

Living As A Real Man In Christ



Bill Loveless
Christ Is Life Ministries

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Christ Is Life Ministries

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Biographical Sketch

Bill Loveless

Bill was born and raised in College Station, Texas and moved to Dallas, Texas in 1986. He was a commercial general contractor there for 25 years. Bill and his wife, Paige, have been married since 1988.

Although he was saved at age 18, Bill wandered in a wilderness of spiritual performance for the next thirty years trying to earn God's love and acceptance. He also wanted to experience victory over his severe internal struggles with fear, anxiety, and inadequacy that overcame him for most of those thirty years. He would ask, "Where is this abundant life that the Lord promised in John 10:10? Why, after living the Christian life so long, am I still being defeated by the same sin patterns? Why am I not experiencing God's promises of change?"

Bill's defeat in the Christian life got to a point that in 1998, while an elder at a former church, he told Paige that he wanted out of the Christian life. He was spiritually exhausted. In late 1998 Ian Thomas, founder of Torchbearers, was invited to Bill's church to speak. The first words that he shared were, **"God never intended for you to live the life that only Christ can live in and through you."**

The Lord showed Bill through Ian Thomas's words that he had been living much of his Christian life out of self-effort and self-sufficiency. The Lord also revealed to Bill that God has designed us to be His vessels through which His life and His power would flow. He realized for the first time that God didn't want to help Christians live the Christian life. He discovered that God wants to be our **Source** for living the Christian life. This was such a transforming time for Bill that five months later God called Bill out of his business and eventually led him into full-time ministry with Exchanged Life Ministries Texas (ELMT) in Dallas. During his 2 ½ years with ELMT, Bill shared the Christ-life message in conferences and in follow-up discipleship curriculum. He was the conference coordinator for all the ELMT church conferences. While ministering in the churches, he recognized a growing need to partner with them on a continuing basis. He and Paige prayed for God's will concerning his growing passion to be more involved with churches.

In September 2003 the Lord called Bill and Paige to form a ministry with the primary focus being to teach, develop curriculum, and disciple "multipliers" in the local church. In November 2003 he and Paige formed Christ Is Life Ministries. They moved to San Antonio in April 2004, and they are now working with several churches in the area and throughout Texas.

Why I Wrote This Study

I feel led to write this study for a number of reasons. First of all, I believed lies for forty-eight years about what it means to be a real man. My dad set the bar for what a man should be, and I felt like I could never jump over the bar or measure up to his standard as a man. As a result, I tried through my job, my marriage, and other areas of my life to prove that I was a real man. Even as a Christian I thought it was up to me to produce godly manhood. The problem was that I felt that I couldn't meet the world's standard or God's standard in being a man. This always left me feeling "less than." It wasn't until God started revealing to me who I am as a real man in Christ that I began to experience freedom from my lying beliefs about manhood. That freedom is leading me to a greater Christ-confidence and security of who I am as a real man in Christ.

Secondly, I wrote this study because I disciple men, and I see the adverse effects of their false beliefs about manhood on how they see themselves as men, in their jobs, in their marriages, in their families, and in all other relationships. I have witnessed these relationships radically change as these men learned the truth and now walk in the truth of what it means to be a man "in Christ."

I don't know where you are or what you believe that a real man should look like. But, I trust that this study will clear up any lies that you may have been believing about manhood and will give you the same Christ-confidence and security that it is giving me.

As you go through this study you will find verses that you have heard before. You may have already come to conclusions about the verses that you already know. However, I would encourage you to approach this study as if you had never heard the verses before and to ask God to give you greater personal revelation of the meaning of the verses.

At different points in this study I am going to ask you to meditate on certain scriptures or terms. The New Age movement has greatly distorted what Scripture has to say. "Meditate" first began as a biblical word in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for meditate is "syach." In relation to God's truth, meditate means to engage God to give you greater understanding or revelation as you think on, consider, or give thought to His truth. Therefore, I ask you to look past the distorted view of this world because meditation will be crucial to you in understanding the truths that you are about to study.

I have divided each lesson into five daily readings. I hope that this will encourage you to study a few pages a day. Please take the time to answer the questions in each lesson and meditate on the scriptures given.

Thank you again for choosing this study. I pray that God will give you great insight and great encouragement as you move through the study and that you will experience radical changes in your life in the process.

Living As A Real Man In Christ

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INTRODUCTION

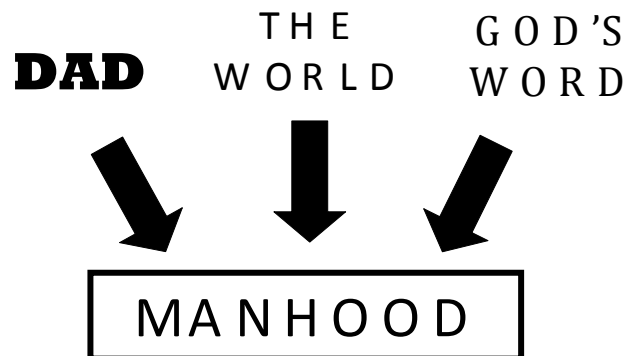
What Do You Believe Is a “Real” Man?

Introduction

If you haven't done so already, I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes and read why I wrote this study which is on the preceding page. Since I have discipled so many Christian men, I am seeing patterns among men that tell me that men have false beliefs about manhood that are based on what they heard from their fathers about manhood and what the world is telling men about being a man. In addition, many men have false beliefs about what it means to be a godly or Christian man. My desire is to expose these false beliefs and the adverse effects of those beliefs and share God's truth about being a real man in Christ.

What Do You Believe About Manhood?

I want to start our study by finding out what you believe about manhood. From the moment we were born until this moment, our beliefs about being a man have been shaped primarily from three sources: our **dads**, the **world**, and as Christians we have learned about manhood from **God's Word**.



Is What You Have Believe A LIE Or Is It The TRUTH?

Is what you believe about manhood from these three sources the truth? I want you to think about the following three statements.

KEY TRUTH:

You will NOT live beyond what you believe.

If what you believe is a LIE, then that is how you will live.

Living from false beliefs will ADVERSELY impact yourself, your circumstances, your earthly relationships, and your relationship with God.

If these statements are true, does it not stand to reason that we need to insure that what we believe about manhood (especially Christian manhood) is the truth?

The repeated messages from these three sources primarily, have helped shape what you believe is a “real” man. Therefore, I first want to explore what you believe about yourself from these three sources and then compare your beliefs with God’s truth. In this introduction, we will see how the world and your dad shaped your beliefs. We will also look at some of the needs men have and where they are getting those needs met. In addition, we will look at some fleshly, sinful behaviors that you may be experiencing.

How Does The WORLD Define Manhood?

The world has its standards for manhood. It is sending us verbal and non-verbal messages about what a real man is like. Such messages are:

1. Be smarter, stronger, and wiser.
2. Never show fear, weakness, or neediness.
3. Be self-sufficient and independent.
4. You must succeed at all costs.
5. Stay ahead of the rest of the pack.
6. Failure is not an option.
7. Your identity as a successful man is based on the job that you have, the salary that you are making, the car that you drive, where you live, etc.
8. Men are idiots.

Question: What are some of the messages you hear from the world about what it means to be a man?

Exercise: Do you feel that you are being influenced by what the world says about manhood? If so, write down some of the ways you think that the world’s standard for manhood may be influencing the way you think and live as a Christian man.

How Did Your DAD Impact You Concerning What You Believe About Being A Man?

Our dads have had a tremendous impact on how we see ourselves as men. What kind of father did you have? Was he one that was angry, controlling, or demanding, or was he one that loved, supported, and encouraged you? Was your dad a strong personality, or was he passive in his fathering? Were you loved or abused by your dad? Did you feel unconditionally accepted by your dad, or did you feel rejection? Here are some of the messages from their fathers about being a man that some men have shared with me. (Keep in mind that messages come in verbal and non-verbal form.)



1. Failure is not an option.
2. Be strong, independent, and self-sufficient.
3. I don't love you.
4. Suck it up and be a man.
5. Be all that you can be.
6. You are a failure.
7. Don't be a wimp.
8. Never let them see you cry.
9. You can do anything that you set your mind to do.

Question: What are some of the verbal and non-verbal messages you heard from your dad about what it means to be a man?

Question: Do you believe that you are (or are not) measuring up to your dad's standards for manhood? If not, how does it make you feel as a man?

What Have You Learned Up To This Point About What You Need To Do To Become A Christian/Godly Man?

Below are some responses that men have given me to this question:

1. Learn God's Word and go out and accomplish what it says with God's help.
2. Obey God's commands to the best of your ability.
3. Be strong for God.
4. Imitate Christ to be Christ-like.
5. I need to change my sinful behavior to godly behavior.
6. I need to work harder to experience more victory and freedom in my life.
7. Try to keep from sinning.
8. To be a godly man, husband, and father, I need to do certain things such as have a quiet time every day, go to church, and be involved in ministry.

Which of the above do you believe is the truth? Write down some other things that are not on the above list that you believe you need to do to be a Christian/godly man?

What Are Your Needs As A Man?

As a man, do you have a need for:

- _____ Value/Worth?
- _____ Acceptance?
- _____ Respect?
- _____ Success?
- _____ Meaning and Purpose?
- _____ Love?
- _____ Security?
- _____ Happiness?
- _____ Significance/Adequacy?

Where Are You Getting Your Needs Met?

- _____ Job?
- _____ Performance on job, as a husband, as a father, as a friend?
- _____ Possessions?
- _____ Accomplishments?
- _____ IQ or intellect?
- _____ Wife?
- _____ Kids?
- _____ Friends?
- _____ Hobbies/Interests?
- _____ Salary, money in bank, investments, 401K plan?

Is There Anything That You Want Changed About Your Life?

Look on pages 10 and 11 and pick five fleshly behaviors that you would like to change about yourself.

How are these five behaviors negatively impacting you, your job, your wife, your kids, your friends, or your walk with God?

If anything, what are you doing to change your sinful behavior? Is it working?

What Are Some of the Effects Of Living Out Of Your Beliefs?

If you are married, do you feel that you are measuring up to your standards or God's standards concerning being a godly husband? If not, what areas would you like to change?

If you have children, do you feel that you are measuring up to your standards or God's standards concerning being a godly father? If not, what areas would you like to change?

Is there something more that you want to experience out of your Christian life?

How Is Your Christian Life Working For You?

Would you examine your Christian life so far and see if you are experiencing any of the following things in your Christian life?

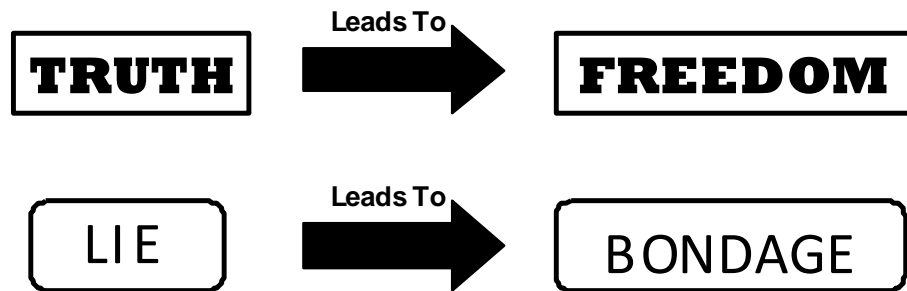
- Frustration about your progress concerning your Christian walk.
- Sinful behavior that you want changed, but it is not changing.
- Bondage to a stronghold, addiction, or sin pattern that you are not free from.
- Feeling like a failure in living as a godly man, godly husband, or godly father.
- Not meeting your expectations for godly manhood.
- Not meeting God's expectations for you.
- Your life is not being transformed.
- Given up trying to be a godly man.
- Need to try harder to achieve godly manhood.

***If any of the above is true of your Christian walk,
is it possible that you might be missing something in your
understanding of the truth about godly manhood?***

The promise in John 8:32 is this:

"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

If this is true, then it must be true that if you do not know the truth or you are believing lies, you will stay in BONDAGE to your lying beliefs.



Therefore, my encouragement to you as you go through this study, is for you to periodically refer back to the answers you wrote down on the previous pages and compare them with the truths that are shared in this study.

Fleshly Behavior

Be self-absorbed (self-consumed)

become overly introspective
feel sorry for myself (self-pity)
get depressed
beat up on myself
play the role of victim/martyr
focus on my suffering to get
attention and sympathy
be jealous of another's success
and happiness

Withdraw (isolate myself)

be aloof (pull away)
distance myself from others
avoid others (be a loner)
go into a shell
become unapproachable
give them the silent treatment
refuse to communicate

Escape (pain/pressure) by using:

promiscuity
drugs and alcohol
computers
hobbies/games
sex
fantasy
computers
television
pornography
overeating
work/career

Be anxious (worry and fret)

be fearful (apprehensive)
lack peace and rest
become paralyzed (numb)
be paranoid (overly suspicious)
refuse to see the positive
(gloom and doom thinking)
assume the worst

Seek guidance from:

astrology/horoscopes,
fortune telling and/or
the occult

Be self-disciplined (self-reliant)

base acceptance of self and
others on performance
become a perfectionist
try hard so as not to fail
fear making mistakes
be legalistic:
live "by the book"
feel obligated (have to's,
should's, ought to's)
be too hard on myself/others
set unrealistic standards for
myself/others

Become obsessed with:

accomplishments
recognition/status
acquiring material things
what others think of me
how I look physically
my physical health
the past (especially past hurts
and failures)
a devotion to a cause
structure, order and regulations

Become dominant

be dictatorial (bossy)
be demanding (pushy)
be overbearing (controlling)
intimidate others
refuse to give in

Stay in control through:

blackmail (making threats)
manipulation (use of guilt, pity,
silence, flattery, etc.)
coercion (physical threats)
profanity (swearing)
passivity (playing helpless)
not eating (anorexia/bulimia)

Lack compassion, gentleness

understanding, kindness, love
become defensive

Be self-righteous (self-justifying)

make excuses (rationalize)
cover up and hide mistakes
have to prove my point
assume I am never the problem
blame someone or something
else as the problem
avoid taking responsibility for
failure or problems
have difficulty: apologizing,
admitting I was wrong,
asking for forgiveness,
asking for help, and/or
expressing gratitude
have a superior attitude
(saying in effect):
"I know what is best"
"My way is the right way"

Be critical (judgmental)

find fault with others, myself
and everything around me
nitpick things to death
be prejudiced (intolerant)
complain a lot (nothing is
ever good enough)

Be self-assured (self-confident)

depend on myself instead of
God or others
become proud (haughty)
be egocentric (act pompous)
brag (be boastful)
become arrogant (cocky)
become conceited (smug)

Come across as insensitive,

uncaring, unsympathetic,
indifferent or unconcerned

Be complacent (nonchalant)

say things like, "it's okay" or
"it doesn't matter"

Fleshly Behavior (Cont.)

Be pessimistic (negative)

lack confidence and optimism
be skeptical (suspicious)
distrust others, myself, God,
church and/or government
expect the worst
never be pleased with self
or others
never be satisfied or content

Become hostile

be unfriendly
be sarcastic (caustic)
be cynical (contemptuous)
be hateful (mean-spirited)
be cruel (malicious)
have a quick temper
rant and rave to vent my anger
be physically abusive
be verbally abusive
break things

Hold a grudge (be resentful)

become moody (sulk)
harbor bitterness
be unforgiving
keep a scorecard of offenses
try to get even (seek revenge)
want others to fail or get hurt
punish myself or others

Fight unfair (take cheap shots)

be slanderous
misrepresent the situation
gossip (talk behind their back)
engage in passive-aggressive
behavior: use humor to hide
real feelings, forget things,
refuse to communicate, be
late, procrastinate, etc.)

Be self-deprecating

assume I am always the problem
become overly apologetic
be too hard on myself
be uncomfortable with success
or happiness
have difficulty receiving: love,
compliments, forgiveness

Challenge others

resist authority
be uncooperative (inflexible)
be unteachable (close-minded)
cause dissention (strife)
be irritating (aggravate others)
be argumentative
be stubborn (unyielding)
be unreasonable

Deny reality

ignore problems and hope they
will go away
deny anything is bad or wrong
be subjective instead of objective
deceive others and myself
lie to self and others
exaggerate (overstate matters)
play games to hide real intent

Put up a front

hide what I really think and feel
pretend to be something I'm not
put on a show to impress others
and/or get attention
fake it (act like I know something
even when I don't)
be pretentious (phony, unreal)
be superficial (never let anyone
get to close)

Be passive (lack initiative)

quit too easily (give up)
don't take chances (play it safe)
wait for someone to tell me how
to think and what to do
vacillate (be too changeable)
be indecisive (let others make
decisions for me)
avoid failure at all costs
procrastinate (put things off)
be irresponsible (unreliable)
be lazy (apathetic, lethargic)

Be tense ("on guard")

be easily agitated
be restless (feel like I have to be
doing something)
become impatient

Become emotionally insulated

avoid intimacy
have difficulty expressing
feelings and opinions
suppress (stuff) emotions
be inhibited (restrained)

Live by my feelings

believe that truth is what I feel
be too sensitive to criticism
take things too personally
(be hypersensitive)
be touchy (irritable)
be controlled by fear, anger,
doubts and insecurities
automatically read in rejection
(think "it's about me")

Be a pleaser (be nice)

try to keep everyone happy
avoid conflict/keep the peace
say what I think others want
be overly compliant
submissive
have difficulty saying "no" and
setting boundaries
can't stand up for myself
afraid to disappoint others
give in to others too easily

Be a caretaker (rescuer)

be overprotective
be overly responsible
become too involved with
other's affairs/concerns
be possessive (too invested)
talk too much and listen poorly
make decisions for others
give unsolicited advice

Be too serious (intense)

be overly analytical
become stoical (unemotional)
not be able to have fun
be formal and businesslike
lack joy or life

Lesson One

What Is The Difference Between Living “A” (Christian) Life Versus Living “THE” (Christian) Life?

DAY ONE

Understanding The Foundation Of What It Means To Live The Christian Life

The foundation for understanding the truth about godly manhood is knowing what you believe about living the Christian life. With the men that I have discipled, I have discovered that they are living one of two kinds of the Christian life: “A” Christian life or “THE” Christian life. It is crucial to know the difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life because one life will lead to the fulfillment of God’s promises of victory, freedom, and transformation while the other will lead to more defeat, more bondage, and no change in your life. So let’s look at the difference between the two.

Overview of Lesson One

- **Understanding the difference between living “A” (Christian) life versus living “THE” (Christian) life**
- **Seeing God’s truth about the meaning of “THE” Life**
- **What it means that God is our source**
- **Learning about the SIN side and the LIFE side of the cross**
- **Understanding how God will transform our lives as we live from Him as the Source**

“A” Christian Life

Let me start with defining “A” Christian life.

“A” Christian Life:

What I was taught that I, using my own intellect, strength, ability, self-discipline and willpower, needed to DO with God’s HELP to live the Christian life

The key words in this definition are “I,” “my intellect, strength, ability, self-discipline, and willpower”, the word “do” and the phrase “God’s help.” The reason I point these words out is because I would like for you to keep them in mind as we look at the difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life.

In order to help you better understand what I mean by living “A” Christian life, let me share my story of living “A” life for the first 30 years as being a Christian. I became a Christian at age 18, but I did not get serious about my Christian walk until I was age 22. At that point, I asked the question, “What am I supposed to do to live the Christian life?” I thought this was the right question to ask because everything in my life was something that I learned and then went out and accomplished. Therefore, I thought this “learn and do” mentality applied to living the Christian life. Does this question seem logical to you?

Here are some of the answers to my question that other Christians have shared with me:

1. “I was told to take what I learn from the Bible and go out and try to accomplish what it says.”
2. “I was taught that I need to try to stop sinning.”
3. “I was taught to try to keep God’s rules and commands.”
4. “It was up to me with God’s help to try to change myself.”
5. “I needed to try to become more righteous.”
6. “I needed to try to transform my fleshly behavior into godly behavior.”
7. “I could attain freedom and victory if I tried hard enough.”

I believed that if I could accomplish these things with God’s help then I would be a “successful” Christian and would be pleasing to God and others. By the way, did you pick up on the word “try” in each of the examples above?

Question: Have you been told to do some of the things above to live the Christian life?

Being a “Type A” guy, I tried very hard to accomplish all of those things for thirty years as a Christian. The problem is that the more I “tried” the worse things eventually became. Instead of experiencing the freedom, victory, and transformation that God promises, I was getting more frustrated with my Christian walk because nothing seemed to change. I felt more and more like a failure as a Christian man because I could not get done what everyone was telling me that I needed to get done. And since I thought it was up to me with God’s help to get it done so that I could experience freedom, victory, and transformation, I condemned myself when I failed to get it done. Let me share some personal struggles that I wanted to be set free from.

My Personal Struggles

During this 30 year period, I had great internal struggles with inadequacy, rejection, anger, and unworthiness. As I shared earlier, these struggles were beliefs about myself based on the messages I heard from my dad. These struggles were so strong in my life that they became like “dictators” within me ordering my feelings and my choices. The truth is that I wanted to be set free from the bondage of these struggles.

Here again, I was told that if I “tried” hard enough with God’s help that I could set myself free. As hard as I tried, I was never able to set myself free from my feelings and beliefs of inadequacy, anger, rejection, and unworthiness. In fact, just the opposite took place. My feelings and beliefs got more entrenched the harder I tried. After several years of trying to be set free from these struggles, I came to the conclusion that what I was doing was not working (and was not ever going to work).

The truth be known, somewhere along that thirty year journey I gave up on the Christian life because it was not transforming me, it was not meeting my expectations, and it was not

producing the promises of freedom and victory. I felt that God had let me down and that I was on my own. I was more miserable than before I was saved. In fact, I became so depressed that I had thoughts of suicide.

Was this the life that God intended for me to live all those years? What was I doing wrong? Was there some key truth that I was missing in my understanding of the Christian life?

How about you? Have you been taught some of the things that I was taught to do and tried to make those happen in your life? If so, I have a few questions to ask you:

- Are you struggling with experiencing consistent victory in your Christian walk?
- Is there some sin pattern that you cannot set yourself free from?
- Is there some sinful behavior or attitude that you want changed, but it never seems to change no matter how hard you try?
- Do you feel that on some level that Christian life is just not working?
- Do you believe that there is something missing or something more that you want out of your Christian life?

My answer was “Yes” to all those questions. When I look back on those first thirty years, I realized that I was living “A” life not “THE” life. The reason being is that living “A” life will never produce the freedom, victory, and transformation that God promises. If I had continued to live “A” life I would still be experiencing:

- More frustration
- More defeat
- More bondage
- More disillusionment
- More inner turmoil
- More of the same or worse (i.e., no change or transformation)

Question: Have you been living “A” Christian life? If so, how do you feel about your Christian life so far? Frustrated? Defeated? Disillusioned? Wanting more? Lacking something? Wanting to give up? Needing to try harder?

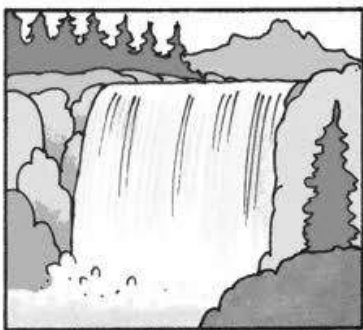
When you look at the list above, I hope you will agree with me that this is not the kind of life that God intends for us as men to live. So when we look at the results of living “A” life, it begs the question, “Is there another life that God has for us to live?” The good news is that there is another life that God has called us to experience, and it is called “THE” life. Let’s look at the meaning of “THE” life.

What Is “THE” Christian Life?

I believe that we need to begin answering this question by understanding what Jesus and Paul had to say about “THE” life.

What Jesus Says Is “THE” Christian Life

Jesus said:



*“...I AM the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE**...”*
John 14:6

*“...I AM the resurrection and **THE LIFE**.”*
John 11:25

What is Jesus saying in these two passages? I believe it is clear that Jesus is saying that He Himself is **THE** Life. What does He mean when He says that He is **THE** Life? For many years, I read these verses and concluded that they only meant that He was the source for my **eternal** life. However, is it possible that Jesus is telling us something more in these passages? Let's further explore the answer to this question by looking at what Paul said.

What Paul Said About Living “THE” Christian Life

Paul took the truth of Christ as “THE” Life to a more personal level when he said in Colossians 3:4:

*“..Christ who is **YOUR** life...”*

What is Paul saying in this verse? He is saying that the life of Christ is more than the eternal life that He gave you at salvation. He is saying that Christ is **your** life today, at this very moment. At this point you might be scratching your head and asking, “What is Paul talking about? What does it mean that Christ is my life? Is the life that Paul is referring to the Christian life?” I believe that the answer is found in Philippians 1:21 when Paul says:

*“For me, to live **IS** Christ....”*

Paul is saying that life for him is Christ being his life. Jesus and Paul are revealing to us an incredible truth, and that is:

“THE” Christian Life

is a PERSON: It is Christ HIMSELF!

Have you understood before now that Christ Himself is THE Christian life? Think about this for a moment. If “THE” Christian life is a Person, does that mean that “THE” Christian life is not about completing a checklist, trying to keep a set of rules, trying to keep from sinning, or trying to do your best to live for God? I believe what Jesus and Paul were saying is that THE Christian life is not a life that we are to produce. Rather:

“THE” Christian life is a life that ONLY Christ can produce.

The truth is that the Christian life is not about living “A” life. It is about living “THE” life. The problem is that you and I cannot live “THE” life. Only Christ can do that. Let me share with you how I discovered “THE” life.

I Finally Understood What It Meant To Live “THE” Life.

