

The Last Crusade

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Published by:
Christ, Our Life Ministries Publishing
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As you take this and begin to read, you, like Indiana Jones in his "Last Crusade," are on the precipice of the unknown. The curtain is about to be unveiled to the mystery that is written of throughout the Bible, but which Paul truly helps us see "is now being made manifest."

You are about to reach the point of no return because a taste of the truth will not satisfy. So if you, like Lot's wife, have thoughts of turning back, if you are faint of heart or fearful of spirit, please Stop Reading This Right Now!

For this will cost you everything; but as Jesus said, "He who will lose his life for my sake will save his life." If you are willing to risk everything, if you, like Indiana Jones, can not return to your safe, secure but miserable, unfulfilled "terra firma," which in reality is the tomb of the striving and trying, never-quite-good-enough Christian, then you are ready to take the true Leap of Faith from the solidity of your understanding and rationale into the impossibility of faith. At the very point of your leap, at this very admission of your total weakness yet total faith in God, He will give you revelation. My friend, you will now cross the bridge from the dark world of "trying to be a good Christian" into the Promised Land of knowing that Christ lives His life in you, through you, as you. And that only comes by the revelation of God!

Caution: In this Last Crusade, misunderstanding and misinterpretation are sure to abound. Please do not use a phrase or sentence out of context that may cause you or someone else to stumble. Just as part of a map or letter does not give a clear picture of the whole and may cause confusion, this too, must be read and understood as a whole!

Take comfort and know that those of us who agonized to see this truth written, this mystery revealed (as far as ink and paper are able to reveal) know that we are praying for you!

I must ask you, if at any time you read anything that seems too radical, or not Biblical, to please Check Your Bible! In fact, I challenge you to do as we have done and search the Scriptures with a pure and honest heart and see for yourself if every word in this is true!

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God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity

God is a universal Spirit being. A Spirit cannot be understood unless it comes in a particular form. So God had to come to man in a particular form, and He came in the form of Jesus Christ--God became man.

Jesus, the God-man, spent thirty years growing up in his Jewish home, learning who he was. Was he the One? Would he be the Messiah? He was not sure. He knew he was about his Father's business, but he did not yet know that he was his Father's business. The final revelation did not come until he came to the Jordan River and he was baptized by John. Then the Father spoke, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

This wondrous event reflects a Jewish ceremony that is performed on the eldest son in the family when he has come of age and has come to be the responsible person he was meant to be. It is called "Son Placing." The father says to his son in the ceremony, "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." So Jesus was expecting this, but it didn't come from his earthly father, it came from his heavenly Father. His Father spoke and the human Jesus, who stood in the water humbly as a man--just like you and me--had the same revelation that you and I can have.

But revelation cannot come from mere learning. As Jesus said to the legalistic Pharisees, "You search the Scriptures, because in them you think you have eternal life, but I tell you they testify of a person." The Bible is a dead letter unless you know the Living Jesus Christ.

Jesus had to have this revelation of who he was, flesh and spirit, perfect humanity indwelt by the Spirit of God. Then, immediately after his baptism and confirmation by the Father, two of the Gospels say He was led into the wilderness. But Mark says He was driven (Mk. 1:12), which intimates there was an element in Him that did not want to go. There was His humanity, and there

was His first point of identification with us.

Having been driven into the wilderness, he went forty days and forty nights without food or companionship. At His weakest point, God sent Satan to tempt Him. The human Jesus had to be tempted on every level: spirit, soul, and body, so that He would be in perfect identification with you and me.

The Father put Jesus through all of this because we humans are so important to God. Abraham was called a friend of God. God does not want children, He wants friends. He wants Christians to grow up from little children to young men to fathers (I John 2:12-14). Jesus said, "I have not called you servants, I have called you friends because I have made all things known unto you that the Father has made known unto me"(John 15:15).

Jesus Christ is so worthy. But we stop short when we don't accept the final work that He did to make us worthy. Everything about the human has been made right because He did a perfect, final work. Jesus Christ did it all. He not only forgave--His blood covered every sin we ever committed, are committing, or will commit--but every sin is eradicated in God's consciousness. He remembers them no more. The blood of Jesus has satisfied God. The body death of Jesus is meant to satisfy us. However, until we understand what happened in that second aspect of Calvary, the resurrected side of Calvary, we will never truly come home inside of ourselves.

The Last Will and Testament of Jesus Christ

I, Jesus Christ, being of perfect mind, do make, publish, and declare my last will and testament through my servant and appointed executor, Paul. Upon my death I leave a complete and incorruptible inheritance. To Paul, I give the authority to interpret this last will. To the Holy Spirit, I give the authority to make known to you the mystery of this will, and to freely give this inheritance to you, that you will know upon believing my word of truth and my gospel of salvation, that you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. To those who will receive, please remember: I paid a dear price to give you this inheritance and now I make you worthy to receive it. God the Father will give to you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in a full knowledge of Himself, and will enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may know the hope of this calling, this invitation to my glorious Wedding Feast, and the riches of the glory of your inheritance. So drink deeply of the Water of life and eat of the everlasting Bread which is freely given, and boldly take what is rightfully yours as my Father's sons and my precious friends. You have all my love and all of Me,

Your Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Life Comes out of Death

The fundamental principal of the universe is that life must come out of death. Everywhere we look, in nature and the natural realm as well as in the unseen and the spirit realm, we see this principle in operation. Therefore, when God paid the ultimate price of His Son's death on the Cross, ultimate and tremendous results (for us) had to come out of it. Until we understand the total meaning of the death of Jesus Christ, we cannot totally understand the full meaning of His resurrection, nor how it relates to us.

Hebrews 9:15-16 states, "He (Jesus Christ) is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, they which are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance, for where a testament (or will) is, there also must of necessity be the death of the testator" (or person making the will). The last will and testament of Christ is presented in the 6th chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans. We will discover ourselves in the death of Christ, as well as seeing ourselves participating in His resurrection. Through death, Christ gained total deliverance for us, as well as obtaining an incorruptible eternal inheritance. This chapter defines our inheritance and birthright as sons of God. Jesus Christ died on the Cross to give believers a tremendous inheritance, but have we as believers claimed our inheritance? Do we even know what we have inherited?

The Spirit gave Paul revelation into the mystery of what we really have in Christ. Paul writes, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. If sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. . ." (Romans 8:14,17). In the Romans letter (6-8), Paul brings to light exactly what our inheritance is. Then he reveals the mystery of how we can now claim this inheritance for ourselves.

There are two truths that thunder out to me in Romans 6 and 7: we are "dead to sin" and "dead to the law." These are the two liberating truths that we must know in order to finally be free. I heard someone say once that if people don't teach grace as though

it were license, they are not teaching grace strongly enough. The very first verse in Romans 6 almost sounds as though we have a license to sin. It appears the human is so free, we can just be and do whatever we want, and that seems like a dangerous license to sin. The grace of God has set us free, but we are not free to sin--we are free from sin. He has set us that free because He trusts us. He trusts His life in us, so He trusts us.

It is not good enough that God sits in His heaven and sees us whole and complete if we do not see ourselves that way. God is not satisfied until we know that we are whole and complete. This knowing must rise in us and we must know it. Knowing means that we live in it as a spontaneous part of us. We don't have to work it up every Wednesday night or pump it up every Sunday morning. It is just who we are.

That first verse in Romans 6 begins, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Paul knew it would sound like license when he asked this rhetorical question. He knew there were those who would want to use this freedom as license and thus his strong answer: "God forbid!"

To understand Romans and what Paul is saying we must first answer the question, "What is sin?" We know what sins are; we've seen them forever in ourselves, and we have seen the fruit of them. Yet there is a difference here, the difference between root and fruit. Sin is the root, sins are the fruit. Sin is the producer, sins are what is manifest.

There are two grammatical usage's for sin in the Bible: one is as a verb and the other is as a noun. So we see "sin" is the action of the producer "Sin." The word "sin" in both II Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 6:2 is rendered in the Greek as a noun. Ethelbert W. Bullinger,¹ in his critical lexicon and concordance, writes, "Sin is not merely, however, the quality of an action, but a principle manifesting itself in the activity of the subject. The 'man of sin,' II Thes. 2:3, being the personal embodiment of sin."

