



PASTOR BOBBY KEATING



Created in His Image

By Pastor Bobby Keating

Dedicated in loving memory to

Flora E. Keating

June 23rd 1926 – Feb. 8th 2009

and

Sgt Maj. Robert F. Keating 11

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Preface

I know that there are many people today who do not have a clear picture of God's Divine Nature and the part that they play in the plan that God has for us, His creation. Through many hours of prayer and meditation, God has placed on my heart the desire to write this book. The central idea for this work is to help clear up some of the misconceptions that face both new believers and those who have not made the decision to follow Christ.

The purpose for this book is two-fold. First and foremost, this work is an attempt to clarify some of the basic concepts that people are face with concerning God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Secondly, all of the proceeds from this book will be used for the outreach ministries of New Covenant Fellowship to feed the hungry both physically and spiritually and to build a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.

By purchasing this book, you, as well, will be helping us to provide some of the basic necessities for less fortunate citizens and to plants seeds of faith in their lives. Thank you so very much for helping us to help others. I pray that God will not only bless you for your help but also will deepen your relationship with Him.

Pastor Bobby Keating
[The Christian Success Institute](#)

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Chapter 1
Created in His Image

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, ^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Created in His Image

In Genesis Chapter One, God said, “let us make man in Our own image....”In order for us to be able to understand the profound meaning of this single statement, we need first to understand the nature of the One who spoke this.

It is as difficult for us to understand the nature of The Holy Trinity as it would be for an ant to understand the function of a nuclear reactor. This is the reason that our Holy Father through His Holy Spirit has given us His Holy Word. In order for us to be able to understand the nature of God, He sent His Holy Word to become flesh. By incarnating, The Holy Word of God gives us a glimpse into the Devine Nature of God.

It is difficult for us, relating things to our physical world, to grasp the concept of a Supreme and Holy God. We humans understand by the concepts that we form. We know that fire is hot because of either accepting what we are told or by experiencing its nature. This is also the manner in which we have conceptualized God. We either accept what others have told us or we have experienced His Divine Nature in our own lives.

The truest way is to experience His Divine Nature in our lives. However, because of our human nature, we always try to compare the experiences we have with God to other experiences on a physical level. This often leads to misconception. We also accept what others, authority figures, have told us to be absolute truths.

This often brings us to misconception as well. So often we accept as truth the ideas that others have misunderstood or we accept ideas without understanding their core meaning because we accept what we are told by those we respect as knowledgeable.

There is also Divine Revelation. This is an experience that embeds in us the meaning of a concept, the core of the concept. When we study the Word of God earnestly and with a hunger and passion to understand, The Holy Spirit of God reveals to us an understanding that is at the very least profound.

First, however, we must understand who The Holy Trinity is. As has been revealed to me, God The Father is the mind of God. In Him all things were conceived. Every idea, every concept, everything that was created first was conceived and exists in The Holy Mind of God, God the Father.

This explains to me a statement of Jesus Christ in the book of Mark. In regard to the return of Christ, Jesus states in chapter 13 verse 32: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." It confused me for a while that, since Jesus was God incarnate, He did not know something that The Father knew. How could God know something that God did not know? The answer came to me. The day and the hour of The Son of God's return had been conceived in the mind of God but had not been spoken. Thus the Mind of God (God the Father) knows the day and the hour of Christ's return but this was not spoken so the Holy Word of God knows not.

Secondly, The Holy Word of God is the Voice of God. God The Father conceives and then He speaks through His Holy Word to relate His Divine Thoughts in order that they become or are created. In the Old and New Testaments, when God the Father

speaks, it is the presence of His Holy Word that relates His Divine Ideas to us.

When Moses saw the burning bush he experienced the Holy Spirit of God and He heard the Holy Word of God. Just as it is impossible for us to know the thoughts of another, it is impossible for us to know the thoughts of God until The Holy Word of God speaks them.

The Third aspect of The Holy Trinity is The Holy Spirit of The One and True Living God. The Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost is, without a doubt, the most misunderstood aspect of God's Divine Nature. Because we live in a flesh body in a physical world we tend to relate concepts to our understanding of this world. We must remember that God exists in a Spiritual universe outside of time.

Too often I hear people refer to The Holy Spirit as though He were a separate part of The Holy Trinity, The Third Person, so to speak. This is not the case, as I understand it.

The Holy Spirit is God. He is God The Father and The Holy Word of God. He is no more separate from the Holy Father and The Holy Son than I am separate from my mind and my body. He is a spiritual manifestation of The Holy Trinity. He is God the Father and The Holy Word of God who has been sent to guide us and to comfort us. Without His presence I could not write these words.

It is The Holy Spirit of God who has inspired this writing as He has inspired the writings of others. The 14th chapter of the Gospel according to John relates beautifully the promise of another comforter.

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

I firmly believe that God has a true desire for us to understand Him. He inspired His Holy Written Word and He inspires those who would speak of Him.

This brings us back to Genesis Chapter One; God said “let Us create man in Our own image....” We must know that God is a Spirit and not a physical being like you and me. In John 4:24 we see

”God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

He did not create us to physically resemble Him but to spiritually resemble Him. Look around you at the vast numbers and physical types of human beings that exist in this world. If we are to think that our physical image is the image of God, which would be His image - the Caucasian, the Negro, the Semitic tribes? Jesus told His disciples in:

John 5:37 “ *And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,*”

And as well

John 14:7 “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 15:24 If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.

I believe that Jesus is telling us that the image of the Father is a spiritual image. This is a new concept for humankind. How do we resemble the creator of the universe? What did Jesus mean that if we have seen Him we have seen the Father?

The answer to these questions can be found in Paul's epistle to the Galatians.

In **Galatians 5:22-23** we read:

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³*gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

The image of God is Love, pure and holy. God is the truest form of love. We call this love Agape. This is the Love that everyone who comes in contact with Christ felt. Even those who could not understand this love reacted to Him. Some could not accept this love and rejected Him because they could not endure this faultless love. Others accepted Him and the Love that He brought and

exemplified. This agape (love) was shown to us by the simple fact that The Holy Word of God agreed to leave the splendor of Heaven to become incarnate here on this world to teach us, heal us, and save us from ourselves.

The image of God contains joy. This is the deepest form of happiness that can be experienced. When your heart is with Christ, even in the roughest times you can feel the joy of His presence. Christ's life exemplifies the joy that filled Him.

The image of God contains Peace. When you have love in your life, true and pure love, and your heart is full of the joy of the presence of God, you reach a peace in your life that cannot be equaled. This peace is reflected in the way that we, as believers, live.

The image of God contains patience. When your life is full of love, joy and peace, you experience patience even in the most trying of situations. When we can remember to weight the situations that we encounter by the weight of the love, joy and peace in our lives, our attitudes change and we seem to find the patience to endure things that would normally have driven us up a tree.

The image of God contains kindness. When your heart is full of love, joy and peace you reach a state of patience which surprises even the best of us. This patience brings us to the realization that we live by the Grace of God. God loves every human soul that He created and it is our duty and privilege to treat every one of God's creations with kindness. We are brought to a new respect for the world that our God created for us.

God's image contains goodness. We are filled with love, joy, peace, patience and kindness. We then have the desire to do good.

We are driven to do good works. How is it possible to cheat or steal when you love each one of God's creations? What would a man gain by storing up treasures here and losing his soul?

God's image contains faithfulness. His desire is that our lives will be driven by faith and not desire. Faith is one of several forces in our lives. Faith is believing something that we cannot register by physical senses. Faith is spiritual. Faith is simply standing firm on the promises that God has made us through His Holy Word. We must believe that He will do what He says He will do. Faithfulness is living our lives without doubt. Doubt is a seed planted by an enemy to tear down our faith. Doubt is that black spot on our spiritual hearts that grows and snuffs out our ability to trust that God will do what He has promised.

God's image contains gentleness. When we are filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness our nature becomes gentle. We treat everything in God's world with a gentle touch and with gentle speech.

God's image contains self-control. This is the hardest of the fruits to bear.

Paul tells us in the same chapter (5) of Galatians:

¹⁶So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

¹⁷For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

¹⁸*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

The flesh and the spirit are always at war with one another. This is because the flesh is of this world, governed by the Prince of the air, our enemy. If we fully rely on God's grace and we strive with all of our being to bear the fruits of the Spirit, we can attain self-control.

These fruits of the Spirit are just that. They are not gifts, they are fruits which we must bear. Just as an apple tree is formed from the seed of an apple and bears again that fruit and a pear tree is formed from the seed of a pear and bears fruit in kind so then we, who are formed from the seed of God should bear the same fruits that He bears.

This is what Jesus was telling us. If you look at the life of Jesus when He walked on this earth, you can clearly see that He bore the fruit of God and thus portrayed the image of His Holy Father.

In order for us to understand what this statement in Genesis is saying to us, consider this.

God created us in His image. Jesus told us that if we have seen Him we have seen The Father. Jesus' spiritual image was love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We are from the same seed. God created us this way to contain His image. There will come a day of judgment for each one of us (none shall be spared this). Each of us, believer and non-believer will one day stand before the Throne of God. He will peer into our hearts looking to see His image. When He sees His image in us, He will say, "Well done My good and faithful servant".

However, when He looks into our hearts and cannot see Himself in us, He will say, “Depart from me you worker of iniquity. I know you not”.

Know Him. Learn as much as you can. Obey His commandments and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

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Chapter 2
What is The Nature of God?
John 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that
he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believes in him
should not perish, but have
everlasting life.*

What is The Nature of God?

In the first chapter of this book, we were introduced to the concept of understanding the Divine Nature of God. This is a daunting task. I feel that it is impossible to discover the true nature of God while we are in these flesh bodies, constrained by our concepts of this carnal world. Conversely, it is important for us to try to understand His nature. This exercises our brains and helps our relationship with Almighty God to grow.

God, in His Divine Goodness, has given us a glimpse of His nature in His Holy Bible. If we read the Holy Bible from the beginning, God's nature is revealed to us by His names. As we progress through the Holy Word of God, we see that every time God acts in this world His name is used to express the action.

Elohim

(Ehl – oh – heem)

In the first sentence in the Holy Bible God is referred to as Elohim. In the Hebrew, this name reflects the sovereign nature of God. It expresses His creative nature. Grammatically Elohim is a masculine singular word with a feminine plural ending. This expresses the all encompassing nature of the one who created this world, separated the light from the darkness, separated the seas from the land and separated night from day. This name shows God's authority. Jesus, in His darkest hour used a form of this name in His agonized prayer on the cross. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?"

To me this is the most pitiful prayer ever spoken. It breaks my heart to know that, in order to offer me salvation, Jesus became my sin. He did not simply bear our sins on the cross, He *became* our sin. Our Heavenly Father cannot look upon sin and for the first and only time, since before the beginning of time, God took His eyes off of His Holy Son. Jesus could feel in the depths of His Spirit the absence of God the Father's vigilance. This was, without a doubt, the most horrible moment in the existence of the Holy Word of God. He suffered this, the most agonizing time, in order to make a way for me and for you to return to the presence of God. I praise His Holy Name.

Elohim, The Mighty Creator, made all that is out of nothing. The presence of the Trinity is expressed in the beginning of the first chapter of His Holy Bible. This is the first show of the nature of the Triune God. God the Father thought about light, He spoke through His Holy Word and His Holy Spirit, whose face hovered over the water, created the light.

