

INDEX - GOD'S PLAN (WAY)

UNIT I - Faith

LESSONS

1. Introduction - The Foundation of Our Relationship with God
2. God's Plan for Releasing Faith
3. Love Which Releases Faith - 1
4. Love Which Releases Faith - 2
5. Walking in Love

UNIT II - The Way of the Cross

LESSONS

1. Christ Living Through You
2. Jesus, Our Example

UNIT III - God's Way (Plan) to Spiritual Maturity

LESSONS

1. Being Led by the Spirit
2. Be Filled With the Spirit
3. The Distinction Between the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the New Birth in Jesus
4. Speaking with New Tongues
5. The Gifts of the Spirit
6. The Fruits of The Spirit
7. The Lord Added to the Church
8. The Local Church
9. Putting on the New Man
10. Taking a Spiritual Bath
11. Submission to a Spiritual Father

UNIT 4 - Three Fold Salvation

LESSONS

1. God's Plan of Salvation
2. Cultivate your Salvation
3. Reasons to Cultivate Salvation - 1
4. Reasons to Cultivate Salvation - 2
5. Reasons to Cultivate Salvation - 3
6. Reasons to Cultivate Salvation - 4

DISCIPLESHIP III

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT I - FAITH

LESSON 1 - FAITH, THE BASIS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

I. GOD'S HEART REVEALED

In this lesson, from **Psalm 81:8-16** we want to lay the FOUNDATION for **LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)**.

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit we would see the HEART and NATURE of our FATHER GOD.

A. We would see that the heart of God DESIRES TO PROTECT, DEFEND, AND FIGHT for His children.

B. That our Father DESIRES TO GIVE His children THE VERY BEST

C. That our Father IS NOT A PERMISSIVE FATHER, who indulges His children when THEY ARE REBELLIOUS (not living according to His ways).

The history of Israel is one of God protecting, fighting for and providing for those called as His very own.

with Abraham, as God gave him favor among the kings in the land of his sojourning.

with Isaac

Jacob

Joseph

in the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt

the 40 years in the wilderness

the establishment of Israel in the promise land

we see this very dramatically in the live of David - Goliath and when he was running from Saul.

God wonderfully provided for and protected Israel; and still does to this very day. BUT, the thing that God WANTED for Israel was to COMPLETELY SUBDUE and put down their enemies once and for all; BUT He COULD NOT because they would not hearken (listen carefully, diligently and attentively with an attitude of obedience) to Him and walk in His ways (vs. 11, 13).

Verse 11 & 12 of Psalm 81 is the EPITAPH of Israel.

"But my people would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would have none of me. SO I GAVE THEM UP UNTO THEIR OWN HEARTS' LUST: AND THEY WALKED IN THEIR OWN COUNSELS."

NOW, our Father God desires to do for us what He desired to do for Israel and COULD NOT. God desires to completely SUBDUE the enemies in our lives and provide for us according to His riches in glory in Jesus Christ. To give us His very BEST. Notice verse 14 says, "I should **SOON**"...

In Jesus Christ, God has already made PROVISION FOR THIS.

The CROSS OF CALVARY, not only, brings us the good news of salvation from the condemnation of our sin - BUT, ALSO, stands before us as our BANNER OF COMPLETE VICTORY.

The CROSS OF CALVARY tells us that Jesus Christ by His death has destroyed the works of Satan; He has rendered Satan useless and set the captives free. Amen?

It is my prayer for you as you begin this discipleship course, that you will attentively, carefully and diligently with an attitude of obedience listen to the voice of your Father God and walk in HIS WAYS, so that, THE EPITAPH written over Israel will not be written over you.

Our Father God is coming to you and He is saying to you even as He said to Israel:

'HEAR, O MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL TESTIFY UNTO THEE...'

God would TESTIFY unto you of the things HE WOULD DO FOR you and of WHAT HE EXPECTS OF you, so that, what He wants to do will become a REALITY IN YOUR LIVE.

