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THE CROSS, SELF-DENIAL  
AND THE  
MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

by

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\*\*\*On-line edition - complete and unabridged\*\*\*

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# THE CROSS, SELF-DENIAL AND THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

## INTRODUCTION

The term “**manifestation of the sons of God**” (Rom. 8:19) evokes strong feelings of wonder among many in the church yet evokes feelings of disdain in others. Many splinter groups have taken the manifested sons doctrine to outrageous extremes and this has had a chilling effect on all sober efforts to teach this important scriptural doctrine.

The mere fact that someone teaches the sonship message doesn't mean that he claims to be a manifested son or claims to be sinlessly perfect or to be elitist. I personally don't claim to be a manifested son although I do feel led to teach the sonship message.

The sons of God, when they are manifested, are likely to be humble and gentle like Jesus who was manifested as the only begotten son of God. Jesus is the pattern son, the forerunner (Heb. 6:20), the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). Jesus is the only manifested Son I know! As ancient Israel, before the time of Christ, longed for the coming of the Messiah (the first manifested Son), so now the whole creation longs for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19).

I believe the sons of God will be manifested just prior to the second coming of Jesus which will be just prior to the millennial reign of Christ. Christ will come to His church before He comes for His church. The portion of the church that grows to full maturity in Christ, or as Eph. 4:13 puts it “**the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**” are those who are overcomers. Revelation chapters two and three contain great promises to “**him who overcomes.**” The sons of God who will be manifested are the overcomers who will rule and reign with Christ.

To him who overcomes, Christ will give authority over the nations (Rev. 2:26). This is a great responsibility and a great undertaking. God will give such great authority only to those who have proved faithful in small things. The small thing that is of greatest consequence in our stewardship before God is the self. In this book I will explain the full scriptural definition of the self and how the self is

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sanctified.

God commands that we place no other gods before Him, especially the god of self. We must subdue the self. The self is a small thing in one sense yet in another sense it's the most difficult foe that we ever encounter! Each of us must deal with that which is within ourselves that opposes God. This, of course, can only be done by the grace of God; but we must be faithful in laying hold of the grace of God. The overcomers must overcome self before being entrusted with the greater ministry of subduing things outside the self-life.

The overcomers overcome self by the way of the cross. The term "cross" refers of course, to Jesus' suffering and death for our sins but there is an additional facet of meaning to the term. Each of us is commanded to deny self and to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23). The cross is where Jesus denied Himself and the cross is where each of us must deny our self-lives. The cross is the place of surrender. The individual believer's laying hold of the cross is to deny self, hence "self-denial".

Much of the teaching in this book will be on the subject of self-denial. Denial or surrender of the self is how a Christian allows God to transform the self. Transformation of the self is sanctification and this is how a Christian grows from being a mere babe in Christ to being an overcomer. At a set time in the future the overcomers will be manifested as mature sons of God.

Sanctification is also an often misunderstood subject. Some teach that we are fully sanctified at the time of our new birth. This teaching is part of a theological system often called **sinless perfection** or **perfectionism**. Others teach that complete sanctification occurs during a crisis some time after conversion. This is **crisis sanctification**, more popularly called **the second blessing** or **entire sanctification**. The purpose of my pointing this out is not to disparage Christians who hold such teachings. There is a measure of sanctification that occurs at the new birth and there is a measure of sanctification that occurs at a crisis point sometime after conversion. However, we shouldn't stop there and assume that sanctification is complete.

There is a second blessing but there's also a third blessing and a fourth blessing and so on. In fact I maintain that sanctification takes place daily - a daily blessing! Jesus commanded us to deny self and take up our cross daily. This is **process sanctification**. There is sanctification that takes place in a crisis in which

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we are tested and renew our commitment to Christ and there is also a daily process of sanctification throughout our lives.

Sanctification involves the surrender of self, called self-denial. The world teaches people to build up self and exalt the self. The world and Christianity are at odds here. Christ taught us to lay self down, to surrender to God, to turn the other cheek. The world says to improve self and defend self. Jesus taught us that we must lose self in order to find the self and that if we hang on to self we lose it. Notice that Jesus did teach that we find self (the renewed self) in the end. Ultimately Christ's message is a positive message regarding the self. In fact, as we shall see, Christ's message regarding the self is far more glorious than anything the world has to offer!

"Self-denial" is term which is very often misunderstood. A major reason for the writing of this book is to clear up the common misperceptions as to what self-denial actually means. The first thing that comes to mind when "self-denial" is mentioned is legalistic asceticism. Legalistic asceticism is a rigid lifestyle of harsh living and often leads to self-righteousness and it is not truly God's righteousness. Biblical self-denial, by contrast, is to surrender the self-life and walk by the Spirit in radical commitment motivated by genuine love for God. It yields a close, intimate, one-on-one relationship with God.

Paul, the apostle, in Romans 1:16 said that the power of God unto salvation was unto **"the Jew first."** Later, in Romans 11:28 Paul describes physical Israel as being **"beloved for the fathers' sakes."** Here a distinction is made on the basis of physical, ethnic ancestry. I hasten to add that with respect to salvation there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female but on a different level other than salvation the Lord does regard national origin. My point is simply to inform the reader that I reject replacement theology. The church doesn't replace Israel or any other nation. National distinctions do matter.

The overcomer company shall rule the nations (Rev. 2:26) during the coming millennium. Israel is receiving her homeland now, all the nations shall receive their homelands in the coming eon. As salvation is to the Jew first I believe that the first Christians to be manifested as mature sons of God will be of Jewish ancestry. The first thing that Paul the apostle mentions about Israel in Romans 9:4 is that **"Theirs is the adoption as sons"** (NIV).

May God grant the readers keen insight and joy as they read this book and



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may they avoid the quagmire of legalism and come to a full understanding of God's wonderful plan of sanctification. This sanctification begins with the daily surrender of the self and culminates with the resurrection of the glorified self that fully knows God and will enjoy Him forever.

## CHAPTER I

### THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

In recent years a number of prophetic words have come forth through such seasoned ministers as Bobby Conner, Paul Keith Davis and Heidi Baker that indicate that now is the time for the manifestation of the sons of God. I believe that the prophetic words don't necessarily mean that the manifestation will occur at any minute but that this is the general time for the event. Let's take a brief look at the sonship doctrine and the history of the sonship movement.

The doctrine of the **manifestation of the sons of God** is a Bible doctrine that has seldom been taught or elaborated on until recent generations. The teaching on the manifestation of the sons of God is often called the "**manifested sons message**" or the "**sonship message**" or the "**Kingdom Message**" or "**present truth.**"

In a nutshell the sonship message is the teaching that there is great power beyond the Pentecostal or Charismatic experience and certain believers in the body of Christ will apprehend this greater power and will enter a higher realm of personal holiness and ministry power to bring great deliverance in the end-times.

The message was taught in the 1950s by Bible teachers such as George Warnock, George Hawtin, Bill Britton and many others that are not exactly household names in the body of Christ. The sonship message was

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preached in the outflow of the Latter Rain Revival of 1948. The sonship movement has been and still is a small movement within the overall Charismatic renewal.

There are prominent teachers in the Charismatic movement today, including Rick Joyner, Paul Keith Davis, Bobby Conner and Patricia King whose teachings contain some sonship message themes. I also have taught the sonship message for many years. I've emphasized the role of sanctification in preparing the sons of God to come to full maturity to be ready to be released into the full measure of sonship power to bring deliverance to all creation.

It has saddened me that the sonship message hasn't prospered over the years and remains a largely unknown fringe movement to this day. I have recently seen some encouraging signs though. The message and messengers have matured.

For years many in the sonship movement (not necessarily those named above) were prone to elitism and doctrinal error. There has been a strong tendency by many sonship preachers to over-allegorize the scriptures. This over-allegorization of the scriptures has led many sonship teachers to not see the importance of literal, physical Israel. Many regard Israel simply a past move of God that has no continuing relevance. Some have embraced replacement theology.

I remember sitting in my church in Florida in the 1980s, listening to a sonship preacher allegorize and spiritualize so many things that I began to wonder if he could pour any meaning into any scripture. His message was so hyper-allegorized that I couldn't make sense of it – and I'm a sonship preacher myself!

I contend that Israel is a real people to whom real promises have been made. I'm convinced that the restoration of national Israel is an important part of God's end-time plan. I believe a new sonship message is emerging that rejects the past errors. The new sonship message embraces Israel.

The sonship message is the true full Gospel message. The term "**Full Gospel**" usually refers to Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians. However, it can be said that Pentecostals and Charismatics have only 2/3 of the gospel. Pentecostals and Charismatics have salvation (foreshadowed by the Old Testament feast of **Passover**). They have the gifts of the Spirit (**Pentecost**). Pentecostals and Charismatics, including myself, haven't yet apprehended the fully sanctified, fully empowered, maturity of manifested sonship (**Tabernacles**). When we experientially come into the manifestation of sonship and experience the fulfillment of Tabernacles, then we will truly be Full Gospel.

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## THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

To fully understand the eschatological significance of this doctrine we must understand the connection of the doctrine of manifested sonship with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. In Romans eight, Paul taught about the manifestation of the sons of God in a passage dealing with the resurrection of the dead. **"For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God"** (Rom. 8:19 NASB).

Rick Joyner, Director of MorningStar Ministries of Fort Mill, South Carolina Carolina has said that the resurrection is perhaps the most neglected doctrine in the Bible. My studies of church history has caused me to agree with Rick on this point. As Christians we long for heaven but we must remember that in heaven we are disembodied spirits and our bodies remain on earth awaiting the resurrection. Hebrews 12:23 describes heaven as a place wherein we find **"the spirits of just men made perfect."** In Revelation 21: 2 &10 we read that the holy city, the new Jerusalem will descend from God out of heaven. Heaven is coming to earth!

Planet earth is the place of our habitation for the eons to come. We will not be here as disembodied spirits but our bodies will have been raised from the dead and joined to our spirits in a glorified state. When Jesus spoke about salvation in John chapter six He connected it to the resurrection of the physical bodies of the believers. Jesus said **"Every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day"** (John 6:40 NASB). The phrase **"Raise him up on the last day"** or **"Raise it up on the last day"** occurs no less than four times in this brief passage in John six. The resurrection phrase occurs in verses 39, 40, 44 and 54 of John six. Jesus didn't say "I'll see you in heaven someday as a disembodied spirit." Jesus' view of salvation was of the whole person, that is: spirit, soul and body.

The manifestation of the sons of God can be viewed as a resurrection of certain believers that occurs before the general resurrection of the dead. This is not without precedent in the scriptures. In Matthew 27:52-53 we read **"and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many"** (NASB). This passage is unique to the gospel of Matthew and the incident is not discussed anywhere else in the New Testament. We are not told if the risen saints were recognized or if they spoke or if

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they worked miracles or if they ascended with Christ. All those details remain a mystery. It is also interesting that this is recorded in Matthew which is regarded as the gospel especially directed to the Jewish people.

I regard the passage in Matthew 27:52-53 describing the raising of a small number of dead saints as a type or a picture of the *out-resurrection* which is the manifestation of the sons of God. Paul writes about the out-resurrection in Philippians 3:11 **"in order that I may attain to the [out]-resurrection from the dead"** (NASB). The word for resurrection in this passage is Strong's #1815 **"exanastasis."** This is the only place this word appears in the New Testament. The usual word for resurrection is Strong's # 386 **"anastasis."** The "ex" in front of "anastasis" means "out" hence the "out-resurrection" which is the resurrection that Paul was pressing on to attain.

We can infer from this passage that Paul was pressing on to attain the personal sanctification necessary to qualify for the out-resurrection from the dead which is the manifestation of the sons of God. Each and every one of us should likewise press on in Christ to attain this supreme level of sanctification! When the manifestation of the sons of God occurs will we see Paul among them? We'll have to wait and see.

Let me just say that we look forward to a resurrection before the general resurrection. It will be an "out-resurrection" of saints from past and present who will rise and do great exploits for the advancement of the kingdom of God. I don't presume to know exactly when and how it will occur but I'm sure it will be a glorious time!

## THE DILEMMA OF ROMANS SEVEN

Paul, the apostle, wrote the following words in Romans 7:14 **"I am carnal, sold under sin."** These are puzzling words from the pen of perhaps the greatest apostle of the early church. Some have tried to explain away these words and other words in Romans seven in which Paul tells of his struggle against the "law of sin" or sin nature in his flesh.

Some commentators have said Paul was speaking of his condition before he was born again in Christ. However, the reformers of the sixteenth century and the Puritans of the seventeenth century have pointed out that the context clearly

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affirms that Paul was writing about himself as a mature Christian in daily struggle against sin.

Just one chapter earlier, in Romans chapter six, the Bible teaches that we are dead to sin and the **"old self was crucified with Him"** (Rom. 6:6 NASB). Obviously we have a stunning contrast between Romans six and Romans seven. I maintain that Romans six is speaking about the reborn **spirit** of the believer in Christ and Romans seven is speaking about the **soul** of the believer that is undergoing the process of sanctification. We must remember that the Bible makes a clear distinction between spirit and soul. Hebrews 4:12 speaks of **"the division of soul and spirit"** (NASB).

Your spirit is the core of your being. Your spirit was regenerated when you were born again. The following verses refer to your reborn human spirit. **"Born again to a living hope"** (1 Pet. 1:3 NASB), **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (2 Cor. 5:17), **"he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Titus 3:5), **"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"** (1 John 3:9), **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"** (Gal. 3:26 NASB). And perhaps most convincingly: **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"** (Rom. 8:15).

Your human spirit was born righteous at the new birth, your spirit is fully sanctified, has partaken of the divine nature, cannot sin, cannot fall away and cannot lose it's salvation. Your spirit was reborn as an experientially righteous son (or daughter) of God.

When you were born again your human spirit was born into God's family but the Bible in Romans 8:23 also speaks of the adoption or "placing" as a son in the context of the future resurrection of your physical body in a glorified state. **"Waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body"** (NASB). Your spirit was *born* as a son of God but you are waiting to be *adopted* (i.e., placed) as a son at the resurrection. When you are resurrected in a glorified state you are in essence, revealed (manifested) as a son of God.

The ancient Romans had a placement or adoption ceremony in which a man would publicly place his son, who had come of age, along side him in his business. This Roman custom was roughly similar to the Jewish Bar Mitzvah ceremony. God will place mature Christians by His side one day, at the manifestation of the sons of God.

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Let me explain the biblical concept of adoption so we don't confuse it with the new birth. The Bible in Romans 8:15, 23 and Galatians 4:5 speaks of the adoption of the believer but these verses are not speaking about the new birth of the human spirit. These verses are speaking about our **placement** as mature sons. Adoption in the above verses is the Greek word '**huiothsethia**' which means 'placement' and not 'regeneration.' Regeneration is the Greek word '**paliggenesia**' (Titus 3:5).

We are placed as mature sons after we have been processed by trials and tribulations and having grown in character to full maturity. Romans 8:19 speaks of the **manifestation of the sons of God** which is our adoption as mature sons. This event is still future and has to do with mature sons of God being released into extraordinarily great power in the end times.

Knowing that your human spirit is reborn and is fully redeemed and fully righteous and is presently a son of God gives you great joy and full assurance and security in our walk with God. The Holy Spirit dwells with our reborn human spirit. Romans 8:16 says "**The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God**" (NASB). The verse does not say that the Spirit of God bears witness to our soul that it is a child of God. The Holy Spirit speaks to our spirit that we '*are*' not '*will be*' a child of God. Your born again spirit is a son of God now!

At the new birth the righteousness of Christ is not only imputed to us but is imparted to us in our spirit. Romans 6:11 tells us to **consider** ourselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness. The word in Romans 6:11 translated "**consider**" is the Greek word "**logizomai**" and it is essentially an accounting term and means that we must count ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to righteousness. It refers to a past event, namely the new birth, that caused your human spirit to be born again into a state of experiential righteousness. God would not tell us to 'count' ourselves dead to sin and alive to righteousness if it were not actually already true. Your reborn human spirit is, therefore, presently dead to sin and fully alive to righteousness.

Romans six teaches about the new birth and sinlessness of the believer's spirit. The next chapter, Romans seven, speaks of the processing of the believer's soul and how the soul is still a slave to sin. Romans seven explains that the "**the law of sin**" (the sin nature) dwells in the believer's flesh. Romans eight speaks of the future resurrection of the physical bodies of believers in Christ.

Romans chapters six, seven and eight teach about the salvation of the spirit, soul and body of the believer. Romans *six* emphasizes the salvation of the human

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**spirit.** Romans *seven* emphasizes the sanctification and salvation of the human **soul**. Romans *eight* emphasizes the salvation of the human **body**.

The reformers rightly said that a true born-again Christian cannot lose his salvation. This is because the spirit of the believer is sinless and cannot sin. The believer's reborn spirit certainly cannot commit the unpardonable sin, hence cannot fall away and cannot lose its salvation.

Jesus, who spoke more about hell than any other person in the Bible, also gave us the most comforting words of assurance regarding the security of the believer. Referring to His followers in John 10:28, Jesus said "**they shall never perish.**" According to **The Discovery Bible** the word "never" in John 10:28 is in a Greek form that is inherently emphatic and in major emphasis. Thus, Jesus gave very emphatic assurance that anyone who is truly born again will NEVER be lost.

Every born again Christian exults in the wonderful encounter with God that gave him new birth and new life in Christ. The believer revels in the joy of first love. It's not long however, before his unruly flesh rears its ugly head and he encounters the dilemma of Romans seven and the discovery that there is a part in him that is not fully sanctified. A careful reading of scripture shows that the spirit is fully saved and is experientially righteous, the soul is in the process of being sanctified and the body will be glorified (saved) at the resurrection of the righteous dead. The dilemma of Romans seven, therefore, has to do with the soul.

## METHODS OF SANCTIFICATION

Over the centuries the church has brought forth many methods of dealing with the soul and facilitating sanctification. Some of the church's methods are sound and scripture based and some are unscriptural. The desert fathers of the early church and early Medieval period sought to subdue the flesh by **isolation** in monasteries and by practicing **asceticism**. Many in the Medieval church practiced **mortification** which also involved ascetic practices.

In our own day, over the last century or so during the current movement of New Testament restorationism we have seen the rise of the holiness movement with its "**clothesline religion**" of modest clothes and hairstyles. Sanctified people dress modestly.

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We've seen the rise of the **discipleship movement** with its prominent leaders such as the "Fort Lauderdale Four" of the 1970s. The discipleship movement objective was to make each believer accountable to shepherds or elders. This would cause people to repent and live in a biblical sanctified way. People were mentored (some would say dominated) and their lives were cleaned up and they walked in submission to authority.

Also during the 1970s and in the decades since, there was a move on the part of some churches to form **Christian communities** by buying land in the country and living together on the land and farming it. One prominent leader called this a "*prophetic call to community.*" I'm also aware that centuries ago Christian communities like Zion Illinois, New Haven Connecticut and Plymouth Massachusetts were founded by people trying to build model Christian communities. Community living put people together every day and made them accountable to each other. This aided daily repentance and sanctification.

In another novel twist in the approach to sanctification, one leader in southeastern New York State in the early 1990s taught that the reason people were in bondage to sin was because they weren't **water baptized** right. He began having baptismal services and re-baptizing people. His teaching on re-baptizing was a bit controversial and does not have very clear scriptural support.

Recent decades have also seen the rise of **deliverance ministry** as a means of **inner healing** which in turn results in sanctification and right behavior. Names like Derek Prince (he was also big in the discipleship movement), Frank & Ida Mae Hammond, John Wimber and many others spring to mind when discussing deliverance ministry. More recently we see Paul Cox and others teach about **deliverance from generational spirits**. There are many instances of people being set free from sinful behavior patterns.

In my own teaching on sanctification, the Lord has led me to emphasize **self-denial** (daily surrender to Christ by taking up the cross) and the necessity of the daily **prayer of consecration**. Most of the above methods are useful in facilitating the process of sanctification and dramatically show that the church has always seen the need for process sanctification.

SO . . . YOU THINK YOU'RE  
ALREADY THERE?



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Let me take the opportunity here to mention that there are those who effectively deny that the believer needs sanctification. There are those who take verses such as 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Titus 3:5 and other verses describing the new birth and apply them not just to the spirit of the believer but also to the believer's soul. Like Bob Jones has said "There are some folks who say '*were already there.*'" The term "already there" means "already sanctified." The late Bob Jones, a prominent prophet in the body of Christ, warned us against people who say that we are already fully sanctified and hence don't need any process of sanctification.

Rick Joyner of **MorningStar Ministries**, Fort Mill, South Carolina has humorously interjected "*If you're already there, what are you still doing here?*" In other words, Rick was implying that the very people who say that they are fully sanctified often show a lack of personal sanctification in their own lives.

In the early 20th century there were some in the Pentecostal movement who taught that we're "already there" under the labels "sinless perfection," "second blessing" and "entire sanctification." The doctrine of **entire sanctification** is really a variant of "crisis sanctification" in which a Christian makes a radical commitment to obey God during a crisis sometime after conversion. The error in this teaching is the assumption that the sanctification is "entire" and hence there is no need for gradual or process sanctification. Another variant of crisis sanctification is "second blessing." Some old preachers taught that such a crisis experience caused the sin nature to be eradicated from the soul. I think that both the plain words of scripture and the lessons of experience proved them wrong.

There are those in the body of Christ today who take 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Titus 3:5 and other verses about regeneration and apply them not just to the spirit or even just to the soul but go so far as to apply those verses to the physical body of the believer. They claim to be manifested sons in the physical sense of the term. Like the Bible characters Hymenaeus and Philetus they essentially imply that "***The resurrection is past already***" (2 Tim. 2:18).

I have heard and read some very bizarre teachings along this line. Nevertheless, I assure you that not very many people who teach on the manifestation of the sons of God are guilty of this error of claiming to be fully sanctified yet still walk in sin. The true, scriptural sonship message is not a denial of the need for process sanctification but is the teaching that some people in the body of Christ will attain a level of sanctification of such high degree in the end-times that they will experience a release into extraordinary ministry power beyond anything heretofore seen.

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Those who teach that Christians can be indwelt by demons and therefore need deliverance from demons have come under criticism. I believe the Bible teaches that a Christian can be afflicted by demons. A Christian does not have to actually be indwelt by a demon to be tormented by demonic activity. A right understanding of Romans seven which teaches that there is a part of the believer that is not yet sanctified gives a scriptural basis for understanding how a demon could have such access to the soul and body of a genuinely born-again child of God. Every Christian must exercise authority in Christ to resist demonic activity and obtain deliverance.

There are many scripture based tools of sanctification. These include fasting, prayer, Bible reading, submission to legitimate church authority (discipleship), inner healing, deliverance, living in a Christian community, self-control, the prayer of consecration, self-denial and taking up the cross daily. If we follow on to know the Lord and seek Him with all of our hearts and use the tools He has provided us, we will be **"renewed day by day"** (2 Cor. 4:16).

The Christian's spirit is 'already there' i. e. experientially righteous, the soul is being sanctified and the body will be redeemed at the resurrection of the righteous dead.

**"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Rom. 7: 24-25).  
**"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"** (Gal. 5:16).

## CHAPTER II

**UNDERSTANDING SIN, LAW  
AND THE  
STARTING POINT OF OUR SANCTIFICATION**

In all the churches I've been to over the years I've noticed signs that said **'Do Not Smoke'** and **'Do Not Chew Gum in the Sanctuary.'** I've never seen a sign that said **'Do Not Eat the Potting Soil From the Potted Plants.'** Why would a church never have to post a sign to protect its potted plants from people tempted to eat potting soil? The obvious answer is simply that such a sign is unnecessary

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because it is not human nature for any human, even an unrepentant sinner, to eat potting soil.

It is human nature to smoke tobacco and inebriate oneself with nicotine. Hence we need a sign (a law) to restrain this aspect of human nature. It is human nature for children to chew gum and stick it under the pews. Hence we need a law to command young people to refrain from chewing gum in the sanctuary.

The fact that a sign forbidding the eating of potting soil is unnecessary teaches us something about the whole relationship between human nature and law. Where there is no human nature to do a certain destructive thing, there is no necessity to outlaw it. This principle sheds a great deal of light on a scripture that has often been misunderstood. The scripture is "**You are not under law, but under grace**" (Romans 6:14 NASB).

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NOT UNDER LAW?

When you die and go to heaven will you be under law? When you walk through heaven's gate and . . . after you finish shouting "*I made it!!!!*" and kiss Jesus . . . will you look over at a wall and see a list of laws there? Will the Ten Commandments be posted in heaven?

Imagine what it will be like to be in heaven. You are totally free of sin and you have the righteousness of Christ not only imputed to you but imparted to you. Do you really expect a list of "do's and don'ts" to be listed on a wall? When we get to heaven we will have no sin nature. We will not need law because we will live perfectly and righteously by nature.

Romans 6:14, however, teaches that we are not under law *now*. What could this possibly mean? Are we perfectly righteous now in our fleshly state on this earth? Some have taken this view and teach sinless perfection. I dealt with a group in New York who taught a form of sinless perfection. I wrote an article titled "*The Perfection Message*" that explained and gently corrected this error.

A human being is composed of spirit, soul and body (I Thess. 5:23). Many Bible teachers, myself included, teach that the **spirit** of the born again Christian is regenerated into a sinless state at the new birth. The **soul** of the Christian has a sin nature and is being sanctified and renewed day by day throughout the

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believer's walk on this earth. The physical **body** of the Christian will be raised from the dead in a glorified, sinless state at the resurrection of the righteous dead.

The phrase "**you are not under law**" strongly infers that the reborn human spirit has no sin nature. The human spirit of the Christian believer received this new sinless nature at the time that the human spirit was regenerated at the new birth. Law is given to forbid us from doing certain behaviors. If we are not under law it means that all things are permitted.

You can eat all the potting soil you want. There is no law or sign or church rule against it. How much potting soil will you eat? You will eat none because your nature restrains you. Since we are not under law it means -- strange as this sounds -- that we have permission to break the law. However, the spirit of the Christian won't behave lawlessly because the new sinless nature in his spirit restrains his spirit from sinning.

Romans 6:14 teaches that we are not under law and that means we are not under the Ten Commandments. How can I be so bold as to say this? This fact is confirmed in the passage in Romans 7:6-7 in which Paul lists the tenth commandment, "**thou shalt not covet,**" as an example of a law that we are not under. Romans 7:6 teaches that we were released from the law and that we have died to the law. The very next verse, Romans 7:7 is so bold as to list one of the Ten Commandments as an example of a law to which we have died!

The seventh commandment forbids adultery. How much adultery do you want to commit? Your new nature, that is the nature of your reborn spirit (not soul), restrains you. Adultery is totally repugnant to the reborn spirit. You commit no adultery (you don't even think about it) when you walk by your reborn spirit. "**But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law**" (Galatians 5:18). The reborn human spirit is in total agreement with the Holy Spirit and always is led by the Holy Spirit. Yet in our immaturity we are more aware of our souls than we are of our spirits.

