

Fellowship with God

Volume One

A collection of doctrinal expositions with applications
to the spiritual life of the Christian believer

By Max Klein

Fellowship with God, Volume One

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1 John 1:9
Regaining fellowship with God
through the naming of sin

Foreword

The greatest commandment given to all believers in Jesus Christ is the command to love God. As believers we are also commanded “to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ”. Without correct understanding of Bible doctrine it is impossible to fulfill these commandments, and the believer will continue to fail in the spiritual life.

The great Christians are not necessarily those who have the most prominent positions in the church, or who show themselves to be constantly busy in Christian service, or who sing and pray the loudest during the worship service. This collection of essays helps us to understand that the great Christians are those who are humble enough to obey God’s commands, learning and applying the word of God, and growing to spiritual maturity by developing an intimate and continuous fellowship with Him through means of both Bible doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit. These Christians are the ‘winner-believers’ of the Church age, the believers who have attained spiritual fulfillment, passed all forms of faith-testing and who maintain continually focused on the person of Christ. Only the winner-believer has the capacity to receive maximum blessings from God while giving glory to Him before both men and angels alike.

Acknowledgement

The author has studied under the teaching ministry of R. B. Thieme Jr., his faithful pastor for over 30 years. During that time Max has learned many biblical principles and doctrinal truths which have given him a clear understanding of the spiritual life. It is this spiritual life that Max desires to explain in simple written form, that others may also come to know the spiritual life that God has provided for all believers in Jesus Christ.

Staying in fellowship is very important in the Christian way of life. Therefore, we must learn how to recover fellowship after committing sin. For restoration to fellowship, God has designed a simple procedure. Although it is simple, it must be followed exactly.

Naming our sins to God the Father is a conditional procedure and not a promise to be applied by faith. A promise is a divine declaration or assurance that something specified will or will not happen, whereas a procedure is a course of action (naming our sins) by which a result is obtained (forgiveness of our sins). A promise requires faith; a procedure requires action.

This verse does not say, “If we believe and cite our sins”. The believer cannot walk by faith when he is out of fellowship. So, God has given the believer a simple procedure for restoration to fellowship. Simply name your sins to Him, and He will restore you to fellowship.

The Faith-rest drill, namely walking by faith cannot be accomplished when we are out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The Faith-rest drill is applying Bible doctrine* to our experience and requires divine power for execution. This divine power is provided by the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit* only when we are in fellowship. Walking by faith is a part of the spiritual life. When the believer is out of fellowship, his spiritual life comes to a halt until he gets back in fellowship.

In the function of the Faith-rest drill, the soul must be controlled by God the Holy Spirit. When the believer is out of fellowship, his soul is controlled by his sin nature. When the believer is controlled by his sinful nature, he is in a totally helpless and hopeless situation. This is why God has to provide a grace solution to our dilemma. This grace solution is a simple procedure, not a faith-exercise.

The Christian must realize that he is either in fellowship or out of fellowship. He is not partly in fellowship and partly out of fellowship.

* An explanation of this term appears in the glossary at the back of the book, together with terms found on other pages that are also marked with an asterisk.

When the believer is obedient to Bible doctrine in his soul under the filling of the Holy Spirit, he is in fellowship and walking in the light. So, being in fellowship is related to the soul, and not the body or its emotions. Therefore, fellowship is not something we 'feel'. No believer should say, 'I feel close to God' or, 'I feel like I'm out of fellowship with God'. Rather, the believer must understand that he loses fellowship with the Holy Spirit and enters into darkness whenever he sins. When in darkness, he must enter the light again through confession of sins.

When a person first believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior, his pre-salvation sins are forgiven, and he is placed immediately in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. After salvation, when he sins, fellowship with the Holy Spirit is broken and the believer enters into darkness. At this point the believer needs a solution for his post-salvation sins that he may again walk in the light. When the Christian is out of fellowship and walking in darkness, he is in a totally hopeless situation. It is hopeless because the believer out of fellowship is under the control of his sin nature* and so can do nothing to please God. Therefore, the solution to this problem must come from divine grace i.e., God must provide the solution.

God's solution is found in 1 John 1:9. This passage starts out with the following clause, "If we name our sins [known sins]." The Greek particle *εαν* (*ean* - if) and the Greek verb *ὁμολογέω* (*homologeō* - to acknowledge, name, or cite) in the subjunctive mood form a 3rd class conditional sentence in the Greek. The 3rd class conditional sentence emphasizes the free will of the individual and has the connotation of 'maybe'. The believer may name his sins correctly to God the Father or he may not. When John wrote this passage under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, he recognized that many Christians would fail to properly cite their sins to God the Father.

Not only does the subjunctive mood recognize free will, but so to does a command. A father may say to his daughter, "If you get married (subjunctive mood: potential, possibility, probability), I will give you an expensive wedding present." Since she has free will, she may never receive that gift. A city mayor may command drivers to drive within a certain speed limit within the city. However, this does not mean that all drivers will comply. Scripture recognizes free will through its use of the subjunctive and imperative mood.

God provided 1 John 1:9 as the only way to recover our fellowship with Him. Since God gave it to us, it is our responsibility to use it. So, every time the believer gets out of fellowship, he should

immediately name his sins to his heavenly Father. This is his responsibility.

The believer is not only responsible for acknowledging his sins, but he is also responsible for the act of his sins. Therefore, when you sin, don't blame others. Don't ever say, "He or she made me angry". This is failure to take responsibility for your own sins. No person can make you angry. You made a decision to become angry, or to worry, to become jealous, to gossip, to fornicate. That was your decision, not the decision of someone else.

Homologeō is a classical Greek word originally used in the Athenian courts of the 5th century B.C, and still in judicial use during the New Testament era. This verb was used of a criminal stating his crimes in a courtroom. After the criminal was found guilty, the judge would demand that the criminal acknowledge his guilt by stating his crimes. In stating his crimes, the criminal was not permitted to get emotional. He was not permitted to state his remorse, apologize or weep. The judge demanded that the criminal only state the facts regarding his crime, after which the judge would assign the appropriate punishment prescribed by law. Law, not emotion, was the criterion in the Athenian Court.

The cross was a courtroom trial. God the Father was the presiding judge. Jesus Christ was a substitute for the guilty human race. Therefore, Christ was sentenced and punished for all the sins of humanity by God the Father. During the trial there was judgment, not forgiveness. Because all sins were punished on the cross, God can forgive all who believe in Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:14 states, "In whom [Jesus Christ] we have redemption [a primary accusative of object] resulting in the forgiveness [a secondary accusative of result] of sins". Forgiveness is a result of the cross. The justice of God punished the humanity of Christ; his righteousness was satisfied; his grace now offers 1 John 1:9 as a solution for recovery of fellowship. The key word in the first clause of recovery is *homologeō*.

This word *homologeō* contains no emotion, not even 1%. No tears, no regret, no begging, no promise to do better, and no ritual. Just acknowledge your guilt and state your sins to God the Father. How you feel about the sins during your confession is totally inconsequential. Just follow the procedure and name your sins; don't try to impress God with your emotion.

Now, it is true that sometimes when you sin, you may experience some regret which in turn may motivate you to name your sins to the Father. This is okay, but not necessary. The truly honest Christian

admits to himself that he wanted to commit that sin and just names it without going through the emotion of regret. Desiring to get back in fellowship is sufficient motivation; emotion is not necessary.

The clause “If we name our sins” refers to known sins. Now, please realize that certain sins are very subtle. So, in some cases you may not even realize that you have sinned. Obviously, if you don’t know that something is a sin, you will not name it. For example if you do not realize that worry is a sin, then you will not realize your responsibility to name it to the Father. So the word “sins” refers to known sins, not unknown sins.

These known sins must be named to the proper person of the Trinity. All prayer and confession of sins in the Church Age is addressed to God the Father (Mark 11:25, 26; Luke 11:2). Therefore, the pronoun “He” is a reference to the Father. God the Father is immutable, and so He is always faithful. Therefore, every time you name your sins to Him, He forgives you and restores you to fellowship. He is never wearied by your confessions nor becomes irritated by your failures. He is always forgiving.

He is not only faithful, but also perfectly righteous. God cannot forgive us in grace until his righteousness is completely satisfied. This takes us back to the cross, the scene of the greatest courtroom case in all of history. God the Father was the judge. As a righteous judge, he demanded a perfect sacrifice be punished for all the sins of the world. The only perfect sacrifice was the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the justice of God punished the humanity of Jesus Christ (He bore our sins on his body) for every sin of every human being in history. When it was finished, the righteousness of God the Father was completely satisfied.

Furthermore, all sacrifices have to be offered by a priest. This was no problem since Jesus Christ was a high priest. As a high priest, he was able to offer himself as a sacrifice. Since the Father was completely satisfied with the work of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, don’t even *think* about adding any human works to gain God’s forgiveness. Just name your sins. Don’t make an issue out of yourself. Make an issue out of the cross by just stating your sins. When a Christian adds the human work of tears, promises, regret, begging, liturgy etc. while naming his sins, his confession becomes unacceptable to God. God cannot accept any work that competes with the perfect work of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

1 John 1:9 “If we name our sins [known sins], he is faithful and righteous with the result that he forgives us our sins [known sins] and purifies us from all wrong doing [unknown sins, grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit, Christian activism etc.]”