Little did I know that during those thirty years God was in the process of bringing me to the end of myself trying to live the Christian life by my own efforts. On Sunday, October 4, 1998, while sitting in the parking lot of our church, a thought came rolling across my mind in the form of a question. The question was, **“Are you done trying, in your own strength and ability, to make the Christian life work?”** There was no doubt in my mind that the Spirit of God was asking the question. My response to God was, “I am done! I can’t make the Christian life work.” God’s timing was perfect because on that day in church, God used a guest speaker named Ian Thomas to share the truth of “THE” life. When he got up to speak, the first words out of his mouth that Sunday were,

***“God never intended for you to live THE life that
ONLY Christ can live in and through you.”***

I was stunned by these words because he was the first person in thirty years as a Christian to ever tell me that it was not up to me to try to live the Christian life. What the Holy Spirit was telling me through Ian Thomas was this key truth:

KEY TRUTH:

***There is only ONE Person who truly lived “THE” PERFECT Christian life,
and that was Christ HIMSELF.***

This truth may be as startling to you as it was to me when I first heard it. However, isn’t it true? No one other than Jesus has lived a perfect Christian life. Therefore, what makes us think that we can do the same. Think about the following truth:

***All that we can do in our own strength and ability is live “A”
FORM of the Christian life.
Only Christ can live “THE” Life.***

The statement may create another question, and that is, “If only Christ can live ‘THE’ Life, how do I live ‘THE’ Christian life?” We will see how the Word of God answers that question later in this lesson.

Question: Do the biblical truths above about Christ being THE Christian life line up with what you believe? If not, how might it change how you live the Christian life if you believed that Christ is the only One who can live THE life?

Meditate: on the verses above and ask God to reveal to you if you have been living “A” life or allowing Christ to live “THE” life in you.

Engaging God: If this truth is new to you, please take a few moments to go to God and ask Him to make these truths real to you personally. Ask God to reveal to you in a deeper way what it means for Christ to be THE life. If this truth contradicts what you have believed about the Christian life so far, ask God to reveal to you if what you have just read is the truth or not. In this next section, we will look further into what it means that Christ is your life.

DAY TWO

What Does It Mean That Christ IS Your Life?

The next question that you may be asking is, “What does it mean that Christ is my life?”
I believe that God sums up the meaning in 1 Corinthians 1:30:

“He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, ...” (RSV)



God gives us the answer in the first part of the verse when He says that He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ. One of the definitions for the word “source” is “the one who produces.” This may be a new truth for you because so many Christians have been taught falsely like I was that they are to be the source for living the Christian life with God’s help. You see, there can only be ONE true source from which to live the Christian life.

***The truth is that God, NOT you, is the SOURCE
FROM Whom to live the Christian life.***

Look at two other verses that reveal that God is your Source for living the Christian life:

“In Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.....” Romans 11:36

These are just two of many verses in the Bible that reveal to us that God is to be our Source for living the Christian life. You may be wondering what it means practically that God is your Source. Let's look at four examples of what it means:

- **God is your Source to meet your needs. Philippians 4:19**
- **God is your Source of power over your sin. 1 John 3:6**
- **God is your Source to renew your mind to believe His truth. Romans 12:2**
- **God is your Source to make all His promises of transformation for you an experiential reality in your life. Philippians 1:6**

Have you tried to be the source to accomplish any of the four things listed above? If so, how is that working for you? If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to say that it is not working. The truth is that if we try to be the source for living the Christian life, then we are destined to fail. If He is not the Source in our Christian walk (and in all other areas of our life), then we will never experience God's truth and His promises in our lives.

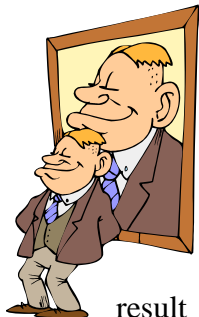
God as your SOURCE for living THE Christian life means that ONLY God can make His truth and His promises an EXPERIENTIAL reality in your life.

Questions: Have you believed up to this point that YOU are to be the source with God's help to live the Christian life? If so, then how would believing the truth that HE is the Source change how you live the Christian life?

Meditate: on 1 Corinthians 1:30, Acts 17:28 and Romans 11:36.

Engaging God: Using these three verses, ask the Spirit to give you a deeper understanding of what it means for Him to be your Source for living THE Christian life.

Why Does God Not HELP Us To Be The Source?



I hear many Christian men say, "God is going to help me." What they are unconsciously saying is that "**God is going to help me be the source to solve my problems, change myself, etc.**" Another way of saying it is, "God will help me help myself." This is a false teaching because God never intended for man to be the source for living life or to be transformed. Think about this question, "If God is the Source, then why would He help you be the source?" You see, God has it rigged! If He is not your Source for living the Christian life, then the result in your life will be more defeat, more bondage, and no transformation. God's design only works one way, and that is with Him being your Source.

Engaging God: If you have believed to this point that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life, ask God to give you deeper revelation that only He can be the Source from which to live THE Christian life.

The #1 FALSE BELIEF of The Christian Life:

Man can SUCCESSFULLY live the Christian life

by being the source and using his OWN intellect and ability with God's HELP.

Now that we have a better understanding of God being our Source, let's look further into what it means that Christ is your life.

How Do We Know That God Is To Be Our Source?

To better understand the truth that God is our Source, I feel that it is important at this point in the lesson to look back at God's original design and plan for man. I believe that this will give you further proof that God's intention from the beginning was for God to be man's source for living life. In this next section we will look at four things.

- **Who was Adam and Eve's source before the Fall?**
- **What happened to Adam and Eve at the Fall?**
- **What was man's spiritual condition at birth?**
- **What did God accomplish in man to become man's Source?**

Let's begin by looking at the condition of Adam and Eve before and after the Fall in the Garden of Eden.

Who Was Adam's and Eve's SOURCE Before The Fall?

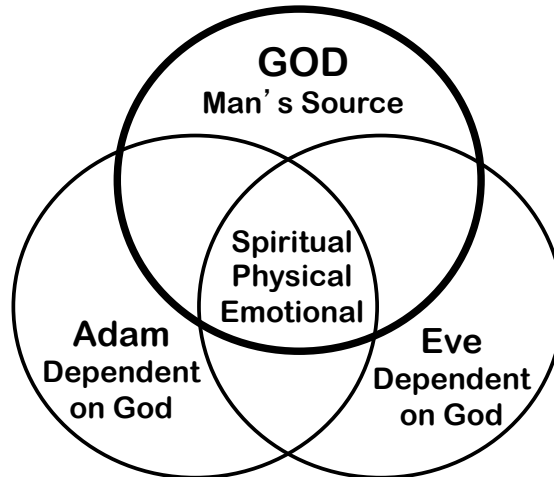
***"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* Genesis 2:7**

***"And my God shall supply all of your needs... in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:19**

At the creation of man, God was man's Source by breathing His life into Adam and Eve according to Genesis 2:7. In addition, God was their SOURCE to meet all of their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. (Philippians 4:19) God's design to be man's Source was clear from the beginning because man cannot meet the needs that only God can meet.

The following diagram illustrates man's relationship with God before the Fall:

**God Was The SOURCE To Meet
Adam and Eve's Needs Before The Fall**



***If God was the Source to meet all their needs, can we conclude that
Adam and Eve were **TOTALLY DEPENDENT** on God to meet those needs?***

“Dependence” is the key word to describe the relationship between God and Adam and Eve. They were totally dependent on God to meet their every need. We will end this section with the following key truth:

KEY TRUTH:
***As long as Adam and Eve continued to live **DEPENDENTLY** upon God,
He was their **SOURCE** to meet all of their needs.***

God Gave Adam and Eve A Free Will Choice To Be **DEPENDENT**



“And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” Genesis 2:16, 17

In order for man to have free will, God gave man a choice to be dependent or independent according to Genesis 2:16, 17. The choice was that they could eat from any tree in the garden but one. This choice was a test of man's willingness to continue depending on God. If they chose to depend on God

and eat of every other tree but the knowledge of good and evil, they would live. However, if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. We know the result in Genesis 3:6.

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis 3:6

In that moment Adam and Eve made a sinful, independent decision that resulted in **spiritual death** according to the first part of Romans 5:12:

*“Therefore, just as sin entered the world **through one man** (Adam), and death through sin...” (Parenthesis mine)*

What is the meaning of spiritual death? The key word in defining spiritual death is the word **“separation.”** In the original Greek text the word “separation” means to “sever” or “cut off.”

SPIRITUAL DEATH is defined as being SEVERED or CUT OFF from God.

This separation was twofold:

- **SEPARATION from the LIFE of God**

“Being darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God...” Ephesians 4:18

At the moment that Adam and Eve chose independence from God and sinned, He removed or separated His life from them. Even though Adam and Eve would still be alive physically, they would no longer experience God’s spiritual life. As a result, they died spiritually.

- **SEPARATION from God as the SOURCE**

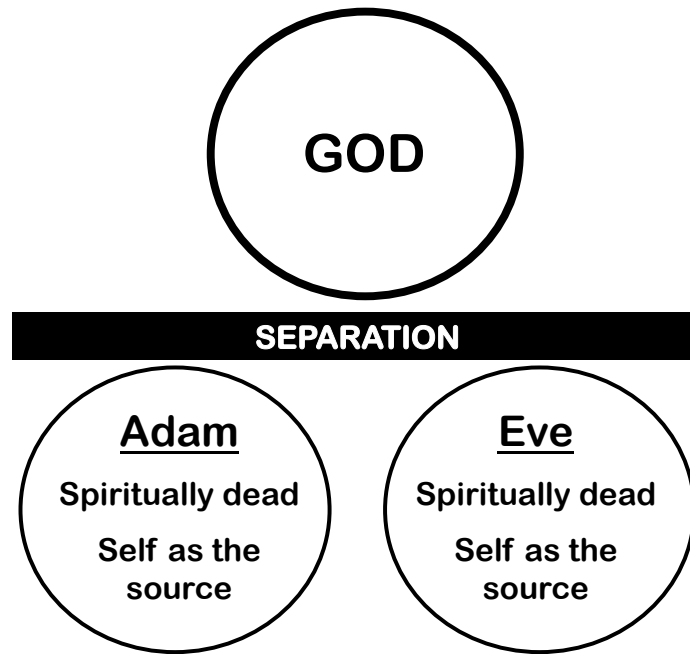
“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.” Isaiah 59:2

As I mentioned above, Adam and Eve totally depended upon God as their Source to meet every need. However, as a result of their sin, God separated Himself from man with the result that He would no longer be the Source for meeting man’s every need. This was the result:

***Man was left on his OWN to be his OWN source to meet his OWN needs,
to solve his OWN problems, and to TRY to make his life a success.***

Look at the diagram below and see how man’s condition changed after the fall.

Adam and Eve's Condition AFTER The Fall



DAY THREE

The Problem Is That We Inherited Adam's and Eve's Spiritual Death

What this means for you and me is that we inherited Adam and Eve's spiritual death and separation at our physical birth. Romans 5:12 tells us this:

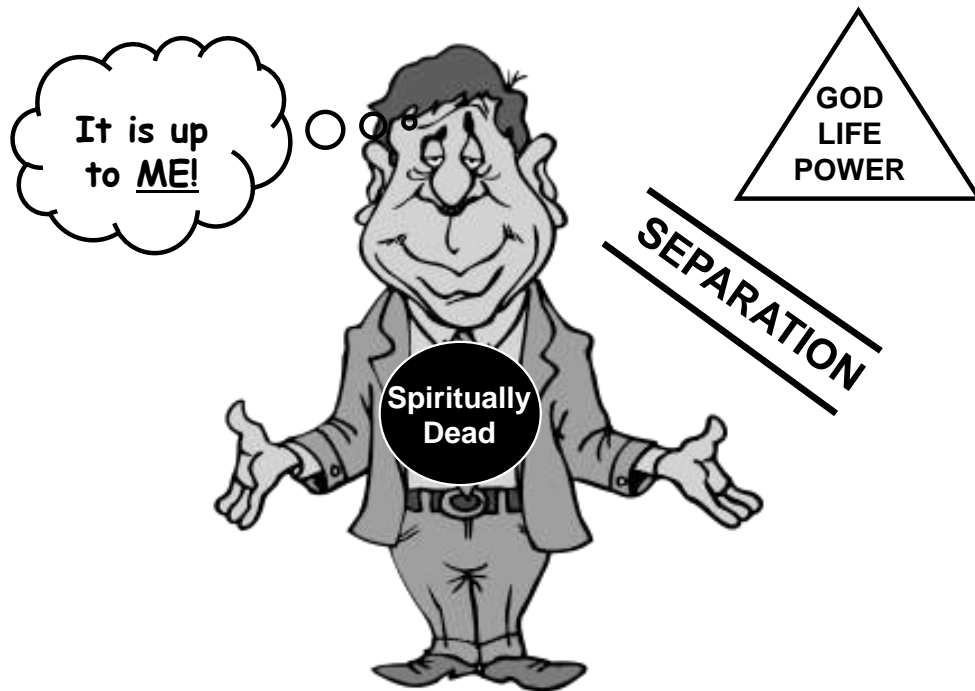
"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." Romans 5:12 (Parenthesis mine)

We see in Romans 5:12 that through the sin of Adam, every one of us is born spiritually dead. In other words, we inherited Adam's spiritual death the moment that we were born.

***Like Adam and Eve, we were born separated from God's LIFE and
from Him as our SOURCE.***

The next diagram illustrates the truth that we inherited Adam's separation from God as our Life and Source with the result that we were spiritually dead.

Man Inherited Adam's Condition At Physical Birth



***You inherited Adam's spiritual death which results in a
SEPARATION from God's Life and a
SEPARATION from God as the Source.***

***Because of this separation, it was up to YOU to
become the source to TRY to live life.***

Question: If God's original design was for total dependence upon Him as our Source, can you and I live independently of God and truly have our needs met, solve our own problems, and be successful in living the Christian life?

Meditate: On the truth that God's design from the beginning was for man to totally depend upon God as the Source for living the Christian life.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to give you further revelation of what it means that He is to be your Source for living life (i.e., in your marriage, in your job, and in your circumstances).

What Did God Do To Restore What Was Lost In The Garden After The Fall?

God knew that man would be eternally separated from Him if He did not provide a solution. Therefore, there were two things that God needed to do to give man salvation and life (and to restore Himself as man's source). I want to illustrate these two things by using a diagram I call

the **Two Sides of The Cross**. One side of the cross represents the SIN side, and the other represents the LIFE side. Let's first look at the SIN side of the cross to see what God accomplished in order to deal with our sin.

The SIN Side of the Cross – Christ Died For Our SINS To Give Us Eternal Life.

The “good news” of the gospel is that Jesus came to bear our sins because we were in need of a Savior. Through His death the penalty of our sins was dealt with, and by trusting Christ for salvation we receive eternal life.

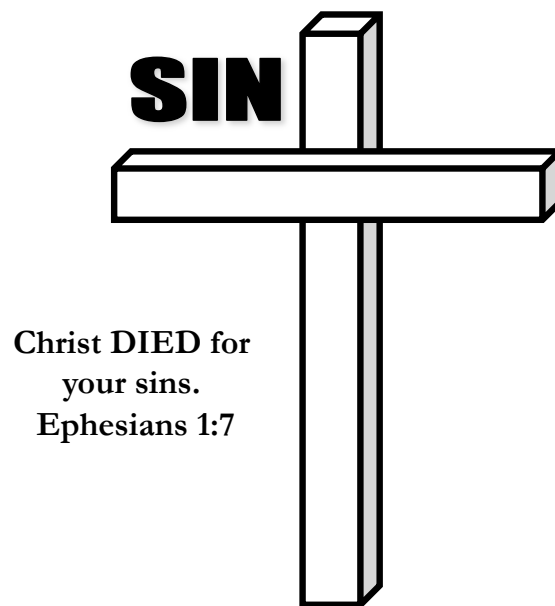
*“He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and **our sins are forgiven.**” Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)*

*“He who **believes in the Son has eternal life...**” John 3:36a*

Christ dying for our sins represents the SIN side of the cross.

The following diagram illustrates the SIN side of the cross.

The SIN Side of The Cross



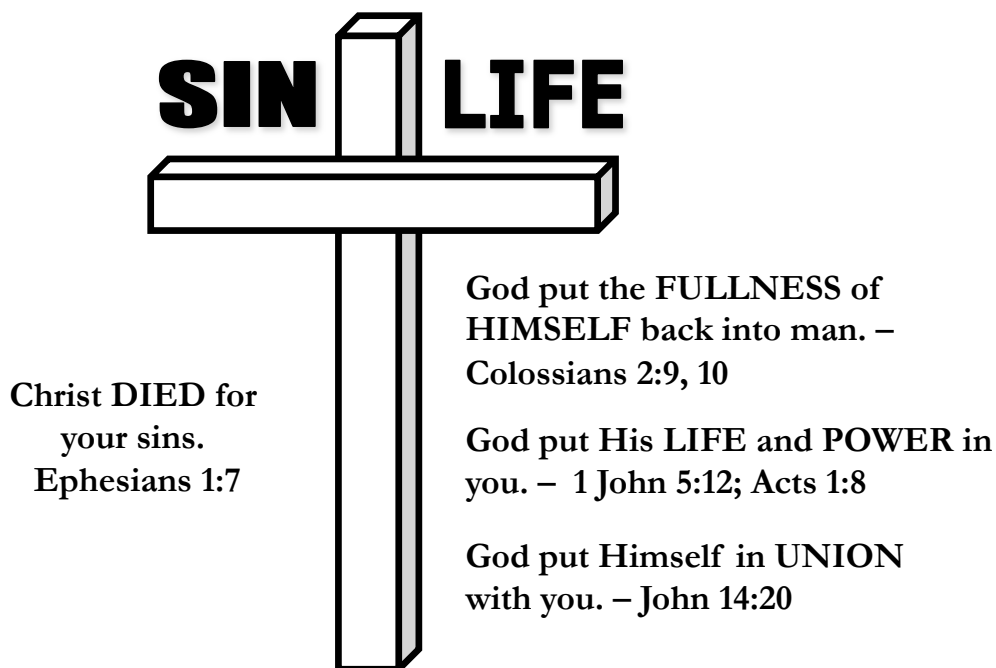
Note: If you are not sure that you have received Christ for salvation, you can do that right now. You can simply say the following prayer in faith and receive forgiveness and salvation. “Dear Lord, I recognize that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. As a result of You dying on the cross for my sins, I receive You by faith to be my Savior. Amen.”

The LIFE Side Of The Cross - God Put Himself In Man To Be Man's SOURCE For Living Life

Even though Christ died for man so that man could be saved, the problem still REMAINED of man being SEPARATED from God as his LIFE and SOURCE.

Since man was not designed to live separated from God, He accomplished three more things to restore Himself as man's Source. These three things make up what I call the "LIFE" side of the cross. Let's explore the meaning of the "LIFE" side of the cross.

The LIFE Side of The Cross



1. God put the FULLNESS of Himself back into man.

At the moment of salvation, you not only received Jesus as your Savior, but you also received the complete Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We see this in Colossians 2:9, 10:

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

These verses are telling us that the fullness of the Godhead is in Christ and that Christ is now in you with the result that you have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within you. You no longer have a God Who is separated from you. You now have the complete Godhead IN you!

God Put The Fullness of Himself In You



***It is critical to understand that if you have received Christ for salvation, you now
CONTAIN the fullness of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.***

Question: If you have not understood that you contain the entire Godhead, what impact might it have on your life if you understood this truth?

Meditate: on Colossians 2:9, 10. Think about this question, “What am I lacking if I contain the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?”

Engaging God: Ask God to give you further revelation of the eternal significance of the fullness of Himself now being in you.

DAY FOUR

2. You Now Have The Fullness Of God’s LIFE and POWER IN You.

In addition, to receiving the fullness of God, you also received all of His Life and Power.

a. Christ’s LIFE

*“God has given us eternal life, and this **life is in His Son**. He who has the **Son has THE LIFE...**” 1 John 5:12a (Emphasis mine)*

We see that at salvation that God gave us THE Life that is in Christ. What are some examples of THE Life that we now possess.

Christ as your life means that you contain ALL of Christ's:

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| Unconditional love | Victory | Worth | Acceptance | Faith |
| Freedom | Patience | Strength | Peace | Power |
| Forgiveness | Understanding | Security | Fearlessness | Wisdom |
| Discernment | Adequacy | Humility | Christ-confidence | Boldness |
| Righteousness | Selflessness | Rest | Compassion | Courage |
| Hope | Gentleness | Control | Faithfulness | Joy |

Christ as your life means that Christ is your SOURCE to provide you

His peace, His acceptance, His joy, etc.

Since you contain the life of Christ, it means that you have available to you at any time all the Christ-life characteristics listed above. We will learn in Lesson Four the difference between Christ-life characteristics and human characteristics. (For example, the difference between Christ's love versus man's love.) However, for now I just want you to be aware that in this moment you already have available to you all of the above Christ-like characteristics.

Question: How might your life be different if you were living from Christ's peace, patience, victory, etc. listed above?

Engaging God: Pick one or two Christ-life characteristics above that you most want to experience and begin seeking God to make the Christ-like characteristics listed above an experiential reality in your life.

Meditate: on the following statement. The key word in this statement is "from."

God put the fullness of His LIFE in you so that you can live FROM His life.

b. God's POWER

In addition to Christ's life, you received all of God's supernatural power at the point of salvation according to Acts 1:8:

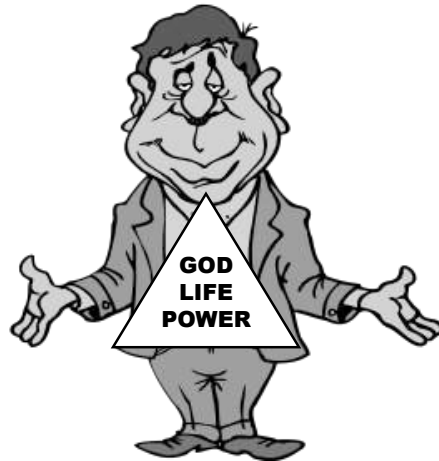
*"you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...."*

Think about this for a moment. Since you contain all of the Godhead, then all of God's power resides in you. God knew that without His power in man, there would be no transformation in man. Therefore, He put the fullness of His power in us to transform our lives. We will talk more in Lesson Three about the magnitude and purpose of God's power that resides within us.

God put His POWER in you to transform you into Christ-likeness.

The diagram on the following page illustrates that you are the container of God's life and power.

God Put His Life and Power In You



Question: Why was it essential for God to put His power into you? What is it that you are trying to change about yourself, your wife, your family, or your workplace in your own willpower? Is it working?

Meditate: on 1 John 5:12 and Acts 1:8 and think about this question, “Why was it necessary for God to put His life and power into me?”

Engaging God: Begin asking God to give you a greater experience of His power in you.

3. God Put Himself in UNION With You.

Not only did God put Himself in you, but He also went even further. God put Himself in UNION with you. We see this truth in the following three verses:

“... (God) made us alive together with Christ.” Ephesians 2:5 (Parenthesis mine)

*“But the **one** (the believer) who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit (in union with) with Him.” 1 Corinthians 6:17 (Parentheses mine)*

“In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you (are in union) in Me, and I (am in union) in you.” John 14:20 (Parentheses mine)

Being in union or “divinely connected” with God means that we can NEVER be separated from God again. In other words, being in union means that you can never lose your salvation and that you entered into eternal life with Him the day that you were saved. This is why He says in the second part of Hebrews 13:5:

“.....I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Meditate: on Ephesians 2:5, 1 Corinthians 6:17, and John 14:20 and think about the following question if you believe that you can lose your salvation. “If God is the One who put Himself in union with me, how can I separate myself from this union?”

Engaging God: If you struggle with the security of your salvation, seek God to persuade you that there is **nothing** that you can do to lose your salvation or be separated from God again.

What is the result of God putting His life and power in you?

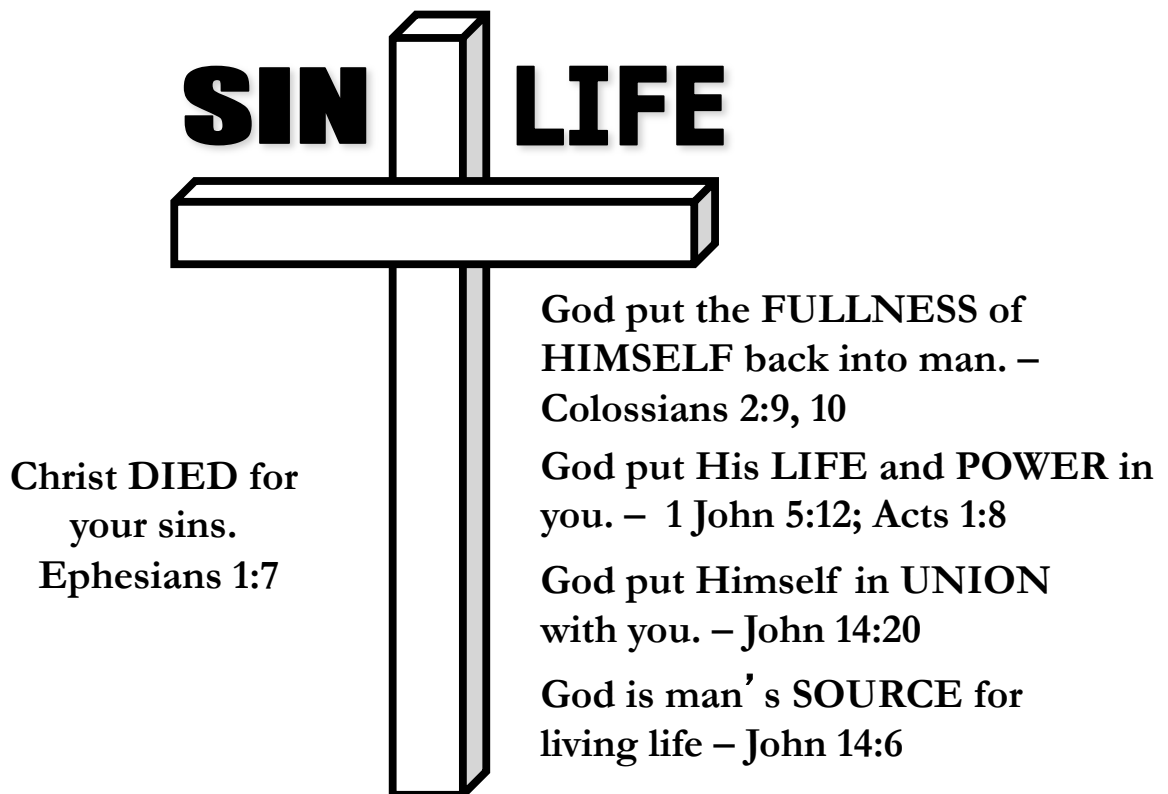
THE RESULT:

By God putting His LIFE and POWER in you and putting Himself in UNION with you at salvation, it means that YOU no longer have to be the Source for living life.

