

# Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever.... (Matt. 6:13)

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## *Motto for the year of 2011*

Render therefore unto God ... **the things that are God's.** (Matthew 22:21 KJV)

### **The Chief Cornerstone**



#### **When “No” Means “I Disagree”**

The Sequel

Last month, while reading the article in the Leadership Living column I was blessed. As the Spirit began to illuminate that truth in my heart; it kept “resonating for me.” I saw this truth become a lamp to my feet and a light to my pathway. <sup>(1)</sup>

As we contemplated it (in a discussion with one of my colleagues) the Lord gave more light, blinding light I might add. That which we have received, we give also to you.

We’ll lead in with a quote from the original article (a beautiful article it was):

*We know that Paul was often imprisoned, beaten, scorned, and at times had very few resources to do the work God had called him to do.*

Chief Cornerstone

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### **The Leadership Corner Leadership Living, Inc.**

#### **The Process of Prayer (Part 1) What You Do**

In this article we will discuss one part of the Process of Prayer. Next month we will follow up with the second part of the process.

Have you ever wondered what process is involved when it comes to getting your prayers answered? Growing up in church, I’ve heard people say that we should ask God for what we want until He answers us. They cite the scripture that talks about a lady that went to an unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). The bible says after she bugged the judge several times he eventually granted her request (not because he cared anything about her, but because he was tired of her coming to him).

Using this text many Christians believe that if we simply pester God, He will get tired of hearing us nag Him and He will grant our request, if for no other reason – because He is completely exhausted by us. Now, let’s take a moment to consider if this behavior is consistent with the character of our Father God. I’m challenged by this concept because God is not an “unjust judge.” He is not motivated by whatever irritates Him.

On the contrary, our God is a loving Father. He delights in His children and wants only what is best

The Leadership Corner

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## Son of My Wisdom



### The Relationship between the Logos of God and the Logos of Man

We have been talking about the relationship between the ethos, logos, and pathos of God and the ethos, logos, and pathos of man. We now come to the explication of the relationship between the *logos of God* and the *logos of man*. I'll tell you, the Lord has been dealing with me on the relationship between the two for the last few days. However, I didn't know that it was actually the content for this article. But as I read the last article in this series again (which I do when writing a series), I came to realize that the very thing which the Lord has been dealing with me concerning was in fact the message of this article.

The Holy Spirit said to me recently that I needed to live a more disciplined life.

You'll probably be able to identify with this: outside of obligations like work or school, I generally schedule my life *my way*. Whenever something like work or school is not pressing on my time I live according to how I feel: I wake up, go to sleep, eat, go, and come as I please. Now, I make time for Bible study, and prayer. But what the Lord said to me was essentially this: the life you live is not yours; neither can you live it your way. You are a son of God. The way of a son is *discipleship*.

Let's look at discipleship.

Jesus says "...I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:28-32)

That is the connection (you'll see a lot of "conditional" injunctions here). Jesus does nothing



## A Journey to Intimacy Bake Me a Little Cake, FIRST

It is with the expressed permission of one of my "big brothers in the faith" that I share this event with you.

Not many days ago, I received an instant message from one of my big brothers. He mentioned that he had been struggling to maintain his integrity before God. We agreed upon a time that we could talk.

We opened our conversation with the customary greetings and pleasantries:

Q) How's the family?

A) Everyone's good.

Q) How's work?

A) Crazy (Which is a euphemism for "more bricks; less straw. You know the routine.")

Then we headed up the mountain:

Q) How have you been doing?

A) I've been messing up.

Q) How's your quiet time with the Lord?

A) I haven't had much time for it.

Q) Really?!? How then do you find time for anything else?

A) Work has been extremely demanding. Then there's the family. **I've got to provide for my family.**

Approaching the summit:

Q) I know that you love your family. So what I'm about to say next is going to sound cold, so please bear with me.

A) I understand.

Q) Are you somehow under the mistaken impression that the love you give your

## Precepts in Practice



### What does it mean to be “used” by God

Have you ever wanted to be “used by God?” You know how some Christians pray, “Lord, use me.” I’ve heard this prayer many times. I have also prayed this very prayer on several occasions. I remember when I was a young teenaged Christian. The church I belonged to at the time used to teach us to ask God to “use” us.

So, in obedience, I started praying this prayer. Then, I started hearing people say, “God, use me until you use me up.” When I heard this, I thought, “Well shucks! If they can pray that kind of prayer, so can I.” As a result, I started praying, “Lord, use me until there is nothing left in me. Empty me out and wear me out. Then, call me home to be with you.”

Now, this may sound crazy, but the story is true. I grew up in an environment where some people (extremist Christians – to say the least), held the perspective that unless we were physically, mentally, and emotionally drained by the Holy Spirit, we had not lived up to God’s requirements. I remember hearing people say, “If you really let God use you, He will wear you out.”

As a young believer, I didn’t know that I could challenge that perspective. Looking back, I realize now that those people may have worn themselves out, but it was not God doing the draining. So, the question remains, “What does it mean to be used by God?”

Surely it must be a good thing to want God to use us. Certainly our Heavenly Father wants to use us. So, how do we dive into this topic? Well, let’s start by backing up and posing and answering a few slightly different questions.

- **Question #1: WHY DOES GOD USE US?**
- **Question #2: WHEN DOES GOD USE US?**
- **Question #3: WHO DOES GOD USE?**

**Answer to Question #1 – “Why does God use us?”** We will tackle the first question using human activities. When I get up in the morning and go to bed at night, I have a routine. It always involves brushing my teeth.



## Boot Camp

### Submission - The Sanctification of the Soul



#### Milestone #1 – The Via Dolorosa

The sanctification of the soul is progressively realized as we submit ourselves to the Lord God. This we speak to those whose Lord is the Only True and Living God. By a continued practice of seeking to know the Word of God and the God of the Word; (in the words of Paul) we “keep our bodies (*and souls*) under subjection; lest at anytime we may find ourselves outlaws before the Holy One.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Last month, in this column, we embarked upon quite a journey; a journey that not many of us are willing to take. But a journey, nevertheless, that all who would see God in peace, MUST take. That is our personal journey down the Via Dolorosa (Latin for the *Way of Grief* or *Way of Suffering*). It is our own personal journey to the Cross; there to “reckon” or “commemorate” the fact that we were crucified with Him. When we “get” this reality, we necessarily, reckon that the life that we now live, we do so by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.<sup>(2)</sup>

We somehow have been “smoked” into thinking that we can have the “destination,” without the entering in upon the “journey.” Only in *Wonderland*, is that possible. There is no *resurrection*, where there is no *cross*; because the one necessitates the other. If something has not died, it cannot be resurrected. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die (*the cross*), it abides alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit (*resurrection*).<sup>(3)</sup> This is the story of *our* lives. If *we* do not die to sin and self; there will be no resurrection to life and liberty. We may “talk” about it but we certainly won’t “be” about it. We can only live one life, at a time. We are supposed to be living a resurrected life.

**Repeat:** The Spirit of God intends, by the human spirit, to mentor and lead the soul into sweet submission and obedience to the Word of God. Thereby we become progressively sanctified into an amazing expression of “Sonship.”

## Living Waters



### Lawless Ones

*Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? In Your name we have cast out devils. And in Your name we have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity. (Matt. 7:21-23)*

In the New Testament, another meaning for “iniquity” is “lawlessness.”<sup>(1)</sup>

Said otherwise, “Depart from Me those whose hearts resist the governance of the Holy One. Depart from Me those of you who practiced lawlessness as a way of life.”

Let’s just talk, shall we. I want to share with you some musings on the topic.

Hhmm ... Lawlessness ... as a way of life.

The Law says that we are forbidden to take the name of the Lord in vain.<sup>(2)</sup> One expression of “taking the name of the Lord in vain” is to call Jesus “Lord” and then live like He’s not our Lord. To do so, means that we are without the governance of the Law of God over our lives. It means that we are law-less, living without His law prevailing over us. And we may do many wonderful things “in His name;” we simply will not submit to His Lordship on a personal level. I’m sorry, are those your toes? Oh, those are my toes!!!