The Greek word ἵνα (*hina*) with the subjunctive mood introduces a result clause and should be translated “with the result that”. Since the righteousness of the Father was completely satisfied by the cross, he is free to forgive us of our known sins and to purify us from all wrong doing (unknown sins and other wrong doing).

The Greek word ἀφίημι (*aphiemi*) means to forgive. The father forgives us our known sins when we name them, but what about our unknown sins and wrong doing? The Greek word καθάρω (*katharizo*) means “to cleanse” or “to purify”. Since we are talking about the soul, it should be translated “purify”. God not only forgives us of our known sins, but he purifies us from all unknown sins and wrong doing and restores us to fellowship.

Many times when we sin and get out of fellowship, God administers discipline. We are not punished for the sin itself since Jesus Christ already paid the price for every sin. We are being punished by the love of God so that we will learn to obey and respect Him and to execute His plan (Heb. 12:6). Forgiveness and purification do not imply that this suffering will stop. Whatever punishment is received related to sinning and being out of fellowship becomes suffering for blessing and spiritual growth when we are back in fellowship.

In summary the opportunity to name one's sins to God the Father and get back in fellowship is a gift of grace. This gift was not intended to encourage sinning, but to provide the believer with the opportunity to continue in the spiritual life and to complete the objective of the spiritual life - to grow in grace and knowledge in order that the believer may some day come to love the members of the Trinity.

A Message to Young Christians

God is patient with us, so we also must be patient with ourselves. Sometimes baby or young Christians expect too much from themselves. (A baby Christian is a Christian who does not know much about the plan of God. Many Christians have been believers for 30 years, but they are still babies since they have never been taught the plan of God correctly). Sometimes when baby Christians learn a new truth, they assume that they should be able to apply it easily and quickly. If I were to demonstrate walking to a 6 month old baby, will that baby be able to walk immediately? Obviously he will not do very well for he is just too young. The same is true for believers.

All young Christians struggle with emotional sins. Some Christians have a problem with anger, others with jealousy, others with worry and fear and other various mental sins. What can the young believer do about this problem? Each time he commits one of these sins, he must name it to the Father. When he does he will be forgiven and restored to fellowship. After he is forgiven and back in fellowship, he should then try to recall pertinent promises and truths that will help strengthen him that he might be able to stay in fellowship as long as possible. Unfortunately, a very young believer's faith is also very weak, so he will easily get back out of fellowship. This can become extremely frustrating for the baby or very young believer. However, the young believer must learn to be patient with himself and never give up.

God does not punish the baby or very young believer as much as he does the mature believer when the same sin is committed. The more we advance in the spiritual life, the greater becomes our responsibility. So, God does not expect so much from the baby or very young believer. However there are two things which he does expect from the young believer. First, when you sin, you must immediately name it to the Father, even if you have to name your sins every minute. Second, you must learn the Word of God daily while in fellowship. If you learn God's truths daily, eventually you will develop strength after continued study and application of doctrine, though naturally this takes time. God knows that you are a baby or a very young Christian, and so will give you plenty of time to grow up. God is patient with you, so you must also be patient with yourself.

A baby or young believer must develop the correct motivation as soon as possible. If you are a student, study hard to please the Lord. You don't need to worry about what the teacher thinks of you. That is not important. Just do as well as you can in your studies to please the

Lord. If you study to please the Lord and you receive a "C" that is okay. The teacher and other students may look down on you, but the Lord doesn't because he knows your motivation. If you are working in a company, just work as hard as you can to please the Lord and obey all correct commands. If you do that, the Lord will be pleased with you. If your boss still is not pleased with your work, don't worry about it. Just please the Lord.

How many babies do you see working? Babies don't work; they only drink milk and make their diapers dirty. So why do baby Christians always want to get involved in Christian service? Possibly because many pastors do not understand the context of Jesus' command to the apostles recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. We must keep in mind that this command to "go out and make disciples of all nations" and "teach them to obey [the Lord's commands]" was not given to new believers, but to the eleven remaining apostles who had spent 3 years under the tutelage of the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving intensive personal training in the spiritual life until the time the Lord knew that they were ready to go into ministry. Since baby Christians are ignorant and emotional, they need only to keep drinking milk (learning about the elementary principles of the Christian life) and occasionally may also begin to eat some solid food (more advanced Bible doctrine). However, a baby or young Christian should never get involved in Christian service for he is not qualified. The Christian must grow up first, then he becomes qualified for some Christian service (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Baby Christians always want to do. Don't do, just learn by drinking the milk of the Word.

Baby or young Christians usually want to solve all problems through prayer. Prayer is communication with God. So, when the believer communicates with God he must know God and His plan. The more one knows God, the better are his prayers. If the Christian is ignorant of God, ignorant of God's grace and ignorant of how to walk by faith, then his prayers are going to be worthless.

Prayer is a vehicle of communication with God. When the Christian incorporates a problem solving device into his prayer, his prayer will have power and meaning. For example, if the Christian loves God and prays an accurate prayer with faith, then that prayer becomes powerful and will be answered. However, if the Christian prays a prayer without faith, it will not be answered. If a Christian prays in a state of fear, his prayers will not be answered. Effective prayers must contain proper motivation, and proper content.

Prayers without proper content do not solve problems. Walking by faith solves problems. Applying grace-forgiveness to others solves problems. Wisdom from learning many truths of Scripture solves problems. Love for God solves problems etc., but prayer without proper content doesn't. For example you have a problem: your boss is unfair to you. What do you do? Do you pray in a state of emotion and tears, "O Father, please, help me for my boss is unfair to me?" No, this is incorrect use of prayer. You should know that the Lord Jesus Christ is fair to you all the time. Since the Lord can only be fair, he will punish your boss for his unfairness and bless you. "Casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Now, if you pray to the Father thanking him for his fairness even though your boss is unfair to you, then that prayer is okay. In that case you are not using the prayer to solve your problem rather you are expressing your faith to God in prayer. Faith properly applied solves problems. So, also faith expressed in prayer solves problems.

Many baby Christians want to pray before learning the Word of God. This is impossible for prayer requires thinking, and babies cannot think. Babies emote with smiles and laughter and more often with cries. So, after a baby grows a little, he must be taught words that he might begin to think and to emote less. After he learns to think a little, he is ready to offer his first prayer, "Father, thank you for your salvation and the work of Jesus Christ on the cross." Prayer is communicating with God, therefore the more one knows about God and his plan, the better one can pray.

Many young Christians try to pray when they are out of fellowship with God. When the Christian has fear, worry, anger, or some other sin which has not been confessed, his prayers will not be answered: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18). Always before prayer, the Christian must make sure that he is in fellowship by acknowledging his sins to the Father.

Sometimes young Christians think that Satan is attacking them. In most cases Satan does not even have to worry about attacking believers for most believers attacks themselves through their sin natures and their ignorance of God's plan. Also keep in mind that Satan is a creature and as such can only be in one place at one time. He spends a certain amount of time in heaven and a certain amount of time on this earth. Satan is the most important fallen angel and very busy. He is also very brilliant and has a large organization. Therefore, he does not deal directly with believers in most cases. If one happens to be like Moses or David, then Satan may spend some time attacking that

believer personally. If you are not as great as Moses, then most likely Satan doesn't even know your name. Satan attacks all believers through his system of thinking. The only defense against Satan's system of thinking is God's system of thinking. Therefore, the only way the believer can defend himself against the thinking of Satan is to possess Bible doctrine in his soul.

A System of Thinking

(The following essay has been taken from pages 49 and 50 of the book 'Tongues' [R. B. Thieme Jr., 2nd Edition published 2000])

The spiritual life was designed by God as a system of thinking doctrine recalled from the mentality of the soul and applied to the circumstances of life. Edification and advancing in the spiritual life demands thought, not emotion. Emotion cannot learn, analyze, solve problems, or produce spiritual growth. Yet many believers would rather rely on emotion than invest the time and energy in the concentration and self discipline required to think divine viewpoint.

When emotion dominates thought, subjectivity, irrationality, self-absorption, and sin control your life. When your mentality is governed by knowledge from Bible doctrine, you can think objectively, no longer preoccupied with yourself. The greater the reservoir of doctrine in your soul, the greater the opportunity for application of doctrine in your life. Scripture repeatedly underscores this principle:

“For as he thinks within himself [in his soul]; so he is.” (Prov. 23:7a)

“Set your mind [φρονέω, *phroneo* – keep thinking objectively] on the things above [divine viewpoint], not on the things that are on earth.” (Col. 3:2)

“And that you be renewed [refreshed] in the [by the personal agency of the Holy] spirit of your *mind* [by means of your thinking].” (Eph 4:23)

“Have this attitude [*phroneo*, objective thinking] in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil.2:5)

What enables you to think like Jesus Christ? The knowledge of doctrine called the “mind” of Christ! (1 Cor. 2:16) Though you may respond with intense emotion to doctrine, those feelings must never be construed as spirituality or spiritual growth. When you attempt to live the spiritual life controlled by feelings, you ride a roller-coaster of emotional highs and lows that negate stability from doctrine. What God *says*, not how you *feel*, is the only criterion for the spiritual life. The word of God must be more real to you than any emotion, problem or experience. Only by learning Bible doctrine and renovating your thinking can you know God, utilize his power, advance in the spiritual life, reach spiritual maturity, and glorify Him.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Love

The Spiritual Life: Correct Thinking and Correct Motivation

Your thinking determines the kind of person you are. If your thinking is bad, then you are bad. If your thinking is noble, you are noble. If your thinking is limited, you are limited. If your thinking is self-centered, you are self centered. If you don't think, you are nothing. If your thinking is not in agreement with divine thinking, you are not a great believer. If your thinking is consistently aligned with God's thinking, then you are a great believer. “For as he thinks in his soul; so he is” (Prov. 23:7a). All thought and motivation takes place in your soul – and ultimately determines the real self.