God HIMSELF becomes your SOURCE from which to live life.

Let's take one more look at the SIN side and LIFE side of the cross.

The Two Sides of The Cross



The GREAT news of the gospel is that in addition to being saved, you have God within you to be your LIFE and SOURCE.

You NO LONGER have to be the Source to try to make life work!

Christ As Your Life Means That He Wants To Live His Life IN You.

Since Christ put Himself in you, He wants to live THE LIFE that ONLY He can live IN you.

Paul confirms this for His own life in the first part of Galatians 2:20:

“I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives IN me...”

Think about what Paul is saying in this verse. When Paul says, “I no longer live,” he in effect is saying that he CANNOT be the source for living the Christian life. This is amazing considering all of Paul’s credentials, intellect, and capability. He clearly acknowledges that none of those things qualifies him to be the source. Therefore, since he admits that he cannot live the Christian life, he says, “Christ lives in me.” Paul recognizes his absolute need for Christ to live the Christian life in him.

Christ living His life in you may be a new concept for you. It was a radical concept for me, especially after trying (and failing) for thirty years to live the Christian life on my own. However, as the Lord gave me greater revelation of the meaning of Christ living in me, I became convinced that I cannot live THE life that only Christ can live.

The KEY to living THE Christian life is for Christ to live HIS life in you.

I hope even now that you will begin to ask the Lord to give you deeper revelation of this very crucial truth. For the rest of this study we will explore the practical meaning of Christ living His life in us.

Questions: Have you realized before now that the Christian life is about Christ living His life in you? How might this truth change the way you think about how you are to live the Christian life?

Meditate: on the truth that you can’t live the Christian life. Only Christ living in you will ever create true change your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you revelation of what it means for Christ to live His life in you.

DAY FIVE

What Will God Accomplish In Your Life As He Lives His Life In You?

You may be asking, “What does it look like for God to live His life IN me?” Part of the answer lies in what He promises to accomplish in your life. Let’s look at a few of those promises.



VICTORY – God will give you experiential victory over the power of sin, the flesh, the world, and the power of Satan.

“but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57

FREEDOM – God will set you free from your false beliefs, your defeating sin patterns, and your ongoing inner struggles.

“So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.” Galatians 5:1

HEALING – God will heal you of your past and present woundedness.

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3

SUPPLY - God will supply all of your needs.

“My God shall supply all your needs.....in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

INTIMACY – He will draw you into a personal, intimate relationship with Himself.

“His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:5

These are just a few of the promises for you as a Christian as Christ lives His life in you.

God living His life in you results in you EXPERIENCING His promises!

Questions: Are you experiencing the promised freedom, victory, healing, and intimacy with God that you desire? If not, do you want to experience these promises?

Meditate: on the promises listed above. Think about which of these promises you most want to experience.

Engaging God: If you are not experiencing these promises to the extent that you would like, ask God to begin making these promises an experiential reality in your life.

One More Key Promise: Fulfillment of Your SPIRITUAL Destiny

You and I, as believers, have a spiritual destiny. Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, and Galatians 4:19 below tell us our spiritual destiny as Christians.

*“For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** to become **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” Romans 8:29*

*“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, **are being transformed into His likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
2 Corinthians 3:18*

*“My children, with whom I am again in labor until **Christ is formed in you**.” Galatians 4:19*

Based upon these three verses, let me share at a simple definition of your spiritual destiny.

Your Spiritual Destiny:

***Is to be TRANSFORMED into the LIKENESS of Christ,
which means that you will THINK, BELIEVE, CHOOSE and BEHAVE like Christ.***

Think about it for a moment. What would be different about your life if God transformed you so that you were thinking, believing, choosing, and behaving like Christ? How would it change how you relate to others or how you would deal with your circumstances?

My experience has been that many Christians that I have ministered to are not experiencing ongoing transformation into Christ-likeness. I fully understand because for the first thirty years of my life I was not experiencing any real transformation either. The reason was that I had been living from a false belief about what it meant to live the Christian life. The key is that without knowing, believing, and living from the truth of what it means to live the Christian life, there will be no major transformation.

Since you contain the fullness of God’s life and power in you, you can experience a supernatural transformation so that you will think, choose, believe, and behave more like Christ.

Remember: This is not a transformation that you can produce or experience apart from Christ living His life in you. This is also not about imitating or trying to be like Christ in your own ability.

Question: In what ways would it change your life if you were thinking, feeling, believing, choosing, and behaving like Christ?

Meditate: on Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 and think about this point: As Christ lives His life in you, He will change the way you think, feel, choose, and behave.

Engaging God: Ask God to begin transforming you in the areas where you want to experience transformation.

What Is The Result Of God Fulfilling His Promises In You?

The result of Christ living His life in you is that you will experience **abundant life**. He makes this promise in John 10:10:

*“...I have come that they might have life and have it **abundantly**.”*

What do you think Jesus meant by an abundant life? I don't believe that He meant an external abundance because that can be easily taken away. Is it possible that the abundance that Jesus is talking about is an internal abundance? Let me use the promises listed in the previous section to give a better understanding of the meaning of abundant life. I will do this in the form of a question.

If you were:

- **living in victory** over sin, the flesh, the world, and Satan,
- **experiencing freedom** from your defeating sin patterns,
- **being healed** of your past or present woundedness,
- **having your needs met,**
- **being transformed** to think, feel, choose, and behave like Christ, and
- **experiencing a personal, intimate relationship with God,**

would you consider that **abundant living**?

I believe that you, like me, would consider this abundant living. Consider this as well:

***If Christ is your life, and His life is ABUNDANT, then abundant living is allowing
Christ to live in you so that you will experience His promises of
FREEDOM, VICTORY, HEALING, TRANSFORMATION, and INTIMACY.***

Question: If someone were to ask you today if you are living an abundant life, what would your answer be?

We Live FROM God And Not FOR Him.

We have just learned that it is all about God living His life in us. However, as a result of living “A” life, I believed that the Christian life was about me living FOR God. By this I mean that I was taught that God needed me to evangelize, disciple, etc. Have you been taught this as well? The truth is that you are off the hook. God does not expect you to live THE life that only Christ can live. In other words, it is not up to you to do something FOR God. The truth is that

God does not need anything from us since He is the provider and the producer according to Philippians 1:6:

*“For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**”*

Since God is our provider and producer, then we are to live FROM Him and not FOR Him. Let's sum it up this way:

THE LIE:
We are to live FOR God because we NEED to do something for Him.

THE TRUTH:
We are to live FROM God because He is our Source FROM which to live life.

Questions: Do you believe that God needs for you to do something FOR Him? What do you think it means that you are to live from God as your Source? How would it change how you live your Christian life if you believed that you are to live from God versus living for Him?

The ULTIMATE Outcome of God Living In You

In order to understand the ultimate outcome of God living in you, we need to first understand His plan for man in Ephesians 1:5:

*“His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by **bringing us to Himself** through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.”*

God's UNCHANGING plan is to draw you to Himself
in order to experience a PERSONAL, INTIMATE relationship with Him.

You see, you were created for relationship with God. Believe it or not, God wants an intimate, personal relationship with you. That is why He put Himself in this inseparable union with you. The truth is that God does not need a relationship with you. However, He wants a relationship with you. God's motivation behind His desire for a deeper relationship with you is His unconditional love. We see this in Ephesians 1:4:

*“Long ago, even before He made the world, God **loved** us and **chose** us in Christ...”*

The truth according to this scripture is that God has loved you for an eternity. Think about this. God was waiting with great anticipation for you to be born so that He could pour out His love on you. I would like for you to think about this scientific fact: At conception, there were 500 MILLION possible genetic combinations, and out of all those combinations God chose YOU to be born! God has not only put His life in you to make His promises a reality in your life, but He also put His life in you to experience His great love for you and His desire to have a relationship with you.

Meditate: on Ephesians 1:5 and Ephesians 1:4 above. Meditate on the truth that God created you for relationship with Him. Think about the fact that God chose you to be born and was waiting for you to be born so that He could pour out His love upon you.

Engaging God: If you struggle on some level with your relationship with God, ask Him to confirm in you His immense and eternal love for you.

What Has Happened Since I First Heard These Truths?

Since I heard the truth about Christ being THE Life on October 4, 1998, I began a new journey of allowing Christ to live THE life in me. As a result, God began a work to change the way that I think, feel, choose, and behave. By trusting Christ to live in me, I have been set free (for the most part) from my strongholds of inadequacy, fear, anger, and unworthiness. He so transformed my life that I left a very good business to go into ministry to share these same truths with Christians like you who are wanting more from their Christian walk. My prayer from this point on for you is that you will engage the Holy Spirit to give you further revelation and understanding of what it means for Christ to live THE life in you.

“A” Life Versus “THE” Life Overview

To get an overview of what the difference is between “A” Life and “THE” Life look at the next page. We will be referring back to this page as we go through the rest of this study.

Summary Points Of Lesson One

- Christ **Himself** is the Christian life. John 14:6
- Christ as your life means that God is to be the **Source** for living life. Acts 17:28
- **God** was Adam’s and Eve’s Source for living life prior to the Fall. 1 Corinthians 1:30
- Adam and Eve made a **sinful, independent decision** to disobey God and died spiritually. Romans 5:12a
- Man **inherited** Adam’s and Eve’s separation from God as our Life and Source. Romans 5:12b
- God not only dealt with our sins, but He **put His life back into man** to once again be man’s source from which to live life. Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 5:12
- God’s **life** and **power** in us promises to transform our lives. 2 Corinthians 3:18
- God’s part in this transformation process is to be the **initiator** and the **cause and effect** for change. Philippians 1:6
- The ultimate outcome of your transformation is a **personal, intimate relationship** with God. Ephesians 1:5

The Difference Between “A” Life And “THE” Life

“A” LIFE (Living From Self As the Source)

Independent Life

Living independently of God to try to live the Christian life.

The Christian Life Is A Life Of Performance

The Christian life is a set of rules to follow
Or a checklist to complete.

You Are The Source To Live The Christian Life

It is up to you using your own strength and ability
with God’s help to live the Christian life.

Living FOR God

Trying in your own strength to please God and to
earn something from God. (Love, acceptance, etc.)

Self-Transformation With God’s Help

Trying by your own effort w/God’s help to produce
victory, freedom, healing, and transformation.

Faith In Yourself With God’s Help

Faith in your intellect, ability, self-discipline, and
willpower with God’s help to produce the Christian
life.

Results In:

More flesh, sin, frustration, defeat, woundedness.
Disillusionment and walking away from the
Christian life or just trying harder to make life work
No transformation
Continuing to live a self-sufficient Christian life
Ongoing turmoil and conflict
More of the same or worse

“THE” LIFE (Living From Christ As The Source)

Dependent Life

Living in moment by moment dependence on God as
Your Source for living the Christian life. John 15:5

The Christian Life Is Christ

The Christian life is Christ Himself.
John 14:6; Philippians 1:21

God Is Source To Live The Christian Life

You live from God’s life and power as the Source to
Live the Christian life. John 14:6; Acts 17:28

Living FROM God

Trusting Christ to live His life in and
through you. Galatians 2:20

God-Produced Transformation

Depending on God as the Source to produce,
Victory, freedom, healing, and transformation.
1 Corinthians 1:30

Faith In God

Faith in God alone with the result that His life and
power will flow in and through you to produce
Transformation into Christ-likeness. 1 John 5:12;
Ephesians 1:19, 20; Hebrews 11:6

Results In:

Freedom, victory, healing – Galatians 5:1;
1 Corinthians 15:57; Psalm 147:3
Greater dependence upon God – John 15:5
Deeper intimacy with Him – Philippians 3:8
Being transformed into Christ-likeness -
2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29
Abundant life – John 10:10

Lesson Two

What Is God's Part and Your Part In God Living His Life In You?

DAY ONE

Overview of Lesson Two

- God's part in living His life in us
- Man's part in God living His life in us
- Understanding how Jesus lived in relationship to His Father
- Why we struggle with dependence
- Why we can't live independently of God
- Four meanings of the word faith
- The two objects of our faith
- Why we struggle with faith

What Is GOD'S PART In Living The Christian Life IN You?

This is an important part of our study because in order to live THE life, we must know God's part and our part.

God Is The INITIATOR And The CAUSE and EFFECT of Making His Promises An Experiential Reality In Your Life.

*"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began (INITIATED) a good work in you..."
Philippians 1:6a (Parenthesis mine)*

What is Paul telling us in the first part of this verse? He is saying that God began the work that He wants to accomplish in us. He began or **initiated** this work in us at salvation. However, God promises to do much more than just save us. Look at the second part of Philippians 1:6:

"...He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion (CAUSE and EFFECT) until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6b

We see in the second part of Philippians 1:6 that God not only began the work, but He also WILL complete the work that He began in us at salvation. This verse reveals to us that God is the **initiator** and the **cause** and **effect** for real change in our lives.

The false belief is that you, as a man, are to be the initiator and the cause and effect of the transformation in your life. In other words if any change is to occur, it is up to you to transform yourself (with God's help). It is because of this false belief that so many men have either given up or else keep trying harder to live the Christian life. The truth is, according to Philippians 1:6, that **only God** can be the cause and effect of change when it comes to fulfilling His promises. This is confirmed by the verse above and by many other scriptures as well. This is a struggle for

us as men because the “world” is telling us that we must be the cause and effect for what happens in our lives. However, the truth is this:

It is GOD’S responsibility to save you, and it is HIS responsibility to make His promises an EXPERIENTIAL reality in your life.

Questions: Have you believed that it is up to you to be the source for change in your life? How might it change how you live the Christian life if you believe that God is the cause and effect of your transformation?

Meditate: on Philippians 1:6. Think about the determined God within you Who is willing to radically change your life.

Engaging God: If you struggle with God being able or willing to change your life, ask Him to persuade you that He is more than able and willing to bring change.

KEY TRUTH:

Without GOD being the INITIATOR of His work in you as well as the CAUSE and EFFECT of change, there will NEVER be any significant change in your life.

God Is Not Only Willing But He Is DETERMINED To Transform Your Life

*“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you **WILL** carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6*

One other point that I want to share along these lines is that I have heard many believers ask the question, “Is God truly willing to transform my life?” Look again at Philippians 1:6 because it clearly shows that God initiated His work in you at salvation and that He is continuously willing to transform your life:

This word not only means that God is willing but He is **determined** to transform your life. Think of it for a moment that eternally more than you want to be transformed God is willing and determined to transform your life.

***Not only is God WILLING to transform your life,
He is DETERMINED to transform your life.***

Meditate: on the truth that God is not only willing but determined to transform your life. How does that change your perspective of God's desire to change your life?

Only God In HIS Ability Is ABLE To Make His Promises A Reality In Your Life.

*“Now unto Him who is **able** to do **exceeding abundantly** above all that we ask or think, according to **the (God's) power** that works in us.” Ephesians 3:20 (Parenthesis mine)*

What Paul is saying is that only through God's power in you is He able to make the promises of victory, freedom, healing, transformation, and intimacy with Him an experiential reality in your life. We see in Ephesians 3:20 that Paul is bearing witness to what God had accomplished in his life. Even as capable and brilliant as Paul was, he is telling us that only God could transform his life.

Questions: Are you at a place in your Christian life where you can make the same exclamation as Paul? Do you believe that God is able and willing to bring you to the same place as Paul?

Meditate: on Ephesians 3:20. Remember that you have the same life and power of God in you as Paul had.

Engaging God: If you struggle with believing that God is able and/or willing to transform your life, begin asking Him to move you from unbelief to belief.

Only God Has the ABILITY to radically change your life.

What Will Be The Results Of God Living In You As Your Source?

I want to share with you concerning the promises that we discussed earlier about God's part and the results of allowing God to accomplish His promises in you.

What God will accomplish IN you pertaining to His promises:

- **God will FREE you from the sin strongholds that you can't overcome.**
- **God will HEAL you of your past and present woundedness.**
- **God will be your SUPPLY to meet your needs.**
- **God will be your VICTORY over sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan.**
- **God will TRANSFORM your life in order for you to experience Christ-likeness.**
- **God will draw you into an INTIMATE relationship with Him**

What God is able and willing do in other areas of your life:

- **He can restore hurting or broken relationships.**
- **He can be your wisdom and discernment in making difficult decisions.**

- He can be your peace and rest in unstable situations or conflicts.
- He can produce in you a joy and a happiness that will exceed your expectations.

Question: What else in your life would you like for God to accomplish that is not listed above?

Engaging God: Ask God to begin accomplishing those things.

Eternally more than you can imagine, this God Who lives in you is able and wants to bring about changes in your life that will STUN you, AMAZE you, and leave you in AWE of Him.

DAY TWO

What Is YOUR Part In Living The Christian Life?

Even though God is the cause and effect of transformation in your life, you have a vital part to play in order for Him to live His life in you. Let's look at John 15:5 to give you a better idea of what that part is:

"I AM the VINE, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit..." John 15:5a

Jesus is saying that as the physical branch is designed to be totally dependent upon the physical vine for life, you, as a spiritual branch, are designed to live totally dependent upon God, the spiritual Vine, for life. The word "abide" is another word for **dependence**. This verse gives us the answer about your part in living the Christian life.



Your Part In Living The Christian Life:

Live with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God as the Source for living life.

Remember that we saw in Lesson One that Adam and Eve were totally dependent upon God to meet every need. Is it possible that this has been God's design all along?

KEY TRUTH:

God created you as a man to be totally DEPENDENT upon Him.

His design from the beginning was for you to live dependently upon Him.

Side note: The word “bear” in John 15:5 does not mean “produce.” The word “bear” means “to carry.” The key point is that the branch does not produce the fruit. The vine is the source for producing the fruit while the branch is the agent through which the fruit is produced.

Doesn’t it stand to reason that if God is the Source to produce His promises in you, your part is to depend on Him to make those promises an experiential reality in your life?

KEY POINT

As you walk with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God, He, as your Source, will PRODUCE in you the freedom, victory, healing, and transformation that He promises.

Question: What do you think might be some of the results in your life if you, as a spiritual branch, decide to live independently of God, the spiritual Vine?

Questions: Have you believed up to this point that YOU are to produce the fruit? If so, how would it change your attitude toward your Christian walk if you believed that your part is “dependence,” and God’s part is “production” of the fruit in you? How does this truth differ from what our culture or religion is telling us?

Meditate: I know that John 15:5 is a very familiar verse, but Christians seem to give ascent to it without realizing the eternal depths of what Jesus is saying. Therefore, spend time going through the verse by meditating on it slowly and deliberately.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper spiritual understanding of the eternal implications of the branch-Vine relationship with Christ.

The Good News About Dependence: You Are OFF The Hook!

The good news about depending on God to transform your life is that you are no longer responsible for making your Christian life work. For so many men, they have been told that it is up to them to set themselves free, to gain the victory or to transform their lives. As I shared with you in my testimony, I believed that I was to be the source with God’s help to live the Christian life. In other words, I was responsible. However, now that I am living a Christ-dependent life then the Lord is the one who is responsible for living His life in me and for transforming my life.

To Better Understand Dependence, Let’s See How Jesus Lived.

You may be wondering at this point what dependence looks like. To gain a fuller understanding of dependence, let’s look at how Jesus lived His life as a man on earth. We need

to first understand that Jesus as the “God-man” laid aside His privileges of deity. We see this in Philippians 2:6, 7:

*“He (Jesus) had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, **He set aside the privileges of deity** and took on the status of a slave and became human!” NLT (Parenthesis mine)*

It doesn’t mean that at any time while Jesus was on this earth that He was not fully deity. What it means specifically is that Jesus laid aside His right to be **co-equal** with the Father in order to live as a man. How then did Jesus live in regard to His relationship with the Father?

Let’s look at three scriptures that describe Jesus’s relationship to His Father:

*“Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself**, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.’” John 5:19*

*“**I can do nothing on My own initiative**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because **I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.**” John 5:30*

*“Jesus therefore said, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do **nothing on My own initiative**, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.’” John 8:28*

The common theme in each of these verses is that Jesus said that He could do **nothing apart from** the Father. Jesus lived in moment by moment dependence upon the Father as His Source.

***This means that Jesus was not functioning out of His OWN
life and power but out of the life and power of His FATHER.***

Could this mean that the Father, not Jesus, was the Source for all that Jesus accomplished while He was on earth? We see the answer in John 14:10 when Jesus says:

*“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say are not my own, but **my Father who lives in Me does His work through Me.**”*

What this verse is telling us is that it was the Father’s **life** and **power** flowing through Jesus in healing the lame, giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead. In other words, Jesus was dependent, and the result of His dependence was that the Father **produced** the miracles through Christ. Jesus’s life in relationship to His Father is a perfect example of the branch-Vine relationship. This leads us to the following question:

***If Jesus, as a man, lived in total DEPENDENCE upon His Father as the Source
with the result that the FATHER lived His life in and through Jesus,
HOW SHOULD YOU AS A MAN LIVE?***

Question: Referring back to God's promises of victory, freedom, healing, and transformation that we discussed earlier, what does God promise to do in your life as you live dependently upon Him?

Meditate: on the verses above and think about this question, "If Jesus as our example lived from the Father's life and power, how does God expect us to live?"

Engaging God: You may not have understood until now the relationship between Jesus and His Father and the application of this relationship to your relationship with God. Therefore, ask God to reveal to you how Jesus's relationship with the Father applies to you in your daily life.

Why Do We As Men Struggle With Dependence?

1. The world says that to be a man means that you must be INDEPENDENT.

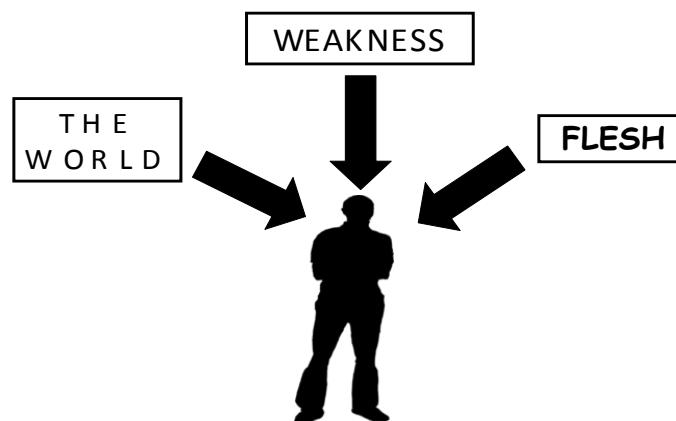
A major part of our struggle with dependence as men is that we live in a world that screams "be independent" or "be your own man." We are so inundated and brainwashed with the message of independence that we struggle with dependence on anyone or anything.

2. The world that dependence is WEAKNESS.

If we, as men, believe the "world's" message that independence defines a man who is strong then being dependent means that we must be weak. Since no man wants to be looked at as weak then he will try to live an independent life to prove his strength as a man.

3. There is a part of man's makeup (THE FLESH) that resists being dependent upon God.

Until we were saved, we were living totally independent of God. Therefore, when we learn that the Christian life is about dependence, there is something within us called the flesh which resists walking dependently upon God. The flesh is simply an attitude within us that says, "I don't need God to live life." We will talk more about the flesh in a future lesson, but it is important to know that there is a part of you that will ALWAYS resist being dependent upon God.



Reasons Men Struggle With Dependence

DAY THREE

What Can't We As Men Live Independently of God?

Even though we struggle with dependence, it is important to remember God's design for man. We can try to live contrary to our design, but it won't work according to John 15:5b:

“.....apart from Me you can do nothing.”

What does Jesus mean when He says, “apart from Me you can do nothing?” This part of John 15:5 creates problems for many Christian men. Why? It is because man is capable of doing many things apart from God. Men learn how to do a job, to master a hobby or a sport, or to manage his finances. So what does Jesus mean?

Jesus means that apart from Him you CANNOT PRODUCE

a life of freedom, victory, healing, transformation, or intimacy with God.

Every one of God's promises are for you to experience. However, as we learned from Philippians 1:6 they are not for you to **produce**. Only God can produce His promises in your life.

What else can you expect if you choose to live independently of (apart from) God?

- You will never experience God's power over sin, Satan, and the world.
- You will never experience Christ's joy, peace, or rest in the midst of adversity.
- You will never see God's divine purposes in your life through your struggles.
- You will be stuck in trying to fix your internal and external problems that only God can fix.

Questions: Are there sin patterns in your life that you have tried in your own strength to have victory over, but you don't have victory? Is there past woundedness that has really never been healed? Are there fleshly behaviors that you want to be free from, but you can't set yourself free? Is it possible that God is using these situations in your life to prove to you that you cannot live independently of Him?

KEY POINT

The problem is that living from your OWN power, strength, and ability CANNOT produce the Christian life that only God can produce.

Does this give you a better idea of what some of the results will be if you live independently of or apart from God? Let's explore this idea further by defining independence:

***INDEPENDENCE is an ATTITUDE that says,
“I can live my life, meet my needs, solve my problems, and be a success
APART from God.”***

Living independently of God is defined as living from the “flesh.”

Question: Since your design as a Christian man is for dependence, what might be some of the consequences for you if you choose to walk independently of God?

Questions: Is there some impossible circumstance or relationship that you can’t fix, handle, or resolve? What do you believe that God might be teaching you through those impossible circumstances or relationships?

Meditate: on John 15:5b and ask God to reveal to you those areas of your life where you might be trying to live the Christian life apart from Him and how that may be adversely affecting your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper understanding of what it means that “apart from Him you can do nothing.”

