time. There are whole libraries of books on the subject. Every church has worship times and worship services and yet most Christians don't know how to worship. Very few can lead others into worship.

Worship seems to be an elusive experience. How do I do it? What is involved? Do I have to be a musician before I can worship? Do I have to have a CD on? What is right to do during church? How do I know if I am out of line? Do I have to do something funky before I am a true worshipper? Do I have to raise my hands or dance or anything like that?

These are actual concerns. And because few really teach on it, the majority of Christians are confused about the issue. For years I have been trying to

get people to worship. I have taught, pleaded, demonstrated, cajoled, irritated, threatened, and begged. How do I get others to worship? I have had a wonderful life of worship and it has been very difficult to translate that over into others so they can experience it. The problem has been that we have treated it as a technique instead of a personal experience between us and God. Just like healing, I can't force people to receive it. They have to want it.

Because of the hype behind it, the unknown of what might happen and the fear that goes with it, people haven't been willing to go there. That is the problem. It requires wanting to take a risk. Before I embraced worship, I didn't know how much of a risk it would be until the Lord started showing me why I had to take it. Now I am amazed on the depth of worship and what goes behind it. Let me take you on the journey.

Worship in Spirit and Truth

In John 4, we are told a very interesting story. Jesus and His disciples are traveling, and they come to the city Sychar. This is a very historically significant city. Mt. Gerazim and Mt. Ebal are on either side of this city. It is there that the Children of Israel were split up into the families of the sons of Jacob. Six were on one mountain and six on the other. They shouted the blessings and cursings of the covenant at each other over this valley where this city lies. Later on, when Jeroboam was made king over the northern ten tribes, this city was designated as the new worship center and sacrifices were set up to a golden calf so the people wouldn't go to Jerusalem in Judah to worship. That separated the Jews from the Samaritans, and the animosity continued

for centuries.

Jesus is tired from traveling and, as a good boss, sends the disciples into town to get lunch. Meanwhile, a woman from the city comes out to get water at the well Jesus was resting on. He asks for water from her. She is shocked and speaks up because, not only was Jesus a Jew, she was obviously a Samaritan woman. There should have been no exchange between them at all. Jesus knew what He was doing and turned the conversation into a spiritual encounter.

He told her He had water she didn't know about and if she had it she would never thirst again. Of course, He was speaking spiritually and not physically, but she was drawn into the conversation. She mocked Him and He got even more spiritual, even personal. He asked her to bring her husband out and she said she didn't have one. Jesus exposed the truth by telling her that she was right, at the time she was living with a man who wasn't her husband and that she had 5 previous husbands. What a mind-blower!

She told Him she perceived He was a prophet. I wonder what made her think that! Then she went theological on Him. Her fathers told them to worship in this mountain (Mt. Gerazim, the home site of idol worship) and the Jews tell them to worship in Jerusalem. Jesus took it even further. He said that the true worship is of the Jews and not of the Samaritans, but that a time is coming (and is right now) that true worshippers won't look for a place. Verses 23 and 24 have something really deep in them.

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit

and in truth. For the Father also seeks such, the ones worshiping Him. God is a spirit, and the ones worshiping Him must worship in spirit and truth.

It has been a mystery to so many about what He could have meant by worshiping in spirit and in truth. As I was studying this, my focus was primarily trying to get the things of the spirit into my soul. I was thinking of how my soul was the problem and the damage to my heart. I was seeing things the way most believers see them; it is all about us. I studied the soul in so many ways and in many different perspectives. But I was missing something big. It took walking away from it for a season to see it in a fresh way.

Psalm 103:1

Bless Jehovah, o my soul, and all within me, bless His holy name.

The use of “my soul” is by definition soulish. It gives us the tendency to focus inwardly and selfishly. Throughout most of this book I have examined us and how we work. We have looked at our needs, wants, desires and the whole focus has been on us. We know that we have the need to understand ourselves and to really examine the motives we have in our lives. Now it is time to look the other direction.

What is the outcome of having a soul that has been set free from wounds, hurts, sins, and choices that we have made? What does the Lord get out of this? Is it just to see us set free? Or is there a greater purpose? I believe there is a greater purpose.

We were made to worship God. That is our highest purpose. But because of sin and a selfish focus, we have no idea what that looks like. We have only had glimpses of what true worship would be like. But now I have seen a small part of how to get there. I believe this is something the Lord wants us to understand so we can become all He has called us to be.

When my soul is totally set free from selfish pursuits, and focused on God, I will be the Lee He has called me to be. I haven't seen in the natural what I have seen I can be in the spiritual. I feel a calling that is higher than anything I have ever recognized before. I can see why the Lord has given us these ministries and methods. He wants His people to be free to worship Him the way they need to.

In this passage, we see that David was teaching us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit something really deep. My entire soul must bless the Lord.

I must bless Him in my mind and the way my mind functions. All my thoughts are to be a blessing to Him both passively and actively. I must submit all my intellectual processes to the High King and bow to Him. I must think His way about everything and it must bring Him blessing and glory.