Does that concern you a bit? It should. I’m concerned.

This is, very really, a case of identity theft; to wear the jersey and not be on the team. To do great works in the name of a person you don’t even have a relationship with. A person you don’t even really know, or (in many cases) care to know; if we’re honest with ourselves.

It’s a frightening thing to imagine living your whole life, naming the name of Jesus, only to learn in the end, that you really didn’t know Him. Worst still, that He doesn’t *know* you. Certainly He would know

## Love and *The* Truth



### Not Hearers Only - Deceiving Your Own Selves

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* (James 1:22-25)

In light of the Lord’s current emphasis on *discipleship* it seems clear that we need to see what the religious antithesis is and what it looks like. The scriptures are so rich and abundant in light and life. The lifestyle of discipleship is a life of continually reading, thinking, and speaking scripture to ourselves. But this is NOT merely for memorization sake. What we are really doing is memorizing scripture for the sake of *living* the Word. We need our thoughts, our words, and our way of life to be governed by the Word of God. Consider the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8, 19-23). They are in fact a progression.

You’ll recall the four types of soil. In each type of soil, the seed did more than in the previously mentioned type of soil.

- You see, seed that fell by the wayside was one who **hears** without understanding. Immediately the enemy comes and takes away that which was heard.
- The seed that fell on stony ground was **heard**, and **understood**, and received with joy. But because there was no root it withered under the sun. (Note: the sun is indicative of trial and testing) Remember, every man’s work will be

## Nutrition, Health & Wellness



### The Two Laws

*And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.  
(Genesis 1:29)*

Lord willing, within the next few months, we'll pick up with some of the benefits of adding Chlorella and Spirulina to your nutrition regimen.

This month it seems that the direction is that we talk very briefly about a few of the principles that govern our food.

In Romans 8:2 there is talk of two mutually exclusive laws that govern every area of our life. We often only regard them as it pertains to our soul. But I submit to you that their reach is pervasive.

*The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus  
or the Law of Sin and Death*

They are very much like the "two masters" mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 6:24. Either one or the other prevails over us.

I submit to you that you will find these two laws operational throughout the length and breadth of your life. In some areas of our life we'll find hints of the one at work; and in other areas of our life we'll find traces of the other at work. They are also very present in our food supply.

Which is operational in our nutrition?

There are ways to tell.

**Disclaimer:** Let me warn you. As we go along, some will find this information offensive and offsetting.

Certainly you know that is never my intention. All I ask is that you check for yourself and not rely simply on what you hear from someone else (myself included). From time to time, by way of transparency, I'll share with you my personal experiences. Even those, you are welcome to look upon with a suspicion. Then do as the scriptures direct: "prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." <sup>(1)</sup>

When the Lord began to deal with me regarding my nutrition...

**Quick insert:** Please know that if you genuinely open yourself to the Lord, He will (pardon the expression) invade every single area of your life. While it can sometimes be uncomfortable; it is a most exquisite and wonderful way of life. Trust me; you'll want Him in e-v-e-r-y room and closet of your life. He is truly amazing and beautifully brilliant. You'll think that you have something "down solid" and He'll walk by and touch it. He'll ask "what are you keeping that for" and to pieces it will crumble. But what He puts in its place "cannot be reckoned with" for excellence.

Where was I? Oh, the Lord began to deal with me on my nutrition. I would say to the Lord, "When You placed our parents in the Garden, You had provided everything necessary to live a whole and healthy life." What has happened? Where have those things gone; and the principles that govern them.

Interestingly, at first He didn't answer me. I left the question before Him. And, as is His way, one day He took me by the hand and began to show me things, sweet and precious things.

One of the things He taught me was how to recognize the principle of *life and death* in food. Nooooo, I'm not a nutritional

*In effect, Paul let God know that it was quite a burden for him to carry out this amazing ministry while always having to deal with persecutions, poverty, and trials. God gave Paul magnificent revelations and did powerful miracles through him. We know that Paul wrote approximately two thirds of the New Testament. He was the lead in bringing the gospel to the non-Jewish world (as well as to many Jews).*

*So, what was God saying when He said “no” to Paul’s constant request for deliverance? To answer this question let’s borrow a definition from the Webster New World Dictionary. One key definition of “no” is to “disagree with.”*

*When God disagreed with Paul, He was letting Paul know that what He had planned was better and more appropriate for Paul than what Paul “thought” he needed or wanted in order to fulfill his purpose. Paul had a sincere passion that he wanted to achieve. And he thought that his request would help him reach his goals.*

Somehow we have been duped into believing that God is obligated to answer every one of our prayers (the operative word is “our”) with an affirmative (yes). We seem to completely ignore that the scriptures<sup>(2)</sup> teach that we must petition in accordance with the will of God to get a “yes” response every time we pray.

So we have Paul, a man, a servant of God, but also a son of Adam. He wanted to be free from these seeming obstructions (*persecutions, poverty, and trials*) to the free flow of his ministry. But he didn’t realize that God had a better idea. God always has a better idea, ALWAYS.

It is incumbent upon us to recognize that the “Way” of God was set before the foundation of the earth was established. He is the Strategist; we are the operatives. If you don’t get anything else out of this article, I enjoin you to get this.

Whatever God *has done, is doing, or will do* has already been “set in stone” by the immutability of His nature; the “IS-ness” of is Being; and the unimpeachable-ness of His character.

We’re not going to get Him to *say or do* anything different. Why is it important that we know this? A few reasons are: 1) so that we will stop attempting to redirect the heavens to meet our needs, as if God created man so He could have someone to tell Him what to do; 2) so that we spare ourselves the “spit and wind” that we call ‘prayer’ that in no way accords with the revealed Will of God. Those prayers that we keep “throwing up against the ceiling” smack of a complete disregard for the Person of God as Holy and Omniscient; we don’t need to bother God with those prayers. I’ll answer them for you; the answer is “No.”

Now let’s get up off of our knees and actually go and get the Word of God and read it. In it we find the *Person* of God; the *Will* of God; and the *Way* of God. And when we have respect for Who God has revealed Himself to be, then we may return to a posture of prayer that takes into account that God is doing exactly “what He said (in His Word) that He would do.” Therefore, it would behoove us to press to “enter into” the eternal strategy and schema (or scheme) of the Holy One.

Now back to Paul: he knew that He was commissioned, by God, to proclaim the gospel.

**Quick sidebar:** When we are dealing with others (but especially with God) we must recognize that people speak from THEIR frame of reference. One must be an extremely objective person to effectively take into account someone else’s frame of reference. Definition of “objective:” not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased.<sup>(3)</sup> By and large, we speak from our OWN frames of reference; for it is how we come to know and relate to our worlds. Add to that our subliminal arrogance and covert selfishness. As a result, we tend not to be as objective as we could be. Now, one does not get to be MORE objective or unbiased than God. But God (even in His objectivity) speaks from His OWN frame of reference. As well He should. Because one thing that’s unusually beautiful about His frame of reference is that it has accounted for everything else. He has this most peculiar blend of subjectivity and objectivity to His character that is overwhelmingly wonderful.

The Lord told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear His name, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and kings and to Israel. <sup>(4)</sup> And Paul came to know the truth of his new assignment. <sup>(5)</sup> But what Paul didn't know was that there was an enormous disparity between "his frame of reference" and "God's frame of reference."

Will you grant me license to fill in a few gaps? It helps to round out the picture a bit.

Here we have Paul, knowing that he was called to proclaim the gospel message. He also knew that all of the people (that he was ordained to preach to) were not physically located in Damascus proper. Over time he came to see that God would lead him to places like: Jerusalem, Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Mysia, Phrygia, Troas, Thyatira, the region of Galatia, Corinth, Colosse, Rome, Philippi and the list goes on. And so it was from Paul's frame of reference. With this you could see why Paul would have a difficult time understanding why the Lord would allow such obstacles to his ministry. So Paul took it upon himself to attempt to help God see how much more beneficial it would be if God would simply make these "little foxes" go away. There we have Paul's situation, from Paul's frame of reference (and possibly from our frame of reference too). I like to call this a "bottom-up view of the situation."