God Is In The Process Of Bringing You To The Place Of “I CAN’T,”

*“I am crucified with Christ and **I no longer live**, but Christ lives in me...” Galatians 2:20a*

What is Paul saying when he says, “I no longer live?” He is admitting that he **CAN’T** be the source for living the Christian life. I know how Paul feels. I should title my autobiography for the first thirty years of my Christian life “How I Proved God Right!” I proved God right in that as hard as I tried I could not produce the victory, freedom, healing, and transformation that only God can produce. It took God thirty years to bring me to the place of “I Can’t.” What is the meaning of “I Can’t?”



“I CAN’T”

***is the place where you come to believe that
you CANNOT produce the Christian life that God promises and
that you must depend on God to produce that PROMISED life.***

What are some practical meanings of “I Can’t?”

1. **I can’t** meet the needs that only God was designed to meet.
2. **I can’t** set myself free from my sinful behavior and lying beliefs.
3. **I can’t** obtain victory over the sin patterns that continually defeat me.
4. **I can’t** move my will from choosing to live in the flesh to living in the Spirit.
5. **I can’t** solve the impossible problems in my circumstances, relationships, marriage, job, with my kids, or in my other relationships.

Question: What do you believe will continue to occur in your life if you don’t come to the place of “I Can’t” in those areas?

Meditate: on the first part of Galatians 2:20. Think about the application in your life if Paul is admitting that he can’t live the Christian life.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you the areas in your life where you have not arrived at the place of “I Can’t.”

Another Word For Dependence Is FAITH

Why do I say that dependence = faith? Let me give you an example. When you have a dental problem, it creates a need for a dentist. You are totally dependent on that dentist to deal with your teeth. Another way of saying that you are dependent is that you have **faith** in your dentist’s ability to do what you cannot do for yourself. Therefore, another word for dependence is faith.



Let’s return to Galatians 2:20 to see Paul’s part in order for Christ to live in Him:

*“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God** who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Galatians 2:20*

Paul says that his part in Christ living his life in Paul is **faith**. Many Christians have asked me this question, “How do I live the Christian life?” The truth is that you can’t live it. The real question should be, “What is my part in Christ living His life in me?” The answer is faith.

Walking with an attitude of DEPENDENCE upon God is called FAITH.

Faith is the “HOW TO” for the Christian.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I know that if you have been living the Christian life for a very long time, you have an understanding of the word faith. Having said that, I would ask that you set aside your understanding of faith and ask God to reveal to you in a deeper way what faith looks like as you go through this next section.

DAY FOUR

Four Practical Ways To Define FAITH

1. Faith Is An ASSURANCE And A CONVICTION.

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
Hebrews 11:1*

FAITH

***is an assurance, confidence, and certainty that God is Who He says that He is
and that He will accomplish what He promises.***

2. Faith Is A PERSUASION and An EXPECTATION.

“being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.”

FAITH

***is a firm PERSUASION and EXPECTATION that God will perform
all that He has promised to us in Christ.***

3. Faith Is The Realization That “I CAN’T,” BUT “GOD CAN.”

I CAN’T - “....*apart from Me you can do nothing.*” John 15:5b

GOD CAN - “*He who began a good work in your life will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*” Philippians 1:6

FAITH

***is trusting God to do what only He CAN do, and I CANNOT.
“Apart from Me you can do NOTHING.” John 15:5b***

4. Faith Is COOPERATION With God.

*“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because **I** do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” John 5:30*

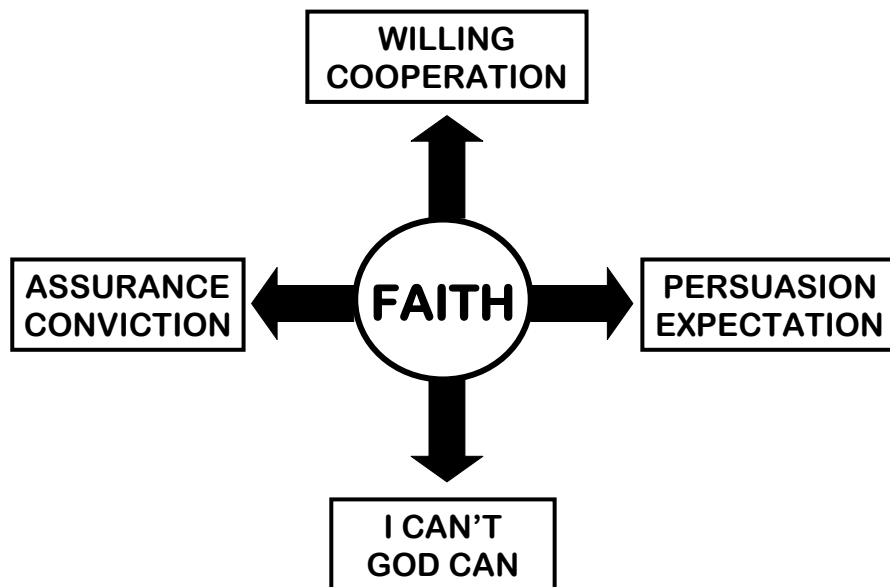
FAITH

Is your willing COOPERATION with God's transforming work in your life.

Questions: Which one of the definitions of faith above do you most identify with? Why?

Meditate: on the four definitions of faith and ask God to give you deeper revelation of the meaning of faith.

This diagram summarizes the four definitions of faith.



Remember: God's Work Is NOT Contingent On Your Faith.

*"Our God is in heaven; **He does whatever pleases him.**" Psalm 115:3*

God's work in your life is not contingent upon your faith. God is sovereign, and He can do what He desires in your life regardless of whether or not you are walking by faith. However, I can tell you from personal experience that as I have more intentionally walked by faith these last several years versus the first thirty years of my Christian life, God has made many radical changes in my life.

Meditate: on the truth that when you take a step of faith, all of what you need is IN Christ. This may be a new truth for you, and you will need for God to give you a greater revelation of this truth.

Faith Must Always Have An Object.

Faith can have many objects. When you drive your car, you have faith in your brakes, or you have faith in the construction of the building that you work in every day, or faith in the chair that you sit in. It is not faith that is the key. The key is the **object** of your faith. The object of our faith as Christians is Jesus. We see this in the following verses:

“We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on Whom our faith depends from start to finish.”
Hebrews 12:2 (NLT)

“And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus...” Acts 3:16

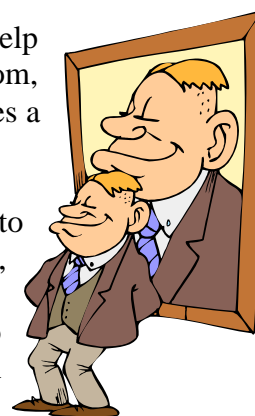
Is It Possible That There Is ANOTHER Object To Your Faith?

I know that if you have been living the Christian life for some time, you know the object of your faith is Jesus Christ. However, as a result of ministering to many Christian men (who have been Christians for 10, 20, or 30 years), I have personally experienced and witnessed in several people that I have ministered to that there is another object to their faith. The reason I say this is that so many Christians believe that it is up to them with God's help to live the Christian life.

***If you believe that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life,
is it possible that the REAL object of your faith is YOUR ability and willpower?***

Let me give you an example. If you believe that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life, then you will take God's promises of victory, freedom, and transformation and try in your own ability and power to make those promises a reality in your life.

In essence, what you have done is put faith in yourself and have asked God to help you be the source for making those promises true in your life. However, what do we know is true? We know from Lesson One that 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that God is the Source for living life in us and that He is not going to help us be the Source. Therefore, take another look at your faith walk and answer the following question:



***Are you truly walking by faith in Christ, or are you walking by faith in your
OWN strength and abilities to produce the Christian life with God's help?***

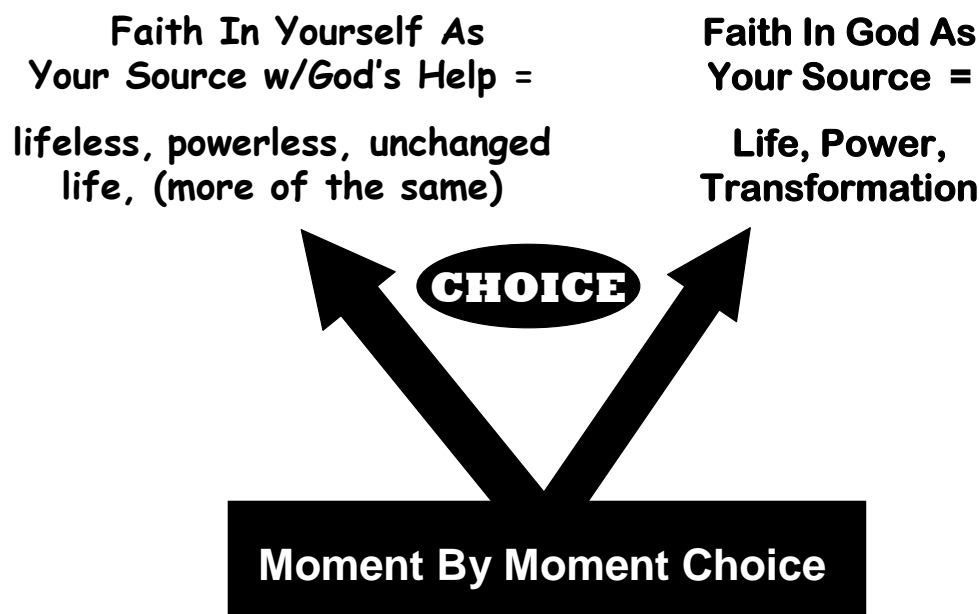
Before you go any further in this study, this is a pivotal question to answer. It is crucial to know the truth because you might be deceiving yourself into believing that you are walking by faith in Christ when the truth is that you are trusting in your own abilities. Here are questions that might help you determine the answer:

DAY FIVE

Is your Christian life producing:

- **Consistent victory over your defeating sin patterns and Satan?**
- **Consistent freedom from your sinful behaviors?**
- **Healing of your past or present woundedness?**
- **Ongoing transformation into the likeness of Christ?**

If you can't answer "Yes" to each of these questions, you need to re-examine your walk of faith. As Christians we have a moment by moment choice. I have illustrated that choice below:



What Choice Will You Make?

The consequences of faith in yourself will mean that **no** significant transformation will take place in your life. However, as we will explore further in this study, living by faith in God as your Source will mean a life of radical transformation because of the divine power that is working in you as a result of your faith in God.

Question: What does the diagram above reveal as to what the consequences will be if you are the object of your faith?

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you the truth about your walk of faith. Are you really walking by faith in God, or is it possible that you are walking by faith in your own strength and abilities?

What Are Some Reasons That We Put Faith In Our Abilities?

1. We bring the “LEARN and DO” mindset into the Christian life.

It is so easy to walk by faith in our own abilities because that is how we live life. Think about your life. How have you lived life thus far? For most of us, we **learn** about life, and then we go about the business of accomplishing or **doing** what we have learned.

For example, you learn how to do your job, and then you do it. You learn how to play golf, fish, or hunt, and you go and do them. The key is that you are using your own intellect and ability to “learn” and then to “do.” This is the way that we have all lived our lives. The question is, “Does this ‘learn and do’ mindset work in living the Christian life?” In other words:



***Do you believe that you are to LEARN God’s truth about living the Christian life
and then in your own ability (with God’s help) go out and DO what it says?***

The truth is that our part is to depend upon God’s power and ability to produce the life that He promises. Therefore, the Christian life is NOT “learn and do.” It is a life of dependence.

2. We as men want to be part of the cause and effect of our spiritual transformation.

Another problem with having faith in God’s ability to transform us is that we can’t bring our own power, intellect, and ability to be the cause and/or effect of spiritual transformation. This is a problem because we use our intellect, ability and talents in our jobs, in our marriages, and in raising our families. The key truth is that God gave us those abilities as a gift. However, when it comes to spiritual transformation, we are totally dependent on having faith in God’s ability versus our own.



In our walk of faith we are depending upon God to bring His intellect and ability to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves. This presents a struggle when it comes to setting aside our ability and drawing upon God’s ability. I hope to some degree that you are in the process of being persuaded that only God, as your Source, can bring about any significant change in the way that you think, feel, choose, or behave.

Does This Mean That I Live A Passive Life And Do Nothing?

I often hear these comments from Christians about faith: “Does living by faith mean that I am supposed to do nothing?” Or, “This walk of faith seems very passive.” Dependence is often mistaken for passivity. However, in your life when you are dependent on your doctor, your mechanic, or your banker how do you view dependence then? You are dependent on these people to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. The truth is that the Christian life is very active but when it comes to spiritual transformation, you are just as dependent on God for that as you are depending on a doctor for your health.



***The truth is that the Christian life is very ACTIVE, but GOD is
the SOURCE of the activity taking place.***

When you look at Jesus’s life and ministry, would you say that He was passive? I don’t believe you would. However, what did we learn about how Jesus lived? He was totally DEPENDENT upon the Father. As He walked in dependence, what happened? The Father released His life and power THROUGH Jesus to transform lives.

***In the same way, as you walk dependently upon God, He RELEASES His life and
power in you to RADICALLY change the way that you think, feel,
choose, and behave.***

Summary

1. Your part in the Christian life is DEPENDENCE upon Christ as the Vine.
2. We struggle with dependence because of what the WORLD says about independence, and our flesh resists being dependent.
3. Dependence = FAITH
4. Faith has two objects: Faith in OURSELVES with God’s help or faith in GOD.
5. Faith is:
 - a. Assurance and conviction.
 - b. I can’t, but God can.
 - c. Persuasion and expectation.
 - d. Cooperation with God.
6. We struggle with faith because of our “LEARN and DO” mentality and because we want to be part of the cause and effect of transformation.

Lesson Three

Key Truths About The Walk of Faith

Drawing On Christ As Your Life To Meet Your Needs

DAY ONE

Introduction

I would summarize what we have learned up until this point as follows:

- We **CAN'T** produce God's promises of transformation or live the Christian life through our own ability.
- As God lives His life **IN** us, God's promises will become an experiential reality.
- Our part is to **DEPEND** upon God to live His life in us and through us.
- God lives His life **IN** us and through us as we take steps of **FAITH**.

We will answer this question in this lesson:

What happens when you take a step of faith?

The Journey of Faith Begins With A STEP of Faith.

Imagine if you moved from your home to Indonesia. You would be moving from a very familiar culture to one that is 180 degrees different from the one that you have been living in. You will now have to learn how to live in this new culture. So, too, we need to understand how to live in **the realm of faith in God's ability versus faith in our own limited ability or inability**. The journey begins with one step of faith.

*"The mind of a man plans his way, but the **Lord directs his steps.**" Proverbs 16:9*

STEP OF FAITH

***is a MOMENT in time where you ACTIVELY
engage God and His power by faith.***

I use the word "actively" because it is an active choice that you must make when you take a step of faith. **A step of faith is an acknowledgement of your need for**



God. Without understanding your need, you will never see your need to walk by faith in God. What do we know is true? Man was created to be a dependent being. The very nature of dependence means that you are in need of God every moment whether you realize it or not. Let's look at what happens the moment when you take a step of faith.

What Happens At That Moment When You Take A Step of Faith?

Remember from Lesson One the truth that at this very moment **within you** is ALL of God's life and power according to Colossians 2:9, 10:

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness IN Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

Since you contain all of God's life and power, what happens when you take a step of faith?

When you take a step of faith, ALL of God's LIFE and POWER is RELEASED in you to transform your thinking, your beliefs, and your behavior.

Look at how Paul ties faith in with the power of God:

*"so that your faith would not **rest** on the wisdom of men, but on **the power of God**."*
1 Corinthians 2:5

*"To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and **the work of faith with power**."* 2 Thessalonians 1:11

When you take a step of faith, God is not giving you just a part of His life and power. He releases the full force of His power in you to transform every area of your life.

What Kind Of Power Is God's Power?

*"But we have **this treasure** in earthen vessels, so that **the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God** and not from ourselves."*
2 Corinthians 4:7

The treasure that you and I have is the very life of God which contains the fullness of His power. If I have all of God's power within me, how much power is that? Look at Ephesians 1:19, 20:

*"I pray that you will begin to understand the **incredible greatness of His power** for us who believe him. This is the **same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead** and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms."*



It is absolutely necessary for us to live from God's power because without it we would never experience God's promises for transformation. You probably have tried in your own willpower and strength to overcome some defeating sin pattern. If so, how has that been working for you? The truth is that we must live from this indwelling power of God in order to experience any real significant transformation.

***Living FROM God's power within you will CHANGE the way that
you think, believe, choose, and behave.***

Question: Have you spent much time meditating on the power of God and the fact that you are the container of His power?

Meditate: on 2 Corinthians 4:7 and Ephesians 1:19, 20 and think about the magnitude of God's power.

Engaging God: Ask God to persuade you in a deeper way of His divine power that you possess and how He wants to use that power to set you free.

What Is God's Power Able To Do When It Is Released In You?

What can God's power accomplish within us? Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 3:20:

*"Now to Him who is able to **do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**, according to the (God's) **power** that works within us..." Ephesians 3:20 (Parenthesis mine)*

Think about this verse for a moment. Paul is making a very bold proclamation when he says that what God can accomplish through His power is "abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." Paul is exclaiming this truth because he has experienced this power so mightily working in him that it has taken him to places of transformation that he never thought was possible. What is it that God's power in you can do regarding changing your life?

God's Power IN You:

- **RENEWS** your mind to believe His truth. Romans 12:2
- **Sets you FREE** from your sin strongholds. John 8:32
- **HEALS** your woundedness. Psalm 147:3
- **Gives you VICTORY** over the flesh, sin, Satan, and the world. 1 Corinthians 15:57
- **TRANSFORMS** the way that you think, feel, choose, and behave.
2 Corinthians 3:18
- Will **DRAW** you into an intimate relationship with Himself. Ephesians 1:5

***When you take a STEP of FAITH, God releases His life and power IN you
To RADICALLY change your life.***

Question: When was the last time that you experienced God's power in changing the way that you think, feel, choose, or behave? Write down three changes that you would like to experience in these four areas.

Meditate: on Ephesians 1:19, 20. Think about the fullness of God's power within you and what God promises to do in and through you with His power.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to transform your life concerning the three changes that you would like to experience.

Over the years in ministry I have come to the conclusion that MOST Christians don't truly understand the MAGNITUDE of God's power because they have not taken enough steps of faith to experience God's power.

"Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! So GREAT is your power that your enemies cringe before you.'" Psalm 66:3

DAY TWO

Remember That God's Power Within You Will Do You NO Good If YOU Choose Not To Walk By Faith.

I recently bought a laptop computer. Compared to the one that I bought two years ago, it had so much more RAM and memory. As with all computers, I have access to all the information that I need through the Internet. However, all that power and access will do me no good if I do not turn the computer on. Until I do that, it will only be an expensive paperweight!

The same holds true for the power of God. At this moment you contain all of God's power. However, God's power is of no avail to you unless you tap into that power.



The way that you TAP into God's power is through steps of faith.

Let me give you a visual image to explain this. Imagine a plastic water bottle that is full of water and has a cap. The water in the bottle represents the fullness of the Godhead and all of God's POWER. Imagine that full bottle entering into you at the point of salvation (because at salvation you received the fullness of God's life and power in you).

However, without the cap off the bottle you will never be able to drink from or to draw on God's power. As you take steps of faith, God unscrews the cap and pours His power into you to transform your thinking, your beliefs, and your behaviors.

What grieves me is that so many Christians are living like I lived for thirty years. They are carrying around within them the power to transform their lives, and they either do not really understand the magnitude of God's power or do not understand how to access His power. The result is that lives remain unchanged. They are living in defeat in the midst of victory. The power that can set them free, heal them, and transform them is to no avail. They live like non-Christians by living life in their own intellect, ability, and willpower instead of from God's power.

***Without tapping into God's power, there will be NO
SIGNIFICANT transformation in your life.***

God's Power Will Accomplish A SUPERNATURAL Work In You.



“March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then **the wall of the city will collapse** and the people will go up, every man straight in.” Joshua 6:3-5

You probably know the story of the fall of Jericho (pictured at left). I would like you to read this passage again and put yourself into the story. What if God told you to march around Jericho for seven days, blow trumpets on the seventh day, and the walls would fall down? (FYI - God did not tell the Jews to bring a crane with a wrecking ball.) Your part in the “fall of Jericho” is to simply respond to God by faith, and He will do the work. Imagine standing there as the walls came down. Would you not be in awe of God's supernatural work?

Is it possible that God wants to accomplish this same supernatural work in you? Does He not promise to knock down the walls of your lying beliefs, your defeating sin patterns, and your woundedness in order to set you free? As with the Jews, your part is to depend upon God and walk by faith. He will do the rest. This is called the supernatural work of God. How do I define a supernatural work?

A SUPERNATURAL WORK

***is a work that God accomplishes in and through us as we walk by faith
for which there is NO natural or man-made explanation.***

Question: What supernatural work do you want God to accomplish in your life? Is it victory over an inner struggle, freedom from a defeating sin pattern, transformation of fleshly behavior, etc.?

Meditate: on Joshua 6:3-5 above and think about this question, “If God can knock down the physical walls of Jericho, will He not knock down the walls of your lying beliefs, sin patterns, and strongholds if you walk by faith?”

Engaging God: Begin taking steps of faith, and ask God to begin knocking down those walls.

What We Need To Understand About God’s Supernatural Work In Us

It is probably safe to say that most Christians understand that God’s power is supernatural. However, when I say that God wants to accomplish a supernatural work in them, they tend to have a more difficult time understanding that concept. So what does supernatural mean when it comes to God’s power working in us?

1. You, for the most part, will NOT FEEL or EXPERIENCE God’s supernatural power working in you.

If you will participate with me for a moment, I think I can show you what I mean. Take a step of faith with me right now. Simply say, “Lord, I am trusting You this moment for Your power to flow in me.” If you did that by faith, are you feeling anything? Are you experiencing a rush of God’s power pouring into you? For the most part you will not be feeling God’s power in you as you walk by faith. Why is this? Look at 2 Corinthians 5:7 for the answer:

“For we walk by faith, NOT by sight.”

Paul is telling us in this verse that it is a walk of faith and not one of feeling or experience. More often than not you will **not** be feeling or experiencing either God’s life or His power. Why can this be frustrating? As human beings we feel and experience life through one or more of our five senses every moment. Since feeling and experiencing are such integral parts of our life, it is easy to conclude that we will feel or experience God’s work when we take a step of faith.



***The truth is that for the MOST part you will NOT feel or experience God’s life and
power flowing into you when you take a step of faith.***

Let’s look at an example to make this truth easier to understand:

When I began my journey of faith, one of the things that I desired was for God to heal me from the woundedness caused by my father. My path toward healing began with a step of faith that looked like, “Lord, I am asking You to heal the woundedness caused by my father.” At that very moment, all of God’s power to heal me was being released in me.

However, I was not feeling or experiencing God’s healing power. Even though I was not feeling God’s healing power, what does God’s truth tell us? Whether I felt it or not, God’s power was pouring into me. The truth is that just because I am not experiencing God’s power, it does not change the fact that God is working in that moment to heal me. Therefore, here is the key truth to the walk of faith:

The Key To the Walk of Faith:

BELIEVE that God is working in you the moment that you take a step of faith whether or not you feel or experience His life and power working in you.

Questions: Have you tried to walk by faith in the past, but you got discouraged and quit walking because you were not feeling or experiencing God’s work in your life? Does it help you to better understand the walk of faith by knowing the truth that you may not feel or experience His life and power working even though He is working?

Meditate: on the truth that we are to believe that God is working even though we don’t experience Him working.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper revelation of the truth that you may not feel or experience His life and power in you the moment when you take a step of faith.

DAY THREE

2. We won’t know HOW God’s power is working in us.

In addition, we don’t and won’t know how God’s power works in us to change us. This can be a struggle for all Christians because we are always wanting to know how anything and everything works. However, God will not tell you how He is working. He only promises TO work as you walk by faith.

***SUPERNATURAL also means that God is not telling you
His PROCESS for transforming your life.***

One of the greatest struggles that I have in sharing these truths is that I can’t describe to you God’s process in transforming your life. He has not (nor will He) let you or me in on how He does His work. He simply wants you to take steps of faith in Him and know by faith that He is accomplishing His supernatural work in you. That is why we cannot formulize the Christian life because God’s work in you will be unique to you and to no one else.

***Because God's work is a SUPERNATURAL work and is tailored individually,
we can't make the Christian life a formula or a checklist.***

Questions: Why do you think that we would rather know what God is doing in our lives rather than not know because it is a supernatural work? Do you have a better understanding of why we can't make formulas or checklists for people to follow to live the Christian life?

Meditate: on Habakkuk 1:5 and think about the truth that if you are walking by faith, God is doing something in you right now that you would not believe even if He told you.

This Does Not Mean That You Won't Experience Changes.

***Even though you MAY not feel or experience God's process, you will
EVENTUALLY experience changes in your thinking, in what you believe, in your
behavior, and in the choices that you make.***

"...I am overflowing with joy in the midst of all our suffering." 2 Corinthians 7:4b

Through Paul's walk of faith he came to a place where he was experiencing great joy even in the midst of his suffering. God wants you to experience the changes that He brings about in your life, and you will. However, you may not be feeling or experiencing His work in you prior to the actual change taking place.

For example, you begin seeking God by faith to move you from fear in a certain area to becoming fearless in that area. As you walk by faith, God's power is working in you to move you to a place of fearlessness, but you may not experience the process taking place. Rather, you will one day find yourself not fearing in a circumstance where once before you experienced fear.



The key question for you in your walk of faith is:

Will you walk long enough by faith to **EXPERIENCE** changes in your life?

Since we do not know (and God is not telling us) how long after we start walking by faith in an area it will take to experience change, we must continue to walk by faith until we do experience some transformation in our life. We will talk more about what to expect in our walk of faith later in this study. What happens when you do experience supernatural changes?

What Does A Step Of Faith Look Like To Experience God's Promises?

