

# Law: God's Grace?

The subject of God's law and our relationship to it can be confusing and hard to grasp. Many Christians struggle through their Christian walk knowing they are supposed to be "not under the law" but still carry a sense of failure that they do not meet it's high standards. Thankfully, Norman Grubb tackles this topic with great clarity and understanding. What glorious news to know that we cannot and were not meant to keep God's law. Christ is the lawkeeper within us. He lives a sin-free life through our vessels and for that reason we are free from sin and from the law.

Paul puts a right relationship to law in the forefront of his victorious life teaching. He makes it as important to understand what it is to be dead to the law as to be dead to sin. This is startling. for sin is bad, but law is good. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law," he says. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit...so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit," you will walk in victory, does he say? No, "ye are not under the law." He puts the law right in there, meaning that it is as important to be out from under the law, as it is from under sin; indeed the two are basically connected. Then, though he admits that "the law is spiritual...holy, and just, and good," he vigorously throws it out from

#### By Norman Grubb

the believer's life: "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ": "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances": "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." Strong language!

Most believers have a partial understanding of Paul's meaning. That is to say, they have it clear that "by the works of the law shall no man living be justified," and that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." They understand that law carries a penalty with it, if it is broken, and that we all are lawbreakers, but that Christ paid the penalty. Therefore, to that extent, we are finished with law; it cannot condemn or punish us any more. But most believers equally think in some vague way that we are still bound to obedience to law. Is not the New Testament full of commands to be obeyed? Certainly we have moved clean out of the false notion that we are righteous before God by keeping the law, "going about to establish our own righteousness," but we have not moved clean out of maintaining some place for law in the believer's life. But Paul throws it right out, bag and baggage. Not just the works of the law, but law itself: "Christ is the end of the law."

We have, therefore, to delve deeper to get this into right perspective. Law can be defined as the way things work, and they don't work any other way. At the creation only one law was given to man (the way man works)—the law of receptivity—"eat." But man obeyed that simplest of all laws in reverse, by eating of the tree of self-sufficiency.

Now the situation changed. Instead of eating of the right tree and receiving Him who is love and who would live the love-life through him (which is the fulfillment of all law), he had been taken

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#### The INTERCESSOR

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Great Britain and Western Europe Jon and Kim Langley 2 Adams Close Stanwick, Wellingborough NN9 6TQ England 01933 625246 011 44 1933 625246 (from USA) captive by the huge delusion that he could manage his own life. So now the history of law in our fallen world begins. God in mercy and grace meets man on his new blinded level and says in effect, "You can live your own life? Very well, here is the law. Man is made to love God with all his heart, mind and strength, and his neighbour as himself. Obey it."

In other words, God institutes an elementary and external form of law, suitable to man's condition—the form of "do

We have sought to build our own righteousness and maintain our own respectability by pretending we keep God's law, by keeping a very little of it where convenient: a little religion, a little ethics, and so on. What we really do is to display the one or two commands we do keep, but carefully hide the dozens we break. We cling to an eleventh commandment— Thou shalt not be found out!

this and you will live." Twice in the Scriptures it is called man's elementary religion: "we, when we were children, were in bondage to the elements (rudiments) of the world . . . under the law": and "wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments (elements) of the world, why...are ye subject to ordinances, Touch not; taste not; handle not?"

Law, therefore, was the first form of God's grace, because it imposed an impossibility on man—that the selfish one should be selfless—and gave him the chance of discovering his truly lost condition.

Man's response to law has been twofold. The first response damns, the second opens the door to salvation. The first response is hypocrisy, the second honesty. Hypocrisy means pretending to be what we are not. All men, including ourselves, have done that. We have sought to build our own righteousness and maintain our own respectability by pretending we keep God's law, by keeping a very little of it where convenient: a little religion, a little ethics, and so on. What we really do is to display the one or two commands we do keep, but carefully hide the dozens we break. We cling to an eleventh commandment-Thou shalt not be found out! This attitude finally damns us, because it is not ultimately sin that damns; God has provided for that; it is dishonesty, refusal to admit and confess sin. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than ligh...and hateth the light, neither cometh to the light."

Man's other response to law is honesty. Recognition that we are all lawbreakers. That is the one capacity we have—recognition and admission of fact. That is what Jesus meant in the parable of the Sower, when He said the good seed fell into an "honest and good heart."

Now law, as the elementary religion for humanity, has done its first work. It had compelled those who respond to admit that they are law-breakers, and therefore exposed to the consequences of broken law. Its first work is to produce and pronounce guilt: "what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that...all the world may become guilty before God." So far so good. Every sinner saved by grace knows this. But law has not yet finished its work. That is why Paul makes these references to the law in relation to the believer. There was a subtler, profounder purpose in the giving of the law, which can probably only be realized after the law has done its first work. Man's real trouble is not the sins he commits and their consequences, but the root cause of his sinning. That root cause is the spirit of error living in him and having total dominion over him, because the fundamental fact of human nature is its helplessness. Man is created to be possessed. But the spirit of error in him has carefully hidden this fact from him, so that he thinks he is self-sufficient. That was the ground of God's challenge to him through the law: "If you can, do it!"

Conviction of sin and admission of condemnation through the law is really also admission of helplessness; but few see that at the time of conviction, because we are more concerned with consequences than causes. We still labour, therefore, under the delusion that we can do much to serve God aright; and the pulpit is often the worst culprit in making us think so and exhorting us to do so. Even the Bible, misread by those who don't yet understand (and meant to be so misread, till they learn their lesson) appears to be full of exhortations to us to obey the commands of God.

This is why Paul reintroduces law in his statements about effective Christian living, and heads it up in the great law chapter, Romans 7. Most significant is that it follows Romans 6 and precedes Romans 8. It was not put here idly. Paul is following through his masterful train of thought in the whole letter. Romans 6: We, the redeemed, have been freed once for all from our old slavery to our old master in the cross of Christ. Let us now walk in newness of life. How do we so walk? Not under law, but by the Spirit, and Romans 8 outlines that triumphant life.

But wait a moment. Before we can walk confidently in Romans 8, we have a lesson to learn. We have lived under a form of elementary religion, the law; and the law kept telling us to do this or not do that. Why? Because it had a deep and subtle error to expose. We thought we could do things by our own strength, so

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God sent the law, in grace, to catch us out. We did not do the things we thought we could. We did not keep God's law. But more than that. We *could* not keep it.

Now, said Paul in Romans 7, watch the effect of being "under the law." It says to you: You do this. We say we will and want to (we delight in the law after the inward man). But we find a contrary principle at work in us, compelling us to do the things the flesh wants to do, not the Spirit—and we follow the flesh. We find we are "sold under sin," and that "sin dwells in me." How is this? Because, not

# Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this magazine is to further the great high calling of the Lord Jesus to carry His Gospel to the whole world. This calling is known in the Christian world as the Great Commission. Our interpretation of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ is the second member of the Trinity, fully God, made manifest in the flesh. He was tempted in all points as we are, but totally without sin. He was crucified for the sins of the world, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. He gives the power to become the sons of God to all who receive Him.

Beyond this forgiveness of sins, *The Intercessor* is committed to proclaiming to every creature the mystery of the Gospel, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost means that Christ has joined Himself to us as one spirit (I Cor. 6:17). Thus we see that Christ has reproduced Himself in our flesh, and we Christians are really Christ living as us (Gal. 2:20).