After all wasn't it Paul (in giving his testimony to King Agrippa) who said, that God had made him a minister to deliver the Gentiles "from the power of Satan...."<sup>(6)</sup> And here was Satan tripping Paul up (it seemed), almost everywhere he went to preach. I mean, if God intends to deliver the Gentiles from the power of Satan, through Paul. It might be nice if Paul, himself, were a first partaker of those fruits, right!?! Paul studied at the feet of Gamaliel, <sup>(7)</sup> he knew that the Lord promised Israel that they would be "the head and not the tail; and that they would be above only and not beneath."<sup>(8)</sup> Why, then, does Paul have to "be the tail" in almost every city he went to preach in? After all Paul was of Israel, was he not?

Paul proceeds to petition the Almighty for deliverance; a type of petition that we all can identify with. One would think that God would be ready to answer this type of prayer. Certainly, God wants all of His children to be free from the attack of the enemy, right? This is a reasonable expectation, isn't it? Perhaps it is, except when what the enemy is doing serves the purposes of God. Sounds foreign? Then (respectfully) you'll want to brush up on the language of the scriptures.

I humbly submit that of the many reasons for God's "I disagree" response to Paul's repeated petitions, two points of interest impress themselves upon me.

- 1) One reason that God declined Paul's request (*to remove the "thorn"*) is because God ordained it Himself. Paul's thorn was a very special gift from God; tailor-made for Paul. Paul's "thorn" may not be as unique as we may think. I believe many of us may have thorns of all different "shapes and sizes." If you can't see it now; move a bit closer to the deep and holy things of God. You'll see it right nicely. It will no longer be a secret to you.
- 2) Another reason for God's "I disagree" response was the *eternal effects* of Paul's sufferings. Paul grappled with the "temporal outcomes" of his sufferings; it does not appear that Paul was even cognizant of the "eternal" application and import of his sufferings.

Not only is it the case that the enemy's attacks against Paul (*persecutions, poverty, and trials*) were useful; it was ordained by God. Still sound strange? Read the book of Job (Okay you can read Job later; for now read on.)

So you ask, how was Paul's suffering "ordained" by God? Great question.

First, let's talk about "*HOW*" it is the case that the sufferings from Paul were ordained by God. Then, let's talk about "*WHY*" it was the divine wisdom of God, from its eternal perspective.

Essentially we'll look at Paul's situation from God's frame of reference. I like to call this a "top-down view of the situation."

The Lord was talking with Ananias about Paul. Ananias was concerned that Paul might still be a threat. During their conversation, the Lord said very specifically, "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."<sup>(9)</sup> Here we see how it is the case that Paul's sufferings were ordained by God.

Doesn't this just grate on you? I mean how is it (you ask) that an "all loving God" could ordain suffering? I admit that the following will sound cold and potentially callous; please prepare yourself. To ask a question like that screams that we don't really know the God of the Bible. This same God had ordained the suffering of His own Son before the foundation of the world. And the scriptures say to us "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"<sup>(10)</sup>

And just here is the underlying point of this text. By the suffering of Christ all of the Kingdom of God was made available to mankind. And by the suffering of Paul, the Kingdom of Light was made available to the Gentiles (and others). And by the things that you suffer for righteousness sake, the King will be made both manifest and available to others. Our problem is that we don't want to "suffer" anything; which is a very foolish posture for a Christian. Our forbearers and ancestors have been suffering for ages. And out of that suffering God has birth the next generation of "sons;" men and women of God, who will see God for who He really is and not for who they think Him to be. The Father births men and women of God who will take Him at His word. But isn't it the case that the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.<sup>(11)</sup> The Kingdom could use more exploits, couldn't it. Are you IN?! I'm IN!!!!

With that we see "*HOW*" it is that God had ordained Paul's sufferings.

Now another valuable consideration is "*WHY*?" This is the piece that sent explosions through me, registering 8.6 on the Richter scale.

"*WHY*" did God ordain such sufferings for Paul (and for us)? Go with me. Can you see Paul on his missionary explorations? Preaching out and planting churches all over Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and over most of the "free world." And then can you see him seemingly "running from pillar to post" to address the issues that would *crop up* or shall I say *creep in*. This could have gone on for the duration of Paul's life of ministry, with one exception. Let's look a little closer at that exception.

**Quick sidebar:** There is a 1998 movie called "Sliding Doors" starring Gwyneth Paltrow. It was one of my favorite movies, at that time. In this movie, you saw how very different the life

of a person would/could be based on the occurrence (or not) of a single event. At the pivotal event/scene, you saw Helen (Gwyneth) running for the subway train. In one scene, she *caught* the train and her life took a particular path. In another (simultaneous) scene, she *missed* the train (by seconds) and her life took a completely different path.

Before we talk about Paul, let me share a personal event. Many sunsets ago and very early one morning I was returning home to my parents' house. I was driving my mother's car. I fell asleep (literally) while I was driving and woke up a block later, sailing about 40 mph into the back of a man's car (he was sitting at a red light). I turned just in time to miss him but I clipped his rear passenger tail light. I often remember that I didn't even look to see if there was anyone else in the lane that I was turning into (GRACE). Although I didn't deserve it, I walked away without a scratch. And, bless God, so did the gentleman whose car I clipped. For years after that, at various milestones in my life, I wondered how different (or nonexistent) my life might have been had I collided headlong into the back of that stopped vehicle.

So what does that have to do with Paul? Can you imagine how different or potentially nonexistent **your** life might have been if the Lord had not ordained Paul's suffering (his thorn)? Let's see if I may be of some assistance in stimulating your imagination.

Paul helped write arguably +/- 50% (about 13 of 27 books) of the New Testament. Where did he write these from? Were not most (if not all) of them written from prison? Was not imprisonment a part of his persecutions, his thorn?<sup>(12)</sup> And even there, it seemed that he was given a most peculiar grace and favor with the keepers of the prison.<sup>(12a)</sup> Isn't it possible that had Paul not been so "buffeted" that he might not have written any of those letters or epistles? Isn't it possible that Paul might have addressed each and every situation in the various churches, in person? Paul might have received word that wolves had crept into Corinth; and Paul might have replied, "not to worry I'll be there in 2 weeks." What then of the cannon of scripture? Through the wisdom of God's "ordination of suffering," Paul has traveled, at length, throughout the United States. And to Paul's long list of accomplishments in vivo, he may now add to his resume that he has preached the gospel (posthumously)

in places the likes of New York, St. Louis, Atlanta, Phoenix, Mississippi, Los Angeles, Dallas and Chicago. None of these things might have happened but for the “sufficient” grace of God; as expressed in Paul’s thorn.

Another question for you: Can you imagine how different or potentially nonexistent **Paul’s** life might have been if the Lord had not ordained his suffering (his thorn)? In Paul’s own words: “unless I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”<sup>(13)</sup> God is no respecter of persons and His law is perfect. “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit precedes a fall, it doesn’t matter who you are.”<sup>(14)</sup> I’m sure we could never imagine Paul as a “fallen soldier;” because of the abundance, the weight and the gravity of the revelations entrusted to him? Well God saw to just that, by employing a “thorn” as a rudder for Paul’s life.