Now that we understand the power that is available to us when we take steps of faith, let's gain a better understanding of the walk of faith in relationship to God's promises of transformation. For the rest of this lesson and the next lesson we are going to see what it looks like in the walk of faith to experience God's power to:

- **RENEW your minds to believe the truth rather than your lying beliefs.**
Romans 12:2
- **Give you VICTORY and FREEDOM from your defeating sin patterns.**
1 Corinthians 15:57; John 8:32
- **TRANSFORM you into Christ-likeness.** **2 Corinthians 3:18**

Key Truths To Understand About The Walk of Faith and God's Promises

Before we begin applying the walk of faith to God's promises, it is important to understand some keys truths about the faith walk and those promises. I will repeat these a number of times throughout the rest of the study.

1. It is crucial to understand that a walk of faith is a **PROCESS**. It is a journey and not a sprint.
2. You may have to take **SEVERAL** steps of faith before you experience any changes in the way that you think, feel, choose, or behave.
3. Remember that you will not necessarily **FEEL** or **EXPERIENCE** God's power flowing in you as you begin taking steps of faith.
4. What God is teaching you as you **WAIT** on Him to make changes in your life is faith.
5. If you don't take steps of faith, then you will **NEVER** experience God's promises of transformation.



Application Of Living From Christ As Your (THE) LIFE

We looked at the truth that God's power is released in us as we walk by faith. In addition, Christ's life is released in us as well when we take a step of faith. Therefore, in this section, I want us to look deeper into the meaning and the practical application of Christ being our life and being released in our lives.

Remember these two verses from Lesson One that reveal that Christ is life?

*“....**Christ**, who is **YOUR life**” Colossians 3:4*

*“**I am** the way, the truth, and **THE life**...” John 14:6*

What does it mean that Christ is your life?

Christ As Your Life
means that you have available to you SUPERNATURAL, Christ-life
CHARACTERISTICS that can ONLY be supplied by Christ.

To give you an idea of what is meant by Christ-life characteristics let's look at the following verses:

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is (Christ's) **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness, and self-control....**” Galatians 5:22, 23a (Parenthesis mine)*

*“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with (Christ's) **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** ¹³ Bear with each other and **forgive** whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on (Christ's) **love**, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossians 3:12-14 (Parentheses mine)*

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23, what we are to clothe ourselves with in Colossians 3:12-14 (i.e., compassion, kindness, humility, etc.), and to be strong in Christ (Ephesians 5:10) are all examples of Christ-life characteristics.



Remember the list of Christ-life characteristics that are available to you:

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Unconditional love | Victory | Worth | Acceptance | Faith |
| Freedom | Patience | Strength | Peace | Power |
| Forgiveness | Understanding | Security | Fearlessness | Wisdom |
| Discernment | Adequacy | Humility | Christ-confidence | Boldness |
| Righteousness | Selflessness | Rest | Compassion | Courage |
| Hope | Gentleness | Christ-control | Faithfulness | Joy |

DAY FOUR

What Are Christ-Life Characteristics?

When we look at the characteristics above, we need to first understand that there is a **human** connotation as well as a **spiritual** one. We know that in the human realm we can also experience feelings of peace, patience, security, etc.

Human characteristics – feelings or experiences generated by man that CAN be changed by our circumstances and/or our relationships.

For example, let's assume that you are having a good day. You are feeling peace, joy, and security. However, you come home to find that someone has broken into your house, your house is flooded from a broken pipe, and your two- year old son is throwing a temper tantrum. What quickly happens to your human feelings of peace, joy, and security? They evaporate in just a few moments.



Christ-Life characteristics – supernatural characteristics of Christ's life that are supplied by Christ and CANNOT be changed by circumstances or relationships.

Christ-life characteristics differ from human characteristics in that they are **supernatural** characteristics that can only be supplied by Christ Himself. In addition, neither circumstances nor relationships can ever change those characteristics. Let me explain using scripture. Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 12:10:

*“Therefore, **I am well content** with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecution, with difficulties.....”*

Paul is telling us that in spite of his adverse circumstances he is experiencing a supernatural, Christ-life contentment. In other words, Paul's circumstances did not rob him of his contentment “in Christ.” Think for a moment about what Paul tells us that he went through in this verse and in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. Only a “spiritual” contentment provided by Christ could withstand all that Paul went through on a daily basis.

Using the same examples as above, whether it is a broken pipe, a break-in at your home or a two-year old throwing a tantrum, living from Christ as your life means that you are drawing on Christ to be your peace and rest and are not allowing these events to rob you of your Christ-like peace and rest.

Another way of saying Christ-life characteristics is the phrase “in Christ.”

“In Christ” means that you have Christ's peace, rest, security, adequacy, etc.

As we go through these next examples of walking by faith, we will see more about what it means to draw on Christ as our life.

Meditate: Spend time meditating on the difference between the human and the Christ-like characteristics that make up Christ as life.

Engaging God: Look at the stressful situations you are in and the needs they are creating. Go to the page titled I AM at the end of this lesson and start seeking Christ to meet that need.

Drawing On Christ As Your Life In The Midst of Your INTERNAL and EXTERNAL Struggles

Before we talk about drawing on Christ as our life, I wanted to share some key thoughts about the struggles we face. The first one is this:

***God will USE your negative circumstances or difficult struggles
to REMIND you of your ongoing NEED for Christ as your life.***

Whenever I disciple an individual or a couple who are struggling, they just want to focus on getting past the struggle or the pain that is resulting from their struggle. However, it is important to know that God is using that struggle to draw them back to dependence upon Him and so that they will draw upon Christ as their life in those situations. Without recognizing our need for Christ as our life in those situations, we will turn to our own ability to try to resolve or get past the struggles. I have often shared this about our struggles:

***God may allow you to be involved in a struggle that you CAN'T fix because He
wants you to come to Him to fix the fix that ONLY He can fix.***

Question: What fix are you experiencing today that you can't seem to fix concerning your internal struggles, your relationships or your adverse circumstances?

Drawing On Christ As The "I AM."

All struggles create a need. For example, your struggles could create a need for peace, patience, wisdom, etc. The Lord says through Paul in Philippians 4:19:

"And my God shall supply all your needs IN Christ Jesus."

Paul is saying that Jesus is our need-meeter. Jesus meets those needs with His very life. In addition, Jesus says in John 14:6:

"I AM the way, the truth, and the life..."

When it comes to Christ meeting our needs, He is saying that He is the "I AM" to meet every one of our needs. To understand what I mean, please look at the page titled "I AM" at the end of this lesson. As you can see from the list, Christ is the "I AM" for whatever we need. Let me give you some practical examples of that and how we might appropriate Christ as the "I AM."

Example #1: Let's assume that you are experiencing rejection from your wife. The need is for Christ's acceptance. Jesus says, "I AM your acceptance." Therefore, an example of how you draw on Christ's acceptance might look like, "Lord, I am feeling rejection by my wife. I am trusting You to BE my acceptance."

Example #2: Let's assume that your job is in jeopardy due to cutbacks in the company. You are feeling anxious. Your need is for Christ's peace. Jesus says, "I AM your peace." Therefore, an example of how you draw on Christ's peace might look like, "Lord, I am worried and anxious about losing my job. I am trusting You to BE my peace."

Meditate: on the truth that Christ is the "I AM"

Exercise: What is it that you need based on the internal and external struggles that you are facing today? Go to the "I AM" list and find the "I AM" that most applies to your struggle.

Engaging God: Seek Christ to BE what you need concerning your struggle. Depending on the severity of the struggle, you may have to continually seek Christ to BE what it is that you need Him to be concerning your situation.

A Final Thought About Christ As Our Life



wisdom.

I hear many Christian men say that they ask Christ to **give** them such things as patience, peace, etc. It is a little like asking a pharmacist for a prescription. However, since we contain all of Christ's peace, joy, and rest in us (Colossians 2:9), then do we really need to ask for something that we already possess? In other words, Jesus is not a divine pharmacist giving us what we need. Rather, He is saying that "I AM" what you need. (i.e., I AM your peace, joy, and rest.) Therefore, as we saw in the examples above, you don't need to ask Christ to "give" you His peace, joy, and wisdom. You simply need to "trust" Him to **BE** your peace, joy, and

The truth is that Christ IS your life. He is NOT dispensing something to you.

Rather, He is continually supplying HIMSELF as your life.

DAY FIVE

Steps of Faith In Drawing Upon Christ To Meet Your Needs In The Circumstances That You Face

Let's look at some examples of what it looks like to draw on Christ as the "I AM" in the workplace, in marriage, and in circumstances.

In Your Workplace

Example #1: Let's assume that you have a stressful job (doesn't everybody?). You get to work one day, and you find yourself taking ownership of the stress which is robbing you of your peace and rest in Christ. A step of faith in drawing upon Christ as your life might look like this:

Step of faith: "Lord, I am taking ownership and being weighed down by the stress of my job. I am **trusting** You to **BE** my peace and rest."

Key Truth: It may take several steps of faith before you are able to truly offload the stress and begin to experience Christ's peace but eventually you will experience His peace.

Example #2: You have just lost your job, and you start feeling fearful, anxious, or angry. At that moment, you have a need for Christ's courage, rest, and confidence.

Step of faith: "Lord, I have just lost my job. I am feeling anxious and worried. I am **trusting** You to **BE** my peace and rest in the midst of this situation."

Exercise: Look at the "I AM" page. What is your job creating a need for that Christ can be the "I AM" to meet that need? Begin asking Christ to be the "I AM" to meet that need.

In Your Marriage

Example #1: I assume that you want to love your wife with Christ's love. (If not, let's talk.) You know that in and of yourself you cannot produce the unconditional love of Christ that your wife needs. Therefore, a step of faith in drawing on Christ's love for your wife might look like this:

Step of faith: "Lord, I can't produce unconditional love for my wife. I am **asking** You in faith to love my wife THROUGH me with Christ's unconditional love."

Remember: As you pray this prayer, you will most likely not feel Christ's love flowing through you, but know by faith that it is. Remember that as you walk by faith, God is truly supernaturally loving your wife through you.

Challenge: Take this step of faith as many times as it comes to mind in the next thirty days, and take note of any changes in how you see your wife or how she sees you. You will begin to see a supernatural change in your marriage relationship.

Example #2: Let's assume that there are things that your wife does to you to rob you of your patience. At those moments, you can draw on Christ's patience by taking a step of faith:

Step of Faith: "Lord, my wife is trying my patience. I am **asking** You to BE my patience toward my wife." **Note:** Do you see that I am not saying, "Jesus, help ME be patient?" Jesus does not want to help YOU be patient. HE IS your patience.

Exercise: Look at your marriage and think about what it is that you need from Christ as your life in the area of marital conflict. Begin taking steps of faith by drawing upon Christ as the "I AM." Once again you can refer to the "I AM" page.

Application To Your Circumstances

Example #1: Let's assume that you are struggling with your finances. You become anxious and worried about what you are going to do. Rather than taking ownership of that anxiety and worry, you engage God by faith to deal with it:

Step of faith: "Lord, I am really anxious and worried about what I am going to do to pay my bills. I am **trusting** Your sovereignty and am **asking** You to BE my peace, rest, and confidence that You will provide a way to accomplish that."

Example #2: Let's assume that you found out at the doctor's office that you have a serious illness. Fear is beginning to take over, but you decide to take a step of faith:

Step of faith: "Lord, I am fearful about what may happen to me with this condition. I am **trusting** You to BE my courage and my strength and to remove this fear from me."

Exercise: Look at any negative or adverse circumstances that you are facing (finances, health, etc.) and determine what needs are being created as a result of those circumstances. Again, refer to the "I AM" page and begin taking steps of faith in these areas.

Key Points To Remember When You Draw Upon Christ As Your Life:

1. When you trust Christ to BE those things that you need, you receive the FULLNESS of Christ's life (all of His peace, strength, unconditional love, etc.) in that moment.
2. Remember that Christ pouring His life into you is a SUPERNATURAL process.
3. Since it is supernatural, you MAY NOT immediately feel or experience what you are trusting Christ to BE (i.e. peace, adequacy, patience).
4. However, that DOES NOT change the truth that Christ IS pouring the fullness of His peace, patience, etc. into you at that moment.
5. WHETHER OR NOT we feel or experience Christ's life in the moment when we ask for it, we know by FAITH that He is supplying His peace, patience, etc.

Summary of Lesson Three

1. A step of faith RELEASES God's power into us.
2. This power within us is the same power that RAISED Jesus from the dead.
3. It is through this power being released in us that we will begin to EXPERIENCE the renewing of the mind, victory, freedom, and transformation.
4. God's power is a SUPERNATURAL power in that there is no man-made explanation for the changes that take place.
5. Supernatural means that we will NOT necessarily FEEL or EXPERIENCE God's power in us nor will we understand how God is working.
6. However, even though we may not feel God's power working, we will EVENTUALLY experience the transformation that God promises.
7. As we experience those changes, God will produce in us a GOD-CONFIDENCE.
8. We can draw upon CHRIST-LIFE characteristics moment by moment concerning struggles that we face in the workplace, in marriage, in family or in adverse circumstances

“I AM Your Life”

As needs arise in your life, Christ is the “I AM” to meet your needs. Insert your personal needs and find from the list how Christ will be your Supply.

Your need_____? Jesus says, “I AM your_____.”

**I AM your love – Galatians 5:22
I AM your joy – John 15:11
I AM your adequacy – 2 Corinthians 3:5
I AM your wisdom – 1 Corinthians 1:30
I AM your way – John 14:6
I AM your truth – John 14:6
I AM your rest – Matthew 11:28
I AM your mind – 1 Corinthians 2:16
I AM your desire – Psalm 73:25
I AM your completion – Colossians 2:10
I AM your sanctification – 1 Cor. 1:30
I AM your purpose – Ephesians 1:10
I AM your identity – 2 Corinthians 5:17
I AM your security – Proverbs 1:33
I AM your goodness – Galatians 5:22
I AM your confidence – 2 Corinthians 3:4
I AM your compassion – Psalm 25:6
I AM your forgiveness – Daniel 9:9
I AM your success – Romans 8:37
I AM your endurance – Hebrews 10:36
I AM your peace – Ephesians 2:14
I AM your perseverance - Hebrews 12:2
I AM your trust – Romans 15:5
I AM your strength – Romans 6:10**

**I AM your sovereignty – 1 Timothy 6:15
I AM your intimacy – Psalm 139:3
I AM your kindness – Galatians 5:22
I AM your humility – Matthew 11:29
I AM your acceptance – Romans 15:7
I AM your faithfulness – Galatians 5:22
I AM your need-meeter – Galatians 4:19
I AM your deliverer – Psalm 18:2
I AM your freedom – John 8:32
I AM your victory – 1 Corinthians 15:57
I AM your gentleness – Galatians 5:23
I AM your patience – Galatians 5:22
I AM your courage – John 16:33
I AM your conqueror – Romans 8:37
I AM your holiness – Colossians 3:12
I AM your self-control - 2 Timothy 1:7
I AM your salvation – Psalm 27:1
I AM your trust – Jeremiah 17:7
I AM your guide – Psalm 48:14
I AM your shepherd – Psalm 23:1
I AM your comforter – John 14:16
I AM your Abba – Galatians 4:5-6
I AM your hope – Colossians 1:27
I AM your life – John 14:6**

Lesson Four

The Walk of Faith To Experience Victory, Freedom and Healing

DAY ONE

Introduction

In the last lesson we gained a better understanding of some of the truths of the walk of faith. In addition, we started looking at the walk of faith as it applies to God's promise to renew our minds. In this lesson, we will look at the walk of faith in order:

- To renew your mind.
- To experience victory and freedom from our defeating sin patterns.
- To experience healing from past woundedness.

However, before we address those issues, it is important at this point of the study to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of Christ as our life.

Be sure and review the key truths at the end of each of these sections.

The Walk of Faith And The RENEWING Of Your Mind

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by
the renewing of your mind” Romans 12:2*

We all struggle with lying beliefs when it comes to the Christian life.

A LYING BELIEF

is any thought, attitude, or behavior that CONTRADICTS God's truth.

We all have lying beliefs about God, others, marriage, and living the Christian life just to name a few. (Look at some of those lying beliefs at the end of this lesson.) These lying beliefs can cause sinful behavior, doubt, unbelief, and can even cause us to quit walking by faith. Therefore, the promise of having our minds renewed according to Romans 12:2 above is so crucial to our walk of faith and transformation. There is one key truth for you to understand before we continue:

KEY TRUTH:

YOU cannot RENEW your own mind to God's truth.

ONLY God can accomplish that renewal and transformation.

God wants to renew your mind to His truth because He knows that on the other side of a renewed mind is freedom, victory, healing, and transformation.

Let's look at some examples of lying beliefs and what steps of faith that we can take to engage God's power to renew our minds.

Example #1: Let's assume that up until now you have been believing the lie that it is up to you with God's help to live the Christian life. Now that you know the truth that only Christ in you can live the Christian life according to Galatians 2:20, you can engage God by faith to renew your mind to the truth.

Step of faith:

"Lord, I have been believing the lie that I can live the Christian life with Your help. The truth is that I can't live it. Therefore, I am **entrusting** my lying belief to You and am **asking** You to renew my mind to the truth that only You can live the Christian life in and through me."

Example #2: Let's assume that you have a lying belief that God is judging or condemning you when you sin or when you fail. The truth is found in Romans 8:1 that there is no more condemnation from God because all of your past, present, and future sins. They have been paid for by Christ's death on the cross, and ALL of your sins are forgiven.

Step of faith:

"I am still believing the lie that You are condemning me when I sin or fail. I repent* of that sin, and I am **entrusting** this lying belief to You. I am trusting You to renew my mind to the truth that You are not condemning or judging me when I sin."

***Important note:** When you do sin, it is necessary to repent of that sin. To repent is to agree with God that you sinned and turn away from the sin and turn back to God.

Example #3: You believe the lie that it is up to your spouse to unconditionally love you. The truth is that we are incapable of unconditionally loving anyone. Only God can meet that need.

Step of faith: "Lord, I am believing the lie that it is up to my spouse to unconditionally love me. I am **presenting** that lie to You and am **asking** You to renew my mind to the truth that the need for unconditional love can only be met from You."

Exercise: Look at the list titled "Lying Beliefs" at the end of this lesson. Choose some of those lying beliefs that you want your mind renewed to or ask God to reveal to you a particular lying belief that He wants to set you free from. Then begin taking steps of faith for Him to renew your mind. You can use the example below.

“Lord, I am believing the lie that _____. I am **entrusting** my lie to You and am asking You to renew my mind and to **replace** this lie with Your truth.”

KEY TRUTHS: Concerning The Walk of Faith and The Renewing of Your Mind

1. Remember that the renewing of your mind is a PROCESS. It will not happen overnight.
2. Some of your lying beliefs are STRONGER than others because you have believed them for a longer time.
3. Therefore, it may take walking by faith for SOME TIME before you experience any change in your thinking or behavior.
4. You may not be aware of some of your lying beliefs, so ask God to REVEAL to you those lying beliefs.
5. Seek God to reveal to you a thought, choice, or behavior that is CHANGING as you seek Him to renew your mind.

***As you take steps of faith concerning your lying beliefs, God will (over time)
RENEW your mind to believe His truth and to live from His truth.***

DAY TWO

The Walk Of Faith To Experience VICTORY and FREEDOM From Your Defeating Sin Patterns and Fleshly Behavior

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” 1 John 5:4

All of us have sin patterns and fleshly behaviors that we want victory over or freedom from. As we walk by faith we will eventually experience that freedom and victory. (Find a fleshly behavior that you want to be set free from by looking at the Fleshly Behaviors pages in the Introduction.)

God’s promise concerning our sin patterns and fleshly behavior is in John 8:32:

“You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

“Know” in this verse is not just intellectual knowledge. It is God’s truth that has become personal revelation to you. Think about this as well. Jesus says in John 14:6, “I am the truth.” Therefore, as the Holy Spirit gives us revelation of His word, and we take steps of faith, Christ as our truth will set us free. Look at Galatians 5:1:

“So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.” Galatians 5:1



What is Paul saying? He is using past tense. He is saying that we have been (past tense) set free. How can Paul make such a bold statement? Now that the fullness of God resides in us, how much of His freedom is available to us? ALL of it is available!

***As we take steps of faith by DRAWING on Christ's FREEDOM and
God's POWER to set us free, we will EVENTUALLY experience
the freedom that we desire.***

Let's look at some examples of steps of faith to experience freedom from defeating sin patterns and fleshly behaviors.

Steps of Faith Concerning Freedom From Defeating Sin Patterns and Fleshly Behavior

Example #1: Let's assume that you have a fleshly behavior of inadequacy, You feel inadequate about yourself as a husband. The truth is that one of the Christ-life characteristics is the adequacy we have "in Christ." Therefore, what would a step of faith look like to bring God's power to bear to set you free from your inadequacy?

Step of Faith: "Lord, I believe that I am inadequate as a husband. I am entrusting my fleshly behavior of inadequacy to You, and I am trusting You to BE my adequacy. Continue to renew my mind to the truth that You are my adequacy."

Note: If you have been believing that you are inadequate for a long time then it will take some time before you experience Christ's supernatural adequacy.

Let's look at an example of a very entrenched sin pattern and what it looks like to walk by faith to be set free.

Example #2: Let's assume that you have a defeating sin pattern of pornography. What would steps of faith look like in being set free from this struggle?

Step of Faith: "Lord, I am powerless to set myself free from this stronghold of pornography. I am **asking** You in Your power to begin setting me free."

Note: Let's assume that you take several steps of faith, but you have not experienced any freedom. (Remember that God's power is always working through our faith even though we may not be experiencing His power moment by moment.) A step of faith at this point might look like this:

Step of Faith: "Lord, I have taken several steps of faith, and I have not been set free from my struggle with pornography. I am asking You to BE my strength and perseverance so that I will keep taking steps of faith."

As you continue down this walk of faith, and nothing changes, you then begin to struggle with your belief in God's desire, ability, or willingness to set you free. A step of faith at that point may be:

Step of Faith: "Lord, I am struggling with believing that You can (or will) set me free. I am **entrusting** my unbelief to You, and I am **asking** You to replace my unbelief with the belief that You will set me free."

Another step of faith during this process might look like this:

Step of Faith: "Lord, persuade me that You are working to set me free from pornography even though I can't feel Your power at work."

Note: The key is to continue walking by faith until you do experience supernatural changes. Remember that the freedom most likely will come incrementally.

Key Truths Concerning The Walk of Faith And Experiencing Christ's Freedom

1. The depth of the grip of your defeating sin patterns or fleshly behaviors will determine to some degree how long it might take to feel or experience any freedom.
2. You will find yourself being defeated by your sin patterns or fleshly behaviors many times as you walk by faith. This is okay in that you cannot expect instant freedom. In those moments when you sin, repent of that sin and continue walking by faith.
3. The truth is that you will fail many times in your walk toward experiential freedom. However, over time you will begin to incrementally experience Christ's freedom.
4. Satan/demonic forces will continue to try to persuade you when you fail that you will never be set free. We will talk more about how to deal with Satan/demons in the next lesson.
5. Be spiritually vigilant and ask God to reveal to you how that He is setting you free.

DAY THREE

My Walk of Faith Concerning Being Set Free From My Anxiety

Because my anxiety had consumed me for over 40 years, it took several steps of faith to begin experiencing freedom. I went from knowing God's truth that He is my peace to believing it, then slowly my anxiety began to subside. Many times in the process I was overwhelmed by my anxiety. In those times, I confessed and repented of my anxiety and kept taking steps of faith.

As God continues to persuade me that He is my peace and is sovereign and in control, I no longer believe that I have anything to be anxious about. This does not mean that I don't feel anxious about certain situations. It means that I no longer live in a chronic state or attitude of anxiety. It has been a journey, but the freedom that I am experiencing now is worth it.

Exercise: Go to the two pages titled "**Flesh Patterns/ Behaviors**" at the end of the Introduction. Write down at least three of your fleshly behaviors from that list that you want to be set free from.

Engaging God: Begin taking steps of faith and ask God to begin setting you free. Ask Him to be your strength, patience, and perseverance during those times along the way when you want to give up or don't believe that God is working. Ask Him to make you aware of the subtle changes that may be occurring in setting you free.

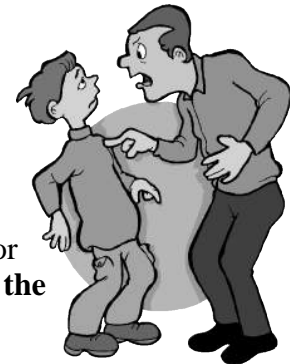
The Walk Of Faith To Experience Healing Of WOUNDEDNESS

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3

“For I will restore you to health, and I will heal you of your wounds.....” Jeremiah 30:17

Many Christians today are suffering from some degree of woundedness in their lives. Living in a fallen world, it is almost impossible not to experience woundedness along the way. Woundedness can come in many forms:

- **Abuse** – which comes in the form of physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, or spiritual abuse.
- **Trauma** – divorce, death, or abandonment.
- **Accidents** – creating long-term health or mobility problems.



The key to understanding woundedness is that it is not the event or events that caused the woundedness that is the problem. Rather, **it is the lying beliefs that result from the wounding events.**

Let me give you an example. I was discipling a lady who had been sexually abused by her father. From that abuse she came away believing that she was dirty and worthless. She met and married a Christian man. She said that he was a godly husband and treated her very well. However, because of her lying beliefs of feeling dirty and worthless, she could never experience any degree of sexual intimacy. The result of her lying beliefs was that the marriage ended in divorce.

Steps of Faith Concerning Healing From Your Woundedness

Example #1: Let's assume that you experienced woundedness from your dad when you were growing up, and it has left you believing as a man that you are rejected or unacceptable. Below are some steps of faith that you might take in drawing on God's power to heal you.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I was abused as a child, and I am deeply wounded. As a result, I believe that as a man I am rejected and unacceptable. I am asking You to renew my mind to the truth that You accept me unconditionally and that I no longer have to believe that I am unacceptable.”

Example #2: You may have been wounded through a divorce.

Step of Faith: “Lord, this divorce has wounded me, and I feel hopeless. I am **trusting** You to BE my healing and to persuade me that You will work Your divine good out of this situation.”