Therefore, there is not only the forgiveness of sins but also a life in Christ of knowing we are dead to sin (Rom. 6). Furthermore, we are dead to the Law (Rom. 7), since the power of sin is through the Law. Christ is the only Lawkeeper (Rom. 8), and there is no independent human nature that can keep the Law, though we are continually tempted to believe so.

Belief in an independent human nature is Satan's lie and the root of sin. Non-Christians are really Satan-indwelt, expressing his lusts (John 8:44), just as we have come to learn that Christians are Christ-indwelt, expressing His righteousness (2 Cor. 6:16). Humans have no moral nature of their own, meaning that we are simply expressions of the indwelling deity nature, either of Christ or Satan (the fallen created being who is the spirit of error). Sin in a Christian is a result of believing again Satan's lie that there is a human nature which can do good or evil.

Our full restoration, then, is to see ourselves as Christ in the world and to labor and travail to see Christ formed in others according to the mighty working of the Spirit. This is "intercession," the definite laying down of our lives to present every man perfect in Christ (Col. 1:28). *The Intercessor* is committed to this great and thrilling commission, the cost of bringing it about, and the resurrection joy of reaping the harvest! having yet fully understood our selves, we have not yet grasped the fact that selfreliant self *is* sin, that is what Satan is, and self-reliant self can only desire to please itself, that is the power of sin in it. But in Christ we are no longer self-reliant selves; instead, we are containers of Him. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. He, who is love, is Himself *the* law, and lives that life of love through us.

Then what has happened? If that is so, why do we experience the bondages and defeats of Romans 7? Because, not having completely learned, or easily forgetting, the basic helplessness of self, and its only function to be the container of the Spirit, we are constantly assaulted by temptation to be something or do something or not do something. Obey those commands, pray more, give more, witness more, be more patient, don't lose your temper, get rid of those evil thoughts, struggle against your lusts, and so on. The real answer to all these is Christ within. He is the Person like this. and I boldly reckon on Him to live like that in me. But because I have been so used through the years to do things for myself, before I know where I am, I have slipped back into the *illusion* of being an independent self, and set about trying to obey that law. The moment I do that, I have slipped back into Romans 7, and am in the flesh, in bondage to indwelling sin; and of course I cannot do the things that I would, and do the things that I would not. It is an illusion that I act as if I was temporarily out of Christ and under an external law; though the effects of the illusion, the sin I commit is no illusion, but a reality that has to be confessed and cleansed.

So Paul says we believers have nothing to do with Romans 7. It is not a chapter for us, we do not live there. He categorically starts by saying that we are like a wife whose husband has died and so can legally marry another. Thus we have died to the law in the death of Christ, and been married to another, the risen, indwelling Christ. We have exchanged the elementary religion of external law for the adult "religion" of the indwelling Christ who lives the law in us. Having said that in the first six verses of the chapter, he spends the remainder of the chapter describing the condition of those who *forget* they are no longer under external law, or who have

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not learned law's deepest lesson—to teach us, not only our guilt, but our helplessness; and who as a consequence slip into trying to respond to law's demands, and at once find that they are temporarily enslaved again to the spirit of self-love which has its home in independent self. Thus trying to do good becomes a believer's chief sin, in place of trying to do evil, the sin of the unbeliever.

Law is always with us, as is the flesh, the devil, the world. They are not dead, but we dead to them. Therefore, law is always round the corner to catch us out, and we need catching out until we learn our lesson. Every sort of enticement can be law to an earnest soul. We read a stirring biography. Why aren't we like that? Down we go under false condemnation, because we have allowed an external "You ought" to slip in instead of "Christ is whatever He pleases to be in me." These constant exhortations to be better Christians, even the commands of Scripture, become external law to us, instead of, "Lord, you are all those things in me. Please live them out through me." For the hidden secret of the Bible is that its commands are to the new man, which is Christ in me, not just lonely me. See how John writes, "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments..." But then he quietly adds, "But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected...He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

In temptation it is the same. Enticement comes, followed by the warning frown of the law, "You must not." If we follow that and try not to, we are back in the bondage of helpless self, and sin in the flesh. The answer is to remember Christ living in us. He is God's "way of escape" when temptations "take" us. The relationship between us and sin, flesh, world, and law, is that between light and darkness. Where is the darkness when light is shining? It is there, yet it isn't there. Withdraw the light, there is the dark. It is kind of swallowed up by the light, as the Scripture says mortality will be swallowed up of life. So it is with flesh and Spirit. We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, Romans 8 says. Yet the flesh is there. Where? Swallowed up while we walk in the Spirit. And when it begins to shew its head by temptation, the answer is to reaffirm our

stand in the Spirit. Turn the light on, and where is the dark? And so with the world and the devil—and the law.

The use of the word "death" in the Scripture needs understanding also. It is never used except as the reverse side of resurrection. In other words, if there is a death on one plane, there is always a resurrection on another. Death is never dissolution. People can be in bondage because they imagine, for instance, that if they are dead to sin, they should never have any feelings or response again in that direction. But when the Scriptures say that lost humanity is "dead in trespasses and sins," that certainly means dead towards God. But does that mean that God can make no approach to us and we no re-

# Editor's Note

When reading Paul's letters (especially in Romans), it's easy to get bogged down in the language and depth of the content. Scripture that delves into our "walk with the Spirit" and our relationships to sin, flesh and the law can be daunting and difficult to decipher. Praise God for Norman Grubb, and others, who were able to take their God-given revelations and put them down for us in a way that we can understand and apply in our lives! This issue of *The Intercessor* features several articles that help illuminate scripture dealing with the role of the law in the Christian life.

Our "Q&A" and "Words to Live By" articles for this issue are a great place to start—each simply and clearly stating what the law is. In the "Q &A," Page Presponse? Obviously not. So also when we are dead to the world, and to sin, and have crucified the flesh, it does not mean that we have passed into a realm where such are non-existent and cannot appeal to us. What death and resurrection mean is that we are officially out of one realm and in another. If dead towards God, we are clean outside the kingdom of God, though not outside appeals from it. If dead towards sin, it is likewise. If, as a member of one nation, I change my nationality, I die to my former country and "rise" to my new one; but that does not mean I cannot visit the old country, or be appealed to to return. So it is with our new relationship in Christ towards law, sin, flesh, world. Thank God, that means really out of them and really in Christ, though not out of reach of their enticements and solicitations, and sometime paying them visits from which I have to return with confession and for cleansing.

#### -God Unlimited

For many years after his retirement as General Secretary of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, Norman Grubb traveled extensively sharing the truth of our union with Christ. He was the author of many books and pamphlets, a number of which are available through the Zerubbabel Book Ministry. Norman P. Grubb entered the Kingdom at 98 years of age.

witt then makes it come alive by sharing what her failure to keep the law revealed to her in her own life.

In our lead article "Law: God's Grace?," Norman Grubb breaks down what a right relationship to the law means in a victorious life, explaining that Paul "makes it as important to understand what it is to be dead to the law as to be dead to sin." Most Christians still feel bound to try to keep the law after accepting Christ. In trying to be "good Christians" they are brought to make one of two choices to handle the fact that they can't be. They either choose hypocrisy by pretending that they are succeeding, or they choose to be honest-bringing them to a Romans 7 experience. Regardless of which category you fall into, Norman biblically and logically lays out the fact that there is no independent human self apart from Christ that can keep the law.