¹ A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament (London 1975), p. 703

Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father you do." These Satanic Pharisees were expressing lusts from a Spirit source that was not of themselves. John reiterates plainly: "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (I John 3:8).

What is sin then? Perhaps the answer is better understood by examining the opposite question: What is righteousness? Righteousness is a person, the person of Jesus Christ. In I Corinthians 1:30 Paul declares, "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." All of these attributes speak of a person: Jesus Christ. God gives us Himself (Jesus expresses his righteousness as us) which is why God says, "I will not give my Glory to another." He will be righteousness through us. Now what is sin? Sin is also a person then--Satan himself.

Romans 6:2 says that we are dead to sin. To understand how we became "dead to sin" or "dead to" Satan, we must look at who we were before we were saved. Ephesians 2:2 (which is one of the strongest Bible messages on mankind without Christ) shows us just how spontaneously mankind walks in Satan. "Where in times past," (that is, before we are saved) "we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Who was that Spirit? It was Satan himself. We were walking Satan's.

Satan can look evil or he can look good. We recognize him immediately when he appears "evil," but we rarely recognize him when he looks "good." Satan can appear very religious and have all kinds of morality. He can dress himself up and look very respectable. But without the Cross, even religion, morality, and respectability are forms of Satan.

Satan's mentality is simply "me for me," the same mentality that we were born into the world with. Sin is a state of being, as Ephesians 2:3 explains: "Among whom also we had our

conversation in times past and the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh . . . and were by nature the children of wrath." Every person without Jesus Christ therefore, is really expressing Satan's nature, whether he or she looks good or bad, or somewhere in between.

How then could we ever know that we are dead to sin? Romans 6:3-5 says: "Know ye not that those of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" We were actually one with Him at the Cross. Jesus Christ was not a lonely Savior hanging there two thousand years ago. All humanity was inside of Him. You were there hanging on that Cross inside of Him. We were baptized into His death. "Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism unto death that like as Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so also we shall walk in newness of life. For if you have been planted together in the likeness of His death, you shall also be ('shall be,' that is a promise) in the likeness of His resurrection"(Romans 6:4). So you and I were there on the Cross two thousand years ago.

At the Cross, a final cutting off of Satan's control over us took place. The power of sin was broken once and for all. II Corinthians 5:21 confirms this: "For He (God) hath made Him (Jesus Christ) to be sin" (to be Satan-indwelted humanity, to take on the Satanic nature, Satan in us) "who knew no sin," (Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice) "that we might be made the righteousness of God!" We are made the righteousness of God through His body, for He represented all humanity. Jesus Christ became you and me.

To better understand this, we need to know exactly what the human is. We are vessels, containers, and receivers.²

All of humanity is really like a female because the woman is the receiver of the seed (Romans 7:1,2). That is all we are. That is why we are called "the bride of Christ." Jesus Christ was also that receiver (John 5:19 and 30). He was in perfect union with His

² Bible illustrations of the human are: Branches (John 15:1); Temples (I Cor. 6:19-20); Slaves (Rom. 6:17-18); Wives (Rom. 7:2-4); and Bodies (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Father and was the sinless receiver and expresser of His Father's life. But God made Him to be sin for us. Now let us ask again, "What is sin?" It is the Satanic nature, the nature people are walking around with: a humanity containing Mr. Sin, Satan himself. How would we be delivered from this?

At the Cross, God took His perfect sacrifice who knew no sin, a receiver, and put sin into Him (II Cor. 5:21). The only way that sin could be taken out of the believer (the receiver) is through a death, for in death the spirit leaves the body. When Jesus died as us, the Satanic Spirit put on Him at the Cross came out. A body without a spirit, however, is dead. So three days after Calvary, God the Father raised Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit came back into that dead body and raised His Son from the dead. Christ became me in death so that I might become Him through the resurrection. Therefore, we have the authority to say we are walking Christs and we are dead to sin. In the Garden of Eden, mankind died to righteousness and was raised to sin. At the Cross we, with Christ, died to sin and were raised to righteousness.

Salvation then is an exchange of union, an exchange of inner gods. We had a false god, the Satanic Spirit; now we have the True God living inside of us. Romans 6:6 says this: "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The old man has been crucified, the old union has been severed. The old Spirit (Satan) was taken out so that the body, the human, might be delivered totally. And not only was the old Spirit taken out, but now I also have a clean vessel. I have a clean body and there is not one thing wrong with my humanity! There never was, for the uncleanness was not my humanity but the Spirit inside of me causing me to produce sin. But when I become a Christian, I have a new Spirit living inside of me, the Spirit of Jesus Christ who causes me to produce righteousness (Ezekiel 36:26). Is it my righteousness? No, "I can of myself do nothing" (John 5:30). It is His righteousness expressed by me. A most important part of the great mystery then, is that the human has never produced good or

evil.

Because of this we have the right to say that Jesus Christ is resurrected as us. We have the authority because of the body side of the Cross. We sing "there is power in the blood"; I have never heard a song yet that says there is power in the body--but there is. It is the power that delivers you and me. The blood side satisfies God. The body side satisfies me, for the body side of the cross delivers me from a striving me.

The second side of the Cross gives us the right to claim that we have total deliverance, not just deliverance from sins of the past, not just deliverance into heaven when we die, but a present tense Deliverer--One who has delivered us from every addictive thing that we humans think we have. We have total deliverance right here, right now. Why, then, haven't we entered into this place of rest?

Again, it is not good enough for God to know it and the Word to say it unless we know that we have been delivered and that our humanity is right. We have to know it. Why don't we? We don't because all we do is beat ourselves up and hate ourselves.

What God has called "clean," we go around calling "unclean." "Oh, why did I do that again, here I go again, I'm doing that again, I hate myself." We hate what God has called clean. Why? Because we still put laws on ourselves. We still think, "I ought to be this; I ought to be that; I ought to try harder." I have this wonderful treasure and I know it's an earthen body, but this earthen vessel better do something to make all of this work. But God says, "No." God says the only obedience we have is to say, "It is. It already is." We simply agree with God.

What is it that we agree with? Romans 6:11-13 says this: "Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto Jesus Christ our Lord." We make laws out of yielding, obeying, and submitting, as if we have to strive to do them. Consequently, we are again depending upon ourselves. We think that yielding is a hard thing to do, but yielding, obeying, and submitting simply means saying what God says and believing Him.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is." Believing is agreeing with God. He says it, so I just say, "O.K., it's true, I am dead to sin." It doesn't seem to be true, it doesn't appear to be true, but I dare to take a leap of faith and agree with God that what He says about me is true. That's what faith is. Faith doesn't say "possibility," faith says "He is." "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," those who dare to say, "I am who God says I am." I am "dead to sin," but resurrected and "alive to Jesus Christ."

Romans 6, 7, and 8 is Paul's declaration of emancipation sounding the trumpet and revealing the mystery of who we are in Christ. In these few chapters, you will find the key to learning how to accept your humanity. You will find the story of your life and you will see your struggles there, the same wonderful struggles that Paul had in Romans 7. In seeing how he became free, you will find your freedom. The truth, the mystery hidden in Romans, will set you free!

What Is Man?

"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him...Paul writes in Romans 6:6. Who is 'our old man?' Who, then, is our new man? Even David asked in his Psalms the question "What is man?" It is essential to know who and what we humans are in order to know and understand completely who we are in Christ. In the last chapter, we saw that the body, the human, is simply a receiver, a vessel, a woman designed to be the bride of Christ.

In Romans 6:14 and through the rest of the chapter, Paul is asking the question, "What is man?" His answer is that man has never been anything other than a slave. Can a slave do anything apart from his master? "You were the slaves of sin...being made then free from sin you became the slave of righteousness"(Romans 6:17&18). We have not understood our humanity and this is the missing link in Christianity. We beat ourselves up day and night because we can't perform. We think we have to do something. Yet we can't do anything right and we hate ourselves. What we don't know is that we are really slaves to righteousness.

A friend of mine, Nancy, called me the other day and said, "Christianity did not work. I threw it out! I tried not to be a Christian and tried to be a sinner again because Christianity wasn't working." Then she said, "But you know what? The thing I discovered is that I can't throw it out."