In the Hebrew Bible the name Elohim occurs 2500 times. Elohim occurs 32 times in the first chapter of Genesis. The stem word El can be translated as God or god (referring to pagan gods). To express His uniqueness and the sense of the Holy Trinity, the form Elohim is used. This is a masculine singular noun with a feminine plural ending. This signifies the all-encompassing nature of God the Creator.

El Roi
(Ehl Roh – ee)

In the 16th chapter of Genesis, Hagar, the maidservant of Abraham's wife Sarah, encountered God in the desert. She referred to Him and "The God Who Sees Me" – *El Roi*. This, to me,

expresses a wonderful aspect of the nature of Our Holy God. No matter where we are, no matter what our circumstance, no matter which desert we are trying to cross, God sees us. He is ever watching us. This is in accordance with the promises that He has made us, "I will never leave you nor will I forsake you."

Even though Hagar ran away into the desert, God kept his eye on her and her unborn son. This encourages me and tells me that no matter what I get myself into, God sees me. No matter what the enemy throws in my path, God's eyes are upon me. I am not alone. You, no matter how desperate you feel, are never alone. God is there in His Majesty watching and waiting for you to reach out for His hand. He is El Roi, The God Who Sees Me".

When Hagar and Ishmael (which means in Hebrew – God hears) were in the desert suffering from an unbearable thirst, God saw them. He had made a promise to her that her son would be made into a great nation. Hagar saw her son dying of thirst in a dry, parched land and cried out to Him. He heard and suddenly there was a well, full of fresh, clean water.

No matter what you think you have done to offend God, no matter how desperate your situation, look up, reach up to Him. He is there and sees you.

El Shaddai
(Ehl Shahd – Dahi)

In the name El Shaddai God reveals His covenant keeping nature. God Almighty reveals His everlasting covenant with Abram and his descendants. Not until Moses encounters God is there another name given to indicate the nature of Our Holy Father. El Shaddai is the covenant name of God.

Isn't it wonderful to know that we have a covenant keeping God? A covenant is an agreement, a binding contract. God always keeps His covenants. We are the ones who back away from and break covenants.

El Shaddai is the All Powerful God, the God who can do everything, the One who is all-powerful and capable of doing what He promises; the One who can sustain me and bless me. He is the One who will fulfill His promises. He inspires awe in His believers. El Shaddai reveals God not only as the creator and maintainer of the universe but also the God who makes covenants with His people. El Shaddai occurs 31 times in the book of Job and 17 times in the rest of the Holy Bible. In the New Testament the word Pantokrator is translated as "The Almighty" and expresses the same nature of Our God.

Often, because of the grandiose view we have of God, we see Him as a God of only great and mighty feats. We must know that He is also the God who keeps the smallest covenant as well. If we cannot believe Him for the smallest things, how can we expect His faithfulness in big things?

El Shaddai is the God who can be everything we need whenever we need it. He is the All Powerful God. He is the Almighty Creator. Nothing is impossible with God. Know that the most powerful Almighty God watches you, makes covenants with you and keeps His promises.

One of the most difficult scriptures for us to accept is 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

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

This scripture is especially hard to digest when we are faced with a stubborn, misbehaving child and feel like screaming. How often do we give in to fleshly temptations in this life that we try to justify by simply saying that we could not resist? These are the times that we need to pray to El Shaddai, asking for Him to give us the strength that we need to handle these times of temptation. We will always succumb when we try to rely on our own strength.

If El Shaddai were a beautiful but weak God, if He were simply a God who wanted to bless us but could not, if He were simply a God of good intention but powerless to provide, would we fall on our faces before Him? He is beautiful and powerful and able to do all that He says He will. We have to keep His promise in our hearts. We must believe without the shadow of a doubt that He loves us and cares about our lives and will keep His promises. All we need to do is keep Him first in our lives, to trust in His Holy Word and to know that with Him, Our God, all things are possible. When we allow the enemy to plant the smallest seed of doubt in our hearts, our faith dwindles and we wonder why God does not bless us. He is there, ever present and wanting us to reach up to Him.

El Olam
(Ehl oh-LAAM)

God reveals to Abraham and to us that He is eternal, everlasting. Olam is Hebrew for eternal, everlasting. The word Olam occurs more than 400 times. The name El Olam appears only 4 times.

This exemplifies the eternal nature of God, His promises, His covenants, His plan and His Mighty Kingdom.

Psalms 33:11 (New International Version)

*¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Things of this world will pass away, even the hardest substance that we know of, diamonds, can be broken. The plans, promises and covenants of El Olam will never crack, break or crumble. God and His Kingdom will last forever. God is eternal and His Son is the Alpha and Omega.

Praise the Everlasting God and His Son Jesus. (Revelation 1:4-8)

Thank God for His everlasting love. (Psalms 100)

Praise the Eternal God, who knows our limitations. (Psalms 103:13-18)

Realize that God's promises will never fail us. (Psalms 145:13-14)

Yahweh (Jehovah)

This name of God denotes His nature in a very personal way. The name comes from the Hebrew word *Chavah* which "to live". He is the Living God. He lives! In the King James version of the Bible

this name is translated Lord. This could be from the tradition of the ancient Jew that the name of God is too holy to be pronounced. When reading scripture they would substitute the word Adonai, which means Lord, when they would come to the word Jehovah (YHWH). Jehovah literally means “I Am”. He is the God who is, who lives and is ever present in our lives, whether we believe or not. He is and is forever. He is ever faithful even when we are not. Jehovah is the God who always was, is and shall always be. In the past He was “I Am”. In the present He is “I Am” and in the future He will always be “I Am”. He is the God eternal, never changing. We are the ones who change and as we know Him better, our concept of His nature and who He is changes.

In the book of James chapter 1 and verse 17, we read:

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

He does not change. In Psalms chapter 102 and verse 27 tells us:

But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

He is the beginning of everything. He is the ever present and eternal present tense.

There are several other names that reveal the nature of the God we worship. Each of these names offers a specific and special glimpse into the nature of the One and True living God.

For now it is important they everyone realizes that through the names of God in His Holy Word we can begin to understand the nature of our Holy God. He is the One who has always existed. He will always live and His word shall never fade away. He is the ever-present Lord who always sees us, no matter what our circumstances are. He is with us in the meadow and He is with us in the desert. He is The Almighty and Powerful God. He created the universe and all that is in it. He can be everything that we need even before we need it. He is our provision and our health. He created us in His own image.

The thought that this magnificent God created me and loves me with a pure and unfailing love fills me with joy unspeakable. He loves me when I cannot love myself and He is always there to help me when I fall.

There is nothing that you can do that will exempt you from His Love. The only unpardonable sin is to reject Him (this is the worst blasphemy). God is always there, ready to pick up the pieces of your life and recreated you in His own image.

God speaks to each of us. He wants us to know that He loves us. He is Our Heavenly Father and as a perfect father He wants only the best for us. He often will let us dig our own holes so that we will realize that without His strength, without His Devine help, we are lost.

Isn't it good to know that we have a wonderful and forgiving Father who wants to see us grow in our relationship with Him. My prayer is that, by reading God's Holy Word and meditating on His names, your relationship with Him will deepen and grow to be rich and fruitful in your life.

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Chapter 3

Who is Jesus?

Matthew 16:15-17

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Who is Jesus?

Since the beginning of my Christian life, I could never quite understand who this person named Jesus is. I was told that He was the Son of God but to me He was a character in the multitude of Bible stories that I had read. Growing up, I had never been told that I could have a personal relationship with Him. To be honest, as little as I knew about Him, this sounded like foolishness. How can you have a personal relationship with someone who was a character in a Bible Story?

What concerns me now is that I know that there are many professed Christians who have no better idea of who Jesus was and is than I did when I was a child. Too often have I heard people talk about Jesus in an impersonal way. They seem to separate Jesus from God. I know that these same Christians have no idea who Jesus really is. They do not realize that He is God. Out of some instilled sense of duty they go to Church every Sunday and they go through the motions of worship. There are so many Ministers who say that you should have a personal relationship with Jesus but they don't tell you how you are supposed to accomplish this. They teach about who Jesus was and not who He is.

I would venture to say that the majority of Christians have not even completely read the Bible. They have learned about Jesus from others that they have heard speak about Him. They know *about* Him but they do not know Him personally.

Jesus is not only the Son of God who was born 2000 years ago and lived in a tiny country on the Mediterranean Sea but He is also the Living God of today.

John 1: 1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

John 10:30 *Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.”*

He is eternal. In Revelations 1:17 John states: “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.””

He is Omnipresent (present everywhere). Ephesians 1:22-23 ²²*And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,* ²³*which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Jesus did not leave us. He promised in Hebrews 13:5-6

*“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,
“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

⁶*So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.*

What can man do to me?”

He is Omniscient (all knowing). In John 21:17 John says “Lord, thou knowest all things...” He knows all that we say and do and even think. Remember in John 1 it is stated that:

¹In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²The same was in the beginning with God.

³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

All means all. He made every cell in you physical body and He also created your spiritual being. He knows all about you, even whether or not you will accept Him. Even though He knows who will reject Him He does not stop loving everyone.

I want to take you on quick trip through the Bible. I want you to see the presence of Jesus from Genesis through Revelations.

In the first Book of the Bible, Genesis, He is the Seed of the woman: ¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Jesus was born of woman without the seed of man. His natural enemy and ours as well is Satan.

In the Book of Exodus He is the sacrificial Passover Lamb. To ever believer He is the Sacrificial Lamb of God. Through the lamb sacrificed in Egypt, the people of God were delivered from the evil grip of the Pharaoh. Through His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, He offers deliverance to all of Gods creation.

In the Book of Leviticus we see Jesus as our High Priest. Just as Gods children were instructed to bring their blood

offering to the priests, we are to accept Jesus as our blood offering and He will offer it up to God the Father.

In the Book of Numbers Jesus was the Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire that guided Gods people through the wilderness. He is also the Lord and Savior who is there willing to guide us through the wilderness of our lives.

In Deuteronomy He is the Prophet like unto Moses. He inspired every prophecy that was made in the Bible and He was also the One Living God who fulfilled the prophecies.

In the 5th chapter of the Book of Joshua we see Joshua confronted by the Captain of the Host: And he said, “Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come.” For us, as well, Jesus will aid you in the battles that we face here on earth.

In the Book of Judges, Jesus is the Lawgiver. Father God conceived the Law and spoke it through the Holy Word of God.

In the book of Ruth He is our Kinsman’s Redeemer.

In 1st and 2nd Samuel He is our Trusted Prophet.

In Kings and Chronicles He is our Reigning King

He is our Faithful Scribe in the **Book of Ezra**.

In Nehemiah we see Jesus as the Rebuilder of the walls that were broken down.

In the Book of Esther He is our Advocate just as He was the Advocate of the Hebrew nation.

He is our Ever-Living Redeemer in **the Book of Job**.

As the **Psalmist King David** states He is our Lord and our Shepherd.

He is our Wisdom in the **Book of Proverbs**.

He is our Goal in the **Book of Ecclesiastes**.

He is our Lover and our Bridegroom in the **Song of Solomon**.

He is the Messiah, the Anointed One in the **Book of Isaiah**.

He is the Weeping Prophet in the **Books of Jeremiah and Lamentations**.

He is the Glory of The Lord in the **Book of Ezekiel**.

In the Book of Daniel, when the three Hebrew boys were thrown into the fiery furnace, He was the fourth man seen by the King.

In the Book of Hosea Jesus is the Eternal Husband who is married to the backslider.