For the record, Paul was a son of Adam, too. Read Romans 7 for a refresher. To be released into the treasury of the Living God, without first having our flesh nailed to the cross, is a suicide mission of seismic proportions. Because of the depths of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God, and the unsearchableness of his judgments and His ways are past finding out.<sup>(15)</sup>

**NEWS:** (Here’s something the Lord just gave me while preparing this article.) I saw the fact that God assigned for Paul a thorn in the flesh, to keep him humble. This was to ensure that his flesh (pride, arrogance, selfishness, etc.) remained nailed securely to the Cross. I saw the Lord say, that no *flesh* shall ascend the holy hill of the Lord.<sup>(16)</sup> Then I saw the tree of Life in the midst of the Garden.<sup>(17)</sup> And, that when Adam fell (and came under the government of the flesh); God promptly put Adam and Eve out of the Garden. The intent was to ensure that Adam did not (afterward) take of the tree of Life and live forever in that fallen state. Before Adam fell, he had open access to the tree of Life. Afterwards we see this opportunity completely shut off from Adam (and from us; as long as we insist on being led of the flesh). Given that God is no respecter of persons, we likewise, should not expect that we can take freely of the tree of Life (or even become a tree of life) in our state of unrepentant fallen-ness.

It is imperative that we get this. Because the brand of gospel being offered today, stinks of a cavalier or wanton disposition towards the Holiness of God; and God’s righteous expectation of man. We somehow have come to believe that we can approach the Throne of God with our dirty hands and with hearts filled with self-determination; unwilling to change (or to be changed). This is a gross under estimation of the justice and righteousness of God. I adjure you please do not find yourself here.

Be careful what you ask for. So, you want to plumb the deep things of God? You want to see with the eyes of God? You want to be a bond servant to the Most High? That’s good ... that’s good. There’s a cross for you (and me). And you’ll find that cross at seemingly every intersection of your life. But let’s not allow that to stop us from pursuing God; His grace is sufficient. Even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil. He’ll be with us; His rod and His staff will comfort us.

As we turn into the home stretch, considering “*WHY*” God had ordained Paul’s thorn; we are reminded that our Lord told His disciples that there were others. “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring; ... and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”<sup>(18)</sup> Who are the “other sheep” and how will they be “brought” to Christ? Israel was first chosen by God; but dispersed through the rest of the nations of the world are the “other sheep.” It was Paul’s lot in life to “bring the other sheep.” And Paul’s suffering, his thorn, is just a glimpse into the brilliant strategy of God for the “other sheep.”

So when you find that you are being persecuted for righteousness sake; and God has told you that He “disagrees” concerning your petitions for relief. Here is the script for your response:

“Lord, I believe that Your grace is sufficient for me. I believe that Your strength is made perfect in my weakness. Therefore, most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”<sup>(19)</sup>

When the Lord, says “*I disagree with you;*” agree with Him. <cc>

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

**Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.**

<sup>(1)</sup>Psalm 119:105

<sup>(2)</sup>1 John 5:14+

<sup>(3)</sup>8/21/11 from Dictionary.com at

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/objective>)

<sup>(4)</sup>Acts 9:15

<sup>(5)</sup>Acts 22:21

<sup>(6)</sup>Acts 26:18

<sup>(7)</sup>Acts 22:3

<sup>(8)</sup>Deuteronomy 28:13

<sup>(9)</sup>Acts 9:10-16

<sup>(10)</sup>Romans 8:32

<sup>(11)</sup>Daniel 11:32

<sup>(12)</sup>2 Corinthians 6:4-5;

<sup>(12a)</sup>Acts 16:23-33

<sup>(13)</sup>2 Corinthians 12:7-10

<sup>(14)</sup>Colossians 3:25; Ephesians 6:9; James 2:1

<sup>(15)</sup>Romans 11:33

<sup>(16)</sup>Psalm 24:3-4

<sup>(17)</sup>Genesis 2:9

<sup>(18)</sup>John 10:16

<sup>(19)</sup>2 Corinthians 12:9

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for us. He does not wait until we “get on His last nerve” to give us whatever it is we have been begging for. Instead, He has pre-designed principles for us to follow to receive what He has determined is best for us (even when we don’t know what that is).

I submit to you that there is an actual process for getting our prayers answered effectively and efficiently. It involves just a few steps that (if followed) will catapult us into manifestations we have only dreamed about. Do you have your paper and pen ready to record this all-time secret? Ok, here we go.

Our God is a God of “process.” He is as interested in the process as He is in the outcome. Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Now, this is a telling scripture.

As we discuss this concept, I’ll use myself as the example. So, if I decide to approach God, the first

requirement is that I “believe that He is.” I have to choose to believe that God is real. I’ve heard people pray like this, “God, if you are real, I need you to do this for me.” When this type of statement is made, the person is really saying, “I don’t know if you are real or not, but on the off chance that you are real, I’m asking for your help.” Let’s say I’m that person and I’ve asked God to bless me with a particular job.

It would be against God’s law to answer my prayer because if He did answer the prayer, I could always say that I got the job on my own or that it was someone else’s contribution that ultimately landed me the job. If I don’t know if God is real, then I don’t know if He is the one that got me what I wanted. So, we understand the first requirement is to believe that God is real. This pleases God or said another way, it “satisfies” God’s first requirement to approach Him.

Next, the scripture says we need to “believe God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Let’s take the word “reward” and work with it first. Webster tells us that some of the meanings of “reward” include profit, benefit, or prize. It usually has to do with a person receiving something in return for doing something good. In essence, the scripture is saying that when we pray according to scripture, there is a profit involved. I like the word “profit” because it implies we will receive more than what we contributed.

We now have to go on to look at what our focus has to be when we approach God. The Bible tells us that when we approach God, we are to diligently seek “Him.” This somehow sounds like a trick. If I’m asking for a new job, why can’t I just believe He will give me the job? Why do I need to be bothered with seeking “Him,” particularly because I’m already a Christian? It’s not like I’m an unbeliever trying to come to God for the first time.

Here is what’s interesting about this part. The scripture is telling us that when we come to God, we are not to just ask for things at a “transactional level” (what I think I need due to a particular circumstance). Instead, each and every time we approach God, we are to “get His **mind** on the situation.” We want to be interested in God’s perspective and His position on what we have on

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our hearts.

So, let's go back to my request for a job. If I follow God's process, I'll do the following.

- 1.) Approach God knowing that He is **Real** (in general and in my specific situation)
- 2.) Ask God what **He** would like to happen related to me getting a job
- 3.) Do **whatever** He tells me to do (this is a part of diligently seeking Him, because He always gives directives when we ask Him what He wants done)
- 4.) From this point on, I **thank** Him daily for whatever He determines is best for me related to my request
- 5.) **Watch** how He unfolds His plan in my life
- 6.) **Thank** Him for what he does as I understand that He knows what is best for me

Is it possible that there are times when we don't get our prayers answered because we don't follow God's process? Maybe we waste precious time when we pray because we are trying to get God to agree with what we want instead of aligning our requests with what He wants for us.

Or, maybe we find out what God wants, but we don't ask Him what he wants us to do. We must remember that our covenant relationship with God is also a partnership. We can't possibly think that we can just come to God and "drop off" bundles of requests as if He is Santa Claus. God doesn't operate this way.

Whenever we approach God, we must understand that He will work **with** us to handle the situations that come up in our lives. He never does all of the work **for** us. When we come to God with a request, we need to be prepared to "camp out" a while with Him. It's not like going through a "drive thru" at a fast food diner. No, hanging out with God is like eating at a five-star restaurant. We need to plan to be there for a while.

Let me leave you with this thought. If you feel your prayers have not been answered as you thought they should be, I encourage you to review the process we discussed and go back to God using the

steps we have outlined. If you do this with a sincere heart, your life (including your prayer life) will change completely. You will find that God is extremely interested in every detail of your life. He is ready to give you guidance, input, and feedback on what He wants you to do while He does what only He can do on your behalf.

Until next we speak, begin to follow the process!  
\*LC\*

*Next month we will discuss Part Two of the Process of Prayer – What Happens to You When You Pray*

**All scripture is KJV paraphrased.**

Joyce White, LMSW

## FASTING

Fasting (a deeper meaning) is the denial of everything that interferes with an intimate and direct fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The first meaning of "fasting" is merely seasonal; it's an occasional day without food, perhaps.