"If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under law" (Gal 5:18). What does this mean? Norman expounds on this in our "Bible Bedrock" feature, in an excerpt from *The Deep Things of God*.

Continuing on, Carol Hoffman's article "Closer to God: Impossible" touches on this theme as well. She explains how all of her efforts to be a "good Christian" in her church did not work. In reality, her view of her works bringing her closer to, or further away from God was just a lie.

This issue also continues with Part Two of the transcript of Scott Prewitt's teaching on Body, Soul, and Spirit. In this interactive question/answer format, you can picture Scott in dialogue with a group of young adults. He interacts with his audience—shedding light on our make-up as persons, with scriptural references of who and what we are.

Anoth ust-read" is a personal testimony from Dacia Trethewey on the topic of singleness vs. marriage. In this world where the v of marriage can be so distorted, Dacia shares how she came to her Total Truth view of singleness, in this compelling letter to help a struggling friend. Married people...do not exempt yourselves from reading this! How many of you married with a view of gaining completeness from your spouse? This article can be illuminating for you as well.

Our final mentions are of two letters written by our beloved Norman. One short

personal letter offers a biblical view on the topic of physical suffering. The other, a letter to his "very dear Co-knowers," spells out how our message differentiates from that of the mainstream Church: "We never had a human self by itself"!

Thank you for reading *The Intercessor*—God's means for getting this message out to the world. We hope you glean

a lot from it and that it helps you in your daily walk with Christ in you, as you. Enjoy!



## Question:

I know the Bible says we are not under the law but under the spirit; however, despite my best efforts I continually fail to live the kind of life God tells us to live. What advice can you give me?

# **Answer**:

The way I understand law is that it is, simply put, "the way a thing works." It is not the law that kills but Satan's misuse of us in relation to the law—him telling us we can and must keep it (Rom. 7:11). When I trust that it is Christ living and that I'm not just "an alone I" but am Christ/I, then it is Christ living in and through me that keeps His law and fulfills His doctrine perfectly.

I've found that my failure to keep the law turned me to God. It was my trying to keep God's law and failing over and over that brought me to the end of the trying. I gave up because I learned through years and years of defeat that I could not be what God wanted me to be. I had run to God for years begging for His help to change me but He was silent. I got more and more desperate and life seemed totally hopeless. Then the time came when out of His total love, grace, and mercy He chose to reveal His hidden mystery to me— "Christ in me the hope of glory." It was as I learned that I was not alone and Christ was joined to me and that He was there to live His life as me that peace, light, hope, and victory became my experience. The truth became mine by faith. I simply began to believe what God said in Gal. 2:20, Col. 1:27-29, and 1 Cor. 6:17. The Bible says in John 15:5 that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. In other words, I took God at His word and trusted Him to do for me what I was 100% unable to do—live a right life.

What a joy to accept myself at last. Being able to do so only because the real me is He in and through me. By His grace my faith in Him being His wonderful self in me has not wavered these last 20 odd years. I have found life to be full, exciting and busy, but most importantly, I know my life, because it is Christ, counts for something eternal.

God, indeed, does have means of making a way so plain to us that neither man nor devil nor our own trembling hearts can shake our certainty.

-The Law of Faith

Exactly what the spoken word of faith effects we do not know. The nearest we can say is that it is the spiritual act of taking and using. Faith is the spiritual hand. Faith must reach out and take the promises, and the public evidence of such taking is the spoken word of faith. The word of faith is the act of taking and applying His power according to need. What we actually take we actually have, and when the decisive word of faith has been spoken, God in his grace begins to work, and as the stand of faith is persisted in the answer appears.

-The Law of Faith

Faith is not the banishing of all difficulties, but their subordination to greater certainties.

-The Law of Faith

To give up is faith's unforgiveable sin. -The Law of Faith

When at last we transfer our believings from our outward suffering conditions, and our consequent resistance to them and our defiance of Himself in them, and believe in Him and His word of grace with no strings of questioning attached, then we have found the key and turned it in the lock: our real suffering was our inner unbelief.

-Who Am I?

# ROAD PLAN F

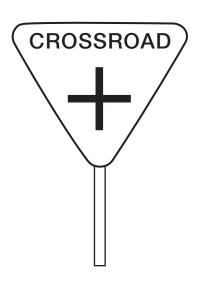


Stop and take a look at your life. Are you satisfied with where you are headed? If you died tomorrow, can you be certain you'd end up in heaven?

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

If not, then you are at a real crossroads. You can choose to stay with Satan calling the shots or opt for a Savior who will take charge of your life.

"Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).





Once you've chosen Christ, He does the doing, and there's no turning back. All you have to do now is believe!

"As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6).

If you have already received Christ, or would like to do so now, write your name on the "reserved" sign. Now you are ready to use this simple picture chart with a friend. It's easy!

# OR SALVATION

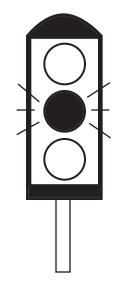


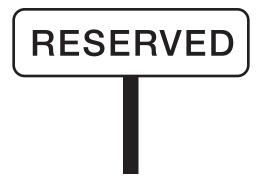
Satan is out now and Christ is in. It's Him we can trust for everything. Believing in who we are - Christ in our unique and wonderful form - is all we must do!

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Be cautious of Satan, as he attempts to trick you from the outside. You are no longer one of his and he isn't happy about that.

"Be careful! The devil is your enemy. And he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat. Refuse to give in to him. Stand strong in your faith" (I Peter 5:8-9).





Your eternal parking spot is now forever reserved. You can rest in that wonderful thought!

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

We would love to hear from you about anyone who receives Christ through your sharing this "road plan of salvation."



by Carol Hoffmann

For a number of years, I yearned to be and feel closer to God. I struggled to spend a sufficient amount of time with Him in prayer or reading my Bible. Often I fell asleep during the endeavor. I even struggled to pray without ceasing like the Bible commands. I came reasonably close to doing it for one day (laugh out loud). I struggled to think and say the "right things." I wanted to look, to my church friends and the unsaved world around me, like a strong Christian, who was close to God.

I went to church two or three times a week, sang and praised God loudly and "felt happy and closer to God while doing so. I thought I was a spiritual leader at my church, as someone that could encourage and counsel others. I visited an elderly woman once a week and even cleaned the church. I received praise from my pastor and church friends for these things and I ate it all up. Inside, I experienced emotional ups and downs that I thought reflected how close I was to God. I soothed myself by working hard in "Christian" endeavors and also by comparing myself arrogantly to those around me. None of this worked.

The Good News and the answer is: We cannot get "closer" to God since He al-

ready lives in us. This is only true, if you have been born again.

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?..." 1 Corinthian 6:19 NASB.

In John 15:5 it says, He is the Vine, we are the branches...No separation there. He is the Head we are the Body. No separation there (Col. 1:18 NASB & Corinth. 12:27).

We were not even separated from Him on the cross. In Galatians 2:20-Amplified Bible, "I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the Life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

The Truth is not what we feel or even what we think about our "relationship/closeness" with God, it is what God says in the Bible. Since the Bible says, we are one with Him, and He lives in us and through us, it is then actually Him, as us, doing our jobs, eating meals, talking to people and more. To believe or live any other way is not of faith and the Bible calls it sin/satan operating through our members.