In the Book of Joel He is the One who is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

As we see in the **Book of Amos**, He is our Burden Bearer.

He is our declared Savior in the **Book of Obadiah**.

He is the Great Foreign Missionary in the **Book of Jonah**.

He is the Messenger in the **Book of Micah**.

He is our Avenger in the **Book of Nahum**.

He is the Evangelist who pleads for Revival in the **Book of Habakkuk**.

The Book of Zephaniah teaches us that He is the Lord, the One who saves.

He restores our Heritage in the **Book of Haggai**.

Zechariah teaches us that He is the Fountain of everlasting, life-giving water.

He is the Son of Righteousness with healing in His wings in the **Book of Malachi**.

In the Book of Mathew He is the Messiah.

In the Book of Mark He is the Miracle Worker.

In the Book of Luke He is the Son of Man.

In the Book of John He is the Son of God.

In the Book of Acts He is the Holy Spirit, indwelling men.

In the Book of Romans He is our Justification.

In the Books of 1st and 2nd Corinthians He is the One who sanctifies us.

In the Book of Galatians He is the One who redeems us from the curse of the law.

In the Book of Ephesians He is the Christ of unsearchable riches.

In the Book of Philippians He is the God who supplies all of our needs.

In the Book of Colossians He is the Godhead fully embodied.

In the Books of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians He is our Soon-coming King.

In the Books of 1st and 2nd Timothy He is our Advocate and Mediator at the Throne of God.

In the Book of Titus He is the Faithful Pastor.

In the Book of Philemon He is the Friend of the oppressed.

In the Book of Hebrews He is the Blood which seals the everlasting covenant between God and man.

In the Book of James He is the Lord who heals the sick.

In the Books of 1st and 2nd Peter He is the Great Sheppard who shall soon appear.

In the Books of 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, He is God, He is Love.

In the Book of Jude He is the Good News and He is the Lord who shall be coming with 10 thousands of His saints.

In the Book of Revelations He is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords.

He is life giving. In Him was life; and the life was the light of the men. (John 1:4)

The Holy Word of God existed before the beginning of time. He planned to become flesh. God knew that mankind could not attain righteousness through the law. He wanted us to see and experience this. He wanted to come to us in the flesh in order to see this world through human eyes, to experience life from the perspective of a human. It is only fitting and proper that we too should look at His creation through spiritual eyes. We need to see this world from Gods vantage point. When we look at others of Gods creation we need to see them as a beloved creation of the Almighty Creator of the universe.

We I look at people, I see them as God would. I see them through Love and I see them as beloved of God. Who am I too judge another? What gives me the right to hold unforgiveness in my heart when the Holy Word of God sacrificed Himself for us and offered forgiveness to every man? He didn't pick and choose. He didn't judge anyone. He paid the same price for me as He paid for each and every one of us.

Jesus said in John 10:30 "I and my Father are one. In John 14:9 He said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." He is The Holy Word of God in the flesh.

He is every blood offering. He is the Noah's rainbow, the promise of God The Father. He is the ram substituted for Isaac. He is as Jacob's ladder, our way to heaven. He is the burden on our hearts as was the burden on Ezekiel. He is the scepter of Judah. He is the rod that Moses leaned on. He is the power in the slingshot that David used to kill the giant. He is Hezekiah's sundial.

He is the Bright and Morning star to offer Light to our path. He is the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon. He is the Staff of Life. He is the Beautiful Pearl of great value and the treasure that we find in the field. He is the Rock upon which His church is built. He is the Everlasting Father. He is the virtue in Peter's shadow, which cures the sick. He is Jesus, The Son of The One and True Living God. He is the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He made it all and He owns it all. He is the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the land of the Pharaoh. He is the force that parted the Red Sea. He is the Great and Mighty Lord who humbled Himself to become flesh, descend to earth. He came here to teach us, to heal the sick and to be a model after which we can pattern our lives.

He is the One who cast out devils and cleanses lepers. He is the Holy Son of God who fed the five thousand. He is the One who innocently suffered the beatings, had the flesh ripped from His Back and shed His Blood so that our healing would be bought. He is the One who became our sin offering and sacrificed Himself for us on the cross. He paid the price for our sins that we cannot pay. He is the One who died a cruel death on the cross for us. He died and was buried. He is the One who defeated death for us when He

arose from the tomb. He is the One who ascended into heaven to sit at the Right Hand of God, to intercede for us. He is Jesus of Nazareth and He's coming back soon for His bride.

Do you know Him, not about Him? Do you have a close personal relationship with Him?

In John 3:16, we are given the key that unlocks the doors of our hearts. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He didn't say for some, He said for ALL. This means you. It amazes me to know that I have access to the One who created everything that is simply by believing in Him and asking Him to live in my heart.

If you have the desire to know Him, please pray and ask God to forgive your sins. Ask Him to make you clean and to live in your heart. Following is a simple prayer of Salvation. By praying this prayer, you are seeking a personal relationship with God. This isn't joining a church. This is a personal one-on-one with Jesus encounter with Jesus.

Dear Holy Father, I repent of my sins. I turn away from the life that separates us. I ask that you forgive me for the sins that I have committed, the same sins that put you on the cross. I ask that you live in me and accompany me all the days of my life. I pray this prayer in the Holy Name of My Savior, Jesus Christ.

This is such a simple prayer. If you sincerely prayed it, it is the beginning of eternity for you.

Get to know Jesus by reading His Holy Word. Pray that the Holy Spirit of the One and True living God will guide you and reveal to you the true nature of God as it applies to you and your life. The Holy Spirit is the Mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 says “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

He is there for you.

Study an intense look at King Solomon’s Principles of Success at the [Christian Success Institute](#)

Chapter 4

Who is the Holy Spirit

Genesis 1

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

So often I hear the Holy Spirit of God referred to as the third person of the Holy Trinity or it. This is such a sacrilege. He is the Holy Spirit of God. He is God's presence on earth.

The Holy Spirit of God is God as He moves and works. He is the manifestation of the presence of Almighty God. He is the energy, the force of God.

Throughout the Holy Bible God's Holy Spirit moves and interacts with God's creation. We can see throughout the Holy Word of God that The Holy Spirit of God is constantly interacting with mankind. From the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, we see the interaction between man and God intensified through the promise of the Holy Spirit. As we are told in Luke 24: 45-49

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then He opened their minds to the scripture – What an amazing statement. The disciples had followed Jesus for 3 years and still did not have the discernment of scripture. This should give encouragement to new believers. As we follow Jesus and let our relationship with Him grow, He, through His Holy Spirit, imparts the wisdom of the ages unto us, if we open our eyes.

The Holy Spirit of God was sent so that, in our Christian walk, we would have guidance, comfort, and a daily reminder of the wonderful grace of God Almighty. He is not alone or separate from the Holy Trinity. He is constantly in communion with God the Father and The Holy Word of God and He is always there ready to give us the assistance we need.

We must remember that The Holy Spirit was the action or energy in the creation process. Because of God's love for us, He sent His most powerful Presence to be with us. Just imagine the power in an atomic bomb, like the one that devastated Hiroshima. This would be less than a hick-up compared to the power of the Holy Spirit of God. God has provided us with power beyond belief. The power of the Magnificent Holy Spirit of God can raise the dead.

In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John we can read the story of Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead. You see, the Holy Spirit of God had descended on Jesus at His baptism by John the Baptist. The resurrection power of God was with Jesus. This is the same resurrection power that, on the third day, powered the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit of God deserves our greatest respect. He is the presence of God here with us. He is the Mind of Christ that cleanses us and governs our conscience.

1 Corinthians 2:15-17 ¹⁵The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

¹⁶“For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ (The Holy Spirit of God).

Isaiah 40:13 ¹³ who has understood the mind of the LORD,

We see the Holy Spirit of God in creation. The powerful action of God lets us know the magnificence of the One who created us and the universe in which we live. Throughout the Old and New Testaments we see the manifestation of God’s Holy Spirit. He has been dealing with mankind since the beginning of time. In the Old Testament, before Our Lord and Savior came to walk this earth, God’s Holy Spirit was present but not always accessible.

Genesis 1:2 (NIV)

²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The presence of the Holy Spirit of God in us is evidence of His Glory. He, the Holy Spirit of the One and True Living God is with us always to give us guidance in our times of trial. He will give us revelation knowledge if we choose to let Him.

Genesis 41:37-39 (NIV)

³⁷And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

³⁸And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

³⁹And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God has showed you all this, there is none so discreet and wise as you are:

God's Holy Spirit uses magnificent manifestations to make His presence known to us. He knows that our human brains limit us.

Exodus 3 (New International Version)

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

We see the ever-present Spirit of God leading us through our wildernesses. We are never alone.

Exodus 13:20-22 (New International Version)

²⁰ After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. ²¹ By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

We see special gifts given through the Holy Spirit. We often forget that all that we are is a gift from God - all of our talents and abilities.

Exodus 31:2-4 (New International Version)

² "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,

³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts-

⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze,

The presence of the Holy Spirit of God transforms men. When we accept Christ and call upon the Holy Spirit of God in us, we are transformed.

1 Samuel 10:6-9 (New International Version)

⁶ *The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.*

⁷ *Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.*

⁸ *"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."*

⁹ *As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.*

The magnificent promise of the Father was made accessible to all believers after the ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:1-5 (NIV)

¹ *In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach*

²*until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

³*After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

⁴*On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.*

⁵*For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

Before the birth of Our Lord and Savior, God's Holy Spirit watched over and accompanied man, revealing Himself from time to time. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Holy Word of God, the Holy Spirit became accessible to all believers.

This, in itself, is a magnificent manifestation of the love and grace of God. When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live with each one of us. This is the same Holy Spirit that, through the ages, has performed miracles through God's chosen. Now, we are all God's chosen. The same magnificent Holy Spirit that lived inside Jesus, when He was here in His earthly ministry, lives in every believer. We do not have to recite a special formula or do some manmade ritual or prove ourselves worthy to have the most powerful presence of the Lord abide with us. He is there for us. Always present, always ready to lift us up and to guide us through the trials of this life on earth. He is the One who quickens the spirit of the believer. He is the One who is ever present when we are in need. He is here with us through the good times and the bad.

Jesus told us that He would never leave us nor forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NIV)

*⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,
"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

*⁶So we say with confidence,
"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"^d*

Isn't it wonderful to know that the Presence of Our Holy Lord is with us always? The power of creation is with us, each and every believer, without our asking. He is there, ever present and ready, to accompany us through all that life offers, good and bad. He is there, a perfect gentleman, waiting for us to call upon Him, to know and love Him.

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Chapter 5 What is Holiness?

Romans 6:18-20 (NIV)

¹⁸You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

¹⁹I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

²⁰When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

What is Holiness?

Holiness is an attribute of God and a quality to be developed in His children. “Holiness” and the adjective “holy” are seen many times in the Bible. The primary Old Testament word for holiness means “to cut” or “to separate.” Fundamentally, holiness is a cutting off or separation from what is unclean and a consecration to what is pure (sanctification).

THE OLD TESTAMENT VIEW OF HOLINESS

In the Old Testament, “holiness” when applied to God refers to His sovereignty over the Creation and to the perfection of His character. God is Holy. He is utterly distinct from His creation and exercises sovereign majesty and power over it.

His holiness is expounded in the Psalms (Psalm 47:8) ⁸ *God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.*

and the Prophets (Ezekiel 39:7) ⁷ " *I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel,* where “holiness” emerges as a synonym for The God of Israel. Scripture assigns to God the titles, “Holy” (Isaiah 57:15), “Holy One” (Job 6:10; Isaiah 43:15), and “Holy One of Israel” (Psalm 89:18; Isaiah 60:14).