I said, "Nancy, let me show you something. Verse 18 of Romans 6 says, 'then being made free from sin ye have become slaves of righteousness.' You're a slave, so go try to throw it away; it doesn't make any difference. You are a slave to righteousness. The truth is that He is keeping you. You do not have to hold on to Him. Jude 24 says, "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless..." You do not have to do one thing to make any of this happen. It is your state of being. You can't help being it because it's who you are." You could just hear her sigh of relief. It is wonderful to know that Christ is

holding us because we are His slave and, He is our Master.

The rest of Romans 6 affirms this liberating truth, for it says that we are servants and slaves to righteousness. When we take Christ as our Lord, the Holy Spirit yields His fruit through us (Romans 6:21,22). The gift of God is that now we are made free from sin and made slaves to Christ who produces through us His fruits unto holiness and everlasting life. In the discourse between Christ and his disciples in John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." It would be ridiculous for a branch to try to produce fruit while detached from the vine, yet we Christians act that way.

Now we are getting close to why Christians have so much trouble making all this work.. Paul brings it out when he said in Romans 6:14, "sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law but under grace." The Scripture promises that sin shall not have dominion over us. But why does it? If we turn this verse around and say, "Sin will have dominion over you as long as you are under the law." And it will. When you are still bound by the law you can say "Christ in you," you can say all the high truths, but sin will have dominion over you as long as you have a "should" or an "ought to." It will because you are believing in a self that has the capacity to do something.

This is where Satan has us deceived. We have been deceived from the Fall because we think the human is a something. God says we're a zero, we're a nothing. Galatians 6:3 says, "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." God is the All and we are the nothing. God needs our "nothingness" to express His All-ness. Paul says in II Cor. 3:5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

I could say to a child, "I want to teach you something. We humans are the cups and God is the Deity that lives inside of the cups, and He is the one that is the doer." The child would say, "Oh, I understand that, I understand the human is just the cup."

Any child could understand this truth intellectually, but to truly know that we are nothing costs us everything. That is why Jesus said in Matt. 16:25, "Unless you lose your life, you will not find life." Jesus knew that unless we lose the illusion of who we think we are, we will not find true life, which is Christ as us.

What we lose is a false independent life that agrees with Satan, "I will be like the most High God." Just think of the pride of the creature that believes that in separation he has a will of his own and strives to be like the Creator! In our deception we don't realize that we are really counterfeits, like Satan. For no one can be like God, apart from being God. For the only way to be like God, is to submit ourselves in a death to our Satanic egos, filled with striving self-effort and humbly rest in the life of Christ as us.

You will have to lose all your false identities. You can't know that our created forms are nothing but empty cups, just because someone tells you that you are the cup. In order to know you're a zero, you have to lose everything, and not have any identity apart from the One in you. That is why Paul had to experience his own personal hell to learn this. It isn't something you can just hear in church or read in your Bible. It is radical and life-changing, which is why Paul brings it into the present tense in Romans 7, with his own experience.

The first part of Romans 7 says, "Know ye not that I speak to them that are under the law" (people who have "I ought to's"). This isn't just Jewish law. Christians have as many "ought to's" as anybody living, probably more. Most of our problems result from too many "ought to's."

"The law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives (Romans 7:1)." It does. As long as we think we have a life of our own, the law is always there constantly pouring down on us saying, "Okay, then rise up and do it!" You think you ought to--go do it, go try a little bit harder. God wants you to. God wants you to get to the end of trying. So if you think you can, go do it. You go figure out from every church or every fellowship, or every Christian you know, everything you ought to do and you go try to

do it as hard as you can. The law is designed to kill you. It's designed to finally get you to the end of trying. We must try: it's the only way for us to learn that self-effort is futile. So I love a good tryer.

The law will have dominion over me as long as "I" am here to respond to it. As long as there is a me who sees myself separate from God, there will be laws to try to live up to. So we say to ourselves, "I ought to be a good mother. I ought to be a better Christian. I ought to be a good wife. I ought to succeed. I ought this, I ought that." The "oughts" and "shoulds" are constantly crashing down on us.

Romans 7:2 says this: "For the woman that has the husband is bound by the law to her husband." The woman (being the Church) that hath the husband (this false identity of who I think I am with a life of my own) is bound to the law. I am bound to the law as long as I have a false husband which is, I "ought" to, I'll try a little bit harder, and I believe I can do something. From the Fall, we've had that independent mentality.

Who is this old husband who died? Satan, with his mentality of "I can do it." Isn't that the lie Satan lives from? Isn't he the liar who believes that he is independent from God, able to perform apart from God? But we are loosed from the law of the old husband! "If then, while her husband liveth she is married to another, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband be dead (Satan is dead to her) she is freed from the law" (Romans 7:3). We are free from that old husband and are not only dead to sin, but dead to sin's control which is through the law.

Now we are married to our new husband, Jesus Christ (Romans 7:4). He has come into my spirit and joined Himself with my spirit and become one with me. He is now the total me and he loves to express Himself through my personality. Never try to change your personality, for God made you to be everything that you are. The only change that took place was an exchange of spirits. He cleansed that vessel and said that it's right--it's whole. There is nothing wrong with you.

This exchange of Spirits is so radical that Paul says, "Therefore, my brethren you are become dead to the law." Thank God. That is what frees the human. There comes a time when I finally must say I will have no "should" or "ought" to: I throw them all out, and I trust that God is expressing His Life through me, however I appear. I am believing He has come inside of me and is married to my spirit; I am a "servant to God" and a "slave to Righteousness." I am trusting Him to walk out His Life as me, though I don't even know how I will be or how I will look.

One thing you cannot do is to predict the Holy Spirit. He will cause us to be the most unpredictable people. We Christians want to put everything in boxes. Things "should" look this way or "should" look that way. But the Holy Spirit is free; He will express himself through us as He pleases. The Bible says He's like the wind: He comes and He goes, He does what He wants to do. Nobody harnesses Him or predicts Him, for He is Lord.

Paul has given us these positional truths. Before you can really know them for yourself, however, you must walk through your own cross and your own hell. You cannot learn this except by revelation, as Paul says in Gal.1:12. It has to be experiential. It has to happen inside of you. Let's look at how this transition occurred in Paul's life.

The Story of Paul's Life (Or Romans 7: Catch 22)

Paul was a Pharisee, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. The Pharisees sat in the place of Moses and they dictated all the laws. They were the top Jews, and they were treated like royalty. They sat in the best seats in the marketplace, were highly respected, and beyond reproach. Not only did they have respect and reputation, they were well-educated intellectuals and most were wealthy. Finally, they believed themselves to be God's special and inerrant leaders of the Jewish people.

Paul gave all of this up when he came to Christ, later calling it all "dung" (Phil.3:8). He exchanged wealth for poverty (he had to work with his own hands and depend upon God to provide his physical needs), honor for dishonor (II Cor. 11:23-33), and man's wisdom for the foolishness of God (I Cor. 1:25).

This was a tremendous conversion in Paul, but then another problem arose as he tried to perfect himself in his daily Christian living. Would he be able to change himself through will power? God had to prove to Paul, once and for all, what part the human Paul played in this new union relationship. God did this by exposing to Paul his utter helplessness to the demands of the law.

More than likely he was put into situations where he started seeing and wanting everything that he had given up in Christ. He probably began to covet the things of his past. From Romans 7, coveting was clearly a constant temptation inside of him, and he didn't know how to conquer it (Romans 7:8). The more he tried, the more he miserably failed. To make things worse, God probably sent him to minister in the most luxurious surroundings, which aroused his coveting even more. Paul was forced to look at all he had given up and feel that strong pull of desire for the former things that he now lacked. He must have wondered what was happening to him.

"Wait a minute, what's wrong with me? I gave up coveting and lusting when I became a Christian. But here I am feeling those desires again." Yet he could not stop his feelings or get victory over them.

The more he tried, the more bound he became. His biggest problem was that he thought he should have the power to control himself. Paul's best efforts to achieve self-control and conquer his feelings failed miserably. How frustrating! But isn't this exactly where most Christians live today? "Here I am a good Christian, I've given up the old life style, and I have Christ living inside of me. Yet here I am lusting after the things that I gladly gave up when I was converted. I ought to get out of this. But how?"

This is so subtle. Just think of how many times we all say to ourselves, "I really should try harder, maybe I can overcome this the next time. What's wrong with me? I'm such a failure." I think we can all identify with Paul, for his heart cry is the same as ours, "What is wrong with me? Why doesn't Christianity work?"