But this (deeper meaning) is something that is perpetual; it is the Christian suffering the loss even of our rights, in order that we may come into a more intimate relationship with God. That is the deepest meaning of the word. And I believe that in proportion as the child of God learns to practice it from that angle; he begins to tap infinite sources of eternal power that can cause him to move as he has never moved before, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It can cause the whole church to shake up whole cities if she's really fasting in that sense of the word.

Any progress in intimacy, thus reality of relationship with Christ is only at the expense of denying everything that could hinder it. There is no move forward in the realm of the spiritual, unless there is a denying of something in the realm of the physical.

– Dr. Alan Redpath (*Sermon: Fasting*)

of Himself, but only those things which the Father taught him. And the Father is always with him FOR (meaning *because*) he does always those things that please Him. Then He says **if** ye continue in my word, **then** are you my disciples indeed ... It is **only then** that we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free.

Just as He does what He sees with the Father, we likewise do what we see with the Christ. Also, because he does always those things which please the Father, he knows that the Father is always with him.

Likewise, as we do only those things which please Jesus Christ we know that the Christ [*the Anointed One*] is always with us. For we do always those things which please Him. The life of son-ship IS the life of discipleship. They are one lifestyle.

The Lord says *Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* <sup>(Matt 28:18-19)</sup>

In this scripture, the word 'teach' is actually the same Greek word for 'disciple.' There is another Greek word which is used more commonly rendered 'teach.' In fact, the Greek word in this passage that is translated 'teach-ing' is the normal Greek word for 'teach.'

In effect what our Lord said was "go ye therefore, and disciple all nations..." Discipleship is the lifestyle of a son of God. In fact, as parents it is our responsibility NOT to simply teach, or train, but rather to 'disciple' our children. That is, it is our responsibility as parents to bring our children into a way of life. You see, that ole "do as I say and not as I do," mantra is NOT Kingdom parenting.

In the Kingdom we are disciples of Jesus, and we simply raise our children in the same life of discipleship. The truth of the Kingdom is this: only a son of God can disciple. The words 'son' and 'disciple' are so inseparable that they are almost

perfectly interchangeable. While a *son* is technically more than a *disciple*, they are nevertheless almost exactly the same.

This then is the relationship between the Logos of God, and the logos of man. The Logos of God is the word which was made flesh, Jesus Christ. He did only those things which he saw with the Father, as a disciple. We likewise do only those things which we see in Jesus Christ, as disciples. Discipleship is the lifestyle of a son. True son-ship works itself out in discipleship. Now that you've heard this, you, too, are responsible to live the life of discipleship. *-SOMW-*

David L. White

Journey to Intimacy

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family (apart from your covenant with God) is going to really do them any good? We cannot love our families, without God. Yes, that's your duty. But even "loving your family" without you keeping your covenant with God is but another expression of death. When your children face life's difficult situations (and they WILL), it's not *your* love for them that's going to save them. It'll be the love of God that you have instilled in them that will guide them through the valley of the shadow of death. It is the Lord who is their Shepherd. Your duty is to lead them to Him. Anything short of that is a betrayal. You'll have betrayed your covenant with God. And you'll have betrayed your duty to your family. A) I hadn't quite considered it that way. Q) When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ; He's not going to ask you about your family. He's going to ask you about your covenant with Him. Your duty is to love God. God will love your family, for you and through you. This is the only way that it really works. It doesn't work any other way.

And the conversation goes on:

Journey to Intimacy

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The Lord commands us to love Him with ALL of our heart, with ALL of our soul, with ALL of our mind and with ALL of our strength. <sup>(1)</sup> This commandment used to puzzle me. I mean, it really is a mathematical impossibility, isn't it. If I give 100% of my love to God; that leaves 0% left for everyone else. But I had heard it said that "with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." <sup>(2)</sup>

Years ago I asked God; "Father, if we love You with our ALL, what would we have left to love our neighbor (or our family) with?" It was years later that the Lord answered that question for me. He said, what amounts to this: "It is not My intention that *you* love anyone else but Me (with *your* love). *Human love is not fit for human consumption.* Man's love belongs to God; God's love is for man. With *your* love you worship Me; and with My love you reconcile your family and your neighbor, and your.... *Your* love is for Me; I'm the only One who can handle *your* love."

Perhaps we can see a bit clearer now what the Lord meant when He said "If any man comes to Me, and hate not his ... wife and children ... and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." <sup>(3)</sup> Said otherwise, "if any man comes to Me and is not prepared to place his love for Me significantly above his affection for his family or even for his own life; he is not worthy of Me." He cannot be My disciple. To borrow from one of my colleague's studies: "To disciple" means to "pattern after" or to "clone." So if we are not willing to esteem our love for God above our love for anything or anyone else; He cannot pattern us after Himself. And isn't that His ultimate goal; that we may be conformed into the image of His Son. Has He not so predestined us? <sup>(4)</sup> Oh, to be patterned after His Son; in Whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And Who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His [the Father's] Person. <sup>(5)</sup>

Just then, the Lord was telling my big brother, that if he would love the Lord supremely, the Lord would take care of his family. Along the way we'll stop off at Zarephath. <sup>(6)</sup> Elijah arrives there in the strength of a famine. He had been "given the

address" of a widow and her son. She was preparing their "Last Supper." As it is the custom of God to do (that is to put Himself first); Elijah upon his arrival requested a glass of water and a slice of bread. The widow said, "**I've got to provide for my family.**" Elijah said, "That's good. But bake me a little cake FIRST. For this is the word of the LORD God of Israel..."

What then did the widow "*do*?" The scriptures say "And *she went and did* according to the word of the LORD God of Israel ..." <sup>(7)</sup> Is not this a most sublime and supreme example of "esteeming the Words of His mouth, above our necessary food?" <sup>(8)</sup>

That's all God is saying to us, isn't it. "Bake Me a little cake FIRST." And with whatever is left, I'll "**...provide for your family.**"

- I know you have bills to pay, but "Bake Me a little cake FIRST."
- I know you must go to work, but "Bake Me a little cake FIRST."
- I know you must study for school, but "Bake Me a little cake FIRST."
- I know that you feel like you're on your last leg, but "Bake Me a little cake FIRST."
- Is that your last "two mites?" "That's good. Bake Me a little cake FIRST."

He is saying "come away with Me, to our secret place." If you "Bake Me a little cake FIRST." Then I'll bake an everlasting cake for you and for your family.

I know it sounds contrary to conventional wisdom. But hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>(9)</sup> Now if this is true (and ... it ... is ... true) that we are to "bake Him a little cake FIRST;" then it sets quite a number of other things in their proper place for us. And it also places upon us very real and very penetrating edicts, does it not.

More to come on that ... meanwhile I admonish you to “Bake Him a little cake FIRST.” <JTI>

*Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG*

**Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.**

- (1) Mark 12:30
- (2) Matthew 19:26
- (3) Luke 14:26
- (4) Romans 8:29
- (5) Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3
- (6) 1 Kings 17:8-14
- (7) 1 Kings 17:14-15
- (8) Job 23:12
- (9) 1 Corinthians 1:20

## Hungry?

Seven things that happen when you do not study the Word of God (when you have no food):

1. There is no inner strength, or nourishment, or refreshment for the human spirit. There's no vital contact with God. No knowledge of the Lord Jesus, personally.
2. There's ignorance of self. The absence of this give rise to our need for psychiatry and psychology, in our day.
3. There's no power to regulate life. And there can't be. The absence of power to regulate life gives rise to anger, quarrelling and fighting.
4. World conditions baffle and depress. It seems that we don't understand what's happening.
5. There's no real answer to the questions being asked.
6. There are widespread delusions adopted about the past, the present and the future. This gives rise to the mass followings of specious theories of origin and destination; which has neither foundation nor fruit.
7. There is defenseless exposure to the works of the enemy.

Ray C. Stedman, sermon - What to do While Waiting  
*Treasures of the Parables of Jesus* series (slightly adapted)

Now I ask you, “Why do I brush my teeth in the morning and at night?” I'm sure you would say I do it to remove food and the film that builds up on my teeth, as well as to freshen my breath. Fair enough.