In the Old Testament the Holy Nature of God, His Holiness, separates Him from all that is evil and defiled (Job 34:10). His Holy character is the standard of absolute moral perfection (Isaiah 5:16). God’s holiness—His transcendent majesty and the purity of His character—are skillfully balanced in Psalm 99 –

¹ *The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
let the earth shake.*

² *Great is the LORD in Zion;
he is exalted over all the nations.*

³ *Let them praise your great and awesome name—
he is holy.*

⁴ *The King is mighty, he loves justice—
you have established equity;
in Jacob you have done
what is just and right.*

⁵ *Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his footstool;
he is holy.*

⁶ *Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel was among those who called on his name;
they called on the LORD
and he answered them.*

⁷ *He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;
they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.*

⁸ *O LORD our God,
you answered them;
you were to Israel a forgiving God,
though you punished their misdeeds.*

*⁹ Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.*

Verses 1 through 3 portray God's distance from earthly things, and verses 4 and 5 emphasize His separation from sin and evil.

In the Old Testament God demanded holiness in the lives of His people. Through Moses, God said to Israel, "You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2, RSV). The holiness described in the Old Testament had two meanings:

1. The outward, external, or ceremonial
2. The internal, or moral and spiritual

Old Testament ceremonial holiness, described in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) included rituals of dedication to God's service. A complex ritual sanctified priests and Levites

(Exodus 29:1 ¹ *"This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect...*),

Also the Hebrew Nazirites were

(Numbers 6:1-4: ¹ *The LORD said to Moses,* ² *"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the LORD as a Nazirite,* ³ *he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins.* ⁴ *As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.)*

Prophets like Elisha were also sanctified for a special prophetic ministry in Israel.

(2 Kings 4:9⁹ *She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God."*)

and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5⁵ *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*)

Also the Old Testament draws attention to the inner, moral, and spiritual aspects of holiness. Men and women, created in the image of God, are called to develop the holiness of God's character in their own lives (Leviticus 19:2² *"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'*)

In the New Testament the ceremonial holiness prominent in the Pentateuch moves to the background. Much of Judaism in Jesus' time sought a ceremonial holiness by works.

(Mark 7:1-5: ¹*The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and*

²*saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed.*

³*(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.*

⁴*When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)*

⁵So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"

The New Testament stresses the ethical, internal, rather than the external dimension of holiness

(Mark 7:6-12: ⁶He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: " 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.

⁸You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

⁹And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

¹¹But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God),

¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the early church perceived that holiness of life was a profound internal reality that should govern an individual's thought and attitudes in relation to persons and objects in the external world.

THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW OF HOLINESS

The New Testament Greek equivalent of the common Hebrew word for holiness signifies an inner state of freedom from moral fault and a relative harmony with the moral perfection of God. The word "godlikeness" or "godliness" captures the sense of the primary Greek word for holiness. There is another Greek word that describes the dominant Old Testament concept of holiness as external separation from the world and dedication to the service of the Lord.

The New Testament writers assumed the Old Testament portrait of deity, and so holiness is ascribed to God in relatively few of their texts. Jesus affirmed the ethical nature of God when He taught His disciples that, when they pray, they must esteem the Father's name, "Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9, KJV). In the book of Revelation the Father God's moral perfection is demonstrated by the threefold ascription of holiness borrowed from Isaiah: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" In the Ancient Tongue, the only way to emphasize a thought was to repeat it three times. (Revelation 4:8, RSV).

Luke, however, thought of God's holiness in terms of the dominant Old Testament concept of His transcendence and majesty (Luke 1:49: ⁴⁹*for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.*).

In the same way the holiness of Jesus Christ is asserted in the New Testament.

Luke (Luke 1:35; ³⁵*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*)

(Luke 4:34 ³⁴"Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"),

Peter (Acts 3:14 ¹⁴*You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.*)

(Hebrews 7:26 ²⁶*Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*),

And John, in Revelations 3:7, ascribes holiness to both the Father and the Son.

⁷*"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open."*

Since the Spirit comes from God and is the instrument of God's holy purposes in the world, he also is absolutely holy.

(Matthew 1:18 ¹⁸*This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before*

they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.)

(Matthew 3:16 ¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.)

God's "Holy Spirit" underscores the ethical perfection of the presence of Almighty God here with us now.

(John 3:5-8 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.")

(John 14:16-17

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

In the New Testament, holiness also characterizes Christ's church. The apostle Paul taught that Christ loved the church and died for it "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of

water with the word" (Ephesians 5:26, RSV). Peter addressed the church as a holy people in language borrowed from the Old Testament. Separated from the unbelieving nations and consecrated to the Lord, the church is "a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). The New Testament most often discusses holiness in relation to individual Christians. Believers in Christ are frequently designated as "saints," literally meaning "holy ones," since through faith God justifies sinners, pronouncing them "holy" in His sight. A justified sinner is by no means morally perfect, but God does declare believers to be guiltless.

Thus, although Christians at Corinth, for example, were plagued with numerous sins, Paul could address His erring friends as those who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2, RSV). Despite their problems, the Corinthian believers were "holy ones" in Christ.

The New Testament, however, places great stress upon the reality of practical holiness in the Christian's daily experience. The God who freely declares a person righteous through faith in Christ commands that the believer progress in holiness of life. In God's plan, a growth in holiness should accompany believing. God graciously gives us the spiritual resources to enable Christians to be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

We need to realize that Holiness cannot be won through some meaningless ritual. Holiness is a state of mind, a divine state of mind. When we know that we have accepted the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit, the Mind of Christ, into our hearts when we were saved, we have taken the first steps toward holiness.

Holiness is not the clothes you wore or the way you wore your hair. Too many well meaning Christians have lost the true meaning of Holiness by trying to appear set apart from the rest of the world by

their dress when their hearts were still wallowing in the muck and mire of this world.

Countless numbers of people associate the word “holiness” with a radical group who served themselves instead of God. The same group of people who believe that, because of their rules and regulations (albeit from the Bible (Old Testament)), they know the only way to a state of holiness. I am worried about these people and I pray for them. They pick a few of the 600 laws of the Old Testament and ignore the rest. They use these few laws, not to uplift their fellow Christians, but to condemn them. This is not holiness.

I regret that these cultish Christians even use the name holiness. Each time they use the law to judge others, they nail Jesus back to the cross. Paul told us in his Epistle to the Romans that we could either live by the law, all 600 of them, or we could know and believe that Jesus came to fulfill the law and that we could be justified by our faith in Him. If we choose the law and break even one of them, we have broken them all.

Holiness is a state of mind, the Mind of Christ. When you change your mind from the mundane fleshy mind to the glorious mind of Christ, He will make the other changes in your life to put you on the path of holiness.

Chapter 6
**What does the Cross really
mean?**

John 19:17

*So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.
¹⁷Carrying his own cross, he went out to
the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is
called Golgotha).*

What does the Cross really mean?

There is an argument that I would like to refute. Some ask, “if your brother were to be shot in a drive by shooting, would you wear a small, silver-plated assault rifle around your neck to remember him. If your mother or father or someone that you really care about were to be stabbed to death, would you wear a small gold dagger on a chain around your neck?”

In Biblical Days, the days before and during the time that Jesus walked here on earth, the cross was a despicable symbol of a horrible execution. It was an effective and extremely cruel killing machine. To the culture of that age, the cross was an instrument of pain and suffering. Crucifixion was one of the most inhumane methods of execution that the human mind could conceive.

Crucifixion caused death by asphyxiating the victim. His arms were stretched out, literally pulled out of the shoulder socket. This was to eliminate the arms as a means of support. The feet were on a small wedge of wood and the full body weight pressed down causing it to be increasingly difficult to breathe. The only way that the victim of crucifixion could breathe would be to press on the wedge under his feet to lift his body enough to take a breath.

Some times it literally took days for the victim to die. As the hours would pass, the victim’s shoulders would swell, the legs would begin to cramp and knot up, and the pain would be excruciating.

If all the people of that time considered the cross to be a symbol of torture and death, why would the Christians venerate the cross? Why would they embrace the cross?

Why was Jesus crucified on a cross? Why was he not hung or scourged to death or stabbed or drawn and quartered? The reason began years before with Abraham.

Genesis 22

¹ *Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"*
"Here I am," he replied.

² *Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."*

God instructed Abraham to take his beloved son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him. I believe that God wanted to see if Abraham (who represents God's chosen people) would in fact sacrifice his son as an offering to his God.

I praise God that He chose Abraham because Abraham did as God instructed him. I know that Abraham's heart was breaking at the thought of killing his beloved son on whom God's promise to Abraham depended. God had promised to Abraham that he would be the father of nations. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. How could God make good on his promise if Isaac, his only son with Sarah, was to be sacrificed? You see, God had a plan. God had already figured things out. He simply wanted to see whether Abraham (mankind) loved God more than anything else.

Abraham prepared the wood pier, his altar to the Lord, and laid his dear son, bound, on the altar. He was just seconds before

plunging his dagger into the boy when God intervened. He stayed Abraham's hand and prevented him from sacrificing his son. He had already prepared the offering. There tangled in the brush was a ram to be used for the sacrifice.

This formed a covenant between God and man. This sealed the plan that God had already made with His Holy Word and Holy Spirit before the beginning. God knew that His creation, Adam, would relinquish dominion over this world to Satan. He knew that through the ages sin would permeate the fabric of humanity and stain the world with a rotten stain. He knew that, in order for His creation to be bought back, redeemed, there would have to be a blood offering made to pay for the sins of the people of this world.

Jesus was the Holy Lamb of God that was offered on a wooden altar on Calvary. That wooden altar was the cross. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son to God on a wooden altar and God did sacrifice His Holy Son on a wooden altar, The Cross, so that all who believe in Him would be redeemed from the sin debt that they owed. But the significance of the cross did not stop there.

On the day of the crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the sky grew dark. For the first time, since before the beginning of time, God had to turn His Holy Eyes away from His Beloved Son, His Holy Word. Jesus was there to finish that part of God's plan. He was there to become the sins of mankind. He was there to pay a debt that we could not pay.

Taking His Holy Eyes off of His Holy Word for the first time must have been an even greater sacrifice than the crucifixion itself. The pain of this was so terrific that Jesus felt as though His Holy Father had abandoned Him. This must have been more painful for Jesus than the bloody scourging that had taken place that morning.

This was all part of the plan that had been set in motion thousands of years before. How alone and abandoned Jesus must have felt when God's gaze was averted. Can you imagine the horror that He endured for us. It was such agony that it seemed as though His Father in Heaven had forsaken him. This is, I believe, the moment that is recorded in Mark's account of the crucifixion:

Mark 15:34 (King James Version)

³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

He must have felt utterly abandoned. The physical pain and the emotional pain were immense. He could sense the absence of His Father's gaze. He had become our sin sacrifice and Our Holy Father in Heaven cannot look upon sin.

Jesus knew that, now that He had become our sin, it was time to finish the work that He and His Father had planned. It was time for Him to pay our debt. It was time to redeem God's lost children. He gazed up to heaven and uttered the declaration of His success.

John 19

³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished. Jesus was telling His Heavenly Father that that part of the plan was finished. He had accomplished His mission. He had provided redemption for mankind, for all of those who would accept it.