Some Christians think that correct conduct will produce correct thinking. Many Christians are very moral, but their thinking is evil and their motivation is false. Since action is not in the soul, action does not produce thought and motivation. If action were to produce thinking and motivation, action would have to create vocabulary and concepts, but since action cannot produce words and concepts, action does not generate thinking and motivation. In contrast however, correct thinking and motivation do produce correct decisions and action. In other words, if a Christian has correct action, but his thinking and motivation are incorrect, he is malfunctioning. As this passage will point out, he is nothing and has accomplished nothing.

The only correct Christian motivation is love for God. If the Christian is motivated by the approbation of people, by the desire for blessing in time, by the desire for reward in eternity, or by his fear of discipline, he does not have correct motivation. Love is the only motivation.

1 Corinthians 13:1 “If [εάν (*e-an* - “let's assume that”)] I communicate in languages of men and of angels, but I do not have virtue love [ἀγάπη (*agape*)] I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”

In verses one through three, Paul introduces three hypothetical situations. The Greek particle *e-an* with the subjunctive mood together with the negative phrase “but I do not have” introduces a hypothetical situation. As angelic languages are unknown to humans, and since no one has ever moved a mountain by faith or ever will, these can not be

probabilities. Rather, these are a series of hypothetical sentences with hyperbole added for dramatic effect.

Many Corinthian believers were given the gift of foreign languages (tongues) by the Holy Spirit in order to evangelize the foreign Jewish traders coming into the ports of Corinth. However, other believers in the church who did not receive the gift of languages became jealous and so developed a pseudo gift of languages in an attempt to satisfy their arrogance (this is brought out in chapter fourteen).

The sensational gift of foreign language reminded the Corinthians of their cultural background with its cultic worship. In the cults of Sybille and Dionysus (the Roman Bacchus), there was a lot of ecstatic, meaningless utterance and other emotional activity such as the clanging of cymbals. The Corinthians associated the biblical gift of languages with their past experiences. For this reason, they assumed that the gift of languages made them great, and many even developed a pseudo gift of speaking in languages. However, Paul not only rejected their pseudo spiritual gift of languages, but also made it very clear that the gift of foreign languages is meaningless unless one has advanced in the spiritual life. In effect, he is saying that unless a believer possesses virtue love his spiritual gift is meaningless.

Although no human being has ever spoken an angelic language, Paul knew that angels do possess languages. Apparently, the angelic languages are much more complicated than human languages, so if any human could speak an angelic language it would indicate his superiority over other humans. Paul is using this hyperbole to emphasize the importance of virtue love. Let's assume that a missionary could speak and write fluently in Korean, Thai, Chinese and several angelic languages, does that make him a great missionary? The answer is no. If he does not have virtue love, namely reciprocal love for God and unconditional love toward all people, he is a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. He is nothing, and he has accomplished nothing.

In ancient Greece and Rome there were no supermarkets, so peddlers with carts would move about the streets selling their produce and wares. As most of the homes had an outer wall around them, the peddler had to have some system of alerting the housewives regarding their presence. One method of doing this was to rub or bang two pieces of brass together making a terribly dissonant and irritating sound. This act of drawing attention to oneself is analogous to the self centered believer who is functioning in a spiritual gift but does not possess virtue love. Without virtue love the believer's motivation will be related to

some form of arrogance, and he will always be trying to draw attention to himself, to glorify himself. This is incompatible with John 16:14 which states that the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. We must relate this principle to our own spiritual life by maintaining virtue love as our motivation in all that we do. In every aspect of life, whether it be related to family, work, education, leisure, Christian service or the spiritual life, our thoughts and actions must be motivated by virtue love and the resulting desire to please the Lord.

Virtue (*agape*) love includes both reciprocal love for God and unconditional love toward all people. Reciprocal love for God is thought, not emotion. "If you love me (Jesus Christ), you will obey my commands." (John 14:15). Therefore, before we can say that we love God we must learn all the mandates and obey them. Learning and obeying are both related to thought, not emotion.

Unconditional love toward people has two sides. On one side is freedom from emotional sins toward other people such as hatred, bitterness, jealousy, antagonism and so on, while on the other side is a positive mental attitude toward them, often expressed outwardly through acts of kindness, graciousness, forgiveness etc.

I Am Nothing!

13:2 "And if [hypothetical situation with hyperbole] I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and all the knowledge and if I had all the faith so that I could remove mountains from one place to another, but I do not have virtue love, I am nothing".

Some of these things are true of Paul, others are not. However, that is not the point. Paul is using himself as an illustration in a hypothetical conditional sentence. For instance, Paul did have the gift of prophecy as did Peter and John (Paul prophesied regarding the rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:15-17). He also had the gift of knowledge of the as yet uncompiled mysteries, prophecies, and all other information which would be in the New Testament.

The Greek word *μυστηριον* (*musterion*) was the name given to the secret teachings of the Greek fraternities and sororities. These doctrines or mysteries were known only by the members of those organizations. In the Church Age there is a new spiritual fraternity, the royal family of God with its own secret teachings. Because certain teachings are unique to the Church Age Christian, Paul used the word *musterion* to describe these doctrines of the spiritual life. The royal family of our Lord is an exclusive club with unique doctrines. The

humanity of Jesus Christ was the first one to have the filling of the Spirit which power he gave to all Church age believers. Jesus Christ has appointed us as His ambassadors to personally represent Him, and we were made members of his royal priesthood through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. These are the highest possible privileges, with the highest possible status that God can give to a believer. Not even the great Old Testament believers such as Moses, Abraham and David were presented with such a high status. Our bodies are temples indwelt by God the Father (Eph. 4:6), God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:27). This never happened before the Church Age and will not happen after the Church Age.

There was not only a special gift related to knowing the mystery doctrines, but also the gift of Knowledge. Certain believers were given knowledge of all which would be in the New Testament. You must remember that in the early church there was no Bible. How were Christians living in that period of history going to learn all of the doctrines and principles found in the New Testament? This gift of knowledge was used to provide Christians with the spiritual life that we now learn from the New Testament.

In verse 3 of chapter 13 Paul also speaks hyperbolically of “faith that can move mountains”. In the pre-canon period of the Church Age there existed the temporary spiritual gift of faith. This temporary spiritual gift must be distinguished from the faith-rest drill, namely walking by faith. The spiritual gift of faith was another of the temporary spiritual gifts provided by the Holy Spirit to the believers of the early church, along with other gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and the verses mentioned in this passage. Since there was no Bible these spiritual gifts were necessary. The functioning of these gifts was a substitute for the Bible. The last book of the Bible was not written until 96 A. D. and even then it took a number of years to assemble and distribute the Bible. In the meantime these gifts functioned for the growth of the church.

Even though the gift of faith was used in the early church, no one ever possessed a faith for the purpose of moving mountains from one location to another. There would be no spiritual reason for doing that. Remember that this entire passage is dealing with hypothetical conditional sentences in order that Paul might be able to make his point. Paul is going to demonstrate that greatness in the spiritual life is related to loving God, not what spiritual gift one possesses or what the Christian is doing. Since all the temporary spiritual gifts in the early church were spectacular, Paul is making the gift of faith even more spectacular

through hyperbole. In this way, Paul’s concluding statement is even more dramatic. If you have all of these sensational spiritual gifts and even if you could move mountains, but you do not have virtue love - you are nothing.

The nothingness of Agamemnon

When Paul writes “you are nothing” he uses the classical Greek expression ουθεν ειμι (*outhen eimi*). In the whole of scripture this expression is used only by Paul and Luke, and by Paul only twice here in 1 Corinthians 13. Paul is drawing the reader to identify the scenario of the Corinthian believers to that of the heroes of the Greek tragedies.

One of the Greek tragedies was about an ambitious and self-seeking king named Agamemnon. He had a lovely wife named Clytemnestra, a beautiful daughter, Iphigenia and a young son. Despite many blessings in his life, he wasn’t satisfied. He wanted to be a great hero, for this was the age of heroes. When war broke out between the Mycenaean Greeks and the Trojans, Agamemnon was given command of the Mycenaean Navy and Army – and the perfect opportunity to become a hero at last. However, as preparation for war was being made a disaster occurred which easily could have caused Agamemnon to lose his position as commander and thus his chance for greatness. The Mycenaean Greeks had assembled a huge naval fleet in the harbor of Aulis, but the winds were unfavorable at that time and the ships could not depart Aulis to sail toward Troy.