When I decide that I want clean teeth and fresh breath, I usually brush my teeth (if I am at home). Therefore, it sounds like I identify a goal (clean teeth and fresh breath) and then I engage in activity that will help me reach my goal (brush my teeth). This sounds like a pretty simple process.

God uses this same principle. He identifies goals He has and then He promptly engages in activities that will cause Him to reach His goals. This activity often includes using human beings. John 3:16 bears witness to this principle. Scripture tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish, but would have eternal life. God identified the goal of redemption. He then sent Jesus to accomplish His goal.

**Answer to Question #2 – “When does God use us?”** This is a remarkable thought. Some Christians believe that God only uses us when we get to a certain level of “holiness.” They think we have to be “righteous” enough to be used by God. Well, let's just see if life and scripture bears this out.

Let's go back to my goal of having clean teeth and fresh breath. Now, although I mentioned brushing my teeth as a way of accomplishing my goal, there are actually several options I can choose from that will help me accomplish these same goals. In my bathroom I might have access to a mouth-rinse that would freshen my breath. Or, I could use those Tic-Tacs in my purse.

As it relates to getting my teeth clean, I could use my toothbrush. Or, maybe I need to dislodge that stubborn piece of turkey from dinner earlier this evening. If so, I may want to pull out my dental floss. And on those occasions where I need a quick cleaning and I don't have my regular supplies, I could just use a napkin to wipe off the obvious residue.

So, it appears that I “choose” which instrument I want to use based on what I have available and which tool would best accomplish the goal I've set. Might God do the same thing? Judges 15:14-17 shows us that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson when he had to fight against the Philistines. The tool Samson used to defeat the enemy was a jawbone of a donkey. Not a

sword, not a javelin, or a knife, but a jawbone of a donkey was the instrument the Lord had Sampson use to defeat the Philistines. Why? The jawbone was available and it was what God wanted him to use to accomplish the goal of defeating the enemy. God *uses* whoever is available and who He knows is the best instrument to accomplish His goals.

**Answer to Question #3: “Who does God use?”** Some people think that God only *uses* Christians. Others believe God *uses* only “good” people. Well, let’s just see what life and scripture tell us. My husband and I are “empty nesters.” This means that we live alone. There are no children living with us. As a result, everything in our home belongs to us. And guess what, we can use anything we want to use to do whatever we want to do. We don’t have to ask anyone else’s permission. We own the articles in our home and we use them whenever we choose.

Our Heavenly Father owns all created beings and things. Psalms 50:10-12 tells us that the world (and everything in it) belongs to God. The scriptures sing out about how God created everything by His word. And, that all things are subject to Him. God uses everything He has made. He uses people, places, and things to accomplish His plan and purpose. If you don’t believe it, ask Job. God spent four chapters (Job 38-41) outlining to Job how He made everything and how everything is under His authority. So, who does God use? He uses every person, place, and thing.

Now, you might wonder if this includes non-Christians. It does. Now, please don’t misunderstand. God is not the only one that has the authority to use people. Satan also uses people. But, the good news is that we don’t have to concern ourselves with what Satan is doing. God told us in His word that He will take what the enemy meant for evil and turn it around for our good. Romans 8:28 sums up this concept beautifully. It says, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” So, let’s get to our original question.

What does it mean to be “used by God?” Well, by now, you may already have the answer. Everyone (without exception) is *used* by God. This can be a scary thought. Does this mean God *uses* the unfair boss, your hateful neighbor, oppressive rulers, and so on? Yes, He most certainly does. If you don’t believe it, review the Old Testament. It is laden with scriptures that tell us how God *used* ungodly nations when He was bringing

judgment on Israel for their idolatry.

In the New Testament God used the Jewish priests’ evil intentions to destroy Christ. Jesus had to be sacrificed for our sins. He was the “Lamb of God” (meaning the perfect – and only - sacrifice for redemption) and under the law, only a priest could offer a sacrifice to God. As a result, God used their desire to kill Jesus to fulfill God’s own law that brought salvation to the world.

Now that we have answered our original question, I would like to submit another concept to you. Instead of focusing on whether or not God *uses* you and me, what if we focused instead on living our lives according to His directives. This would open the door for God to *use* us in different ways.

Let’s recap. God *uses* everyone. He *uses* people “despite” their evil intentions. He will take what they do and use it to grow us, sharpen us, and build character in us. He will also use people “because” of their submitted lifestyle. When our lives are yielded to Him (not in perfection, but more so in commitment), we will find ourselves as the appropriate instruments He will *use* to do great and mighty things in the earth.

So, what does it mean for God to “use” us? It means He will utilize us to fulfill His plan and purpose. He does this with all of creation. The bigger question is whether He will *use* us “despite” our sinful lives, or “because” of our committed lives. This will determine “how” He uses us, not just “that” He uses us.

Be blessed! ~PIP~

Joyce M. White, LMSW

## Where Did You Get that Suit?

Anyone seeking to promote authority without (or above) character (or power above purity) is a wolf in a “sheep suit.”

The way of God is character first, followed by authority. Such is the *ethos* of man.

**Kingdom News**

**Edition: August 2011**

**Column: Son of My Wisdom**

So the soul is to be led, huh? I submit to you that the soul was created both to lead and to be led. As you can appreciate, the soul already leads the body, *necessarily*. However, the soul is led *volitionally* (by choice).

But what leads the soul? This is a pivotal question; especially for a servant of the Living God. We'll talk more about this pivotal issue a bit later. But for now consider this: If you want to know what leads your soul; watch your body. What do you have an appetite for? What do you find that you are not willing to surrender to God? What draws and entices you? What titillates and beguiles you? The body is a "snitch;" it will finger its "master" in 2 shakes of a lamb's t---. There are two masters, you know. The one you serve; the other you hate. <sup>(4)</sup> That's what Jesus said; and I'm inclined to believe Him. I see this truth very really in my own life. What about You, whose report will you believe? <sup>(5)</sup>

Back to that pivotal question: What leads the soul?

There is one real sense, in which it depends on which side of the Cross you are presently on. Here is one way to look at it:

- On the "front-side" of the cross, the flesh leads the soul.
- On the "back-side" of the cross, the soul is being mentored by the Spirit of God, through the human spirit, into conformity to Christ. And you are living your life by the faith of the Son of God.

On the "front-side" of the cross there is the smell of smoke in our clothes:

- We *walk* like the world: our comportment in this world is altogether indistinguishable from that of our unregenerate brothers and sisters. Although we love them (if we are regenerate) we are not like them. <sup>(6)</sup>
- We *talk* like the world: we seek to be "politically correct" often at the expense of being truthful.
- We *make our life's decisions* just like the world: we seek the counsel of this temporal mode of thinking and decision-making. We find ourselves choosing *what* "they" choose and for the same reasons and rewards.
- Our *goals and ambitions* are of this world: we seek the same 'fame and fortune' that they seek and often in the same ways that they seek them. We

value the same things that they value. <sup>(7)</sup>

All of which shall pass away. <sup>(8)</sup> These things won't "cross-over;" they have presence and value **ONLY** in this world. And in the day that God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by the gospel of Jesus Christ; these things will betray us, every single one of them. <sup>(9)</sup> We have forgotten that if we befriend the world; we alienate the Father. <sup>(10)</sup> Such is the life on the "front-side" of the cross.

Contrariwise in life on the "back-side" of the Cross there is the odor of the ointment upon us (spikenard, very specifically); the fragrance of the presence of the Living God.

