

Foundation of Faith

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ 1 Cor. 3:11



Summer 2010

God's Holiness and the Christian p 3

What the Church Needs Most p 6

Sanctification p 9

Significance of the Holy Spirit p 11

To Be Like Him p 15

Too Busy to Care? p 22

Summer here in Canada is a wonderful time! The flowers bloom and the gardens flourish as the Lord provides the warm sunshine and summer rains. And just as the Lord provides for the land, He also provides for our spiritual refreshment through the presence of His Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit is welcomed by His people, revival often breaks out. I will never forget the time in Mexico when my wife and I experienced God's grace extended to school children after some evangelical services. It was a truly amazing and refreshing experience from the Lord! This experience emphasized to me that it is never too early to hear and understand the message of the Gospel.

To fully experience the Christian life, we need to surrender our will and everything we have to Christ. The Bible teaches a second work of grace called sanctification, and it is explained by Pastor Taron in this issue. Dear reader, this is available to you as well! With the fullness of God's Spirit in us, our lives will become more satisfying and we will be more useful in His Kingdom.

Clearly, as Brother Heffren explains in his article, the Church of God needs its members—you and me, dear believer—to be filled with God's Spirit and His Word!

This issue focuses on the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit—the third person of the Godhead—desires to fill His people with His power to lead holy and God-pleasing lives.

In an article written by the late Brother Dale Oldham, he expresses what is also my heart's desire—to know Him more and more. My wish is that every reader experiences the same yearning for a more intimate relationship with Jesus.

Wishing you a blessed and Spirit-filled summer.

Pastor Harry Klinger

Foundation of Faith is a quarterly publication produced under the auspices of the Canadian Mission Board of the Church of God.

For more information, please refer to our website:

www.thechurchofgod.cc

All inquiries may be directed to:

Pastor Harry Klinger

Foundation of Faith

265 Bowman St.

Hamilton ON, Canada L8S 2T4.

Editors: Harry Klinger, Marlene Dotzlaw

Design and layout: Marlene Dotzlaw

Artwork: Helen Holz

Cover: MJD

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Any use of these articles, except for personal or small group studies, requires the written permission of the editor.

Any mention of research sources is for information only, it does not imply our recommendation or endorsement of the entire resource.

Printed by Christian Unity Press,

York, Nebraska 68467 U.S.A.

Copyright © 2010

God's Holiness and the Christian

 In the last book of the Bible we read, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty” (Rev. 4.8). Among God’s many attributes is His holiness.

The Scriptures first use the word “holy” when Moses meets God on Mount Horeb. Speaking to Moses from the burning bush, God commands him to remove his sandals because the place he is standing on is “holy ground” (Ex. 3.5). Later, after having redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage, God assembles the people at Mount Sinai and declares, “I am holy” (Lev. 11.44). What does it mean for God to be holy, exactly? The answer to this question is important because it will lead the Christian to a deeper understanding of God. It is also important for another reason: God expects His people to be holy. The apostle Peter says, “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, because it is written, ‘*Be holy, for I am holy*’” (1 Peter 1.15, 16). God Himself has attested to His holiness. God has called us to that same holiness!

The dictionary informs us that something holy is something sacred; that is, something set apart from what is common. Our God is holy in that He alone is the God of the universe and there is no other god beside Him. In His grace and mercy, God gave the nation of Israel laws—Peter calls them **holy commandments** (2 Pet. 2.21) to help them remember His holiness. He also consecrated a tribe from among them

that served Him exclusively in the tabernacle. The tabernacle itself was consecrated exclusively for the worship of God. It was a holy place, filled with articles that were set apart for no other use than for the service of the tabernacle. The effect upon the Israelite was a deep reverence for God. Because God was holy, sacred, exalted, and above all others, His being, His name, His place of worship, His day, indeed, all that belonged to Him, were to be deeply respected.

We see this sacred element of God's holiness transferred upon

that is separate from and high above what is common.