Now the Greek religion of that period was related to human sacrifice and demonism, the activities of which were governed by the temple priests. After the ships had sat idly in the port for many days, these priests approached Agamemnon to explain that the reason for the lack of wind was that one of the animals sacred to the goddess Artemis had been killed by the soldiers, and that in her anger she had calmed the winds. In order to appease the goddess’s wrath, Agamemnon would have to make a great sacrifice - that of his daughter’s life (Iphigenia loved her father and so had requested and been given permission to accompany her father on his ship).

Agamemnon could have demonstrated true greatness and refused to murder his daughter for the sake of this evil religion, but he didn’t. If he had, he probably would have been removed as overall commander of the fleet and army and his dream to become a great hero would have never come to pass. Since Agamemnon’s lust to become a great hero was greater than his love for his daughter, he permitted the priest to cut

the throat of his daughter and to burn her as an offering to Artemis. The soldiers thought that he was great for making this great sacrifice, though his wife Clytemnestra thought otherwise, and became very bitter when she heard the news of her daughter's cruel murder. After the war, Agamemnon returned victorious to a hero's welcome in Mycenae. Waiting also for him was his lovely wife. She pretended to still love him, but in her heart was bitter revenge. On Agamemnon's return to his residence, Clytemnestra prepared a nice warm bath for her husband. Just as Agamemnon eased down into the warm tub, she threw a net over his head and with the help of her lover, Aegisthus, chopped him into little pieces. In his arrogant lust for fame, he became *outhen* - nothing.

The nothingness of falsely motivated believers

God has loved the Christian for billions and billions of years. He has designed a spiritual life for the Christian that we might also love him with reciprocal love. However, what are most Christians doing? They are being distracted by many things which prevent them from ever developing a love for God. These distractions are the tragic flaws of the Christians today - instead of becoming great heroes and heroines, they are failures. If the believer learns the Word consistently, some day he will develop a love for God. He may not become famous or be recognized as great by others, but in God's plan he will become a great and noble believer just because he had the good manners to reciprocate God's love. However, most believers are like Agamemnon. They want to be great. They want wealth, promotion, recognition, success, and romance more than anything else. So, they do not spend the time to learn about God and his plan. At the end of their lives, they may have achieved many things - including fulfilling all the desires of their sinful selfish nature - but if they have not achieved reciprocal love for God, they are like Agamemnon, nothing.

If you had all the sensational temporary gifts of the early church, but you do not have virtue love, you are nothing – unimportant and without influence. People who are nothing are always unhappy people. Therefore, Church Age believers who fail to develop a love for the members of the Trinity become unhappy nothings.

You may be extremely moral; you may be a famous pastor or missionary; you may give 30 percent of your money to Christian charities; you may pray from morning to evening, but if you do not love God, you are nothing.

13:3 “And if I give all of my possessions to those in need of help [literal translation from the Greek word *psomizo*] and if I deliver over my body [for martyrdom] that I may boast [kauchesomai], but I do not have virtue love, I gain nothing.”

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-2, Paul stated that even if one had several sensational spiritual gifts, but he does not possess virtue love, he is nothing. In this verse Paul states that even if one performs a spectacular Christian deed or sacrifice but he is not motivated by his appreciation, respect, and admiration for God, he *gains* nothing.

To give all your possessions away is spectacular giving. In this illustration, the Christian gives all of his wealth so that he becomes impoverished. This is exactly what Barnabas did (Acts 4:36-37). Barnabas, who intended to accompany Paul on missionary journeys, was a wealthy landowner with a great spiritual life and complete trust in God's provision. He decided to sell all of his property and give the proceeds to the many impoverished Christians in the Jerusalem area at that time. However, Ananias and his wife Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) were jealous of the approbation which Barnabas received after he had given all of his money away (Barnabas himself didn't care about the approbation. He just wanted to please God.) In their lust for approbation they lied about their giving, telling Peter that they were giving all of the proceeds from the sale of their property for the purpose of helping the needy. Now, keep in mind that no one asked them to sell their property or give money to the poor. That was their idea. Because Barnabas had sold all of his property and had given all of the proceeds from the sale to the poor, they had decided to do likewise so that they would receive approbation as Barnabas had. However, they were unwilling to donate all of their money as Barnabas had done – in other words, they lied about their giving in order to obtain maximum approbation.

Ananias and Sapphira were not great Christians who suddenly became bad through greed and lying about their offering to the poor. They had lived their entire spiritual lives out of fellowship, remaining under the influence of Satan's thinking: “Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has filled your heart’ ” (Acts 5:3a). It takes a long time for Satan to completely fill the stream of consciousness of a believer with his thinking and values. The spiritual life is a system of thinking, but Satan also has a counterfeit spiritual life related to thought. If the Christian is constantly out of fellowship, he will learn this system.

This is exactly what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. This lie was not an isolated act, but the result of a lifetime of functioning out of fellowship.

Many Christians are like Ananias and Sapphira. They are involved in many noble deeds, but they are falsely motivated because they do not have a true relationship with the Lord. They think that they are accomplishing many things for the Lord, but in reality they have accomplishing nothing. Someday they too will die an inglorious death.

Some translations differ regarding this verse depending upon what manuscripts were used. Some manuscripts use the Greek word *καυθησμαι* (*kauthesomai*) while the three most reliable uncial manuscripts (written on parchment), the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus scribed in the 4th century, and Alexandrinus scribed in the 5th century all use the word *καυχησμαι* (*kauchesomai*) (to boast, to glory). Also, one of the most important papyri, the P36 (a Chester Beatty Papyri written in the 3rd century) uses the word *kauchesomai* (to boast, to glory). Neither the greatest uncial manuscripts nor the most reliable papyri contain the word “*kauthesomai*” (to be burned).

Furthermore, *kauthesomai* is future subjunctive in form, though this grammatical form did not even exist in the Biblical Period, but only came into existence in the Byzantine period (4th-15th century).

In Bruce M. Metzger's book *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament* the author writes: “The reading *kauthesomai* (= future subjunctive!), while appearing occasionally in Byzantine times, is a grammatical monstrosity that cannot be attributed to Paul (Blass-Debrunner-Funk, para. 28; Moulton-Howard, p. 219).”

A scribe living in the Byzantine period deliberately changed this word. Actually, all he had to do was to change one letter. By changing the Greek letter ‘*χ*’ (*chi*) to ‘*θ*’ (*theta*) he was able to change the whole meaning of the word. Now the question remains: why did he do this? The most likely explanation is that the scribe responsible was very impressed with Christian martyrdom and did not agree with Paul's negative statement regarding martyrdom.

Under certain conditions, God permits certain great believers to be martyred that He may be glorified. When mature believers are being martyred, they are motivated by both unconditional love for their fellow humans (including those who are martyring them), and personal love toward God. In this passage Paul is saying that the motivation for martyrdom in many cases is for self glory. Paul was distrustful of many of the believers' motivation for martyrdom in the early church - warning the Corinthians that if one gives his body over to be martyred, but does not have virtue love, he accomplishes nothing. Paul made an

issue out of this since some Corinthian believers had apparently deliberately martyred themselves.

The main meaning of the word *kauchesomai* is “to boast” or “to take pride in oneself”. In this context, Paul is making reference to Christians boasting in their martyrdom. These were Christians who had failed completely in their spiritual lives. After a life of total spiritual failure, they thought that martyrdom would automatically make them great believers with great rewards in eternity – therefore implying that there is merit in martyrdom itself. If there is merit in martyrdom itself, then the person being martyred has a right to boast. Furthermore, if there is merit in martyrdom itself, then martyrdom would glorify God. However, this is not true. The merit is in the application of doctrine that occurs while a great believer is being martyred, not in the function of being martyred.

The most sophisticated form of Greek language was Classical Greek of the 5th and 4th centuries before Christ. This was the language spoken by the Athenian Greeks and by such great men as Socrates and Plato. However, when the Bible was being written, Koine Greek (common Greek), a less sophisticated grammatical form of Greek was the language of the people. Thus, some writers of Scripture used only Classical Greek (i.e. Luke and the writer of Hebrews) and other writers used a mixture of Koine with Classical Greek. Paul especially was an expert in mixing these two languages, so it should not be surprising that Paul uses these two Greek languages in this passage. The Classical Greek word for nothing is *ουθεν* (*outhen*) whereas the Koine Greek word for nothing is *ουδεν* (*ouden*). Even though they have exactly the same meaning, they can be used to communicate subtle differences. In this passage Paul first uses the Classical form then switches to the lower class of the Koine form. In this way, he is able to communicate a fascinating story with just two words.

In verse two of this chapter Paul identifies the Christian with the Classical period by using the word *outhen*. This is necessary to introduce the believer as either a potential hero or a tragic failure in the spiritual life. Agamemnon was nothing (*outhen*) because of his arrogant lust for fame; he gained nothing, he died a humiliating death. The Christian who fails to execute the spiritual life is nothing, and he gains nothing (*ouden*), he dies under maximum punishment (Phil. 3:19, 1 John. 5:16). By switching to the lower class *ouden*, we understand that the failure of the Christian to glorify God through correct motivation is infinitely more tragic than the failure of Agamemnon.