The inevitable question now arises: if we are not under law why is the New Testament full of commands!? Jesus said to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile. Jesus commanded us to love one another (John 13:34, 15:12). Jesus said "**If you love Me, you will keep My commandments**" (John 14:15 NASB).

Paul, the apostle, writing in Romans, the very book where he declared "**you are not under law**" lists many commands in the 12th and 13th chapters of Romans. We are commanded to obey the governing authorities in Romans 13:1. A

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command (law) is needed because the sinful human nature tends to disobey governing authorities. The very fact that God gave us commands in the New Testament strongly infers that the Christian believer still has a sin nature.

So which is it? Are we under law or not under law? Does the Christian believer have a sin nature or does he not have a sin nature? The answer is both. The reborn **spirit** (human spirit) of the believer has no sin nature, is not under law, cannot sin, has partaken of the divine nature, cannot backslide or lose its salvation. **"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin"** (1 John 3:10).

The **soul** of the Christian believer is in the process of being saved and is not yet fully a partaker of the divine nature. The soul of a born again Christian has a sin nature. The soul and body of a Christian is subject to the commands that are written in the New Testament. The Bible contains many commandments in both the Old and New Testaments. **"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"** (1 Timothy 1:8). Many Christians don't know how to properly apply biblical law. To address this, I've written a book titled **Lawful or Legalistic: How New Testament Believers Must Understand Old Testament Commands**. The book is available on my website at [www.bnugent.org](http://www.bnugent.org) or any of the online bookstores.

In Romans seven, **"law of sin"** means "sin nature." What Paul called the **"law of sin"** in the passage **"the law of sin which is in my members"** (Rom. 7:23) is just another way of saying "sin nature." The sin nature of the flesh resides in the soul. The soul is **"being saved"** (1 Cor. 1:18 NASB). **"The inward man [soul] is renewed day by day"** (2 Cor. 4:16), until **"Christ be formed [in our souls]"** (Gal. 4:19).

It should not seem strange that a Christian has two natures. The early church, in resolving the *monophysite controversy* at the council of Chalcedon in 451 AD declared that Christ has two natures. The council issued a creed adopted by almost all of the church that acknowledged that Christ has *"two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation . . ."* Christ has a divine nature and a human nature. Both are sinless. The Christian has two natures of which one is sinless and one is sinful.

The sinful human nature in the soul of each Christian believer is being transformed into the sinless image of God through sanctification. As we deny self and take up the cross daily God does a mighty work in our hearts. **"For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13 NASB). By grace we will **"grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head**

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**even Christ"** (Ephesians 4:15 NASB). Each Christian can say that his spirit is perfect, his soul is being perfected and his body will be perfect at the resurrection of the righteous dead.

### CHAPTER III

#### LAYING DOWN THE SELF-LIFE

In July of 1978 it was prophesied over me that God was calling me to lay my life down and that God would raise my life up. I had no concept of what this meant. Even the man who prophesied over me could offer only the most feeble explanation of self-denial. Immediately I sought to find out what it really means to lay down one's life and follow Jesus. The search took me through years of study and reflection. I am grateful to God for teachers in the body of Christ including Watchman Nee, Kenneth Hagin, J. Preston Eby and Bill Britton. Most importantly of all I am grateful to the Holy Spirit who by revelation anointing is revealing end-time teaching on the necessity of self-denial.

God is calling many of his saints to the deeper walk of consecration obtained by laying down one's life. I have found that self-denial not only is delivering me from the quagmire of legalism but is revealing to me the victorious life of growing into mature sonship. I do not presume to claim that I've already obtained this perfection, but like Paul, **"I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me"** (Phil. 3:12 NIV). This book is written for the instruction and encouragement of those who are apprehended of God unto full sonship that we may know the life of overcoming through self-denial.

Our God who caused light to shine out of darkness, life to come from the grave, exaltation to come from humility and strength to come out of our weaknesses has decreed that true discipleship and overcoming life come from self-denial. Often touted as a virtue and more often misunderstood, self-denial is nevertheless crucial and central to Jesus' teachings on discipleship. Often we refer to all born again believers as "disciples" but Jesus said, **"...whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple"** (Lu 14:27). Are all Christians disciples in this sense? Do all carry their cross? Do all realize that

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life comes from death and that victory comes as a result of the work of the cross in our lives?

Admonitions to denial of self and carrying the cross appear in all four Gospels as a prerequisite to discipleship. The references are as follows: Mt. 10:38-39; 16:24-26; Mk. 8:34-35; Lu. 9:23-25; 14:26-27; 17:33; Jn. 12:24-26. Let's look at these commands as a step-by-step process.

**"If any man will**

- 1) **come after me, let him**
- 2) **deny himself, and**
- 3) **take up his cross daily...if any man**
- 4) **serve me, him will**
- 5) **my father honor."** (Lu 9:23; Jn. 12:26)

The process begins with coming after (following) Jesus and ends with being honored by the Father. Many sincere believers are following Jesus but don't take the step of denying self and taking up the cross daily. Without this step it's impossible to serve Jesus in the proper spiritual manner. Thus the service that these believers render is tainted with false motives and is not acceptable to Jesus and will not result in their being honored by the Father. Because they did not deny themselves and did not continue in the state of self-denial (by taking up the cross daily) their service to God came out of the unregenerate self-life. Anything done by the old nature is abomination unto God. The only service that the old nature can muster is legalistic fleshly striving.

In addition to the Gospel passages mentioned above, the same concepts about self-denial appear in the Epistles, particularly in the writings of the apostle Paul. Here is a partial list of passages where this great truth appears: Ro. 6:1-13; 12:1-2; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10. Paul uses some different terminology in his teaching on self-denial. We will explore in depth later on, the exact reason for the different terminology. Paul gives us a different perspective on self-denial. His words when studied alongside Jesus' commands shed great light on the concept of self-denial.

Sonship, with all its glory, power and mission both in this age and in the ages to come can all be summed up in this one thing: the acquiring of a perfect Christlike self. Therefore, as we desire to grow up unto full stature and have Christ formed within us, it is with some foreboding that we view self-denial. We don't want to deny self--we want to nurture and perfect the self! But we must tear down

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before He can build us up. The old self must die first. There must be a death if there is to be a resurrection. We must walk through the valley before we can climb the mountain.

## SOUL-LIFE TO BE DENIED

We must correctly understand the definition of self in order to have any comprehension of self-denial. Self is a very broad term and is often used very loosely. Though self is often used to describe the whole man, for our purposes it will be used to describe the soul of an individual. According to I Thes. 5:23, man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul and body. The soul is the organ which joins or connects the spirit to the body. The soul is composed of the mind, emotions, will, desires and affections among other attributes. In Jesus' teaching on self-denial, the Greek word "Psuche" (Pronounced "sue-KAY") is translated "life" in such statements as **"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it."** This Greek word "psuche," which is translated "life" is also translated "soul" in other passages. Psuche refers to the natural soul life common to all men, whereas "zoe" (another word translated "life") refers to the everlasting life of our reborn spirit. The Greek word "zoe" is pronounced "zoh-ee." In addition to this, we shall see, by many scriptural indications, that it is the soul realm life that must be laid down.

## REGENERATION OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Our reborn spirit is already redeemed. Colossians 1:13 says that God **"hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."** Second Corinthians 5:17 says that we are a new creation now, that old things have passed away and all things are renewed or made new. **"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"** (2 Cor. 5:17). This puts salvation for the spirit in past tense. Second Corinthians 5:17 isn't talking about your body. You still have the same fleshly body you had before you were saved. This verse speaks of your spirit. All things have become new regarding your spirit.

We are the new creation man now in the spirit. We entered beyond the veil in Christ in the spirit on the day that we got saved. Our reborn spirit is already a son of God because of faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).



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Our reborn spirit already has everlasting zoe life and cannot sin. **"He cannot sin because he is born of God"** (I Jn. 3:9). **"Whosoever is born of God sinneth not"** (I Jn. 5:18). The Bible verses that speak of sinless perfection speak to the believer's reborn spirit. The Bible verses, such as James 4:8, that rebuke the sinful behavior of Christians, speak to the believer's soul and body.

Our spirit man is the highest level of our personality. Only the spirit man can directly commune with God. John 4:24 says that God is Spirit and we must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Our spirit must rule over the soul and body. The soul and body are organs to be used to do the spirit's bidding. An individual who lives by his spirit, with his spirit in control of his faculties, is a spiritual man and walks a spiritual walk. He lives by zoe life. His spirit communes with and is led by the Holy Spirit of God.

Most Christians, however, are not spiritual. They have allowed the unregenerate, sensual soul to stifle their spirit so that they are hardly even aware of the Holy Spirit's promptings. They also pay great attention to the carnal lusts and urges of the body, living by feelings rather than by faith. God's order is reversed, becoming body-soul-spirit. In order to return to the scriptural order of spirit-soul-body, the soul and body have to be brought into order.

## REGENERATION OF THE BODY

The redemption of the spirit is past tense (for those of us who are born again) whereas the redemption of the body is future. Our bodies are not yet passed beyond the veil. ("Passing beyond the veil" is imagery taken from the Old Testament Temple. It means to enter the Holy of Holies where the manifest presence of God dwelt. To do this requires that we have experiential perfection because no sin or corruption can dwell in God's presence.)

Philippians 3:20-21 says that we eagerly wait for the Savior from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ who will **"transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body"** (NIV).

Romans 8:19 says that the whole creation waits eagerly for the manifestation of the sons of God. Then down in verse 23 it says that we ourselves **"wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies"** (NIV). We can clearly see that the manifestation of God's sons and our adoption

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(placement) as sons is equated with the redemption (transformation) of our bodies. Our bodies will be fully saved. Our bodies will (as is already true with our spirits), pass beyond the veil. The passage above says that we "wait" for the redemption of our bodies. Wait is a time word and indicates that this event is still future. The transformation of our bodies occurs at the "catching up" spoken of in I Thes. 4:17).

There are some people who preach the sonship message who claim to be "manifested sons." They implicitly claim to be experientially, sinlessly perfect in body. They, in one sense, claim that "**the resurrection is past already**" (II Tim. 2:18). This presumptive claim serves only to subvert and discredit the teaching on sonship that the Lord is bringing forth at this time. Any manifested son has a glorified body and one look at these individuals is enough to show you that they do not.

The fact that the manifestation of God's sons is still future should not lull us into complacency. The great promises in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 were made to the overcomers. Overcomers are we who are radically committed to God through Christ and who take up our cross daily. Overcomers are members of the church who are being prepared and sanctified in order to be given great responsibility and commission at the revealing of the sons. This great sanctification will not all be done for us instantly when our bodies are transformed at the manifestation. We must be sanctified day by day, every day between now and the time of the revealing of the sons of God. We must overcome now if we expect to rule then.

The term "**manifestation of the sons of God**" (Ro. 8:19) refers specifically to the redemption of the body and is future. The term "**him that overcometh**" (Rev. 3:21) refers to the redemption of the soul which is gradual and worked out day by day, at present in this life. The individual overcomers grow up to maturity and at some point yet future they are manifested as the corporate perfected body of Christ who are at the forefront of a ministry of restoration. They are entrusted with the noble task of reconciling a dying world back to God. This is why the whole creation longs for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Self-denial, though it primarily relates to soul salvation, does affect the way we handle our bodies. Paul wrote in I Cor. 9:27, "**I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize**" (NIV). A saint who does not control his body's passions has failed to overcome and will not receive the prize of the high calling. How did Paul make his body his slave - - by soulish legalistic striving? May it never be! Paul himself wrote in Ro. 8:13, "**ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body.**"

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The unrenewed soul for all its good intentions cannot restrain the carnal lusts of the body. The old soul must be crucified so that we can walk in true spirituality.

It is not only the behavior or deeds of the body that we must keep in check, but also the body's health. A spiritual walk means moving in a realm of superabundant divine health for the body. Physical infirmity must not be allowed to interfere with or slow down the overcomer's service to Christ. The spiritual man exercises authority to speak health to his body and bring it into line. There is healing in the atonement. We must appropriate physical healing, which is part of our inheritance in Christ, even as we look forward to the full glorification of our bodies at the resurrection of the righteous.

## REGENERATION OF THE SOUL

Christ died for the whole man: spirit, soul and body. We have seen that redemption is progressive, meaning that the whole man is not saved at one moment instantaneously. The spirit *has been* saved. the body *will be* saved, the soul *is being* saved. Soul salvation is the present walk of the overcomer. The soul is the battle-ground of our faith wherein we fight the good fight of faith. We by faith apply the power of the cross to our own souls. **"The cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are *BEING SAVED* it is the power of God"** (I Cor. 1:18 NIV). It is in the soul realm that we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling because God works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

James in writing to believers says, **"receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your *SOULS*"** (Ja. 1:21 ASV). He commands them to receive the word of God in order to attain soul salvation. He doesn't regard soul salvation as having taken place at the new birth. Indeed, even as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not automatically received at salvation, so also soul salvation is not automatic. Both experiences are additional experiences in God that are appropriated by faith.

Paul writes to Timothy: **"Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both *SAVE THYSELF* and them that hear thee"** (I Tim. 4:16). Timothy was not only a Christian but was an outstanding young leader, yet he needed salvation: soul salvation. Finally, Peter

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writes to the elect, "**You are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls**" (I Pet. 1:9 NIV).

Our spirit man, when he was born again, was born a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus according to Galatians 3:26: "**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**" (NASB). Our spirit is born a son but our soul is gradually regenerated and comes to a place of perfection to receive the *ADOPTION* (or placing) as a son (Gal. 4:5).

The custom in biblical times among the Romans was for a father to adopt (place) his own natural born son when the son was a young adult. This is the act of placing him as a mature son, making public that he can conduct family business in full authority on an equal basis with his father. Jesus was born the Son of God in Bethlehem but it was some thirty years later at the Jordan when He was placed as the Son of God and heard His Father say, "**Thou art my beloved Son...**" (Mark 1:11). It was after this event that Jesus performed miracles and healings. Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before pharaoh (Genesis 41:46). The Levites were placed into service at age thirty (Numbers 4:3). This custom of a father adopting (placing) his own son is the pattern of what will be for the end-time company of sons.

The soul's regeneration will be completed by the time of the adoption, which also coincides with or possibly precedes the redemption (glorification) of the body. It is at this point that the soul is forever beyond sin and has entered the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Prior to the adoption/manifestation of the sons, we may experience sonship power and a sinless walk for brief periods as a foretaste of the powers of the age to come. After our placement as sons, however, we are eternally fully redeemed and have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. At this point we have entered beyond the veil, not only in the spirit man, but our souls also will have entered the Holy of Holies to worship God, experience His love and be entrusted with great power by His Spirit to win many souls to Him.

## COUNTING THE COST

Saints and scholars alike have pondered for centuries the meaning of certain of Jesus' radical statements. We have been puzzled by injunctions such as "**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be**

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**my disciple"; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"; "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God"; "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 14:26,33; Luke 9:60,62). These statements, as even a casual reading of their contexts will indicate, refer to the cost of discipleship. These do not refer to rebirth, which is a free gift. Referring to rebirth, Jesus said that God **"gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"**(Jn. 3:16). Also referring to rebirth of the spirit is John 6:29 which says **"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."****

Discipleship, the overcoming life and soul salvation, are one in the same. One can be born again and not be a disciple but one cannot be an overcomer and not be a disciple. All overcomers are true disciples of Jesus Christ. The greatest obstacle that a disciple must overcome is his soul or self-life.

The cross is a radical approach to dealing with the self-life. Crucifixion was more than a means of execution; it was a slow torturous death. There is much talk today about a positive gospel, but the cross is the greatest negative in all the universe. All the sin and corruption, everything of man, all that falls short of the glory of God was summed up in Christ on the cross and put to death. The cross is this terrible death that Jesus commands us to apply to our soul. It costs us everything. Jesus told a parable about a man who in setting out to build a tower must first sit down and count the cost. In the same way as we embark on the life of the overcomer each of us must first count the cost.

Denial of the entire soul realm is the profound sacrifice, the terrible cost of discipleship. It means denying even the "good" things of our lives, not just the bad things, like bad attitudes, sins and failures. Self-denial means denial of soulish love. That's why Jesus said that if one does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters and even his own life (psuche) he cannot be His disciple. We must not structure our lives around that deep human desire to please our parents, make them proud of us, produce grandchildren, etc. This, by the way, is not an excuse to shun responsibility to our families or fail to honor parents or provide for them (I Tim. 5:8).

We must put God first and endure family criticism when God sends us to the mission field or calls us to a life of celibacy. Our soul's noblest attempts at making us good fall so far short that human virtue is as filthy rags. Many people

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say amen to this truth, yet deep down they still hang onto self-righteousness. Are you truly willing to let go and let God? It means giving up things that are precious to you such as attitudes that you thought were pleasing to God. Do you have a naturally buoyant, cheerful personality? The Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. God knows where "natural cheerfulness" comes from. Are you willing to lay down your natural soulish cheerfulness to have God raise up supernatural abiding joy in your life?

Are you willing to be completely changed? Will you miss the old "you"? Are you willing to say goodbye to your present self and become a different person—the person God wants you to be? Are you willing to give up all possessions, all comfort, all rights, all privileges, all independence and all that with which you are familiar? If God commands you to go to a hostile, impoverished land with nothing but the clothes on your back, will you instantly obey? Are you willing to endure the criticism of family and friends who say that Christianity is nothing more than going to church and living a good life? Are you willing to deny your human love and attachment to your family in order to begin to love them with agapao love? Are you willing to offend them with the gospel? Are you willing to cease from legalistic striving in your self in order to walk in inner, spiritual, true holiness? Are you willing to renounce anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, envy, strife, pride, lust, impurity, greed, rebellion, laziness, fear, cowardice, unbelief, bad habits, wrong attitudes and every other sin and bondage whether it's large or small? Are you willing to lay down your opinions and rational insights in order to receive divine revelation? Are you willing to stop eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in order to eat from the tree of life? Are you willing to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile? This is more than just denying the things of self (the sins, attitudes and attachments of the self-life), it is the denying of one's own soul. Deny self, not just the things of self.

If you add it all up and then decide that you're not willing to pay this staggering price, you can forget about being a mature son of God. You can forget the overcomer message. It is only for those who give their all. Jesus turned away many who desired to be His disciples. It is better to not attempt this walk at all than to do it halfway. Many already have turned back to being pew warmers who love the pleasures of this world more than God. This is such a tragedy and so unnecessary because his yoke is easy, his burden is light. In the midst of what the world looks upon as slavish deprivation, we find rest unto our souls. It is more satisfying to live as a success in the Christian walk than to struggle as a failure in legalism.

We live not as men who are just willing to die for Him or that we are going

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to die for Him, but rather we live as men who have already died. Many Christians are willing to face a firing squad but to go on living a life of perpetual self-sacrifice is an even more radical commitment.

There have been overcomers in all generations down through the centuries. These comprise that part of the overcomer company that are at present asleep in Christ. Many of the early church writings and medieval writings indicate a correct apprehension of the crucified life. Among these are some of the writings of the Puritans, Pietists and Quietists of the 1600's and 1700's who emphasized the inner devotional life.

As the times of the restoration of all things draws near, God is calling more of his saints to lay their lives down in totality. God is dividing between soul and spirit in the church. He is restoring the revelation of the crucified life. All of those brave overcomers of the past, in the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us, paid the price of self-denial. Their testimonies and accomplishments in the kingdom of God speak for them and indicate the totality of their commitment. They, by the grace of God, by faith came to the cross and surrendered themselves. As for us, we too, if we are to be part of this great overcomer company must arm ourselves likewise with the same mind.

We are tempted to say: isn't there an easier way? Isn't there an instant cure for self? Does it have to be walked out over a lifetime? Must we lay our entire life down and be crucified with Him? **"This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man"** (Eccl. 1:13).

Jesus, the pattern Son, counted the cost. He too, questioned God, but submitted Himself to the will of God. Here is the account of Jesus' travail in Gethsemane as he looked ahead to the horror of crucifixion: **"My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death...Abba Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt"** (Mk. 14:34, 36). **"And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the THIRD time, saying the same words"** (Mt. 26:44). **"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"** (Lu. 22:44). Jesus our forerunner (Heb. 6:20) has blazed out a path for us that we, too, should be perfected by the suffering of crucifixion (Heb. 2:9-10; 5:7-8). All things are possible with God; nevertheless it is not His will or plan to perfect His sons by anything other than crucifixion with Christ. If we do not count the cost at Gethsemane and submit our will to God's way, then we'll never get to the cross at Calvary. Have you been to Gethsemane?

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### APPROPRIATING DEATH FOR THE SOUL

Many say that the "old man" is already dead and buried and that we don't need to bother with him. If this is so, why did Jesus say that we must take up our cross DAILY? The cross is the means of death. Why would Jesus, who is the forerunner and pattern Son, command us to carry the means of death every day of our walk? Is it just a decoration? Why did Paul say, "**I die daily**" (I Cor. 15:31). Paul also wrote, "**for we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh**" (II Cor. 4:11).

Our old man, that is our natural soul, did die with Christ on Calvary which is a matter of historical fact. All of the sins of all men, all spiritual death, all sinful souls, all diseases of body, indeed all corruption of all creation, was summed up in Jesus Christ and put to death at Calvary. It is based on this fact that we carry our cross which means we appropriate this death to our souls in our present experience. This is bringing established fact into present experience by faith. Faith is never a passive mental assent, but rather it is in utmost supernatural activity in our spirit that we "**fight the good fight of faith**" (I Tim. 6:12).

It is the same for every facet of Christian experience. Take healing: I Pet. 2:24 says that by his stripes you were healed. Our physical healing is past tense. In saying that we were healed, the scripture makes plain that our present infirmities were all laid on Jesus as He suffered scourging and crucifixion nearly 2,000 years ago. Faith teachers all over the country emphasize this and tell us to confess our healing by faith in order to receive it. Indeed, all Christians should learn from them in this. Our healing is an historical fact; it is past tense. But why are so many of us chronically sick? It is because we need to bring healing into manifestation in our experience by faith. This is the concept of receiving the blessings from Christ's FINISHED work.

Jesus died for all men's sins, yet not all are saved. His death for their sins does them no good whatsoever, unless they, at some point, ACTIVELY APPROPRIATE IT BY FAITH. So we see that our old self-life was done away with nearly 2,000 years ago at Calvary. All self-lives of all men were summed up in Christ and put to death as is taught in II Cor. 5:14, "**If one died for all, then WERE all dead.**" However, in our present experience, our old self-lives are very much alive as is taught in Gal. 5:27, "**The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.**"



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The solution, therefore, is to appropriate by faith the death of the self-life into our present experience. The Bible teaches that this is not a one time experience but is a lifetime of taking up the cross daily to put the old man to death. Only by appropriating death to the old creation soul can we ever expect to appropriate the power of Christ's resurrection into the soul realm. We die daily so that we can be resurrected daily and be conformed to the image of the Son of God from glory to glory.

Consider Paul's testimony of his Christian walk which is given in Phil. 3:4-14. It is a testimony of continuing committed dedication in a lifetime of self-denial. In verse 10, Paul speaks of "**being made conformable unto his death.**" The death Paul was experiencing was, of course, being crucified with Christ in the soul realm. The sense of the wording here and in the rest of the passage clearly indicates not a one time event, but a continuing process of mortification of the old creation soul-life. Paul experienced this self-denial in order that he "**might attain unto the resurrection of the dead**" (Phil. 3:11). Here is perhaps the most extraordinary statement in all of Paul's writings. Paul seeks to "**attain unto**" the resurrection from the dead and this is the "**prize of the high calling of God**" (Phil. 3:14). Elsewhere in his epistles the bodily resurrection is clearly set forth as a blessed promise to all believers (e.g. I Cor. 15:51-52).

What Paul is talking about however is not a free gift of bodily resurrection as part of our common salvation but rather a special resurrection, a "**better resurrection**" (Heb. 11:35). This is the faithful overcomer resurrection which is a prize qualified for by persevering in a victorious life of allowing Christ to replace your life with His life.

The Greek word for resurrection in Philippians 3:11 is "exanastasis" and this is the only place it is used in the whole New Testament. It literally means "out resurrection" or resurrection out from among the dead. This is the firstfruit resurrection in which the overcomers are raised not just in glorified bodies but as full grown sons of God and shall be manifested (revealed) as deliverers (saviors) to set all creation free from its bondage to corruption. The overcomers are manifested to creation with Jesus Christ the firstborn Son, at His second coming in His literal, physical, glorified body. "**Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge...**" (Obadiah 1:21). This is the ministry Paul strove after and into which we also must press in.

If we are "**being made conformable unto his death**" (His cross) and experiencing the "**power of his resurrection**" (Phil. 3:10) in the soul realm now in this life, we shall press on to receive the prize of the high calling: the out-

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resurrection. The overcomers demonstrate their faithfulness in overcoming the evil in their own self-lives and by proving faithful in this small thing are then entrusted with the great thing of delivering all creation by leading all people and all creatures to the cross. This is in accordance with the promises to the overcomers given in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

This high calling ministry is a glorious and coveted honor. It is the treasure hidden in a field or the pearl of great price which once we find it (understand sonship truth) we joyfully sell all we possess (lay our lives down) in order that we may buy it (apprehend that for which we are apprehended).

In Phil. 3:13-14, Paul says **"this one thing I do."** What is the one thing he did? He denied himself: **"forgetting those things which are behind** (Legalistic self-righteousness), **and reaching forth unto those things which are before** (renewed, transformed soul-life), **I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God** (full sonship, Christ formed in you) **in Christ Jesus."**

Paul also experienced suffering in persecution and hardship. This suffering is distinct from crucifixion with Christ in a number of aspects. This kind of suffering will be discussed in a later chapter under the heading "Trials and Tribulation."

Romans 6:1-13 contains Paul's teaching on deliverance from sin through death and resurrection. In verse six we read, **"Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him..."** This is revelation knowledge of the accomplished fact of Calvary. We start at knowledge of the fact, but we certainly don't stop there. The eye of faith does see the old man dead at Calvary, but in our experience, the old man is very much alive. Knowledge alone is not enough. The reality of Jesus' work on Calvary must be applied to the soul in our daily experience, not just in our theology. Hence, we read in Romans 6:11 **"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord."** "Knowing" is revelation received by faith, whereas "reckoning" is claiming or appropriating by faith. This brings us to Romans 6:13 **"Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead..."** Yielding comes after appropriating death for the soul. Too many saints are trying to yield their old man to God and expect God to use their old nature. It is the renewed soul that we yield to God. The renewed soul is that which is **"alive from the dead."**

The crucial or pivotal point in the passage is that of reckoning. This is where most believers miss the boat. They have a genuine *knowledge*, by revelation, of Calvary and have testified to it in their water baptism. They also sincerely try to serve God by *yielding*. The reason they are incapable of walking in

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true holiness is the failure to grasp the concept of reckoning. Reckoning is the day by day application of death and hence resurrection to the soul. Reckoning corresponds exactly to Jesus' command to take up your cross daily and follow Him.