A further definition of holiness comes from events at Mount Sinai. God had given the children of Israel laws governing purity. They were not to defile themselves; they were to keep themselves pure. Remedial measures were prescribed for regaining lost purity. It is in this context that God states, "You shall be holy; for I *am* holy" (Lev. 11.44)! Holiness is purity. The children of Israel were to guard themselves in every aspect of life against defilement because, as God's people, they were a holy people. Sin defiles. God's claim to holiness is a claim to complete purity from sin, error, and wickedness. Sin cannot abide in the presence of God because He is holy. Adam and Eve were cast out from the holy presence of God because of the impurity of their sin. Only because of His unfathomable love, God sent His dear Son Jesus to earth to be robed in flesh, to lead a sinless life, to take upon Himself the sins of all mankind, and to suffer the punishment of sin on the cross of Calvary. Now, when a person comes to God in repentance

God expects us to obey His commandment to be holy.

everything that is of God. The Bible speaks of the "Holy Spirit," "holy prophets," "the Holy Scriptures," and, referring to the Church, "holy temple," "holy brethren," and "holy nation." The idea is that just as a holy God is set apart and high above what is common, so are those holy things that are of God. Thus, when Peter exhorts the Christian to "holy conduct," it is conduct

and faith, his sin is removed from him and he may once again enter into the holy presence of God: “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10.19–22). What amazing grace! What loving condescension!

We may say then that God’s holiness has at least a two-fold implication for the Christian: First, God must be honored as a holy God. The greatest reverence, awe, and piety should be given to our holy God. The greatest respect, adoration, and partiality should be given to His sacred name, His sacred word, and His sacred church. There is nothing common, casual, or ordinary about our God. He and His things are sacred. The prevailing attitude toward God in Christianity today has secularized and caricatured His image in the

eyes of the unbelieving world. Let us seek, in our homes and our worship services, to restore the sense of God’s holiness in the heart of every visitor. Our very best, our most cherished, our most vital should be reserved for the sacred things of God.

Second, the Christian’s conduct must be holy. Peter’s exhortation is “not conforming yourselves to former lusts, as in your ignorance,” but to “conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* with fear” (1 Peter 1:14, 17).

God expects us to obey His commandment to be holy. Thankfully, He has made provision for our sanctification so that this commandment can be obeyed. Are you giving practical evidence of holiness in your everyday conduct? Truly, it is by a pure and holy life that the Christian most effectively promotes God’s holiness!

Pastor Friesen and his wife Karolyn live with their four young children in the community of Barrhead, Alberta, where they pastor a Church of God congregation.

What the Church Needs Most

 Acts 1.1-11 tells of Jesus' instruction to the fledgling church to wait for the Holy Spirit. Verse 11 asks the question, "Why do you stand gazing up into heaven?" While there is an easy answer to the question, there is no easy answer to the facts surrounding it. There is no easy answer to any major question and there is no easy answer to the question of what the church needs. Men have felt they had the answer, left communions and started major reformations, only to see them deteriorate in turn causing other people to become dissatisfied and leave looking for growth and deeper life.

It is not difficult to preach an ideal for the church: it is difficult to tell how to live it and put it into practice. Each one in the church can do only according to his talent and vision. No one person has all the gifts.

Answers are not easy. There is a price to pay. Waiting on God takes struggle and sacrifice.

Jesus put priority on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was new. There had been nothing else like Him. When He came it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: "I will pour out My Spirit . . . your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2.28). It was the ful-

fillment of Ezekiel's river of life flowing out. The Holy Spirit is the spring to which Jesus referred—a well springing up to everlasting life.

What is the evidence of a Spirit-filled life? What difference does He make?

In Acts 1.8 we are told that He will make us witnesses. The word “witness” comes from the same Greek root as the word “martyr.” The early apostles witnessed with that conviction.

When we are Spirit-filled we want to glorify the Lord. Many today want Him to glorify us, to make us powerful, healthy, joyful. That is the wrong way. He comes to glorify Christ. We do not possess Him like a coin in our pocket, but like a current in our wire. When the switch is closed, power goes through us, not to us.

Paul admits to his own weakness, but he was mighty in Christ. If we search for power to make us strong and feeling victorious, we are still weak.

We need to exercise the power available to us and for the purpose it is given. We would see more power in our midst if we remembered that its purpose is to glorify Christ.

The person filled with the Spirit will love. The early church loved each other. Can it be said of us? Can we bear each other's burdens? Can we cover faults and love a person enough to help him over them? (We are not asked to condone or sanction the fault, but to love the person.)

We would see more power in our midst if we remembered that its purpose is to glorify Christ.

The love of the Holy Spirit is selfless. It is natural to want to be loved.

But we shall never get enough love until we learn how to give love, the supernatural love. Christ loved us while we were His enemies. He loved the church and made it His bride. This love must fill the church in all its doings.

As the church is filled with the Holy Spirit it will be cleansed as with fire. It is not easy to submit to fire, but it is part of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah gives us the picture of a refiner skimming away the dross to get the pure gold. When Jesus sees His image clearly in us, He has done His work. There is no easy way.

The church needs the Spirit-filled life. Jesus put a premium on it. He warned disciples not to leave without it. It is freely available and desirable. Why don't we see more of it?