A. What does our Father God want to do for us?

1. He wants to rid our lives of gods and the worship of them. (verse 9)
 - a. "THERE SHALL NO STRANGE GOD BE IN THEE:"
 - b. "NEITHER SHALT THOU WORSHIP ANY STRANGE GOD."
2. God wants to DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER in our (verse 10),

"I AM THE LORD THY GOD, WHICH BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT:
OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE, AND I WILL FILL IT."
3. God wants TO QUICKLY (SOON): (verses 14,15)
 - a. SUBDUE our enemies
 - b. Turn His band against our adversaries
 - c. Bring those who hate Him (unbelievers) into submission and obedience unto Him
4. God wants to give us His BEST. (verse 16)

B. What does our Father God EXPECT of us?

THE **KEY** which opens the door, so that, God may do for us WHAT HE WANTS TO DO is to: (verse 8, 13)

1. HEARKEN UNTO HIM, listen:
 - a. carefully
 - b. attentively
 - c. attitude of obedience
2. WALK IN HIS WAYS - Direct the course of our lives according to WAYS which He has revealed in His Word.

SUMMARY: God would have done all of these things for Israel if they would have hearkened to Him and walked in His ways. But it did not become a reality in the life of Israel because they did not. Neither, will the abundant life which the Lord Jesus Christ came to give us become a REALITY IN OUR LIVES if we do not hearken to Him and walk in His ways. Amen?

II. GOD'S PLAN (WAYS) REVEALED

A. INTRODUCTION

Our Father God has a PLAN FOR OUR LIVES which is guaranteed to bring success, joy, happiness, and complete fulfillment. Psalm 18 verse 30 says that His way is perfect - that is - it is a tried and proven way.

If we will order the course of our lives "LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN," all that we

do will be successful.

In the following lessons the Holy Spirit will be revealing in detail this way, Plan of God for us.

Briefly, at this point, we would say that for us this plan has its beginning in **FAITH**.

B. GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

1. FAITH IS THE BASIS AND FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

- a. Definition of Faith
 - (1) Hebrews 11:1
 - (2) Galatians 2:20
- b. Faith towards God - Hebrews 11:6
 - (1) believe that God is
 - (2) a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.
- c. BY FAITH we have been saved from the condemnation of our sin
Ephesians 2:8,9
- d. The just shall live by Faith - Romans 1:17
 - (1) the just
 - (2) shall live
 - (3) by Faith
 - (4) 2 Corinthians 5:7
- e. Hearing of Faith - Galatians 3:2,5

[INDEX](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT I - FAITH

LESSON 2- GOD'S PLAN FOR RELEASING YOUR FAITH

In lesson one, from Psalms 81:8-16, we laid the foundation for this course of study, **LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN**.

Psalm 81 gives us a glimpse of our Father God's heart and reveals to us that:

1. Our Father God DESIRES to protect, defend, and fight for His children - to SUBDUE all their enemies.
2. Our Father God DESIRES to give His children the very BEST.

QUESTION: If our Father God DESIRES to SUBDUE completely, all the enemies in our lives and DESIRES to FILL us and GIVE us His very BEST, WHY DOESN'T HE DO IT? Is it because He is not capable - does not have the ability to do what He desires to do?

OUR GOD IS ABLE!! Our Father is the Awesome God - the Creator of the heavens and earth. He is the One who delivered Israel from Egypt; who parted the Red Sea; who upholds this universe by the Word of His power.

IS THERE NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE WITH OUR GOD? NO!!! NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH HIM. The only things impossible for our God is the limitations which He, Himself has placed on Himself. God will never act contrary to His nature and character. Amen!!

If God, then, is able WHY?

COULD IT BE THAT WE HIS CHILDREN DO NOT DESIRE TO HAVE OUR ENEMIES SUBDUED AND DO NOT DESIRE THE VERY BEST?

Again the answer is a resounding NO!! Don't you desire this, I know that I certainly do?

WHY? If it is God's desire and likewise our desire, why doesn't He do it?

The question, "WHY DOESN'T HE DO THE THINGS WHICH HE DESIRES TO DO?", is the wrong question.

The question we should be asking is "WHAT IS KEEPING ME FROM THE COMPLETE REALITY OF GOD'S DESIRES BECOMING A REALITY IN MY LIFE?"

YOU SEE, the things that God, your Father, desires for you, the subduing of all your enemies and the giving you His very best, has already been accomplished in Jesus Christ.