Paul, however, pressed on and found the answer. He found it the same way we must find it--through the process of elimination. Paul's search began with his question in Romans 7:7, (paraphrase) "Is the law my problem? The law says not to covet; is the problem the law, because it sure does bring me grief?" But Paul reasons, "I can't really blame it on the law, because I know God's law is right and holy." The law is a perfect picture of God's holiness.

A lot of people want to throw out the law. It is not the law that is wrong; it is how I respond to that law. How did Paul respond to it? "Here I am, this good Christian person; I shouldn't feel this way. I minister in people's homes, they give me things, and here I am lusting and coveting. I have got to stop this, I ought not to disobey the law. I must get victory over these temptations, I'm going to try to make myself right."

The law wasn't his problem and Paul began to understand that, saying in verse 10, "and the commandments which were ordained unto life I found to be death. For sin, taking occasion by

the commandments, deceived me and by it slew me." It says in I Corinthians 15:56 that the strength of sin is the law. Sin gets its strength through "I ought to!"

SELF-EFFORT IS THE SECRET, SUBTLE SIN OF THE CHRISTIAN

The hidden root of Paul's problem (and our problem) is self-effort. Of course this is completely opposite from what we are taught in this world. We are taught to do more, give more, and to try to be the best Christians we can be. And most of all we are taught, "Don't be a bad witness!" Aren't we actually believing in an independent-self with the power to perform? That is why God's people know so little of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The Holy Spirit is the very life of Christ come back inside of us, to be our life (Col. 3:3-4). Yet how can the Holy Spirit be our life if we are still living it?

Self-effort is so subtle that we naturally operate as if we are independent; we have done it from birth. We are deceived into believing that it is the only way to operate. Don't we say, "We have to try, what else is there to do?"

God has to expose this lie and He does it through the law when we see that "that which is made good was made death unto me." There is this place we finally come to, where sin or self-effort becomes exceedingly sinful. God means for us to try, try, try, until we become so sinful that we're ready to kill ourselves. It is almost suicidal, for it is not good enough just to have a little bit of law. People want a little bit of Jesus and a little bit of law, a little bit of righteousness and a little bit of sin, a little bit of God and a little bit of the devil. God says that it is all or nothing: we must go all the way. He wants sin to become exceedingly sinful. He wants you to be bloody from trying. Then you're ready to take a leap of faith.

In fact, Romans 7 is the only chapter in the whole Bible that is a lie! Does that startle you? It should, but let me explain: Paul's experience was true enough, but what he believed about himself was a lie. He believed the lie, so it was real to him. But hadn't he

just said in Romans 6:6, "knowing this, that the old man is crucified," as well as many other wonderful positional truths? Then why does he say in 7:14, "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal." Here he is crying that he is just flesh, "sold under sin," after that Romans 6 declaration that we are free. What was he doing? He was looking at his humanity and saying, "I'm just me here and that's all, a self that can't perform, and is sold under sin." If that's the truth, then God help us. We might as well kill ourselves. Who is going to deliver us from this agony?

How wonderful! Now we are ready! It's wonderful that you cannot do one thing to get yourself out of this hellish predicament. Thank God.

Paul had begun to get the true picture of the human: "For that which I do I allow not." He said, "I don't want to do these things, I don't want to have all these reactions stirring up inside of me, I hate it." What he was experiencing was, "For what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that I do."

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." Paul is saying that he actually agreed with God in his inner man (16 and 22). God is right; coveting should not have had dominion over him. Therefore, if he agreed with God in his inner self, then that self (the human Paul) couldn't be his problem either. Paul had just eliminated the biggest misconception in Christianity--the lie that there is something wrong with the human self.

The problem then is this: "Now then it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." This Sin/Satanic consciousness, this striving me consciousness that is deceived me into thinking that the flesh has a life of its own, that's the problem. It is Satan not, I. Romans 7:17 is actually the negative counterpart to Galatians 2:20, "YET NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME." The negative counterpart is, "IT IS NO MORE I THAT DO IT, BUT SIN DWELLING IN ME." The culprit is Satan not, I and the hero is Christ not, I. But the point is that it has never been just I.

Finally, clarity came to Paul with the illumination that the

human is neither good nor evil in itself. Yet how often so many Christians still identify with a different scenario. If I say, "You were just precious today, and I really saw the love of God in you," you will say back to me, "Oh, that wasn't me, it was Christ in me." If I come back to you tomorrow, when you are ready to sin or are maybe even doing it, you will say, "Oh, that was me, oh, I'm so terrible; there it is again, my evil human nature." We give Christ the credit for the righteousness in us, but blame ourselves for our sins and temptations.

THE HUMAN DOESN'T HAVE AN EVIL HUMAN NATURE. THAT IS A LIE!

The subtlety of thinking that we do the evil is that it leaves the possibility for the human being to be able to do the good. Both are lies, and both are forms of self-righteousness.

We are beating up God's precious human vessel because we expect it to do better. There is our deception. All a vessel can do is receive either the truth or the lie. The human is nothing but a neutral vessel. I cannot produce good, and I cannot produce evil. This is the illumination that Paul came to see, that we are dead to the law. If you are lying in a coffin, the "should's" and the "ought to's" can fly over you and speak to you as much as they want. When you know that you are nothing but a neutral vessel, you can't respond to the law because you're dead to it. The law isn't dead; you're dead to it.

Who then is the problem? Not I, but Satan, Mr. Sin disguised as me. Satan gets his advantage over us through the law. I Cor. 15:56 says, "The strength of our sinning is the law." Through God's holy law, Satan has Paul in bondage. As long as there is an alive Paul that responds to the law with, "I will do it," Satan will be constantly accusing him, and he will be condemned. What a vicious trap!

The unknown factor to Paul is that the human is the instrument of someone else, and not an instrument able to perform of itself. Yet here in Romans 7 that someone else controlling him was Satan, instead of Christ, "The evil which I would not, that I

do" (Romans 7:19). His problem is that he had not yet discovered this secret concerning his humanity. And the way to discover it is through the roller coaster dilemma of trying and failing.

Man has to be broken under the bondage of Satan because he must see the one simple fact that he is only a vessel. In Romans 7, Paul was an instrument of Satan, when, in fact, he is actually a child of God. What opposites! Heaven and hell in the same body. I tell you it is the most radical situation any man can be in. The self is shattered into a million pieces. All the false idles of "I can do it," crumble. All the false pride that is built on the foundation of false goodness, falls on it's face before the commandment of, "Thou shall have no other gods before me." We must be naked and stripped of all vain ideals of self-improvement. And God uses Satan to do this final stripping.

Paul finally sees his total helplessness. Weak humanity is always and only a vessel, a simple clay pot, and nothing more than a helpless container of someone else. This Romans 7 situation, which made Paul appear so totally out-of-control is the perfect conditioning that caused him to see that he never was in control. We have always lived with the false ideal that we are holding ourselves together by self-control. That is a lie! We have always been operated by another, and have never been our own.

The Christian can not really unite in oneness to her true husband, Christ as me, while we still half way think we are able to do some good. The truth is that we have never been able to produce one ounce of good, nor one ounce of evil.

This great mystery cannot be seen except by first seeing it's opposite misused form. We cannot know light, except we first know darkness. This Roman seven identity crisis is God's necessary negative background to Paul's revelation of Christ as him. That is why God commands Satan to do his last and final work on Paul, as well as on all us Christians. This radical stripping is done at God's appointed time, for only He knows how, and when, to cleanse his created vessel. God says in Deuteronomy 32:39, "I, even I, am He, I wound, and I heal," and in Isa. 45:3, "I

will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places." Then in Isa. 45:7 God says, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord do all these things." God uses his convenient agent, Satan, to do the final work of tearing down all forms of false self-sufficiency. It is just like what God said to Satan in Job 1:8, "Hast thou (Satan) considered my servant Job?" It was God that drew Satan's attention to Job. Ultimately it was God that ordained Job's "furnace of affliction", just as the master potter molds and refines the clay as he wishes, in his prepared fiery furnace.

At this point most Christians think that the answer is to fight and defeat Satan. What a trap! Satan couldn't love it more. Giving him recognition, and taking up arms against him only propagates him. II Cor. 10:4 says, "The weapon of our warfare is not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." The strongest weapon we have is our faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Fight the fight of faith and stand still and see the salvation of God. For it is done, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord (Zech. 4:6).