The whole process of self-denial is by faith. If you have no revelation of this truth in your heart I suggest that you seek God, asking him to reveal it to you. Get into the word because **"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Ro. 10:17). This is a treasure hidden for you, not from you. Speak the word of God according to the famous quote, "If you want faith, preach faith, then you will preach faith because you have faith."

Appropriating death for self begins by first counting the cost and then recognizing the self-life for what it really is. When we perceive and understand what an abomination the natural soul is and how far it falls short and that even its best and most righteous deeds are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), then and only then do we hate our own life. Jesus said that he who hates his life (psuche) in this world will keep it for life everlasting. Armed with this revelation of the sinfulness of not only the sins of self, but also self's most noble human virtues, we take up our crosses and follow Jesus.

Where do we follow Him? To Calvary to be crucified with Christ, which is to appropriate death and resurrection into our present experience. We do this every day, moment by moment as we pray the prayer of consecration without ceasing. Indeed, self-denial is done in prayer, a prayer of faith. It is the ultimate prayer, the presenting of ourselves to Him on the altar of the cross in complete surrender. The cross is the place of surrender in the spirit. Most of us know that the altar of incense in Moses' Tabernacle typified the offering of the prayers of the saints. Even more so, the burning of the incense is typical of our offering up ourselves to God in a fire of consecration, yielding sweet smelling savor.

The law required burning of incense daily--every morning and evening so that incense was before the Lord perpetually. The fulfillment of this is that the overcomers offer themselves to God every day on the cross in the judgment of the baptism of fire so that the incense of the savor of self surrender is always before God. The term "baptism of fire" will be explained more fully later in this chapter. The "prayer of consecration" will be explained in detail in chapter six of this book.

## THE SOUL DIES

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**"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow..."** (Heb. 4:12). Our God divides things. He is the great separator. God divided the light from the darkness and divided the waters from the waters (Gen. 1:4,7). He commanded Jeremiah to separate the precious from the vile (Jer. 15:19). He commands us through Paul to come out from among them and be separate and to touch not the unclean thing (II Cor. 6:17). God commands us to rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15). God also joins things together as in marriage joining husband and wife and in the church joining together Jew and Gentile into one new man in the body of Christ.

It is man who is so often guilty of joining what God has separated or dividing what God has joined. It is clear that God divides the soul and spirit. We lay our lives down in surrender upon the cross before Jesus our great High Priest. Jesus does the cutting, the work of separation, with the sword of His mouth. We do not cut ourselves because it is always the duty of the priest to divide the sacrifice. He cuts to the marrow which, as biology tells us, is where the blood is formed. Leviticus 17:11 tells us that the life (Hebrew: "*nephesh*," which means soul) is in the blood. Thus the very source of the soul-life is cut away. It reaches to the center of the heart.

The reborn spirit is now free from soulish influences. The spirit is no longer smothered by the soul. This enables the spirit to see clearly and be free from all impediment to guide the walk of the believer. This is the spiritual walk. Our spirit man is the part of us that communes with and receives direction from the Holy Spirit.

John 10:27 says **"My sheep hear my voice."** A sheep is a mature believer. A lamb is an immature believer. As lambs we lay down our lives as we follow the lamb of God who poured out His soul unto death. Having done this and continuing in it we grow up to be sheep who hear His voice. As sheep we follow the good shepherd who gives us everlasting life (i.e. "zoe" life) for our souls. As sheep who hear His voice we enter a realm of clear and direct guidance and are able to discern God's direction for our lives in all situations.

It is unfortunate that so many saints are deluded into thinking that they are spiritual simply because they exercise the gifts of the Spirit. It is clear from the study of First Corinthians chapter fourteen that even babes in Christ can be and often are quite fluent in spiritual gifts. Such people often don't see the need for denying and laying down the soul because they feel their present walk is pleasing

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to God. They are so satisfied with the Pentecostal experience that they have no grasp of the deeper truths of the faith and see no need to press on.

Consider the following quote from a well-known Christian writer: ***"...the teaching in Hebrews 4:12 takes on paramount significance. For the Holy Spirit instructs us therein how to divide spirit and soul experientially. The dividing of these two is not a mere doctrine; it is pre-eminently a life, a must in the believer's walk...Only after we learn how to differentiate experientially these two kinds of life and come to apprehend their respective values, are we delivered from a shallow, loose, sensational walk into that which is deep, firm and spiritual. Only then do we come into rest. The soul life can never furnish us rest. But please note that this must be known in experience; simply understanding in the mind will merely make us more soulish...Only after the cross has done its work on the soulish life is the spirit liberated."*** (from *The Spiritual Man* by Watchman Nee Vol. I pp. 195, 197 & 198)

The condition of our natural soul is so desperate that it requires surgery. A simple Pentecostal band-aid won't do the job. Jesus is the surgeon and His scalpel (His word) cuts away the soul from the spirit. This results in death for the *soul*. For the operation to be a success it must result in the death of the patient because God's work of regeneration always begins with death. Referring to salvation of our *spirit*, Paul says, **"when we were DEAD in sins hath QUICKENED (made alive) us together with Christ..."** (Eph. 2:5) and **"if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things (fallen human attributes of our old spirit man) are PASSED AWAY: behold all things are BECOME NEW"** (II Cor. 5:17).

In our initial salvation experience we surrendered our spirit at the cross in order for our spirit to pass into Christ's death and then be instantly born again to resurrection life. As spirit salvation began with our dead spirit, so soul salvation begins with our dead soul.

Ezekiel 18:4, **"The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"** applies to believers as well as unbelievers. Isaiah 53:12 tells us that Messiah, when crucified on the cross **"poured out his soul unto death,"** which is further proof that the death of self (soul) takes place at the cross. James 2:26 reveals to us that the body without the spirit (body separated from spirit) is dead. In the same way the soul separated from the spirit is dead. This death is necessary because only when we are dead are we free from sin (Ro. 6:7). Therefore, this experience of crucifixion with Christ results in complete deliverance from sin. In death, sin must release its grip on our souls. The old man (soul) is put to death piece by piece, day by day.

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## THE NEW MAN

All is not lost because we have confidence (faith) that since we are united with Christ in His death, we also will be united with Him in His resurrection (Ro.6:5). Romans 12:2 says, **"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."** This refers to soul renewal (i.e. regeneration of the soul) because the word "renewing" is continuative. The Greek word translated "transformed" is the word "metamorphoo," which is the same word translated "transfigured" in the Gospel passages about the transfiguration of Jesus. This gives us an idea of the radical nature of the change self-denial brings about. Also, keep in mind that the transfiguration of Jesus is a type or pattern of the manifestation of the sons of God.

It is only through the cross that we can truly put off the old man and **"put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"** (Eph. 4:24). Paul, who lived the crucified life and doubtless carried his cross daily, was able to testify that **"the inward man is renewed day by day"** (II Cor. 4:16). The faithful walk of daily taking up his cross resulted in his daily experience of soul renewal.

**"Receive with meekness the IMPLANTED word which is able to save your souls" (Ja. 1:21 ASV).** The surgery that is performed at the cross and which results in death for the soul is also an implant operation. A new life is implanted in us. This is "zoe" resurrection life for our soul. It is spoken into existence by His word. This is the zoe soul, the regenerate soul that is implanted in us and grows and is added to day by day as the old self is cut away. Jesus doesn't clean up our lives but rather He replaces our Adamic life with His anointed life.

There is an initial crisis of self-denial in which the thick roots of self-life are cut away. Then there follows the constant process of pruning back any attempted regrowth of the roots of self-life. The new life of the zoe soul is implanted where the roots of self are cut away. Indeed, self-denial cuts to the root of sin. When the root of sin is cut, the tangled bramble of sinful branches and fruit must wither and die. Self must decrease; Christ formed in us must increase.

There is a law of sowing and reaping that is set in motion in the walk of perpetual self-denial. Jesus said in reference to material things: **"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"** (Lu. 6:38). In the same way, we, in laying down our natural

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soul are given a supernatural soul that is conformed to the image of God's Son as spoken of in Romans 8:29, "**Conformed to the image of his Son**".

Jesus asked in Matthew 16:26, "**what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?**" I don't hesitate to say that even if a man did own the whole world then even the whole world would not be enough in God's sight to exchange for the renewed soul. Give your soul in exchange for your soul! Give the real you; give your heart--that is what God is after. He doesn't want your money; He wants your life. But, of course, when He's got your life He's got your money also. Don't just present yourself to God in a casual way, like a sort of bloodless sacrifice. Give yourself in the way that God has commanded: the cross. It is a bloody sacrifice because he cuts to the marrow. Lay your life down; He will raise it up.

Mark 10:28-30 gives us the promise of a hundredfold return in this life on all that we left behind to follow Jesus. "**But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time**" (Mark 10:30). This is the law of sowing and reaping in not the 30-fold or 60-fold, but in the 100-fold realm. Those who have left ALL to follow Jesus have the promise of the hundredfold return. Along with this comes persecutions in this age but in the age to come we shall rule and reign with Christ (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:6).

The renewed soul life submits to the reborn human spirit of the Christian. The spirit loves the renewed soul. The renewed soul is a life the spirit can truly love. The order in our house is this: spirit, soul, body. The carnal urges of the body are kept in check and our bodily members are yielded to God as "**instruments of righteousness**" (Ro. 6:13). It is only as our souls are transformed by the cross that our bodily members can be used by God to do the greater works of reconciliation. Soul salvation is by faith, but this faith is completed by the righteous works of the overcomer (James 2:22).

The new man, the new soul which is given back to you after you lay down the old man is *the real you*. The personality that you have now is unrecognizably corrupted with sin. The new personality, the perfectly righteous personality, is what we long for. This is the joy set before us as we endure the cross, despising the shame (Heb 12:2). This new personality is that which we yield unto God "**as those that are alive from the dead**" (Rom. 6:13).

Being an instrument of righteousness means more than just being a nice guy who minds his own business and does a good deed or two. Baby Christians and even many worldly people can be "nice people." The mark of the overcomer, however, is a righteousness on a higher supernatural order that is exercised out of

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a transformed heart. It is actively being a peacemaker, walking in the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, keeping God's commandments and not finding them burdensome, loving God and man with a heart full of genuine agapao love and living a victorious life of holiness with purity of thought, motives and intentions. As tongues and other manifestations of the Spirit are the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, so the practical, visible evidence of being an overcomer is the supernatural righteousness described above.

## THE CROSS IS THE THIRD EXPERIENCE

Total consecration by way of the cross is that which differentiates an overcomer from other Christians. In the church today, the saints move in any of three realms: **“Beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”** (Matthew 13:23). The first is the newly reborn believer who has not yet received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is the 30-fold realm. The second, or 60-fold realm, is those who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit but have yet to enter into the overcoming life. The third, or 100-fold realm, is the walk of those saints who are not only saved and Spirit baptized, but have entered into the victorious overcoming life.

The 100-folder is not yet perfect, but is growing in a perfected realm whereby he is gradually transformed throughout his life in order to be released by God to do the greater works to glorify God. The evangelical/30-folder can point to his initial conversion and praying a sincere sinner's prayer by faith. The Pentecostal 60-folder can point to his receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit when he asked for it in prayer by faith and began to move in Holy Spirit power. What experience of faith can the overcomer point to as assurance that he is indeed an overcomer? Some seem to think that being a member in good standing in a church that teaches the sonship message is proof that he or she is an overcomer.

I would point out that just because you know about self-denial or even teach it, doesn't make you an overcomer. It must be experienced in your life. It must be walked out. Going to a church that teaches sonship doesn't make you a mature son anymore than going into a stable makes you a horse! We must experientially enter into a higher dimension, a realm of perfection, whereby we overcome self, the world and the devil.

Self-denial, which is total consecration to the service of Jesus Christ, is the very essence of overcoming. It is an act of overcoming. Daily consecration to



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God through Christ is the third experience, the entrance into the 100-fold realm.

In this 100-fold realm we desire not our own will, but God's perfect will for us, no matter how difficult it may be. We desire God for Himself and not for the things with which He blesses us. In Romans 12:2 we see that it is only after we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (self-denial, soul renewal) that we can prove what is that good (30-fold), acceptable (60-fold), and perfect (100-fold) will of God.

The three realms are typified for us in the tabernacle of Moses described in the book of Exodus. The 30-fold corresponds to the outer court. The 60-fold or Pentecostal realm corresponds to the Holy Place. The 100-fold realm is beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies, wherein dwells the presence of God in the shekinah above the mercy seat.

The Holy Place (60-fold) clearly illustrates the realm of the earnest (down-payment Eph. 1:14) of the Holy Spirit entered into at the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Table of Showbread speaks of the fellowship and divine order in the Pentecostal body of Christ. The altar of incense speaks of the prayers of the saints as we pray by the Spirit. The golden lampstand speaks of the manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The altar of incense is a type of the Cross. Most Pentecostals are content to offer up prayers in Jesus' name on the basis of Jesus' death and resurrection. The overcomers, those who press on into the 100-fold realm, take it a step further and offer up not only their petitions but also their soul-lives on the altar of incense in Jesus' name on the basis of Jesus' death and resurrection on our behalf. This is by way of the prayer of consecration prayed in true spiritual faith. Self-denial is the ultimate in prayer. It is total prayer. There is much teaching in this present move of God about the necessity of serious travailing prayer. Self-denial is more than this because in self-denial we go beyond just offering our praises and petitions unto God. We offer our entire selves unto God. We, like the incense, are burned on the altar in the baptism in fire. Yes, there is a baptism in fire.

Remember that upon entering the outer court of the tabernacle we came to the brazen altar to receive salvation in the 30-fold realm. Next we came to the laver where we received the baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. There's no reason why baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit should be separated by years or even days in the experience of a believer. In type, all Israel received both baptisms in the one experience of passing through the Red Sea (water baptism) under the cloud (Holy Spirit baptism) as recorded in I Cor. 10:1-2

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**“And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”**

The experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit at the laver brings us into the Holy Place or 60-fold realm. In the Holy Place we come to the altar of incense to receive the baptism in fire (Luke 3:16). These three experiences comprise the one baptism (Eph. 4:5). The one baptism is three in one: water, Holy Spirit and fire.

The baptism in fire is a continual experience of consecration, typified by the High Priest being required to burn incense morning and evening so that the incense cloud was continually before the Lord (Ex. 30-7-8). In self-denial, which is the baptism in fire, we take up our crosses *daily* (Luke 9:23) which means continually.

"Self-denial," "the baptism in fire" and "the third experience" are different terminology for the same thing. The altar of incense is in the Holy Place and this typifies that even when we do walk in self-denial, we still, for the most part, operate in the 60-fold realm. The exception to this is that the incense cloud does to a small extent pass beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies or 100-fold realm. Therefore, in self-denial we move into the 100-fold realm in a foretaste of the powers of the age to come (Heb. 6:5). Right now no one can claim to be a full manifested son because in this age only a foretaste, a peek at the new day before the sunrise, is available to the overcomers. Jesus is the only manifested Son I know of. He is the forerunner; He has already entered in.

There is a time soon coming when the censer (altar) of incense will enter fully beyond the veil. This was typified on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest entered beyond the veil with the censer and burned incense beyond the veil. This is when the overcomers enter, not partially, but fully beyond the veil into the 100-fold realm. This occurs at the manifestation of the sons of God. At this point the cross will have done its complete work in our lives and we are fully consecrated unto God. We are placed as mature sons and manifested as deliverers to free all creation from bondage.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father (Ro. 8:15), is given to us to lead us to the cross. The Holy Spirit gives our reborn spirit power to enable him to surrender the unregenerate soul on the cross. The cross is the place of surrender in the spiritual dimension. The Holy Spirit is not given to us merely for us to be satisfied with gifts of the Spirit, but for us to press on to the place of perfect holiness beyond the veil. The Holy Spirit is given as a down payment in order for us to enter into the inheritance of the full payment which is our manifestation as mature sons of God. The overcomers together are the

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corporate man who is of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a necessary step in coming to mature sonship. Without it, genuine self-denial is not possible. John 1:12 says that those who receive Jesus are given power to become sons of God. The Spirit draws us to surrender ourselves on the cross. God calls us to lay our lives down. It is because of this drawing, this tug upon our hearts, that so many in Pentecost are feeling the need to seek for more of God. Mature sonship is the logical end to which Pentecost brings us. God works in our hearts by His Spirit to cause us to will and to work for His good pleasure. Thus we can work out our salvation (come to fullness, 100-fold realm) with fear and trembling. Confidently, we seek God for the revelation of true, radical, experiential self-denial. This is because we know that if we are Spirit-baptized, God will draw us on to perfection.

## ENEMIES OF THE CROSS

There are many, even among those who preach the sonship message, who, either by ignorance or by presuming that the work of the cross is complete at salvation, have failed to truly come to the cross for its work in the soul realm. In the next chapter we will explore certain aspects of the Christian experience that are often confused with what the Bible really teaches about self-denial. Many sincere and dedicated saints are committed to following Jesus to the cross, but are led astray by their own false notions about the cross. As it says in Hosea 4:6, **"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."**

This ignorance of the cross or presuming that it's not a day by day experience or confusing the cross with other experiences, has caused many saints to live soulish unsanctified lives. Paul has this to say about them, **"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"** (Phil. 3:18-19).

There are people who are concerned about the temporal things of this life: material possessions and sensual pleasure. They use the gospel as a means of gain. There is indeed a prosperity message in scripture but there is a death that comes first. That death is the daily death of the self on the cross. That death is self-denial. That death is radical commitment and consecration to God through

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Christ. It is the mature sons, who lay their lives down, who are raised up and entrusted with authority to claim the promises. Sadly, we now see lukewarm Christians, confident in their material wealth but knowing little of the cross and the deep truths of the faith. They feel that they have need of nothing. Jesus has this to say about them, **"I will spue thee out of my mouth"** (Rev. 3:16).

We must not be distracted by earthly possessions. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that we can press on to know the Lord. Jesus said, **"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"** (Mt. 10:39). If we hang onto our lives and try to build them up in their corrupt, fallen state, we will lose our reward. If we lay our lives down for Jesus' sake and get out of the way, God will raise us up to bear spiritual fruit worthy of everlasting reward. The sons of God who have laid their lives down will be raised up and entrusted with power in a move of the Spirit to produce greater works and miracles far exceeding those ever known before.

In these last days God is restoring the body of Christ. In doing so, He has raised up vital ministries to bring about this restoration. These vital ministries are often called the "hand" ministry. The hand ministry consists of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as listed in Ephesians 4:11. We infer that the above gifts constitute the hand, first because there are five gifts which correspond to the five fingers of the hand; second because of the fact that in a natural human body the hand is used to care for, nurture and build up the other parts of the body.

God is using the hand, i.e., the apostles, etc. to build up the body till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. If the major ministry groups defined above function properly and in tune with God they will lead the body to maturity by way of the cross unto full sonship. On the other hand, if the possessors of the ministry gifts are soulish because they don't know of the working of the cross, they will tear down the body and lead many astray. The failure on the part of the gifted in the body to truly deny themselves has led to the present weak state of the overall body of Christ. The body is not only divided into countless schisms, cliques and denominations but is also perplexed by conflicting doctrines and revelations.

God must do something drastic in order to bring us to unity. In Matthew 5:29-30, Jesus commands that if your eye offends you, pluck it out and cast it away. If your right hand offends you, cut it off and cast it away because it's better if one of your members perish than the whole body be cast into hell (Gehenna). Unfortunately we may see some amputations of ministries in the near future.

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There are some in the hand ministry who do the body more harm than good. They bring false revelation, false doctrines and divide the sacred body of Christ. They seldom preach against sin. They seldom preach of the need for repentance. They ignore or pervert the message of the cross in their own lives and certainly are not capable of teaching biblical self-denial to the church at large. They are concerned about programs, budgets, buildings, pomp and show. They instill a lukewarm self-satisfied comfortable attitude in the people. They produce organizations and denominations that are regimented and controlling. They lead the whole body into this hellishness. It is not for us to speak out accusations. It is God who will lovingly correct those who are divisive or heretical.

In Matthew 18 and I Cor. 5, the Bible tells us how members who persist in sin are to be cut off. This, however, must be done at the leading of the Holy Spirit and through scriptural channels of authority. We, who by the grace of God hold to sound doctrine must still love, reach out to and fellowship with saints that are blinded by false teaching. Yet we must look to ourselves and be careful that we don't fall into the same pit of religious error. In such a case we ourselves would be cut off.

In I Cor. 9:27 we read about how Paul brought his body into subjection lest after he preached to others he himself should be a CASTAWAY. Paul, as an apostle, was a part of the hand ministry and he through self-denial kept his body in check lest he fall into sin because of carnal passions. He was not afraid of losing his salvation, but of being cast off from God's highest purpose of being part of the overcomer company.

Among us who hold to the overcomer or sonship message are those who presumptively claim to be "manifested sons." These claim to have already arrived at sinless perfection and some even claim to have glorified bodies. They either fail to teach self-denial or they teach it in such a twisted way that it's unrecognizable. In claiming to be sinless they imply that their souls are already fully saved. I will hasten to point out as I have stressed all through this book, that self-denial involves taking up our cross daily all through our lives. The soul is gradually being saved and is not fully saved until the body is glorified, which takes place at the resurrection of the righteous. Our spirit has been saved, our body will be saved but our soul is being saved. To say that one is glorified now when it is obvious to anyone with eyes to see that his body is mortal is serious foolishness. Preachers and prophets who make such claims diminish the credibility of the sonship message. Those in the hand ministry who do this are leading the saints to Babylon. They are in danger of being cast off.

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Many of these "free thinkers" deny the necessity of the saints to assemble together in local churches and they deny the concept of pastoral authority in local churches. Some of them are not willing to recognize denominational saints as genuine brethren and are even schismatic among "come outers" in religious pride. They twist self-denial passages such as Luke 9:26 "**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children**" as an excuse to slough off all responsibility to their families and refuse to provide for their own. This is in spite of what Paul wrote in First Timothy 5:8 that he who doesn't provide for those of his own household "**hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**" Enemies of the cross sometimes further degrade the family by living in fornication and rationalize it as "free-love" and "soul-mating."

Paul, even in his day, had troubles with those who claimed the resurrection was in the past. In II Tim. 2:17-18, he speaks of Hymenaeus and Philetus who erred by saying the resurrection had already taken place and had destroyed the faith of some. To preach that the manifestation of the sons of God is a glory that we are waiting for (Ro. 8:19, 23) is to flow in the present move of God. On the other hand, to preach that the manifestation of the sons has already taken place is to claim to be already resurrected.

We, like the Ephesian church must test those who claim to be apostles, but are not (Rev. 2:2). We must discern the liars, the false ministries. We must deny them access to our pulpits. They would lead sonship churches to gnostic apostasy and ultimately to the image of Babylon, though they, more than anyone, would vehemently deny this.

Many of these same teachers "spiritualize" the resurrection. They say that passages referring to the resurrection, refer to the spirit and not to the literal physical bodies. There is also a tendency by some to allegorize even the most basic truths of the Bible, even the truths that pertain to personal salvation. The sonship message, however, is consistent with a literal or plain interpretation of the scriptures.

There are some passages where an allegorical interpretation is clearly intended. For instance, we don't take up our cross in the literal sense. It is clear by the Spirit that our Lord used the word "cross" to create a word picture that indicates the necessity of our abiding in a continual state of sacrifice and surrender before Him. However, to spiritualize the bodily resurrection of Christ is to deny the clear Bible teaching that Christ's body was resurrected. Allegorizing Bible teachings on sexual morality often results in the condoning or practice of such overt sins as fornication and adultery.

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In many of his epistles Paul dealt with early forms of gnosticism which were creeping into the early church. Gnosticism was a religious system that was derived from ancient Greek philosophy. They believed that God was entirely separate from matter and that matter itself was inherently evil. They regarded the soul as a spark of divinity imprisoned in the body. From this basic premise, ethics were formulated according to two opposite extremes. On the one hand were those who practiced extreme asceticism, which meant a total denial of sex and inhibiting other natural bodily cravings. On the other hand there were those who felt that the body's behavior was inconsequential and therefore unrestrained sensual indulgence, including immoral sex, was permitted. To counter these false teachings Paul taught against asceticism (Col. 2:8-23) and immorality (I Col. 15:12) and opposed those who spiritualized the resurrection (II Tim. 2:18). Other scriptural injunctions against gnostic error in Paul's epistles, in John's epistles and in the book of Revelation are too numerous to mention here.

In Paul's teaching on self-denial he tends to use somewhat different terminology than did Jesus. Paul stressed the importance of the body and of outward body behavior. This is because of the necessity to counter gnosticism which minimized the importance of the physical body. It is for this reason that we see in Paul's writings such statements as **"yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your MEMBERS (bodies) as instruments of righteousness"** (Ro. 6:13) and **"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God..."** (Ro. 12:1).

Jesus taught self-denial from the standpoint of the spirit of man. The spirit denies the soul-life and submits the soul to the crucifying work of the cross. **"Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily"** (Luke 9:23). Paul taught self-denial from the standpoint of the body, i.e., the soul-life laid down and raised up changes bodily behavior to conform to the will of God. The body becoming an instrument of righteousness is the burden of Paul's teaching. The teachings of Jesus and Paul taken together give a full picture of biblical self-denial and form a perfectly balanced revelation.

Some teach that the spirit and soul are to be united. They teach that there will be a marriage of spirit and soul. This teaching is not antithetical to self-denial in an absolute sense but must be clarified. The scripture clearly teaches the necessity of the dividing between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12). Therefore, any marriage or joining between spirit and soul must take place after the cross has done its work of crucifying and renewing the soul. Therefore, we find the seeming contradiction, which is division taking place before unity. This is in keeping with

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God's ways in the deep truths of the faith. For instance, we must lose our life in order to find it; and we must humble ourself in order for God to exalt us. In the same way faith and prosperity teachers teach the prosperity of the soul, but we must clarify it by saying that the death of the soul comes first. Regarding the marriage between spirit and soul I would point out that the spirit will only marry a renewed soul, and in this marriage the spirit (masculine) is head over the soul (feminine).

James 1:8 says, **"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."** The Greek word for double minded is "*dipsuchos*," which means two-souled. This is the condition of someone who rather than dividing soul from spirit has divided soul from soul. He is partially committed to God and partially committed to the world. This is a state of confusion, doubt, misdirected prayer and inability to be led by the Spirit. It is the sad state of many a Christian.

The way to unify the soul is through self-denial. The divided soul is surrendered on the cross, is crucified and is raised up renewed. The renewed, zoe-life soul is never divided but is unified in her intent to serve God. Thus the command is given, **"purify your hearts** (by the way of the cross), **ye double minded"** (Ja 4:8). We cry with the psalmist of Israel, **"Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: UNITE my heart to fear thy name"** (Ps. 86:11). The soul that is laid down on the cross is raised up with one purpose and that one purpose is to serve God whole heartedly. This is often called *the crucified life*.