# Walk in the Spirit

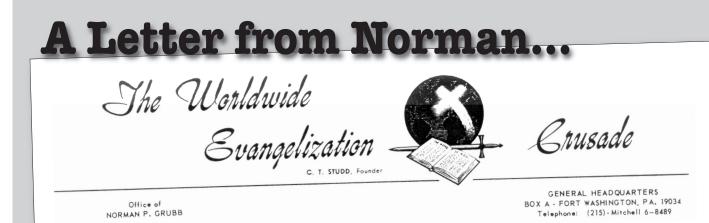
But I say, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. –Galatians 5:16-18

The Accuser of the brethren will cast doubts on our crucified position in Christ, and try to tell us that our "old man" is still very much alive in us. That is a falsehood. But many accept it, and drag their feet through life on the false assumption that they have a divided self, a divided heart, a divided nature. Their conception of Christian living is a continuous struggle, a losing battle between their old nature and their new: "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh; these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." But that does not mean two coequal natures battling in the believer one against the other. We have only one nature at a time; we cannot have more, for our nature is our very selves. We were by nature the children of wrath, we are partakers of the divine nature. That is the death and resurrection in Christ. No half measure about that! The old nature is the old man which has been crucified with Christ. The new nature is the new man, which is we risen with Christ and Christ living in us. This verse of Gal. 5:17 on flesh and (the human redeemed) spirit is a concentration in a few words of the teaching of Rom. 7.

We live and walk in the Spirit, led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25, 16, 18). We are not then walking in the flesh (independent self), which we have crucified (5:24). Because we are not walking in the flesh, the law has no claim on us, for it only presents its demands to independent self (5:18). Because the law has no hold on us, the lusts of the flesh (the motions of sin in the flesh) are not stimulated by its challenge to impose their demands on us (flesh lusting against spirit), and to dominate our helpless self (ye cannot do the things that ye would). While we abide in Christ, we are dead in Him to law, and therefore dead to sin which is by the law.

But if we do not walk in the Spirit, then we return again under law, into the flesh and self-effort, and therefore under the dominion of sin in the flesh. That is not a question of an old and new nature, which was settled at the new birth. This "flesh and spirit" matter is a question of the daily walk, and the possibility of slipping back any time for a visit to the flesh and thus to sin, law and condemnation.

-The Deep Things of God



June 8

Dear Kathy,

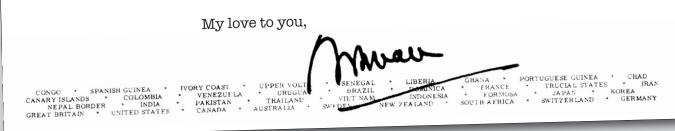
Yes, dear, our oppositions are God's ways of "forcing" us to hear only Him and take no note of other folks' attitudes or leavings of us, beyond anything He says to us, and never accepting self-searching, but only that quiet confirming beautiful inner word of the spirit. GO RIGHT ON—He in you, is you, as you!!

Love, we certainly face physical sufferings. Paul makes that quite plain in his "victory chapter" Romans 8:23-28. I see it like this. We first accept all conditions as perfect, and perfectly meant by our God of perfect love. So we accept and praise, no light thing. And this includes saying with Paul His Philippians 1:20 ("according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.") including "death," for we take no notice of that; we have died long ago, and only move on to the more perfect dimension—with him.

But then as we accept and praise, we do not center our believing on any physical condition, however real it physically is. We constantly believe that we are in God's health.

As we do that, we take any physical remedies available but also accept Paul's word in Romans 8:11, for "quickenings" in our body; and I see by our believing in Him rather than the physical conditions and doctor's opinion about them, very often there are real both quickenings and deliverances. And so with R., how beautiful it is to hear of his present believings and compassion for others. We can't assess our abilities by how much they are used in this dimension—we are eternal.

So we keep seeing GOD ONLY in all,



"If you confess with your mouth. 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart...you will be saved." –Romans 10:9

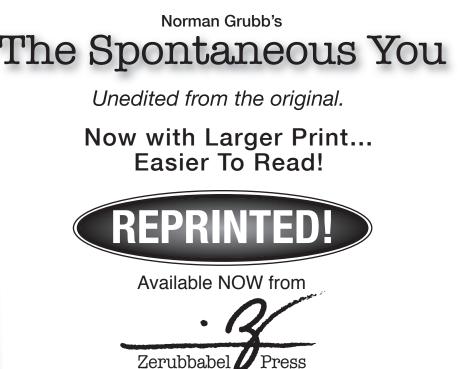
All Christian relationships are two-way, not one-way. They are horizontal as well as vertical. This is to say, we are a two-way people. We are not just isolated units living in a vertical relationship with an isolated God.

"The word of faith," we read in Romans 10:8-10, is two-way, with the heart towards God and with the mouth before man. Indeed, it takes it farther and says that to experience in our hearts and lives the full benefit of our faith we must express it both ways, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," that is to say, the heart-believer is accounted righteous before God; but it is "with the mouth" that "confession is made unto salvation," that is to say, we realize in our experience the joyful fact that we are saved. Confession before man does something in our hearts that heart-faith alone never does.

So saving faith, the attitude of brokenness, is a two-way activity, towards God and man, as are righteousness and love and indeed all the relationships of Christian living. Indeed, we can put it this way. We can liken a man to a house. It has a roof and walls. So also man in his fallen state has a roof on top of his sins between him and God; he also has walls up, between him and his neighbor. But at salvation, when broken at the cross, not only does the roof come off through faith in Christ, but the walls fall down flat, and the man's true condition as a sinner saved by grace is confessed before all men.

-Summit Living

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# LETTER TO CO-KNOWERS

January 1987

My very dear Co-Knowers,

I received many loving cards and messages from so many of you. I think they officially called it a heart attack, but it was really only just a heart touch from which I'm fully recovering and hoping in due course to continue along with Sandie with my visits and times with the different ones of you. Of course we all know, as Paul said, that we "know no man after the flesh," not even ourselves, so we're not soul and body, but are marvelously spirit fused with The Spirit, and our soul bodies are only just convenient agencies, and we shall exchange them for our resurrection bodies which is "far better," and then we shall marvelously be co-heirs with our Jesus Himself, and co-lambs and co-lovers of the universe entrusted to us. Thank God we did our real dying long ago in His death and rising, so what we call our physical dying is anyhow only an incident and a leap into glory! But I'm still thankful that it's been given to me to remain along with you and see the further stages of the uprising of God's army among us.

One of our newer WEC leaders, who with his wife, are marvelously co-knowers with us by the Spirit, and with whom Page had living contact on her recent British tour, have written me calling me "Dear Older Brother," so I'm writing to you all a kind of dear elder brother letter! I write to you, not merely as Co-Knowers, but by the marvelous revelation in the Spirit we are a rising army of Co-Transmitters. Once we were walking Satans, but now through Calvary walking Christs, and we never were walking independent selves! That revelation burns, as Jeremiah said, like a fire in our bones, and we as a rising army now pull no punches in our total sharing of what we know to be our total truth. It is what Page recently named our "Total Life Ministry" and we make no compromises in our total sharing of it. Our great thrill is that, while by God's grace we are Co-Knowers and Co-Transmitters, we are now seeing an ever-enlarging army of what I might call the "Co-Transmuted." By that I mean that they are those who, as we, have experienced this marvelous "transmutation" from being Satan-expressors to being Christ-expressors. It began with ones and twos of us, then it became tens, and now hundreds, and becoming thousands, because we together have the faith of God in that prophetic word coming true that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." And that is our commission. We are not one whit different from any other member of this wonderful body, but to us it is given to know by grace who we really are, and to be commissioned to help the other members of the body know the same.