The Faith-rest Drill **(Living by faith, a drill producing tranquility in the soul)**

Walking by faith is a drill which must be practiced. This drill of applying God's word to one's difficulties and pressures produces tranquility in the soul. When the believer lives by faith, he applies biblical promises, principles and doctrines by faith to his experience. Living by faith is trusting in God's thinking, not one's own false thinking. For example, God is perfect justice and as such he can only be perfectly fair to all of his creatures, all the time. God is perfectly fair to you every second of every day. Therefore it is incorrect thinking if you think: 'People and life are unfair to me'. Don't you realize that if a person treats you unfairly, God can discipline that person and provide extra blessing for you?

When the believer applies God's word to his problems and pressures, he will possess tranquility in his soul. Tranquility means two things: complete confidence in God, and freedom from mental agitation caused by emotional sins. When the believer is controlled by such mental sins as fear, worry, anger, hatred, jealousy, bitterness, self pity etc., he will have stress in his soul. For example, if he worries about his family problems, stress will occur. This can be illustrated with the following simple formula:

(problems + mental sins = stress)

Stress produces an agitation in the soul, whereas applying Bible doctrine by faith produces a phenomenal tranquility in the soul:

(problems + applying Bible doctrine by faith = tranquility)

Applying Biblical promises, principles and doctrine by faith has always been a part of the believer's spiritual life. Abraham was promised a great progeny by God through his wife Sarah, for God certainly would not encourage Abraham to produce his progeny through adultery (Gen. 12:2; 13:16). At first Abraham did not have the spiritual strength to believe this promise and in discouragement assumed that his progeny would come through Eliezer (Gen. 15:2, 3). Even when Abraham was 86 years old, he still did not believe that God could manufacture a progeny through his wife, Sarah (Gen. 16:1-3, 16).

The promise was initially given to Abraham when he was still residing in his hometown, the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (Ur of the Chaldees). At that time he was less than 75 years old for after spending several years in Haran he departed from there at the age of 75 (Gen. 12:4). It took Abraham more than 24 years to accumulate enough Bible doctrine in his soul to develop a faith strong enough to believe that he would have a son through Sarah.

“And so not becoming weak in that faith, he completely understood his own body which had become [sexually] dead when he was approximately one hundred years old likewise he completely understood the deadness of Sarah's womb [passed menopause]. He [Abraham] staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that what God had promised [a son through Sarah], God is able also to perform.” (Rom. 4:19-21)

You see, as Abraham learned more and more about God, his confidence in God increased. Romans 10:17 states, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” The believer listens to the Word of God today, and a little faith is developed. Then he listens tomorrow, and a little more faith is developed, and then the following day, and he continues to do so for his entire life. In this way his faith becomes stronger and stronger.

This stage by stage development of faith is illustrated by one of the Hebrew words for faith, *qawah*. This was the word used to describe the binding process that produces a very strong rope, and is used to illustrate the strong faith of the mature believer waiting on the Lord (Is. 40:31). In order to make this strong unbreakable rope one begins with a single strand of rope which easily breaks under pressure. However, when this single strand is twisted around a second strand and then around another and another, a strong rope is developed. The principle is as follows: as more and more strands are twisted together, the stronger the rope becomes. This process involved in making a strong rope depicts how faith is developed in stages. The first strand of faith is extremely weak. However, as the believer twists more and more strands of faith together, he will eventually have a strong faith. As baby believers, our faith is like a single fine thread. It has no strength at all. However, as the believer learns more and more doctrine and gains experience in applying his faith to pressure situations, he develops a strong, ropelike faith. At that point he can walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

Before the Church Age, the spiritual life of the believer emphasized living one's life by faith. For example, the Jews of the Exodus generation were taught how to walk by faith while they were still in Egypt. For example, they were all taught about the promise which God made to Abraham namely that God would give the Jewish people a country of their own, a prosperous land "flowing with milk and honey". So, when Joseph died, he refused to be buried in Egypt, but was embalmed and placed in a vault above ground. He made the Jews promise to take his bones out of Egypt and bury them in the promise land. So Joseph's bones remained unburied, which meant that the Jewish families living in Egypt would pass by the vault of Joseph, and the Father would be able to relate this story to his children. In this way they learned to trust in the Lord. They were taught that their spiritual life was to trust in the promises of God just as Joseph believed the promise of God. Thus, the Jews had a spiritual life before they crossed the Red Sea, before they received the Mosaic Law (the Mosaic Law taught about the cross, about confession of sins and many things related to establishment, but it didn't teach the spiritual life). The spiritual life of these believers was living their life by faith in God's promises and principles.

Faith Testing

When God gives a spiritual life to the believer, He is going to continuously test that believer's spiritual strength. Therefore, the Jews were tested regarding their spiritual life as they were leaving Egypt. As the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day, God the Son, the only manifest person of the Trinity, led them deliberately into a trap. He led them into a cul-de-sac at the Red Sea. There were mountains to the north and south and the Sea was to their front. Suddenly, behind this great multitude of Jews, arose a great cloud of dust. Pharaoh Amenhotep II was leading the greatest military force in the world at that time. Facing this great military force were over a million untrained Jewish slaves. The only Jewish people with any military training were Moses and possibly Joshua and Caleb. This was a hopeless situation from the human viewpoint. However, nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). As a matter of fact this was a test of faith because God had already promised the Jews that they would worship him at Mount Horeb:

"Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the

west side of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God." (Ex. 3:1)

"And He said, certainly I [God] will be with you [Moses], and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain [Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai being the same]." (Ex. 3:12)

Although there were more than one million Jewish adults, only Moses had the spiritual strength to apply this promise to this hopeless situation. While those Jews were immersed in fear and screaming about dying, Moses said, "Do not fear. Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord. The Lord will fight for you today" (Ex. 14:13). The Jews should have passed this test, but they kept concentrating on the problem - namely the advancing Egyptian military, rather than the solution - trusting in God's promises. Initially, Moses concentrated on the advancing Egyptians in order to understand the situation, but when he realized that their situation was militarily hopeless, he concentrated on a divine solution, a solution based on his confidence in God and the promise which God had given him. So, he walked by faith and remained very calm in this tense situation.

Principles of Fear and Stress

"As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians marching after them. They were terrified and screamed to the Lord." (Ex. 14:10)

The Jews used faith in salvation; now they needed to apply the God's promises by faith to this pressure situation at the Red Sea. If one does not use faith for salvation, it is hopeless, so also if one does not use faith in the spiritual life, it is hopeless. Col. 2:6 states, "Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus your Lord [a metaphor for believing in Jesus Christ as ones savior], so be walking in him [the spiritual life after salvation]". We used faith for salvation, now we must use faith for the spiritual life. The only difference is the object of faith. In salvation the object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. In the spiritual life the object of faith is the thinking of Jesus Christ.

To the Exodus generation security was more important than applying Bible doctrine. As a result of their emphasis on personal

security, they became involved in the emotional sin of fear. Fear is not only an irrational state of emotion, but it is also a destructive sin.

God does not answer prayer when the believer is out of fellowship and controlled by his sin nature (Ps. 66:18). The Jews should not have prayed the prayer of “Help! Help!” Rather, they should have prayed to the Father thanking him for this opportunity to watch the Lord’s power in delivering them at the Red Sea. Fear however destroyed their perspective of the situation.

Principles related to fear:

1. It is possible to learn a lot of doctrine and yet fall apart in a sudden pressure situation.

2. Sudden disaster often places the believer in a panic situation resulting in a failure to apply doctrine to that situation.

3. The courageous person is able to think under great pressure, whereas the person with fear is not able to think rationally under great pressure. The difference is the ability to concentrate under pressure. Now, if you have a problem concentrating in normal situations, you will surely have a problem concentrating under pressure in an abnormal situation.

4. Concentration is not only required in learning Bible doctrine, but even to a much greater extent in applying Bible doctrine. This is especially true when historical disaster occurs, because in historical disaster one has two categories of pressure to deal with, namely personal and national.

5. Adversity and great pressure can easily cause stress. When a believer is under stress, he is not able to think objectively.

The Jews expressed all the above principles of fear through their rebellion of Moses:

“They said to Moses, ‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?’ ” (Ex. 14:11a)

Now keep in mind that these Jews did not have to leave Egypt. Moses did not force them to leave. Arrogant people never take responsibility for their decisions. Furthermore, Moses was only God’s agent. It wasn’t his idea to bring the Jews out of Egypt; it was the command of God. God was going to remove the Jews from Egyptian slavery in order to make them a special nation (client nation) in history.

A coward dies many times, but a brave man dies only once. Under fear, emotion took control of these believer’s souls, and they

became irrational. In their state of irrationality, they possessed a false view of their situation. Their false viewpoint was that they were already dead. The true view was that God would deliver them.