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## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT SELF-DENIAL IS NOT

In this chapter we will discuss the doctrines and experiences that well meaning saints often confuse with self-denial. Many sincere people who love the Lord and desire to take up the cross to follow Him have a false notion of what the cross actually is. Centuries ago, in medieval times, the Bible was withheld from the people. One result of this Bible illiteracy was great confusion about what the Bible teaches about self-denial. Nowadays there is greater Bible literacy and by revelation by the Spirit we can rightly divide the word of truth. Therefore, by God's grace, we should be able to end the confusion.

The five doctrinal topics that we'll examine are the following: Trials and Tribulation, Low Self-Esteem, Inner Healing, Self-Discipline and Self-Indulgence. Not all of these topics are bad, in fact some are essential to the development of the overcomer. All of these topics are, however, confused to some degree with self-denial. Our analysis of each of these topics will both enhance our understanding of self-denial and show how these topics relate to it.

### TRIALS AND TRIBULATION

We must be careful to distinguish true self-denial from all its impostors. Nowhere is this more true than in the context of Christian suffering. Trials and tribulations are valuable tools in the hand of God to train and build character in his children. Among the many scriptures that testify to this are, Romans 5:3-5; Hebrews 12:5-7 and James 1:2-4. An examination of these verses will make it

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quite clear that tribulation refines the *character* of our souls. In contrast to this, I will point out that self-denial does a much deeper work that changes the *nature* of the soul. Self-denial (the cross) cuts to the center of the heart whereas tribulation merely shapes or molds the heart.

The condition of our souls is so desperate that nothing less than radical surgery will do. We discussed earlier regarding Hebrews 4:12 that Jesus the High Priest uses the scalpel of the Word of God to divide soul from spirit in our hearts. Tribulation alone, no matter how prolonged or frustrating will never do this to our hearts. This is not to degrade or diminish the importance of tribulation but to make the distinction. The cross can be compared to radical surgery. Tribulation can be compared to physical therapy which is exercise to develop the strength of the surgically repaired organ.

Tribulation leads us to the cross and once we take up the cross tribulations become stepping stones to greater things. Tribulation leads us to the cross; nevertheless tribulation per se, is not the cross. In the same way God's kindness leads us to repentance, (Ro. 2:4) but God's kindness is distinct from the repentance to which it leads. There are many people who are wooed by the Spirit and gently led to repentance who never repent. In the same way, there are many dear saints who endure great suffering, yet never come to true brokenness.

If trials and tribulation alone could mature the sons that God is raising up, I dare say that the overcomer company would have appeared centuries ago. The church has always had an abundance of tribulation but not always a REVELATION OF TRUE SELF-DENIAL. The Medieval and Reformation church tended to equate tribulation with the cross. God is restoring, in these last days, a true revelation of the cross. Without the sovereign revelation of the cross all the tribulation in the world will not cause you to surrender. It is only the appropriation, by faith, of Christ's finished work on Calvary that will perfect the soul of a son of God. Throughout the ages there have always been a few with the revelation of self-denial, but in these last days many shall be brought to maturity by biblical self-denial.

In order to understand how trials and tribulation function along with self-denial in the maturing process it is necessary to know the difference between nature and character. Second Peter 1:4 says that we must be "**partakers of the divine nature.**" The Greek word translated nature is "phusis" which is derived from "phuo," which means to bring forth or produce. The nature of a being is the source or fountainhead of its life and action. Self-denial is a suffering with Jesus but much more than that, self-denial is a crucifixion death with Christ whereby the

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nature of our old self is done away and the nature of the new self in the image of God (divine nature) is implanted. This is the implant surgery of Hebrews 4:12 and James 1:21.

Tribulation on the other hand is not a crucifixion with Christ but is a suffering with Jesus. This suffering does not change the nature (physis) of the soul but merely develops the character of the soul. The word translated character in Romans 5:4 of the NIV is the Greek word "dokime," which literally means the process of proving or the effect of proving. Dokime means not just good character but proved, tested character. Tribulation, therefore, causes the nature of the soul to be tested, proved and expressed in daily life situations. The renewed soul and also the reborn spirit of the overcomer are strengthened and developed by overcoming in the trials of life.

As an illustration, let's look at the refining process of a precious metal. Trials and tribulation are the furnace coals and flames that burn off the dross from the metal. The flames don't change the metal itself but simply causes the dross to burn away and the metal to be revealed. Self-denial, on the other hand, is the supernatural process that does indeed change the metal itself. Self-denial supernaturally changes fallen human metal into divine gold. It is only by starting with self-denial which implants divine nature (gold) that trials and tribulation are effective in bringing us to mature sonship. Therefore we are to be gold that is refined in the fire (Revelation 3:18).

The difference between nature and character can be summarized as follows: *character is nature applied*. A person with godly character is one whose divine nature is expressed by bearing spiritual fruit (love, joy, peace) in every bad situation. Divine nature is the source of right living, whereas godly character is the ability to live right. Trials and tribulations give us the opportunity to learn through practice the bearing of the fruit of the divine nature in adverse situations. Trials and tribulations develop the character of a son who lives the crucified life. Over time, as the believer matures, his ability to bear fruit increases.

Adversity is used by God to strengthen the new man. The new man is the zoe-soul, the soul with life that is really life. It is obvious that in all areas of life it is impossible to grow stronger in an environment where there is no resistance. The examples that confirm this are legion: weight lifters must pump iron to strengthen muscles, musicians must practice to develop natural talent, an intelligent mind must exercise its ingenuity by solving problems. Even so the overcomer must develop his overcoming ability by practical experience in overcoming in adverse circumstances. We must joyfully praise and worship God, giving thanks in all

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trying situations. Only in this victorious attitude will God entrust us with power and authority to change our circumstances. There is power in praise.

Adverse circumstances put pressure on an individual and cause his true nature to manifest itself. Either the nature of the old man who is a grumbler or the nature of the new man who rejoices in tribulation is expressed. A person totally sold out to God can take a trial or an attack on himself and not only rejoice in it and bear fruit in it, but in doing so can actually turn the situation around and use it for God's glory.

Consider Joseph, betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery. He patiently endured it, rose to a position of great authority in Egypt and was used by God to bring a great deliverance to multitudes of people. Joseph later said, "**ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good**" (Gen. 50:20). Overcomers bring the good out of evil. A true son is one who looks on his problems as opportunities because God causes all things to work together for good (Ro. 8:28). How much better this is than grumbling and complaining!

When in the midst of a trial we must pray "Father I thank You for the good that You are working into my spirit and soul right now. I praise You for bringing the good out of evil." When we truly exult in our tribulation and consider it pure joy we have already moved beyond trials and tribulation.

Most of us have a long way to go till we reach the point of being beyond grumbling. When we are offended by someone the attitude of vengeance rears its ugly head. Trials and tribulation are used by God to reveal to us the unsundered areas in our lives. These unsundered areas can then be presented to Jesus for the deep work of separation of soul from spirit. So often when things are going well we feel that we are mature and fully committed to God. Adverse circumstances have a way of bringing out anger and vengeance and other attitudes we thought were behind us. In true brokenness we come to the cross.

Trials and tribulations are a rod of correction to keep us in a state of sensitive brokenness before God. It keeps us willing to take up our cross every day of our lives. In II Cor. 12:9 the Lord says to Paul, "**My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**" In verse 10 Paul says, "**Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: when I am weak, then am I strong.**" A thorn in the flesh was given to Paul to weaken him so that he would not be "**exalted above measure**" (self-confident). Tribulation has a way of

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humbling the old man. Tribulation affects the old creation soul life by crushing it and containing it. When Paul became weak he realized that it was only in his weakness that he became strong with GOD'S STRENGTH. So we, too, must lay down self-confidence at the cross and take up confidence in God.

Some saints even in this present move of God know nothing of self-denial. They have never come to that place of blessed daily surrender on the cross. Trials are used to break them so that their failures open their eyes to their need for a deeper work in the heart. There is so much shallowness, so much assuming that a person is an overcomer because he doesn't smoke, cuss or chew. Being an instrument of righteousness is so much more than that. A transformed heart, a putting on of the mind of Christ is needed. People don't realize this until they come to the end of themselves.

It may take a long term trial, years of suffering, to bring a person to true brokenness so they surrender to God through Christ on the cross each day. It doesn't have to be that way, though. It's not the amount of suffering, but rather the efficacy of suffering in bringing true brokenness. A person might suffer and fail only a small amount and be broken unto surrender. On the other hand some people suffer a great deal and never truly yield to God. In view of this, let's come to the cross now and lay our lives down daily to have that supernatural transformation accomplished.

So we see that trials and tribulation lead us to the cross for our initial consecration unto God; and as we take up our cross daily, tribulation develops our character so that we express our new nature. The reality of the new life implanted in us is developed and strengthened in the hardship of the rough and tumble of everyday life. There are no armchair quarterbacks on this team. It's easy to sit on the sidelines and theorize, but this salvation must be worked out. You can't learn how to swim without getting wet. We must consecrate ourselves to God in every situation. We must consciously appropriate the work of the cross at all times. Only in this constant bearing of the cross do we patiently bear spiritual fruit.

The correct answer to every test is to consecrate ourselves to God in it and get into holy joy. This allows God to mold the character of our souls and conform us to the image of His Son. When we are in joy in hardship we grow, we change, we are victorious.

God will test each one of us to force us to choose between Him and self. It is "**God, which trieth our hearts**" (I Thes. 2:4). With Abraham, the test was Isaac. With the rich young ruler the test was all his possessions. If we give our

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hearts to Him we have no possessions. We have no covenant rights. Why do we have no rights? We have no rights because we don't have us! We gave ourselves to Him. When we realize that we have no rights there will be no complaints. If He tells you to give your car away, don't complain because it's not your car. We have no money, no cars, no families, no **"great and precious promises"** (II Pet. 1:4).

The great and precious promises that are given unto us really belong to Him because we are His. **"Ye are not you own"** (I Cor. 6:19). Therefore when we pray to get released from a trial we must ask God which of the great covenant promises we are to claim. We can't just claim any promise we choose but we must seek God and hear the rhema word from Him. He will tell us which covenant promise to speak over our situation. Again we see the necessity of our dependence on intimate personal relationship with God.

There is healing in the atonement. There is deliverance from every trial in the atonement. Every blessing is secured for us in the atonement but it must be spoken into existence by God through His sons in His times. First Timothy 2:5-6 says **"...Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."** The Numeric translation puts it **"Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be in its own seasons."** What this verse is saying is that though the ransom has been paid and all creation has been redeemed, it is testified (i.e. the creative word spoken) over the course of time. **"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time"** (Eccl. 3:11).

We must seek God earnestly in prayer and fasting (any trial can be considered a form of fasting) in order to find out what time it is in His program and what promise to claim and what word to speak. We must consecrate ourselves to God in the trial and seek Him first and not seek deliverance as the priority. If we go to Him seeking deliverance, that is idolatry. We have idolized deliverance. We must go to Him seeking Him and He gives us deliverance for His own glory and as an expression of His great love for us. He gives us the rhema word of deliverance when we seek God for God. When we seek His face, His hand will move on our behalf.

We must persevere in speaking the rhema word (or do whatever point of contact He leads us to do such as laying on of hands etc.) until the enemy is forced out of our situation and deliverance is attained. The whole process begins and ends with self-denial. We do nothing of ourselves but only what we see Him do. He may give us deliverance right away or He may lead us to be abased for a season and say **"My grace is sufficient for thee."** Either way we trust in God and walk in faith.

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## BEYOND TRIALS AND TRIBULATION

We have seen the important role that trials and tribulation play in the process of maturing the overcomer. When the overcomers reach the state of full maturity, however, trials and tribulations are no longer needed. It is at this point that the sons of God will be entrusted with authority and power to turn back every attack of the devil. Let us look at a scriptural illustration that reveals this truth. **"The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under TUTORS AND GOVERNORS until the time appointed of the father"** (Gal. 4:1-2). Trials and tribulations are as tutors and governors that build character in us until we reach maturity. In this passage the term "tutors and governors" is specifically referring to the law as our **"schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."** I believe that the same principle also applies to trials and tribulations, that these are as a schoolmaster to bring us to the cross whereby we grow unto maturity. We who are justified are already sons of God in our spirits (Gal. 3:26). We must become sanctified sons of God in our souls as we grow to maturity.

Let me clarify that the spirit, soul and body of each believer is justified through faith in Christ at the initial conversion experience (being born again). The believer's spirit is judicially and experientially righteous at the new birth. The believer's soul is judicially but not yet fully experientially righteous at that point but must be sanctified day by day. The believer's body is justified (judicially redeemed) but awaits experiential redemption at the resurrection of the righteous.

As a child, a son of God appears no different than a mere servant. In our immature state, overcomers are subject to the same distresses and afflictions and persecutions to which other Christians and unbelievers are subject. There will be a time, however, when the overcomer will stand out as different from the rest of men, as masters over circumstances. Indeed, we shall be masters not only over our own circumstances, but masters over all circumstances that keep all the world in bondage. All creation longs for the sons of God to come to maturity because the sons of God shall set all creation free (Ro. 8:21)!

First Peter 1:6 proclaims this truth: **"Now for a season, IF NEED BE, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."** We suffer trials only if we need them to mature us. It logically follows that once fully mature we no longer need to suffer under persecution, but glorify God by triumphing over persecution. In the latter part of this same epistle we read the following: **"But the God of all**

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**grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"** (1 Pet. 5:10).

I demonstrated earlier that God uses trials to break us to lead us to the cross and keep us at the cross in surrender before Him. There comes a point in time (I know not when) when we are fully broken and fully transformed by the cross. God will not test and break His sons forever. A man does not break a horse forever. He breaks the horse so he can ride it. A man does not plow a field forever. He plows the field so he can plant it. In the same way, God did not form His church to be trampled under foot by persecution. God did not raise up His sons, His firstfruits from the church, to be bullied and beaten by the world system. The breaking by trials is for a season, so that after the breaking has done its work, we are mature and ready to be used by God to bring all things into subjection to Him.

Isaiah speaks of this truth: **"Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed?...Does he not level its surface...and plant wheat in rows?...Grain for bread is crushed, indeed, he does not continue to thresh it forever. Because the wheel of his cart and his horses eventually damage it. He does not thresh it longer. This also comes from the Lord of hosts, who has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great"** (Is. 28:24, 25, 28, 29 NASB). For too long the church has failed to see this wonderful counsel and great wisdom from God. We must lift up our eyes unto the Lord. We shall be brought to a place of total victory beyond trials and tribulation.

We read of the two witnesses in Revelation eleven that, **"if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this way be killed."** Someone says, *"Aren't we supposed to turn the other cheek?"* In a later chapter the glorious principles of turning the other cheek and going the second mile will be discussed at length. Suffice it to say for now that these two witnesses are mature; having the selfish vengeance of their old selves crucified at the cross. They now execute God's vengeance upon those that persecute them. We, in our present immature state must, for the most part, not resist evil men because to do so would be an expression of our own selfish, soulish vengeance.

There are many Pentecostal preachers nowadays that teach what has been called the "health and wealth gospel" or "faith and prosperity of the believer." The principles that are taught are for the most part sound and Bible based. They teach that Christians are to walk in divine health and in financial prosperity. They



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teach that all adverse circumstances are from the devil and must be rebuked and changed by speaking words of power. Many of the adherents to this message amply demonstrate their success in applying these principles. It is true that in the Pentecostal, 60-fold realm (the earnest or deposit of the Spirit) great things can be accomplished. The danger that these teachings present is that these dear saints exercise these principles in their present state of immaturity. This can lead to a lukewarm state in which health and material possessions are worshipped as an end in themselves. Also, since they regard all tribulation as not being God's will, they fail to see its usefulness in maturing them.

For all the glory of the prosperity message and all of the precious promises of triumph in the Bible we must always bear in mind that there is a death of the self-life that we must die first. This death is followed by resurrection unto true power. Like Jesus we must wear the crown of thorns before we can wear the crown of kingly glory. Yet there are many in the faith/prosperity message who claim to be full, who claim to be rich, and who claim to be kings (1 Cor. 4:8). These know little of the crucified life and the power they exercise is not that of the fullness of kingly sonship. Self-denial is a vital part of the faith/prosperity message and is a part that is all too often left out.

Immaturity cannot handle responsibility. The faith and authority principles are to be used not just by the immature, but primarily by the overcomers. The faith/prosperity message, despite its excesses, is a move of God. Prosperity is a revelation concurrent with the revelation of manifested sonship. It is meant to be appropriated and used by the overcomers. As never before, we shall heal the sick, raise the dead, speak to the storm and make it calm, rebuke the persecutors, work miracles and change adverse circumstances. Only mature sons in the 100-fold realm will be total victors and masters over circumstances. The devil, who brings trials and tribulations is to be overcome by the mature sons. **"They overcame him (the devil) by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death"** (self-denial) (Rev. 12:11).

My point here is not to discourage 60-fold (Pentecostal/Charismatic) believers from exercising their faith, but rather to emphasize the importance of going on to know the Lord in full maturity. In an immature state we receive great joy and encouragement by exercising faith to change a bad situation. Rather than presuming that we "have arrived," we need to press on to maturity. We yet have much to suffer and much to surrender on the cross day by day.

To summarize our analysis of trials and tribulation, we have seen that:

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tribulation is distinct from self-denial, that tribulation shapes the character of the soul, whereas self-denial transforms the nature of the soul. Tribulation breaks us and leads us to the cross and causes us to remain yielded to the deeper work of self-denial. Trials and tribulations are "tutors and governors" that remain with us until we reach maturity and once we reach maturity, tribulation is no longer necessary and we overcome tribulation by operating in the fullness of power by faith in God to whom all the power and glory belong!

## LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Self-denial must not be confused with self-destruction or hatred of self in an absolute sense. Jesus' words in Luke 14:26 that a person must "**hate...his own life**" would seem to indicate self-hatred. The word for hate is the Greek "miseo," which does indeed mean hate and is always translated that way in the New Testament. The word for life used here is "psuche," which, of course, refers to the soul-life as we have seen. We are commanded to hate our souls but the hatred is not in an absolute or destructive sense. It is the hatred demonstrated in giving up ourselves, surrendering ourselves on the cross. We don't punish, condemn, destroy or put ourselves down, but simply present ourselves to Jesus. He, as High Priest, wields the sword that cuts us asunder. In the Old Testament no sacrifice lamb ever took the sword from the priest and destroyed itself.

We are to abhor the sin and pretension of the old nature. We are to put off the old man and put on the new man. We are to love the new man (the resurrected, transformed zoe-soul) with everlasting agapao love.

The soul is the feminine part of us and like a woman, its greatest need is to be loved. The spirit is the masculine part of us and like a man, its greatest need is to be respected and obeyed. Our spirits must love our souls--the renewed soul. Our souls must not lord it over our spirits, but must be submissive. The biblical order is spirit, soul, body, not body, soul, spirit.

There are many books that teach about the problem of low self-esteem. Even a person with low self-esteem does not really hate himself but suffers from perverted self-love. As Paul says in Ephesians 5:29: "**...no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it...**" (NIV). Every man loves his body and I believe also loves his soul, even though in such a perverted sense it may lead to self-pity and self-centeredness.

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Even criminals love themselves to such a degree that they would steal from others to support themselves. In fact, no social science study, to my knowledge, has ever shown that an educational program intended to raise self-esteem has caused a reduction in aberrant behavior. There is, in fact, a study, (Baumeister Boden & Smart, Psychological Review, 1996, Vol. 103), that reports a strong correlation between high self-esteem and violence. This study finds that criminal types have bloated egos and regard it as their right to rob or attack an "inferior" person. (Concerned Women for America "Family Voice," Sept. 1996, p. 7 .)

Billions of dollars are spent every year on Secular Humanistic public education programs designed to raise students' self-esteem. How futile it all is when we know from both scripture and experience that a heart changed by God is the only thing that yields right behavior.

A low self-esteem person is disappointed with his failures, lacks self-confidence and is generally unhappy. Low self-esteem is often caused by rejection. In order to compensate for the rejection, a person becomes overly self-protective or self-assertive. He convinces himself he is important and manifests pride in trying to draw attention and recognition to himself. These defensive reactions to rejection spring out of self-love, not hatred of self

Even self-destruction, such as suicide, is done out of perverted self-love. Suicide has been called the ultimate selfish act. It is done entirely for the benefit (?) of self and out of a lack of regard for the hurt inflicted on family and on others close to the person. Suicide is a cowardly disgrace and is perhaps the worst of all sins. It is the ultimate failure; it is giving up and throwing one's life back in God's face. Life is a gift, a beautiful gift; and God expects us to live out our days even though at times the going is rough. It is our duty to live a full life of service unto God and His people until such time as God takes us home. **"We call them blessed that endured"** (James 5:11 ASV).

The only deliverance from such perverted self-love is the proper self-hate that results, not in destruction, but in the *surrender* of the soul on the cross as a holy sacrifice. Lay your life down and God will raise it up!

## INNER HEALING

Inner healing is more properly described as soul healing. It is a genuine,

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legitimate work of God's healing power on the soul. It is, however, quite distinct from and not to be confused with the work of the cross upon the soul in self-denial. The scriptures speak of the soothing balm applied to a wounded heart and of being loosed from bondage caused by past hurts. This soothing balm is inner healing.

In Psalm 23:3 we read, **"He restoreth my soul."** In Luke 4:18 Jesus quotes the prophecy of Isaiah, of which He Himself is the fulfillment: **"...he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."** In II Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul testifies, **"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God."** Indeed, we walk through the valley of the shadow of death and in a world armed with cruel hate, we are stung by fiery darts. Each of us, from time to time, needs a touch from the balm of Gilead (Jer. 8:22).

The low self-esteem individual in particular requires this ministry. Through prayer and counseling and most effectively by the word of knowledge, the areas of soul injury are identified and ministered to. Trauma related to early childhood abuse, especially physical and sexual abuse are healed. Also, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, areas of bondage to sin and demonic oppression are commonly dealt with in soul healing. The areas of sin are repented from and renounced, demonic spirits are cast out, the healing power of God is applied through prayer.

The recent phenomenon of the *Toronto blessing* seems to be related to inner healing. Some testify that the holy laughter or even the deep weeping have a cleansing effect that helps the soul to release old resentments. Also a new zeal for evangelism is often imparted. God is preparing His church for a great end-time harvest of new believers. Our inner man must be healed in order to stand the stress that is often involved in the nurturing of new believers.

Someone may ask "what is the purpose of inner healing and how does it contribute to the walk of an overcomer?" The purpose of soul healing is the same as the purpose of physical healing. The reason God provides physical healing and divine health is because it is difficult to serve him in an injured or sick body. In the same way that a broken body is a hindrance to divine service, so also an injured soul is a hindrance to the bearing of spiritual fruit. The soul is an organ used by the spirit as a vehicle to bear spiritual fruit, such as: love, joy, peace, gentleness

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and meekness (Gal. 5:22-23). Any injury to the soul interferes with the bearing of fruit. Keep in mind, also, that soul healing is not a self-improvement program, nor is it self-discipline, but is the application of the healing power of God. Similarly, divine healing of the body is not to be confused with an exercise program or visiting the family doctor but is God's healing power applied to the physical body.

Now we come to the major question, which is how soul healing relates to soul regeneration. It was stated earlier that soul healing is not to be confused with the work of the cross, i.e. self-denial. Both inner healing and the crucified life are works of the grace of God in the life of the overcomer. These experiences are not contrary to one another, nor do they compete, but rather they are complimentary. Let's look again at our surgery illustration. The cross, or self-denial, corresponds to the dividing of soul from spirit and the implantation of the Christlike "zoe" soul. This changes the nature of the soul. Trials and tribulations correspond not to the surgery itself, but to the exercise and physical therapy that develops the character of the soul. Inner healing is not the surgery or the therapy but is the soothing balm that restores the normal functioning of the soul. Remember that the regeneration of the soul is a gradual process. It is slowly worked out every day in the life of the overcomer. Even though the soul is being renewed day by day and its character is growing stronger, it still has the scars and wounds from attacks by demons. The enemy seeks to hinder the overcomer and sometimes he succeeds in ripping open an old wound or inflicting a new one. Soul healing is a constant help to us, to comfort and edify us and heal these injuries.

So we see then that self-denial is the deepest work. Self-denial results in the transformation of the soul to supernatural functioning, whereas soul healing results in restoration of the soul to natural, normal functioning. In comparing this to the regeneration of the body we see that resurrection is the deepest work. Resurrection from the dead means putting on the transformed, glorified body, whereas physical healing results in merely the restoration of natural normal functioning of the body. The manifestation of the sons of God takes place at the first resurrection. At this point both our souls and bodies are fully redeemed. Both soul healing and physical healing will then be no longer necessary because both soul and body will be in a glorified state.

There are believers who have experienced inner healing, but yet have no experience of the deeper work brought about by self-denial. Inner healing does bring a great deliverance from bondage and gives freedom to move in righteousness. Some people confuse this new found freedom for the victorious walk of the overcomer. On the contrary, the freedom given through self-denial to do the greater works of righteousness far exceeds the freedom achieved through

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inner healing. This is like a man who was an invalid and through physical healing is restored to normal. He feels so healthy and free that he thinks he must be in the glorified resurrected body. But in fact if he was in the glorified body he'd be far healthier and freer than he was after the mere physical healing.

It was mentioned earlier that self-denial and soul healing are not competing but are complimentary. There are those walking in self-denial who need a healing touch. Paul testified of this, "**for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ**" (II Cor. 1:5). On the other hand, there are those who walk in inner healing who need to come to the cross. Even a restored healthy, robust soul needs to be laid down and surrendered on the altar of the cross. In this way the deeper work of soul transformation can be accomplished.

## SELF-DISCIPLINE

As was mentioned earlier, self-denial is an often misunderstood subject. The symbolism of Jesus' words "**take up his cross**" and "**whosoever will save his life shall lose it**" is very hard for the natural mind to grasp. Also, in this category are Paul's words, "**being made conformable unto his death**" (Phil. 3:10).

Many who preach on this subject use these scriptures to advocate a stern austere life without amusements or pleasures. Strict adherence to arbitrary man-made rules ostensibly based on scripture makes it a life of self-punishment. Some believe that the denial of bodily comforts and enjoyments somehow purifies one for service to Jesus. Watchman Nee calls such body abuse "Christian asceticism."

Imagine isolating yourself in a remote monastery, reciting prayers, chanting hymns, having no amusements, under a vow of poverty, engaging in backbreaking manual labor, all in order to be close to God. Imagine doing all of this in order to break down the body so that you can enter into a victorious, peaceful, separated-into God realm. This is what many people mean by the term self-denial. But is this really self-denial?

Such an ascetic lifestyle can be referred to not as self-denial but as self-discipline. The self (soul) disciplines the body and meets with a measure of success. The soul, however, cannot really discipline itself or change itself in a lasting way. Outward behavior of the body is greatly modified but the inward

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attitudes of the heart are not changed. For instance, such an ascetic person would never physically take revenge for an offense but still would be filled with hatred and bitterness for the offender.

Self-discipline is legalistic in that it relies on law to modify external behavior. The soul dresses up the outside to make it appear righteous but doesn't change the heart. Jesus said, **"For from within out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries...thefts... deceit...pride..."** (Mk. 7:21-22) and **"First clean the inside of the cup and dish and then the outside also will be clean"** (Mt. 23:26 NIV).