My emotions are all to be a blessing to Him. All the pain and lies that I have had in my life must lead me to praising Him. I must be emotionally involved with my Lord in all ways. What freedom that will take! I am to submit my anger, joy, fun, concern, love, hate, frustration, humor, thrills, pleasure, pain, and anything

else that is running through my emotions.

My will must be submitted to His will. I have to want what He wants and not what my flesh wants. My desires must reflect what He desires. He is so radically involved in my life that He wants to be in on everything I desire in every way. Don't you think He knows what you want and why? It is time to examine them and totally submit them.

Bless Jehovah, o my soul. All of it. That means that I am going to have to walk in the spirit and not in my flesh. When I am walking in my flesh, I cannot worship in spirit. I am worshiping in flesh and that doesn't glorify God; it glorifies me. It is really me worshiping myself and not Him at all. Therefore worshiping in spirit means that I am soulishly submitted to Him and walking in the spirit. The Father is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit. If everyone was doing it, He wouldn't have to be looking for them. They would be obvious. But the scripture is fairly obvious that people like that are hard to find. Now I know why. How many are willing to go through that kind of self examination to gain that kind of freedom?

The second part of verse one says, "All that is within me, bless His holy name." The emphasis is on the word "all." It occurred to me that it isn't a simple thing for everything in me to do that. I have many areas in my heart that aren't free yet. I have hidden things that only the Spirit of the Living God can root out. Am I willing to go through that process? It won't be fun. It is going to be very painful and will require the crucifixion of my flesh. It is a death process that is very painful. I have to examine everything that is within me. It all needs to

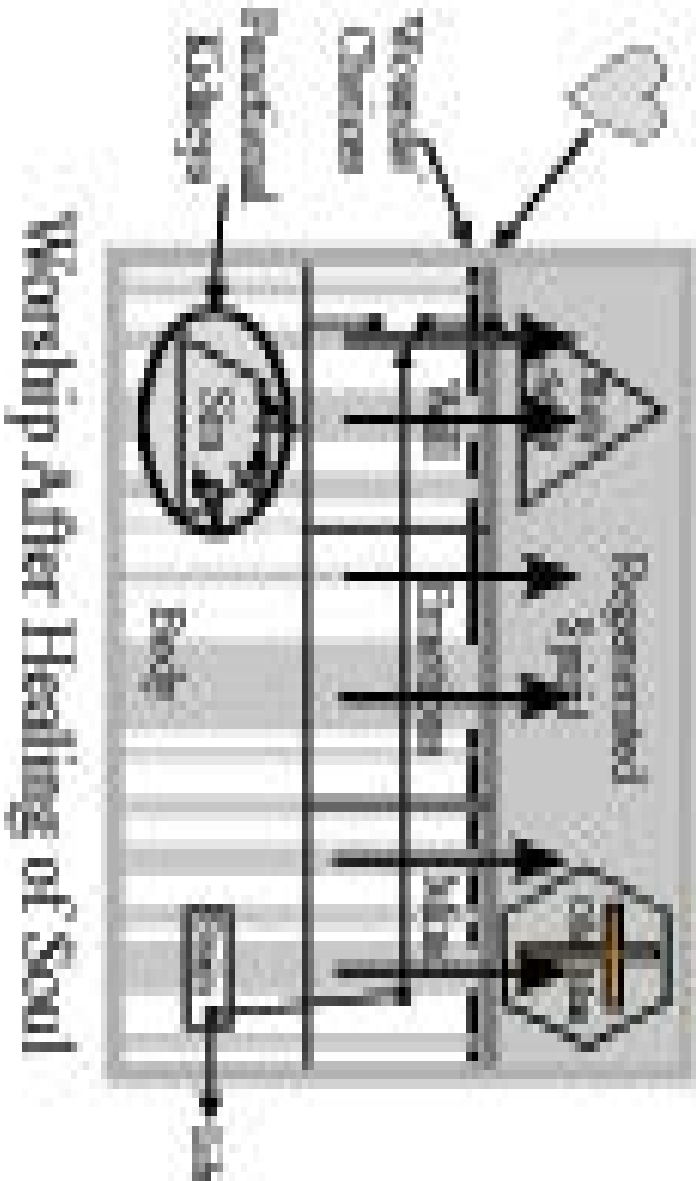
be submitted. That is why it is going to take my whole life to do so.

As we talked about earlier, we also have spiritual kidneys. When we are walking in the spirit, God has given us the spiritual capacity to surround the sin in our bodies that is defiling us. My kidneys must also bless the Lord. The only way that happens is if I am walking in the spirit and the sin in my body isn't affecting me. That blesses the Lord in a huge way.

As you can see, this isn't an easy process, but it is glorious. I have found that the more I submit to Him and the process of dying to myself, the more He lives through me and the more He is able to work through me.