“Is this not the word which we spoke to you in Egypt? Let us alone that we may be slaves to the Egyptians because it is good for us to be slaves to the Egyptians rather than to die in the desert.” (Ex. 14:12)

Initially, when the Jews heard that God was going to remove them from slavery, they welcomed the idea:

“And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.” (Ex. 4:31)

However, once the Egyptians started to give them a hard time, they changed their minds about going:

“And they said, may the Lord look upon you and judge you [Moses and Aaron]! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” (Ex. 5:21)

Even with the continued assurance of the Lord, the Israelites refused to humble themselves to God’s purpose:

“ ‘And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.’ Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.” (Ex. 6:8, 9)

Principles related to stress:

1. Adversity is outside pressure of life; stress is inside pressure of the soul.

2. Stress is caused by oneself; adversity is caused by other people and outside circumstances.

3. Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional.

4. Stress destroys the spiritual life of the believer. Therefore, the believer must name the sin which caused the stress to God the Father as soon as possible.

5. There is a definite relationship between stress and cognition, namely stress lowers cognition.
6. Stress makes a person forgetful and impairs the memory in regards to acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, stress impairs the ability to learn.
7. Stress affects a person's perception of reality. At the Red Sea the Jews with stress in their souls considered themselves already dead.
8. If a person remains in a stress situation too long, all of his cognitive ability is destroyed, and he enters into a psychotic state.

People controlled by emotion and possessing false priorities easily succumb to fear when pressure occurs. If the Faith-rest drill or some other problem solving device is not used when we face difficult problems or pressures, the believer will easily enter into a state of fear. In a state of fear and stress, he cannot solve his problems rationally. Only the stable Christian with doctrine in his soul is able to handle the pressures of life and glorify God.

Strength in Faith, Weakness in Emotion

Now, after God had delivered the Jews, they sang beautifully praising him for their deliverance, but singing does not imply spiritual strength. These believers were not praising and singing because they respected and loved God. They were expressing their appreciation to God for delivering them. Their appreciation was based on their emotional relief from being delivered, not on their appreciation of the Lord. To these Jews the most important priority in their life was their safety, not a harmonious relationship with God. Praising God and singing hymns has meaning if one has a close relationship with God based on knowledge. However, if the believer is ignorant of God and His plan, his relationship with God will be related to emotion. An emotional relationship has no strength!

One can relate to a hymn cognitively or emotionally or both since a hymn contains both lyrics and melody. The purpose of the lyrics is to stimulate thought whereas the purpose of the melody is to stimulate one's emotion pleurably. If the believer understands and appreciates the lyrics of a hymn only then can he benefit from his singing and at the same time enjoy the melody. However, if the believer does not understand and appreciate the lyrics of a good hymn, his singing has no spiritual value and becomes a meaningless emotional activity related only to the melody.

“The Lord is my strength and song, and he has become my deliverance. This is my God, and I will praise him. My father's God; I will extol him.” (Ex. 15:2)

“The chiefs of Edom were dismayed; the leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.” (Ex. 15:15)

Three days after the Jews sang ‘the Lord is my strength’, they demonstrated that they had no spiritual strength at all for they immediately began complaining under the pressure of a simple test. Then one year later after singing about how confident they would be in combat, and how fearful the Edomites, Moabites and the inhabitants of Canaan would be of them, the Jewish army refused to enter the land and wept all night in their fear of the Canaanites! So, the Edomites, Moabites and the inhabitants of Canaan didn't need to worry about that generation of Jews for those men were to cowardly to fight their way into the land (Num. 14:1-11). You see, a believer can sing and praise God until he passes out from exhaustion, but all of this is meaningless unless that believer has strength in his soul from knowledge of God and a continuous fellowship with Him. These Jews produced sinful emotion on one side of the Red Sea and non-sinful emotion on the other side of the Sea. They swung from one end of the emotional spectrum (fear) to the other end (relief from being delivered). Only Moses had divine thought in his soul and true capacity to handle all situations in life. So when he sang, it had meaning. For the rest of the Jews singing was meaningless, because every time they had a pressure situation they would worry and fear about their safety and never even once considered God's provision and plan for their lives. So they continued to complain and complain until they died in the desert because the majority of these Jews never learned to apply the Word of God by faith to their experience.

“For we also have been evangelized as they had been [the Jews of the Exodus generation were believers], but the word they heard [after salvation] did not profit them, because those who heard it did not mix it [knowledge of the Word] with faith. For we who have believed [in the promises, principles and doctrines of God's word] enter into the rest [of contentment and tranquility from trusting in God].” (Heb. 4:2, 3)

Romans 5:5

Bible doctrine and Reciprocal love: The two column advance to spiritual maturity

Rom. 5:5 “And confidence does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out [circulated] in our hearts [streams of consciousness] by the personal agency of the Holy Spirit who was given to us for our benefit.”

Confidence is always related to knowledge. No one has confidence when he is in a state of ignorance. No one has confidence in a person unless he knows that person very well. First comes knowledge, second comes confidence. In this verse, confidence is based on our understanding of God’s eternal love for us. As the believer learns about God’s love and responds, he develops a reciprocal love for God. In this way, he gradually gains a confidence in God and in God’s plan.

As the believer advances in the spiritual life, he must advance with two columns. The first column is formed from his understanding of the principles and categories of doctrine found in Scripture. The second column is formed from his love for (appreciation, respect, obedience, devotion to) God. There must be the simultaneous advance of two columns - namely doctrine and reciprocal love.

Some Christians learn many doctrines of Scripture and may even learn of God’s love, but they never develop a love for God; they never walk by faith or appreciate God’s grace, develop divine standards and values, or try to please God in their motivation, thinking, decisions and actions. These Christians will eventually give-up under the pressures of punishment or testing. Only love for God provides the necessary motivation to carry one through the difficult times of punishment or testing. Other Christians appreciate their salvation and eternal security, the seeds of love, but they do not learn consistently from a prepared pastor. Thus, eventually their desire to love dissipates and is replaced by emotion or legalism. It takes two columns to advance spiritually. If the Christian attempts to advance with only one column, he will fail.

If the Christian learns from a qualified minister about God’s love for him in eternity past, he should be able to respond to that love with reciprocal love for Him. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

The Christian must understand God’s love of eternity past before he can develop a love for God. The Greek phrase ‘η αγαπε του θεου (*he agape tou theou*) can be translated as either “the love of God” or “the love for God”. Here it should be translated as “the love of God”. As the pastor communicates accurately about God’s love for the Christian in eternity past, the Holy Spirit fills the soul of the believer with an understanding and an appreciation of God’s love.

The Greek word εκχεω (*ekcheo* - translated here as “poured out” or “circulated”) is in the intensive perfect tense. The intensive perfect tense emphasizes the results of a completed action. The completed action is the believer’s spiritual growth and his understanding of God’s love for him in eternity past. This results in his love for God.

Who instructs the Christian regarding the subject of love? This is accomplished through the faithful ministry of God the Holy Spirit - “through the agency of the Holy Spirit.” A faithful and qualified pastor is the voice; the Holy Spirit is the teacher. As the pastor communicates information dealing with God’s love for us, the Holy Spirit teaches and circulates that information in our stream of consciousness. Under the filling of the Holy Spirit the believer respond to God’s love with a love for God.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit was given to us for our benefit by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek dative of advantage requires that we translate this last part as follows: “to us for our benefit.” One of the greatest benefits in life is the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit, because it enables us to obtain the greatest possible love for God.

Love for God is never disappointing

“And get to know the love of Christ which goes beyond [surpasses] academic knowledge [the Greek word γνωσις (*gnosis*)] that you may be filled [the filling of the Holy Spirit] resulting in all the fullness [of blessing] from the source of God. Now to Him [Father] who is able to do infinitely more than we could ask [in prayer] or think on the basis of the power [the two columns: doctrine and love] that keeps working in us for our benefit.” (Eph. 3:19, 20)

When the Christian learns about the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, from both Christ’s deity and his humanity, then under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit we can begin to love Christ. At this

point of spiritual development God the Father will give us things that are beyond our expectations or dreams.

“And we [the Christian who understands the love of God] know that to those who love God, He causes all things to work together for good [divine good] to those who are called according to his predetermined plan.” (Rom. 8:28)

This promise, which removes all disappointments of life, applies only to those believers who have a personal love for God. When the believer has a personal love for God, no person or situation in life is able to disappoint him because he has confidence in God’s promises to those who love Him.

Romance without capacity is disappointing

A strong desire to enter into a romantic relationship with people produces disappointment and frustration. Very few people are loved the way they want to be loved or treated the way they want to be treated. Let’s say two people in love get married. The wife expects her husband to love her always, and the husband expects his wife to respect and obey him consistently. Only two mature believers in fellowship can fulfill these expectations, but even mature believers are not always in fellowship. However, if one realizes that most Christians getting married are not mature believers, he can begin to understand the problem. They are both functioning under unrealistic expectations. Only God can love the believer in such a way as to completely fulfill all of the believer’s expectations.

What happens when Christians enter into romance without the two columns? What happens when the Christian is not loved or treated the way he wants to be treated by the opposite sex? Well, he develops the demand-syndrome (a demanding attitude and behavior). The wife demands love from her husband, and the husband demands respect and obedience from his wife. When these demands are not fulfilled, they become frustrated. From this frustration come bitterness, self pity and resentment. From resentment comes malice, and from malice comes revenge. Without a reciprocal love for God and doctrine in the soul, the Christian will fail in marriage or in any other relationship in life.