## WHAT THEN IS OUR CLAIM TO UNIQUNESS

We need continually to be reminding ourselves, and boldly sharing with others, what it is that we boldly call our uniqueness. On what grounds do we say that we have a unique commission? How dare we say that we are saying

what the apostle Paul said and what St. Augustine said, and what Luther said, and what we are now saying as if we ourselves are like a 20th century reformation? What is this uniqueness? We ourselves must be so sure of it, and so sure of our biblical basis to it, and of our own inner knowing of it, that we shall stand up for it, as Luther did. "Here I stand and can do no other." For we are still bound in our day to meet plenty of intense opposition, even from our beloved brethren in Christ.

What is this bold uniqueness? It is not our new birth experience. Thank God there are today millions who are new creations in Christ. We are born again and all out for the Lord and wholeheartedly want to be for Him and work for Him and glorify Him as much as we used to do for the devil. But that has not solved our problem, for it is not a matter of just a consecrated or surrendered life. Further than that, many are coming to know these days that the truth is not only Christ for us but Christ in us. Many will now say He is the vine and we are the branches, and we are His co-workers and co-witnesses, and we go forward by His enabling. Many will say further that we have experienced the gifts of the Spirit, which have been so widespread these days in so many different forms. But still that is not the total answer! What then is the answer! Where is the missing spot? Where still is the unfulfilled area of failure? It is in the "me" part of it. What is the human self and how am I "complete in him" as much as He complete in me? Paul's challenge of Col. 1:28 to fit in with the "Christ in me" of 1:27! That is where the body of Christ is still in so many ways in such a delusion.

In my own pilgrimage years, it was not in lack of zeal for Christ or the experience of his power. In my army days I formed a movement called Christ's Own (C.O.) among officers and the men. In my college days God broke through and the InterVarsity Fellowship (I.V.F.) was started, which is around the world today. It was not in my all-out dedication, when Pauline and I went out in 1920 to join C.T. Studd in the Congo. Then where was the problem? My problem began to take shape when I began to live among the Africans. It was not a question of the Christ part of my relationship with Him, but of the inconsistent me. I was caught by C.T. Studd's continual word of seeing "Jesus Christ running about inside black bodies." He was not interested in making churches, but in people expressing Christ. I saw the same in Paul saying "he travailed in birth until Christ was formed" in the Galatians. The Christ was not the problem, the us, the bodies was the problem! I came much closer a couple of years later after reading Mrs. Penn Lewis's writings sent out to us. Pauline and I spent that night in a banana plantation in the Congo forest battling out the Galatians 2:20, and after five hours we spoke the word of faith for ourselves. We both then did get great Spirit revelation when we saw it is "not I but Christ."

But there still remained this question. What is this "I"? Yes Christ in me, or Christ as me, or even Christ is me. But what is the me? The wavering and often inconsistent me?

The following years there was light and help given, as explained in the books I was led to write, during my thirty five years as secretary of the WEC in their rapid enlargement.

I also got great help through the years in the reading of the mystics, and I hope to leave a good shelf or two of

them behind, when I've gone, for others of you who might find help from them.

But the greatest light began to dawn when I got hold of the writings of Jacob Boehme and his interpreter William Law; from them I got fundamental biblical light on God as The One Self in the universe and all created selves as derivatives of this One Self, as in biblical terms, vessels, branches, body members, temples, slaves.

But depriving the created self of its claim to independent self raised questions among us. But as usual by the law of the opposites, great light comes through great darkness. So we went through some painful divisions among us. Yet out of that at last came the shining of the total light we were seeking. There never has been anything else but only One Self in the universe. All created selves are mere derivatives of the One Self. *There never has been such a thing as a self independent from being an expression of The Self.* 

We see that nothing in the universe can operate except by its interaction with its opposite: light swallows dark, sweet, bitter, heat, cold etc. So our living God, the fire self Heb. 12:29 in the eternal begetting of his Son becomes eternally the Light Self (1 John 1:8). Fire, which is self for self, becoming light, which is self for others. The whole universe is then a glorious reproduction of the Three in One. The fire expressed in the light of other love and reproduced by the Third, the Spirit in all forms of perfection in the universe.

We understand that the created self can only become conscious self as in the two trees in the Garden by its choice. Lucifer became the one created being to choose to be self for self, instead of an expression of God, the self for others. We now know why Jesus called Satan the liar from the beginning, because he was caught up in that lie of himself being an independent fiery self for self. When in essence he's a reproduction of the fire self of God which in God is eternally the light self. In his delusion of thinking he is an independent fire self for self he impregnated our fallen human selves at the fall with the same delusion, of being independent selves.

Right through from our unredeemed days, when we were in reality expressing Satan in his self for self nature as though ourselves, and right through into our redeemed selves, right up to Romans 7, where we redeemed selves still regard ourselves as independent selves, whether good self or bad self (Rom. 7:21). Now by some means our human independent selves can express Christ's Deity Self. And that is the lie. *There never has been an independent ent human self anymore than there was ever an independent Satan self.* We only have always been expressions of God's fire self expressed in its self for self form by Satan's fire self, and he making us think that it is just ourselves—the Lie.

So here we come to that vast illusion which makes our message unique. Practically the whole redeemed Church of Christ regard themselves as human selves, expressing in some form the Divine Self. We never had a human self, by itself. We were created beings, and our created being never changes its basic created beingness, but it expresses the nature of the deity being (just like a computer only expresses it's programmer). Formerly that false self for self satanic deity nature, but now through Calvary, in place of expressing Satan's deity nature, we express

Christ's self-for-other deity nature (2 Pet. 1:4). There never has been such a thing as an independent self expression of ourselves.

God particularly brought it into focus for us through our Page Prewitt in the fact there never was a human independent self. In other words, all humanity is Satan expressed through "me," and then through Calvary it is now Christ expressed through me. There never was such a thing as a me expressed through me. That is our uniqueness and that is the missing note in the body of Christ today. Hardly any, even the greatest victorious life teachers know and understand and teach that. It was Paul's hidden mystery expounded in Rom. 7, and then Luther again in his book *The Bondage of the Will*. Now it is for us to express it in the terms given us.

My last book called *Yes, I Am* has been my fullest attempt to put that into print. I think it comes out even clearer in that brochure a leading Nazarene pastore asked me to write, which I've called "It's As Simple As This." Then I added to that a further clarification in an article published in our *Intercessor* magazine called "No Independent Self." This is now printed as a booklet. I've gone still further now in another article the *Intercessor* published called "Here We Stand," showing how we have picked up what God had shown Luther, but was too much for the church of those days to take, in his book *The Bondage of the Will*. I have now written a further article which I have called "Romans Six to Eight: Paul's Key to the Liberated Life."

### Soldier-Intercessors

Finally I thought I would just remind you that we are all learning together that the topmost of our high calling is as intercessors, and the summit of our ministry is to know the biblical and spiritual reality of being an intercessor. A far cry from the normal concept of intercession being just intercessory prayer. The widespread book on the life of Rees Howells has opened many eyes to look for the right answer. I have written a pamphlet on Intercession giving the five main periods in my life when I knew the call of the Spirit to be an intercessor. That death-life principle of John 12:24 and 2 Corinthians 4:11-12, which really is by grace the summit of our knowing and being who we are, He the Intercessor Spirit in us (Rom. 8:27) and how we can now illustrate and explain this to others as well as knowing it in our own lives the meaning of Paul's final Philippians 3 word: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Which was Paul the intercessor to the Gentiles.