After declaring that He had accomplished His mission, Christ made the decision to commend His Spirit to His Heavenly Father's care. He had stated before that no man could kill Him. He had dominion over His life. Father God had given this to Him. He could lay it down and He could pick it up again at His will.

When The Holy Christ gave up the ghost, the earth began to shake. The fury of the weather began to show forth. The cross became a sword that rent the veil in the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies from the outer rooms.

Since the time of Abraham, the section of the temple in which God would dwell was separated from the outer, accessible parts of the temple. Only the high priest was allowed to go into the inner sanctuary, The Holy of Holies. Only the high priest was allowed to be in the presence of God. If a man had some reason to get in touch with God, to make sacrifices, etc., He had to do it through the priests and the high priest.

When Jesus gave His life on the Cross, His Cross became the sword which ripped the veil separating God from His people. The Cross of Jesus gave mankind again access to the Holy Throne of Father God. No longer is it necessary to seek intercession by another man. No longer do we have to have a priest speak for us to God. A new age of divine communication began. Because of the sacrifice of Our Lord and Savior, we, each and every one of us, have the right and the privilege to go directly to Our Heavenly Father in prayer.

An interesting point here is that, the temple was very busy during this Passover Feast. Many Jews from around the known world came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and, of course, they were want to go to the temple to make oblations and seek a priest

to intercede for them, to make a sin offering for them. So, when the veil separating the public sanctuary from the Holy of Holies was torn into two pieces, what would you imagine that the priest of the temple did? They quickly began to sew the torn veil back together. They were trying to separate man from God again so that man would believe that the only way to reach God was through their intercession. They did not realize that they had just been made obsolete, useless and jobless. God Himself had fired them because they were an obstacle.

The Temple Veil was no ordinary veil. It was probably a foot thick and weighed a ton. It took an act of God to tear that veil in half from ceiling to floor.

So far we see that the cross was a killing machine, an instrument of torture, of pain and death. The cross instilled fear and loathing to the culture of non-believers.

For the believing Christian we see that the cross is a wooden altar upon which God sacrificed His Holy Word, The Spotless Lamb, to pay the sin debt of all who would receive it. There He bought redemption for all.

Read John 3:16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

That same altar is the altar where we too can sacrifice ourselves to God. That same altar is the altar upon which we can take every problem that we have and leave them there.

God made no distinction between men. He didn't say for some or for a few. In Acts Chapter 10 verse 34 we read: *Then Peter*

*opened his mouth, and said; of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons:***

³⁵*But in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted by him.*

You need to understand that God created all of us, every one of us, white, black, Asian, etc. He loves us all equally.

For the believing Christian the Cross of Jesus Christ was a great and mighty sword, which ripped that temple veil in half. By this cross he wants to let us know that there is no veil separating us from Him. When that veil between God's presence and man was torn apart the believing Christian could enter into the presence of God. No longer was it necessary for a believer to reach God through the intercession of another man.

So many believers, even the sainted disciples of Jesus Christ lost hope. In their eyes and hearts Jesus had been killed. They did not remember the words that Jesus had given them, the promise. In Mathew chapter 16 we read

²¹*From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

They were afraid and scattered. Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7 says

⁷ *"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the*

shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.”

It was on the first day of the week, on the third day after Jesus' crucifixion that it was discovered that Jesus had risen. His prophecy had come to pass. The promise was kept. Jesus was and is alive!

To the believer the cross had become the key that had opened the tomb where hope had been buried. The cross was the key that opened the door to Salvation and Righteousness. Without the cross there would have been no key.

The cross was:

1. A cruel instrument of pain and death.
2. A wooden altar upon which The Sacrifice was made for our sin
3. A sword which rent the veil that separated man from God
4. A key that opened the door to Salvation.

This is the reason that believers venerate the cross. It represents Redemption, Union, Salvation, and Righteousness. To venerate the empty cross honors God. Too often people wear a cross with the body of Christ still hanger there. Christ is no longer there.

We cannot separate any of these aspects of the cross. Too often Christians will cling to one portion and disregard the other aspects.

Too many Christians have grabbed onto the stone that sealed the tomb and have hung it around their necks. Too many who profess to be Christians pick and choose which aspects of the cross that they will venerate. We must accept all of the aspects and benefits of the cross.

This, to me, is the rebuttal for the argument that the cross is simply a symbol of death. It is not just a symbol of death but the reality of life. It represents life and life in abundance. I don't want part of it. I don't want a small portion. I want all that God wants me to have it all. His plan is a complete plan. It is not a buffet for us to pick and choose what we are hungry for at that moment.

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Chapter 7

Is the Holy Bible the Word of God?

2 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Bible the Word of God?

There have literally been thousands of volumes written to support the fact that the Holy Bible is truly the word of God. For the sake of brevity, I will not bring all of this forward now. There are, however, some very necessary points that one must consider.

The Holy Bible is a tool for understanding the will of God for our lives, if we will pay attention to what it has to say to us on a personal level. The Holy Bible is God's message to and for his people. In it are 66 books containing stories, prophecy, and guidelines for godly (holy) living. God, through His Holy Spirit, inspired men from the time of Moses until the Apostle Paul, to pen His words so His message could be given to each of us.

The Holy Bible contains specific revelations from God. It explains the nature of God, how He desires us to act, and the penalties of our rejecting his message and the reward for applying His Word to our lives. The Holy Bible contains hundreds of answers to the big questions in life: Who created the universe? What is the meaning of our existence? How can I be sure to spend eternity as a member of God's Family?

The Holy Bible is one of the most widely read books in the entire world, translated into almost every language. It is written to two distinct groups of people.

- 1.) To people who do not know Jesus Christ, the Holy Bible proclaims the message of his loving and redeeming work. It has touched millions of Hearts with its promises of renewal and salvation for those who may not have any hope.

- 2.) For Believers, Christians, the Holy Bible serves as a guidebook, a manual explaining who God is, what Christ has done and will do for us, and how we should live in order to reflect His wonderful work (His image) in us. How we are to maintain His image in us

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is made up of 39 books primarily written in Hebrew. It explains the story of God's work on earth before He caused His Holy Word, Jesus Christ, to be born. Over the course of a thousand years, about 30 writers, including Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, David, and Jeremiah contributed writings to the Old Testament. It can be split into three main sections: History, Poetry, and Prophecy.

THE HISTORY BOOKS

The books containing the history of God's interaction with mankind begins with Moses' five books, the Pentateuch. These 5 books contain such stories as God's creation of the universe, Adam and Eve's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden, the great Flood in Noah's time, and the Israelites' exodus out of bondage in Egypt. The Pentateuch contains God's first laws for His people. These laws were given to Moses in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) and were meant to instruct the Israelites (and all believers) to honor God in everything they do.

Israel became a very powerful nation after moving into the land God had promised them. Beginning with Saul, the first king of Israel, the history books tell the story of other leaders, King David,

his son Solomon, and the other kings that followed. Some kings, like King Asa, followed God's laws and were blessed by God. Other kings, like King Ahab, set up idols and disobeyed God's laws. Because of their disobedience, God said He would end Israel's reign as a great nation, and it was eventually conquered and enslaved by the empires of Assyria and Babylon.

Even though God loved the Hebrew people dearly, He often found it necessary to chastise them.

THE POETRY BOOKS

There are five books of poetry in the middle of the Old Testament, written, for the most part, by King David and King Solomon. These books include songs praising God (Psalms), books of wisdom (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes), and a wonderful love poem between a bride and groom (Song of Songs). These books serve as wonderful meditations on God's love for us, his power over all of creation, and his desire for us to respect and fear him. Also we are warned about the power of darkness, which tries to trap us in the snare of sin.

THE PROPHECY BOOKS

Following the five poetry books come the prophetic books, written by sixteen different authors. There are the Major Prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, who wrote very involved books, and there are Minor Prophets, such as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, whose books are shorter but just as powerful. These books deal with God's disappointment in the Hebrew people for not keeping His commands and covenants. They remind the people of God's unconditional love for them and foreshadow the coming Messiah who would redeem His people forever.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was written in Greek with the exception of the book of The Gospel according to Mathew that was written in Aramaic, and its twenty-seven books were written in the span of about fifty years. The New Testament is primarily concerned with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the early Christian church. It also gives wonderful guidance concerning godly living. The New Testament can also be split into three main sections: history, the epistles, and prophecy.

THE GOSPELS

The first three books of the New Testament are the synoptic gospels, which tell the story of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. The fourth book is the Gospel according to John. They also record the words Jesus spoke to his disciples about following him and continuing his work after his eventual return to Heaven. Each Gospel was written to a different segment of the population of the first century world but also apply to the segmentation of the world today.

The Gospel according to Mathew was written to guide the Hebrew people to believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. This is the reason for the long genealogy in the first chapter. He wanted to show the Jewish people that Jesus was indeed descended from the Line of King David, according to prophesy.

The Gospel of Mark was written with the Roman people in mind. They were a nation of people who respected power and authority. When reading the Gospel according to Mark, note the emphasis of the power and authority of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel according to Luke was written to the Greek segment of the population. The Greeks were a mystically oriented people. You will see as you read The Gospel according to Luke that there are more miracles and the tone is more spiritual.

The fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to John, was written to tell everyone of the divine nature of Jesus Christ as God who became man.

Following the gospels, the beginnings of the early church and the work of Jesus' disciples in performing miracles and preaching the gospel are recorded in the book of Acts. This is the book of the early history of the Christian faith. There are many denominations that do not reverence the Book of Acts. There are many very important events in this most amazing book. The fulfillment of one of the great promises of God to us is in this book. The advent of the Holy Spirit of the One and True Living God is recounted in the book of The Acts of the Apostles.

THE EPISTLES

Following the book of Acts are the epistles, or letters the Apostle Paul and others wrote to encourage the first Christians in their walk with Jesus Christ. The epistles provide admonitions and exhortations and great insights into God's desires for our everyday lives.

THE PROPHECY BOOK

The final book of the New Testament is The Revelations of Jesus Christ to John, which is a prophetic book detailing Christ's return to claim His Bride, the body of believers known as the Church.

THE TRUTH AND AUTHORITY OF THE HOLY BIBLE

Many people claim that all truth is relative and that there is no such thing as a completely authoritative God. For these people, Christianity is a matter of opinion or preference, for there is no one set of beliefs that are absolutely true.

But God has given us the glorious universe and all that there is in it as a reminder of his majesty and authority. We are given an inner desire for a relationship with him. Even though God gives these signs to us, some still refuse to listen to him and act according to his will. This is one of the purposes of the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is God's "special revelation." In simple words that everyone can understand, the Holy Bible reminds us of our sinful nature through the law and of our justification through our faith in His Son Jesus. It shows us that we have a daily responsibility to God and his commands. From reading the Holy Bible, we know that God is all-powerful, and that He has unlimited authority over all people. When we reject what the Holy Bible has to say to us, we are in essence rejecting God himself and then foolishly denying the authority He has over all of Creation.

When we read the Holy Bible, we see that people have always rebelled against God. The Israelites wandered through the wilderness because they did not believe God would protect them. King Ahab erected idols to false gods. Jonah refused to go to Nineveh despite God's command. Ignoring God's promises of blessing for us, we consistently disobey him and follow our own desires and wishes. The Holy Bible is a wonderful reminder of God's eternal authority over all people.

Many of the same people who deny the authority of God also say that the Holy Bible is not absolutely true because humans-prone to human error-wrote it down. While it is true that the biblical authors

were not perfect people, the Holy Bible is clear in stating that it is a work inspired by God and is therefore perfect.