Cleaning the inside of the cup means cleansing the heart. Then the outside will be clean. Then we will know which pleasures are sinful and which aren't, which laws are of man and which are of God. God writes his laws on our hearts (Heb. 8:10). Only with a clean heart can we walk in and obey the commands of scripture. Many eastern religions and cults practice self-discipline in devotion to their various deities. Buddhist monks, Krishna cult members, Unification church members, to name a few, follow a strict regimen of "self-denial" or asceticism. This "self-denial" practiced by people who do not have God's Spirit is certainly not biblical self-denial.

Consider Paul's words to the Colossians: **"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!?' These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence"** (Col. 2:20-23 NIV). Sensual indulgence can never be restrained by man-made rules. A soul that desires sensual indulgence will either find a way around the rules or break the rules. If it can't indulge in a base physical pleasure as in some forbidden amusement, it will find a noble "pleasure" like intellectual arrogance.

Self-denial based on man-made rules is that which depends on the soul's knowledge of good and evil rather than on the reborn spirit's communion with God. The fact that it abstains from this or that pleasure gives the soul great pride in thinking that it really is denying itself and serving Jesus merely by abstinence. However, the soul can't truly nail itself to the cross. The cost is much too high; it means death to all that it is!

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Biblical self-denial is not the denial of the things (pleasures) of self, but is the denial of the soul which is the self. Fleeing youthful lusts is not self-denial, nor is it the way to achieve self-denial but true self-denial results in the fleeing of youthful lusts. Self-denial is necessary in order to become a disciple and truly follow Jesus. Then we can flee youthful lusts, keep ourselves unstained of the world, keep our bodies in subjection, to no longer live for pleasure but live unto God.

Paul wrote, **"...I beat my body and make it my slave..."** (1 Cor. 9:27 NIV). How did Paul beat his body? By the Spirit. This is indicated in Romans 8:13 **"...ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body."** The reborn spirit with whom the Holy spirit dwells must rule over soul and body. Christians, however, can allow their unrenewed soul (old man) to suppress the spirit and try to restrain the passions of the body. Such an arrangement is out of divine order and leads to defeat. This is worldly self-discipline in which the self (soul) disciplines the body.

Let's not exercise legalistic, self-effort, ascetic "self-discipline" but rather self-denial which allows zoe spirit life to reign. One of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 is "temperance" (also translated self-control). True biblical self-control is a fruit of the Spirit and is not to be confused with soulish legalistic self-discipline. Spiritual self-control is our spirit in control of self (soul) in the divine order of spirit-soul-body whereas soulish self-discipline (in which the soul disciplines itself) inevitably fails and results in the carnal order of body-soul-spirit. Self-denial (denial of soul) is the only way to release our spirit to exercise the spiritual fruit of self-control.

## SELF-INDULGENCE

When a Christian realizes that human rules do not restrain self-indulgence (Col. 2:20-23), he is tempted to throw off all restraint and live as he (his old man, Eph. 4:22) pleases. This is what is known as backsliding. A Christian not wishing to be legalistic allows himself a liberal amount of "freedom" which really amounts to blatant self-indulgence. He believes that God's highest purpose and greatest delight is in his comfort and material prosperity. Entertainment is important as are material possessions and money. The unrenewed soul is on the throne stifling the spirit but at the same time allowing itself to be overwhelmed and controlled by the carnal urges of the body. God's divine order of spirit-soul-body is reversed to become body-soul-spirit.

Jesus warned the church in Laodicea: **"You say 'I am rich; I have**



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**acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked"** (Rev. 3:17 NIV). Every Christian, especially those of us who live in prosperous industrialized countries, needs to take this warning to heart and examine himself or herself in its light. Deut. 8:10-16 reveals how easy it is to forget God when we prosper.

At the baptism in the Holy Spirit we receive power and revelation. However, we must not to use these solely for mere human purposes such as personal comfort and satisfaction. We must use this power to press on into the overcoming life unto full sonship to do the greater works. Use faith and authority to accomplish God's work, not man's. Learn to use faith principles in small things, but do not be content with these. Press on!

Self-indulgence is tolerated and even encouraged in our lax, liberal culture. Sensual gratification is the central part of certain worldly philosophies and thought systems such as Epicureanism. Holidays such as Mardi Gras and even Christmas, are often celebrated by wild partying, drunkenness and gluttony. Hedonism, the belief that pleasure is the greatest good, is highly prevalent in today's world among the lost. All forms of self-indulgence are directly opposed to the doctrine of self-denial. Indeed, self-denial is a much ignored doctrine because of the current flood of self-indulgence both in and out of the church. Second Timothy 3:1, 2 & 4 says **"in the last days...men shall be lovers of their own selves...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God..."**

This is not written to condemn all forms of enjoyment nor is this written to say that all Christians must live in poverty. However, we must not set our hearts on pleasure nor should we allow the things we possess to possess us. Perhaps the problem with the rich young ruler, who **"had great possessions,"** was that his possessions had him! If your possessions possess you, then will God's command be given for you to sell all and give to the poor. Pleasure and enjoyment are OK, but do we live for pleasure? **"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth"** (I Tim. 5:6).

True biblical self-denial results in a God-centered life, not a life centered around pleasure or material gain. Once a soul has been touched by the cross it is never the same. As we walk in self-denial we desire God not for the things of God, but we desire God for Himself alone. It's not that God won't bless us. He does bless us because He loves us, but we don't set our hearts on the things with which He blesses us. We no longer lust after creature comforts but instead desire to know God.

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Sin has its origin in lust. Peter in his second epistle says that corruption is in the world through lust. In the epistle of James it says "**...every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin...**" (Ja. 1:14-15). Adam and Eve desired to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and then sinned by eating it.

Lust, as used here, is not a sex word. Sexual lust is a main driving force in human nature, but lust as used in the Bible means much more than that. First John 2:16 sums up all sinful desire as "**the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.**" We've often heard it said that someone has a lust for power or a lust for recognition. Some of the most noble appearing deeds are done out of a lust for recognition. Jesus rebuked the hypocrites who gave alms in public or prayed in public to receive glory from men or be seen of men. Yes, even the "good" things of self can be done with a motive of lust.

Even working hard at a career or raising a family is often done for social standing and acceptance by relatives and friends. I'm talking about motives now. God looks on the heart. He can see if our "good" deeds are done unto man or done unto God. We lay down our career (motivated by natural selfish ambition) so that God raises up our career once the motive of it is no longer selfish ambition but rather spiritual desire to please God.

Selfish ambition is lust and it is vanity. Vanity and holiness are opposites. Vanity is anything that puffs up self, whereas holiness is anything that glorifies God. Self-indulgence is allowing the unrenewed soul to pursue the above mentioned lusts for the sake of vanity. Only through self-denial can we overcome self and free our souls from entanglements in vain, lustful desire. Once we are free from selfish desire we are then free to do the will of God, to live in holiness, to do things unto God, not man, and bring God glory. To put it another way: if we lay down our great selfish desire, doing the will of God is easy.

To cease from sin we must strike at the root of it which is the self life. That is why we must die, be crucified with Christ. Only a dead man has no plans of his own, no ambitions, no desires. We shall put on the new man created after God's likeness who desires what God desires. This is the overcoming life.

Death of self followed by soul renewal is necessary to become an overcomer. Self-denial is the act of overcoming. We surrender self on the cross each day as we take up the cross daily. We then desire God alone and gladly follow His will and are used by God to accomplish His purposes in these last days. The Father shall honor those who serve Jesus in this way.

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Don't be like the Laodicean church who said that they were increased in goods and had need of nothing. Don't be satisfied with mere earthly riches. Material prosperity is not good enough! Christians with that "good enough" attitude need to be tried and purged so that they may seek God only. Jesus said, **"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"** (Rev. 3:19).

That which is good is the greatest enemy of the perfect. Good and evil grow on the same tree: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Perfection grows on the tree of life. Hebrews 6:1 says **"let us go on unto perfection."** Therefore, let us press on to enter in and settle in the great victorious Christian life that is promised to the overcomers.

Spiritual zoe life is the only thing that can keep us from falling into the quagmire of self-indulgence. Walking by the spirit is the way to transform attitudes of the soul and is the only way to restrain sensual indulgence.

Indeed, the Christian life is a narrow road; and it's easy to veer into legalistic asceticism or self-indulgent hedonism. We need to always remember that the Christian life is the way of the cross, a real work of the power of God in the soul realm. Let us not be legalistic and fall dead in the desert wilderness or be self-indulgent and settle for man's good and miss out on God's perfection. We shall enter the narrow gate, follow the narrow road; we are overcomers. It is not the easy way, in fact it costs everything! Let us be willing to pay the price, to despise our own lives and suffer crucifixion with Christ, in order to know the power of his resurrection.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we have clarified our understanding of self-denial by distinguishing it from other aspects of the Christian experience. We have seen that self-denial is different from trials and tribulation, low self-esteem, inner healing, self-discipline and self-indulgence. In the following chapter we shall explore self-denial in its practical application to the Christian walk. We shall see what kind of righteous works flow out of the experience of self-denial. The souls of the overcomers are brought into obedience by living the crucified life. Once our obedience is complete we shall be used by God to avenge all disobedience (II Cor. 10:6).

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## CHAPTER V

### SELF-DENIAL IN TYPE AND SHADOW

One of the greatest witnesses to the authenticity of the sonship message is the frequency with which it appears in various biblical types and shadows. We see sonship themes in the Old Testament law and in the narratives of Israel's history. In addition to this Old Testament witness, we have Jesus, the Pattern Son, who by life example and teachings amply revealed principles of sonship. One would expect that the cross and crucifixion with Christ on the part of those who comprise the overcomer company would also appear in such typology. The following is by no means an exhaustive analysis of biblical types in which self-denial appears.

#### THE GIVING OF THE LAW

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In the first chapter we discussed the common misapplication of law called legalism. Now we see typified in the giving of the law (the law itself being a type of the righteousness of God) a certain aspect of self-denial. Moses shattered the first set of stone tablets that contained the ten commandments. This was because of Moses' anger over the lawless calf worship idolatry in which the people were engaged (Ex. 32:8, 19). Traditional Jewish teaching on this incident is that Moses is to be commended for breaking the tablets because only in this way is the value of the Torah (law) appreciated. A short time later the Lord commanded Moses to hew out two new tablets of stone and to climb back up the mountain (Dt. 10:1-3). When Moses came down from the mount the second time, his face shined with light to such an extent that Aaron and the children of Israel were afraid to go near him (Ex. 34:29-30).

Self-denial is the second giving of the law in our lives. The first giving of the law is the law we could not keep. In our immaturity we try to keep the law in our own strength, with the energy that comes from self. Before self-denial we inevitably fail to keep the law because our self is the center of our lives. We engage in idolatry of self and worship the golden calf which is the God of self. We do good deeds in order to please ourselves. We outwardly conform to the law in order to please self. God has to open our eyes to see the utter falseness of our Christian walk. We see our idolatry of self and we rightly throw down and break the stone tablets of the legalism of self-righteousness.

In denial of self, we go up the mount to receive the true righteousness that flows out of a God centered life. We take up the cross daily and deny the old self daily. God gives us new life daily. We can say with Paul: **"not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of God by faith: that I may know him and the power of his resurrection...being made conformable unto his death"** (Phil. 3:9-10). It was only after Moses descended from the mount the second time that his face shone. This second giving of the law which typifies the righteousness of God through faith, is the righteousness of the mature sons of God. Moses' face that shone is a type of the manifestation of the sons of God. These mature sons will walk in the power of His resurrection and shall shine as the stars for ever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

The second giving of the law was greater than the first. The second life (the renewed life we receive from God) is greater than the first life (the old soul-life we deny.) God's seconds are always greater than his firsts. Haggai 2:9 declares that the *latter* glory of the temple will be greater than the former. Jesus, the *second* man (I Cor. 15:47), far exceeds the glory of the first man, Adam. For the overcomer, his second life is the life he keeps forever after his old man is nailed to

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the cross.

## ENTERING THE HOLY OF HOLIES

On the Day of Atonement all Israel was under command to "*inna napso*," which are Hebrew words which literally mean to "afflict the soul" (Lev. 23:27, 29, 30, 32). This is a clear reference to self-denial. The people were commanded to deny themselves on the day the high priest was to enter beyond the veil. It is clear that though we have already entered beyond the veil in Christ in our spirit man, we must be crucified with Christ in order to enter in with Christ, our High Priest, in the soul realm.

In sonship circles, there is much talk today about entering in beyond the veil. We need to be reminded of the fact that in order to be a part of the overcomer company that enters in unto the full salvation, we must deny ourselves. Biblical self-denial means to surrender ourselves and take up the cross daily. Self-denial is a daily consecration in which God does a work of sanctification in our souls.

The high priest entering beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies with the censer of incense on the Day of Atonement is a type that speaks of the manifestation of the sons of God. The high priest is a type of the overcomer company. The Holy of Holies is a type of the unveiled presence of God which speaks of intimate communion and fellowship with God. The manifestation of the sons of God is still future, yet perhaps sooner than we think. Let us walk in self-denial now and prepare to enter in!

## THE GOLDEN CENSER OF INCENSE

There was one day in the year, the Day of Atonement, during which the high priest took the censer of incense beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies. The High Priest put burning coals from the brazen altar into the censer before he took it beyond the veil. He then put two handfuls of incense on the fire in the censer which was placed on the golden altar which was in the Holy of Holies. The cloud of incense covered the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:12-13).

Remember that the burning coals had to be taken from the brazen altar in

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the outer court of the Tabernacle. The brazen altar speaks of the cross of Christ at Calvary. We must be crucified with Christ, burned by the coals of Calvary, in order to enter beyond the veil in the soul realm. The golden censer speaks of the cross. This is the cross, the place of surrender, that we must take up and follow Him. The fiery burning coals speak of judgment (crucifixion), and the cloud of incense speaks of the renewed soul lives of the multitude of overcomers that arise from the death on the cross unto resurrection life.

Also note that the High Priest was commanded to burn incense morning and evening on the altar of incense in the Holy Place every day (Ex. 30:7-8). This speaks of the fact that we must take up our crosses daily and thus consecrate ourselves daily. The altar of incense is the place from which the prayers of the saints are offered up. What greater prayer is there than the prayer of consecration by which we present our souls on the cross? Self-denial is therefore the ultimate in prayer and worship. Self-denial is the superlative prayer whereby we offer up not mere petitions of request but offer up our total soul lives into the baptism in fire. This is the fire that transforms our profane lives into the glorious cloud of incense that the Lord desires to have before Him perpetually.

The altar of incense, therefore, speaks of two aspects of self-denial. In the Holy Place (60-fold, Pentecostal realm) the morning and evening burning of incense speaks of the daily taking up of the cross by the overcomer. The once per year taking of the censer of incense beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies (100-fold, overcomer realm) speaks of the consummation of self-denial (soul totally regenerated) at the manifestation of the sons of God. At the manifestation of the sons of God, our bodies also pass beyond the veil, being changed to a glorified state at the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23) and are fully saved. At this point we have full salvation: glorified spirit, glorified soul and glorified body.

What becomes of those in the church who are not part of the overcomer company? Aren't they also resurrected? The bodies of all the saints, whether or not they were overcomers in the soul realm will be resurrected. The difference will be that those who did not overcome will not be entrusted with the greater works, which is the ministry of reconciliation of all things unto God. The overcomers seek a better resurrection (Philippians 3:11-14). Remember that what we do in this brief, fleeting lifetime will determine our ministry unto the Lord during the ages of the ages.

## ISRAEL'S CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

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"*Jordan*" means descending and we derive from this that Israel's crossing of the Jordan was a type of death and resurrection. The waters were held back and completely cut off at a city called *Adam* (Joshua 3:16). Even so, everything of our Adamic nature (the unregenerate soul) is cut off to die in the dividing of soul from spirit. The soul is divided from spirit as the believer takes up his cross daily to follow Jesus. What emerges is a renewed soul that submits to the spirit and enters the promised land of sonship (overcoming life) to take the land in power.

## THE BAPTISM IN FIRE

John the Baptist, who baptized people in water for repentance, spoke of Jesus as the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and with fire. **"John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire"** (Lu. 3:16).

There are three baptisms spoken of here: *water*, *Holy Spirit* and *fire*. They are three events and three realms: 30-fold, 60-fold and 100-fold. The three baptisms together are one experience: the full salvation. The three baptisms are therefore three aspects of one baptism. Ephesians 4:5 says, **"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."**

In Old Testament typology we see these three baptisms in the experience of Israel as they progressed from Egypt to the promised land. In First Corinthians 10:1-2, we read: **"all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."** They were baptized into Moses (a type of Jesus) in the cloud (a type of the baptism in the Holy Spirit) and in the sea (a type of baptism in water). The first two baptisms for Israel occurred when they crossed the Red Sea under the cloud of God's presence.

Later on after forty years of testing in the wilderness, they came to the edge of the Jordan. Crossing the Jordan was a third baptism. We saw earlier, when we looked at the crossing of the Jordan, that this speaks of a baptism of death and resurrection. Crossing of the Jordan is one of many Old Testament types of the cross, the place of surrender and crucifixion. This baptism in fire is the third experience of the overcomer.



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The Jordan typifies death but how does it typify the baptism in fire? It is simply that the death we die is not just any death, but the death of fiery judgment on the cross. In the Bible, fire speaks of judgment and there is no greater judgment than what Jesus suffered for us on the cross. By being crucified with Christ through self-denial, we join Him in this baptism in fire. Jesus is the Lamb of God. God commanded Israel in Exodus 12:9, regarding the Passover Lamb (which typified Jesus), **"Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire..."** The cross was where Jesus was roasted in fire of judgement and we join Him there.

Prior to his crucifixion, Jesus said, **"I have a baptism to be baptized with"** (Lu. 12:50). At another point, Jesus indicated that his disciples would also have to undergo this baptism. Jesus said: **"Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized"** (Mk. 10:39). Jesus equated this baptism with His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. The death we die with him is the baptism in fire on the cross!

## SAUL AND THE AMALEKITES

Saul, king of Israel, was commanded by the Lord: **"to smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."** Saul raised an army and attacked the foe, but he didn't obey the Lord fully because: **"he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive...and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."**

When Saul returned from the battle, Samuel, the prophet, rebuked Saul in the strongest terms, because he did not completely destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions as the Lord originally commanded. When Samuel asked Saul about the sheep and oxen which he brought back, Saul replied: **"for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."** Samuel said to Saul: **"hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."** Saul admitted: **"I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice"** (I Samuel 15:3, 8, 9, 15, 22, 24).

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In this episode in Israel's history we see a vivid picture of how so many of God's dear people fall short in terms of laying their lives down in self-denial. God commands us to lay our lives down. The whole of the believer's life, the "good" and the "bad" must be laid down. Saul saved the good things of Amalek in order to sacrifice them to God. This is like trying to serve God with the good, noble appearing attributes of the flesh. God does not accept or desire anything of the flesh. Human love, human joy, human kindness are all from the old man and must be crucified. Sounds crazy doesn't it? It's like preaching against religious programs, good intentions and self-improvement. Yes, this is crazy from the world's point of view. But this is the radical Christian walk that the Lord demands of His sons. How can we go on to perfection if we hang on to mere human love and loyalty? It is easy to see that we must give up our sins. Saul's army did destroy the vile things and the trash. It's easy to renounce our mistakes and drive out the Ishmaels. Are we too dull to see that God calls us to lay Isaac on the altar as well? Abraham gave up Isaac, his beloved and only son--this father was about to kill his only son! Can we in the fulfilling of the ages get by with anything less?

Saul said that he **"feared the people and obeyed their voice."** So many in the church today, even in this present move of God are afraid to go all out and live the life of consecrated discipleship because of concern about what other people will think. They serve man by becoming humanitarians moved by human emotion and compassion. The overcomers are called to serve God, not man. Our outreach to mankind flows out of our commitment to God and not vice versa. God's perfect will, His ideal way of doing things, always seems strange to man because, as Isaiah 55:8-9 says: **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."** We listen to the heavenly voice of God and are not moved by the earthly voice of man.

God says, **"I kill, and I make alive"** (Dt. 32:39). In Hosea 6:1 we read, **"Come let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."** He kills before he heals. We must experience the utter abandonment of self. Even self's noble religious longings to please God must be crucified. This is where the Kingdom of God begins in our lives!

Saul also spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Agag represents the center of the self-life, the heart of the old man. He's the #1 in the worldly expression, "looking out for #1." Agag is a type of human pride which is the vile

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self-importance in the heart of man that would exalt itself above God if it could. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* calls pride the greatest sin and the sin on which all other sins are based. Any laying down of self which does not lay down the "good" things will never get to the root of pride. In true self-denial, pride is cut off.

In First Samuel 15:33, we see that Samuel took a sword and personally hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. That, my friends, is what God thinks of pride. Sons of God are being delivered from all pride. The greatest in the church are to be the servants of all. The overcomers are not an elite, but are a servant, slave class, like Jesus who came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. We, like Paul, are small, nothing in our own selves. We are **"less than the least of all saints"** (Eph. 3:8).

Saul, in this episode, is also a clear type of old order "Babylonian" religious systems that advocate self-improvement and glory in fleshly accomplishments. Like Martha rattling pots and pans, they are busy in the flesh doing things for God. They run ahead of God and expand programs, outreach and church facilities. They suppose that God is pleased with such sacrifices; but God desires obedience and not sacrifice. They teach the saints to lay down the bad things of self, but even non-Christian religions teach that.

The overcomers know that we must lay down the whole self because **"that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God"** (Luke 16:15). **"All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"** (Is. 64:6). We have repudiated self-righteousness in order to serve from the new man in divine righteousness. We, like Mary, sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word (Lu. 10:39). Jesus shall enable us by His word to do the greater works which shall accomplish more in a moment than what carnal religiosity could ever hope to do in a lifetime.

It is of significance that as a result of Saul's disobedience, Samuel said unto him: **"The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou"** (I Sam. 15:28). In the same way the harlot religious systems who serve in the strength of the flesh shall have the kingdom taken from them and given to the overcomers. The overcomers, those who obey rather than sacrifice, shall rule with true submission to God's will. The meek shall inherit the earth.

We who are called to sonship, shall we hinder their programs and forbid their ministry in the name of Jesus? Absolutely not, because as Jesus said, **"Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us"** (Lu. 9:50). Consider also what David said regarding Saul: **"Destroy him not: for who can stretch**

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**forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?"** (1 Sam. 26:9)

### THE TORN VEIL

In this section we shall explore another type which speaks of self-denial. The tearing of the veil speaks of self-denial while the entering beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies speaks of the manifestation of the sons of God. The torn veil is a type which appears not in the Tabernacle of Moses but rather in the Jewish temple mentioned in the New Testament. Yes, the New Testament also contains types. In fact, the life and walk and even the miracles of Jesus are types and patterns of what the overcomer company shall do in the last days in fulfillment.

Jesus is the Pattern Son, the forerunner (Heb. 6:20), the firstborn among many brethren (Ro. 8:29). We shall do greater works (Jn. 14:12). Jesus fed the 5,000; we shall feed nations. Jesus cleansed ten lepers; we shall empty the cancer wards in ten hospitals. (These are illustrations, not necessarily predictions.) Jesus lived a perfect, holy life; each of us shall conform to this pattern. The greater works that we do are part of God's plan for us in our being used to reconcile all things unto God.

The type which occurred in Jesus' experience that we shall consider is the veil in the temple that was torn from top to bottom. We read in Matthew 27:50-51: **"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."** Notice that as soon as He died, that is, as soon as He gave up the ghost (spirit), the veil was torn. Jesus committed His Spirit into His Father's hands (Lu. 23:46), but He poured out His soul unto death (Is. 53:12, Mt. 26:38), and His body was buried in the garden tomb (Jn. 19:40-42). The spirit, soul and body of Jesus were separated at His time of ultimate surrender, when He poured out the full measure of devotion.

In the same way, we in overcoming self, in being crucified with Christ, pour out our souls unto death and entrust our spirits into the care of the indwelling Holy Spirit while looking forward to the firstfruit out-resurrection when our bodies shall be changed while we live or raised in glory from the grave. That previous sentence was quite a mouthful. It bears rereading as it summarizes both self-denial and the manifestation of the sons of God.

The veil must be torn in our own hearts so that our souls can enter into the

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Holy of Holies. Remember that our hearts are temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). Our renewed souls must enter into the same realm of life as that of our reborn spirits.

The veil was torn from top to bottom, which means it's God's work from start to finish. All we do is surrender, present ourselves by faith and Jesus as High Priest takes over from there. This is a living and active faith whereby we surrender ourselves day by day as we take up the cross daily. It's not mere mental assent to the fact that we were indeed crucified with Him on Mount Calvary nearly 2000 years ago. We, by faith appropriate the reality of our past crucifixion with Christ into our present experience. We then demonstrate and complete our faith by walking as a peacemaker in preparation for the ministry of the reconciliation of all creation.

Hebrews 10:20 says that the veil is Jesus' flesh. Jesus' flesh was torn and so also His many brethren must experience the flesh (self-life) being torn (crucified). Then we can experience what is written in I Peter 4:1; **"He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."** This is the way we cease from sin. We experience a full deliverance from sin that is gradually but measurably worked out in our lives as we daily take up our cross and are crucified with Him.

Jesus lived a perfect life, His flesh was not sinful so why did he have to be crucified? It is simply that though He had no sin, all our sins were imputed unto Him which made His flesh exceedingly sinful. All of our sins, all our souls were summed up in his soul and were poured out unto death. God condemned sin in the flesh (Ro. 8:3). All of creation in its fallen state was gathered together in Christ and put to death. **"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"** (II Cor. 5:19 NASB). It is through the application of Jesus' work on Calvary to all creation that all creation is judged, resurrected, restored and gathered into one in Christ with Christ as the head (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:18-20). **"And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself"** (Col. 1:20 NASB).

In self-denial our soul dies and the veil is torn in the temple of our hearts. The soul is resurrected by our faith in Christ's resurrection power. The renewed soul, the zoe life soul, has access to the Holy Spirit in order to be guided day by day as we grow to the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13) and Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19)!

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

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The death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central event of the Christian Gospel. The crucifixion of Christ speaks of self-denial because each of us must surrender and deny self as we take up the cross daily (Luke 9:23). Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20 **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."** The foregoing is a perfect description of self-denial and the resurrection of the new self.

Jesus is our forerunner who has already entered in (Heb. 6:19-20), and we must follow the path He has blazed out for us. Jesus, the Pattern Son, was crucified and all of His many brethren must conform to the pattern. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if we suffer with Him in order that we may be glorified with Him (Ro. 8:17). To suffer with Christ is to be crucified with Him because the sufferings of Christ were experienced in His crucifixion. We must be made conformable to His death (not just any death) if we are to **"attain unto the resurrection of the dead"** (Phil. 3:10-11) at the manifestation of the sons of God.