- I John 3:8
- Hebrews 2:14-15
- Galatians 3:13
- Isaiah 53:5
- II Corinthians 8:9
- Luke 1:74

God has already provided these things in Jesus Christ. ***He has subdued and defeated all your enemies. He has made it possible for you to have His very best.***

SO THE QUESTION IS NOT, "Why doesn't our Father do it?", BUT RATHER, "What is keeping me from realizing the reality of what He has already made available for me, His child?"

To answer this we must **First** realize that **God is a God of ORDER** and would establish His order, His ways in our lives. So, God, in His infinite wisdom developed a plan, a system, whereby if followed by His children would result in them ENJOYING the fulness of His provisions for them.

Therefore, if we will order the course of our lives according to God's plan, we will realize the reality of having our enemies subdued and we will be enjoying the best our Father has for us.

Now, ordering our lives according to His ways, has its beginning in **FAITH**. Faith is the Basis and Foundation of our Relationship with our Father God. It is Faith Towards God. Faith is believing that God is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do.

Paul in Romans 1:17 puts it very simply, "...the just, shall live by FAITH.

a. the just - those whose sins have been washed by the blood of Jesus, who through faith have been born again b. shall live - life as opposed to death - John 10:10

(1) resurrection life

(a) Romans 8:11

(b) Ephesians 2:1, 8

(2) abundant life - which life is to enjoy all the BENEFITS OF CALVARY; enjoying all the PROVISIONS God has for you.

(3) The difference between resurrection life and abundant life may be seen in the following example.

Resurrection life is like having an unlimited amount of money in your checking account. The abundant life is to those who know how to get the money out of the account, so that they can make use of it.

Every child of God has "Resurrection Life". When a person through the working of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, creates faith in his heart which receives Jesus as

his personal Savior from sin death and hell, the Spirit of Life entered into his spirit bringing the resurrection life of Jesus. Thus that born again child of God has resurrection life.

However, the Abundant Life is to those who have been justified, having resurrection life in them AND WHO ARE LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (Psalm 81:13-16)

IF the foundation of our relationship with God and thus the KEY which opens the door to the abundant life is FAITH or the exercising of FAITH, WHAT, THEN, IS GOD'S PLAN (WAY) FOR THE RELEASING (EXERCISING) OF OUR FAITH.

The ways to release faith runs from the pure humanistic view of the power of positive thinking, to those who say that to release your faith there must be a point of contact (that is, you must be believing for something specific - or if you can visualize in your mind whatever you are believing for, you can have it. Name it and claim theology.)

For sure we need to have positive thinking and be specific about what we want are asking for in prayer. BUT, neither positive thinking nor being specific is the KEY for releasing your faith for the Abundant Life.

GOD'S PLAN FOR RELEASING FAITH

- a. FAITH IS RELEASED BY LOVE, Galatians 5:6
 - (1) worketh - (lit. GK. energo - energized)
 - (2) love - (lit. Gk. agape - selfless, self sacrificing love, acts of love, charity)
- b. LOVE (CHARITY) COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SIN,
I Peter 4:8
Romans 13:8-10

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT I - FAITH

LESSON 3- LOVE WHICH RELEASES FAITH (PART 1)

The premise upon which this course of study "LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN" is based, is that our **Father God is a God of ORDER.**

I, for one, praise and thank God that He is a God of order and has a plan for our lives.

Maybe this doesn't apply to you. Maybe your life, your living never gets out of plum (order) bringing into your life chaos and confusion. But mine does.

Sometimes my life becomes so chaotic and so out of order that my inner peace is shattered and I begin thinking - what's the use of all this, why don't I just give it up, no body really cares or understands. I never have time or the money to do what I want to do.

Now that kind of thinking is just so much hog wash - it is purely stinking thinking.

I AM DOING WHAT I WANT TO DO. The problem when this happens is that I have allowed myself to get caught up in the chaos and confusion of the world - I have allowed myself, my life, my way of thinking to be ordered and directed by the wiles, schemes, and plans of the devil, rather than by the plan of my Father.

What I want you to realize and understand is that if your life is full of chaos and confusion - if the things you are involved in, or the things going on around you seem to be ruling you and are out of control - if your life is full of disorder, THEN YOUR LIFE IS BEING DIRECTED BY SATAN AND NOT BY YOUR FATHER GOD.