Remember: If your woundedness has gone on for years, it will take time to feel or experience God's healing. If you are in a situation today that is creating woundedness, you may have to be more intentional in taking steps of faith in asking God to be your protection and strength in that situation.

Engaging God: Are you experiencing past or present woundedness? If so, begin taking steps of faith for God to heal you from that woundedness.

DAY FOUR

Woundedness and Unforgiveness

Woundedness and unforgiveness go hand in hand when you have been wounded by another person. Because of the depth of the woundedness, the lie is that you could not possibly forgive this person for what they did. However, this is a lie because all of Christ's forgiveness is available to you to forgive the person that wounded you. The problem is in our unwillingness to forgive. We know from the Bible that we are to forgive, but our will is resistant to forgiving that person.

Personal Example Of Unforgiveness Toward My Dad

Let me give you a personal example of how God moved me from unwillingness to willingness to forgive my dad. Because of the deep woundedness from my dad's verbal, physical, and emotional abuse, I was unwilling to forgive him. The Lord knew that I was unwilling to forgive.

However, He spoke to me through my thoughts and said, "I know that you are unwilling to forgive your dad. Are you willing to LET Me forgive your dad through you?" I was unwilling to forgive my dad, but I was willing to allow God to forgive my dad through me. Here are some examples of the steps of faith that I took:

Step of Faith: "Lord, I can't forgive my dad who abused and wounded me. I am **asking** You to BE my forgiveness and to forgive my dad through me."

Over an 18 month period of intentionally seeking God by faith to forgive my dad through me, God transformed my heart by giving me a willingness to forgive my dad. He first supernaturally did a work through me and then supernaturally transformed my will so that I would be willing to forgive my dad. This is one of the greatest supernatural works that God has accomplished in my life because I never thought that it would ever be possible to forgive this man for what he did.

KEY TRUTH

God NEVER does a work THROUGH you without doing a work IN you.

Engaging God: Think of a person that you don't believe that you can forgive. Are you willing to trust God to forgive that person through you? Then begin taking steps of faith similar to mine above and ask God to forgive that person through you.

Key Truths Concerning The Walk of Faith And Healing From Woundedness

1. There is no "quick" fix for long term woundedness. It may take a long time to heal from woundedness that you might have been carrying for years.
2. You will have to draw upon Christ as your perseverance and patience during the healing process.
3. Remember that it is not the wounding event or events that are the main issue in woundedness. It is the lying beliefs that come from those events.
4. You may or may not be able to tie your lying beliefs back to the woundedness. That is okay, because God can.
5. Your part is to seek Him by faith to heal the woundedness and renew your mind to the truth.
6. Therefore, not only is it important to take steps of faith to seek God for healing, but it is also important to seek Him to renew your mind with His truth to replace the lying beliefs associated with your woundedness.

Remember That The Walk Of Faith Occurs In A SUPERNATURAL Unseen Realm.

*"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is **unseen**. For what is seen is temporary, but **what is unseen is eternal**." 2 Corinthians 4:18*

It is important to understand that as you walk by faith, you are entering another realm of living. It is a supernatural realm where God transforms your life. It is much different than the experiential realm of your five senses. In the experiential realm, you are always experiencing life, emotions, changes, etc., but in the supernatural realm it is a different story. In the supernatural realm:

1. You can't visibly see God's process of changing your life take place.
2. You don't feel Christ's life filling you when you draw on Him as the "AM."
3. You don't feel the power of God renewing your mind and transforming your life.



The result is that you may be tempted to give up walking by faith because you aren't experiencing changes as soon as you want to. It is crucial to understand that as you begin the walk of faith that you are learning how to live in a realm that you are not used to living in. Look at the words of Paul in Philippians 4:11:

*"Not that I speak from want, for **I have learned to be content** in whatever circumstances I am."*

Paul is telling us that the Christian life is a process of learning. He was learning how to live from Christ's contentment regardless of circumstances. As Paul had to learn, so do you. It will

take time walking by faith to learn to live in the unseen realm of faith and to experience supernatural transformation.

The key to LEARNING how to walk by faith is to keep walking. The longer you walk by faith and experience changes, the more your God-confidence will grow in living in the unseen realm.

Summary

1. God can give you immediate victory, freedom, healing, etc., or it may be a LONGER term process BEFORE you experience those things. (This is the case most of the time.)
2. Know by faith, whether you feel it or not, that as you walk by faith God IS working in your life to free you, to give you victory, to heal you, and to transform your life.
3. From time to time you may run out of patience with God's timetable. Ask Him to BE your PATIENCE and PERSEVERANCE when those times arise.
4. Be spiritually AWARE every day of God's working in your life. It may be a SUBTLE change or a series of subtle changes. Ask Him to make you aware of the changes that He is making.

DAY FIVE

Experiencing Transformation Produces GOD-CONFIDENCE.

“For I am confident of this very thing that He who began a work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6

What kind of confidence is Paul talking about? This is a God-produced confidence. Why? Paul is testifying that he has experienced such supernatural changes from God that his confidence is not a self-confidence in his ability. Rather it is a God-confidence in God's ability.

GOD-CONFIDENCE is the result when you experience supernatural changes in your life for which there is NO OTHER explanation than that God was the Source for those changes.

I will be honest with you that I don't see that much God-confidence because many Christians have not walked long enough by faith to experience those changes. Therefore, my encouragement to you is that you continue to walk by faith long enough so that you will experience God-confidence and be able to say one day with Paul:

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the (God's) power that works within us...” Ephesians 3:20 (Parenthesis mine)

Remember that developing God-confidence is a process. Paul uses the word “persuaded” to reveal that process in 2 Timothy 1:12:

*“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and **am persuaded** that **He is able** to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.”*

The same will be true of us as we walk by faith and experience God’s transforming work in our lives. Just like Paul, we will be persuaded concerning God’s desire and ability in moving and working in our lives.

***Therefore, as we walk by faith long enough to experience change in our lives,
our CONFIDENCE in GOD will grow.***

Question: If you could experience what God’s power promises, what would that do for your confidence in God’s ability?

Engaging God: Ask God to begin persuading you in a deeper way of His ability and desire to transform your life. Ask Him to give you greater God-confidence in who He is and what He promises to do

Final Truths About The Walk Of Faith

- It is through the walk of faith that you **learn how to live by faith**.
- Through your walk of faith the reality of living by faith will become **a greater reality** to you than living by feelings and experiences.
- The more that you walk in faith, the more you will begin to **see every situation through God’s eyes** with the result that you will better understand what His purposes are.
- The longer that you walk in faith, the more **at rest you will be in not knowing** what happens next in your life because you will have a greater confidence in God’s sovereignty and control.
- **If you persevere in your walk of faith**, you will experience a supernatural work of God that will change how you think, believe, choose, and behave.
- As you continue to walk by faith, you will deepen your relationship with God with the result that **you will enjoy being in His presence** and will **be more in tune with His plan, purpose, and will** for your life.

LYING BELIEFS

Lying Beliefs About How To Live the Christian Life:

1. I must work FOR God:
 - a. to gain His love.
 - b. for God to be happy with me.
 - c. to earn His acceptance.
 - d. to escape His condemnation.
 - e. to feel good about myself.
 - f. to please others.
2. It is up to me using my intellect and ability (with God's help):
 - a. to keep His commands.
 - b. to make His promises real in my life.
 - c. to transform myself.
 - d. to be happy.
 - e. to be successful.

Lying Beliefs About God:

I believe that God is:

Or, in the past in a very stressful situation I felt like God was:

Angry
Cold and distant
Indifferent
Not really in control

Judgmental
Condemning
Punishing
Uncaring

Unloving
Unable
Unwilling
Uncompassionate

Lying Beliefs About Marriage

1. It is up to my spouse to:
 - a. Meet all my needs.
 - b. Make me happy.
 - c. Love and respect me unconditionally.
 - d. Fulfill my expectations about his/her part in marriage.
 - e. Accept me unconditionally.
2. We, as a married couple, in our own ability with God's help can produce a Christ-centered marriage.
3. If my spouse will get fixed, then I will be happy in marriage.

Lesson Five

The Fight Of Faith

DAY ONE

Introduction

Now that you have a better understanding of what the walk of faith looks like, we need to talk about the resistance that you will face as you walk by faith. It will not take long in our walk of faith to experience resistance. This resistance will create a fight of faith. What we will discuss in this lesson are the enemies we face in this battle and how we engage God to do battle with these enemies. Here are the major enemies we will face in our fight of faith.

- **The Flesh**
- **The Power of Sin**
- **Satan/Demons**
- **Your Thoughts**

The Fight of Faith

“Fight the good fight of faith...”
1 Timothy 6:12

I define the fight of faith as follows:

FIGHT OF FAITH:

Occurs when you meet RESISTANCE from your enemies to your walk of faith.

The truth is that from the first step of faith you will meet resistance. The fight begins. The question I want to ask is two-fold:

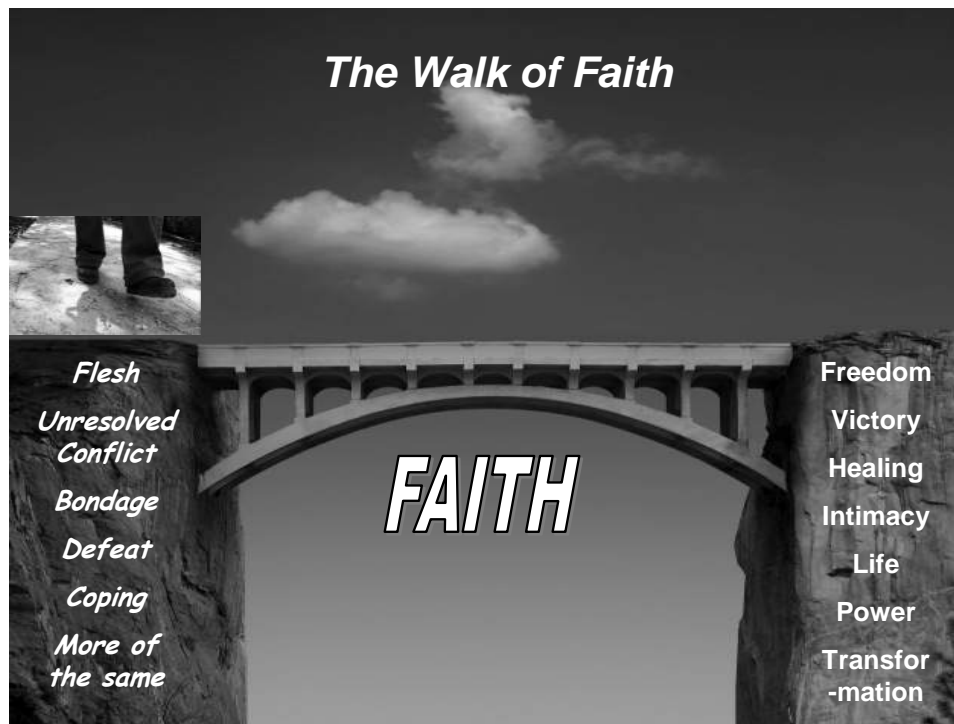
- Are you aware there is a fight?
- Are you engaged in the fight?

The first thing we must be aware of is that there is a fight. If we know there is a fight, then we will live as if no fight is taking place. In addition, if we know there is a fight and/or don't fight the fight of faith according to 1 Timothy 6:12, then two things will happen:

First, we will eventually give up on God and our walk of faith.

Second, we will turn back to self as the source from which to live our life.

In the diagram below, we see on the left where we begin our Christian walk living from the flesh, experiencing unresolved conflict, in bondage to defeating sin patterns, etc. On the right side are God's promises of transformation that we want to experience. The bridge between the two is faith.



Truths About The Fight of Faith

#1 - You Can't Fight This Fight.

"For the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory." Deuteronomy 20:4

The truth about the fight of faith is that you **can't** fight this fight apart from God. Why? It is because your strength and willpower is no match for your flesh, the power of sin, and Satan. You will lose the fight every time when you choose to engage the fight of faith **apart** from God's power. God promises to fight the fight FOR you!

**God NEVER intended for you to fight a fight that you
CANNOT win apart from Him.**

#2 - Your Part In The Fight of Faith

"The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." Exodus 14:14

Even though God must ultimately fight this fight, you do have a crucial part to play: “Be still.” At first this may sound very passive, but the truth is that “be still” is a very active phrase in that you are trusting the Lord by faith to fight the fight with the result that you can be still. When the obstacles of the flesh, the power of sin, Satan, doubt, etc. surface and want to take control, you ask God by faith to intercede on your behalf to bring His supernatural power to bear on those obstacles and to destroy them. “Being still” means that you can rest in God’s ability and power to destroy the obstacles to your walk of faith. We see this truth in Psalm 46:10: “***Be still and know that I am God...***”

Your faith ACTIVATES God’s power to destroy the enemies to your walk of faith.

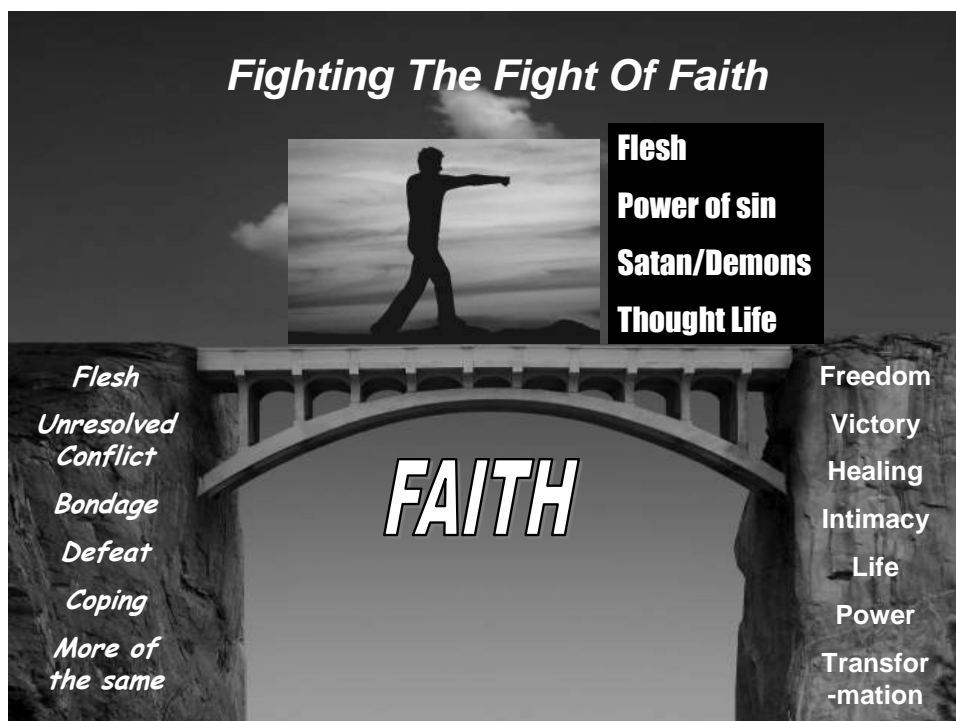
#3 – Use God’s Word As Part Of The Fight of Faith.

*“My soul weeps because of grief. **Strengthen me according to Your word.**” Psalm 119:28*

*“You will **know the truth**, and the **truth will set you free**.” John 8:32*

An essential part of fighting the fight of faith is knowing and using God’s truth. The word “knowing” in John 8:32 means more than intellectual knowledge. It means “to believe.” We also know that Christ Himself is the truth according to John 14:6. Therefore, as we believe God’s truth and engage God by faith, He will use His truth to destroy the obstacles to your faith walk and set you free. We will see how this practically works in the next section of this study.

Who Are The ENEMIES In This Battle?



Enemy #1 – The FLESH

What Is The Flesh?

Paul describes his flesh in the following ways in Romans 7:

*“For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”
Romans 7:14*

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.” Romans 7:18

The biblical meaning of the word “flesh” is man’s DESIRE to live life with HIMSELF as the source, INDEPENDENT or APART from God as the Source.

Prior to salvation, we learned that we had no choice but to depend on ourselves (our flesh) as the source for solving our problems, dealing with life, and becoming a success. We were living life out of our own resources (such as education, IQ, personality, looks, talents, abilities, capabilities, self-discipline, and self-strength) apart from God as our Source. As we did this, it reinforced our desire to BE the source for life.

When we were saved, God had two purposes in that salvation. He first wanted to save us from our sins. Secondly, He put His life and power in us to save us from ourselves or our “self-life” which the Bible calls the flesh.

(Note: It is worth noting at this point that God gave every one of us IQ, talents, abilities, etc. However, God never intended for us to live from those talents and abilities **independently** of Him.)

Living from our flesh will ALWAYS create the desire to live independently of God. Since we were DESIGNED to live dependently upon God, we will NEVER produce the life that God promises if we CHOOSE to live from our flesh.

Let me ask you a question, “Is it possible that you are using your God-given talents, abilities, strength, and willpower apart from God to deal with your external problems, your internal struggles, and other areas of your life?” If so, I have another question:

“How well is it working for you?”

For some of us it may have the appearance that it is working. But, the truth is:

***God has it RIGGED in that He has designed man to
live DEPENDENTLY upon Him.***

Life truly works only as we live with an attitude of dependence upon God.

DAY TWO

Characteristics of The Flesh

To give us a better understanding of our flesh, let's explore some of the characteristics of the flesh.

The “**flesh**” is an **independent attitude** that says:

- **I** can be in control.
- **I** can meet my needs.
- **I** can handle or overcome all problems.
- **I** can deal with every circumstance concerning marriage, family, job, finances, etc.
- **I** can be a success.
- **I** can be my own god.

***Because the DESIRE to live in the flesh is so strong, fleshly desires always
bring us to the place of “I CAN” live INDEPENDENTLY of God.***

Your Flesh Will ALWAYS Resist Your Walk of Faith

Your flesh will always be resisting your walk of faith. We see this in Galatians 5:17

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Galatians 5:17

We will struggle the rest of our life with the flesh and its desires. The bad news is that going back to our fleshly, independent living is the “default” position for all of us. In other words, it is easy to go back to the flesh because that is what we are used to living. However, now that we are Christians, we have another option. Since we have the fullness of God's power in us, we can now choose to walk dependently on God's power (which ALWAYS overpowers the flesh).



The DEFAULT position for every Christian is the FLESH.

Questions: Based on Romans 7:15, what are some things that you would like to be doing but are not doing or vice versa? Have you tried to not do or do these things using your own willpower? Is it working?

Living From The Flesh Produces Fleshly Behavior.

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.....” Galatians 5:19-21a

There is another downside to living from the flesh. It will only produce the “works of the flesh” which are **fleshly attitudes** or **fleshly behaviors** like those listed in Galatians 5:19-21.

Fleshly behaviors and attitudes are the outflow from your lying beliefs. They come in two forms: **positive** flesh and **negative** flesh. Below are some examples of negative and positive flesh.

Examples of negative flesh: anger, inadequacy, unforgiveness, envy, controlling, fear, worry.

Examples of positive flesh: self-confidence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, success, strong in self.

Note: Positive flesh is harder to recognize because it can look very appealing, but it is still the flesh. The key word in defining positive flesh is “self.”

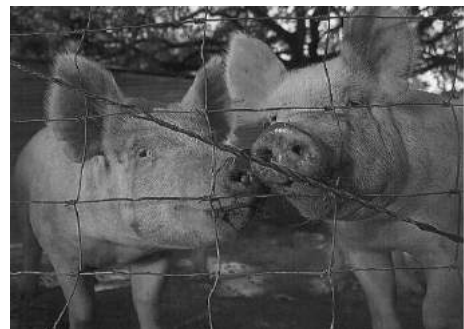
Exercise: Please refer to the last two pages of this lesson titled “**Fleshly Behavior**” and write below five fleshly behaviors that you struggle with the most.

Living From the Flesh Leads To Living In “The PRODIGAL PIGPEN.”

When you move from living by faith in God to living by faith in the flesh, the Bible tells us in Romans 8:6 that it results in “**death**.”

*“.. the mind set on the flesh is **DEATH**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”*

This “death” is defined in Strong’s Lexicon as “**the misery of our soul as a result of sin.**” If you continue to live independently



of God and out of your own resources, it will lead you to the prodigal pigpen of “misery” in your soul. This misery can be caused internally by your own flesh or externally by circumstances or relationships.

What are some examples of “misery” of the soul?

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Condemnation | Stress | Anxiety | Shame | Unforgiveness |
| Unhappiness | Anger | Guilt | Arrogance | Bitterness |
| Self-pity | Inadequacy | Fear | Worry | Frustration |
| Unworthiness | Blame | Rejection | Insecurity | Dissatisfaction |

Question: As you read through this list, are you experiencing any of these characteristics of the misery of the soul?

When I give in to my flesh and live there for awhile, I call that going to the “prodigal pigpen.” Remember the prodigal son who decided to live independently and ended up in a pigpen? This is what happens to us when we go to the flesh. We end up like the prodigal son “wallowing” in the mud and muck of our flesh. Peter addresses this truth in 2 Peter 2:22:

“Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.’”

The dog returning to its vomit or a pig returning to wallowing in the mud are great pictures of what going back to the flesh is like. If this is the case, why do we keep going back to the flesh? Here again, it is what we are used to. As sick as it sounds, we have learned to be at home and to be comfortable with the misery of our flesh. Does that sound troublesome to you? I hope so.

God in His grace and love is offering you a way OUT of your “prodigal pigpen.”
Walking by faith in His power is your only WAY out!

The good news is that God offers you a way out of your flesh through His power.

The Fight of Faith And The Flesh

There are three things God wants to accomplish concerning the fight of faith and the flesh.

1. EXPOSE your fleshly behavior.

Sometimes we have lived in our flesh so long that it may not be readily apparent what the flesh patterns are that we face. Therefore, what God wants to do is to expose any and all of your fleshly behavior. Look at what David said to God about this issue:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23, 24.

2. Show you the death OF your flesh.

“Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit.....’ 2 Peter 2:22

The key truth to understand is this:

***Before you walk in the death TO your flesh you must first recognize
the death OF your flesh.***

What I mean by this statement is that it is difficult if not impossible to turn away from fleshly behaviors that we have been experiencing for some time. The problem is two-fold: One is that we are unwilling to turn away from our flesh and two, we don't have the power in and of ourselves to set ourselves free from the grip of our flesh. Therefore, God has to reveal the death of our flesh before we are willing to allow God to set us free from it. Otherwise, we will be like the dog returning to it's vomit, lapping it up and throwing it up. (Sorry about the graphic analogy but it is a visual I hope the Lord will use to make this point.)

As you continue to walk in your flesh, you will experience ongoing misery of the soul. The question is: How much misery can you live with?

3. Walk in the death TO your flesh.

***Death TO your flesh means that you turn away from the flesh and
turn to God as your SOURCE for living life.***

Look at 2 Corinthians 4:11:

*"For we who live **are constantly being delivered over to death (to our flesh)** for Jesus' sake, so that the **life of Jesus** also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." 2 Corinthians 4:11*

What Paul is saying is that God is constantly exposing the death OF our flesh so that we will walk in the death TO our flesh. Paul goes on to further say that when we turn away from our flesh, we can once again walk in Christ as our life.

***Walking in the death TO your flesh is another way of saying that
you are walking in victory OVER your flesh.***

DAY THREE

Examples of What It Looks Like To Engage God's Power To Experience Victory Over Your Flesh

To experience victory over the flesh:

1. Ask God to continually expose your fleshly behavior when you are experiencing it.
2. Ask God to reveal the "death" (misery) that your flesh is causing you and others around you.
3. Ask God, in His power, to give you the willingness to "die" TO your fleshly behavior by moving you away from living from it.

Let's look at a few examples of how to engage God by faith to experience victory over our fleshly behavior:

Example #1: Let's assume that you struggle with the fleshly behavior of wanting to control your spouse. The Holy Spirit exposes this fleshly desire to control. What does a step of faith look like to engage God's power to deal with your controlling flesh?

Fight of faith: "Lord, You have exposed my fleshly behavior of controlling. I am asking You to expose to me the 'death' that my controlling is causing my wife and my marriage. I am asking You in Your power to move my will so that I will no longer desire to control my wife."

Example #2: Let's assume that in your fleshly behavior you are demanding or even dictatorial. Your relationship with your kids has been that you demand certain things from them. What does a step of faith look like to release God's power to have victory over this flesh pattern?

Fight of faith: "Lord, I struggle in my flesh by being demanding of my kids. I am asking you to show me the 'death' of my demanding flesh and in Your power remove that desire to be demanding."

What Will Happen As You Release God's Power To Deal With Your Flesh?

1. God begins working by showing you the **"death"** or misery that your flesh is causing you and to those around you.
2. As you take multiple steps of faith, God will reveal to you in what ways He is moving you away from (**dying to**) living from your flesh.
3. You will, over time, begin to experience God's power moving your **desire** to a place where you no longer want to live from your fleshly behavior.
4. Remember that some fleshly behavior is more entrenched and will take longer than others for you to experience victory.

Key Truth:

***You will choose to go back to the flesh many times during your walk of faith.
However, during those times God wants to expose the DEATH of your flesh as
you WALLOW in your "prodigal pigpen."***

Exercise: Write down the ways your fleshly behaviors are adversely impacting your marriage, your kids, your co-workers and your other relationships.

Engaging God: Begin taking steps of faith similar to the examples above and ask God to show you the death that your flesh is causing you and others and ask Him, in His power, to move your will to a place where you no longer desire to live by that fleshly behavior.

Enemy #2 - The Power of Sin

*“But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but (**the power of**) **sin** which dwells in me.” Romans 7:20 (Parenthesis mine)*

*“For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for **I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.**” Romans 7:15*

What is the power of sin?

THE POWER OF SIN:

**an INTERNAL and ONGOING power in your life that seeks to
DRAW you or TEMPT you to live independently of God**

The power of sin within you is always tempting you to live life in your own intellect and ability versus God’s life and power. **This is a power that you cannot have victory over because your willpower is no match for the power of sin.** Therefore, if you do not engage God’s power by faith then you will always give in to the power of sin.