Romans 7 is the holy ground of sanctification, which delivered Paul from a state which is unholy and impure, and put him into a state which purely reflects the nature of God. The word holy means pure, and pure, as Webster describes it means, "free of foreign matter, contamination, or corruption," i.e. that which defiles. The word unholy or impure means mixed with that which is corrupt, and would defile the vessel. While we are still mixed with Satan's independent self-sufficiency, our vessels are not yet cleansed from the impure. This cleansing takes place as we are broken in the valley of 'Romans Seven,' then restored to oneness, in Christ, on the, no-condemnation, mountain top of 'Romans Eight.'

Then as a clean vessel, Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit which raises him up with Christ, who is his right self-sufficiency. That is why Paul says in Phil. 4:13, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And again in II Cor. 9:8, "God is

able to make all grace abound toward you; that you always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Paul simply moved from wrong self-sufficiency based on self-effort, to right self-sufficiency based on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul is finally conditioned by God to leap into the finished work of Jesus Christ, who has already fought the last battle that defeats this Satanic realm in our human members: Rom. 6:6 says, "Our old man is crucified (old union with Satan) with him (Christ), that the body of sins (our misused humanity) might be destroyed;" Heb. 2:14&15 says, "Through death He (Christ) might destroy him (Satan) that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them (us) who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" Gal.5:24 says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh (misuse) with the affections and lust;" Eph.4:23&24 says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that you have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" And Col. 3:10 says, "You have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Paul can now leap into the person of Christ as his victor, his rescuer, and the true Paul. Paul is now cutting off the cause of his problem, not just the symptom. Satan has no more claim on him, because through the Cross we are made dead to the "works of the devil" (I John 3:18) with all his lies of independent self-effort.

In II Corinthians 3:18 Paul gives us the only true way to be transformed by the Spirit. It begins in verse 17 by saying, "The Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." This verse is saying that the Holy Spirit will do the work. This frees us from trying to sanctify ourselves. Then it goes on to say in verse 18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image: from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Our only part in this whole process is to just look into a mirror. The question is, "do we see ourselves as we alone?" Or, "do we dare to see, by faith, the

glory of the Lord in our human forms?" By simply gazing into the mirror of our true identity, we are changed from glory to glory even by the Spirit of the Lord.

Someone asked me one time, "how do I get this resurrection life to be in me?" I'll reiterate an earlier point: "We simply agree with God." God said that the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead, dwells in us (Rom. 8:11). Therefore, "say that it is already in you--say, you are resurrected with Christ, whether you feel it or not."

It seems simple, and it is, but the hard part is that nothing outer testifies to this truth. Paradoxically all hell screams at you, telling you the very opposite. God has prepared a banquet table for you, (for us to partake from) but it is in the presence of your enemies (Psalms 23:5). He does this on purpose, for it is his way of fixing us. It forces us to say the truth. If we don't, we die under the weight of hopelessness. Yet, even when we are so weak that it seems too hard to say the truth, we can depend on, II Tim. 2:13, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." The glory of the Lord finally comes into being as God "anoints my head with oil, and my cup runneth over; Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalms 23:6).

The key that finally unlocks the locked door of our hearts, is the recognition of the lie. We are not independent selves able to produce good or evil. Satan does not dwell in us--Christ dwells in us. Satan has lied to us, and we will believe his lies no more. Through the Cross we are made whole, complete, and lacking nothing. We are perfect Christ living in a perfect humanity. We are free at last; thank God, we are free at last.

The perfect law of liberty is living inside of us; He is perfectly keeping the law, and that means we cannot touch it. I do not try to make it happen I believe, I simply believe. Most of us don't know how to simply speak a word of faith, believe it, and do nothing. But that's the secret. Don't lift one finger to make anything happen; simply say the word and believe.

Diary of a Mad Housewife Trapped in a Clothes Dryer

A lot of Christians know "Christ in me." I knew it, but I was still a striving person, experiencing Romans 7 in my own life. Most of the time I looked like a crazy person and felt as though I was trapped in a clothes dryer, constantly going around and around, rising to the top, then tumbling to the bottom. I knew all the wonderful truths of Christ in me, living His life as me, but couldn't make these union truths work. It wasn't just that I couldn't make Christianity work; I couldn't make the top truths work either. I tried. I knew it all, I could say it all, I could teach it all, but I could not make it work. God said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me," (Galatians 2:20) but I could not make Galatians 2:20 work. I couldn't appropriate it enough or say it enough to make it real inside myself.

I had a besetting sin that continually hounded me like my shadow; I was insanely jealous of my husband. I was driving myself as well as my husband crazy, but I couldn't stop doing it. My problem was that I thought I had to try to get victory over it. I would preach to myself, and I would pray, and I would read my Bible, but no victory would come. The more I tried, the more I failed. Around and around I would go, making one resolution after another. All my resolutions painfully met with failure.

Finally, I sat in my closet, ready to commit suicide because I could not control myself or keep myself from sinning. I felt as if I was a total embarrassment to all my Christian friends. (Little did I know they were all going through the same thing at the same time I was, but I was so focused on myself, that I thought I was the only one in the world enduring such madness and darkness). I was so desperate that I sat in my closet and beat my head on the wall as I was screaming to God, "I hate myself, I want to die. Please, please let me die."

There is not a Christian anywhere that hasn't loathed himself some time in his life. God's precious creation in which Christ has totally set free and yet, we hate ourselves. God wants us to get to this place of desperation. He wants us to say, like Paul, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin?"

A miracle happen that day in my closet of desperation for God, the Spirit, rose in my heart and said, "But Sylvia, you are already dead, so go ahead and say good-bye to that Sylvia, bury her real good, and don't resurrect her. But the good news is that as sure as you are dead, so are you resurrected as me, for the real new you is Me. This crazy you that you're seeing blown up in full color is not you! You thought it was, but it is not. The real you is a resurrected expression of me!"

This was revelation to me. The maniac me, the one I always kept stuffed somewhere was not me! I went to church and kept it in my back pocket as much as I could, at least until I got out of the parking lot. I always thought that I was just me, some parts good, some parts bad. I had a difficult job hiding the bad, while trying to demonstrate the good. What a trap!

Now I see the good was never me and the evil was never me. I thought, "How can that be? Then where is this real me?" All I could see was this other horrible me. Then God said to me, "You can not make this be manifested. That is not your joy! The Holy Spirit is the Lord of manifestation, you are not." He will manifest however and whenever He pleases. We do not dictate manifestation, He does. All I can do is agree with God because that's what it means to obey God.

I'm finally learning how to obey, and this is what Paul finally learned, how to obey God for the first time by just speaking the Word only. That's what God wants. Isn't Jesus Christ the Word? Is He the doer? No. The Holy Spirit is the doer. Christ is the Word, and we are Christ in our forms, but the Holy Spirit is the producer of the life of Christ in us.

I had been living from a teaching or a concept, but we cannot

live from a concept; we live from a person. That is why God told Moses that his name is "I Am." I Am is being, God is a person not a principle. His principles naturally flow out of his life, but I had the cart before the horse. Christ is Resurrection Life and I have to come to the end of anything that I thought that I I could do to make life work. Then at the end of my struggles, the supernatural person of Christ rescued me inside myself and set me free from these insidious dead works. It was only in this dark night of my soul, where I found myself in total helplessness, unable to analyze or make anything work, that I really discovered my only function as a human, is to speak the Word and agree with God.

That day, sitting in my closet, I thought, "I can hardly believe this." I was like the man that said to Jesus, "I believe Lord, but help my unbelief." It was hard for me to believe because I was used to believing in what I was seeing.

Then God said, "I'm going to take you into another dimension of faith inside of yourself--you are an eternal being, and you are going to learn to operate the things which are not seen."

Jesus has come back inside me, to be me. He made me stop looking at me, stop trying to make anything work. Funny thing though, He didn't have to tell me to stop trying, because at that point, I was bloody from trying. I could not strive any more.

There is a transition period. We do not change overnight, because He is training us to be safe, trustworthy, faith persons. If He changed us overnight, we would not learn the operation of faith and would be tempted to return to self-effort. So He takes His time and trains us to say who we are, against the appearance of how we look. That is why Hebrews 4:11 says, "Let us labor to enter into His rest." We labor in faith, believing God against all appearances. Only then can we see the glory in faith, not in the things which are seen.