The Apostle Paul writes that all Scripture is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16), and Peter explains that “prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). This includes both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Because of God’s love for us, He would never lead us astray by giving us a Holy Bible that was not absolutely true. His Holy Word is as an absolute guide to the truth. His Word will not come back void.

GOD'S COVENANT

“Testament” means “covenant” or “promise.” The Holy Bible reminds us of God’s covenant with his people—first with the Hebrews and eventually with all people. The Holy Bible makes it possible for us to understand what God expects from us in order to maintain this covenant and nurture a wonderful relationship with Him.

The Old Testament talks about many covenants, but one of the most important of these is God’s covenant with the Hebrew children in the Ten Commandments. After giving his first laws to the people of Israel, God said, “Take care to follow the commands, decrees, and laws I give you today. If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep His covenant of love with you, as He swore to your forefathers” (Deuteronomy 7:11-12).

When Israel followed these guidelines and worshiped God alone, their kingdom thrived. They moved into the Promised Land of

Canaan and became a very powerful nation. When Israel broke the covenant by being disobedient to God, He sent enemies to attack and enslave them. The Old Testament describes the numerous opportunities that God gave Israel to keep their covenants with Him and how they were often unwilling to do so. The Israelites had no hope of earning God's favor as long as they were constantly sinful and rebellious.

When the Israelites went through tough times, God never forgot them. He assured them that they would eventually be redeemed. God sent prophets to tell of the "new covenant" which would come in the form of the Messiah (His Chosen Savior).

Jesus Christ was the instrument of this new covenant. Because He came to earth, became our sin, died on the cross as the ultimate sacrifice for us; Jesus did away with the need for man to sacrifice animals to God. The only requirement of God's new covenant is to simply believe in Jesus Christ.

The New Testament provides the details of God's new covenant, which is available to all people, not just the Hebrews.

God's covenant will not change. We can accept or reject what the Holy Bible tells us, but we cannot change it. God has promised that if anyone accepts His covenant, he will ultimately prosper, and He will care for him or her. For those that do not accept this covenant, God promises harsh judgment.

The Holy Bible is the story of God's covenant with people-how it was first established with the Israelites and was later extended to all people through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. When we read and follow what it has to say, we are participating in the very

same covenant as the people in the Holy Bible. The Word of God is eternal.

INSPIRATION

INSPIRATION refers to the way GOD guided those who wrote His Holy Word.

The Holy Bible is not simply a collection of stories, fables, myths, or human ideas about who God is. It is not a human book. Through the Holy Spirit, God revealed His nature and plan to selected believers, who wrote His message for His people (2 Peter 1:20-21). This process is known as inspiration. The writers wrote from their own personal, historical, and cultural contexts. Although they used their own minds, talents, language, and style, they wrote what God wanted them to write.

INSPIRATION ATESTS TO THE RELIABILITY OF GOD'S WORD

Scripture is complete truth because God was in control of those who wrote it. God used frail human beings, but the truths He caused to be recorded are God's message to us. The scriptures are authoritative directives for our faith and for our life. The Holy Bible is "inspired by God." Read it, and use its teachings to guide you in your life now.

GOD'S INSPIRED WORD IS A WAY HE IMPARTS HIS SPIRIT INTO OUR LIFE.

All of the Holy Bible is God's inspired Word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should read it and apply it to our life. The Holy Bible is the standard by which we must test everything else that claims to be true. It is our safeguard against false teaching

and our source of guidance for our lives. It is our only source of knowledge about our salvation. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for Him. The amount of time you spend in God's Word will determine the depth of your relationship with Him. Read it regularly and discover God's truth and become steadfast in your life and in your faith. Develop a plan for reading the entire Holy Bible, not just the familiar passages.

HOLY BIBLE READING: 2 Peter 1:12-21

¹²*So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.*

¹³*I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,*

¹⁴*because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.*

¹⁵*And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*

¹⁶*We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

¹⁷*For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

¹⁸*We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

¹⁹And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

INSPIRATION MEANS THAT GOD IS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

"It was the Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God" simply states that Scripture did not come from the creative work of the prophets' own invention or interpretation. God inspired the writers; therefore their message is authentic and reliable. God used the talents, education, and cultural background of each writer (they were not mindless robots). He used each specific man for each specific message. God directed the writers in such a way to ensure that the message He intended was faithfully communicated in the very words they wrote.

Whatever else we may think about the Holy Bible, it's not possible to reject it on the grounds that the document itself isn't trustworthy. The Holy Bible we have today is essentially the same book it has been for over two thousand years. If we accept the writings of Shakespeare or Emerson on the basis of such evidence, then certainly we must accept the Holy Bible on that and evidence.

No matter who argues that the Holy Bible is not relevant, he is sadly mistaken. There is only one way to truly understand the Holy Word of God. Read it with spiritual eyes and a believing heart. It will come alive for you when you accept it as the truth, the absolute truth. It will guide you through any of life's trials. It will answer all of your questions.

Before you begin reading, pray that the Holy Spirit of the One and True Living God will guide you to understand what God's plan is for you. He will.

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Chapter 8

How do I worship?

John 4:23

*Yet a time is coming and has now come
when the true worshipers will worship the
Father in spirit and truth, for they are the
kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*

WORSHIP IS FIRST AND FOREMOST AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING AND HOLY GOD.

At God's command, Moses removed his sandals and covered his face. Taking off his shoes was an act of reverence, conveying his own unworthiness before God. God is our friend, but he is also our sovereign Lord. To approach him frivolously shows a lack of respect and sincerity. When you come to God in worship, do you approach him casually, or do you come as though you were an invited guest before a king? If necessary, adjust your attitude so it is suitable for approaching a holy God.

Exodus 3:5 "Do not come any closer," God told him. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground."

WORSHIP IS AS REAL AS THE PARTICIPATION OF THE WORSHIPERS.

God gave his people many rituals and instructions to follow. All the rituals in Leviticus were meant to teach the people valuable lessons. But over time, the people became indifferent to the meanings of these rituals, and they began to lose touch with God. He sent His Holy Word to fulfill the law and to release us from these ritual expectations.

Even today, some churches have instituted ritual and recitation as worship. When your church appears to be conducting dry, meaningless rituals, realize that your worship becomes dry and meaningless. Develop your spiritual relationship with God. Come before Him with love and thanksgiving in your heart. Ask the Holy Spirit of God to lead you into the worship that God would have you do. Your worship will be revitalized.

God created us to worship Him. He created us to worship Him in the beauty of Holiness. So many people simply come to church, grunt a few prayers and lip sink a few hymns, repeat a memorized prayer or two and leave as empty as they arrived.

We should not simply attend church out of a sense of obligation. This is meaningless. It does not entertain you and certainly does not please God. If we could understand that worship is our opportunity to thank God for all of the wonderful blessings in our lives, we could then approach the presence of God with a new found respect for the most Magnificent and most Powerful Being ever to exist. It is a shame that we will show the CEO of a company more respect than we show El Shaddai, the Holy Creator of the universe.

We should look forward to having the opportunity to gather with other believers to worship our Holy God, our Lord of Lords and King of Kings. We should approach Church time with the same excitement and anticipation we do to the Super Bowl. We should be excited to have the opportunity to commune as a corporate body with the Sweetest Holy Spirit in the universe.

We need to prepare ourselves with a sincere anticipation, a true sense of excitement and awe, as the time for corporate worship approaches. Too often we simply rush to get ready and arrive at church haggard and frustrated.

We need to instill in our children the excitement of having an opportunity to be blessed by the presence of God. When you anticipate going to church as much as you anticipated a meeting with your first love, you have begun to prepare yourself for worship

WORSHIP IS OFFERING THE BEST THAT WE HAVE TO CHRIST.

The Wise Men brought gifts and worshiped Jesus for who he was. They honored Him because they knew Him to be God. They sought Him to give of themselves and not to beg for what their fleshy hearts desired. This is the essence of true worship-honoring Christ for who he is and being willing to give him what is valuable to you. Worship God because he is the perfect, just, and almighty Creator of the universe, worthy of the best you have to give.

Too often believers think that prayer, a truest form of worship, is nothing more than a chance to lift up their wish list to the genie in the sky. "Oh God, give me this!" and "Oh God I need that!" are all self-absorbed. We need to approach our Creator with Love and Adoration. He knows what you need and what you want. When it's time to worship God, it's about Him and not about us. He, Jesus Christ, should be our focus and we should be consumed with a desire to be in His presence, to honor Him, to worship Him. Worship means to "bow down", "to surrender". We cannot truly surrender to God when all we have on our minds is what we want and need.

Look forward to church (corporate worship) with the same anticipation that you would feel as the time approaches for your favorite activity. Give God your best, not what's left over. He gave you His Best. We live now simply to prepare for our eternity with God. This life is short compared to eternity.

Only a fool tries to hold onto things that will eventually decay instead of treasures that are eternal.

Scriptural References

How is worshiping God important to my relationship with Him?

1 Chronicles 16:29 . . . Give to The Lord The glory He deserves!
Bring your offering and come to worship Him. Worship The Lord
in His entire holy splendor.

Our Creator is worthy of our best, not what is leftover.

Psalms 145:3 . . . Great is The Lord! He is most worthy of praise!
His greatness is beyond discovery!

*Worship is the recognition of who God is, and of who we are in
relation to Him.*

Exodus 29:43 . . . I will meet the people of Israel There, and The
Tabernacle will be sanctified by my glorious presence.

*God meets with His people in a powerful way when they worship
Him together.*

Deuteronomy 31:11 . . . You must read this law to all the people

of Israel when they assemble before The Lord your God at The place He chooses.

Micah 4:2 . . . Come; let us go up to The mountain of The Lord, to The Temple of The God of Israel. There He will teach us His ways, so that we may obey Him.

Public, corporate worship gives God's people an important opportunity to hear His word proclaimed and learn about God's Devine Nature and His ways.

Psalms 5:7 . . . Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house; with deepest awe I will worship at your Temple.

God loves us passionately. We should also worship Him with passion.

Isaiah 6:3 . . . In a great chorus they sang, "Holy, holy, holy is The Lord Almighty! The whole earth is filled with His glory!"

Worship is a fitting response to God's holiness, power, and grace.

Revelation 4:9-11 . . . Whenever The living beings give glory and honor and thanks to The one sitting on The throne, The one who lives forever and ever, The twenty-four elders fall down and worship The one who lives forever and ever. And They lay Their crowns before The throne and say, "You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that They exist and were created."

Our worship of God is a prelude and preparation for Heaven.

What should worshipping God include?

Psalm 96:4 . . . Great is The Lord! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be revered above all the gods.

We worship God alone because He alone is worthy of our utmost devotion.

1 Chronicles 13:3 . . . [David said,] “It is time to bring back The Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul.”

Do you worship out of a genuine love for God or out of a vague sense of guilt? God wants a heartfelt response from us, like David’s, not a distant acknowledgment like Saul’s.

Genesis 35:2-3 . . . Jacob told everyone in His household, “Destroy your idols, wash yourselves, and put on clean clothing. We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to The God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has stayed with me wherever I have gone.”

Prepare yourself to inter into the presence of God.

Deuteronomy 11:16 . . . Do not let your Heart turn away from The Lord to worship other gods.

We must worship only our Holy God! Too often our love and attention is directed toward money, sports, other people, things of this world.

Exodus 3:5 . . . “Do not come any closer,” God told Him. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.”

When we enter God's presence in worship, we should recognize that we are standing on holy ground.