- We *walk* according to the ordinances of the Kingdom: The law of the Lord is in our heart, none of our steps shall slide. <sup>(11)</sup>
- Our *conversation* is in heavenly places: our speech is seasoned with grace. We talk to people with respect for the Living God and for them. We know the way in which we are obliged to respond to others. <sup>(12)</sup>
- We *make our life's decisions* from the counsel of God's word: we acknowledge Him in all of our ways, and He directs our path. We commit our way to the Lord, we trust Him and He brings them to fruition. <sup>(13)</sup>
- Our *goals and ambitions* all flow out of a focus on the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: we seek preeminently the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. We delight ourselves in the Lord and He gives us the desires of our heart. <sup>(14)</sup>

I know this is not 'sexy.' But take it from one who knows, 'sexy' always short pays its bills and it never did deliver on its promises. Somehow our appetites have been whetted by the dainties and delicacies of this world. Our taste buds, have been blunted and seared and are altogether ineffective in helping us taste and see that the Lord is good, and that His mercies endure forever. <sup>(15)</sup>

Perhaps along the way you have been asking the question: "Doesn't *everyone* who is a Christian live their life on the back-side of the cross?" As we embark upon a response, please genuinely consider the implications of the question. If it is the case that "*everyone*" who calls themselves a Christian is living their life on the "resurrection" side of the cross, then what of the efficacy of the Blood of the Lamb? What, then, of the purpose of that Blood on the Mercy Seat? Is our Lord's blood so

impotent as to be simply useful at “labeling” us Christians; but not useful in actually conforming us into His image? We make a public spectacle of a Cross and a Christ that cannot save of from the ‘power’ of sin in our lives. Is being freed from the ‘penalty’ of sin *as good as it gets?* God forbid!!! If the blood of goats and rams cleansed Israel to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?<sup>(16)</sup>

What is unfortunate and very dangerously so, is that many of us are not really interested in the Person of Jesus Christ. We know nothing of His gospel; nothing of the plan and purpose of salvation. Shamefully, if our lives had to do the “telling” it would say that Jesus was just a man we call our Lord. But then that would provoke a response from Jesus Himself (wouldn’t it): “Why do you insist on calling Me, Lord; and do not the things which I say?”<sup>(17)</sup>

May I ask that we do ourselves a favor? While taking this journey along the Via Dolorosa, please take to heart what is being shared here. We are responsible and accountable for every expression of truth we encounter in this life. Let us desire the sincere milk of the Word that we may grow thereby.

Again, off we go, down the Via Dolorosa with our cross in tow. If “die” we must; then “die” we shall. For in three days we get up. -BC-

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

**Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.**

- <sup>(1)</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:27
- <sup>(2)</sup> Galatians 2:20
- <sup>(3)</sup> John 12:24
- <sup>(4)</sup> Matthew 6:24
- <sup>(5)</sup> John 12:38; Isaiah 53:1
- <sup>(6)</sup> John 17:16; Ephesians 2:2-3
- <sup>(7)</sup> Psalm 1:1
- <sup>(8)</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:31
- <sup>(9)</sup> Romans 2:16
- <sup>(10)</sup> James 4:4
- <sup>(11)</sup> Ephesians 2:10; Psalm 37:31; Philippians 1:27
- <sup>(12)</sup> Colossians 4:6; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 13:5
- <sup>(13)</sup> Psalm 37:5; Proverb 3:6
- <sup>(14)</sup> Matthew 6:33; Psalm 37:4; Philippians 3:14
- <sup>(15)</sup> Psalm 34:8; 118:1
- <sup>(16)</sup> Hebrews 9:14
- <sup>(17)</sup> Luke 6:46

“who” you are; but He would also know “that you were not His.”

And so in that day, many will say to the Lord, “we did all of these great and wonderful things in Your name; doesn’t that count for something?” It’s like someone going to the store and purchasing items with my credit card and my ID; but without my permission. They are buying food for the homeless or clothes for the orphans, all in my name.

Yes, the disenfranchised are “blessed;” God be glorified for even that grace on their behalf. But that still does not absolve the perpetrator of fraud (resulting kindness, notwithstanding.)

Let’s say that the police officer brings the perpetrator(s) to my door, after catching them. And that person(s) says, “I took your AMEX and ID to buy school clothes for the at risk children, in your name.

And the police office then asks, “Do you know this person?” Said otherwise, “Has there been established between you two levels of intimacy or communion that permits them to represent you in that way?” Unless I make myself a liar and also defraud the Living God; I must say, “No, I do not know them.”

Good deeds done on the part of another; does not constitute a relationship. That the store(s) received my credit cards and facilitated a transaction does not make me one with the purchaser. *That* the name of Jesus could/would cast out devils and raise the dead is no credit to one who perpetrates fraud; who uses the name of Jesus as if they have a right to do so.

Another reason I must also say to the perpetrator, “Depart from me....” is because a perpetrator cannot be trusted. A perpetrator is a usurper, a liar, and a fraud. They can be the nicest, most generous person in the world. But alms deeds and kindness have never been a remedy for fraud or lawlessness.

So here we are, naming the name of Jesus, but not living in subjection to His Lordship. That notwithstanding, we have a call on our lives. We can pray for the sick and they are healed. We can do many wonderful works. Remember now, gifts and calling are without repentance.<sup>(3)</sup>

**Sidebar:** This particular scripture has an interesting, dual meaning. Romans 11:29 says “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” It means 1) that the gifts and calling of God do not require the repentance of the individual/recipient. It also

means 2) that whether or not that individual (upon whom the gift or calling has been bestowed) eventually comes to son-ship, does not make God wish that He had never bestowed the gift. (“I speak as a man/human”) The gifts or callings are given without repentance or remorse on both accounts.

Now with this *gift or calling* some are able to perform miracles, to wax eloquent or extend graces that are uncommon to others. It is an endowment that they have received. Again here they are, naming the name of Jesus, but not living in subjection to His Lordship. They somehow (very mistakenly so) believe that this *gifting or calling* constitutes a special relationship between them and God. This is a mythological relationship that seems not to require the complete surrender of their lives to God. Somehow the scriptural mandates for the uprightness of the Christian walk, (to them at least) seem not to apply.

Why are we talking about this, you ask? Because the day is upon us where signs and wonders will increase in the earth, and in the church. And many will be deceived into thinking that the persons facilitating the activities are “in good” with God; and that nothing more is required of them. As if the ONLY thing the Lord saves us for is to perform miracles or for doing good. The scriptures teach that “these signs shall follow them that believe...”<sup>(4)</sup> But it does not replace the precedent teachings, that if any man would come after Christ, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow the Lord.<sup>(5)</sup> The former does not preclude the later.

One reason (in the opening scripture) for the dismissal ‘out of hand’ or the departure mandate is that it is clear that the perpetrator wants the power of His name but not the purity of His character. They very really are inseparable.

Thank you for sharing this time of reflection with me.

May the grace of God and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit rest, rule and abide with you forever. =LW=

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<sup>(1)</sup> Collected 9/1/11 from Blue Letter Bible’s International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia  
<http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?type=getTopic&topic=Iniquity&DictList=4>

<sup>(2)</sup> Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11

<sup>(3)</sup> Romans 11:29

<sup>(4)</sup> Mark 16:17

<sup>(5)</sup> Luke 9:23

tried. This seed with no root is the word in us who hear and don’t walk in it.

- Thirdly, the seed that fell among thorns was **heard, understood, and began to bear fruit**. But the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word and it **becomes unfruitful**. This is why there must be **patience** in well-doing. James 1:2-4 says “*my brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptation (various trials); knowing this, that the trying of your faith works **patience**. But let **patience** have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*”
- The seed that fell upon good ground was **heard, understood, bore fruit, and brought forth 30-, 60-, and 100-fold**. There are four levels of growth. Only those, who patiently continue to bring forth fruit, are not deceiving themselves.

The reality of the Christian life is not that I prayed a prayer, or that I go to church, or that I know the word. Rather the reality of the Christian life is that by the grace of God my life is continuing to be fruitful day-by-day, moment-by-moment. Until we have begun to actually live the life of discipleship, the parables, and all of Jesus’ teachings are just a good idea or just a theory to us. Indeed Jesus himself might just as well be any other main character in any other book we’ve read.