Crucifixion is the perfect picture of self-denial. Jesus was made into a public spectacle, degraded in utter humiliation. I Peter 2:23 says that He did not revile in return and He uttered no threat. This is turning the other cheek. His patient endurance of such abuse and His noble words as He hung there cut to the heart of one of the thieves who was being crucified with Him. This is an example of how doing good to an enemy can cause him to turn to God. Both thieves had hurled abuse at Jesus (Matthew 27:44). One thief came to repentance (Luke 23:40-42).

Jesus' head was cut by the crown of thorns. This was the surrender of His mind, the entire realm of thought and intellect. His hands were pierced. This speaks of the fact that all His works were laid down. His feet were pierced. His walk with God was thereby consecrated. Lastly, His side was pierced with a spear. This meant that His heart and the whole realm of emotion was given over to death. He was laid in a tomb for three days. This speaks of the obscurity and hiddenness that each of us must experience as the world rejects us as we walk to Zion. The resurrection, of course, speaks of the restoration of the self (soul) in glorified form--far greater than the self we laid down.

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**CHAPTER VI****THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION:  
TAKING UP THE CROSS DAILY**

The true story is told of a very serious young man who felt called to the ministry. He spent an entire day in a church in prayer and poured out his heart to God. He was consecrating himself to God as best he knew how. He thought he was supposed to be a missionary and travel overseas. During his time of prayer he even wrote out on a piece of paper all the things that he would do for God. He wrote things such as *"I'll give up my career in business." "I'll go to language school." "I'll live a simple life in a poor country."* Finally, at the end of the long day of earnestness, the Lord spoke to him. The Lord said: *"Tear up the piece of paper."* We can imagine the shock in the young man's mind but the Lord continued: *"Give Me a blank piece of paper and let Me write on it."*

All of the noble thoughts and good ideas that the young man had about what he would do for God were torn up that day. The Lord never did send him overseas as a missionary. In fact, he never even went into full time Christian ministry. The Lord prospered him in business and he financed missionaries and other types of ministry that reached many souls for Christ. The young man thought that he knew what was best. The young man might have said *"Isn't being a missionary the best thing that any person can do?"* It may well be, but it is a calling from God that no man can, by his own will, take upon himself. Consecration is our surrender before God whereby we trust Him to lead us into the ministry calling that He has chosen for us. The prayer of consecration, which we shall study in this chapter, is our verbal expression of surrender.

We must deny ourselves, which is to deny our own good ideas and tear up our own piece of paper. We must take up our cross. The cross is the instrument of death. The cross is the place of surrender. Death of self is the ultimate in surrender. Death is surrender in the extreme. Only then can we follow Him and He gives us the piece of paper with what He chooses written on it. If we hang onto our good ideas, we lose them. If we surrender our ideas to Him, He gives us His perfect ideas which is to be our

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new life which we keep forever. **“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it”** (Luke 9:24).

Jesus says that we must take up our cross daily. Why daily? It's because we have good ideas (and bad ideas) every day that have to be surrendered over to death. When we die daily He gives our lives back to us daily. We do not **"live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"** (Mt. 4:4). We eat the physical bread that God gives us each day. We must also eat the words from God that He speaks to us each day. God speaks to us in more ways and at more times than we think.

Our good ideas are not good at all but come from our carnal minds (Romans 8:6-7; First Corinthians 3:1-4). **“The carnal mind is enmity against God”** (Romans 8:7). The wisdom of the carnal mind does not descend from above but is **"earthly, sensual ("psuchikos": soulish), devilish"** (Ja. 3:15). **"The natural ("psuchikos": soulish) man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God"** (First Corinthians 2:14 NKJV). The soulish or carnal mind must be laid down in death on the cross daily.

Jesus said that **"whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple"** (Lu. 14:27 NKJV). Many believers are not really disciples of Christ but are disciples of themselves. If you live by your own ideas then you are your own disciple. If you live by the Spirit of Christ and not by your own soul then you are a disciple of Christ.

**“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish”** (Galatians 5:16-17 NKJV).

The above verses indicate that there is a battle raging within the believer. The Holy Spirit, who dwells with our reborn, righteous spirit, is opposed to the unsanctified part of us which is the soulish mind and body. We do not do the things that we wish but like Paul in Romans 7:14-25, we are pulled one way and then another. The remedy for this is to surrender to the Spirit to do what He wants.

## WHAT IS MY CROSS?

I once asked a young Christian woman *"Did you take up your cross today?"* She very enthusiastically said *"Yes!"* Then I said *"What is your cross?"* She said *"My cross is my belief in Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection."* I said to her *"That's not your cross, that's your faith in Christ's cross. Your cross is your surrender to Christ which is to give Him all of your desires and all of your dreads every day."*



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Christ's cross was His surrender to the Father's will in suffering on our behalf. Our cross is our surrender to God through Christ and we must do this each and every day.

Jesus surrendered His life to the will of the Father when He prayed at Gethsemane. Jesus took up His cross and laid His life down on it at Calvary. The Father raised up His life again from the dead. This is the cross of Christ. This is how Jesus Christ reconciled the world and obtained our redemption. Our belief in Christ's atoning work through His death, burial and resurrection is our faith in Him. This is how we are saved by faith. It is by trusting in Christ's finished work at Calvary. Our faith in Christ saved us once and for all when we got born again. We continue to believe in Christ's finished work. A Christian can't stop believing in Christ from his reborn spirit because his spirit was recreated righteous forever at his conversion.

It is the realm of the soul that we must take up our cross daily and follow Him. Christ's cross, that is His death, burial and resurrection, is a type or picture of our own surrender in our walk with God. Christ's cross saves us if we just believe. Our cross consecrates us to Him if we just surrender. Christ's cross was His death for us. Our cross is our death for Him. Jesus died for us and was raised again so that He ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). We die daily in the soul realm so that our souls also can partake of resurrection life and live for Him day by day. So then, Jesus lives for us and we must live for Him.

Jesus' cross is His covenant commitment to us. Our cross is our covenant commitment to Him. The essence of covenant is that each party to the covenant dies to himself and lives for the other party. That's why it says in Hebrew 9:16-17 that where there is a testament (covenant) there must be the death of the testator for a testament is in force **"after men are dead."** This is also why, according to some customs, when a covenant is cut, each party takes the name of the other party. Each party identifies with the other and lives for the other.

Didn't we already die with Him at the new birth? Yes, our spirits died and were recreated (II Cor. 5:17) from above at the new birth. Our spirits are now in full covenant blessing. That's why each believer must walk by his or her fully righteous reborn spirit. The Holy Spirit who is in us, dwells with and communicates with the spirit of each believer (Ro. 8:16). **"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"** (Romans 8:16 NASB). Each of us who are born-again have heard the witness of the Holy Spirit, who tells us that we are redeemed. Every Christian, even Christians who are not prophetic, have heard this voice of God deep within. Some Christians might not remember hearing that still small voice of the Holy Spirit but all have heard it.

Jesus died and rose again also to save our souls. Yet our souls do not experience death and rebirth all at once. God has so ordained that the soul would be

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the battleground, the area of testing that we must surrender to Him not once and for all, but day by day. We must learn to divide between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12) or the Bible will seem to be full of contradictory statements. If we study to show ourselves approved unto God we will know which scriptures refer to spirit and which refer to soul and thereby we will rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

## UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

A true story is told of a young English woman who felt called to the ministry. As she prayed and consecrated herself to the Lord she told the Lord that she would obey the call and do His will. She said, however, that she would not want to leave England. Also she said she would have to be married, that she just couldn't go through life alone. Lastly, she said that she didn't want to speak in front of groups of people. Other than those three areas she was solidly committed to do the Lord's will and to serve him as a faithful minister of the Gospel.

It should come as no surprise to any of us how things turned out in this young woman's life. The Lord led her out of England; she's still unmarried and her ministerial duties require much public speaking. Our God is a jealous God, and He will test us in those areas that we don't surrender to Him. He will not allow us to have any other gods before Him. The Lord required those three unsundered matters from the young woman and she ultimately gave them up. She now joyfully serves the Lord in her present situation. I heard her tell her life story on a radio show. She is not bitter about how things turned out. She is in peace and joy in her life and ministry.

The cross that we must take up daily to follow Him is unconditional surrender. A surrender that has conditions is not a true surrender. If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. In the same way if a person surrenders all areas of his life to the Lord yet holds back one thing, he has not surrendered at all. Anything that you don't surrender is your god. An unsundered thing is an idol. God required Abraham to lay down his Isaac. Ultimately Abraham did not actually have to kill Isaac, but he had to be *willing* to kill him.

A single person must surrender his marriage plans to God and say "*Lord, I'm willing to remain single forever.*" God may not require the person to remain single but he is very pleased at his *willingness* to stay single. However, if he refuses to surrender his marriage plans, God may allow the enemy a foothold in his life to keep him single or to get him married to the wrong one. God is not turning him over to the enemy but simply using the enemy as a paddle to spank him.

There are two major categories of things that we find difficult to surrender. We can call them *desires* and *dreads*. There are some things that we desire so much that

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we are not willing to surrender them to God to let Him decide if we should have them or not. There are other things that we fear or dread so much that we refuse to allow God to bring them into our lives. Things that we *desire* are things such as marriage, a ministerial position in a church, a secular job, money, a nice car, entertainment, present geographic location, etc. Things that we *dread* could be fasting, remarriage to your ex-spouse, adopting a retarded child, being a missionary in a poor country, doing street ministry, etc.

## LISTING OUR DESIRES AND DREADS

A practical way to begin to consecrate ourselves to the Lord is to prayerfully consider what things are our greatest desires and our greatest dreads. They are, of course, different for each person. Some people have a strong desire for marriage and family, others are very ambivalent about it and some even reject it. Some people don't particularly dread going to Africa while others wake up in the middle of the night with a cold sweat worrying about it.

The desires that we must lay down are the desires for anything other than a closer relationship with God. The list of desires should be limited to desires we have for things other than God Himself. Even the God-given desire to serve Him in a certain type of ministry can be an idol. As Abraham laid down Isaac so we too must consecrate even our ministry giftings so that our relationship with God comes before all else.

Once we determine our own personal desires and dreads, we can write them down on a piece of paper and set it before the Lord. Write two lists: desires and dreads, on the same piece of paper. Desires could be money, cars, vacation home, investments, travel, teaching ministry, writing ministry, marriage, children, friends, etc. Dreads could be missionary work in a poor country, singleness, waiting, living in a small apartment with a difficult roommate, moving to a location far from your adult children, etc.

We then can pray the prayer of consecration like Jesus did in Gethsemane saying "*Father...not my will, but Yours, be done.*" Let God decide whether or not to give us our desires and whether or not to withhold our dreads. We must do this every day and thereby take up our crosses daily.

What I do personally is to open my morning quiet time in praise and worship. Next, I take my list of desires and dreads which I keep in my Bible and read it aloud. I then pray "*Father, these are my desires and I now commit not to idolize them. These are my dreads and I now commit not to fear them. You alone are my desire. You alone are my fear*" (Isaiah 8:13). Then I flip the paper over so the blank, reverse side of the paper faces up. I continue in prayer: "*I trust in You Father to write on the blank page of my life called October 3rd 20\_\_* (or whatever the date may be) *and I let You do the*

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*choosing, not my will but Yours alone be done."*

I don't focus on the piece of paper. The piece of paper which lists my desires and dreads is not my cross but rather the attitude of unconditional surrender in my heart is my cross. The piece of paper is just a prop to remind me of the desires and dreads that I need to surrender. There are other matters I attend to during my daily time of consecration, including forgiving people who have offended me.

During one's early morning quiet time of consecration, it is also appropriate to pray such statements as the following: *"I lay my life down before You and You will raise it up"; "I thank You Father for everything You've given me and for everything You've taken from me"; "I have joy in our relationship"; "I will serve You wherever, whenever and to whoever You send me and do only that which I see You do"; "I'm willing to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile"; "I forgive all who have offended me."* Let your heart speak to God such statements of surrender. Let God give you new things to say. You can write them on the same page as your desires and dreads.

I can stand in the pulpit of a mega-church and say *"How many here have committed your heart to Jesus Christ?"* Everyone raises their hands in the affirmative. I ask *"How many have ever **recommitted** your heart to Jesus?"* A few hands go up. I ask *"How many of you have recommitted your heart to Him in the last twenty-four hours?"* Fewer hands go up. Every hand should be raised in response to that last question because we must recommit ourselves to Him every day!

The prayer of consecration is a dangerous prayer; but if you refuse to pray it, you're being cowardly and not acting as a true disciple of Christ. Be brave enough to let God write on the blank page of your life each day. God may give you guidance to serve Him in an ordinary way or God may write: *"Sell all you have and give to the poor and you will serve widows and orphans for ten years."* Don't be like the rich young ruler who turned away from such a command. Don't be like Jonah who turned his back on God's leading. We all know of the terrible trials he suffered because of it. If you refuse to consecrate yourself to God, then you're acting as a lukewarm Christian. You could be spit out and miss God's purpose and find yourself in mediocrity in the end times.

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Looking at this from a more positive perspective we must remember that God gives His best to those who leave the choosing to Him. Does the Lord ask you to give up a career in accounting that you earnestly desire? In its place the Lord will give you a career, perhaps, in nurturing and caring for the handicapped that you will learn to love far more than you would a career in accounting.

A friend of mine in Florida had a strong desire for a certain type of boat. He gave his desire to the Lord and tried to put it out of his mind. The desire kept coming back. Eventually he felt he had permission to buy the boat. He bought the boat and didn't use it for long when the Lord led him to donate it to missionaries to tribes on the Amazon in Brazil.

There's a woman in her seventies who ministers to primitive people in the jungles of South America. Someone said to her: *"When are you going home to America?"* She said *"I am home."* She found joy and fulfillment right where she was in the jungle. Therefore be willing to pay any price (give up any desire) and bear any burden (take up any dread). You will find that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

## DELIVERANCE BY CONSECRATION

Here are are two reasons why God will touch an area of your life that you do not surrender to Him. One is positive, the other negative:

Reason #1: God loves you too much to let you keep a part of yourself away from Him whether it's a desire (an idol you worship above Him) or a dread (something besides Him that you fear).

Reason #2: the enemy accuses us before God day and night (Rev. 12:10) and makes request that the unsundered areas of our lives be judged. **"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"** (Luke 22:31).

In order to understand this second reason we must remember that the serpent was told that he would eat "dust" (Gen. 3:14). Dust is our carnal Adamic nature. God told Adam that he is dust (Gen. 3:19). What we refuse to commit to God, we hold onto with our dust nature which is the unsanctified part of us. The

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enemy tries to feed on the dust in us and feeds on whatever belongs to the dust nature.

We have seen that if we don't surrender, the enemy is allowed into our circumstances. The reverse is also true: that if we do surrender the enemy is forced out. Therefore unconditional surrender is not only the means to a closer walk with God but is also the means of deliverance from the enemy. There truly is deliverance by consecration!

In John 14:30 Jesus, speaking of the enemy, said "**He hath nothing in Me.**" The enemy had no dust to feed upon in Jesus. Jesus was fully consecrated to the Father. When we come to maturity in Christ we will say the same thing about the enemy: *"he has nothing in us."*

The things that bind Christians are things that we bring on ourselves by our lack of consecration. I can sum up the term "lack of consecration" in one word: FEAR. We are afraid to trust Him with our desires because we think He will just take them away and not give us anything better. We are afraid to trust Him with our dreads because we think He will bring them on us and we'll be miserable.

The things that bind a Christian are his fears. What a Christian fears rules him. Our fears are those areas of our lives that we refuse to surrender to God. These areas are not under the Lordship of Christ but are under the Lordship of our sin nature which is that part of us that is "**carnal, sold under sin**" (Ro. 7:14). Whatever we are afraid to surrender to God, we have in effect sold it over to sin. The thing that we refuse to surrender is the price at which we have sold our souls into bondage to sin.

As an example, consider a man who has a desire to be married but because he's afraid to surrender that desire to God he has a fear of singleness. Also, he dreads the thought of going to Africa and is afraid to surrender that to God. He therefore has a fear of going to Africa. The enemy accuses him before God on the basis of these fears. The enemy gains access to his life to interfere with his marriage plans and his ministry plans. The remedy for this dismal circumstance is for him to learn to fear God alone. The way to fear God alone is to trust Him with all our fears.

12. **"...neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid**

13. **Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.**

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**14. And he shall be for a sanctuary..." Isaiah 8:12-14**

The above verses were written in the context of a time when the nation of Israel was being threatened by a conspiracy of several foreign nations. God said that if they feared Him alone He would be a sanctuary for them. The same is true for us. If we fear Him *alone*, we will dwell in the secret place of the Most High (Ps.91:1). Psalm 91 with its promises of protection applies to true disciples who trust Him alone and thereby dwell in the secret place.

The "secret place" was typified by the Holy of Holies where the very shekinah presence of God dwelt. Only in complete consecration to Him can we enter the Holy of Holies, secret place. If we fear our circumstances or fear what might come into our circumstances we remove ourselves from God's protection. To fear something is to worship it, and God demands our undivided worship.

Fear is to evil what faith is to blessing. If we are afraid of an evil circumstance coming into our lives, that fear releases the enemy to bring that very thing into our lives. If we believe God to bring a good thing into our lives, that faith releases God to bring the good thing into our lives. Consecration, which is unconditional surrender, is how we move from fear to faith. All that the word "faith" means is *trust* and what greater way is there to trust God than to consecrate ourselves to Him every day? This releases God to deliver us and bless us.

If we have a fear of poverty, it allows the poverty spirit to afflict us with poverty. We must give that fear or "dread" of poverty to God. We must say "*Father I give you my dread of poverty,*" then the legal basis for the operation of the poverty spirit is removed. That area of our lives is put under the Lordship of Christ and we let Him choose if we are to be abased or abound. If the Lord chooses for us to be abased for a season, it is for His glory and we will have His joy. When He chooses for us to abound, we will flow in the Lord's prosperity without guilt. In either case we will be at liberty, not being bound by the enemy.

There is much teaching, by Robert Henderson and others, about operating in the courts of heaven. Before you enter the courts of heaven to present your case before God, be sure that you are totally consecrated to the Father through Christ. Be sure that you have fully given Him all of your desires and all of your dreads.

A Christian mother sends her children out to play and sometime later a

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fearful thought comes into her mind. She imagines one of her children being hit by a car. She could get fearful and worried but that is not trusting in God. What she should do is calmly consider that thought and say *"Lord, I don't fear that to happen but I trust you with my children. Send your angels to protect them."*

Face your fears. Look them straight in the face and say *"I trust God, He alone is my fear."* Surrender your fears to God. Consecration is the way to conquer fear and to be free to serve God. The enemy flees when we have no fear.

## TO WALK AS JESUS WALKED

**"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked"**  
(I John 2:6 NKJV).

**"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the son also does in like manner"** (John 5:19 NKJV).

What did Jesus do when He saw a sick and dying person? He did nothing of Himself. What did Jesus do when He saw a blind or a crippled person? He did nothing of Himself. He only did what He saw the Father do. He walked in complete consecration to the will of the Father. We are to walk as Jesus walked. We are to do nothing of our own selves but only do what we see God do.

In John 5 Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda among a great multitude of sick people and healed one man. He healed only one person because He saw the Father heal only one. At other times, in other places He healed all who came to Him because He saw the Father heal them all. Jesus had the ability to know what His Father was doing in each circumstance and flow with what the Father was doing. We must do the same if we are to walk as Jesus walked.

Growing to Christian maturity can be defined as growing into a greater and greater conscious experience of reliance upon God. In this we cast down all our idols and fears (desires and dreads) and put God first and trust God with all things.

In Matthew 17:20 Jesus told His disciples that the reason why they couldn't cast a demon out of a boy was because of their unbelief. In the next verse He said that kind of demon doesn't come out except by prayer (see also Mk. 9:29). In



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other words, the immediate reason why they couldn't cast it out was unbelief, but the lack of prayer was the cause of their unbelief.

The disciples did not see what the Father was doing in the situation; therefore, they could not do likewise. They could not see because they weren't in faith. They weren't in faith because they did not draw close to God in prayer.

Spending time in prayer enables us to more fully consecrate ourselves to God. We seek His face and not His hand. When we do sincerely seek His face and not His hand, His hand will move and bring great deliverance. We will see what God is doing in the circumstance and we will hear the rhema word that God would have us say to the situation.

Only when we see Him and hear Him can powerful, overcoming faith come into our hearts. Only then can we speak the rhema word by the Spirit in power. The Spirit only flows in what God is doing and not in our good ideas. When we consecrate ourselves to Him like Jesus did, we will see that there is deliverance by consecration.

Let me clarify some terms. The term "logos" refers to the written or "established" word of God contained in the Bible. **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"** (Ps. 119:89). That verse refers to the logos word. The term "rhema" refers to the "proceeding" word that God is speaking to our specific personal situation in limited space and time. **"Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"** (Mt. 4:4).

The rhema word for a situation never contradicts the logos (Bible) and often can be in the form of a Bible verse. The word "logos" and "rhema" are both Greek words used in the original Greek New Testament. The meanings of these words are not as rigidly defined, as indicated above, in their New Testament usage. I was generalizing a bit. One should be mindful of this when exegeting specific New Testament passages.

When we perceive in our spirit the rhema word for our situation we can speak to our situation or act on our situation with much greater boldness. This is what the scripture means which says **"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word (rhema) of God"** (Rom. 10:17). We act on the situation according to God's specific rhema instructions.

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## AVOIDING PASSIVITY

Many of us who are going on to know the Lord in a deeper walk of self-denial tend to emphasize yielding and surrender to such an extent that an attitude of passivity can set in. We often forget that as we reach that place of yieldedness before God, He will raise us up to do spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness. There is a time to surrender to God and also a time to rise up in great boldness to fight the enemy.

I heard a woman testify over the radio about when she was in the beginning phases of a miscarriage and in real danger of losing her baby. She said that she prayed "*O Lord, if you want to take this baby I do not object. Not my will but Yours be done.*" She then rested in that attitude of surrender and the baby died. I believe that the woman did not handle the situation properly; and if she did handle it properly, the baby would be alive today. It is good that she surrendered the baby (a desire) to God but not good that she stayed passive. It is not right to remain passive in the face of an enemy attack.

We must draw near to God in prayer and hear His rhema word which is the scripture promise He chooses for us to speak against the work of the enemy. She did right in surrendering her desire to God, but she should have persevered in prayer until she heard God's desire (His rhema) for the situation. By 'prayer' I mean specifically asking God for His rhema word and waiting on Him in quietness and in fasting. The term "fasting" is not limited to abstinence from food but can refer to abstinence from marital relations or TV or any number of things. Allow God to lead you into an appropriate fast.

If she drew near to God in prayer, she may have had a verse of scripture impressed on her spirit. God could have given her Ezekiel 16:6 or Psalm 103:2-3 or Matthew 8:17 or others. The important thing is to let God choose the verse. Some faith teachers say that you can just flip through the Bible and choose whatever promise you want to claim and just speak it into being. God is not inclined to honor that because man does the choosing. Let God choose the verse and God's anointing will be on that Bible verse. She can speak LIFE to that baby through that verse!

Some confuse "faith" with "power" and say that faith is power. On the contrary however, faith and power are radically different concepts. The Greek word for faith is "pistis" meaning "trust" and is a relationship word meaning to trust

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in the ability of another. The Greek word for "power" is "dunamis" which is not a relationship word but means "ability" or "strength" or "power" like dynamite which is a word derived from dunamis. Faith has to do with our personal relationship to God. Power refers to God's ability to change things. In Mark 11:22-24 Jesus teaches us to have faith in God before He teaches us about the power released through the spoken word. We must have faith in God to release His power through the words He gives us to speak.

A rhema word can come in the form of a prophecy spoken over you by a prophetic brother or sister. In I Timothy 1:18 Paul wrote **"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare"** (NKJV). Prophecies are weapons of war! We must speak God's revelation to our situation and watch our situation conform to God's revelation. Isaiah echoes this principle in Isaiah 50:4, **"The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple"** (NASB).

Luke 6:12 tells us that Jesus spent the whole night in prayer. In the morning He chose the twelve apostles. Jesus, though He was the divine Son of God, was totally dependent on what He saw and heard from the Father. He said **"as I hear, I judge"** (Jn. 5:30). He didn't act on His own good ideas (even though His own ideas really were good!).

Jesus got His instructions from the Father. The Father told Him what point of contact in the Spirit to utilize. In one instance He simply spoke to the situation (Mk. 11:14), in another He responded with both the spoken word and the laying on of hands (Lu. 13:12-13), in another situation Jesus even made mud balls and smeared them on a blind man's eyes and the eyes were healed (Jn. 9:6)!

Jesus walked continually in an attitude of consecration before the Father. This continual attitude of surrender did not lead Him to passivity but rather into intense action in the Spirit. So must it be for us His disciples!

We are quick to remember that, to the Lord, a thousand years is as a day (II Pet. 3:8). Yet we often forget that the same verse goes on to say that, to the Lord, a day is as a thousand years. Each of our days is as a thousand years in the sight of God! We can accomplish more in the will of God in one day consecrated to Him than we could in a thousand years unconsecrated! Let us therefore pray the prayer of consecration every day and remain in the attitude of consecration at

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all times.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PRACTICAL DAILY WALK OF AN OVERCOMER

A changed heart means a changed life. If we lay our lives down in self-denial, God will raise our lives up. The transformed attitudes are visible to those around us by radical changes in our behavior.

Thus far we have focused on what takes place in our hearts in that vertical relationship between us and God. In the following sections we will explore what takes place in the horizontal relationship between us and others. We have talked about self-denial unto God (consecration). Now let's look at self-denial before men (application).

Anyone who has truly laid his life down and has sought God for God alone will manifest his inner experience of self-denial in his outward actions. The Bible says **"be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"** (Ro. 12:2). Our transformed attitudes result in works that reveal Christ to the world in practical ways in ordinary, everyday life. If one does not exhibit the practical works, there is cause to question the reality of the renewal of his soul.

The first and most basic change that takes place in our lives is a genuine humility before God and man. Consider the following passage: **"Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me?...This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word"** (Is. 66:1-2 NIV). Here we see God almighty who fills the whole heavens, yet the tabernacle of God is with men. What sort of people are these with whom God dwells? The humble in heart, who are truly spiritual, are the ones God esteems. A magnificent house that covers the earth is insufficient to

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contain Him, yet He desires a humble heart.

We need a revelation of our utter smallness before God. We need to see all our ambitions and aspirations in their diminutiveness before God. Then we truly desire to lay them aside for the surpassing greatness of knowing God. Before God whole nations are as a drop in the bucket, or weighed as but small dust on the scales (Is. 40:15). Each one of us is but a minute part of just one nation yet we strive for that feeling of importance!

If one is to be humble before God, he must be humble before man. First Peter 5:5 says, **"Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."** Being clothed with humility reminds us of Jesus who girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:4-5). We who seek mature sonship must humble ourselves to the lowly service of all saints; and indeed as we shall see, we shall be servants unto all men. The call to sonship is the call to the humility of Jesus who came as a servant and endured the disgrace and humiliation of the cross.