The biggest problem I have seen is pride. Pride is very tricky. You humble yourself and see great things happen and then you are prideful for submitting. The paradox of humility is that as soon as you think you have it, you've lost it. Pride comes in so many forms it is hard to get a grip on. We can be so proud that we aren't able to do anything for God or we can be so used of God that our pride takes us out of ministry. Fighting with pride is a constant battle in each of us. The reason for that is because of our focus on ourselves.

I was told one day that I was the best kept secret in the Denver area. If only people knew about Lee, they would be clamoring at the door of my church. The lady who told me that had just been set free from all sorts of terrible things and she was being thankful and appreciative. I had to immediately go before God with that and have Him remind me that He and He alone can heal



people or set them free. I am not the best kept secret, He is. Pride can be so subtle.

Whenever you do something well, it feels good to have someone say that they appreciate what we have done. I have found that most people are doing what they do for the feelings they get when someone appreciates them. If you don't tell them often enough, you are in real danger of losing them in your church or ministry. How should they respond? How should I respond? It isn't an easy line to draw. It takes a revelation of the reward from God and not from man. Even saying I don't want any thanks can be pride in being humble. Tricky. Very tricky.

The only one who knows for sure is the Lord. It takes walking with Him continually and listening to Him to know for sure. Don't worry. He will tell you. We are way too susceptible to religion to not walk with Him more closely than we have ever walked before.

The Body

When I am submitted to Him in soul, by body is also submitted to Him. Such is the hierarchy of the spirit. Spirit is over soul, soul is over body. When we get those turned around, there are problems. My body is an important part of worship.

We didn't understand that growing up. We were taught to just stand there and sing. That is all you do. Then I got into the scripture and found that there are a lot of things my body is supposed to do. But, my word, did that feel awkward! I was really worried about what others were thinking and about the rejection I was put-

ting myself in position to receive.

Then I found out something very valuable. God was trying to show me how much I was concerned about others and their power of rejection. If I didn't give them any power over me in the area of rejection, then the freedom I experienced was huge. I had to find my acceptance in Him and no one was then able to reject me in a way that hurt me or caused me pain. I had to express myself in a way that could bring rejection from others in order to see how much stock I put in what they thought of me. This proved to be a huge area of freedom in my life.

Was I truly willing to make a fool of myself in front of others, especially ones I held in high esteem? I know there is a difference in finding my own freedom and purposefully trying to get people to reject me. I didn't dare get a pride in my freedom to do whatever I wanted to do, but I couldn't let my pride keep me from gaining that freedom. It isn't an easy line to walk, but it is worth it.

I had to finally stop caring what anyone thought and actually raise my hands in church! That was step one. It led to other things. I eventually had to dance before God and everyone without worrying about what they thought. This was for Jesus alone and no one else. If they were watching, it was because they weren't concentrating on Jesus, but were more concerned about what was happening around them. Tricky line to dance along.

That path eventually led me to doing other things the Lord was calling me to. As I started dying to my

concern about what others thought (and still maintained a humble approach as to not disrupt a service intentionally for selfish gain), I was able to hear from God about doing other things. My first step into prophecy was heart rendering for sure. Having a tongue and an interpretation was devastating. The beauty of the whole thing is the outcome that was ministering to the hearts of so many people.

As I stated before, it can lead to a whole different form of pride that we must continually be aware of and on the lookout for.

In Spirit And In Truth

When we are willing to examine our lives with the direction of the Lord we will constantly be shown where we are walking in the flesh. We will also be continually shown the lies we have harbored and nurtured. As we expose the lies and the truth becomes more important to us and the path we are walking, then we are able to worship in spirit (not worshiping our flesh) and in truth (no longer living according to the lies that have affected us).

Worshiping in Spirit and in truth means that we are not walking in the flesh and are not being directed by the lies we have believed. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we submit to the direction of the Lord to get healing in those areas. This is why this understanding of spirit, soul, and body is so vastly important. As we find healing in our hearts, we will find freedoms that were unknown to us and areas where we were unable to go.

We must find ourselves humbling ourselves before the Lord and getting things dealt with so they have no hold on us. We must be willing to go through whatever it takes to gain those freedoms. Most of us want to do this on our own. But for the vast majority of us, that just isn't going to happen. We will need to humble ourselves and go to someone for that healing. In James it tells us to confess our faults one to another and be healed. I have found that to be most effective.

My final appeal to the reader is this: Submit yourselves to someone for healing. Humble yourself to find it. It may not be in the first person you go to. Be careful, but don't be daunted. Keep it up until you have found the freedom in Christ that you need to have. The Lord knows. Go to Him and submit yourself to Him for the process. He wants you free more than you want to be free. He is wanting you to come into His presence with fullness of joy. He doesn't want you in bondage in any way.

I bless you with strength in the seeking. I pray this book has helped you desire the freedom you can have in Him. May you find all that Jehovah has for you in your life.

Jehovah bless you and keep you.

Jehovah cause His face to shine on you and be gracious to you

Jehovah lift up His face to you and give you peace.

Shalom!