Another key truth is that the power of sin is in “partnership” with your flesh. To give you a picture of how they work together, imagine eating at your favorite restaurant. The server brings you the dessert tray with all of your favorite desserts. You can’t resist, so you take one or more of the desserts. The power of sin is the server in this example, and the desserts are your personal flesh patterns. The power of sin is always serving up a flesh pattern for you to choose to live from.



Examples of What It Looks Like To Engage God’s Power To Experience Victory Over The Power of Sin

Let’s see what it looks like to engage God’s power to deal with the power of sin:

Example #1: You walk into the office today, and you find that someone else got the promotion that you worked so hard for. At that point, the power of sin serves up to you the flesh pattern of anger. You have a choice to make. You can either give in to the power of sin which leads you to get angry at your boss, or you can engage God’s power over the power of sin. This is what a fight of faith looks like if you decided to take a step of faith:

Fight of faith: “Lord, I know that I deserve that promotion, and I want to be mad at my boss. However, I am trusting Your power in me to defeat the power of sin within me and to move me away from wanting to be angry.”

Example #2: You find out that a friend has been talking about you behind your back. At the point that you hear that news, the power of sin is right there serving up the flesh pattern of anger and/or rejection. At that point you can choose to engage God to fight for you.

Fight of faith: “Lord, I am entrusting my fleshly right to be angry or to feel rejected to You.. I am trusting Your power in me to move me away from the anger and rejection.”

Questions: In what areas of your life are you constantly being undermined by the power of sin? What flesh patterns does the power of sin continue serving up that keeps you defeated?

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you areas of your life where the power of sin continues to be an obstacle that takes you back to your flesh. Begin taking steps of faith to engage God’s power in order to experience victory over the power of sin in these areas.

THE POWER OF SIN
*will continue to be an obstacle by **CONSTANTLY** tempting you to
give in to your flesh.*

Enemy #3 - Satan/His Demonic Forces

*“The thief comes only to **steal** and **kill** and **destroy**...” John 10:10a*

*“Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the **Devil, your great enemy**. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to **devour**.” 1 Peter 5:8*

I must be honest with you that early on in my Christian life in my church we did not talk much about Satan. We spent even less time talking about demonic forces. However, in my Christian walk, I have come to discover that Satan and his demonic forces are very real and have an ONGOING strategy:

**To STEAL, KILL, and DESTROY your walk with God,
your marriage, and your family.**

Satan and his demons come against you to:

- **Constantly try to DESTROY your faith walk.**
- **Keep you in BONDAGE to your lying beliefs.**
- **Keep you in bondage to your defeating sin patterns and strongholds.**
- **Turning you back to yourself to be the source for life.**
- **Keep you focused on yourself to try and solve your impossible problems.**



Satan’s first objective was to keep you from being saved. Now that you are saved, his next objective is to keep you from seeking God by faith as the Source to transform your life. Satan

knows God's truth and the power of it. That is why he and his demonic forces will do everything in their power to keep you from knowing, believing, and being set free by God's truth.

The GREATEST threat to Satan is God's truth!

***The greatest threat to Satan concerning you is that you choose to
WALK IN and BELIEVE IN God's truth.***

We are in a fierce battle with Satan and his demons. These enemies are formidable foes. The problem is that we are dealing with an unseen enemy who knows the Bible only too well and knows what God can and will do in our lives if we walk by faith.

*"For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the **spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**" Ephesians 6:12*



Therefore, Satan's and his demons' objective is to prevent us from walking by faith in God's power so that we will continue to live in the prison of our lying beliefs, fleshly behaviors, and the power of sin. Satan knows that if he can keep you believing the lies, you will never experience the transformation and the abundant life that God promises.

KEY TRUTH:

You, in your own power, are no match for Satan and his power.

*"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, **the devil**, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to **devour**." 1 Peter 5:8*

Key Point: Satan and his demons CANNOT INDWELL you as a Christian. Because you are in union with God, Satan and his demons can now only try to INFLUENCE your soul, but they cannot indwell it.

We see in 2 Corinthians 12:7 that Satan can bring his demons against us. This is what happened to Paul when Satan sent him a demon (messenger of Satan) to torment him:

*"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, **a messenger of Satan, to torment me.**" 2 Corinthians 12:7*

Satan is your only historian. He has kept very meticulous records on your entire life. He and his demonic forces know your weaknesses, your flesh patterns, and your lying beliefs. They know exactly the areas where you are most vulnerable. Therefore, they attempt to draw you away from your walk with God by triggering the power of sin and your flesh patterns. Satan and

his demonic forces are ruthless in that they will use lies, temptation, deceit, and condemnation to draw you away from your faith walk.

DAY FOUR

Examples of What It Looks Like To Engage God's Power To Experience Victory Over Satan/Demons

Example #1: Let's assume you are struggling with your finances. Your spiritual desire is to trust God to provide the necessary finances, but after several steps of faith your financial situation has not changed. Satan or his demonic forces enter the picture and insert thoughts such as, "I have given God a week to solve this problem, and He hasn't done anything to solve it. He probably isn't really concerned with my problem, so I better use my own intellect and ability (APART from God) to try to figure out how to get myself out of this mess."

Remember: When Satan/demonic forces insert thoughts into your mind. they will always come in the form of first person (I, me, myself, etc.) and sound like your own voice.

If you take ownership of those thoughts, then the enemy's strategy has worked, and he has successfully turned you back to yourself (the flesh) as the source. However, you can choose to take steps of faith to walk in God's power over Satan/demons.

Fight of faith: "Lord, I know that the enemy is tempting me to give up on You and Your ability to solve this financial problem. I am asking You to do battle with the enemy and to remove him from tempting me in this area."

Example #2: Let's assume that you struggle with pornography. Your desire is to experience victory over this fleshly behavior. However, the temptation of Satan is too strong for your willpower to stop going back to it.

Fight of faith: "Lord, I know that the power of Satan is greater than my power to stop looking at pornography. I am trusting in Your power to overpower the power of Satan and to keep me from going back to the pornography."

Questions: Do you have recurring negative, lying, or condemning thoughts? Is it possible that Satan or his demonic forces could be inserting those thoughts into your mind? Ask God to reveal to you the origin of those thoughts and how Satan is using them to draw you into sin. Seek God by steps of faith in those areas where you believe that Satanic or demonic power has a grip on your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you where Satan/demons are trying to steal, kill, and destroy your life, your marriage, your family, or any other area of your life. Engage God's power to do battle with Satan in these areas.

Truths To Remember In The Walk of Faith In Dealing With Satan/Demons

1. Don't try to deal with Satan in your own power. You are powerless against him.
2. Satan is always looking for a fight. Remember that you must engage God's power to win that fight.

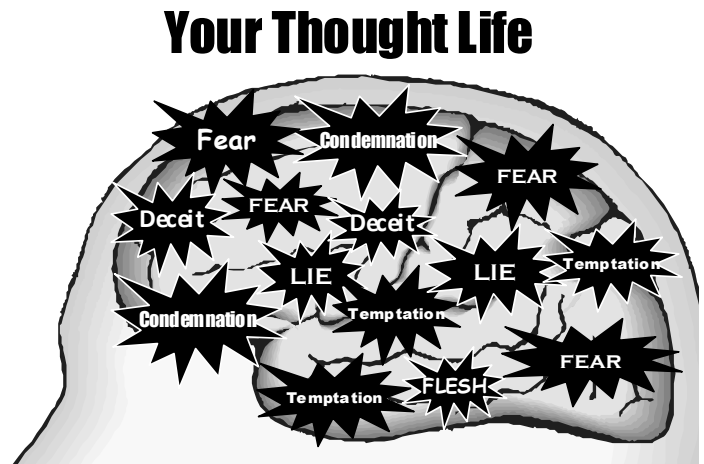
3. You may have to continuously take steps of faith to remove the Satanic/demonic influence in your life, especially in areas where your fleshly behavior is the strongest. The enemy will not give up easily.
4. Remember that in God's power the enemy is defeated. However, he is constantly trying to deceive you into believing he is all-powerful and that you are powerless.

Enemy #4 – Your Thought Life

*“because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” Romans 8:7*

*“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and **we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.**” 2 Corinthians 10:5*

One of the greatest obstacles to your walk of faith is your thought life. As you have seen in several of the examples, your mind can be deceived by the enemy. In addition, your mind contains lying, unbelieving, and condemning thoughts. These thoughts can flood your mind and keep you hostage. Therefore, let's look at four roadblocks in your mind that can draw you away from walking by faith: fear, self-condemning thoughts, unbelief, and doubt.



Note: The “we” in 2 Corinthians 10:5 above does not mean you, independent of God. “We” means that as I walk by faith God will take those thoughts captive through His power.

Fearful Thoughts

*“For God has **not given us a spirit of fear**, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7*

I think that the main hindrance to the walk of faith is fear. What are some of the fears that we have concerning our walk of faith?

Fear of the UNKNOWN

The question that I hear most often is, “What will happen when I take a step of faith?” This is a valid fear because we may not know exactly what will happen when we take steps of faith. This fear of the unknown can keep us from ever taking the first step. The source of this fear is not being in control about what will happen when you take a step of faith.

What is the truth: The truth is that God knows what is going to happen when we take steps of faith. If we trust God's character and His promises, we will no longer fear what will happen when we take steps of faith. The catch is that we will never experience trust in God's character unless we do take a step of faith.

Fight of faith in dealing with fear of the unknown:

“Lord, I am fearful about taking a step of faith because I don’t know what to expect. Persuade me that You are the sovereign God of the universe and I have nothing to fear.”

Fear of FAILURE

Another question that I hear often is, “What if I take steps of faith, and nothing happens, or God does not come through?” Fear of failure is a very common fear in the walk of faith. We won’t take steps of faith because we fear that God may fail us or that we might fail God.

What is the truth: The truth is that God will not fail you, and you cannot unless you decide NOT take a step of faith. Since it is not up to you to produce the results, then you cannot fail if you are walking by faith. As we have studied previously, we know by faith that God is working in every step of faith whether we feel it or not.

Fight of faith in dealing with fear of failure:

Step of faith: “I am fearful that I will fail if I take a step of faith. Lord, I am entrusting my fear to You and am asking You to persuade me that I cannot fail if I walk by faith.”

Fear of PAIN or SUFFERING

I hear it said so many times about the walk of faith, “I don’t want to take a step of faith because I might experience pain and suffering from God.” This is one of Satan’s greatest ploys with Christian men. If he can convince you that a step of faith involves pain and suffering, you will NOT take the first step.

What is the truth: The truth is that we live in a fallen world full of pain and suffering. You may not be suffering today, but you probably will be experiencing pain or suffering sometime in the future whether or not you ever take a step of faith. The truth is that it is not a step of faith that will bring pain and suffering because God is not the author of it. What God promises if you walk by faith is to deliver you from the suffering OR to transform your attitude in the midst of the suffering.

Fight of faith in dealing with fear of pain and suffering:

“I am fearful that there will be pain or suffering if I take a step of faith. Persuade me that if I experience pain and suffering you will deliver me through it or transform my life in the midst of the suffering. Also persuade me in those times of suffering that I need You more than ever.”

Giving In To Fear Robs You Of:

1. Victory over the flesh, sin and Satan/demons.
2. Freedom from defeating sin patterns.
3. Healing of your past woundedness.
4. Transformation of you, your marriage, and your family.
5. Transformation into Christ-likeness.
6. Personal relationship with God.

Engaging God: What are the fears that you are facing concerning your walk of faith? Begin taking steps of faith and ask God to begin replacing those fears with His courage and His confidence.

Your fears can take OWNERSHIP of your life and ROB you of your faith walk.

DAY FIVE

Self-Condemning Thoughts

We know from our discussion about Satan that Satan/demons can insert lying, deceiving, tempting and condemning thoughts. However, we can produce our own self-condemning thoughts without Satan's help. After many years of discipling, I find that many Christians spend more time in self-condemnation after they sin than the time they are in the sin itself. I know that was true in my life.

What is the truth: Self-condemnation comes from not knowing or believing that Christ took all your condemnation on Himself when He went to the cross. That is why a crucial truth to understand for Christians is Romans 8:1.

*"Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**." Romans 8:1*

Because you have been delivered from EVERY form of condemnation through Christ, then you NO longer have to condemn yourself.

However, this is easier said than done. Therefore, let's look at what it looks like to bring God's power to bear to fight these self-condemning thoughts.

Example: You continue to fail in an area of your life that brings on thoughts of self-condemnation. You decide to engage God to deal with those thoughts.

Fight of faith: "Lord, I have been taking ownership of these condemning thoughts. I am **entrusting** these condemning thoughts to You and **asking** You to take these thoughts captive and to set me free from condemnation."

Engaging God: Are there any areas where you feel you are failing in life that bring on self-condemning thoughts? Begin seeking God to take those thoughts captive and renew your mind to the truth of Romans 8:1 above.

Unbelieving Thoughts

*"Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; **help my unbelief**." Mark 9:24*

*“And so we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**.” Hebrews 3:19*

The Jews in Hebrews 3:19 were promised a “promised land.” However, in their unbelief they chose not to enter. It was a land of God’s abundant provision and protection, but they said, “No!” What was the problem? They saw the “giants” in the land as a greater reality than God’s promise. The “giant” that could keep you from believing and experiencing transformation is **unbelief**. Unbelief keeps us locked in our lying beliefs and in the bondage of our fleshly attitudes and behaviors.

I have said before that we are all “unbelieving believers.” By that I mean that we have believed in Christ for salvation but there are many things about God that we do not believe. Remember that there is a difference between “knowing” (intellectual knowledge of) the truth and “believing” (personal revelation that leads to transformation) the truth. When we start a walk of faith there is great unbelief about several issues but I believe that unbelief primarily falls into two areas:

Unbelief about WHO God is.

Unbelief about WHAT God can (or is willing to) do in your life.

Therefore, when unbelieving thoughts come into mind, we must engage God to do battle with these thoughts.

Example: Let’s assume that you struggle with believing that God is truly willing to work in your life.

Fight of faith: “Lord, I am struggling with the thoughts of unbelief that You really will transform my life. I am asking You to take those thoughts captive and renew my mind to the truth that You are eternally willing to transform my life.”

Engaging God: Pick one area of your unbelief. Ask God to begin moving you from unbelief to belief in that area.

***An attitude of unbelief will move you to a place where
you QUIT walking by faith.***

Doubting Thoughts

*“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘**Did God really say**, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1*

*“But when he asks, **he must believe and not doubt**, because **he who doubts is like a wave of the sea**, blown and tossed by the wind.” James 1:6*

I believe that doubt is the #1 killer of faith. Doubt was the first tactic of Satan in the garden of Eden with Eve. He knew that if he could get Eve to doubt God then he could tempt her to make

an independent decision to sin against God. I am further convinced through my counseling of others that doubt can quickly move us away from living by faith.

I hear over and over again doubts about God's love, His power, His desire to set us free, etc. As long as Christians live in doubt, they will not walk by faith. These doubts begin as thoughts so what does it look like to seek God to take those doubtful thoughts captive.

Example: Let's assume you have been walking by faith in some area but you have yet to experience any change. Thoughts of doubt begin to creep into your mind.

Fight of faith: "Lord, I am beginning to doubt whether or not You are really working in my life because I am not experiencing any changes. Take those thoughts captive and BE my patience and endurance to take another step of faith."

Engaging God: In what areas of your life are you doubting God's desire or ability to change? Ask Him to remove your doubt and replace it with His confidence. Ask Him to BE your perseverance in the midst of your doubt.

Living in DOUBT leaves no room for faith.

In Some Fights You May Have To Continue To Fight For Some Time.

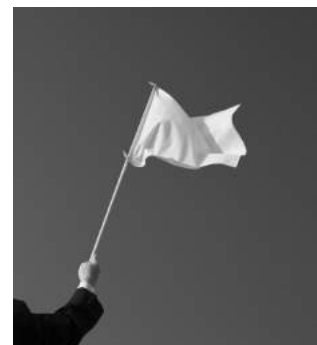
The duration of the fight of faith is always different. Some obstacles that you may face may be destroyed immediately upon engaging God to fight. However, many situations that we face may involve a longer fight of faith. Let me give an example to illustrate:

Let's assume you have an ongoing addiction to eating, alcohol, pornography, etc. When you start down a path to freedom from these addictions, you will be met with all types of opposition. The lust of your flesh will continue to draw you to your addiction. Satan or his demonic forces will be constantly tempting you. When you decide to engage God to fight this fight and to be set free, it can be a very long, hard, drawn-out battle. Therefore, you may need to be continuously engaging God to do battle with these obstacles that will not give up easily.

You Will Be Tempted To Give Up The Fight.

"How long will you forget me, Lord? Forever? How long will you hide from me? How long must I worry and feel sad in my heart all day? How long will my enemy win over me?"
Psalm 13:1, 2

Have you ever felt like David did in Psalm 13? Can't you hear the struggle in his words? The truth is that many times you will want to give up the fight of faith as well, especially when you are in a very difficult situation that seems to never end. However, it is during those times that you need to **persevere** in engaging God's power to fight for you. What you need to know is that YOU can't provide the perseverance. Only God can! Therefore, ask Him to be your perseverance to stay in the fight.



*“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through **perseverance** and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may **the God who gives perseverance and encouragement...**” Romans 15:4, 5a*

*“But if we **hope** for what we do not see, with **perseverance** we wait eagerly for it.” Romans 8:25*

Romans 8:25 is telling us that if we have “hope” (which is translated “confident expectation”) concerning what God promises to do, then we will persevere in our walk or fight of faith. As we experience freedom, victory, healing, etc., it will build our Christ-confidence to keep walking in faith and to keep fighting the fight of faith.

As you PERSEVERE in fighting the fight of faith and eventually experience a supernatural change by God, your CHRIST-CONFIDENCE increases and allows you to take another step of faith.

Where Will You End Up If You Give Up The Fight?

*“Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A **dog returns to its vomit**’ and, ‘A sow that is washed **goes back to her wallowing in the mud.**’” 2 Peter 2:22*

The truth is that if we give up the fight, then all we have left is to turn back to the flesh as our source. We go back to the “prodigal pigpen” of self by depending on and wallowing in our own ability and willpower to transform our lives, to solve our problems, and to meet our needs. If we turn to that option, remember that it will result in more of the same or worse.

If you don’t engage God to fight the fight of faith, you have ALREADY lost. However, if you ask God to fight, and you STAY in the fight, you will eventually experience His VICTORY over all the obstacles to your walk of faith.

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”
2 Timothy 4:7*



Flesh Patterns/Fleshly Behavior

Be self-absorbed (self-consumed)

become overly introspective
feel sorry for myself (self-pity)
get depressed
beat up on myself
play the role of victim/martyr
focus on my suffering to get
attention and sympathy
be jealous of another's success
and happiness

Withdraw (isolate myself)

be aloof (pull away)
distance myself from others
avoid others (be a loner)
go into a shell
become unapproachable
give them the silent treatment
refuse to communicate

Escape (pain/pressure) by using:

promiscuity carousing
drugs and alcohol talking
staying busy school
hobbies/games reading
computers fantasy
television movies
pornography sleep
overeating religion
work/career sex

Be anxious (worry and fret)

be fearful (apprehensive)
lack peace and rest
become paralyzed (numb)
be paranoid (overly suspicious)
refuse to see the positive
(gloom and doom thinking)
assume the worst

Seek guidance from:

astrology/horoscopes,
fortune telling and/or
the occult

Be self-disciplined (self-reliant)

base acceptance of self and
others on performance
become a perfectionist
try hard so as not to fail
fear making mistakes
be legalistic:
live "by the book"
feel obligated (have to's,
should's, ought to's)
be too hard on myself/others
set unrealistic standards for
myself/others

Become obsessed with:

accomplishments
recognition/status
acquiring material things
what others think of me
how I look physically
my physical health
the past (especially past hurts
and failures)
a devotion to a cause
structure, order and regulations

Become dominant

be dictatorial (bossy)
be demanding (pushy)
be overbearing (controlling)
intimidate others
refuse to give in

Stay in control through:

blackmail (making threats)
manipulation (use of guilt, pity,
silence, flattery, etc.)
coercion (physical threats)
profanity (swearing)
passivity (playing helpless)
not eating (anorexia/bulimia)

Lack compassion, gentleness

understanding, kindness, love
become defensive

Be self-righteous (self-justifying)

make excuses (rationalize)
cover up and hide mistakes
have to prove my point
assume I am never the problem
blame someone or something
else as the problem
avoid taking responsibility for
failure or problems
have difficulty: apologizing,
admitting I was wrong,
asking for forgiveness,
asking for help, and/or
expressing gratitude
have a superior attitude
(saying in effect):
"I know what is best"
"My way is the right way"

Be critical (judgmental)

find fault with others, myself
and everything around me
nit-pick things to death
be prejudiced (intolerant)
complain a lot (nothing is
ever good enough)

Be self-assured (self-confident)

depend on myself instead of
God or others
become proud (haughty)
be egocentric (act pompous)
brag (be boastful)
become arrogant (cocky)
become conceited (smug)

Come across as insensitive,

uncaring, unsympathetic,
indifferent or unconcerned

Be complacent (nonchalant)

say things like, "it's okay" or
"it doesn't matter"

Flesh Patterns/Fleshly Behavior (Continued)

Be pessimistic (negative)

lack confidence and optimism
be skeptical (suspicious)
distrust others, myself, God,
church and/or government
expect the worst
never be pleased with self
or others
never be satisfied or content

Become hostile

be unfriendly
be sarcastic (caustic)
be cynical (contemptuous)
be hateful (mean-spirited)
be cruel (malicious)
have a quick temper
rant and rave to vent my anger
be physically abusive
be verbally abusive
break things

Hold a grudge (be resentful)

become moody (sulk)
harbor bitterness
be unforgiving
keep a scorecard of offenses
try to get even (seek revenge)
want others to fail or get hurt
punish myself or others

Fight unfair (take cheap shots)

be slanderous
misrepresent the situation
gossip (talk behind their back)
engage in passive-aggressive
behavior: use humor to hide
real feelings, forget things,
refuse to communicate, be
late, procrastinate, etc.)

Be self-deprecating

assume I am always the problem
become overly apologetic
be too hard on myself
be uncomfortable with success
or happiness
have difficulty receiving: love,
compliments, forgiveness
be unable to forgive myself

Challenge others

resist authority
be uncooperative (inflexible)
be unteachable (close-minded)
cause dissension (strife)
be irritating (aggravate others)
be argumentative
be stubborn (unyielding)
be unreasonable

Deny reality

ignore problems and hope they
will go away
deny anything is bad or wrong
be subjective instead of objective
deceive others and myself
lie to self and others
exaggerate (overstate matters)
play games to hide real intent

Put up a front

hide what I really think and feel
pretend to be something I'm not
put on a show to impress others
and/or get attention
fake it (act like I know something
even when I don't)
be pretentious (phony, unreal)
be superficial (never let anyone
get too close)

Be passive (lack initiative)

quit too easily (give up)
don't take chances (play it safe)
wait for someone to tell me how
to think and what to do
vacillate (be too changeable)
be indecisive (let others make
decisions for me)
avoid failure at all costs
procrastinate (put things off)
be irresponsible (unreliable)
be lazy (apathetic, lethargic)

Be tense ("on guard")

find it hard to relax
be restless (feel like I have to be
doing something)
become impatient
be easily agitated

Become emotionally insulated

avoid intimacy
have difficulty expressing
feelings and opinions
suppress (stuff) emotions
be inhibited (restrained)

Live by my feelings

believe that truth is what I feel
be too sensitive to criticism
take things too personally
(be hypersensitive)
be touchy (irritable)
be controlled by fear, anger,
doubts and insecurities
automatically, read in rejection
(think "it's about me")

Be a pleaser (be nice)

try to keep everyone happy
avoid conflict/keep the peace
say what I think others want
be overly compliant
submissive
have difficulty saying "no" and
setting boundaries
can't stand up for myself
afraid to disappoint others
give in to others too easily

Be a caretaker (rescuer)

be overprotective
be overly responsible
become too involved with
other's affairs/concerns
be possessive (too invested)
talk too much and listen poorly
make decisions for others
give unsolicited advice

Be too serious (intense)

be overly analytical
become stoical (unemotional)
not be able to have fun
be formal and businesslike
lack joy or life

Lesson Six

Expectations About The Walk Of Faith

Final Truths About The Walk of Faith

DAY ONE

Introduction

The final truth that it is critical to understand about the walk of faith are the expectations we attach to it. Without understanding some of these expectations, you may be tempted to give up and turn back to yourself as the source. Therefore, I want to share some of the key expectations that most Christians have and contrast the difference between a realistic and an unrealistic expectation. We will look at the expectations in the following areas:

- **Having A Consistent Walk of Faith**
- **Experiencing Failure**
- **Faith Versus Feelings**
- **God's Timing**
- **Pain and Suffering**
- **Figuring Out What God Is Doing**
- **Reaching A Point of No Struggle**

Expectations About The Walk Of Faith

Expectation #1 – You Will Consistently Make The Choice To Walk By Faith In God.

Unrealistic expectation: You will consistently choose to walk by faith in God.

The Truth: Early on in your walk of faith, you will choose many times to go back to your self (the flesh) as the source to try to deal with your problems, to find solutions, and to make your life work.

This is the most critical unrealistic expectation to dispel. Early on in your walk of faith, you will go back to your self (the flesh) many times as the source to either solve your problems or to cope with your problems. Why? First of all, it is your default position. By this I mean that living from the flesh is what you are familiar with. It is your natural tendency to want to use his intellect, ability and willpower to live life independent of God.

In addition, as you begin to walk by faith, you have what I call a “weak” faith or what Jesus calls “little” faith. Your weak faith is a result of the level of your unbelief in who God is and what He can and will do. Along with your weak faith is your “strong” flesh. Your flesh will have a strong grip on you early on but as you continue to exercise your faith then it will become

stronger than the strength of your flesh. In addition, as you learn to walk by faith in God, you will begin to experience His life and power transform your life and you will come to realize the truth that SELF has no real solutions, no power, and no ability to solve life's problems. When the Holy Spirit reveals to you that you are walking by your flesh, simply confess that to God and turn back to Him in that moment.