The Devil is the Father of chaos, confusion and disorder. Our God is a God of ORDER and He instructs us to do things decently and in order. Amen.

I truly appreciate the fact that my Father is a God of Order and that He wants to establish His order in my life.

It is my prayer for you that you understand that God desires to establish His order in the lives of all His children; that you understand that God in His infinite wisdom, out of pure, unselfish love for you has developed a plan, a system, whereby if followed by you, His children, will result in you enjoying the fullness of His provisions for you.

Jesus said, "...I AM COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE LIFE (RESURRECTION LIFE) AND THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY"

NOW the ABUNDANT LIFE is for those who have Resurrection Life dwelling in them as a result of the new birth in Jesus Christ, and who are ORDERING THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO THE WAY OF GOD.

The ways of God for us begins with FAITH, "...the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). FAITH which is RELEASED, energized by love (selfless acts of love) according to Galatians 5:6.

In this lesson we want to talk about "LOVE WHICH RELEASES FAITH" for Abundant living.

LOVE WHICH RELEASES FAITH (PART 1)

a. Love - definition (Galatians 5:6)

(1) Lit. Gk. agape - love which prompts ACTION

(2) Agape love is best demonstrated in the actions of God who LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVED IN HIM WOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. It is a self sacrificing, self denying LOVE.

b. Love - First direction of (Matthew 22:37,38)

The First and great commandment says that first of all that love which release faith for Abundant Living is directed to God.

NOTE: Points of Clarification

(1) The word commandment is another way of saying God's Ways For You which when followed will bring His blessings into your life. Obeying commandments does not bring eternal life BUT, RATHER, ABUNDANT LIFE.

(2) The abundant life which comes from obedience, from obeying God's commandments is in direct proportion to your obedience to the revelation of God's ways.

This means that if you are only a little bit obedient, then you will be enjoying only a little of the abundant life. The more of God's ways you are committed to and are following, the more of the abundant life you will have and enjoy. 3 John 2 says, "I desire above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospereth."

Thus the more we get God's ways in our soul, in our heart, the more of the

abundant living we will enjoy

- SOUL GROWTH EQUALS

LEARNING AND LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN.

(3) Loving God

If I asked you, "Do you love God?" You no doubt would say - "Yes" and rightly so. One who has received the new birth in Jesus Christ can't but have a love for their heavenly Father.

BUT is the love you have for God agape love? Love which knows no bounds. A love which will allow you to put aside, deny, crucify the self and follow Jesus. A love that keeps your Father God and His ways first and foremost in your mind and living.

In John 21:15-17, Jesus is asking Peter "Do you love Me." Peter do you have agape love for Me." Jesus asks Peter 3 times do you love me and all Peter could answer at that time was, "Lord, you know that I have tender affection/feelings for you. Peter did not have agape love but tender affection for Jesus.

Peter's later life, however, demonstrated that as he was obedient to the directive of Jesus to "Feed my lambs", that HIS TENDER AFFECTION truly became agape, self sacrificing, self denying LOVE.

Your Father God will bless your tender affection for Him, BUT the greater blessings and truly abundant living will come through agape love.

YOU SEE, you can have tender affection for God and still be self indulgent. As you, however, make the determination to SUBMIT to God's ways and begin to order your life accordingly, then that tender affection will begin to take on the appearance and character of agape love and all of a sudden you will realize, WHAO - God is really blessing me.

WHY? Because that agape love is releasing your faith to believe God is who He says is and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

Thank you Jesus. Amen!

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT I - FAITH

LESSON 4 - LOVE WHICH RELEASES FAITH (PART 2)

IT IS GOD'S WAY (PLAN) THAT LOVE WHICH ACTIVATES, ENERGIZES, RELEASES FAITH BE AGAPE LOVE WHICH IS SECONDLY DIRECTED TO ONE ANOTHER.

John 13:34 says, " A new commandment I give give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that you love one another."

We see from this passage God's way for us, also, includes acts of love (agape - selfless, self sacrificing, self denying love) to one another). We are to love one another even as He has loved us. Amen?

I Corinthians 13:1 - 8a, characterizes for us the out working of agape love in relationships with one another.

LOVE SUFFERS LONG. - Love is patient and kind

LOVE ENVIETH NOT - Love finds its fulfillment in contentment; being content; it is being able to rejoice over God's blessings to others.