People will claim salvation and give up sins, but it seems more difficult to give up self. Often something holds us back even though God's plan is perfect and for our good. We want to get away from sin and guilt, but not from self.

In Acts 5.32 we are told that we get the Holy Spirit when we obey. That is a difficult word. We want to reserve portions. Many things we want to manage ourselves. Trouble results. Our reservations quench the Spirit and prevent Him from controlling us. In order to get our self and

reservations out of the way and truly have the Spirit-filled life, we must die. Paul said "I am crucified . . ." Gal. 2.20. Dying is hard. We avoid it in the natural and in the spiritual life. But dying is the price for the Holy Spirit to live through us.

The church needs men and women filled with the Holy Spirit. There are no expendables in the kingdom of God. Each one is essential and the resulting gifts are essential to the church. We need in the church more than anything else the filling of the Holy Spirit with the resultant cleansing, guiding, gifting, witnessing and glorifying of Christ. As part of His church, are you filled with His Spirit?

Reprinted with the kind permission of Gladys Krueger (nee Heffren) on behalf of her late father, H.C. Heffren.

The Experience of Sanctification

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”
Hebrews 13.12

Experiencing sanctification is one of the most rewarding and essential needs of a Christian’s life. Sadly, many will never seek to experience it, even though Jesus gave His blood that they might be sanctified.

Because the doctrine of sanctification has become so neglected and even rejected, let us briefly consider this wonderful work of God.

1. What is Sanctification?

To sanctify is to cleanse, to purify, to make holy, and to separate or consecrate for holy use. In practical terms, it is a definite experience subsequent to conversion which includes a complete consecration to the service and will of God and a dying to self. Complementing the experience of justification, it is a cleansing of the sinful nature to achieve a restoration to moral perfection and holiness, as well as an infilling with (or baptism of) the Holy Spirit of God.

This was clearly taught and experienced by the Apostles: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12.1); “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and

may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5.23).

Many Scripture references testify to the fact that the early Christians experienced entire sanctification. For example, in 1 Corinthians 6.11, we read, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

When Peter gave his report about the experience of the Samaritans to the Jerusalem council, he testified: “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, . . . purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15.8-9). See also Acts 8.15-17.

God’s requirement is “You must be holy, for I am holy” and the power in His plan of salvation to purify man completely

and make him holy is as limitless as the Savior Himself!

2. Why is Sanctification Necessary?

Man was created in the moral image of God. After Adam's fall into sin, all his offspring were born with a fallen, sinful nature from which they could not save themselves. When Jesus cried out on the cross "It is finished," He had completed the perfect plan of salvation which includes forgiveness of sin in justification, cleansing of the nature in sanctification, and the ultimate salvation of the body at His return.

Not only does sanctification purify the sinful nature and make it holy, but it also empowers one to live a victorious and sin-free life, as the Holy Spirit fills and takes complete ownership of the vessel consecrated to Him. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6.19). See also Acts 1.8, 4.31, Romans 15.15-16.

3. Experiencing Sanctification

Sanctification is a work of God, which He works in the heart of believers through "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive" (John 14.17). It is a definite experience that must be prayed down from God just as justification is.

A Christian, tired of the constant struggle with "self" and the flesh, with

pride, ego, and wounded feelings, an ongoing cycle of repenting and falling, will come to the realization that God has more in store for His children. Oh, that every Christian would seek this experience!

Sanctification is conditional upon our consecration. "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12.1). It requires our prayer. Jesus says, "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11.13). Sanctification is experienced by faith—believing that God will honor His word and sanctify us if we humbly ask Him.

Have you experienced sanctification, down to the very depth of your being? Does the Holy Spirit have complete control of your life? If you desire a life of victory, filled with the glory of God, then seek it today. What a difference this experience made in my life! I can testify from personal experience that this is the only life which truly satisfies! "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4.3).

Pastor Ron Taron and his wife Bettina, with their four children, currently serve the congregation of the Church of God in Steinbach, Manitoba.

Significance of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the divine Trinity. The best place to learn of Him is in John 15 and 16, for it is there that Jesus Christ tells of Him. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will “convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16.8). “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come” (vs. 13).

The word “holy” means pure, morally and spiritually perfect, sinless; it also means consecrated. That the Holy Spirit is a person is seen by the Scriptures, which show that He has will (I Cor. 12.11), intelligence (Rom. 8.27), knowledge (I Cor. 2.10-12), power (Acts 1.8), and capacity for love (Rom. 15.30). In Acts 5.3-4, the Holy Spirit is called God. In Psalm 139.7-10 He is shown to be omnipresent, or in all places. John 14.26 teaches that He knows all things—has the attribute of omniscience. He is eternal with the Father and the Son, as shown by Hebrews 9.14.