REMEMBER:

The truth is that you will turn back to self (the flesh) as the source MANY times, but remember that in the NEXT MOMENT you can repent of your flesh and turn back to God as your Source.

Expectation #2 – Failure Is NOT An Option!

Unrealistic expectation: I cannot afford to fail in my walk of faith. If I do, I will condemn myself for failing and believe that I am a failure.

The Truth: Realistic expectation: You will fail many times in your walk of faith. However, this does not make you a failure or give you license to condemn yourself.

THE TRUTH:

God EXPECTS you to fail!

There were many great saints in the Bible who failed many times but God used them in mighty ways. We don't have to look any further than David to understand that we can and will fail many times along the way. However, what did God say about David: "He was a man after God's own heart." Therefore, expect to fail often. (I simply define failure as turning back to self as the source.) You see, God expects you to fail because He is well aware of your unbelief, the strength of your flesh, the power of sin, and the power of Satan in your life.

Even though you will fail many times, this does not make you a failure and is no reason to condemn yourself. Why? Romans 8:37 says that you are not a failure in God's eyes but are "more than a conqueror" in Christ. You do not have to condemn yourself when you fail because Romans 8:1 tells us:

*"There is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**."*

Since you are in Christ, God no longer condemns you, and you no longer have to condemn yourself. (I hope that is good news for you since so many Christians spend so much time in self-condemnation.) When you fail, you simply confess your failure to God, and turn back in the next moment into dependence upon Him.

All God is primarily wanting is for you to seek Him. He says in Matthew 7:7 that if you seek Him you will find Him. He is not measuring your performance. He knows you are going to fail but His real concern is that you will continue to seek Him even if you do fail because He knows that Satan is trying to get you to give up walking in dependence on God. The key truth is this:

Key Truth:

***It does not matter how many times you fail.
The key is to NOT stop SEEKING God by faith.***

Expectation #3 – Faithing It Versus Experience

“For we walk by faith not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7

Unrealistic expectation: As you take steps of faith or walk in faith, you always will feel or experience God working in your life.

Realistic expectation: For the most part in your walk of faith, you will NOT feel or experience God’s process of transforming your life until you experience the results of that process (i.e. freedom, victory, healing, etc.). You will be “faith-ing” it more than you will experience or feel it.

I know that we talked about this earlier but it is so hard to understand that I feel we need to explore it further because it is such a stumbling block in our walk of faith. It is a stumbling block because we feel or experience life every moment through our senses. However, when it comes to living by faith we may not feel or experience God’s working in our lives.

I compare God’s work in your life like an IV. Let’s assume you are in the hospital and you are given an antibiotic through an IV. As you sit and watch the drip, drip, drip of the IV you can’t feel the antibiotic working initially. However, you believe it is working because you have faith in the doctor who promised you it would do what it was designed to do. Eventually, as you are being healed you will feel the effects of that healing on your body.



In much the same way, when you start walking by faith, God’s work in you is like the IV in that you may not feel Him working but you know by faith He is because that is what He promises. However, as you walk by faith for a time (I wish I could tell you how much time.) you will begin to feel the affects of God’s work in the form of freedom, victory, healing, transformation, or intimacy.

As human beings we feel and experience all of life. However, when it comes to faith we may NOT feel or experience God’s transforming work.

DAY TWO

Expectation #4 - God’s Timetable Versus Your Timetable

Unrealistic expectation: When I begin the walk of faith then I expect to experience changes very soon.

The Truth: God has a perfect timetable for His will to be accomplished in your life (and He is not telling you what that timetable is).

I don't know about you, but I don't expect to have to wait a long time for anything. When I put the key in the ignition and turn it, I expect the car to start immediately. When I put the car in "Drive" and put the gas pedal down, I expect it to quickly respond. How about you? Unfortunately, for the most part, this is **not** how it works with God. As you walk down this path of faith, your desire will be for God to give you freedom, victory, and healing of your woundedness quickly. However, you will soon discover that God's timetable and your timetable may not be the same.



Let's assume that you continue seeking God for some time to transform you in some area, but nothing changes. You feel like you have logged enough time by faith that you should be experiencing some change. When God has not met your timetable, you may be tempted to give up or get angry with Him. Neither one of these options is going to bring about the change that you desire any faster. The key is to keep taking steps of faith long enough for you to experience the change that you desire. The key thing to remember when you are unhappy with God's timetable is this:

Even though God may not be working fast enough for you, He IS working!

"There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven."
Ecclesiastes 3:1

One of the questions that we tend to ask God is, **"Why is it taking so long to experience change?"** We need to understand that in some areas of our life we will be changed "quicker" than others. Why? The following are some of the reasons why change may come more slowly in some areas of your life than in others:

- Your lying beliefs are very entrenched because of the years of believing those lies.
- Your strongholds, addictions, etc. have a strong grip on you because of the length of time that they have held you in bondage.
- The depth of your woundedness and the length of time that you have lived with your woundedness may result in a slower healing process.
- Some areas of your flesh are stronger and more resistant to God's work than others are.
- Your unbelief, doubt, and fears can cause you to resist and delay God's transforming work in your life.

I believe when it comes to faith that the key question is this:

"How long can you continue to trust God WITHOUT experiencing change in your life?"

Question: What might be your temptation if God is not meeting your timetable?

Exercise: If you have been in a walk of faith for some time with an issue and God has not answered you, ask Him to be your patience and perseverance until you receive His answer.

Remember:

Faith is believing that God is working even though there is no visible or experiential evidence of that work in our lives.

Faith is the key thing that God is teaching you as you wait on Him.

Expectation #5 – There Will Be No Pain Or Suffering.

“For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5

*“Dear friends, **do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering**, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” 1 Peter 4:12, 13*

Unrealistic expectation: If I do my part in walking by faith, God will prevent pain, suffering, and conflict in my life.

The Truth: There will be pain, suffering, or conflict, BUT God will supply your needs when those times arise in your life and will reveal to you in His timing the “divine good” that He is working through your suffering.

I don’t like (nor will I ever like) pain, suffering, or conflict. I know that you feel the same way. However, God never promises that our walk of faith will be without pain or suffering. Why? We live in a fallen world, and in this fallen world there will always be pain and conflict. There are three kinds of people: those who have suffered, those who are suffering, and those who will suffer. Sooner or later we will fit in all three categories. We feel that God can (and perhaps should) stop all forms of suffering. However, there are consequences to living in a fallen world, and suffering is one of them.

However, for the Christian man who is walking by faith during the suffering, God promises to supply your needs (Philippians 4:19), to work a divine good purpose through it (Romans 8:28), and to use it to draw you into a deeper dependence on Him (John 15:5).

*“And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28*

***As Christians, we must understand that suffering will ALWAYS have a
DIVINE PURPOSE.***

My Personal Story of Suffering

I have a chronic health condition called chronic fatigue that may never go away. Early on as I was experiencing this condition, I begged God to take this “thorn” away because it was so debilitating. When I began truly walking by faith I reasoned that God would remove this thorn. However, as of this writing I still suffer with this condition. The difference is that I have come to realize the divine good that is resulting from my thorn. God is using my suffering to teach me dependence, compassion, and perseverance, just to name a few. I no longer ask God to remove. On the contrary, I now embrace my “thorn” because through it I am experiencing a greater dependence on God and transformation that is as Paul says is: “exceeding abundantly beyond all I can ask or think.”

In the midst of suffering it is very easy to try to run from it, anesthetize it, or deny it. The truth is that there is no place to run but to God. He is the only One Who can be your comfort, endurance, and hope in the midst of your suffering. I wish that I could promise you no more pain as you walk by faith but I can’t make that promise. However, I can say with great Christ-confidence that suffering as a result of your faith walk will always have a divine good purpose.

“DIVINE GOOD”

***God will use every bit of your pain and suffering to draw you into a GREATER
DEPENDENCE on Him, to TRANSFORM your life, and to REVEAL to you what His
grace and mercy looks like during your times of suffering.***

Important Note: If you choose to walk in your flesh, God will use suffering as a way to discipline you and bring you back to Him as the source.

Exercise: In what area of your life are you experiencing some conflict or suffering that seems unending? Ask God to draw you into a deeper dependence on Him concerning this suffering. Ask Him to reveal to you what “divine good” is being worked out.

DAY THREE

Expectation #6 – You Will Figure Out What God Is Doing In Your Life.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways. And My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8, 9

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity in their hearts, except that **no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.**” Ecclesiastes 3:11*

Unrealistic expectation: I have the right to know WHY and WHAT God is doing in my life.

The Truth: God will determine if you need to know why or what He is doing or not doing in your life. He always has a purpose in telling you OR not telling you what He is doing.

Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 4:8:

*“afflicted in every way, but not crushed; **perplexed but not despairing.**”*

Are you perplexed about what God is doing or not doing in your life? I would imagine if you have walked with God for very long that you are always perplexed on some level concerning God. The truth is that God wants us in a constant state of perplexity. Why? One reason is that being perplexed means that we can't and won't understand all of what God is about in our lives. Especially when it goes against the grain of our expectations.



I find the further I walk down this path with the Lord the more perplexed I get. However, what God is teaching me in my perplexity is that I don't need to try and figure it out. He has it figured out. He knows the end from the beginning and all that He is asking you and me is to trust Him and die to our expectations. Die to trying to figure out His ways.

You can REST in your perplexity because

God knows exactly why and what He is doing and He IS in control.

Other questions that we have all asked are, “WHY? Why is this happening or why is this not happening? Why won't You stop this or why don't You do this?” We all have “why” questions and want answers to those questions. There is something about our “humanness” that needs to know why. Therefore, what is a realistic expectation when it comes to those questions?

Many of our “why” questions go unanswered. Why is that? What we tend to forget during these times is that God is God, and He will reveal to us why or what He is about if He so chooses. It is God's prerogative to tell us why or what He is doing in our lives. God always has a divine purpose in giving you answers (or not).

If you go under anesthesia, trusting a brain surgeon who knows precisely what to do in brain surgery (and you don't), then can we not trust our “heavenly Surgeon” who knows precisely what we need and why we need it. As we learn to trust Him, we will come to rest in the fact that He truly knows what He is doing and that it will be for our eternal benefit.

I know that answer might not be satisfactory, but I have come to a very important conclusion:

If God believes that you need to know WHY or WHAT, then He will tell you.

Otherwise, your part is to trust that He knows WHY and WHAT and to rest in that.

FAITH = REST!

Exercise: What is going on in your life that you don't understand why or what God is doing? Meditate on the five truths above, apply them to your situation, and ask Him to give you greater revelation and experience of those truths.

Expectation #7 – We Will Arrive At A Place Where The INTERNAL Struggle Will Be Over.

Unrealistic expectation: I will arrive at a point in my walk of faith where there will be no more internal struggles.

The Truth: There will be an ongoing internal struggle until you come face to face with Jesus. However, Christ in you has overcome all the internal and external struggles that you will ever face. As you walk by faith in God, you will experience more victory, more freedom, and more transformation through your internal and external struggles.

I would love to be able to tell you that if you walk long enough in faith that you will arrive at a place of no more struggle. We mentioned previously that external struggles will always be with us because we live in a fallen world. This holds true for internal struggles as well. The struggle with the flesh and the power of sin will last a lifetime.

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Galatians 5:17

*“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. **In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.**” John 16:33*

Even though you will never arrive at a point of no struggle, you will experience incredible victories over your flesh and the sin patterns which have continually defeated you. In addition, as you continue to walk by faith in Christ, you can experience radical transformation in your behavior and in what you are thinking, believing, and choosing to do. You truly can arrive at the same place that Paul did when he exclaimed in Ephesians 3:20:

*“**He is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we can ask or think** according to the power that works within us.”*

Remember that Paul went through beatings, whippings, stonings, shipwrecks, etc., and yet God used all of those painful events to bring him to the truth of Ephesians 3:20. This is a promise that I hope will be used of the Lord to motivate you to take the next step of faith and then the next until you experience this verse.

Paul also came to another place through his suffering. It was a place of great intimacy with God. We see this in Paul's words in Philippians 3:8:

*“Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the **possession of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him.** For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish, in order **that I may win Christ.**” Amplified Version*

This does not mean that we all must suffer like Paul. We all have a unique journey. However, whatever your particular journey, if you persevere in your walk of faith:

God will bring you to several places along the way where you will experience an INEXPRESSIBLE JOY (1 Peter 1:8) and a PEACE that passes ALL understanding. (Philippians 4:7)

Summary

My friends, I have experienced all of the above and more. I turned back to the flesh many times. However, each time that I returned to my prodigal pigpen, I soon realized that nothing was going to improve (and usually got worse). I realized that my only real option was to come back to the Lord and to continue taking steps of faith. I still “wallow” from time to time, but I see more quickly the death of my flesh, and that turns me back again to a step of faith.

Remember:

**You will choose to go to back to your prodigal pigpen (the flesh) MANY times.
However, in the next moment you can REPENT of your flesh and
continue your walk of faith.**

DAY FOUR

Final Truths Concerning Your Walk Of Faith

Truth #1 - God Is In The Process of PERSUADING You.

*“And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.”
Romans 4:21*

During your walk of faith God is in a life-long process of persuading you of:

- His eternal desire to transform your life and to have an intimate relationship with you. (Ephesians 1:5)
- His ability to transform your life. (Ephesians 3:20)
- His willingness to change the way you think, choose, believe, and behave. (Philippians 1:6)
- The truth that He is in control. He knows what He is doing, He is for you, and His plans will be accomplished. (Job 42:2)
- All things will work together for your good. (Romans 8:28)
- His love for you is unfailing. (Psalm 36:5)

If you take enough steps of faith, God WILL persuade you that He is Who He says He is and that He will do what He promises to do in your life.

Exercise: If you are not persuaded of the truths listed above, ask God to begin persuading you that these truths are indeed true.

Truth #2 - Your Transformation Is A Lifelong SURGICAL Procedure.

“For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” 2 Corinthians 4:11

The minute that you trusted Christ, God began a lifelong surgical procedure of transforming your life. Many times it feels like surgery without anesthesia because of the pain involved. Many times you will want to (and will) jump off the surgical table. However, God loves you enough that He will constantly be drawing you back to Himself for continued surgery.



As “The Way,” God knows the exact path of your surgical process. As the divine surgeon, He understands what needs to occur next in your transformation process. As you continue your walk of faith, you will find yourself more and more staying on the table because you are persuaded that God knows what He is doing and that all of what He is doing is driven by His love for you.

As we see, experience, and are repulsed by the death of our flesh, we will turn back to Him for life. Therefore, God will use every event in your life, positive or negative, as a part of His divine surgery to expose the death of your flesh and to deliver you over to the death of your flesh.

God’s divine surgery is OFTEN without anesthesia.

However, STAY on the surgical table and let God work.

Truth #3 – As You Continue To Walk By Faith Then You Will Have SPIRITUAL Eyes To See What God Is About In Your Life

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:2

*“because we are **not looking at what can be seen** but at **what cannot be seen**. For what can be seen is **temporary**, but what cannot be seen is **eternal**.” 2 Corinthians 4:18*

The blind man said “that once I was blind but now I see” (John 9:25). When we begin this walk of faith, we are much like the blind man.



All we can see is what our five senses tell us. However, as we continue to walk by faith God gives us “spiritual” eyes to see with.

You will come to see that:

- God truly is sovereign and in control of your situation.
- God has known about the problem that you are facing for an eternity and has a solution.
- You are in “divine” surgery, and the pressure will not be off until God is through.
- There is a divine good purpose that God is about in the midst of pain and suffering.
- God will never leave you nor forsake you in the midst of your struggle.
- God loves you eternally, immeasurably and unconditionally.

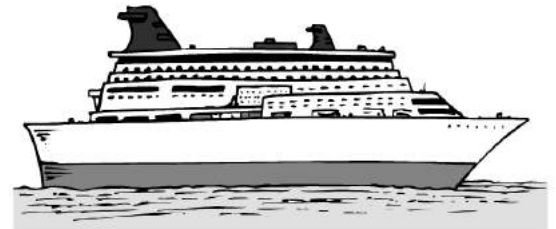
God will give you EYES to see what the natural man is blinded to.

Exercise: What problem are you currently facing that you need to see from 30,000 feet? Ask God to make all of the truths above concerning your problem a reality.

Truth #4 – You Can’t Connect A Step of Faith To Experiencing Transformation Tomorrow

Another key truth we need to understand is that we can’t connect a step of faith with transformation tomorrow. This is a struggle because we live in a “cause and effect” culture where we want to experience something as we take steps of faith. However, for the most part God wants you to walk by faith and He will transform our lives.

An analogy that I use is that if you are on a cruise ship that is leaving the dock and you are at the front of the ship, you cannot tell how far you have traveled. However, if you get at the back of the ship you will see clearly how far away from the dock you have come. Therefore, as you walk by faith, look back to where you started and you will begin to see how far you have traveled down the path of transformation.



DAY FIVE

Truth #5 - God Is Building Christ-Confidence As We Walk By Faith.

*“And **such confidence** we have **through Christ** toward God.” 2 Corinthians 3:4*

What I see in so many Christians is a lack of “Christ-confidence.” Why? So few have walked long enough by faith to experience God’s supernatural work in renewing their minds to the truth and setting them free by the truth.

How would you feel if you began to experience a supernatural change in your life? What do you think that would do for your **Christ-confidence** in God’s ability and desire to change your

life? Would you strongly consider taking another step of faith in anticipation of what God might do next?

As you begin to experience supernatural changes, it will increase your Christ-confidence, and you will take another step of faith. This is why we must continue taking steps of faith. God is in the process of building your Christ-confidence in His ability and desire to transform your life. Here is your challenge:

THE CHALLENGE:

To take enough steps of faith to experience SUPERNATURAL changes in order to build your CHRIST-CONFIDENCE in God's ability and His desire to transform your life.

How Will I Know When Change Has Taken Place?

Since the process of transformation is primarily incremental, how will I know that change is taking place? In Romans 15:8, Paul tells us that God will confirm to us His promises:

*“For I tell you that Christ became a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God’s truth in order to **confirm** the promises given to our forefathers.”*

We know by faith that God is working in our lives. However, God wants to confirm it in your mind, will, emotions, and behavior as well. Therefore, I have listed some ways that God might use to confirm His work in your life:

- 1. Your mind begins to think and believe God’s truth rather than believing your lies.**
- 2. Your will begins to make choices based on the truth that you are now thinking and feeling. This will produce in you a greater willingness to come to God for Him to further renew your mind to the truth.**
- 3. You begin to experience a supernatural change in your attitudes and behavior.**
- 4. You will experience healing of your woundedness.**
- 5. You will begin to experience freedom and victory in areas where you had only experienced bondage and defeat previously.**
- 6. You will find your Christ-confidence in God’s ability growing.**
- 7. Your desire to walk by faith in God will grow, and your desire to turn back to self will decrease.**
- 8. You will find that your love and desire for God will take you to places that you never thought were possible.**

9. You will find yourself more and more being stunned, overwhelmed, and in awe of Who God is and what He has done in your life.

Remember once again Paul's words as a reminder of where God is taking you:

"He is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all we could ask or think according to the power that works within us." Ephesians 3:20

***Ultimately, God's transformation process will bring you to the place where
all you want is JESUS.***

At that point He will be your ALL in ALL.

Every Moment Of Your Life You Have A Choice To Make

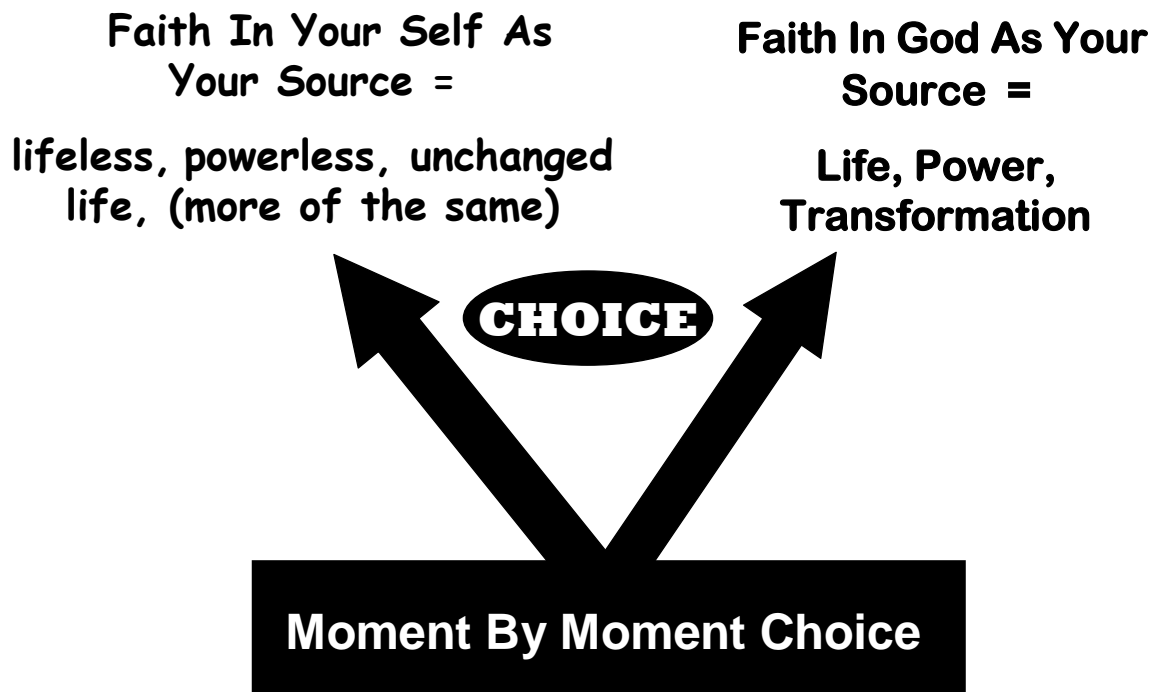
***EVERY moment for the rest of your life you will be making a moment by moment
choice to have faith in YOURSELF or faith in GOD.***

Faith In Yourself Will Result In:

- No victory
- No freedom
- No healing
- No transformation
- No joy
- No intimacy

Faith In God Will Result In:

- Victory
- Freedom
- Healing
- Transformation
- Joy
- Intimacy



What Choice Will You Make?

If You Decide To Walk By Faith In God

In your journey of faith you will be tempted many times to:

- To doubt God's ability and willingness to transform your life.
- To get frustrated and angry with God.
- To condemn yourself.
- To give up on God.

Sadly, I have seen many people give up on their walk of faith. It grieves me greatly because when they do, they are turning away from the only Person Who can make a difference in their lives. All that is left when we turn away from God is to "cope" with life. I define coping as what man tries to do to deny, cover up, or anesthetize the pain when his efforts to fix the problems in his life fail. Therefore, when you are tempted to give up:

Take ANOTHER step of faith.

When everything within you says, "turn back," take another step of faith. You will demand answers from God, and when you don't get them, take another step of faith. When you are in more pain than you can bear, take another step of faith. When you are perplexed, confused, and bewildered, take another step of faith. Because if you do, then you will experience all that God promises and much, much more.

*“...**much more** those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness **will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**” Romans 5:17*

Final Words

*“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. ‘**You do not want to leave too, do you?**’ Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, ‘**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’” John 6:66-69*

When many of Jesus’s followers turned and walked away from Him, he turned to the twelve disciples and asked them if they would leave as well. Look at Peter’s response: “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” Peter and the rest of the twelve figured out that:

Jesus is the only WAY to live the Christian life.

“I am the way....” John 14:6

The disciples realized that there was no other way than to depend on Jesus. They had taken enough steps of faith in Christ so that they believed that He was the only Source from which to live life.

Therefore, let me encourage you with the words of Paul in the first part of Philippians 3:14:

“I PRESS ON...”

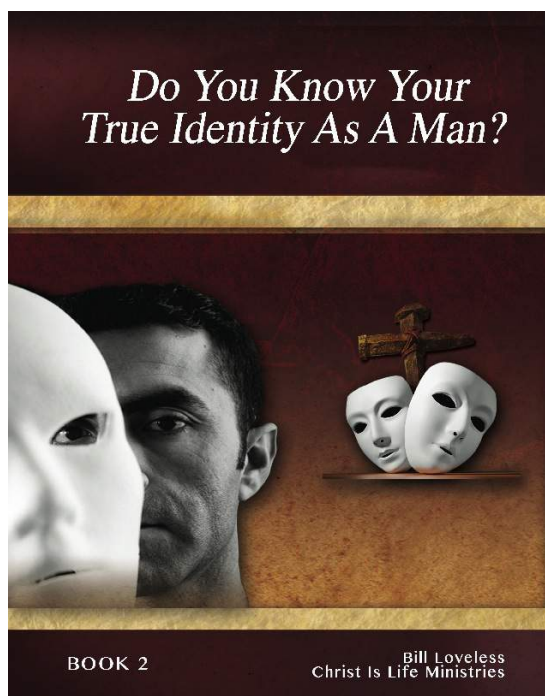
My ongoing prayer for you is that you will press on and take another step of faith. Press on and don’t give up and turn back to the flesh. Press on and experience the supernatural works of this awesome, loving God who lives within you. Press on to the place where you will say with Peter that you have no place else to go but to Jesus. Knowing what you now know, I leave you with this final question:

Will You Press On And Take The NEXT Step Of Faith?

If so, you will come to the place where you will say with Paul:

“To live to me is Christ”

Where Do I Go From Here?



You have just finished Book One of a two part series for men. The second study is called ***Do You Know Your True Identity As A Man?***

If you would like this next study, please go to our ministry website which is www.christisministries.com and look under the **Store** section. You will see under this section the booklet and curriculum called ***Do You Know Your True Identity?*** You can purchase them online or email your order to our email address below. Or, you can download these materials for free and reproduce as many copies as you would like.

Do You Know Your True Identity As A Man? will focus on the following:

- **False beliefs we believe about ourselves as men.**
- **How our old identity was formed.**
- **What God accomplished at the cross to give us a new identity.**
- **What our true identity is as a man in Christ.**
- **The process God uses to move men from living from their lies to living from their true identity.**

Christ Is Life Ministries

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(2-1-14)