LOVE VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF. - Love is not boastful. It does not allow you to think about and lift up yourself. There is a vulgarity in boasting.

LOVE DOES NOT BEHAVE ITS SELF UNSEEMINGLY. - Love exercises courtesy. It is not rude or offensive. It is polite.

LOVE SEEKETH NOT HER OWN. - Love's motivation for being moved to action is the needs of others. It does not allow us to be motivated to action because of our need to serve, to be involved or to show love.

LOVE IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED. - Love does not have a bad temper. It does not fly off the handle. It has self under control.

LOVE THINKETH NO EVIL. - Love gives the benefit of doubt and puts the best construction on things.

LOVE REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY: BUT REJOICES IN TRUTH. - Love does not and can not get joy from sin, nor get joy or rejoice when someone else is in sin (does something wrong, I told you so). But rejoices when truth is revealed and received.

LOVE BEARTH ALL THINGS. - Love puts up an umbrella for others. Has the meaning of giving protection.

LOVE HOPETH ALL THINGS. - Love is optimistic about others. It has a positive outlook.

LOVE ENDURETH ALL THINGS. - Love remains strong in relationships with others, even when those relationships are being tried and tested.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH. - Under the most trying circumstances in its out working in our relationship love never breaks down. It will, always see you through.

If we will order the course of our lives according to God's plan (ways), exercising this kind of love, this love which will release our faith to receive God's blessings will be inwrought in us and out worked through us to others and God's protection and blessings will be most evident in our lives.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT I - FAITH

LESSON 5 - WALKING IN LOVE

Question: Can we do what we want to do, as long as we are not doing something criminal, or not involved in any immorality and expect God's blessings upon what we are doing and in our lives?

The answer is NO!!! We will have God's providential care but not His blessings.

WHY? Because the simple facts are that our Father God chooses in His infinite wisdom to bless those things which we do, which are PLEASING TO HIM, things which are according to His ways. Likewise, He withholds His blessings when we are doing our own thing.

James 1:25 - "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be

blessed in his deed."

However some will say or at least think, "Isn't God being selfish and a manipulator."

SELFISH NO!! You see we need to fully understand and comprehend that we belong to God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are God's.

God has the right of ownership which right is to use His property as He desires.

Now, that which God is doing in each of His pieces of property is to restore and perfect it. The purpose is to conform it (His property - you and me) into the image of His beloved Son from eternity, Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 - "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

IS GOD A MANIPULATOR? YES!! To manipulate something or someone is not evil or bad, unless the purpose of the manipulation is evil.

To manipulate means to handle with skill. Manipulation is artful, skillful management or control.

I, for one, praise God that He, my Father is a skilled, artful manager, controller and director of my life.

You know what happens to property which is not manipulate. The buildings decay, the yard or garden or fields or orchard becomes over grown with weeds so that the good grass, vegetables, crops, or fruit is choked out.

OUR FATHER GOD IS MANIPULATING, handling us with skill, molding us, restoring us, conforming us to be like Jesus.

So, in order to motivate us in the right direction, He is saying, "If you will live your life according to my plan, my ways, I will bless the work of your hands with the best, and I will subdue your enemies." We are being motivated to live by Faith which is activated by love for this is the basis and foundation of God's plan for us His children.

LOVE as we have seen is the catalyst which releases the POWER OF FAITH IN OUR LIVES.

In lesson 4 we saw how agape love expresses itself in one's relationships with others.

Love:

- suffers long, being kind
- is not envious
- is not boastful
- behaves properly
- does not seek its own way or wants
- is not easily provoked
- does not think evil
- has no joy in sin
- is protective of others
- is optimistic not negative
- is strong in and through testing
- never fails

This lessons is WALKING IN LOVE. Here the Holy Spirit would show us God's plan for walking in love. In Ephesians 4:32 we find three elements, which when put into action will result in

these expressions of love from 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 being evident in our relationships with one another.

THESE THREE ELEMENTS OF WALKING IN LOVE ARE BEING:

1. **KIND** to one another
2. **TENDERHEARTED** toward one another
3. **FORGIVING** as God has forgiven us

Let us now, analyze these three elements of walking in love, that we might put them into action in our lives, and thus be walking in love our Father God's way.