Psalm 35:18 . . . Then I will thank you in front of The entire congregation. I will praise you before all the people.
Our worship should include praise and giving thanks to God for what He has done for us.

1 Chronicles 13:6-8 . . . David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all Their might, singing and playing all kinds of musical instruments-lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.

Worship can take the form of a joyous celebration with musical instruments.

Psalm 95:6 . . . Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before The Lord our maker.

Worship means to honor, to bow down, to surrender. Kneeling and bowing are appropriate postures for worship.

Hebrews 12:28 . . . Since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping Him with holy fear and awe.

Holy fear (respect) and awe should accompany thanksgiving as our attitude in worship.

Amos 5:21-24 . . . I hate all your show and pretense-The hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies.

Public worship is worse than useless when it is done without sincerity and the fruit of righteous living. You can't live like Hell during The week and then expect God's Holy Presence during worship.

How important is worship?

Exodus 34:8 . . . Moses immediately fell to The ground and worshiped.

We, as Moses, should realize the honor we have to be in The presence of Almighty God.

2 Kings 17:36 . . . Worship only The Lord, who brought you out of Egypt with such mighty miracles and power. You must worship Him and bow before Him; offer sacrifices to Him alone.

We must worship only our Holy God! Too often our love and attention is directed toward money, sports, other people, things of this world.

1 Chronicles 16:29 . . . Give to The Lord The glory He deserves! Bring your offering and come to worship Him. Worship The Lord in His entire holy splendor.

We must offer our very best, our first fruits, to God and His service.

Psalms 145:3 . . . Great is The Lord! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!

We do not consider the fact that the most Magnificent Holy God, The Creator of The entire universe, allows us to be in His Holy presence.

Isaiah 66:1-2 . . . This is what The Lord says: “Heaven is my throne, and The earth is my footstool. Could you ever build me a temple as good as that? Could you build a dwelling place for me? My hands have made both Heaven and earth, and they are mine. I, The Lord, have spoken! I will bless those who have humble and contrite Hearts, who tremble at my word.”

Worship is the recognition of who God is, and of who we are in relation to Him.

Genesis 35:1 . . . God said to Jacob, “Now move on to Bethel and settle There. Build an altar there to worship me-The God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother, Esau.”

In The Old Testament, worship was accompanied by sacrifice, which was the means by which people formed and maintained their relationship with God. Since God made the ultimate sacrifice for us through Jesus Christ, His Holy Word, we no longer are required to sacrifice animals to appease Him. We must sacrifice ourselves. Read in Paul’s Epistle to The Romans, chapter 12
¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Exodus 29:43 . . . I will meet The people of Israel There, and The Tabernacle will be sanctified by my glorious presence.

God has told us that He will be present when we gather to worship Him.

1 Kings 8:10-11 . . . As The priests came out of the inner sanctuary, a cloud filled The Temple of The Lord. The priests could not continue their work because The glorious presence of The Lord filled The Temple.

The presence of God's Holy Spirit is truly will fill you with awe.

2 Chronicles 7:1 . . . When Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from Heaven and burned up The burnt offerings and sacrifices, and The glorious presence of The Lord filled The Temple.

God meets with His people in a powerful way when they worship Him together.

Deuteronomy 31:11 . . . You must read this law to all the people of Israel when they assemble before The Lord your God at The place He chooses.

The presentation and reading of God's Holy Word is integral to worship.

Micah 4:2 . . . “Come, let us go up to The mountain of The Lord, to The Temple of The God of Israel. There He will teach us His ways, so that we may obey Him.”

Public, corporate worship gives God's people an important opportunity to Hear His Holy Word proclaimed and learn about God's Devine Nature and His ways.

Psalms 5:7 . . . Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house; with deepest awe I will worship at your Temple.

Worship should be an intense and awe inspiring experience.

Psalm 47:7 . . . God is The King over all the earth. Praise Him with a psalm!

Worship is not for our entertainment. It is our attempt to entertain God.

Psalm 95:1 . . . Come; let us sing to The Lord! Let us give a joyous shout to the rock of our salvation!

The opportunity to worship Almighty God should be a happy time, not a time of moaning and sorrow.

Psalm 100:1-4 . . . Shout with joy to The Lord, O earth! Worship The Lord with gladness. Come before Him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that The Lord is God! He made us, and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name.

Isaiah 6:3 . . . In a great chorus they sang, “Holy, holy, holy is The Lord Almighty! The whole earth is filled with His glory!”

Worship is a fitting response to God’s holiness, power, and grace.

Matthew 14:33 . . . Then the disciples worshiped Him. “You really are The Son of God!” They exclaimed.

Christ is worthy of our worship.

Revelation 4:9-11 . . . Whenever The living beings give glory and honor and thanks to The one sitting on The throne, The one who

lives forever and ever, The twenty-four elders fall down and worship The one who lives forever and ever. And They lay Their crowns before The throne and say, “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that They exist and were created.”

Revelation 5:11-12 . . . Then I looked again, and I Heard the singing of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders. And they sang in a mighty chorus: “The Lamb is worthy-The Lamb who was killed. He is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.”

Our worship of God is a prelude to Heaven.

HOW SHOULD I WORSHIP GOD?

Genesis 35:2-3 . . . Jacob told everyone in His household, “Destroy your idols, wash yourselves, and put on clean clothing. We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to The God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has stayed with me wherever I have gone.”

Exodus 20:2-4 . . . “I am The Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship any other gods besides me. Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish.”

Deuteronomy 11:16 . . . Do not let your Heart turn away from The Lord to worship other gods.

Revelation 22:9 . . . Again He said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers The prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this scroll. Worship God!”

We must worship only God!

Exodus 3:5 . . . “Do not come any closer,” God told Him. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.”

When we enter God’s presence in worship, we should recognize that we are standing on holy ground.

Psalms 9:11 . . . Sing praises to The Lord who reigns in Jerusalem. Tell the world about His unforgettable deeds.

Psalms 35:18 . . . Then I will thank you in front of the entire congregation. I will praise you before all the people.

Hebrews 13:15 . . . With Jesus’ Help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of His name.

Our worship should include praise and giving thanks to God for what He has done.

Psalms 30:4 . . . Sing to The Lord, all you godly ones! Praise His holy name.

Psalms 147:1 . . . Praise The Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God! How delightful and how right!

Ephesians 5:19 . . . Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to The Lord in your Hearts.

Singing is an important part of our worship to God.

Psalm 33:2 . . . Praise The Lord with melodies on the lyre; make music for Him on The ten-stringed harp.

Psalm 71:22 . . . Then I will praise you with music on the harp, because you are faithful to your promises, O God. I will sing for you with a lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

Psalm 150:3-5 . . . Praise Him with a blast of the trumpet; praise Him with The lyre and harp! Praise Him with The tambourine and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with a clash of cymbals; praise Him with loud clanging cymbals.

Musical instruments have an important role to play in our worship.

Deuteronomy 31:12-13 . . . Call them all together-men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns, so they may listen and learn to fear The Lord your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law. Do this so that your children who have not known these laws will Hear Them and will learn to fear The Lord your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing The Jordan to occupy.

2 Chronicles 20:13 . . . As all The men of Judah stood before The Lord with Their little ones, wives, and children.

It is good for everyone in the family to be present together for corporate worship.

1 Chronicles 13:6-8 . . . David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all Their might, singing and playing all kinds of musical instruments-lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.

Worship can take the form of a joyous celebration with instruments of music.

1 Chronicles 15:16 . . . David also ordered The Levite leaders to appoint a choir of Levites who were singers and musicians to sing joyful songs to The accompaniment of lyres, harps, and cymbals.

A choir can aid in worship.

1 Chronicles 16:4-6 . . . David appointed The following Levites to lead The people in worship before The Ark of The Lord by asking for His blessings and giving thanks and praise to The Lord, The God of Israel.

Worship leaders can help guide God's people in worship.

Psalms 95:6 . . . Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before The Lord our maker.

Kneeling and bowing are appropriate postures for worship.

Hebrews 12:28 . . . Since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping Him with holy fear and awe.

Holy fear and awe should accompany thanksgiving as our attitude in worship.

1 Chronicles 29:10-13 . . . Then David praised The Lord in The presence of the whole assembly: “O Lord, The God of our ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in The Heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength. O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name!”

1 Timothy 2:8 . . . Wherever you assemble, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

Public prayer is an important part of corporate worship.

Amos 5:21-24 . . . I hate all your show and pretense-The hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies. I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings. I won't even notice all your choice peace offerings. Away with your hymns of praise! They are only noise to my ears. I will not listen to your music, no matter how lovely it is. Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, a river of righteous living that will never run dry.

Public worship is worse than useless when done without sincerity and the fruit of righteous living.

Matthew 2:11 . . . They entered the house where the child and His mother, Mary, were, and they fell down before Him and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Worship should be accompanied by giving God our all.

Acts 2:46 . . . They worshiped together at The Temple each day, met in homes for The Lord's Supper, and shared Their meals with great joy and generosity.

John 4:23-24 . . . God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.

Worship must be in spirit and in truth. When we read Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 1, we are told that we are "in Christ, in Heavenly places". This means that right now your spirit is in Christ who is seated at the right hand of the Father.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 . . . This is what The Lord Himself said, and I pass it on to you just as I received it. On The night when He was betrayed, The Lord Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In The same way, He took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by The shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing The Lord's death until He comes again.

The Lord's Supper is both an act of worship to God and an act of fellowship among believers.

1 Corinthians 14:26 . . . Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize what I am saying. When you meet, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in an unknown language, while another

will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must be useful to all and build them up in The Lord.

Everyone has something valuable to contribute to public worship, but all things must be done in good order.

Is there a right way or a wrong way to worship? *Should our worship be somber and serious or full of joy and praise?*

Leviticus 10:1-3 . . . In this way, they disobeyed The Lord by burning before Him a different kind of fire than He had commanded.

Worship is a response to the holiness of God and therefore should be respectful and reverent.

Psalms 95:1-7 . . . Come, let us sing to The Lord . . . Let us kneel before The Lord our maker.

Matthew 2:11 . . . They entered the house where the child and His mother, Mary, were, and they fell down before Him and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave Him gifts.

True worship involves both kneeling in humble adoration and rejoicing in celebration.

1 Chronicles 6:31-32 . . . David assigned the following men to lead the music at the house of The Lord.

From ancient times, music always played a central role in worship.

Exodus 20:3 . . . Do not worship any other gods besides me.

Daniel 3:8-20 . . . Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue.

No matter how great the pressure, we must never give our worship to other gods. Money, social status, pleasures of the flesh, sports, rock stars are all exalted to the status of gods when we pay them more homage than Our Holy God in Heaven.

Acts 2:42-47 . . . They worshiped together at The Temple each day, met in homes for The Lord's Supper, and shared Their meals with great joy and generosity.

Worship in The early church included fellowship and regular sharing of Communion.

1 Corinthians 14:26-33 . . . Everything that is done must be useful to all and build Them up in The Lord . . . For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Our worship is to be orderly and not chaotic.

PROMISES FROM GOD:

Psalms 66:4 . . . Everything on earth will worship You; they will sing Your praises, shouting Your name in glorious songs.

Isaiah 35:10 . . . Those who have been ransomed by The Lord will return to Jerusalem, singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness.

Philippians 2:9-11 . . . God raised Him up to The Heights of Heaven and gave Him a name that is above every other name, so that at The name of Jesus every knee will bow, in Heaven and on earth and under The earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to The glory of God The Father.