I dare say we all have been touched at times with the pathos of longing expressed in these words from a little hymn:

I think when I read the
sweet story of old,

When Jesus was
here among men,

How He called little children
as lambs to His fold,

I should like to have
been with them then.

Wonderful as it was to be here when Jesus was on earth and to see Him perform His mighty deeds and to hear His marvelous words, Jesus

told His followers that it would be better when the Holy Spirit came than when He was here in the flesh (John 16.7). Great as was the need for the Apostles to go out and tell everybody about the resurrection of Jesus as soon as they knew it, Jesus told them that the need of waiting in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came was even greater. We can see, then, the importance and the significance which Jesus attached to the Holy Spirit (Luke 24.49).

Why did our Savior emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit? Following are some of the things the Holy Spirit does.

1. He Convicts. It is the Holy Spirit who awakens slumbering souls to a sense of sin and constrains them to ask God for pardon. Without conviction no one would realize his need of salvation (John 16.8-11).

2. He Bears Witness to Our Salvation (Rom. 8.16). It is the Holy Spirit who causes us to know when God accepts us into His family. This assurance banishes all doubt and fear and restores communion between God and us.

3. He Regenerates. “Regenerate” means to renew the heart of and cause to turn to the love of God. That is what takes place when one is born again, and it is the Holy Spirit who effects the new birth (John 3.3, 5). This is the most important transaction in the New Testament so far as God and man are concerned. To be “born again,” or “born from above,” is the purpose of the whole plan of Salvation. It is the beginning of spiritual life, and this life is brought about by the Holy Spirit.

4. He Guides (John 16.13). There is a difference between a guide and a guidepost or a map. A guide goes right with us. That is what the Holy Spirit has promised to each one who believes on Christ.

5. He Fills, or Baptizes (Eph. 5.18; Acts 1.8). The importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit cannot be exaggerated. However, this experience is often misunderstood, and so we shall note some of the things which accompany a Spirit-filled life. The Bible stresses the manifestations and the demonstration of the Spirit more than the experience. The reason for this is clear: we can

see a demonstration, but we have to be told about an experience. (Read I Cor. 2.4 and 12.7.)

6. He Glorifies Christ. “He shall glorify me” (John 16.14). The first manifestation of a Spirit-filled life is the pre-eminence given to Christ. A selfish person thinks of self first, and even tries to “use” the Spirit of God to exalt himself. A Spirit-filled person is “used” by the Spirit, and the interests of the kingdom of God predominate.

7. He Translates or Interprets. “He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16.14). We would never be able to understand or appropriate the work of Christ unless the Holy Spirit imparted the knowledge to our own hearts. The unbeliever cannot comprehend the mystery of Calvary; indeed, it appears to be foolishness until the Holy Spirit reveals the purpose of it (I Cor. 2.14-16).

8. He Imparts Gifts (I Cor. 12.3-11). You will observe how various gifts are dispensed according to the all-wise determination of the Spirit. We should seek to use our gifts fully and always for the glory of Christ. In seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we should always be in an

attitude to receive whatever gift he may wish to impart.

9. He Helps Our Prayer Life (Rom. 8.26-27). Spirit-filled men are men of prayer, and their prayers are effectual because the Holy Spirit interprets their hearts desires to God, and God hears. Many people just “say their prayers,” but such prayers do not move God. Praying in the Spirit (Eph. 6.18) is the kind of praying that brings an answer. You will notice that Romans 8.26 reveals the love the Holy Spirit bears toward honest seekers.

10. He Blesses Our Work for Christ. Acts 2.41 tells of three thousand persons coming to Christ—the result of one sermon preached by Peter, who was filled with the Holy Spirit. So many lives are barren of spiritual power because they try to perform supernatural deeds in their own strength instead of depending entirely upon the Holy Spirit. It is not an easy lesson, but we must learn it if we are ever to accomplish anything worthwhile for God.

11. He Warns Us of Spiritual Dangers and Pitfalls (Isaiah 30.21). If you listen, the Spirit will admonish you when you leave the right path. The same idea is

contained in John 16.8: “He will reprove [“convince,”] . . . of righteousness.” If we always hearken to the inner voice, it will save us from many snares of the evil one and lead us in the right path.