1. The first element in God's plan for walking in love from Ephesians 4:32 is,

" . . . be ye KIND to one another . . ."

Being kind means according to the Greek word here translated "kind" is to be serviceable. Serviceable according to Websters Dictionary means:

that can be of service; ready for use; useful; usable

that will give good service; durable service

willing to serve; attentive and obligating

Thus to be kind to one another means to be a servant to one another.

Galatians 5:13 - "to serve one another by love."

We are to be usable - a slave for one another. So to walk in love according to God's plan is first of all to be a servant looking for an opportunity to serve others.

2. The second element in God's plan for walking in love from Ephesians 4:32 is,

"...be ye TENDERHEARTED..."

The Greek word here translated tenderhearted comes from the same root word which in other passages of Scripture is rendered "compassion". Compassion is a description of feelings which comes from deep within a person which moves that person to action.

Thus to be tenderhearted towards one another means to have feelings of compassion which will move us with a sense of urgency to help the one who is in a needful situation. It is to be tender toward one another as opposed to being tough with or towards one another. It is being sensitive to each others needs.

Now from the life of Jesus we want to look at three areas of need in which we are to have compassion.

(1) Matthew 9:36

To love as Jesus loved is to have a burden, to be moved with compassion for those who are spiritually weak and scattered and floundering having no shepherd to guide them and to feed them. They need to be reconciled to their Father and we are to be those ministers of reconciliation. This is being tenderhearted.

(2) Matthew 14:4

Our Father God wants us to have a burden for those who are sick. He wants us to be moved with compassion for them. To visit the sick, encourage them, to lay hands on them and heal them. To do what ever we can to give them relief and help. This is being tenderhearted.

(3) Matthew 15:32

We are to be concerned about the physical needs of our brothers and sisters. We are to have compassion for them and be moved with an urgency to help them in their need for

food, shelter and clothing. To love them, to be tenderhearted towards them is to do all that we can to help them. Not just sympathize with them, but help them.

Being tenderhearted (have compassion) is the second element in God's plan for walking in love.

3. The third element in God's plan for walking in love from Ephesians 4:32 is,

". . .FORGIVING one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

The literal translation of Ephesians 4:32 is "forgiving yourselves." I see from this translation three areas of forgiveness.

(1) We are to forgive ourselves. We are to consciously pronounce upon ourselves that we are forgive of all sin past, present and future. That in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. If you have not done this, you will not be able to be a minister of reconciliation and forgive others.

(2) When one of our brothers or sisters is being weighted down by the burden of sin and guilt we are to be those ministers of reconciliation and pronounce upon them the forgiveness of their sins. This is part of the great commission which Jesus gave us in John 20:21-23.

(3) You, yourselves are to forgive those brothers and sisters who have wronged, sinned against you. It does not matter what they have done to you, or how badly they may have treated you. To love as Jesus loved will move us, constrain us to forgive them. If you do not forgive them, bitterness will be structured in your soul, which will result in separating you from fellowship with your Father God. And, also, might very likely result in sickness in your body.

Forgiving one another is then the third element in God's plan for walking in love.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT II - THE WAY OF THE CROSS

LESSON 1- THE WAY OF THE CROSS (PART 1) - CHRIST LIVING THROUGH YOU

REVIEW

OUR FATHER GOD says, Psalm 81:8, "Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee..."

Now His (God's) testimony is this

"...if thou wilt hearken unto me..." Hearken, means to listen carefully, attentively with an attitude of obedience.

What is God's testimony to us if we hearken, listen diligently and then do what our Father God says to us?

(1). "There shall NO STRANGE GOD BE IN THEE:"

Is it possible for a BORN AGAIN child of God to have a strange god; a devil, or demon/demons in him? YES, it is possible! The open door that allows demonic activity in a child of God is not living according to God's plan; is not hearkening unto the voice of God.

(2). ". . . neither shalt thou WORSHIP any strange gods."

What are strange gods which we worship? Strange gods in our lives which we worship are every thing or every one who has first place in our lives. Anything which keeps us from

HEARING God. If you are having a difficulty hearing God you are worshipping strange gods.