How we need to let go and let God work in us and forget our puffy pride! Go into your yard and stoop down and look at the ants. Multitudes of them, yet you hardly knew they were there. We are as much less than those ants by comparison to God. Those busy ants spend their lifetimes building anthills that are washed away by the next rain. Even so, we in building houses and cities must meditate on the fact that these are only temporary, transient and fragile things that will soon be wiped away.

We often hear people boasting about their experiences in life--where they've been and what they've done. This is the boastful pride of life (I Jn. 2:15). We must come to know that there is only one glorious experience in life: knowing God. All else is vanity. Whether it be travel, romance, military exploits, physical beauty or business career, all is vanity, vanity of vanities! Vanity is something that puffs up self, whereas holiness is something that glorifies God. **"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD"** (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Many women nowadays are seeking satisfaction and fulfillment in jobs outside the home. We men can save them the trouble and heartache by speaking

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truth: careers are vanity, they do not satisfy! **"And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This, too, is meaningless, a chasing after the wind"** (Eccl. 4:4 NIV). We have spent so much of our lives building anthills that now we must **"count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"** (Phil. 3:8).

## TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK

Arthur Burt of Wales U.K. on page 10 of his book, "Boomerang," has this to say:

"As a Christian for twenty-five years, I tried to carry out the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and found I couldn't do it--I failed! I gave it up in disgust and decided to leave the Sermon on the Mount up on the mount! It was some years after that I discovered that the Christian life isn't hard to live--it's impossible to live and only Jesus can live it. Then I discovered that my only struggle was the struggle not to struggle, to let go and let God!"

I agree with Arthur and I, too, left the Sermon on the Mount "up on the mount"; but I am convinced that once we truly let go and let God, He will take us right back up the mount and we will live by its transcendent precepts in being peacemakers unto all men. A soul not touched by the cross cannot hope to turn the other cheek from the heart. A regenerate soul that has been renewed by **"the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe..."** (Eph. 1:19) can truly use these principles to overcome evil with good. How we have halted at the words "love your enemies," "go the extra mile" and **"do not resist him who is evil"** (Matthew 5:39 NASB). It seems so distant, so theoretical. Jesus couldn't really mean that--but He does mean that!

I believe that turning the other cheek and going the extra mile are integral parts of the **"gospel of the kingdom"** (Matthew 24:14) that Jesus said would be preached to all nations before the end comes. The sonship message is a radical message. It is the 100-fold realm. The sonship message is often called the kingdom message. The gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of Jesus and it is more radical than the gospel of Paul. God is bringing back the gospel of the kingdom!

There is a contrast between some aspects of the gospel of Paul recorded

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in the Pauline epistles and the gospel spoken by Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus required a higher standard of disciples who were in His immediate presence. There was great grace available to the disciples who were in the immediate presence of Jesus. After the ascension of Christ, there was a more relaxed standard required of God's people. Jesus even allowed the disciples to buy swords (Luke 22:36). There is, however, a new day of power and presence of God coming to the church in the end-times. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached again. It is a higher standard.

Jesus and Paul are in perfect agreement in regards to the fundamental message of salvation and sanctification. However, in regards to the level of radical commitment, the gospel of Paul is less demanding. Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor. In First Timothy 6:18 Paul commands the rich to merely **"be generous and ready to share."** This doesn't diminish the fact that Paul was an apostle, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Self-denial is the daily surrender of self on the cross. It allows Jesus to change the very nature of the soul. The deepest inner attitudes of the heart are transformed so that we truly love our enemies with sincere agapao love. This is indeed a miracle. Very often we pray for miracles such as physical healing of cancer or for finances to be miraculously provided to complete the new church building. Glorious as such miracles are, they are still merely earthly things. To truly be free to love our enemies is a heavenly miracle, a blessing in a higher heavenly realm. We should pray much more for such miracles! How do we pray for freedom to love our enemies? We pray the prayer of consecration; we surrender our self-life on the cross. This is how our hearts are transformed so that we can truly obey from the heart and apply the commands of the Sermon on the Mount.

Most Christians, however, do not start with self-denial. They run ahead and try to keep the commands, such as, **"bless them that curse you,"** "turn the other cheek," etc., in their own strength. This is legalistic self-righteousness. Outwardly they keep the commands, but inwardly they hate and resent their enemies. Soon they give up trying to keep even the outward form. This is why so many de-emphasize or minimize the application of the commands of the Sermon on the Mount. This is unfortunate because these commands are essential to the victorious walk of the overcomer.

Striving in the flesh to keep the commands of the Sermon on the Mount is the most subtle and abominable legalism. It leads to a passive, milquetoast

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religion in which a wimpy, servile saint, though not resisting the evil person fails to reconcile him and be a true peacemaker. A legalistic believer tries to please God by turning the other cheek; but since the believer's heart is not in it, it's not genuine. The evil person is not impressed by what he sees as just a religious act. In fact he may be even more hard-hearted toward Christianity, thinking it's just an empty, passive taking of abuse.

Many sincere believers who are very serious about going on in God consider such non-resistance to be part of their commitment to God. What they fail to see is that true commitment is self-denial in which our shallow, carnal outward conformity to God's commands is renounced for the folly that it is. Our shallow, ineffective adherence to these commands is definitely one of the "good" things of the self-life that must be laid down. Such obedience must be utterly crucified on the cross by the living and active Word of God which judges the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God does not force anyone to do the impossible, but He certainly makes us willing and able to do what is humanly impossible. This truth is revealed in Psalm 110:3, "**Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.**" It is God's power through the cross that makes us willing to do what is contrary to human nature. The old self hates its enemies. A day is coming in the near future; it is a day of God's power in which He will draw His overcomer company to a deep work of the cross. This is a sovereign move of God. Our striving in our selves cannot make it happen.

We must be faithful in taking up our cross and following Jesus, the Pattern Son. God will bring it to pass in our lives, and we will have His commands written on our hearts! Galatians 5:5 says, "**by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope**" (NIV). Notice that Galatians 5:5 speaks of a righteousness that is in the future. We hope for this righteousness. Hope is futurized faith. We must not carnally try to manufacture this righteousness in the present but rather wait upon God to supernaturally bring us into this holy righteous walk. We shall be brought to perfection, to full salvation at the manifestation of the sons of God. Of course we can have foretastes of the power of the age to come in our present daily walk of self denial and daily renewal of the soul. The commands of the Sermon on the Mount will be as natural to us as breathing the air.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a law book of rigid formulas. Every situation that we encounter is unique and requires a unique spiritual response. Someone asks: how do I know whether I'm applying and obeying these



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commands by the Spirit or just operating in the flesh? It's easy: if you're in the flesh, it's forced; when you're in the Spirit, it flows. When you're in the Spirit, you truly love your enemy; and the outflow from the agapao love is to do good to him in return for evil.

James 4:7 tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from us. Matthew 5:39 tells us not to resist an evil person. Very often we have this backwards: we resist people and let the devil push us around. When an evil person insults us we resist them by responding in kind. We return insult for insult, slap for slap, etc. This is an attitude of vengeance and is the clearest manifestation of the self-life. Yet when demons attack us with sickness or adverse circumstances, we often take it as though it is from God. What we need to do is obey God and do spiritual warfare. We must not resist people but rather resist the demons that cause people to come against us. As Paul says in II Cor. 10:3-4, **"For though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds:)."** It is not fleshly resistance but spiritual resistance that does God's will.

Rather than resisting carnal men we should be busy reconciling them. Overcomers are peacemakers who reconcile men to God by exercising God's principles to bring them to repentance. The only thing that brings true repentance is godly sorrow brought on by Holy Ghost conviction. In Romans 12:19-21 we are shown how we can bring conviction on our enemies: **"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"** (NIV). This is not passivity but rather aggressive activity truly reaching the offender with blessing in such a demonstration of Christlikeness that he is sure to acknowledge that you are of God. He shall be convicted of his sin as symbolized by the burning coals placed on his head. The offender shall repent and become our brother.

I'm impressed by testimonies from behind the iron curtain which tell of imprisoned saints in eastern Europe who through genuine love won even their torturers to Christ. They expressed Christian love in the face of the most brutal treatment imaginable. No wonder the atheist communists were melted under conviction.

Someone says, "I don't want to just be stepped on like a doormat." I agree.

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To just be stepped on is not enough. Be like a doormat that gets up and even washes the feet of those so callous as to step on it. This is a walk of not just passively taking abuse but actively blessing those that persecute us. Our bodies are to be **"instruments of righteousness"** (Romans 6:13). The Greek word translated instrument is *"hoplon,"* which means a tool or a weapon. Tools or weapons are put to use in an active, not passive way.

I read a bumper sticker recently that said *"We Christians destroy our enemies--we make them our friends."* We reconcile our enemies now and in the future we as the overcomer company shall reconcile all creation (now at enmity) back to God. If we can't reconcile an enemy of ours over a petty matter, how will God ever entrust us with the greater work of restoring all things? According to Matthew 25:21, we must demonstrate faithfulness with few things if we expect to be put in charge of many things.

Jesus said, **"Pray for those who persecute you."** (We are not to pray imprecatory prayer except in rare circumstances and only as led by the Spirit.) Jesus continues: **"...that you may be SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous"** (Mt. 4:44-45 NIV). Our Father blesses His enemies and we, being like Him, must bless our enemies. Praying for enemies means doing spiritual warfare against the demons who bind them and praying that our enemies be convicted of sins and come to repentance.

Being a peacemaker is not being some kind of anti-war zealot. It is making peace person-to-person in our church and in our other relationships. It is turning our enemies into friends. **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the SONS OF GOD"** (Matthew. 5:9 NIV). Then in the fullness of time these sons, as a great company without guile or vengefulness, shall be born out (Rev. 12:5) to be used by the Prince of Peace to reconcile whole nations to God.

Consider how Jesus, the Pattern Son, put these principles into action: **"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps...When they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly"** (First Peter 2:21, 23 NIV). As He was in agony on the cross He prayed for his tormentors, **"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"** (Luke 23:34).

We, in our daily walk of bearing the cross in consecrating ourselves to God

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on the vertical beam and reaching out to man on the horizontal beam, suffer the insults and barbs of ignorant enemies. God used the hands of wicked men to nail His only begotten Son to the cross and we also are nailed to the cross by the slaps on the cheek and other affronts that we encounter. Turning the other cheek does a work in our own heart: it strengthens our character. Through self-denial the nature of the soul is changed and by non-resistance to enemies we allow the renewed nature of the soul to be expressed and bear fruit in the good work of winning enemies over to God. In this walk we have the purity of one consecrated to God and the meekness of a true peacemaker who reaches out and reconciles men.

Here's a true story: a man was nearly run down by a rude and careless driver as he walked across a parking lot. Immediately he forgave the driver and prayed that God would bless her, convict her, draw her unto Himself and save her. He thought to himself: *that lady did a wrong thing to me and all she will ever get from it is blessing*. He felt a twinge in his heart--it was the old man in pain crying out for revenge. It was death to the old man--he gets no satisfaction. Indeed it is death. The overcomer abides in death of self so that others might live. **"For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, DEATH IS AT WORK IN US, but life is at work in you"** (II Cor. 4:11-12 NIV).

Peacemakers also cross denominational barriers, reconcile individual Christians and are a unifying influence in the body of Christ as a whole. Peacemakers rise above petty squabbles and are ever conscious of the unity that makes for peace. Consider how Jesus, the Pattern Son, the greatest Peacemaker, the Prince of Peace **"hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...for to make in himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, SO MAKING PEACE"** (Eph. 2:14-15).

We not only reconcile our enemies to God but also reconcile our own Christian brothers and sisters to each other. This is because most often the worst hurts that we Christians suffer are inflicted by those closest to us in the church rather than from those outside. We need to make peace in the house of God: **"endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"** (Eph. 4:3). We need to see the measure of truth in all of the movements in the body of Christ, whether it be the Charismatic movement, discipleship movement, word of faith movement, etc. We need all truth from all movements in order to grow up unto mature sonship.

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## PEACE IN OUR HOMES

The following is an example of an ego struggle: wife squeezes toothpaste tube from the bottom and is neat; husband squeezes tube in the middle and is messy. The wife patiently puts up with the minor annoyance until one day she is irked just enough to mention it to her husband. After some slightly tense discussion, the husband promises to do better. He does--for a while. When he slips back into his old ways, the wife is even more annoyed. It's not only the mess that annoys her, but even more so, the fact that he knows it wears her and continues to do so even after they discussed it. Yet she bears with it patiently. In fact, she's embarrassed that she even mentioned the whole thing to begin with. Yet the tension builds. Every day the messy tube irritates her.

In addition to the above, there are many other "ego struggles" affecting their marriage. (This whole concept of an ego struggle and especially the example given, may seem silly but there's nothing funny about such a situation when you're going through it!) The husband and wife gradually find themselves becoming more distant as this and other petty squabbles go unresolved. Communication begins to break down. All attempts to put that spark of fire back into the marriage sputter fruitlessly. They tell the marriage counselor that there was nothing between them that was a major disagreement. They just kind of drifted apart. It was all little things that wedged between them: the lawn not cut, the messy kitchen, the football games and the toothpaste tube. Are they really going to mention the toothpaste tube to the marriage counselor?

Take the example of the rugged outdoorsman who testified as to what hobbled him on his trek: *"It was not the mountains I climbed or the blazing sun, but rather the tiny pebbles in my shoe that made me limp."* A devoted married couple endure many of life's challenges together. Must it be undone by such insignificant things?

The way to restore a marriage and bring peace to a Christian home is to put a satisfactory end to all ego struggles. How do you get the egos to stop struggling? Put the ego to death, even the death of the cross. Ego is simply the personal pronoun, "I" in Greek. Paul said, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"** (Gal. 2:20).

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Anyone who has truly presented himself to God on the cross has also presented the things that belong to self, including such things as rights and privileges. A husband has a right to a clean house and a wife who respects him. A wife has a right to a considerate husband who loves her and provides for her. These basic rights also extend down to the little things that cause ego struggles. In self-denial we deny ourselves even our rights. Husband, if you're annoyed by a messy kitchen, clean it up. You find it messy again? Go the second mile and clean it again. Wife, he never takes you out to dinner? Cook him his favorite meals at home. You'll heap burning coals on his head.

Husband and wife must humble themselves before each other. The way to be humble before God is to deliberately humble yourself before people. It takes a great deal of emotional energy to maintain a front of haughty pride. It is a relief to be humble.

Peacemaking and reconciliation begins with those closest to us. Let there be peace in our homes for we are called to peace.

## WHEN TO USE THE SWORD

The above heading may seem a bit provocative and certainly out of place considering that this is a book about self-denial, and we have just concluded a discussion on non-resistance to evil. It may come as a surprise for some of us to learn that the New Testament does teach that in certain situations active resistance to evil is appropriate. Consider what Jesus taught in Luke 22:36 **"he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."** This may seem contradictory to what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:39 but is not. It is what we call dynamic tension. Dynamic tension is when two statements or principles seem to be saying the opposite but can be logically reconciled on closer examination. For example, the laws of aerodynamics seem to contradict the law of gravity but on closer examination we can understand how planes fly yet are still experiencing gravity's pull.

How do we know when it is appropriate in God's will to turn the other cheek or when it's appropriate to resist evil to the point of using a deadly weapon? Some people who are pacifist say that we are never to resist evil and they ignore or explain away Luke 22:36. To them the teaching of Matthew 5:39 is to be applied to every situation like a formula. Whenever one is slighted or persecuted, simply

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lay down and take it. However, the Christian walk is not that simple.

The New Testament is not a book of formulas. We are not to be Bible technicians. We are to walk as loving sons of a loving Father. We are to hear His voice, receive His gentle impression and let Him choose the scriptural principle that applies to each situation. This is the way Jesus walked. He said **"the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing"** (John 5:19 NIV). Jesus, the divine Son of God, was totally submitted to His Father. As the pattern Son, He left this example for all sons of God who will follow Him.

We must hear from God! There is no substitute for hearing from God. This is why the Gospels make mention of Jesus' commitment to seasons of prayer. Prayer is not so much speaking to God as it is entering His presence to hear from Him.

Let's consider examples from the life of Paul the apostle as to how he walked in non-resistance to evil at certain times, yet at other times he resisted evil. A very clear example of the harmonious operation of these two principles is found in Acts 16. Soon after Paul and the apostolic team arrived in Philippi they encountered a time of persecution. The magistrates commanded Paul and Silas to be beaten with rods. Now Paul, who was a Roman citizen, could have stopped them from inflicting this punishment at any time by simply asserting his rights as a Roman citizen. He didn't assert his rights at that time and endured a severe beating. This is non-resistance to evil as expressed in Matthew 5:39.

Later on, in that same chapter, Acts 16, in verse 37 Paul asserted his citizenship rights and made certain demands upon the civil authorities who punished him unjustly. **"But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now they are sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out'"** (Acts 16:37 NASB). This is active resistance to evil. (Acts 22:25-26 contains another example of Paul asserting his rights as a Roman citizen.) Paul resisted evil in accordance with Luke 22:36. The passages in question do not indicate that Paul used his own sword to resist them but by appealing to his citizenship rights Paul implicitly appealed to Caesar's sword. The military might of Caesar backed up the rights of all Roman citizens.

In reading Acts 16 we can clearly see the fruit of Paul's actions and thereby see God's wisdom vindicated. Yes, it was God's wisdom that guided Paul and

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Silas to submit to a horrible beating in front of a ranting mob of his enemies. What humiliation! Yet he sensed in his heart that God would have him not resist this injustice. God saw the jailer and his family that needed salvation and that they would be led to salvation by the faithful witness of His humble servants, Paul and Silas. The jailer asked Paul and Silas **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household’”** (Acts 16:30-31 NASB). If Paul and Silas asserted their citizenship rights and avoided the beating and jail, they would not have met the jailer and led him and his family to Christ.

Later, in verses 35-37, when the chief magistrates sent word to the jailer to release Paul, Paul asserted his citizenship rights and demanded they come and release them personally. Why this show of seeming hubris? Perhaps it was to gain respect for the newly formed church of Philippi in the eyes of the leadership of the city. Paul was about to leave the city and was led by God to make it clear to the magistrates that he could bring suit against them if he desired. This would have the effect of chilling any intentions on their part of persecuting the newly baptized believers who were meeting at the home of Lydia.

In every situation we encounter, God would have us respond from life and not from mere head knowledge of facts. To respond from life is to flow in His life and hear His words from His Spirit. Let God choose the scriptural principle that He would have us apply.

God is not a pacifist. **"God is not mocked"** (Gal. 6:7). Romans 13:1-7 teaches that civil authorities are instituted by God to bring punishment on evildoers. This means that Christians who serve in civil government are entrusted to use force if necessary to restrain the wicked. The New Testament contains no teaching that forbids believers from serving in the military. It is also noteworthy that the church fathers in the early church were not pacifist regarding the idea of Christians serving in the military.

To actively resist evil without God's permission is sin. Peter, the apostle, found this out when he drew his sword on the band of soldiers who came to seize Jesus. Jesus immediately rebuked him (John 18:10-11). Likewise to submit to injustice when God leads us to resist is not true humility but is servility and will not be anointed to effect change in us or in our enemy. To submit to injustice when God leads us to resist it is just as much a work of self as it would be to resist injustice when God leads us to submit. We must deny self and all of self's opinions and live by God's opinion in each situation

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Sons of God are often led to lay their lives down in humiliation in non-resistance to evil. **"Being reviled, we bless"** (I Cor. 4:12). We overcome evil with good. Yet God will use us at times to resist evil. It must not be our own selfish, petty revenge but rather His revenge. For, in the future, after the manifestation of the sons of God, God will give us authority over the nations and we shall rule them with **"a rod of iron"** (Rev. 2:27).

## CHAPTER VIII

### RELATING THE SONSHIP MESSAGE TO THE DISPENSATIONS AND END TIME EVENTS

Most people who study the Bible in depth would say that biblical Judaism did not end well. By biblical Judaism I mean the Torah Judaism of the Bible which was centered around animal sacrifices which were offered in the stone Temple located in Jerusalem. The time period of biblical Judaism was roughly 1500 BC to 33 AD. In this chapter I will use the term "biblical Judaism" and "dispensational age of law" interchangeably.

By the first century AD, Judaism had a corrupt priesthood, was rigidly legalistic and was oppressed by the Roman occupation. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD putting an end to the offering of animal blood sacrifices. At first glance, one could say that the dispensational age of law ended in corruption and tragedy.

However, I believe that the scriptures show that in at least one aspect, biblical Judaism ended with great success. This aspect of the successful end of biblical Judaism has ENORMOUS prophetic and practical applications for us today as we near the end of the dispensation of grace which is the church age.



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This one aspect of the triumph of biblical Judaism has to do with Jesus of Nazareth being **the perfect Jew**. Everyone knows that Jesus was (and is) a Jew. The Bible teaches that He was without sin. Hence, Jesus kept the Old Testament law perfectly. He was the only Jew ever to perfectly fulfill the Law. He rebuked the Pharisees over their man made Sabbath rules but He definitely kept God's Sabbath commands. So what is the significance of Jesus being the perfect Jew? I will show you the striking prophetic ramifications!

Let me give you a thumbnail sketch of **Dispensationalism**. Dispensationalism is a method of biblical interpretation that divides the Bible into time periods of history. It is in contrast to the more traditional **Covenant Theology** method of biblical interpretation. Covenant Theology views the Bible through the lens of the several covenants made between God and man.

I will mention in passing that the dispensational premillennial method of biblical interpretation is the method that most clearly sees the crucially important role of the present Jewish state in the Middle East. Dispensationalists tend to be pro-Israel while those who come from a covenant theology perspective tend to minimize the continuing special role of the Jews. I will hasten to point out that there are genuine born again believers in both the dispensationalist and covenant theology persuasions.

Dispensationalists see seven major time periods (called "dispensations") in the Bible. Each time period begins with a major move of God and the giving of commands followed by a period of time and mass failure of large numbers of people to obey the commands. Dispensations end with a time of great tribulation or judgement because of the failure of mankind to obey God's commands. Each dispensation shows the failure of mankind to obey God by human effort and by implication shows the need for man's utter dependence on the grace of God.

The seven dispensations are as follows:

- 1) Innocence:** Adam and Eve were given one command and they disobeyed and were cast out of Eden.
- 2) Conscience:** The early patriarchs of Genesis lived by their consciences and were to obey the inward witness of right versus wrong. It ended in such rampant evil that God judged the whole earth with a flood. (Jesus later drew a parallel between the days of Noah and the days just before the end time great tribulation.)

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**3) Government:** Noah was given instructions to the effect that murderers were to be given the death penalty (Gen. 9:6). This implies the setting up of a court system and a human governmental restraint on evil. This dispensation ended with all the people gathered at Shinar building a tower to heaven. Judgement came on them to confuse their languages and they were scattered to the ends of the earth.

**4) Promise:** God chose Abraham, a righteous man who obeyed God and received the promise of the land of Canaan. The dispensation of promise ended with Abraham's descendants out of their promised land and enslaved in Egypt. Great judgement came on Egypt at the end of this dispensation just before the exodus of the Jews. (Many Bible teachers have pointed out the striking parallels between the ten plagues on Egypt and the prophecies of future judgements recorded in the book of revelation.)

**5) Law:** For the first time in history God's laws are written down in exhaustive detail and given to a distinct people-group to obey. Moses, a righteous man in spite of personal failures (striking the rock twice, etc.) led the Israelites to the edge of the promised land. There followed centuries of failure and disobedience on the part of the Israelites that culminated in a 70 year exile in Babylon followed by a return to the land of Israel and more disobedience. At the end of the age of law the people were enslaved by the Romans, the Pharisees were heartless legalists, the high priesthood was auctioned off by the Romans to the highest bidder and the Temple was filled with extorting moneychangers. This dispensation ended with the Romans burning Jerusalem and the Temple. (Many Bible teachers have pointed out the striking parallels between the judgements on Israel in 70 AD and the prophecies of future judgements recorded in the book of Revelation.)

**6) Grace:** This age began with Jesus, the promised Messiah, dying for our sins and rising from the dead. The early church was pure, in spite of examples of individual failures (Ananias and Sapphira, etc.) and the church began to evangelize the world. This was followed by the Medieval period of centuries of increasing corruption and false doctrine. There followed a Reformation and the rise of a small end time church of born-again believers. The church is surrounded by the world with the corrupt elements of the great apostasy (abortion, gay marriage, etc.). The church will be confronted with the rise of the man of sin described in Second Thessalonians 2:3. The judgement of a great tribulation, prophesied in Matthew 24:21-22 and in the book of Revelation, will come on the whole world at the end of this dispensation in which we now live.

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**7) Millennial Reign of Messiah:** This age begins at the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the righteous saints who will rule and reign with Him for a thousand years. It is a period of spectacular world peace in which Isaiah 11:6-10 is fulfilled. This dispensation also, amazingly, ends in ignominious failure on the part of a large number (not all) of the people. Revelation 20:7-9 prophesies that they will surround the holy city and that great judgement will come upon them.

In the fifth dispensation, the age of law, a major change occurred regarding the usual pattern of failure at the end of dispensations. Though biblical Judaism ended in failure on the part of the nation of Israel there was one individual in that nation that succeeded in fulfilling the Law of Moses down to the very last letter. His name is Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel and He kept the Law perfectly. Jesus was Him **"who did no sin"** (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus was the perfect Jew.

## AN AMAZING PROPHETIC PARALLEL

Furthermore, I wish to show an amazing prophetic parallel. As the fifth dispensation ended with the perfect Jew, I believe the sixth dispensation ends with **the perfect church!** The church is referred to in scripture as the body of Christ. This perfect church will not be the whole church but will be a small portion of the church that comes to full stature in Christ (Ephesians 4:13). The New Testament refers to this in Revelation 14:1 **"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."**

The sons of God (born again Christians) who grow to full maturity in Christ will be the perfect church. The term "sons" does not exclude women. All of us are sons of God (Gal. 3:26) but none of us on this earth are yet fully sanctified. Those who come to full sanctification will be manifested (revealed) to all creation. God will use the manifested sons to do greater works in the end times before the second coming of Christ. I'm tempted to teach on how the sons will climb the seven mountains of influence but I'll leave that for another message.

Most Christians believe that the present age will end in failure with either the church being raptured out or barely muddling through the great tribulation in the end times. I believe that this implicit defeatism leads to lowered expectations and lowered effort on the part of Christians. Those who expect the church to be

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defeated are less likely to diligently seek the Lord for full sanctification. Jesus commands us to be perfect **"Be ye therefore perfect"** (Matthew 5:48).

So what are the prophetic and practical applications of Jesus being the perfect Jew? As I've said, the prophetic parallel is that the present dispensation in which we now live will end with a perfect church or more specifically, a body of fully sanctified overcomers. Jesus was the perfect Jew in 33 AD; the overcomer company will be the perfect church at the end of this age. Jesus is the perfect head; the overcomers will be the perfect body. Unfortunately, the perfect church will not be the whole church. It will be a remnant, an end-time army, a company of manifested sons of God.