The last verse of Romans 7 ends up looking pretty schizophrenic; "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord, So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Paul was saying one thing, but looking the opposite.

Paul is saying here that with his mind, or inner self, he was going to serve the Lord by faith alone, but in his flesh he could not stop trying. So he came to totally depend on the work of the Holy Spirit to cause his flesh to conform to his word of faith. I'm sure he looked somewhat like a chicken with his head cut off, flopping around as though he were still alive. But with the head of the problem cut off, the body must soon follow, for Spirit is master over flesh.

I looked the same way. There were days that I would be screaming at my husband, and ten minutes later I would be saying, "Scott, that's not me, I'm really Christ in Sylvia form." Then ten minutes later, I would be screaming at him again. I could not stop doing this but I knew better to touch it.

At this point I moved into Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This was the beginning of my self-acceptance. I could not look to the right or the left as I dared not to take any condemnation. I couldn't have cared less about my reputation. By this time, I had none anyway. I had nothing to lose, and if this madness was the truth, I had everything to gain. All I knew was that I had one function and that was just to say the truth about myself. That is all I did; it was all I could do.

The wonderful miracle is that what you take by faith, takes you, and becomes you. The old drops away. The old striving me that thought I could perform by self-effort, fell away. I started walking in the Spirit of who I am instead of the appearance of who I thought I was.

I began to accept my negative reactions and not try to change myself. When my depressions would start to come, I would say to myself, "Well, then, I will be depressed today." I finally began going with the negatives instead of trying to get out of them. The Lord began to teach me the necessity of the negative. Without a negative, I would not have the need to seek his Spirit or speak faith into my situation. I began to be positive about my negatives, and embrace my whole self as a form of Christ.

My humanity is neither right or wrong of itself, and by faith through the Cross, my members are an “instrument of righteousness.” There is a right use to my basic human desires, and the life of Christ transmutes these desires into right-use-ness. God Himself is a jealous God. So it must mean that there is a right use of jealousy. Galatians 5:25 says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust." This simply means that in the Cross of Christ the wrong use of my flesh, which was Satan in my members, was done away with. Now I have a rightly used flesh, because the Spirit rightly uses me for His glory.

In a since our basic passions don't change, although in Christ they are rightly used. The Holy Spirit redirects our desires upward and Godward, instead downward into misuse. Instead of being jealous of my husband, I was really jealous for him. The Spirit was jealous for him to know God's completeness and fullness.

Paul knew this same redirection. There is an account in Acts 20:27-34 that gives us insight about this: Paul was addressing the Ephesians after a long, three year stay. He said, (paraphrased) "I've given you the whole counsel of God, and now I'm ready to leave you." His parting words were in agony for he knew that the wolves were going to come in to these people and scatter the sheep. All he could do was commend them to the grace of God that was able to keep them. Then he said, "I will pray for you with strong crying in fear you will be sweep away by false teaching." But all he could do was believe for them. Then he went on to say, "While I was with you, I did not covet your silver or gold or apparel."

This tells me that in the past he could have done just that, but now his coveting was redirected in a upward constructive way. Paul was coveting the souls of men. Paul didn't change. He still strongly coveted, but now it was for humanity to know the final liberating truth of Jesus Christ. The Spirit had used Paul's great passion and redirected it into Fatherly love for God's precious people. So coveting which in Romans Seven was Paul's liability, was turned into his greatest asset.

All of the things we have hated about ourselves, all of the

things we have considered our liabilities are really our greatest assets. Faith turns them around and puts them back in Christ. Just think of the thing you hate most about yourself. Can you dare believe God will make it your greatest asset? Is it jealousy, temper, lust, fear? Greater is He that is in you than he that is on you. Satan is on your flesh telling you that you are nothing but sin, that is a lie. Dare to believe that you are the righteousness of Christ.

Although let Satan have his right to tempt you, but take your rightful place as a son and by faith turn it around. Believe that Christ is your life, therefore fleshly misuse is not the Spirit reality in you. Stop believing Satan's lies, start believing the real truth which will set you free.

God does mean for Satan to tempt us though. It says in Hebrews that after you're illuminated, you "fight a great fight of affliction." Satan is going to pull at you and tell you who you are not; he will probably do it every day. This is your invaluable training ground and your privileged place of suffering. For II Timothy 2:12 says that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

If we could look into temptation a little more deeply though, we may broaden our understanding concerning our daily negatives: We human beings are tripartite--spirit, soul and body. Our spirits are united to Christ's Spirit and are the real we, or our "I am." The soul and body are the means of expressing that I am, it's clothing. Our "I am" (spirits) knows, desires and chooses, while our soul carries our individual unique personalities with our thinking and feeling capacities. Our souls are somewhat like two way mirrors which reflect who we are to the world, but also receive from the outside what comes to us of Satan's world.

I learned that my soul reactions come from my human responses to outer stimuli and are neutral in themselves. Responding negatively or positively does not constitute a spirit choice, for it is in our spirits that we choose sin or righteousness. Here is where we Christians are so confused. Most of us think that

our response or reactions to Satan's pulls are evil in themselves. But if we as persons had no place to survey possibilities, we wouldn't be free people, we would be robots. We must be free from condemnation in our fleshly reactions. Otherwise we would continually think of ourselves as sinners. This is why I hear so many Christians say that they are saved sinners. That is not true! God does not call his precious blood bought children sinners, He calls us his saints.

We are meant to be fully human and have honest reactions, otherwise we would always be suppressing our right humanity. We Christians become frustrated, trying to keep our reactions under control, and as a result we usually end up being phony. Many times Christians go into deep depressions just because they suppress normal human responses. I have heard psychologists say, for example, that depression is suppressed, inverted anger.

Personally I was in such a sin mind set, that I confessed sin continually, trying to get rid of my suppressed human reactions (which are not sin). Finally after finding myself confessing things that were not even true, just to get rid of my guilty feelings, I gave up. This led me to make a pact with God. I said to the Lord, "I am just going to be me, and I am not going to call anything sin (excluding the obvious) unless you tell me." I knew that God was big enough to take a sledge hammer and hit me over the head if he wanted me to know. Otherwise I was going to live freely in the green light, not cautiously in the yellow, or stopped by the red. Jesus certainly never suppressed his humanity, for he was totally true to himself. When he was angry at the Pharisees (Matthew 23) he knew that his was right anger. But when he was crying out to God in the garden, "take this cup from me," he knew that we was being tempted. The point here is to just be yourself and trust God for the discernment.

Temptation is not sin!! And we must know the difference. James 1:14 says, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Lust isn't evil in itself, for it is God given desire. But Satan tries to entice us through it to believe that

we really want what we should not have. This period of enticement is not sin, but temptation. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness by offering him all the kingdoms of the world, there had to be a part of Jesus that wanted these kingdoms, or it would not have been a temptation. Yet Jesus didn't call these Satanic pulls sin.

Then the next verse goes on to say, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" The thing that most Christians don't understand is that sinning (conception by the will) is really hard to do. Its somewhat like raping your own nature; you have to go against your own heart and turn your back on God's keeping power. Sinning is possible, but not probable. But if temptation does becomes sin, the Christian temporarily joins with Satan in an adulterous affair. This conception brings forth sin. But we can praise God for his provision, the shed blood of his Son, and faith in that fact will cleanse us totally.

Temptation is our daily diet, while sin is very rare. Temptation is an enticement to want to do evil, while sin is a spirit choice of, "I will." We resist evil by not fighting it, and by replacing the lie with the truth of who we really are. Christ in us is pure desire, not misused lust or perverted desire. Then surrendering to God by faith as our keeper makes Satan flee from us (James 4:7).

When a soldier goes out to battle, he stands against the enemy. He doesn't foolishly hate and fight the place where the battle takes place. Our souls are the battle fields of Satan's attacks. Yet we Christians spend most of our time hating ourselves (souls) for feeling or thinking evil thoughts, instead of recognizing that the real evil is not coming from us, but from Satan. It helps me to remember that Satan is on us and not in us. Our final liberation comes when we can put these Satanic temptations in their proper perspective and back into God as his necessary negative training ground for us, and our opportunity for faith.