(3) "...Open thy mouth wide, and I will FILL

Philippians 4:19 puts it this way, "**My God shall supply ALL your need according to His RICHES in glory by Jesus Christ.**"

(4) Your Father God will, soon . . .

- subdue your enemies
- come against those enemies
- bring even the unrighteous into submission to Himself
- give you the very best
- satisfy you

Father God is testifying unto us, saying, "I WILL DO THOSE THINGS IF YOU WILL HEARKEN UNTO ME AND WALK IN MY WAY (LIVE ACCORDING TO MY PLAN)."

God, our Father wants you and me and all His children to LIVE IN VICTORY. Amen?

In this lesson, our Father God would take us a step further as He reveals to us that His way for us - His plan according to which we are to live is THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Are you trying to live for Christ? Are having a hard time doing it? Do you know WHY you are having a hard time living for Christ? Why? Because if you are trying to live for Christ you are out of God's plan for your living.

God's plan according to which you are to live is NOT, you living for Christ; it is not you doing things for God; BUT, RATHER IT IS CHRIST LIVING THROUGH YOU: It is God working through you.

Galatians 2:20

The emphases is not on you living, BUT ON CHRIST LIVING: living His live through you.

God's plan (way) is THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

WHAT IS THE WAY OF THE CROSS?

1. It is to know and understand that I, (the son of Adam, the old man, the man of sin, the sin nature) was crucified with Christ.

When you through the ministry of the Holy Spirit by faith received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you through the miracle of the new birth became a new creation - your old nature (sin nature) was crucified with Christ - you, the son of Adam, died - and he that is dead is freed from sin (Romans 6:7) you are no longer alive.

2. The way of the cross is to know and understand that the life which is now in us is not ours, but it is the life of the resurrected Jesus in us. Thus everything in us which is not Christ is Death.

Therefore, that which we in reality are trying to do when we try to live for Christ is to bring life out of death; it is trying resurrect the old man which is dead and buried, making him, the old man, live for Christ. This will not work now any more than before.

The reason the death and burial of the old man was necessary was because it was in total opposition to the ways of God. An enemy and hater of God; resisting always, rebelling against God and God's ways. That is the NATURE, character, essence of the OLD MAN. It cannot do other wise.

God did not take the old nature and restore it, or even begin a restoration process. BUT,

rather "...old things are passed away." The old man is gone, crucified with Christ. Never to be restored, resurrected; it is dead and buried.

Now death only brings forth death never life; that's why when we fail in our attempts to live for Jesus, and fail we will, we become frustrated, hurt, angry, negative, critical of others, get under condemnation, feel, UNAPPRECIATED, etc.; it is death coming out of death.

Romans 7:19 says it this way:

" . . . FOR THE GOOD THAT I WOULD I DO NOT; BUT THE EVIL WHICH I WOULD NOT DO, THAT I DO.

We need to get it down deep into our hearts, we CANNOT do any thing for God. as the Word says, "ALL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS AS FILTHY RAGS."

God's plan according to which we are to live is to crucify the self, so that God can do what He wants through us. Psalms 116:15 says,

**"PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS."
Matthew 16:24, "IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF
AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME."**

(a) deny self - not deny self of something, but deny self the right to exist

(b) take up cross - the cross is an instrument of execution - the flesh, the sin in us, the ways of the old man, SIN HABITS, self is to be put to death, EXECUTED.

Thus the way of God which will bring victorious living, IS THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT II - THE WAY OF THE CROSS

LESSON 2 -THE WAY OF THE CROSS (PART 2) - JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 19, verses 37 and 38 we witness Jesus' triumphant into Jerusalem amid the praise and worship of the people.

Brothers and sisters, even as Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem that first Palm Sunday, I pray that He will find that same acceptance in your hearts as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

You see, it is one thing to receive Jesus as your Savior and another to acknowledge and accept Him as your King, as the Lord of your life. Amen?

Palm Sunday sees Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem; But, it also, ushers in the last days of Jesus here on earth. Before this week would be finished, He would be betrayed by one of His disciple, rejected by the people, tried and executed by the Jewish High Court.

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

In this lesson we want to look closely at one of the events which took place during our Lord's last few days on earth and relate it to what we talked about in our last lesson entitled, THE WAY OF THE CROSS. This event took place in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46 (44).