The practical application of this is that each of us can set a goal of becoming fully sanctified! Aiming for full sanctification is better than settling for the mediocre status quo. We must be careful not to arrogantly claim to be fully sanctified when we have not yet attained it. We must humbly rely on the grace of God to grow unto full stature in Christ.

The Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, contains hundreds of prophecies of a coming Messiah. Only two of these messianic prophecies contain the word "Messiah." Those two are Psalm 2:2 and Daniel 9:25. All of the other messianic prophecies refer to the coming Messiah by other names or titles or just by implication. Jesus fulfilled more than 300 messianic prophecies in His first coming and He will fulfill many prophecies in His second coming.

It should not surprise us to realize that there are many prophecies in the New Testament that predict the coming of a perfect church. The Old Testament prophesied the coming of a perfect man. The New Testament prophesies the coming of a perfect company of men. The Old Testament foretold the coming of the Son of God and the New Testament foretells the coming of the manifested sons of God. The clearest prophecy of the manifested sons is Romans 8:19 **"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."** There are many other New Testament passages that refer to the coming manifestation of the sons of God. The other prophetic passages are not as clear or direct as Romans 8:19.

Every Christian is commanded to be a perfect son or daughter of God. Matthew 5:48 says: **"Be ye therefore perfect."** Every one of us is commanded to obey God perfectly from the day we are born-again to the day we die. We often forget that. We are so accustomed to sinning and confessing our sins and then

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sinning again that we think it is normal to commit sin! Every Christian is commanded to apprehend full sanctification in spirit, soul and body from day one of his walk. We can't sanctify ourselves. Only God can fully sanctify us. God sanctifies us by drawing us to a deeper experience of the cross day by day.

The perfect church that is coming will be a mega-church. A mega-church is usually defined as a church with a thousand or more members. The coming perfect mega-church will have 144,000 members. **"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."** I don't presume to know if 144,000 is a literal number or not. It could be more or less than that exact number. Some say that the 144,000 are all Jews because of what is written in Revelation 7:4-8. My position is that the 144,000 will likely include some Gentiles who are grafted in to Israel and who love Israel.

The First five verses of Revelation fourteen describe the overcomer company, which is the perfect church; the manifested sons. They are **"not defiled with women; for they are virgins"** (Rev. 14:4). This could be literal and limit the son company to unmarried men but I tend to think it would mean that the members of the overcomer company are virgins in the sense that they are not corrupted in their souls. The overcomer company, in my view, could be males and females that grow to the point of complete sanctification in their souls.

Very importantly, Revelation 14:4 says: **"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."** The overcomers are those who follow the Lamb fully to the cross to receive the full sanctification of spirit, soul and body. The apostle John was the only apostle present at the crucifixion of Christ. John is a type of the overcomer company. John followed Jesus to Calvary. Jesus entrusted Mary, His mother (who prophetically represents the church), into John's care (John 19:26-27). In John 21:22, Jesus gave John a cryptic promise that implied that John would survive until the second coming. John didn't literally remain until the second coming but the implication is that the overcomer company, whom John represents, will.

In Isaiah 53:2 it is foretold that the Messiah would be as a **"root out of a dry ground."** Jesus was born at the end of the age of law, during a time of dry pharisaical legalism. Likewise, the perfect church will be a church that springs out of dry, lukewarm end-time Christianity.

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Matthew 3:13-17 describes the **epiphany** of Christ. "Epiphany" means "reveal" or "manifest." When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, the heavens opened and God spoke the affirmation that Jesus is His Son. This is when Jesus became a manifested Son of God and He walked under an open heaven, receiving clear revelation from the Father for the rest of His life.

The perfect church will also have an epiphany. There will be a time when the heavens will open up above the overcomer company and they will walk in pure revelation and minister without failure. They will walk under an open heaven of clear revelation and they will do only that which they see God do. They will be a powerful end time army of God!

Can you imagine one man in our day who would have a miracle ministry and healing ministry just like Jesus? How long would it take for your town to be converted to Christ with such a man ministering in it every day? Can you imagine 144,000 people, including resurrected saints from past generations, ministering in the power of Christ and in even greater power as Christ promised in John 14:12? How long do you think it would take to convert all the nations into disciples of Christ?

The church has been given a supreme mandate. This supreme mandate is the Great Commission which is to make disciples of all nations. One consequence of fulfilling this mandate is the takeover of all of the governments on earth. When 70% of Russia is converted to Christ do you really think they will have a secular government? What about when 80% of Russia is converted? I don't necessarily predict that 100% of all people on earth will be saved but I contend that we are commanded to work toward that end!

I'm fully aware of the fact that the Bible prophetically predicts the great tribulation (Matthew 24:21) during which the world will be judged and many people will die. My point is that we must go on to fulfill the great commission and win every soul we possibly can. We are working towards 100% conversion of the world.

An obvious question arises at this point and that question is: *Is the manifestation of the sons of God before, during or after the second coming of Christ?* I don't know for sure but I believe the sons will be manifested before the second coming. **"The Son of man cometh at an hour when you think not"** (Luke 12:40). Our part is to take up the cross daily (to receive sanctification in the

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soul) and to do the work that Christ commanded us to do and to be ready for the second coming.

My favorite sonship preacher, Bill Britton (1918-1985), prophesied of the coming of a great army of God in the last days. I believe this army of overcomers will be regimented, humble, orderly and submitted to God's orders through channels of authority. It will be an army of Davids. It will be an army of manifested sons!

We have been commanded to make disciples of all nations. A command is not optional. We must go about doing the great commission and not stop doing it until every person in all the nations is converted! The only way to do that is to be recipients of the grace of God to such an extent that we become fully sanctified and grow to full stature in Christ and experience the epiphany or manifestation of the sons of God and walk under an open heaven and receive perfect revelation and a healing ministry that does not fail.

## COMMANDED TO SUCCEED BUT PREDICTED TO FAIL

In Matthew 28:18-20, the church is commanded to make disciples of all nations. We also see that prophecies contained in the Bible reveal that the church will fail to win all the nations to Christ and the nations will follow the antichrist at the end of days. We are commanded to succeed but predicted to fail! I believe that the Bible shows us how to deal with this conundrum.

As an illustration, imagine Rick Joyner giving a pep talk to the football team of MorningStar University. He exhorts them to play hard and press on to victory. The team is energized to carry out Rick's command to win on the field and be a good witness for Christian athletics.

On the way out of the locker room, as they run to the field they are met by the head of the prophetic ministry at MorningStar. He says *"I've got a word from the Lord about your game today!"* The young men circle around him in eager anticipation of what the Lord would say to them. The prophet says *"There will be perilous times on the field today, especially in the game's fourth quarter. The Lord has shown me that there will be frustration and major setbacks. Your cheerleaders won't be able to be heard above the din of the crowd calling for your blood. The opposing team will play dirty and cause injuries. I see young men carried off on*

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*stretchers. I see your team losing 36 to 6 and the crowd rallying around the opposing team's captain and enthusiastically carrying him off the field."* Then the prophet exhorts them to play a good game, have fun and go for the victory!

How hard will that MSU team play? They've been commanded to succeed but predicted to fail! How can they rally their energy and playing skill to put in a winning performance? The team goes out to the field terrified and they play overly cautious. They can't seem to shake off a defeatist, escapist, fear mentality. They go down to ignominious defeat.

In Matthew 28:18-20 we are given the great commission. **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"** (NASB). In Revelation 13:7, speaking of the antichrist, we read: **"And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him"** (NASB).

This command to succeed but prediction of failure is what I call the central conundrum of end-time revelation. I could quote many other New Testament passages that tell of perilous times at the end of the age. These include First Timothy 4:1-3, Second Thessalonians 2:3-12 and of course, the long passages in the book of Revelation that tell of the coming great tribulation in which God's judgement falls on an unbelieving world.

The church has responded to the predictions of failure by adjusting her attitude and focus. One very common position is the escape mentality often connected to the belief that the entire church will be raptured out before the tribulation. Other Christians teach that the church will go through the tribulation but be supernaturally protected.

Several generations ago, in the 19th century, much of the church believed that the people of God would transform the world into a godly society before the second coming of Christ. Those who held to this position were either postmillennial or amillennial in their understanding of the timing of the second coming of Christ. This was eschatological optimism which believed the church would be triumphant at the end of the age before the second coming.

This view largely crumbled when World War I and World War II demonstrated the extreme brutality of man. The general decay of morals in western civilization over



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the last fifty years has also caused many in the church to abandon the postmillennial view. Those who continue to teach that the church will transform society in the end-times are often chided as "dominionists" or "Kingdom Now" adherents. We who teach on the seven mountains mandate are often derided as those who are merely rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic.

The seven mountains mandate is the view that Christians should press on to influence the culture for Christ in seven major areas. These areas or mountains are: 1) religion, 2) education, 3) arts and entertainment, 4) the economy, 5) media, 6) government and 7) the family. Bill Bright, Loren Cunningham and Francis Schaefer are generally credited with receiving this revelation in the 1970s and teaching it to the church. Lance Wallnau and many others teach it in Charismatic churches today.

I'm a premillennialist, yet I also believe that we must scale the seven mountains and bring in a great harvest of souls at the end of the age.

How do we deal with the prophecies in scripture that predict that the world will follow the antichrist at the end of the age? How can we teach the seven mountains mandate knowing that the great tribulation is coming? I know that prophecy is conditional. Even Jonah's prophecy which said that Nineveh would be overthrown in forty days was conditional. Jonah's prophecy is a Bible prophecy yet it went unfulfilled because the Ninevites repented and their city was spared. Are the prophecies in the book of Revelation which predict the great tribulation conditional? If the world repents will God cancel the great tribulation? Are the prophecies of end-time judgement to be taken not as predictions but as warnings?

Why did God command His church to win the nations to Him and yet give prophecies that predict the failure of the church to fully carry out that command? Did God prefer that his church have a defeatist mentality rather than an arrogance mentality? I don't want to draw circles around the truth. I want to deal with this conundrum directly!

I see the predictions of end-times disaster as a kind of sorting mechanism. When Jesus came, He used the Sea of Galilee as a sorting mechanism. Did you ever wonder why Jesus spent so much time near the Sea of Galilee? If the crowd got too big Jesus would command the disciples to set sail for the other side of the sea. Only the most earnest of the people would walk around the sea to be with Jesus on the far side. In the Old Testament we see that Gideon was given a sorting mechanism to reduce his troops to just 300. So we see that God sorts out His

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people.

The prophecies of catastrophe are a sorting mechanism. How will you handle these negative predictions? Do you take an attitude of defeat and scale back your efforts? Do you refuse to scale the seven mountains? Or do you regard the negative predictions as mere warnings and press on valiantly to win the entire world for Christ?

In genesis 32:24-29 we read that Jacob wrestled with a man until dawn. Reading further we can see that the man was no ordinary man but was what theologians call a preincarnate appearance of Christ. God wrestled with Jacob! God wrestles with each of His people today! How we handle the prophecies of end-time failure is one factor that determines whether or not we will be a part of the remnant, which is the overcomer company, the manifested sons, God's end-time army, the 144,000 described in the book of Revelation.

In the book of Daniel we see that Daniel had scaled the mountain of government. Daniel was a government official of great power in pagan Babylon. God will place His people in positions of power, like Daniel, in the seven mountains in the end-times. These are Christians who have great intimacy with God and great power in government and great power on the other mountains of influence.

The antichrist will not overcome all of the saints! The overcomer company will be immune to the great tribulation! The antichrist will not defeat the manifested sons of God! Sadly, much of the church will be worn down and overcome by the antichrist.

The Bible teaches a triumphant eschatology. There seems to be two major streams of predictive revelation. Some Bible prophecies tell of the saints being overcome by the antichrist and multitudes of people in the world being lost. Other prophecies tell of the rise of an overcomer company that brings in a great harvest. I believe that each believer, through faith and action, determines his place and ministry in the end-time triumph of the kingdom of God! Great promises are made to **"him that overcometh"** (Revelation 2:7,11,17 & 26; 3:5,12 & 21).

The bottom line is that we must deal head on with the prophecies that predict the rise of the antichrist and perilous times ahead. We, however, must not take an attitude of either defeat or of arrogance. With sober humility we must press on to know the Lord and wrestle with Him in intercession and climb the seven mountains from which we will harvest a vast multitude of souls!

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

As the sons of God are in the maturing process, it is their duty to reconcile personal enemies. When the sons reach full maturity, the Father entrusts them with a much greater ministry which is that of reconciling whole nations to God. **"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"** (Prov. 16:7). In walking in the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount we reconcile our enemies and thus demonstrate that we are true peacemakers. Through self-denial the attitude of vengeance has been eliminated. We will have demonstrated to God our obedience in dealing with our enemies; therefore, God will give us the ministry of judging His enemies. This truth is brought out clearly in I Cor. 6:2-3: **"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"** Yet most Christians are largely ignorant of the fact that the overcomers will be used by God in this way.

Consider the following passage: **For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son...**" (Jn. 5:22). This is, of course, referring to Jesus. Jesus is the pattern Son, the forerunner and the head of the body of Christ. The mature sons, who have conformed to the pattern in every way (including death and resurrection of the soul), are members of the body of Christ which is the corporate son. The corporate son is the many-membered manchild company (Rev. 12:5), the overcomer company who shall rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is coming soon and when he does, there shall be a manifestation of the sons of God. These manifested sons shall be used to liberate all creation from the bondage to corruption (Ro. 8:19-21). **"Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes"** (I Cor. 4:5 NIV). When the Lord comes we shall judge nations.

Let us consider for a moment what it means to judge. To judge doesn't mean to destroy or annihilate the nations, but rather it means to set things right. It means to establish justice in the earth. It means to reconcile the nations back to God and only then will the nations be at peace with each other. This is being a peacemaker on a grand scale. We were faithful in the past in making peace with

our own enemies and now we make peace between nations. In making peace it will be necessary for us as judges to execute God's vengeance on His enemies. Paul wrote of this in II Cor. 10:6: **"And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."** This is God's revenge not our own. Our own attitude of vengeance has been dealt with through self-denial. Our obedience will by then be complete. God will only seat judges who are objective and disinterested. The judges have no input in terms of their own feelings, sympathies, opinions and prejudices. Only those who have crucified their self-life with Christ can qualify. Justice can only be meted out by those who are selfless in their judging. Again in the example of the Pattern Son: **"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me** (John 5:30).

## THE MANCHILD

The twelfth chapter of Revelation sheds great light on what occurs in the church in the end times. Revelation 12 is a pivotal chapter and is also a difficult one for the Bible commentators. The interpretations of the chapter are many and varied. Armed with our knowledge of the role of the overcomer company (the sons of God in maturity) the proper understanding of Revelation 12 is easier to discern.

The woman clothed with the sun (Rev 12:1) is the glorious end-time church. She is experiencing labor pains which is travailing intercession (verse 2). The church is crying out for a perfected ministry to come forth. It's a ministry with great power yet without error, scandal or failure. The dragon (Satan) opposes the birthing out of the overcomer company but to no avail (verses 3-4).

**"And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne"** (Revelation 12:5 NASB). The son company is born out (i.e. manifested) and caught up to God and to His throne (verse 5). This doesn't necessarily mean that the sons are physically removed from the earth for a time in a rapture though we cannot rule out that possibility. It means that the sons of God are given great authority. The male child was caught up to God and to His throne. Verse five also states that the male child is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. Many commentators say that this refers to Jesus Christ but remember that Jesus Himself spoke the promise of ruling the nations to the overcomers in Rev. 2:26-27!

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Verse six speaks of the woman fleeing into the wilderness to be nourished for 1,260 days. This is echoed in verse 14. Here is where I speculate a little. I believe that the wilderness being spoken of is the central part of the United States. Verse 14 speaks of the wings of the great eagle being given to her. The symbol of the United States is the bald eagle.

Verses 7 to 11 speak of the war in heaven and the means of victory. Satan and the world rulers and other demonic hosts are ejected from heaven. The heaven to which Satan presently has access is no doubt the second heaven. Paradise is in the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2). Verse eleven of Revelation twelve gives keen insights into the means by which Satan was overcome. They overcame him by 1) **“the blood of the Lamb”** which is Jesus’s atoning work at Calvary, the foundation of all victory and by 2) **“the word of their testimony”** which is the confession of faith in Jesus and also the power of the rhema or spoken word when spoken at the leading of the Holy Spirit and by 3) **“they loved not their lives unto the death”** which speaks of self-denial, the surrender of self unto the purposes of God, which is how a Christian becomes an overcomer.

The dragon, when cast down to the earth, persecutes the woman who flies to the wilderness (the United States) on eagle’s wings. She is nourished with physical and spiritual blessings and teachings for a time and times and half a time (three and a half years) which is the duration of the great tribulation. The next verses (15 & 16) tell of the serpent (v. 15), or dragon (v.16) pouring water out of his mouth to sweep the woman away with the flood. Waters or floods in scripture often speak of invading armies (see Isaiah 57:20; 59:19 and Dan. 9:26). The symbol of the nation of China is a serpentlike dragon. Hence this could refer to a Chinese invasion of the United States that is ultimately thwarted.

The final verse of the chapter, verse 17, tells of the dragon going off to make war with the rest of her (the church’s) offspring. This refers to a worldwide persecution of Christians of unprecedented magnitude. This lasts for three and a half years and is called the great tribulation (Mt. 24:21). The great tribulation is elaborated on in the thirteenth chapter of the book of Revelation.

## HOW TO RULE THE WORLD

In Revelation 2:26-27, Jesus promises the following to the overcomers:  
**"To him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod**

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**of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."** In saying that we shall rule with a rod of iron and that the nations will be broken like pottery, Jesus indicates that the judgment that we execute is at times to be rather harsh. We do this in humility and from a pure heart of compassion with God's agapao love for all people. Remember that God's judgment is more than simply exacting a penalty to pay for the crime. His judgment is always to reconcile the offender. The initial harsh penalty is merely the first step toward the ultimate reconciliation of the offenders. We shall smite but also heal the nations (Is. 19:22). The leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations.

Consider what Isaiah says concerning punishment of the nations: **"when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness"** (Is. 26:9). The next verse, Isaiah 26:10, goes on to say that if favor is shown to the wicked they will not learn righteousness. It is because of their troubles that the nations will turn to God. As Hosea says: **"in their affliction they will seek me early"** (Hosea 5:15).

In a mission of mercy we shall destroy empires. The imperialistic organizations of men were founded by violence and sustained by oppression. The remnants of the communist bloc and the colonial system shall be dissolved. The land shall be returned to the rightful owners and there shall be peace and liberty. We shall rebuke the oppressors and set the injured free. We shall rule in the midst of our enemies (Ps. 110:2-3). We shall even judge angels according to I Cor. 6:3. As for the judging of angels, it is hard to discern exactly what this will entail.

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Let us consider how economic justice will be established in the earth. In the coming millennial age one of the first things to be established is an equitable distribution of wealth where **"He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack"** (II Cor. 8:15). In establishing the economy of Israel, the Lord ensured an equal distribution of wealth because the land was divided among the families equally by casting of lots. The jubilee laws provided that all debts be erased and all land that was sold be returned to the original owners. Real estate and therefore wealth, could not be concentrated in a few hands because it all had to be returned to the people every fiftieth year.

Isaiah rebuked the hoarding of real estate **"Woe unto them that join**

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**house to house, that lay field to field . . .”** (Is. 5:8) and Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for **"devouring widow's houses"** (Mt. 23:14). Perhaps the very first thing Christ and the overcomers will do is declare an international worldwide jubilee and enforce it with the rod of iron. It is only in this way that, **"Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree"** (Micah 4:4 NIV).

Jesus promised Peter and the other apostles that they would sit on twelve thrones and judge (govern) the twelve tribes of Israel (Mat. 19:28). From this we can infer that overcomers of Jewish/Israeli extraction will govern Israel. It seems reasonable then that the overcomers who presently reside in and identify with a particular nation will govern that nation during the millennial reign of Christ. For instance Japanese overcomers will one day govern Japan. French overcomers will govern France. We in the church in the United States who go on to know the Lord through the radical walk of self-denial are the future leaders of America! All of the overcomers and indeed all of the nations shall be submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ who shall rule the world from the throne of David in Jerusalem (Luke 1:32-33).

Fully restored Israel shall be glorious and will be at the head of the nations (Deut. 26:19; 28:13). As the gospel is to the Jew first (Ro 1:16) so the manifestation of the sons of God is to the Jew first. Jewish believers are not superior to Gentile believers. The Jews are beloved in a special way for the sake of the fathers. **"As touching the election they are beloved for the father's sakes"** (Ro 11:28). God will honor and fulfill His ancient promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Fallen man has put forward the teachings of socialism and communism as a remedy to the problem of uneven distribution of wealth. The problem with this is that in these systems wealth is concentrated in the hands of the powerful central government. Under communism, the people don't own the land or businesses and therefore have little incentive to work. The result is even greater poverty. Some liberal seminaries have taught their missionaries to promote socialism. A socialistic doctrine called the *"theology of liberation"* which is a blending of Christian and socialistic principles is inciting revolution in Latin America today. Christians trying to install such supposedly equitable economic systems today are rushing ahead and not waiting till the Lord comes.

The economy of ancient Israel was not run by a strong central government. It was a de-centralized agrarian economy of small farmers and cottage industry. Israel's government was a theocracy. God ruled the country through the judges He raised up. Israel did not even have an earthly king for centuries. The

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government on earth during the millennium will clearly be a theocracy. **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”** (Isaiah 2:2-3). We can expect that during the millennium there will be a great deal of personal freedom and prosperity. **“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free”** (Gal. 5:1 NIV).

At the present time it is sad to see the great **"falling away"** (II Thes. 2:3) and people **"depart from the faith"** (I Tim. 4:1). As people become lawless and rebellious, governments become brutal and tyrannical. Since Darwinian evolution (and by implication atheism) is taught in schools all over the globe, people have lost their inner moral compass. Therefore harsh governmental legal power is brought to bear externally upon people in order to maintain social order. What started out as a quest for worldly "freedom" in casting off Victorian sexual restraints ends up in family breakdown, abandonment of children, juvenile delinquency and lawlessness. A fascist style curtailment of civil liberties is then imposed. All power is concentrated at the top and the way is paved for a dictatorial antichrist figure to seize power.

A limited government, such as the constitutional republic founded in the United States of America in the late eighteenth century, is possible only for a largely Christian populace. Ancient Israel's government was both limited and decentralized at the start. As Israel lapsed into idolatry and lawlessness, the government became more centralized during the kingdom phase. When the nations return to God during the coming millennial reign of Christ, government will most likely be limited in scope and personal freedoms will flourish. I don't presume to know the exact structure of the millennial government, but I do know that Rev. 20:6 says that we shall rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years. The phrase **"reign with"** indicates that some governmental authority will be delegated to the overcomers.

## SETTING ALL OF CREATION FREE

Let us consider how Jesus dealt with the material world. He rebuked the wind and turbulent sea and they became calm (Lu 8:24), He rebuked the fig tree and it withered from the roots (Mk. 11:14, 20), He spoke life into dead bodies (Lu. 7:14-15; Jn. 11:43-44), He turned water into wine (Jn. 2:7-11), His tribute money was provided by a fish (Mt. 17:24-27), and He rode a colt on which no one had



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ever ridden without first having to break it (Lu. 19:30, 35). Christ has authority over all creation: material, vegetable, animal, mankind and also over heaven's angels and hell's demons.

Jesus speaks creation into order by authority declaration and He gives this authority to the overcomers. In Mark 11:23 Jesus said **“whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea.”** John 14:12 says we will do **“greater works.”** This authority is greater than the faith realm we now know in pentecostal experience. Ephesians 4:13 says that we shall come to **“the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS of Christ.”** We shall be like Him not only in moral holiness but also in authority power! Of course, we will be submitted to Christ and honor Him as Lord.

We shall have this power at the return of the Lord at the manifestation of the sons of God. However, before the second coming, while still in our present mortal bodies, there shall be some who move in sonship power as a foretaste. We shall have a preview, a foretaste of the powers of the age to come (Heb. 6:5). I look forward to a time when we shall instantly heal all the patients in a hospital just by walking through without a word. The aura of God's presence will flow out of us to heal the sick and convict the lost, bringing weeping sinners to their knees. This is the ministry of the presence of God. We shall speak creation into order and receive instant answers to prayer. This is beyond Pentecost. This is the Spirit given without measure (Jn. 3:34). In this foretaste experience, and especially in the coming ages, we shall apply Christ's finished work at Calvary to all creation. **“Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven”** (Col. 1:20).

It is God's will to raise up mature sons both from Israel and from the Gentiles with whom He can share the weighty responsibility of reconciling His creation back to Himself. **“Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom”** (Lu. 12:32). What a mighty God we serve!

## CONCLUSION

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, which is where He entered the realm of mature sonship. He was born as the only begotten Son of God at Bethlehem but He was placed (adopted) as a full grown son at Jordan. The water speaks of our

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baptism of repentance, the Spirit descending in the form of a dove speaks of Holy Spirit baptism, the fact that it was the Jordan speaks of the baptism in death (baptism in fire). After this baptism He lived the crucified life. He manifested not His own life to the world but the Father's. He said: **"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"** (Jn. 14:9). The death He died enables us to die with Him so that we, too, can live the crucified life. In the crucified life we manifest not our own life, but the life of Christ so that we will say: "he that sees us, sees Jesus." Revelation 12:11 says **"They overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony: and THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH."** So then, armed with this attitude, let us take up our crosses and follow Him.

My prayer to God is that the reader has found this book to be a genuine encouragement to surrender to God more fully. For my part, I don't claim to have arrived at mature sonship. Let me put it this way: I haven't arrived but I have left. I've left mediocrity behind and although I may still stumble I'm pressing on to know the Lord. When I do stumble I get more embarrassed than most of you because I wrote a book about denial of self! I don't take a superior attitude about myself. If any statement in this book has conveyed such an attitude I deeply regret it and assure you that it was not intentional. Like most of you, I just believe that there's more. I have determined to discover that "more" in God. I encourage you to do the same.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William P. (Bill) Nugent, author, pastor and Bible teacher, has written chiefly on the topics of apologetics, repentance, law, self-denial and the role of the overcomer company in the end times.

His book ***The Cross, Self-Denial and the Manifestation of the Sons of God*** is an in-depth study on sanctification and end-time events. It is well known that many who teach sonship have taken scriptural principles to unscriptural extremes. Bill has sought to bring balance to the teaching on the manifestation of the sons. He has done so in this book and also through other messages in articles and on tape.

His book ***Messianic Jews and the Law of Moses*** reveals his heart for Israel and his burden that Messianic Jews relate properly to the Old Testament law in order to be released with full vigor into their glorious future in the end of this age. It is his conviction that as the first disciples of Jesus were Jewish and the message of salvation was "to the Jew first" so also will Jewish believers be the first to come

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to full stature in Messiah.

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