I can say from experience that I would not take anything for my years of darkness. I learned more in my time of darkness than

any other time of my life. God means for me to be pulled and tempted, for temptation reminds me that Satan is a liar, and it gives me good practice in recognizing who I really am. This is God's way to cause me to speak the truth about myself, which fixes me and settles me in who I am.

James says, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

I have heard a lot of prosperity talk in Christian circles. I think that this is one of the biggest lies in Christianity. I don't want to get out of my predestined hells or tribulations, for the Lord means me to go through them. For now it is a great adventure for me to discover God right in the middle of every hell that comes my way. God cannot be separate from anything; can we have the eye to find him in the midst of trouble and suffering?

Jesus said this concerning His Cross, "The Father's cup, shall I not drink it?" The Cross was the most evil event in history. However, what appeared to be Satan's greatest triumph, was in truth his ultimate defeat. What looked like death for Jesus Christ, turned out to be Resurrection and Life for others. If we agree that this great evil was God's greatest triumph, then we must also agree that anything that happens to us, no matter how terrible or wretched, must also be the Father's cup ready to be filled with His glory!

“Yea, Though I Walk Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I Will Fear No Evil”

Romans 8 always brings to mind the last courageous years of my mother's life. Rather than giving a verse by verse exposition, I am simply going to share her story as a living example of the "more than conquerors" life of Romans 8. She epitomized the whole Spirit of, "nothing can separate us from the love of God; all things work together for good; and the sufferings of this present world cannot be compared with the glory that shall be revealed" (Rom. 8:18,28 &35).

My precious mother and father were great charismatic people. They both knew the truth of who they were in Christ, and it changed their viewpoint on outer healing. My mother suffered with rheumatoid arthritis for many years. When she was first saved, she thought the Lord was going to heal her. As a result, we traveled to Pittsburgh, Pa. to Katherine Kuhlman meetings many times, as well as other healing services though-out Louisville.

Several years went by, but she was not healed outwardly. I was always very glad that she didn't say to the Lord like so many Christians do, "Where have I sinned? What have I done wrong? Why haven't I been healed?" The condemning factor for most charismatic people is that they put the responsibility of faith on themselves. They do not know that faith is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and doesn't come from them.

Also, so many people think that it is our right as good Christians to always have outer healing, when Jesus promised the very opposite when he said, "In this world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The wonderful thing that Mother knew is that if God says, "no," then he must have bigger "yes" on the way.

After seeking outer healing and not getting it, she said to the Lord, "Show me your answer to this." The Lord said to her, "I'm

going to show you a deeper dimension of healing, one that you didn't know existed. I am going to show you what Isaiah 53 really means when it says, 'By His stripes you are healed.' I'm not going to heal you outwardly, because that would be only temporary for everyone must die. I want you to know permanent, eternal healing, the healing in your inner man."

All outer healing is temporal, in that it can only last a human lifetime. It will never fully satisfy. Jesus promises everlasting satisfaction: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst again" (John 6:35). My mother found the deeper meaning of Isaiah 53. She experienced the inner healing and joy of who she was in Christ. Knowing who we are as Christ brings us total satisfaction and total deliverance.

The Lord taught my mother the marvelous glory hidden in our present tense Crosses. Men hate suffering, but what man despises, (weakness, sickness, outer imperfection), God glorifies! The Cross was horrible and despicable, but God made it glorious and life giving.

Mother went to her church to a healing meeting once and astonished everyone. She was a tiny lady, about 4' 11". Her hands were crippled, and she limped from arthritis. The meeting was ending with an altar call. She watched the people coming forward to get healed. All of a sudden, she stopped the meeting and demanded attention by holding up her hands. She said, "You all think I'm not healed don't you? Look at my hands! But I want to tell you the real healing isn't out here in my hands--no it's in here, in my heart. Now that I know the freedom of who I am, it doesn't make any difference if my hands are crippled or not. I have found the true inner joy hidden in the midst of my suffering, which can never be taken away. Jesus is pleased to use these hands just the way they are. He doesn't mind if they are crippled, He's going to get His blessings through them. These are his hands, and he loves it when I praise Him with crippled hands for he loves 'the sacrifice of praise.' It honors him and glorifies him." Man despises suffering, yet God means it and uses it for his glory. The Cross is

the greatest example of that.

The people mostly discredited her as crazy, but I think they really didn't understand her. The Lord honored her though, because an old minister walked up to her later and said, "You're saying something far higher than we know or understand, but I know it's true."

Another time she went to a meeting where they were calling for people to come down to get their needs met. As they all came down front and knelt at the altar, she walked down as well, crippled as she was, for she had many surgeries, including hip and knee replacements. She drew attention when she walked crippled down that aisle, making her way to the front. At first we all thought she was going for prayer, but to our astonishment she looked at the people kneeling down and said, "Everybody get up, you're in unbelief. If you've got Jesus Christ in you, you don't have any needs. Get up! You don't need one thing if you've got Jesus Christ."

Well, I want you to know that those people stood up. What else could they do? What power there was in that little lady, that little, crippled lady who outwardly looked the most needy, but inside was a giant! She didn't get delivered from her suffering; she got deliverance in it. That spoke louder than any outer healing ever could have, because people forget outer healing, but none of us will ever forget this!

Sometime later, she went to the hospital one more time for cataract surgery. There we discovered through a routine chest x-ray that she also had cancer. John, our best friend and surgeon, did an exploratory on her to find out where the primary cancer was. He came into the waiting room where Daddy and I were sitting and told us that the cancer originated in her gall bladder and had already spread to her lungs. John's eyes welled up as he brought the bad news: "Gall bladder cancer is very aggressive. She probably has only six months."

Daddy and I just hugged each other and cried together. Then the Spirit rose in me and I quoted a verse, "The sufferings of this

present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). We knew that God was not going to reveal it only in heaven, but right here and now. God's glory was going to come out of this suffering, and it was going to bless many.

Tears filled my eyes as I made my way upstairs to tell her that she had cancer. I sat by her side waiting for her to stir. As she awoke, she asked me what the doctors had found. Reluctantly I began to tell her about the cancer. She stopped me in mid sentence and said, "Sylvia, we're not going to give the devil one bit of glory over this. We're going to praise God for this cancer. That's what's wrong with the people I know; they give too much glory to the devil. We're going to look straight through and see that this is the Father's cup. This can't really kill me, because I'm already dead and resurrected in Jesus Christ. So don't cry for me." My mother bypassed the devil, and made her way straight to the very throne of God. In doing that, she caught the praise and glory of the Cross.

She only lived for two months, and during those two months I stayed with her constantly as I learned the ways of the Spirit from her. I was on holy ground. She taught me that there was another living in the midst of the suffering who was able to bear her pain and live life to the fullest in the midst of hell. It reminded me of Rom. 8:36-37, when it says, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loves me." With this great attitude, people were drawn to her because she lived in praise, instead of self-pity.

Before she died, three ministers from her church came to lay hands on her for healing. "Look," she said, "I've got cancer, and I'm going to die from it, but it really can't kill me. I'm already dead and resurrected in Christ. When I look in the mirror, I don't see Leona, I see Jesus. For it isn't happening to me, it is happening to Him."

There is a mind set among faith healers that if you even acknowledge the negative, the devil will get hold of you. Mother

blew their theology when she said, "I've got cancer, and it is going to kill me." Then she quickly reversed it by saying, "Oh, but it can't kill me, because I am not my body, I am spirit. I am already dead, and I am already resurrected as a form of Christ." Those three men were almost slain in the Spirit that day, for her words were so powerful.

My mother's sister, Irene, came to visit her one day. Irene stunned me with her remarks, "Your mother has turned the most dreaded thing into something glorious. When I look at her I don't see Leona, I see Jesus."

I knew that "flesh and blood" had not told her these things. This was revelation--just like the revelation given to the thief on the cross next to Jesus. He didn't see a dying man, he saw a reigning King, and he asked, "Please allow me to be in your Kingdom." He didn't see a bloody, dying man; he saw the King of Kings.

At the end of her life, she started having severe pain. John came to her house and said to me, "You will have to give her pain medication by injection." I had never given shots before, but I spent the night with her and gave her injections every five hours. All night long she agonized with pain, while I wrestled with the Spirit in the other room. I thought, "God, if this is what you are doing to her when she has done nothing but praise you, then strike me out of the Lambs Book of Life. I don't even want you. I don't want to be a Christian. She's done nothing but give you glory and praise and here you are causing her to agonize like this."