John 15:1-8 **Christian Production**

Children must learn correct thinking and motivation and be trained in humility in order to enjoy sports and to participate properly in them. So, parents must teach their children thoughtfulness, kindness, graciousness, appreciation, fairness and righteousness; must teach their children to control their emotions through correct and rational thinking, and must train their children to be obedient and respectful not only to them, but also toward all legitimate authorities. They must not permit their children to function under anger, hatred, bitterness, worry, fear, self pity or self-interest. Children must be taught to be motivated by what is right and fair and to fulfill their responsibilities in life. Only when children have been inculcated with correct thinking; have acquired humility, and are properly motivated are they then prepared to enter into sports.

Just as children must be taught properly before they are able to enjoy and properly participate in sports, so the Christian must learn the spiritual life and develop a rapport with God before he is able to properly participate in Christian service*. This does not mean that a baby Christian in fellowship cannot witness to his loved ones and friends, but it does mean that he must grow up spiritually before he becomes too involved in Christian service. If he does not grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he will not be properly motivated (2 Pet. 3:18, 2 Tim. 3:16-17). If the Christian is improperly motivated and out of fellowship, his Christian service is meaningless dead works (1 Cor. 13:2-3). Thus, John teaches that the Christian must be connected to the vine (must be in fellowship with Holy Spirit and have rapport with the Lord Jesus Christ) if he is going to produce fruit.

John 15:1 “I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser.”

In this metaphor Jesus Christ in hypostatic union is the vine and as such is the key to the production of fruit. God the Father is the vinedresser, the owner and manager of the vineyard. As the vinedresser, God the Father is the author of the plan for the believers of the Church Age.

God the Father designed a plan which focuses on reciprocal love. God loved us in eternity past; we must learn about that love and reciprocate that love, love him in turn. Not only did the Son of God love us in eternity past and do many things for us, but as the God-man

he also loved us and provided many more wonderful things for us. Without appreciation and love for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian can only produce dead works from his deeds and service. If the Christian is going to produce fruit, he must have a harmonious relationship with the vine.

15:2 “Every branch in me [in union with Christ] that does not produce fruit, he [the Father as the vinedresser] lifts him up [warning and intensive discipline] and takes him away [dying discipline], but every branch which bears fruit, he prunes it [underserved suffering] that it may produce more fruit.”

Although all Christians are eternally in union with the Lord Jesus Christ, not all Christians produce fruit. If the Christian does not remain in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and grow spiritually, he cannot produce fruit. If he does not produce fruit, he will be disciplined by God. The Greek word *αίρω* (*aireo*) means “to lift up and take away” and is usually translated “to remove”. “Lift up” is a reference to divine discipline for the believer who refuses to stay in fellowship in order to learn God’s plan. Obviously, if the believer does not learn God’s plan, he will not be able to execute God’s plan. If he does not execute the plan, he will be punished. If the believer does not respond to this discipline, he will be taken out of this earth through some method of death (1 John. 5:16). Even though this Christian dies in disgrace, he will go to heaven after his death for no Christian has the power to destroy his salvation.

The growing Christian must be pruned. By analogy in order to produce a beautiful clay vessel, the vessel must be placed in a kiln. It takes extremely hot temperature to produce a beautiful vessel. So it is with the believer. No believer becomes great without a lot of pressure. As the Christian advances in the spiritual life, God will provide for that believer some undeserved suffering. In the metaphor, this would be analogous to the vinedresser pruning the productive branches. If the vinedresser did not prune the productive branches, they would become less and less productive. If the advancing believer did not receive undeserved suffering occasionally, he would become distracted and arrogant. He cannot continue his advance without pressure.

15:3 “You are already clean [cleansing of all pre-salvation sins and wrong doing] because of the Word [gospel] which I have communicated [the perfect tense indicates that as a result of the gospel, they believed] to you.”

In Isaiah 43:25 it states, “I even I am he who blotted out your transgressions and will not remember your sins.” Since all your pre-salvation sins were forgiven at the moment of your salvation, there should be no guilt regarding your pre-salvation sins. Therefore, nothing in your life before you were saved should be a hindrance to the production of divine good after salvation.

15:4 “Remain in association with me [fellowship and love for Christ], and I in you [the thinking of Christ in your soul]. Just as the branch is not able to bear fruit from itself if it does not remain in the vine so, also you are not [able to bear fruit] if you do not remain in association [fellowship] with me [motivated by ones love for the Lord].”

There is no fruit-bearing without being filled with the Holy Spirit and without learning the spiritual life. Learning one’s spiritual life leads to loving the members of the Trinity which is the objective of the spiritual life. Christians who never learn the spiritual life may produce a lot of deeds, but these deeds are always dead works.

If the Christian (the branch) is not in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and is not learning the thoughts of Christ (broken off from the vine), he cannot produce divine good. In order to produce fruit the Christian must be dependant upon two powers namely the Filling of the Spirit and the Power of the Word of God. If the Christian operates on human power, he will produce only dead works.

15:5 “I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who remains in association with me [fellowship with the Lord through the Filling of the Spirit], also I in him [the thinking of Jesus Christ in the believer’s soul resulting in a love for God], bears much fruit because without me [the thinking of the Lord], he is unable to do anything.”

Jesus Christ is the vine. Just as the branch is sustained by food from the vine, so we must be sustained by learning the thoughts of Jesus Christ through the Filling Ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ in his humanity spent 30 years learning and developing his spiritual life (Luke 2:52). Only then did he begin his three year ministry. Spiritual growth must precede service and good deeds or any other divine production. If the Christians enters into Christian service without understanding the spiritual life and without a love for the God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, his Christian service and deeds will be dead works. Only the Christian who advances spiritually through perception of God’s word and develops a love for

God is able to bear fruit. Without the thinking of Jesus Christ in our souls, we cannot have a spiritual life. Without the spiritual life which Jesus Christ gave to us, we are not able to bear any fruit at all.

15:6 “If [maybe the believer will and maybe he won’t] anyone does not remain in association [in fellowship] with me [the believer fails to be motivated by his respect and love for the Lord], he is thrown away like a branch [divine discipline in three categories: warning, intensive and dying discipline] and dries up [no spiritual life only dead works]. They [elect angels] will gather them [the dried up branches representing dead works] and throw them into fire and, they [the dead works] will be burned.”

There are two types of branches in this metaphor, the healthy and the dead. The healthy branch produces fruit whereas the dead branch represents dead works. One has to realize that not all metaphors fit their messages perfectly. So, in this metaphor, the branch represents both the believer and his dead works. However, when the branches are burned, it is not referring to the believer, but only to his dead works. A believer is never burned. Even Paul explained very clearly that only a believer’s dead works are burned, but not the believer.

“Now if any man [the Christian] builds upon the foundation [salvation through Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones [great production through loving God and sharing his happiness], wood, hay, straw [deeds and Christian service while out of fellowship = dead works], each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it [Jesus Christ will evaluate each believer’s life after the rapture], because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work [fruit or divine good] which he has built remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work [dead works] is burned up, he shall suffer loss [of rewards]; but he himself shall be saved [delivered to heaven], yet as through fire [all of his pseudo production is burned].” (1 Cor. 3:12-15)

Do you want to hear something humorous? Since some Christians do not correctly understand the metaphor in John 15, they think that the believer who does not produce good works is thrown into fire and burned-up. Can you even imagine the stupidity of this? All believers are evaluated in their resurrection bodies (Rom. 14:10-12). In a resurrection body, even if a Christian stood in fire for ten years he

would not burn-up. The resurrection body cannot be destroyed or corrupted in any way. As a matter of fact, not even the unbeliever in his eternal body burns up in the Lake of Fire; he suffers immensely, but his body is not destroyed by fire. How do you think the unbeliever is able to survive trillions of years in the Lake of Fire?

15:7 “If you remain in association [fellowship] with me [maintain ones love for the Lord], and my word abides in you [the Lord’s thinking in the believer’s soul], whatever you wish, ask [in prayer] and it will come to pass for you.”

In this verse we see prayer being used as an example of fruit bearing. The Greek word *εαν* (*ean* - meaning ‘if’) introduces a clause that depends upon the status of the Christian. If the Christian develops an appreciation and respect for the Lord and so is motivated by his love for the Lord in everything he does, then he may ask for anything in prayer and that prayer will be answered. This prayer promise is not given to just any believer, but to the believer who loves the Lord. This is the mature believer. The mature believer is not silly. Therefore, he doesn’t wish or ask for silly things. The mature believer has correct norms and standards, correct motivation and priorities. So, he can be trusted with this promise.

15:8 “My father is glorified by this that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.”

When the Christian is in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit and is motivated by his love for the Lord then whatever he does is fruit. There is the obvious fruit which everyone can see such as Christian service and good deeds. However, there is also a vast area of production which is invisible. Let me just present a few examples. If a wife obeys her husband because he loves the Lord, if a student studies hard to please the Lord, if a husband forgives his wife for some failure because of his application of the grace of God, then this is production. Fruit comes from believers walking by faith, forgiving others in grace, suffering but never complaining because of their respect for the Lord. Fruit whether it is visible or invisible must be properly motivated under the Filling of the Spirit.