We have become so remarkably comfortable with going to church and hearing sermons. But *to him, that knows to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin* (James 4:17). The more we listen to sermons, and read scripture, and are admonished by those around us; we only add to our sin if we are not walking in it. Let me be clear, all of the reading and hearing the word imposes an obligation upon us. But not only are we heaping up unto ourselves obligation, the longer we continue in this trend of “going to church,” with no life of discipleship, we deceive ourselves. He says be not hearers only: deceiving yourselves. That is, hearing without living is sin because we’re not doing the good that we

know. But that sin not only deceives, but hardens. This hardening is the antithesis to the Christian life, which is the consequence of ‘hearing and not living’ the word. -LATT-

*David L. White*

### Cause or Effect?!?

- One cannot interpret the *scriptures* in light of *experience*.
- One must interpret *experience* in the light of the *scriptures*.

Inspired by Gerhard Du Toit (adapted)

Nutrition, Health and Wellness

continued from page 5

conspiracy theorist. But I do see that over time the more arrogant and haughty we’ve become within ourselves; we began to lose sight of the simple and life-giving truths that have ever been before us.

One brief personal experience before I close: When the Lord began to teach me how to change my relationship with food and the practice of eating I noticed something peculiar.

During one portion of my “*training*,” Monday-Friday I was allowed to eat only fruits and vegetables (as much as I wanted). And on the weekend I could eat whatever I chose. Over time I noticed that during the week, even when I was hungry, my body did not crave anything. I was not “starving.” I was noticeably hungry, but even if I chose to delay eating, my body complied nicely. You may have experienced that when you’re hungry, there is no reasoning with the body. It wants to eat NOW. But increasingly I did not find that to be the case Monday-Friday.

Contrariwise, on the weekend, when I would eat processed foods, my body would turn into a food maniac. My appetite would try to

bargain, cajole, negotiate or blackmail me into eating processed foods. The difference was soooo pronounced that I could not believe what I was seeing. So I began to experiment and found that to be consistently the case with me.

I asked the Lord, “Father, what is this? This is crazy!!” I’ve never seen anything like it in my life. At length I came to see that (for me) natural foods cooperate with my appetite and my system; whereas processed foods have a mind of their own. Processed foods and natural foods operate by two completely different laws.

#### Economic Profile of Processed Foods:

- High caloric expense
- Very low nutritional value
- Net negative Return on Investment (ROI)

Not only do you not profit (in any real sense), but your liability coefficient is enormous. The law of Sin and Death.

#### Economic Profile of Natural Foods:

- Comparative low caloric expense
- Very high nutritional payback
- Immediate and sustained Return on Investment (ROI)

Not only are you profitable, but your health-related assets increase exponentially. The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

Begin to make the comparisons for yourself.

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Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

<sup>(1)</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:21

# Psalm 23

## God Our Shepherd

My Shepherd is the living Lord;  
Now shall my wants be well supplied;  
His providence and holy word  
Become my safety and my guide.

In pastures where salvation grows  
He makes me feed, he makes me rest;  
There living water gently flows,  
And all the food's divinely blest.

My wand'ring feet his ways mistake,  
But he restores my soul to peace,  
And leads me, for his mercy's sake,  
In the fair paths of righteousness.

Though I walk through the gloomy vale  
Where death and all its terrors are,  
My heart and hope shall never fail,  
For God my Shepherd's with me there.

Amidst the darkness and the deeps  
Thou art my comfort, thou my stay;  
Thy staff supports my feeble steps,  
Thy rod directs my doubtful way.

The sons of earth, and sons of hell,  
Gaze at thy goodness, and repine  
To see my table spread so well  
With living bread and cheerful wine.

How I rejoice when on my head  
Thy Spirit condescends to rest!  
'Tis a divine anointing, shed  
Like oil of gladness at a feast.

Surely the mercies of the Lord  
Attend his household all their days;  
There will I dwell to hear his word,  
To seek his face, and sing his praise.

*The Psalms and Hymns of Isaac Watts*

## Are You Sure?

There is a healthy contemplation that drives us to check our commitment to our various relationships with others. While I have your attention may I ask another question? Do you ever wonder if you're really saved? I don't mean to intrude ... okay maybe I do intend to intrude. Do you contemplate your loyalty and commitment to your relationship "with Christ" very specifically? Respectfully, we are not talking here about your relationship with a religious institution. We're asking about a very up-close and personal relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ. The scriptures encourage us to periodically check our "fruit." We are admonished to work out your own soul's salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>(1)</sup>

I can just imagine Jesus standing before the fig tree, asking "Hey guys, what type of tree is this?" His disciples replied (almost snickering), "My Lord, it's a fig tree."

And Jesus asks again, "How can you tell, that this is a fig tree?" His disciples reply again (almost bursting at the seams), "Teacher, we can tell by the leaves."

Jesus once again, "Okay, let Me ask you guys one more question ... what is the purpose of a fig tree, if it won't bear figs." They all fell silent.

Jesus cursed the fig tree saying, "Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit, My Father will remove. It will not be allowed to continue to make demands of (or trouble) the ground." <sup>(2)</sup> He looked at the disciples and walked away en route to Bethany. <sup>(3)</sup> So I ask again, how do we know that we have a personal covenant with God?

### May I make a few suggestions on ways to discover the truth? <sup>(4)</sup>

1. How does your covenant with Jesus Christ affect your concept of God and your attitude towards Him?
2. How does your relationship with God affect your attitude towards Jesus Christ (Him as a Person and His Lordship over your life)?
3. How does your covenant with God affect your attitude towards the Holy Scriptures?
4. How does your relationship with Christ affect your attitude towards your "self-life" or your "flesh"?
5. How does your covenant with Christ affect your relationship with and attitude towards your fellow Christians?
6. How does your relationship with Jesus affect your relationship with and attitude towards the world?
7. Last, but in no way least, how does your covenant with Jesus affect your attitude towards sin?

Perhaps we should take the next couple of weeks or months and grapple with this? Try to answer each question thoroughly in light of the scripture's mandates on each of these respective relationships.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. <sup>(5)</sup>

## Be Sure!

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

(1) Philippians 2:12

(2) John 15:1-2; Luke 13:7

(3) Matthew 21:17-19

(4) Gleanings and adaptations from A.W. Tozer's Man: The Dwelling Place of God, p.62-68

(5) Hebrews 13:20-21

~ SUMMARY ~

**The Chief Cornerstone**



What then of the cannon of scripture? Through the wisdom of God’s “ordination of suffering,” Paul has traveled, at length, throughout the United States.

**Son of My Wisdom**



Just as He does what He sees with the Father, we likewise do what we see with the Christ.

**Precepts in Practice**



- Question #1: **WHY DOES GOD USE US?**
- Question #2: **WHEN DOES GOD USE US?**
- Question #3: **WHO DOES GOD USE?**

**Boot Camp**



What leads the soul? There is one real sense, in which it depends on which side of the Cross you are presently on.

- On the “front-side” of the cross, the flesh leads the soul.
- On the “back-side” of the cross, the soul is being mentored by the Spirit of God, through the human spirit, into conformity to Christ.

**Nutrition, Health & Wellness**



In Romans 8:2 there is talk of two mutually exclusive laws that govern every area of our life. We often only regard them as it pertains to our soul. But I submit to you that their reach is pervasive.

~ SUMMARY ~

**The Leadership Corner**

... “God, if you are real, I need you to do this for me.” When this type of statement is made, the person is really saying, “I don’t know if you are real or not, but on the off chance that you are real, I’m asking for your help.”

**Journey to Intimacy**



Is that your last “two mites?”  
“That’s good. Bake Me a little cake FIRST.”

**Living Waters**



Said otherwise, “Depart from Me those whose hearts resist the governance of the Holy One. Depart from Me those of you who practiced lawlessness as a way of life.”

**Love and the Truth**



Rather the reality of the Christian life is that by the grace of God my life is continuing to be fruitful day-by-day, moment-by-moment. Until we have begun to actually live the life of discipleship, the parables, and all of Jesus’ teachings are just a good idea or just a theory to us.

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