12. He Inspires. It was the influence of the Holy Spirit that made it possible for the writers of the Bible to prophesy and to reveal many truths impossible of discovery through natural means. It is also He who enables true gospel workers to witness to the saving truth of the gospel of Christ.

Because the influence of the Holy Spirit is so necessary to our success in living the Christian life, God has given us three warnings:

1. We must not resist Him (Acts 7.51). People who resist conviction and refuse to yield to God resist the Holy Spirit just as much as do those who oppose the gospel of Christ. It is a dangerous thing to do.

2. We are warned not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4.30). You can grieve only one you love or one who loves you. Every wrong deed, motive, or passion grieves the Holy Spirit, and he seeks to give us victory over all wickedness.

3. We are commanded not to quench the Holy Spirit (I Thess. 5.19). That is, we must not obstruct or impede his work. Spiritual life is very sensitive; even an impure thought impairs it. A bad, uncontrolled temper kills it, and an unruly tongue ruins its influence.

The person who is filled with the Holy Spirit will manifest the same characteristics that the Holy Spirit has, namely, holiness of life, purity, sinlessness, unselfishness, and Christlikeness. If you remember how Jesus cleansed the Temple by driving out every unclean, sinful thing, you will have some idea of his attitude toward sin in one’s heart. The heart is now the temple of God (I Cor. 3.16), and the Holy Spirit must cleanse it in order to dwell there.

Perhaps it is somewhat mystifying to think of the Spirit being in your heart, and of how you can be yielded to him. But if you are yielded to the Spirit of God and are filled with that Spirit, a new element transforms your life, and it has a different effect on everyone with whom you come in contact.

Reprinted with the kind permission of Gladys Krueger (nee Heffren) on behalf of her late father, H.C. Heffren.

To Be Like Him

by Dale Oldham

 One primary aim of devotion and divine aspiration is personal godliness—to be like Christ. Is this possible or has God created us with a tormenting hunger and thirst for righteousness only to turn us away unsatisfied?

Jesus prayed, “And this is eternal life, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17.3). And in John 14.9 we find Jesus saying to Philip, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” So if we can know Jesus, we can also know the Father. Yet **to really know Jesus, one must become like Him.**

Are we willing to discipline our lives, to pay whatever cost is involved in becoming like our Lord? Would we be like Him in personal purity—this man of whom it was said, He “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1 Pet. 2.22)? Peter said we were to follow in His steps.

We are not like Christ if we are still servants of evil and unrighteousness. Impurity and ungodliness separate us from fellowship with Christ. Can we hope to be like Him if our religion is like that of the Pharisees, outwardly respectable but inwardly self-seeking and even depraved? “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5.8). Purity is a basic ingredient—a necessity—if you would draw closer to God. And, second, the only road which can possibly lead to thrilling victories in the realm of the spirit must begin and

proceed with an absolute honesty. “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). Others can be deceived, but not God. Our hearts are like an open book to Him. He who would grow in grace must provide an honest heart in which to plant the seeds of eternal truth. **We cannot be like Christ if we will not conscientiously face the unconquered areas of our lives and give them completely over to God.** We must be conquerors before we can be “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8.37). We will have more to say about this matter later.

Sometimes after you have been a Christian for years perhaps not too happily or victoriously, our Lord will open before your eyes a more glorious road. In following this you will come into a new experience of power, victory, and glory.

Some time ago I set myself to find a richer and more satisfying walk with God. Although I had been a Christian since the age of sixteen, there was the feeling that my relationship with Jesus Christ ought to be providing more for my life than was apparently there. So through the months I have been praying earnestly (and, I think, honestly) for advancement in my own spiritual life. That longing has finally resolved

itself into a great yearning for a person—and that person is Christ!

This new direction has changed my praying habits radically. Formerly much of my praying was done in an effort to beg from God the attributes of Christ. Now the prayer is for Christ Himself to be mine in a new way whereby He can control me more fully; for if Christ is mine, all else I need will be provided. New meaning has come to Romans 8:32 where Paul assured the Christians at Rome, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

The attributes of Christ will follow Christ into your heart. Don’t pray for patience: pray for Christ, for when He is enthroned upon the high place of your heart, you will have patience. Instead of praying for control, make full room for Christ and He will provide control. When I ceased praying for love, faith, and other Christlike virtues, and instead, began seeking a warm companionship with Christ, I experienced an in-filling of these neglected qualities which I trust will never cease. Out of the experience of these months—really a period of a couple of years—has come a “magnificent obsession for Christ Himself.”

Will God actually give us all the things we need if we permit Him to give us the greatest gift of all—His Son? When God gives you His Son, He will follow that gift with everything you really need if you but trust His grace and are obedient to His will.