So with our much love and abounding joy and praise, and thanking so many of you for your concern for me in my little physical bout from which the Lord is now delivering me.



# BUDY, SOUL, & SPIKIT

Continued from our previous issue, this article is a transcription of a teaching lesson given by Scott Prewitt at a fellowship weekend in North Carolina in 1998. What his mother, Page Prewitt, has written so clearly and succinctly on many times in The Intercessor and in her booklet "Life: The What, The Who, The Why," Scott brings to life in this discussion.

#### PART TWO

**Scott:** Is everyone ready to get back to our discussion? Great. Now we can examine how our human spirit is connected to another spirit. That's right, your spirit is never alone. We are hooked-up with either the Holy Spirit or with Satan's spirit. This is what I mean when I say that there is no such thing as an independent self. You are always a slave to one spirit or the other. This is what makes the ultimate distinction between a Christian and a non-Christian. So, let's look to the Bible to see how God describes this.

Romans 6:6—"Knowing this that our old self was crucified with him [Christ] and that the body of sin might be done away with and that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

So, how do we do away with the body of sin? We recognize that Christ died on the cross for us; He has a plan for us, and we need to turn away from our sinful ways and follow Him. When we make that choice, our spirit becomes joined to Christ's Spirit.

Ezekiel 11:19—"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh."

A new spirit within them implies one thing: if we get a

new spirit, then we must have had an old spirit. We did have Satan's spirit. Now, a new spirit will be put in us. Let's read more Scripture.

2 Peter 1:4—"Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

I Corinthians 6:17—"But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with Him in spirit."

Remember, we have two parts. Before you are saved, your spirit is connected with Satan's spirit. However, when you are saved, Satan's spirit gets thrown out, and you become connected with Christ's Spirit. This happens because our spirit must be connected to either the spirit of Satan or the spirit of Christ. Our spirit never exists alone. I Corinthians 6:19 says, "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." So now we can see that we have a body, a soul, and a spirit. We have the body, which is the method of input and output. We have the soul. Thoughts and feelings make up the soul. We have spirit which is made up of desire, will, and mind. Let's talk about desire for a moment. What did we say desire was?

Frank: Either "self-for-self" or "self-for-others."

**Scott:** Yes! Either the spirit of Satan or the Spirit of Christ determines the desire of our spirit. Let me make one thing very clear; when we are unbelievers—that means we have not turned to Christ, confessed our sins and become saved—we are self-for-self because we are joined to Satan's spirit, and Satan is the self-for-self spirit. When you become a Christian, you become a self-forothers person because Christ's Spirit is the self-for-others spirit. You become a self-for-others person because your spirit is hooked up with Christ's Spirit.

Now, let's ask the big question: "How in the world does sin still exist in the believer when we are joined with Christ's Spirit?" Let me begin by saying the one thing that cannot happen is for your spirit to change back to what it was before you accepted Christ. God does not leave or become "unjoined" to your spirit. When He comes in, He joins to your spirit forever. He does not leave. You are always, therefore, a self-for-others person. I don't believe there is anything you can do to lose your salvation. One reason I think this is because salvation is a gift, free from God. It is based on God's grace. If there is absolutely nothing I can do to deserve or earn His free gift, and God decided to bestow it on me anyway, then I don't think it will be taken away. If I cannot do anything to deserve it, then there is nothing I can do to "undeserve" it. But, as Paul asks in Romans 6:1-2, "Should I continue to sin because grace abounds? Heavens no!" There are still consequences in life and the Hereafter.

When Satan lived inside of us as unbelievers, he got to know our insides very well. Satan knows your body and soul very well because he was inside of you all those years before you became a believer. Now as a Christian, how does Satan fit into the equation? Just because we are joined to Christ's Spirit and Satan has been thrown out, that doesn't mean that Satan goes away forever and we don't have to worry about him anymore. Satan knows us very well because he lived inside of us. Satan attacks us and bombards us on two levels—on the body level and the soul level. Tell me, what are some of the ways Satan tempts us through our bodies?

Group: Alcohol, drugs, food, sex.

Scott: Good. What about on the soul level?

Group: Hate, lust, greed, pride.

**Scott:** Yes! The way Satan tries to get at us is to tempt us through our body and soul. Like I said earlier, I believe that our spirit is impenetrable in that Satan cannot in any way get to our spirit. Again, what he would really like is to get back into the "driver's seat" so he could boss us around freely. That's the way he really wants it to be. However, Satan cannot affect our spirit anymore, so he goes after our body and soul. The problem is that, when I choose to give in to temptation, I choose in my will to go against the fact that Christ and I are joined together. Let's look at some very important verses that talk about this.

Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things in Christ..." and James 1:4 states that in Christ, I'm "...whole and complete, lacking nothing."

You get into unbelief when you have a feeling in your soul and you act out on it with your body.

For example, I feel jealous that someone else has more money than I do. Soon, this jealousy turns into depression because I start to feel sorry for myself. I might ask myself a question like, "Why does he get all the good stuff in life that I cannot afford?" If I do not bring God into the equation with these thoughts and feelings, I'll feel more and more depressed. Eventually, I will probably resort to new methods of making myself feel better. I might begin to drink or even take drugs. This is how unbelief in the soul can be seen in the body.

However, since I am joined to Christ, "I am whole and complete, lacking nothing." I am not any better or worse off because I have more or less money than someone else does. I have exactly what I need because I am whole and complete lacking nothing. The sin is that I believe against the fact that I am in union with Christ's spirit. But even in this unbelief, the truth remains that Christ is still in you and is in union with your spirit. Christ does not take a vacation. He remains joined to your spirit, but your choice (in your will) is not to believe that fact. That's how we sin as Christians. Let's look at Hebrews 4:12:

"For the word of God is full of living power, sharper than a double edge sword penetrates, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires, it exposes us for what we really are. It divides and penetrates soul and spirit."

This verse is talking about the Word of God. Did you know that Christ is referred to many times in the Bible as "the Word"? Since Christ lives in us, His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, divides and penetrates soul and spirit. This tells me that soul and spirit inside of me can seem confusing since they are going on all the time. But Christ lives inside us and is able to divide soul and spirit. If you will keep soul and spirit separate, and make your choices from Spirit Truth, then I can guarantee you a sinfree life. The problem comes when your thinking gets a little "gray and muddy," and it looks like soul and spirit are together, one and the same.

Let's see what it looks like when we try to put soul and spirit together. Let's look at some simple temptations. When your spirit is joined with Christ's Spirit, the spirit itself is free of sin by your desire. Your desire is for a selffor-others life since that is Christ's desire. Remember, your will is where you make your choice. Plus, you know that your desires are Christ's desires. The roots of sin are found when soul and spirit look like the same thing. To demonstrate, let's look at this statement: "I am afraid to talk in front of people." Here is the problem. First let's define the "I." As a believer, your spirit is joined to Christ. So the "I" is really *me plus Christ* joined together; therefore you must put Christ at the beginning of the sentence. You would then say that Christ is afraid to talk in front of a group. Is that fact or fiction?

Eddie: Of course, it's fiction.