Revelation 15:4 . . . Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed.

When we enter into corporate worship, we invite the presence of The Holy Spirit of God, God's manifest presence on earth. We must adore Him. We must honor His Devine Presence.

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Chapter 9

How do I get His Blessing?

Psalms 37:4

*⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD
and he will give you the desires of your
heart.*

How do I get His Blessing?

Some Christians ask the question, “Why am I not being blessed like others I see?” They tell me that they pray and they read their

Bibles but the things that they are asking for never seem to come. “Where is my blessing?”

In **Psalms 37:4** we are promised, “⁴Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

Most people have been taught and believe that all they have to do is profess their love for God with their mouths and take their wish list to Him in prayer and miraculously everything that they want will suddenly appear. This is a shameful misinterpretation of what the Word says. This does nothing more than exemplifies the childish greed in our hearts. It’s like saying, “Well God, I told you that I love you, now where is the stuff I want?”

Just imagine how you would feel if your children or others that you love only came to you when they needed something. You have a great desire to give them everything that they want and need but you are lead to believe that the relationship is a little too one-sided. We have to understand that God wants us to worship Him. He wants our undivided, unfettered, devoted and passionate attention and deepest love.

He wants us to approach Him with respect and devotion. He knows both what we want and what we need. If your loved ones constantly came to you just to tell you how much they love and honor you; if they came to you wanting nothing more that your presence and company, wouldn’t you give them not only everything they need but what they want as well. God is all knowing. Before you ask, He knows what you want and need. He is there in His magnificent Heaven waiting to give you the things that you seek.

In Psalms 37:4 we are not being told that God would give us every fleshly desire that our impure and greedy hearts desire. Read closely! He says that He will give us the desires of our hearts not what our heart desires. He will give us the desires that we should have in our hearts. As we grow in our personal relationship with Him, as we develop that purity of love by filling our lives with prayer and worship, He, then, will place in our hearts the desire to worship Him, the desire to seek His presence in our lives, the desire to grow closer to His throne, the desire to live our lives according to His Word.

These are the desires that we should have in our hearts not the desire to simply be blessed because we are His children. Not the fleshy, selfish, greedy desires that consume us.

We must remember that, when it is harvest time, an apple tree that bears no fruit is passed by. So it is in our lives, if we do not bear fruit, we are passed by when it is time for our harvest.

Blessings are not obligatory. God blesses us when He feels that we are in His divine will. If you want a blessing, be a blessing.

You may ask how you can be in God's will. First we must be committed to Him, following His will and teaching in the Holy Word as closely as we can. God has given us the gift of choice. He loves us so much that He gives us the ability to either accept Him or reject Him. Which option we choose does not change the fact that He loves us but it does determine what our blessings will be.

Commitment is the key here. Christians declare and some loudly that they love God and are devoted to Him. This they do for the benefit of those around them. God knows the truth. He can discern

our hearts. He knows our every thought and deed. He sees us even in those dark places.

The Psalmist states that no matter where he goes, to the highest mountain or to the depths of the deepest ocean, God is there. Christians often ignore this fact. They do not realize that God is omnipresent. He is everywhere all the time and He sees you even in the shadows. He sees your innermost thoughts. He knows the truth about your heart.

How then is it possible for mere mortals to make a commitment, a true and sincere commitment, to The God Most High? To answer this we must look at a beautiful scripture. Mathew Chapter 14:

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²*Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.*

²³*After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,*

²⁴*but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.*

²⁵*During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.*

²⁶*When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.*

²⁷*But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. don't be afraid."*

²⁸“Lord, if it's you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹*Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”*

³²*And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.*
³³*Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”*

This is an amazing and beautiful story that has a very deep and profound meaning. It's not just that Jesus walked on the water. He is supreme. He is God and the Creator of the Universe. Walking on water is no extraordinary feat for Him. It is not so much that Peter was able to walk on the water. The amazing thing to me is that Peter was able to make a deep and sincere commitment to His Lord.

It's one thing to be in the boat looking out at Jesus but it is entirely a different thing to be able to abandon everything that you know is solid and real and step into the supernatural. Peter knew the boat. He was confident that the boat would be there. He was a fisherman. He was comfortable on boats. It was solid. He could use his 5 senses to be assured that the boat was there. He was in his comfort zone.

This is so much like us today. We are assured by our physical environment that what we know is real is there. We are committed to that which we know. Just as with Peter, we desperately want to join Jesus in His realm but our flesh holds us back. Our enemy plants seeds of doubt in our minds. "Be careful! That's water and you know that you cannot walk on water. It's out of your realm. It will not support your weight. You'll sink like a stone!"

Peter made a commitment. He could see the prize. He could see Jesus there, arms outstretched, beckoning for us to come to Him. We must be like Peter. We must be willing to step outside of what our senses tell us is real. Our senses are of this world. We must be ready to answer Jesus' call to us to join Him. We must be willing to step out of the boat.

Peter had to make a decision. Do I stay in this realm, my comfort zone or do I trust in God enough to do what I know is impossible? Do I believe my Lord or do I doubt and wait for Him to come to me? Trust is the key here.

Often God will allow us to get into situations that require our total trust in Him. Remember Daniel in the Lions den. Daniel was innocent. He was put into a life or death situation. No human being could help Daniel in this situation, not even the King of Persia who really liked Daniel. Daniel was in a situation that was, by human standards, was impossible to survive. He had to totally trust in the Grace of Almighty God.

This requires total commitment on our parts. God has already made a commitment to us. He committed His Holy and Beloved Word to become flesh. He committed His Holy Son to be sacrificed to pay a sin debt that we are unable to pay. All that He

wants in return is for us to pledge to Him our unwavering love. We must commit to Him our lives, our possessions and our hearts.

Peter was blessed with the ability to walk on water. As long as He kept His eyes on Jesus, as long as he committed his full attention on Jesus, he was able to walk on the surface of the water. We too must be able to focus our full attention on Jesus. We must be able to fully and completely trust Him.

Peter, however, demonstrates what happens to us when our attention is diverted from our first love. He shows how, we, when our eyes veer from Our Holy Lord for even a second, we look again at our natural environment and it begins to consume us. When Peter looked away from Christ, he began to sink. The enemy was able to plant that seed of doubt and Peter's faith in the magnificence of Christ gift to him paled in his mind and he began to sink.

We must be willing to focus our hearts and minds on Jesus in order for Him to bless us. We must be able to make a full and complete commitment to follow Jesus, never taking our heart and minds off of Him.

When we can make this deep commitment to Jesus we will begin to develop His image in us. We will begin to bear the fruit that He so desperately wants to see in our lives. The more committed to Him that we are determines the fruit that we will bear in our lives. When our attention is on Christ, when our trust in Him and His provision matures with our relationship with Him, the harder it is for us to succumb to the temptations of this world.

The devil loves to plant little seeds of doubt in our minds. He loves to present us with minute irritations that he can blow completely

out of proportion. You see, Satan understands the principle of seed planting more than most Christians. He knows that the seeds that He plants in our lives will produce the cankered fruit that he wants to see in our lives.

It would be grand if we understood this principle of seed planting. It would be wonderful for us to be able to focus our attention on Christ, never wavering, always on target. It would be magnificent if we could put our full and total trust in the One who created us, the One who loves us.

If you plant an apple tree, you will get apples. If you plant a fig tree, you get figs. If you plant seeds of love you will reap a harvest of love. If you plant the seeds of anger and mistrust, those seeds too will bear fruit, bitter fruit.

Only when we are able to step out of the boat and trust God unconditionally will we see the great blessings that He has in store for us. When we live our lives by His direction, forsaking our own fleshly emotions and the devils seeds of deceit and doubt, we will be able to receive the wonderful blessings that God already has planned for us.

Let's consider for a moment a father and a son. The child is disobedient or thoughtless in his actions. He follows his own feelings and desires. He disregards the directions that his father has given and goes his own way. He only goes to his father when he is in need and the rest of the time he does things his way. How likely is this father to give the child what he desires? When the child comes to the father and asks for money or some other mundane possession, will the father disregard the disobedience and selfishness of the child and pour out his blessing on the child. Nope.

Now consider the child who is always attentive to the father. He follows his father direction in life without question. He completely trusts in his father's ability and willingness to take care of him. This is the child who doesn't need to ask his father for money or a car or anything else. His father knows what he needs and to the greatest extent what he wants as well. This child's desires have been tempered by the love and understanding of the father. Take a look at this same parallel in the Gospel according to Luke.

The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 11:

⁹*"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

¹⁰*For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

¹¹*"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?*

¹²*Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?*

¹³*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

Step out of your boat and trust that Jesus will be there for you when you need Him.

Chapter 10

Summary

What is my place in all of this?

John 3:1-5

¹*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council.*

²*He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."*

³*In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

⁴*"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"*

⁵*Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*

⁶*Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.*

⁷*You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again'*

⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

John 3:16

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Summary

We know that God is supreme in His Glory and His Grace. He created us to be His beloved children. He created this universe to give us a magnificent home.

Jesus Christ is the Holy Word of God who became flesh in order that we would have a way back to God. The world in which we live is beautiful but rampant with sin. Humans are not able to live by the law of God because we have an inherent sinful nature. There had to be a sacrifice made to pay our sin debt. Jesus Christ, our Savior, was that sacrifice. He became our sin so that our sin could die on the altar of God. The glorious fact for us to realize is that He rose again from death's grip to provide us with salvation; to become our righteousness.

We were created in the spiritual image of God. That image is described in the 5th chapter of Paul's epistle to the Galatians.

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

³Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

⁴You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

⁵*But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.*

⁶*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

⁷*You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?*

⁸*That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.*

⁹*"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."*

¹⁰*I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.*

¹¹*Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.*

¹²*As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!*

¹³*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

¹⁴*The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."* ¹⁵*If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*

Life by the Spirit

¹⁶*So I say live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

¹⁷*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*

¹⁸*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

¹⁹*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;*

²⁰*idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions*

²¹*and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

²³*gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

²⁴*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

²⁵*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This is the spiritual image of God. These are the very same qualities that exemplify the life of Jesus Christ while He was on earth. These are the same qualities that God looks for in His children. The only way that we can regenerate that wonderful image in our lives is to truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Holy Son of God and to hold Him dear to our hearts. When we allow Him through His Holy Spirit, the Mind of Christ, to work in us, then and only then will we be able to wear His mantle of righteousness and project the image of God in our lives.

When we enter the throne room on Judgment Day, Jesus will recognize us by His image in us. If He does not see love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance in our lives, He will not see us as His and He will reject us.

If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, please do not hesitate. We are not guaranteed each day. Tomorrow may be too late. Accept Him today. It is a simple process that contains eternal rewards.

Pray the following pray sincerely.

“Father God, forgive my sins. I truly repent of the evil ways that I have lived. Jesus Christ, please, come and live in my heart and make me the new person that you would have me to be through the guidance of your Wonderful Holy Spirit. Holy Jesus, apply your blood that was shed at Calvary to my heart. In Jesus Christ’s Holy Name I pray. Amen”

If you prayed that prayer honestly, you are now a child of the One and True Living God. You need to find a Bible Believing Church, get yourself a Holy Bible, and dedicate the rest of your life here on earth to your Savior.

If you have already accepted Christ as your Savior, read His Holy Word every day. Concentrate on building your relationship with Him. Share the message of Christ's Salvation for man with others.

Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ and pray for those who have not yet accepted Christ. Time is short.

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