Words fail me in conveying to you what has taken place in my heart. All I can say is

this: I want Christ in His sacred fullness, to be sovereign Lord of my life, to be with me every waking moment. I want this more than I have ever wanted anything in my life. I want to be like Him at any cost. Wherever He wants me, there I shall be content. I must be utterly and completely His. I am consumed with a burning desire to feel His presence every hour, not just during a morning and evening prayer, but every hour. I want to talk to Him and listen carefully for His voice. I find my prayer life revolutionized. I want to pray more than I ever wanted to pray in all these years. In the midst of the busiest hour, suddenly I feel Him near, and take time out for communion with this matchless, loving, wonderful Friend.

This communion of which I speak has taken on a new and much fuller meaning. I am singing more, and irritated less. I am possessed by a new inner peace that seldom deserts me. The old restlessness, the old something that was never quite at rest (some of you know what I allude to, for your own lives are restless as the waves of the sea) is gone. This is even more thrilling when you realize it has happened to a man who has been a Christian for thirty-eight years. Somehow, through prayer, study, a deep insistent longing, an inexpressible yearning and a fresh commitment, Christ has become for me much more than a character in history: He has become an inner, abiding Presence, an incomparably wonderful Friend! So now I am never really alone.

I am in so deep already in my confession to you that I may as well be even a bit more personal, and in this I beg your forgiveness. I

have been married for more than thirty years to a lovely, most charming woman. Some of you have surmised how deeply I am devoted to this companion who has stood so loyally by my side through the heavy and long years of an exceedingly busy ministry. To me there is no one like her in all the world. Just to be with her brings relaxation and contentment. I believe I could live serenely on a desert island if we were together. I revel in her confidence and trust. The touch of her hand still thrills me. It would break my heart to be a disappointment to her, or do anything that would hurt her.

I did not tell you these things to be melodramatic or sentimental, but to prepare

and let Christ take over. I mean this. It is just that simple. It is easy or hard to do according to whether or not you actually want Christ to have His way in your life.

When you hold out in any area of your life against the will and spirit of Christ, inner tensions and conflicts are inevitable.

You cannot eat your cake and have it too. You cannot be true to Christ and the world at the same time. Moral inconsistencies block off the flow of power and peace from your soul.

Check yourself. Are you really dedicated, soul, mind, and body, ambitions, talents, and

We cannot be like Christ if we will not conscientiously face the unconquered areas of our lives and give them completely over to God.

this analogy. My feelings for Christ are just like the feelings for my wife, but even more so. How can I explain it further to you? Some of you know this warm, thrilling relationship to Christ. We rejoice in His friendship and hope for His confidence. To deliberately hurt Him or sin against Him is unthinkable. We long to saturate our souls in Him forever!

Oh, I struggled so long! **And the struggle is so hard when we try to do in our own strength something which Christ alone can do for us.** Yet victory is comparatively easy and simple when you have found the way. You merely give up your personal sovereignty

possessions, to Jesus Christ? and working at it? Are your affections stayed on Him? It is chiefly in the area of the mind that Christians fail. Some Christians still play with temptation as a child plays with matches. You warn your child. In some slight way at least he knows danger is involved in a lighted match. But in spite of all warnings and admonitions he will sometimes slip away to play with fire. Tragedy often results. Right here is the battleground of the soul. No one grows in grace while deliberately playing a cat and mouse game with sin and temptation. No pleasure is to be found in halfway service to God.

So if we are to be like Christ there are certain lines that must be cut, certain spiritual disciplines that must be voluntarily assumed. **It is very possible to form habits of thought that will tend to strengthen the soul in God.** Take full advantage of this privilege! In the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, the Master used the Holy Scriptures as His chief weapon against Satan. Each of us can do the same thing effectively.

Really, the power to win spiritual battles is not to be found in fighting sin, but in opening your heart completely to Christ. Full surrender! You do not conquer greediness by fighting your avaricious inclinations, but by surrendering your life to the godly, benevolent spirit of Christ. You do not win the battle against dishonesty by gritting your teeth, but by opening your heart fully to the Spirit of truth. You do not win over the temptations of the flesh by struggle but by having the unseen, ever-present Christ living vitally and radiantly within, controlling you, giving you power beyond your own. The battle against an ungodly temper is won only when we come to love Christ and others more than self. A temper tantrum is an uncontrolled eruption of self! It results from the wounding of pride and ego. Only the humble become victorious at this point. You must experience what the psychologists call “the expulsive power of a new affection.” In other words, you must undergo the crucifixion of the carnal self, that the thoroughly Christianized self may come to expression. The uncontrolled, by their very spiritual poverty, symbolize the fact that