**Scott:** Is Christ afraid to talk in front of a group? Did Christ live out a fearful life on this earth? Does the Bible say I can do all things through Christ? It doesn't say I can do all things, except talk in front of a group, through Christ. "I am afraid" is the unbelief. The right believing is that I feel afraid in my soul; however, the truth is that Christ does not live a fearful life out through me. This is where I must choose in my will against the feeling of fear. Now, let's do an example that is more appropriate to us here. Let's say you are really attracted to someone of the opposite sex who is a non-believer. You have a few dates with that person, and things seem to be going great. Well, the Bible says, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers..." (2 Corinthians 6:14). You've come to the point where it is obviously time for the relationship to be over after the person refuses to make that Spirit commitment to God and Christ. At the same time, you feel like you can't be without this person because you have grown attached to how he or she makes you feel. You might say something like "I feel like I can't be without this person to whom I'm really attracted. But he/she is rejecting Christ, and I know that's wrong." I've seen this very thing happen often; this is real life. Unfortunately, a lot of people act like they can't live without the person. The problem is that you are joined to Christ's Spirit, and Christ makes it very clear not to be yoked to an unbeliever. To do so goes against God's rules, and to do so is disobedient. So even though I feel like I can't live without the other person, I am going to be obedient to God and end the relationship.

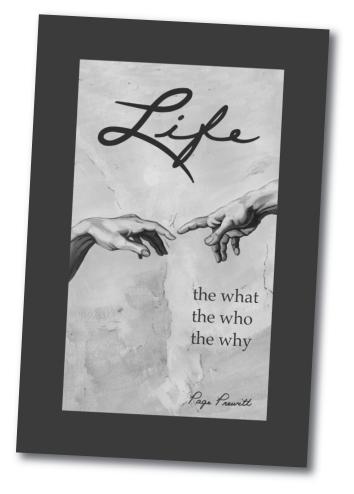
Does everybody understand what I am talking about? Your feelings are where unbelief gets it's root, and the unbelief transfers over to will. You eventually act out on the feeling. The fact is that soul and spirit are two separate things; soul is not who you really are. Who you really are is your spirit joined to Christ.

Even though we haven't had a lot of good things to say

about it, the soul really is a wonderful thing, because God made it first of all. God doesn't make junk. In the souk, there are all these kinds of different things that can bring about temptation, yet at the same time, we feel joy and many other positive things in the soul too. The soul, just like the body, is a tool for God to use. God uses the body when He lives His life out through us. God uses the body to get Himself out to other people. My spirit goes out to the spirit in each of you through the vehicle of my body-through talking, laughing, being friends, that kind of thing. That is how the body is used. The soul is used the same way. For example, Eddie and I connect on an emotional level. We share the same feelings about some things and we share the same thoughts about some things. God uses the soul as a tool for people to connect with each other.

God also uses our brains, which are a part of our souls. God gave us our ability to function here on the earth by using our brains. We reason things out in our brains. For instance, we decide that we shouldn't cross the street because there is traffic coming, and we don't want to get run over by a car. The soul (thoughts and feelings) is supposed to be used as a tool to give input to the spirit about making choices. The soul is not a bad thing, and neither is the body. Even though temptation and sin can enter through the body and soul, righteous living is made evident there also. God uses both the body and the soul as tools to express His love to other people.

So, now you know what the Bible says about body, soul, and spirit. God made us in His image (spirit), and He gave us the ability to choose to either serve Him or reject Him. Remember, don't let your soul rule over you. Don't live by your thoughts and feelings alone. Always remember that it's what God says that counts. If you obediently serve Him, you cannot go wrong.



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# God's Ways Are Perfect

by Dacia Trethewey



In this insightful letter to a friend, Davia Trethewey shares her experiences of dealing with the issues of marriage and singleness, and how, like Paul, she found the "secret of being content in every and any situation," (Phil. 4:12).

#### Dear J.

I'm aware we have had similar struggles, so I want to share some of the things God has graciously showed me in my own life related to having a right perspective of singleness and marriage. As women, we have a natural, normal tendency to find a mate and marry. It is how God designed us and intended us to be. As Christians, the point of marriage is to be joined as one to represent Christ and work together for God's will, as a representation of our union with God (the two shall become one). We are ever bombarded with worldly views of marriage along with our own normal desires for self-worth and completeness, pressure to fit in to normal society, find purpose in life, avoid loneliness, etc. While these are all normal thoughts to have, they are not the sole purpose or foundation for a Godly marriage.

The idea of marriage and singleness is something I've struggled with for many years of my life, because my view was very different than God's, and I preferred my own thinking about it. It wasn't until far into adulthood when my view was corrected, and I finally accepted His view over mine. Most of my life I was driven (although not so much

in an outgoing way) by the desire to find my wholeness and completeness externally, believing a relationship with a man and the hope of marriage would make my life worth living. I also didn't have strong marital modeling at home and found that I trusted little in peopleparticularly males. I'm sure this relates to my relationship with my own father, as we had little trust on either side of our relationship. I mention this because it's important to understand the origins of our belief systems, not to place blame or avoid responsibility. It is certainly my own godless, stubborn way of seeing myself and my circumstances independently (unbelief/sin) that led me further into a godless lifestyle, resulting in desperation and a keen awareness that my life didn't work. After years of searching in all the wrong places, nothing filled the void I knew I had. Even a serious relationship that was leading to marriage couldn't touch that void. I became more desperate and truly wanted an answer for myself. I was a born again Christian and the Holy Spirit has already come into my heart, yet I'm a miserable failure at life. What is the problem, and what is the solution? The answer became loud and clear...eventually.

I'll take a few moments to explain what I have come to believe, as it is the foundation for my changing perspective about life overall and my struggle with marriage and singleness. After reaching a point of desperation and searching (although not passionately searching in the

right places like some Godly people I know), God answered my desperate call for help and gave me the clear answer! The container isn't the problem, and the contents aren't the problem (because after all I had accepted Christ and was "joined to Him one in spirit"). The problem stemmed from what I believed about myself. God showed me through an illustration my mother shared with me at a time when her life had noticeably changed for the better: that as a person, we are made up of three parts: a body, a soul, and a spirit. The body is the outer realm...our physical being. The soul is where we have thoughts and feelings. And the spirit (what REALLY matters) is where we reason and choose, and where we are joined to one of two spirits: Christ (the spirit of truth) or Satan (the spirit of error). Since the fall of man, Satan gained entrance into our inner spirit realm, and we were born joined to him in spirit (Romans 5:12). When we become born again, the spirit of error is kicked out and replaced by the Spirit of Truth/Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). However, Satan can (and does) tempt us from outside the realm of spirit-through our body and soul. He is the "accuser of the brethren," who exercises his God-given right to tempt us. So he bombards us with lies, as this is his only weapon against us. While Satan can only misuse us in our members (our body and soul), he tries to use our body and soul reactions to help aid his lies-as supporting evidence. For

me it usually sounds like my own thought: "I'm just a hopeless failure, and I'm no different than I've ever been and will never be able to change." The problem comes the moment "I" buy the lie: that I'm just myself, an alone "I," who is independent/apart from God. By doing this, I have agreed with Satan and inadvertently (although still accountable for my independent choice/sin) allow him to misuse my members (body and soul). This choice precedes any other outer act of sin. This finally, fully identified my problem.