Matthew 7:1-2 Judging

Matthew 7:1 “Stop judging [*κρινω* (*krino*)] so that you will not be judged [not receive triple discipline from God].”

The Greek word *krino* when used of people means to judge, criticize, gossip, malign and slander. No Christian has a right to critically evaluate another Christian unless they are in some position of authority which requires their doing so. This verse has been written in the imperative of prohibition which means we must translate the verb with the meaning ‘to stop doing something you are doing’. The durative present is an action which began in the past and continues into the present. These believers began judging other believers in the past and are continuing to do so in the present. So, they are commanded to stop.

Let’s say that a certain believer is sinning. Now, who handles believers that are out of fellowship? Of course, the Lord disciplines believers who are out of fellowship - and he does not need any help!

In verse two we will see that the Christian who judges another person will be disciplined for three sins. First, he will be punished for judging. Second, any Christian who judges another person has to be arrogant. So he will be punished for arrogance. Third, as we will soon see, the believer will be punished for the sin that he mentions regarding another person.

Not only does the Christian receive triple discipline when he judges, but also at the same time he makes himself miserable under the natural law of self induced misery. Every time the believer sins and gets out of fellowship, he makes himself unhappy because every sin has within it a certain amount of misery naturally. So, when a person sins, he naturally makes himself unhappy. This is not divine discipline, but rather the believer in effect punishes himself.

Please note the following statement carefully: Whenever we say that a person is being disciplined by God for a certain sin, we mean that the person is being disciplined for the consequences of that sin. No believer is punished by God for the actual sin itself because every sin has already been judged on the cross: “and he himself bore our sins on his body” (1 Pet. 2:24a). The Justice of God does not punish two people for the same sin. In eternity past, the righteousness of God demanded that every sin in human history be punished. At the cross the Father punished the human nature of Jesus Christ for every sin. This completely satisfied his perfect righteousness. Therefore, his

righteousness does not punish anyone else. No one is punished for their sins.

So why do unbelievers and believers receive punishment? God punishes the unbeliever that he might follow the rules regarding his individual responsibilities, his responsibilities in marriage, family and in his nation. God punishes the failing believer that he might get back in fellowship and continue his advance to spiritual maturity. All punishment is designed to help the one being punished and to discourage others who see this punishment from doing the same.

Furthermore, God always punishes the believer from the source of his love. Because God loves every believer with infinite love, he will do everything in his power to motivate the believer to complete the spiritual life.

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, ‘My son [the believer], do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint [become discouraged and react] when you are reprovved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves [believers] He disciplines and He scourges [severe discipline] every son whom He receives.’ It is because of discipline that you endure [the believer becomes strong through discipline]; God deals with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers [all believers receive discipline], then you are illegitimate children [unbelievers] and not sons.” (Heb. 12:5-8)

7:2 “For by what judgment [slander, gossip, maligning] you judge, you will be judged [punished for slander, gossip, maligning], and by what measure you measure it out [the sin you mention regarding another], it will be measured back to you [you will be punished for the other person’s sin which you mentioned].”

Every verbal sin is motivated by some mental sin of arrogance. For example anger, hatred, jealousy, and self righteousness all motivate verbal sins. A person full of hatred may want to slander; a jealous person may want to malign his rival; a self righteous person may want to gossip or criticize another believer. All verbal sins are motivated by some mental sin.

Any verbal sin will produce quadruple punishment. Let's illustrate using Christian A and B. Christian A hates Christian B so he slanders B by spreading the rumor that B is unfaithful to his wife. Thus A will receive *four* punishments:

1. He is punished for hatred.
2. He is punished for slander.
3. He is punished for adultery - the sin he mentioned regarding B: "by what measure you measure it out, it will be measured back to you".
4. He will be punished by the law of self induced misery.

This explains why Christians who like to gossip in a Church have a hard time. Almost every Church has some old woman or man who is a skilled gossip. These Christians claim to be so perfect that they have a right to judge and to gossip about others. These believers are loaded down with self-righteous arrogance. If self-righteousness had weight, they wouldn't be able to walk. Yet, these self-righteous Christians portray themselves as great believers. These believers consider their suffering to be undeserved when in reality they are under triple discipline from the Lord combined with their own self induced misery.

One has to realize that God is fair. Let's say that some person fornicates. Now, the discipline related to the sin of fornication is severe. Also keep in mind that God doesn't need any help in disciplining that person. However, let's assume that you decide to help God in punishing this individual through gossip. God's justice says that this is unfair. So, God gives you the punishment that he was giving to the fornicator since the fornicator is now being punished by your gossip.

Some times the gossip maligns a person who is innocent. In that case, God will provide extra blessing to the victim of gossip. One must always keep in mind that God is perfectly fair to every person. Therefore if a believer is causing extra suffering to another believer, God must balance it out with extra blessing. This is the justice of God.

Fellowship with God Conclusion

The spiritual life which gives us fellowship with God relies on two co-dependant factors: Bible doctrine in the soul, and the filling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes the doctrine that we have stored in our soul and enables us to recall that doctrine in every aspect of decision making and volitional thought – in other words they are both necessary to guide our thought, so that our thinking may conform with God's thinking, and that our actions may glorify Him. This is fellowship with God.

Bible Doctrine teaches us about the character of God and his love for us. God's love is not emotional, but is a virtue (agape) love composed of His righteousness, justice, grace, and omniscience. Fellowship with God requires appreciation of these aspects / components of God's love (essentially the character of God) – an appreciation that will be outwardly expressed by constantly meditating on God, acquiring experiential righteousness, and demonstrating God's grace to others. Notice that these expressions of Love are all based on thought (Bible doctrine in the soul), *not* emotions.

Emotions are designed to be an outward expression of what is in the soul; or, to enable man to appreciate and respond to what is in the soul. However, if emotions are allowed to dominate the soul (thinking) any resulting speech or action becomes irrational. Emotion may also be described as a feeling function. If how you feel becomes the criterion for your life, you will never be able to execute God's plan as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In a worship service where the worship-leader prays excitedly to a background of adrenalin pumping music and in front of a mass of weeping people, the participant is most likely to 'feel' that he is having a spiritual experience. In this kind of situation even an unbeliever may feel he is having a spiritual experience. The reality is that they are overcome with emotion, and in the case of the believer his worship of God will be based on his emotions rather than Bible doctrine in the soul and the filling of the Holy Spirit (John 4:24).

A believer who allows his thinking to be influenced by his emotions will also fail in Christian service because he will be motivated to serve God by a desire to 'feel' fulfilled, to receive the approbation of others, or is possibly trying to relieve the guilt of a particular sin. If the Christian serves God from emotional desire, rather than an appreciation of the character of God and His personal love for the individual believer, his works count for nothing, and he is considered a failure in

the spiritual life. The emotional believer will also fail in times of testing, where he needs to be thinking Bible Doctrine under the filling of the Holy Spirit to have victory over Satan, the world, and/or his own fleshly desires. If emotions are influencing the soul the believer will use his volition to gratify his own desires, rather than to do the will of God.

It is crucial for the Christian to develop a love for God which results from growing in the grace and knowledge of God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ. To achieve this, the believer must focus his life around constantly learning and applying Bible doctrine while under the filling of the Holy Spirit. To sustain the filling of the Holy Spirit the believer must continue to maintain purity of the soul. In his grace God has provided all believers with a procedure to get back into fellowship again – if we sin we must acknowledge our guilt and state our sin before God the Father, so that we may be cleansed to regain the filling of the Holy Spirit - and continued fellowship with God.

Glossary

Bible Doctrine : Bible doctrine is all the material related to a given Biblical subject. When the pastor-teacher imparts correctly interpreted Bible doctrine to the student filled with the Holy Spirit, that doctrine then becomes metabolized in his soul and ready for application to his spiritual life.

Christian Service : At the moment of salvation every believer enters into fulltime Christian service. The phrase “fulltime Christian service” does not imply the narrow view of having to be a pastor, evangelist, missionary, or a person involved in some kind of Christian service organization. Fulltime Christian service means execution of the plan of God for the Church. In doing so the Christian may perform Christian service through five categories of service, as follows:

1: Christian service related to ones spiritual gift such as the gift of helps, evangelist, pastor-teacher.

2: Christian service related to ones priesthood, such as prayer.

3: Christian service related to ones royal ambassadorship, such as evangelizing.

4: Christian service related to invisible impact, such as the “blessing by association” that is received by people associated with the mature believer.

5: Christian service related to the laws of divine establishment such as paying taxes, voting, and military service.

Filling of the Holy Spirit : Under the filling of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit provides the power that the Christian may understand, metabolize, retain, recall, and apply the Word of God. Under this ministry, the Holy Spirit is our mentor - our authority, encourager, advisor and teacher.

Sin Nature : The sin nature is an integral part of every human being and resides in the cell-structure of the human body. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength producing pseudo good; an area of weakness producing sin; trends towards moral degeneracy (legalism) and immoral degeneracy, and lust patterns.

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