Christ has been crowded out. **Christ will not share the throne of your heart with self. It is Christ or self; never Christ and self. Which is it for you?**

A little girl awoke one morning, sat up in bed, and gazed into a mirror hanging on the opposite wall. In the mirror she could see reflected plainly a picture of Jesus which hung on the wall above the head of her bed. Noticing this for the first time she exclaimed, “Mother, I can see Jesus in the mirror.” Then to get a better view she decided to stand up, but this brought her body between the picture and the mirror and Christ was shut out. This interested the little girl and she had to stand and lie down several times, experimenting with her new discovery. Finally she said, “Mother, when I can’t see myself, I can see Jesus; but every time I see myself, I can’t see Him.” It is too bad all of us can’t realize this.

We stand in front of the cross or behind it. We either exhibit Christ or hide Him. When Christ is made sovereign He controls our lives. He provides the divine stimulus, the holy impulse—the godly motivation.

Perfect love is our primary need—love for Christ, love for people, love for goodness, in short, love for the kingdom of God. **Perhaps this is the one great secret of grace, to love Christ more than life itself—to love Him so much and so long that finally you really become like Him.**

Adapted from Chapter 2 of *Living Close to God*, by W. Dale Oldham, copyright © 1957 by Gospel Trumpet Company. Used by permission of Church of God Ministries, Inc.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 19:14

an amazing week

Nine-year-old Tina was curious. Their pastor had announced that another pastor was coming all the way to Mexico from Canada! And he would lead evangelical services every evening the next week.

"E-van-gel-i-cal . . . I wonder what it means?" Tina thought to herself.

The next week, Tina sat next to her parents in church every evening.

The visiting pastor was talking and telling them about how much God loved them, and that He'd sent Jesus to save them from their sins. He encouraged the people to accept Jesus' gift of salvation and to give their hearts to Jesus.

"Ahh," thought Tina. "So this is what evangelical services are."

It was the last evening of services. The pastor invited those who felt guilty and troubled with burdens of sin to come forward to pray. They could ask the Lord Jesus to cleanse their hearts from sin and accept Him as their personal Savior.

As she listened, Tina felt really sad. She couldn't help but think about how she'd lied to her sister last week. Then she remembered that she had become so mad at her Dad when he'd asked her to clean the chicken coop. And the nasty words she had started saying to herself—oh! She was feeling really bad!

When the pastor invited people to come up to the front of the church and kneel there, Tina's heart raced. More than

Doris Klinger shares this story of a wonderful week she and her husband experienced when they lived in northern Mexico, sharing the gospel among the people there. Names have been changed, but the account is true.

anything, she wanted to get rid of her feelings of guilt and shame. Peter, her cousin, stepped out from the benches and walked to the front. When he got to the front bench, he knelt there. Tina didn't wait another moment. With tears running down her cheeks, Tina stepped out and followed him. Both cousins knelt to pray. As she prayed, Tina remembered all the things she'd done that were wrong, and she prayed, saying she was sorry and asking for forgiveness. She asked Jesus to live in her heart so that she could be like Him.

The next day was Monday. Tina was so excited, she could hardly wait to get to school.

"Mary, Mary," she called out to her best friend as she ran up to the school. "Last night I prayed to Jesus and He took all my sins away! Now I am so happy and my heart feels so light!"

Mary tilted her head and looked at Tina with a puzzled expression. "What are you talking about?"

"Oh, come, let's sit over here, Mary. I can tell you more!"

Taking Mary by the hand Tina led her to a bench where they both sat down. Mary listened intently as Tina told her what she'd experienced the day before. "RRrring!" The school bell rang, interrupting the girls. Quickly they jumped to their feet and hurried to their classroom. At lunch Mary asked Tina a bunch of questions, but Tina didn't have too many answers.



"Let's go talk to the pastor next door," Tina suggested.

The girls knocked on the door and waited.

Soon the door opened. The pastor smiled at the girls.

"How can I help you?"

"My friend Mary has questions; her

heart is sad and she wants to pray to Jesus for help,” Tina said.

“Then come in, come on in.” The pastor kindly ushered the girls into the house.

A couple of minutes later the two girls and the pastor were kneeling and praying. Mary, whose questions had been answered, asked Jesus to forgive her sins. When they prepared to leave, Mary’s tear-streaked face glowed with joy.

“I am so happy! I found Jesus!”