Thankfully, God provided a perfect solution to our problem. First of all, we defeat Satan by saying no to his lies, and instead say yes to God's truth. The Bible simply reads "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The victory comes when we confess our sin, admit our failure of having any hope to live right in and of ourselves, and trust another (Jesus Christ) to live the right life for us that we could not live. My life changed for the better when I began to BELIEVE differently about myself and see that I am joined to Christ. God says this is true, while Satan say that I'm independent. Right believing plus faith action made the impossible in life possible. I now know that there is another here, Christ in me, doing the action in and through me. My job is to dare to take God at his word and believe he really can and will and IS taking over my life. When we do this, nothing may seem different at the moment and we may see no apparent changes overnight (although often times we do), but a change of believing results in the change of operators and a life that moves from bondage to freedom! Once I saw myself as God sees me, I could

begin to dare to say things about myself that were true of Christ, because this is who God tells us we are in the Bible: "As He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). Our faith is no longer in our independent selves (which is a lie) but in the trustworthy, competent, complete, perfect One who is joined to us. This is great news!

Although this is great news, I didn't take it as good news in all areas of my life. I mentioned my stubbornness, and I have been a passive aggressive force to reckon with in order to keep my original independent view. Why would I resist if changing my believing results in

The victory comes when we confess our sin, admit our failure of having any hope to live right in and of ourselves, and trust another (Jesus Christ) to live the right life for us that we could not live.

freedom? For starters, the lies I believed were well familiar since childhood. Another reason is that I preferred to see myself as a special case by having an overly negative view. God showed me the truth behind this: If we make ourselves up to be anything other than vessels, we are disobedient and in doing so are calling God a liar. Tearing ourselves down or building ourselves up yield the same results: an elevated view, where we seem "important" to ourselves. To be just a vessel like everyone else would mean we have to give up any sense of specialness and importance. When I finally laid down my view and took God's much later in life, I experienced such a relief and grace to be free of it! Satan does not want to give up the ground he has established in our members, and will do all he can to promote his lie of an "independent self" and play it up as if it's the better way to be. Once free of Satan's bondage, we see clearly (like scales falling off our eyes) and often wonder how we lived in it so long now that we know our freedom in Christ!

I hope this background helps explain the view I had of marriage and singleness and why I held onto my view for so long. I agreed with Satan and then he could do my seeing, which was independent. He does not want to give up any ground he has established and works to keep us in bondage. I live in freedom today with a right, Godly perspective when I agree with God and He does my seeing. He sees through all circumstances to a perfect union with God. Because I was single, I would look at marriage as if it were the preferred status and be envious of those around me who have the privilege of marriage. Even if I were married, I would then be longing for the freedom of singleness. Always longing and never satisfied. How miserable! Of course my view of marriage included only positives: a Cinderella/Happily Ever After complex that would make me better. I preferred to overlook the challenges that come with marriage and the sad statistics today that only half of marriages last.

I have learned that both positions of singleness and marriage are a privilege, and both should be seen as a present blessing that could change. Marital status may change for reasons of choice or circumstance. Seeing this has been one of several defining moments about marriage/singleness through the years. Another defining moment came during a significant crossroads in my life. God placed a man in my life, we became friends and were interested in dating each other. I was waiting for God's green light to proceed with a relationship, but instead got a red light. I bargained with God for a very long time over this issue, and couldn't understand why He would put someone in my life like this, why my desires couldn't line up with God's desires, and on top of that, why friends and peers my age would get the very thing I wanted so much yet God withheld from me. I simply refused to see anything beyond my own view, let alone be settled into God's will. I fought this to a degree that I pulled away from close family and friends who have been a significant part of my life, who have always wanted God's highest and best for me, and who have significantly helped me live right. I did not want to accept that God's highest and best did not include what I thought I wanted at the time. I contemplated many alternatives, but in the end, I had to honestly admit that I would not be OK with anything in my life outside of God's will. When God's perfect way for us it doesn't line up with what we think we want at the time is when we seem to struggle the most.

It struck me that even if I got what I thought I wanted at the time (to date and possibly marry this person), and something happened to him (let's say death or injury), then what? I definitely would not be OK and would probably be worse off than my current single status! I realized that if I were to have gotten married at all to anyone without having a right Godly perspective, marriage would have resulted in misery to me and to any spouse. My view of marriage was for my own selfish gain anyway-to make me OK, feel complete, and avoid loneliness. To put that burden on another person is not fair, nor how God intended the sacred union of marriage to be. Another defining moment came with the question: "Why would I want something in my life that God does not want there?," which led to the realization that anything outside of God's not only will never satisfy us, it will result in misery, separation from Him, and irrevocable consequences. Finally I admitted "God is the only thing I can bank on" sealed the deal for me. I was done for, finally let it go and let God's will rule the day, whatever that would be. When faced with situations like this when we are struggling because what we think we want is not in line with God's will, it is only our temporary soul and body reactions we are experiencing in the present moment. Although intense, they are NOT the REALITY. They are temporary, only God is eternal, which is who we all truly desire to be joined to. God always has His highest and best for us. I thought "Who am I to get to pick and choose what's going to be true for me. He created us, He knows best." And as the hymn goes, "Those that trust Him wholly find Him wholly true." He is the only One who is worthy of our trust!

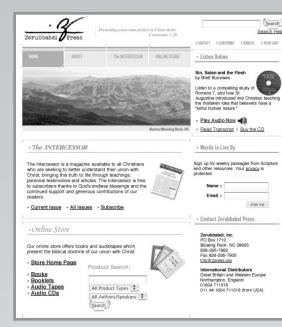
I have been blessed in many ways, most importantly with the freedom I have in Christ. I am relieved today to be a vessel operated by Christ, period. We don't have to know life beyond this moment, and it is our present moment that we claim the truth for ourselves. This privilege and victory over bondage is always ours for the taking. It's a matter of agreeing with God, the creator of the universe and everything in it, who loves us, is pleased to live in us, and lives perfectly through us as willing vessels. It is freeing to know that there's another here to handle whatever He needs to now and in the future. There's not one thing that can be added on to us, because in Christ, we are whole and complete lacking in NOTHING and nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).

I understand that you have and may still be wrestling with some of these same issues and how to determine if what you want is God's will for you. God is not the author of confusion and He gives us clear green lights, especially on such a life-long, life-changing commitment as marriage. I encourage you to accept his red light until He provides a clear green light, and accept that it is His highest and best. God is the one who knows all and sees all. So if He's not providing for us what we think we want or need, it is because He sees the whole plan of our lives and is working out the details as He sees fit for His perfect purpose. I hope you will not make the same stubborn choices I did to resist this. It is only His will that satisfies us-a satisfaction that reaches into eternity (far beyond any of our present and temporary longings and desires). He knows us and told us to "trust in Him-and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

I hope this helps you and I look forward to talking more with you soon!

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-Norman Grubb

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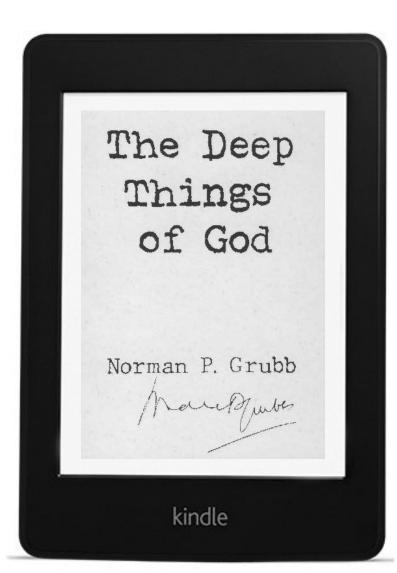


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