It killed me.

I finally dozed off, I woke up the next morning, and I went in to her and said, "Mom, do you remember last night? Do you remember how horrible it was?"

She said, "No... no, oh Sylvia, did you forget, this isn't happening to me, this is happening to Jesus. He's bearing my pain."

I had forgotten who she really was. Jesus was laying down His life again, this time through her body. He was bearing her

pain. She died that very day. Just before she died, I held her little head up as tears rolled down my face, knowing she was in pain again. She raised her hand and pointed her finger upward saying, "Praise Jesus, just keep on praising Jesus."

People were greatly blessed by her, and the promise in Revelation 14:13 is being continually fulfilled, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Everyone she has prayed for has come through, and the power of her sacrificial life has brought life to many and is still calling forth life, out of death, to this very day.

“Goodness and Mercy Shall Follow Me All the Days of My Life and I Will Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever”

There is an evolution in our consciousness from first discovering ourselves as having a no-self (simple container)--to being a right-self (getting ourselves back as persons). I use to think to myself, "I am more than a cup--I am a person." We are persons, but we must first fully disappear (no-self) before we can safely reappear as fully functioning persons. As I reappear, the human me comes back to the foreground, and Christ goes to the background. Now, who am I? I'm just being me, or is it just me? No, it's Christ as me. We move into a unconscious consciousness where we just forget ourselves and be. We have moved from a striving, doing level to a resting, being level. Now there is a new experiencing of release, freedom, and right appreciation for ourselves. Life becomes fun. It's really wonderful rediscovering ourselves as right selves.

So let me close with this thought: Be human! Be yourself! We finally move from self-loathing to self-acceptance, and right self-love. The scripture is fulfilled which says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." We can never really love anyone else until we love ourselves. The Holy Spirit produces his own love nature in us, and causes us to really appreciate ourselves and love ourselves. Then when we love ourselves, it naturally follows that we love everyone else.

The sanctifying process of the Holy Spirit has caused us to die to our false identity, and now we are risen to a new identity as Christ. The most wonderful part is that we fully get our humanity back. So be human! Don't be afraid of your humanity, you are wonderfully made. Let yourself be negative, and trust God to use these negatives as his springboard to faith. Jesus had negatives and weaknesses, "yet he lived by the power of God" (II Cor. 13:4).

This is very crucial because at the end of Romans 7, Paul

begins to walk into Romans 8 and to accept himself in areas he hasn't wanted to. He is not taking any condemnation; for he says, "Now I see that the mind set on the flesh is death--that the mind set on the Spirit is life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:6).

We are spirit beings, we're eternal beings, and we're meant to walk in the Spirit, not in our flesh. Paul says, "The sufferings of this present time aren't even worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Then at the end he says, "What can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?" (Romans 8:35). "Not principalities, not powers, not life nor death, nor any other thing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (verse 38-39). Then he turns around and in Romans 9 says, "But I'm telling you the truth in Christ, I have unceasing grief in my heart because I could wish myself accursed for my brothers." Paul was willing to sacrifice himself, for others to know Christ.

God doesn't come just to save us; He comes to make us Saviors (Obadiah 21). He comes to reproduce His very life in us, which is to die and rise for the people in our world. God will bring specific people to you, because the Holy Spirit that came back at Pentecost has come back in your body, to be the unconditional love-life in you for the people that God will now bring to you. That is why we can say with Paul, "now we fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ" (Col. 1:24) because now Christ suffers and dies and rises again in our bodies, for those we love, for those that get our attention through need.

Christ has come back, but this time in many forms. Now it is my privilege to see the truth for other people. I have a brother who is very hard. He has gone to church all of his life, and he doesn't even know that Jesus lives in him. He will not hear anything I have to share with him. But he doesn't need my words. My words would just run cold to him. He needs my faith. He needs to know that I am believing that Jesus Christ is in him and Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to him. I don't have to do anything except believe it. Most of all, he needs my love. My brother isn't very lovable,

but Jesus will meet him right where he is, in his hardness, and love him unconditionally. Unconditional love is what speaks the loudest to people.

My brother's wife is dying of cancer. She has tried to change him all of their married life, to no avail. Her illness has been God's tool to softening his heart towards her, but most of all it is breaking down his self-sufficiency. God is preparing him to know where inner strength really comes from, and he is doing this through my brother's own weakness and helplessness concerning his wife's condition. She will finally get what she wants for my brother, but it may cost her a great price. Love must meet need, so her laid down life must bring life to him: that is God's promise and the law of the harvest spoken of in John 12:24.

Whenever we see a lost person or a brokenhearted person, their need calls forth our intercession. Whatever or whoever draws our attention, whether positively or negatively, is God's calling card. What does God have for this person? What word of faith does the Spirit have to speak through me? Jesus has come back in us to meet needs. But how? Do we go back to trying and doing? No! We wait on the Spirit to show us the way. All we can do is speak the word.

Abraham was God's friend, because "he called the things that be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). This is what it means to be a co-creator with God. God himself created the world by calling order out of disorder. Now we, with God, call light out of darkness. Psalms 82 says that we are gods, to whom the word of God has come, and to arise, oh god, and do the work as sons of the Creator (Psa. 82:6,8). Jesus answered some eager inquirers who asked: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answers, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-28). Simple enough, isn't it? Yet when everything is black, the greatest sacrifice is to believe, because you have to leave reason and understanding behind and leap into the unknown.

Anyone can make this leap; I made it and I'm an ordinary

person just like you, or Abraham, or anyone for that matter. We're all earthen vessels--ordinary clay pots to contain deity (II Cor. 4:7).

I don't have anything outwardly to offer you. I don't have any ministries. I have no fellowships or churches; I have no degrees, no credentials. I am just a simple housewife. What I do have is a person; the person of Jesus Christ resurrected as me. All I have to offer you is how you can know that Jesus Christ is resurrected as you--as the you sitting there. This marvelous person of Jesus Christ has come back and lives in every born-again human form. Your human form is simply you just as you are, and Jesus cannot be Himself or manifest Himself in another person like He can in you. He needs your humanity to manifest Himself through. Not just Jesus in you, but Jesus Christ resurrected as you, through your personality, through you.

**If you dare to be a part of this
Last Crusade in search of
the True Golden Chalice,
you will discover that the Quest will bring you
right back to yourself,**

You are the cup of blessing!

**You, the True Golden Chalice are filled with all
the Treasures of Knowledge and Wisdom
(Colo. 2:3),
because you are filled
with Christ himself.**

Dare To Search--

Dare to Leap--

And Dare to Find!

The message in this booklet was actually taken from a talk I did in 1991. Scott and I were invited as guest speakers at the Living Word Church in Yonkers, New York. I taught Romans 6-8. One year later, I was asked to have the tape from this meeting transcribed and made into readable text. In doing so, this booklet evolved.

I would like to thank three very special friends of mine: Margo Sanders, Brian Coatney, and Norman Grubb. Margo is an English teacher who worked relentlessly at her computer, fine-tuning the text and composing the challenging introduction as well as the title. Margo's drive of the Spirit is really what precipitated my getting this booklet into print. Brian has been an editor for ten years and his expertise was invaluable. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Norman Grubb who has been a spiritual father to me for many years. Early on in my quest to find answers for my life, he was the person who shared with me the liberating truths I now share in this booklet. I want to personally thank him for unlocking the treasures hidden deep inside my heart. My hope is that this booklet will reveal the treasures in you the same way they were revealed to me.

Twenty-five years ago, another friend of mine said to me in the parking lot of our church, "Romans 6, 7, and 8 is the whole key to the Bible, and I'm going to unravel it's mysteries!"

That statement stuck with me and being the "jealous" person God has made me to be, I also determined to discover this mystery. I don't know if my friend found his answer to the mystery, but I have searched and agonized all these years to know and understand. I believe the Spirit has revealed the secret, the mystery of Christ in me as me, just as it was revealed to Paul. My agony and passion now is to share these liberating truths with God's family. I believe this message is already in the heart of every born again believer, waiting to be awakened by the Holy Spirit. I believe also that I am not telling you anything that you do not already know deep in your spirit. Maybe all that I am doing is putting words to the truth that is speaking to you.

If anyone has any questions or comments concerning this booklet, please write or call:

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“Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power both now and forever.” (Jude 24)