At recess both girls told their friends about their experience, while across the playground, Peter explained to his friend David how he’d given his heart to Jesus.

A day later, Peter and David knocked on the door of the pastor’s house.

“Could David pray with you?” Peter asked the pastor. “He wants to give his heart to Jesus, too.”

As the boys walked into the house, Tina and a group of girls followed behind. “My friends want to pray too,” Tina explained.

The pastor called his wife to help him pray with the boys and girls who wanted to invite Jesus to live in their hearts.

The next day, and every day after throughout the week, children continued to stop at the house to talk to the pastor about Jesus. Many prayed and asked Jesus to be their Friend and Savior.

“Praise the Lord,” said the pastor quietly as he watched the children play on the playground at the end of the week. “Thank you, Lord, for this amazing revival!”



Too Busy to Care?

Someone made a remark to me some time ago that I could have perceived as insulting. Now I did not take that remark personally because I know the person who said it. We have a close relationship. She would be horrified if she knew how the comment sounded to me. I believe that she did not mean to insult me, but merely made a casual remark that came out awkwardly. I can believe this because I know that she loves me.

Why do I react this way? Simply because I know she cares about me.

Caring for one another was one of the attributes of the first century church that made the community take notice. We read in Acts that the early church found “favor with all the people” (Acts 2.47). What was the cause of that favor? Namely this: the community cared, and their love for one another was visible.

The verses prior to 47 tell us that they spent time together: “All who believed were together” (2.44). They shared their possessions and their lives: “[They] had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need” (2.45). They shared meals: “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house” (2.46). The result? “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (2.47).

Today, in the 21st century, we are in acute danger of losing that caring. Across the country, bickering, gossip, and dissatisfaction hamper our churches. We have pews filled with isolated, lonely people. Satan is using an exceedingly effective tool to hinder our church growth: busyness. We are too busy to care about one another. Oh, we still come through in a crisis. When someone in our church community is very ill, we care. We know how to be supportive when things are tough. But it’s the little everyday problems that get overlooked. There are mothers, exhausted from caring for energetic toddlers. There are men burdened by financial pressures. There are teenagers who have no friends and feel misunderstood. Are we still able to care about them?

I am convinced that the problem is not a lack of love or compassion. I know the people with whom I worship each Sunday are caring people. If they knew that the mother sitting beside them with the wig-

gly children had been up all night with a feverish baby, they would offer to help her care for her children instead of criticizing how noisy they are. If they knew that the sullen teenager on the back pew was facing ridicule at school daily because of a learning disability, they would reach out to that teen. But they don't know, and it is so easy to dismiss someone else's problems as insignificant and a product of their own inadequacy. How can I "walk in someone else's shoes" if I do not know what shoes they are wearing?

Some years ago, I was convicted by the Holy Spirit to touch three lives daily in some way. I wrote down the names of three people that I would reach out to every day. The list included my husband and children, my extended family, neighbors, co-workers, and people from our church family. Sometimes I made a phone call, sometimes I baked, and sometimes I wrote a note or did a favor. The things I did were neither big nor time-consuming. I'm not even sure that they were very helpful to the recipients of my efforts. And yet, when I look back on the year that I committed to touching lives daily, I realize that it was without a doubt one of the richest years of my entire life. I have never before or after had so many friends, so much support for my own difficulties, so much satisfaction and fellowship. I didn't end up making the lives of others significantly better. It was my own life that became rich. I was connected with so many people. It was I who felt loved and supported. God gave me the gift of fellowship that the early church experienced

in far greater measure than I was able to extend to others.

Today I often feel alone and isolated. Silly, isn't it? I still know all the same people. I could try to blame my family or my church for my loneliness, but the truth of it is that the fault lies squarely on my own shoulders. I am too busy to touch lives. So today I will walk a mile in someone else's shoes: I will listen, give a compliment or lend a hand.

I don't know if we will ever reach the level of community the early church had. Times are different. We cannot recreate history, but we can learn from it. Fellowship makes a difference. We cannot live in isolation and hope that our church will grow. When we come together, talk together, pray together, eat together, share together, we get to know what shoes our neighbors are wearing. And when we know what shoes they are wearing, we might be equipped to walk alongside them and ease their burdens.

Perhaps the great commission to spread the gospel has to start in our own church community, as we walk together, loving and caring for one another. It's a walk that others will notice.

Benita is a busy lady. Married for over 28 years to Ralf, they have 3 daughters who are occupied with lessons, school activities, jobs and church activities. She strives to take time for others—thereby being a blessing as well as an example to her family.

from Romans 12

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.

Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.