Here in the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus in agony, praying:

"Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me..."

Jesus was looking ahead to the torturous death of the cross which was before Him and He was pleading with His Father to remove it.

Here in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus dying to Himself, dying to His soul's desires.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS FOR US IS TO DIE TO SELF.

Thus we see here Jesus as our example in the putting down of the desires of the soul and becoming obedient to the will of the Father even unto the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

However, Jesus, like you and I, found that dying to self is hard and painful; but unlike you and I, He was able to totally accomplish this in the garden - accomplish a total and complete dying to self.

Let us understand, the agony and suffering of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane was REAL.

Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared."

Jesus as a man did not want, did not desire to suffer the accursed death that was before Him. He did not want to - BUT HE DID. AMEN.

Why was it necessary for Jesus to die to Himself?

Philippians 2:6-8

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 4:15

Hebrews 5:9

WHY? Because Jesus was a man, fully human, who had the same weaknesses and needs and temptations and desires as every other man, woman or child.

WHY? Because Jesus as a true man must be made perfect - He learned obedience by the things He suffered. So that, He would be able to be the author of eternal salvation.

You see, Jesus as a man, suffered, agonized over the temptations that Satan placed before Him. I have no doubt that like Eve, and all men, women and children since the time of Eve, the thought was in His mind to taste the forbidden fruit. But unlike Eve and every one since, HE DID NOT YIELD, DID NOT GIVE IN TO THE TEMPTATION. HE SAID NO TO THE SIN.

But you say, He was not born with a sin nature, so He was not compelled to sin. TRUE, Jesus did not have a sin nature, BUT neither did Adam and Eve have a sin nature until after they had sinned. The sin nature is not an inherent, **necessary, essential part of** the human nature. The sin nature is inherited.

But Jesus is God, therefore, He could not sin. TRUE. Jesus is God and God cannot sin. But Jesus was and still is a man, and as a man, according to His human nature it had to be possible for Him to sin. Otherwise, He would not have suffered, agonized over the temptation to sin.

JESUS DID NOT MAKE USE OF HIS DIVINE NATURE WHEN HE RESISTED SIN, WHEN HE SAID NO TO TO THE TEMPTATION TO TASTE OF THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.

Secondly, we see in the above group of passages that Jesus had to learn obedience. Here then, we see the purpose behind our Father God allowing Adam and Eve, Jesus and us to be tempted by Satan. That we might learn to say NO to sin through obedience. This is His way of proving us.

What does this mean for us?

It means that now we who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we who are new creations, like Jesus are able to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus.

You see, our Father does not expect anything of us that cannot be accomplished. In fact all things are made possible through Jesus Christ.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 1 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY

In this lesson we want to see from 2 Kings 2:1-15, **GOD'S WAY (PLAN) FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY.**

You see, Father God has a goal in mind for your life.

Romans 8:29 describes this goal as you being conformed into the image of His son.

Ephesians 4:12 speaks of you being perfected (lit. Gk., prepared, restored, mended).

Ephesians 4:13 and Colossians 1:28 says that God's goal for you, is that you be made "perfect" (lit. Gk., complete, fully mature, grow up).

Not only, does He, Father God, have a goal for your life, which He will bring to completion as Philippians 1:6 says in the "the Day of Jesus Christ". He also, has a plan where-by His goal can in a measure be accomplished in you, now, in this life. WHY? So that, you will be useful to Him in every good work. 2 Timothy 2:21.

This plan for our spiritual maturity is revealed in 2 Kings 2:1-15, in the meanings of the four places which Elijah and Elisha visited the day in which Elijah was taken up be God.

GILGAL

BETHEL

JERICO

THE JORDAN

As we consider these four places and their meanings in relationship to our spiritual maturity we need to keep in mind the progression from Gilgal to the Jordan is important. **You cannot in your spiritual growth cross the Jordan until you have come from Gilgal, to Bethel, to Jericho and then to the Jordan.**

2 Kings 2:1-15

- Gilgal means whirlwind - the moving of the Holy Spirit
- Bethel means the House of God - Local church
- Jericho means a delightful fragrance - being seasoned
- Jordan means the descender - submission to spiritual father

GILGAL - "BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" (Ephesians 5:18)

In this lesson we begin our journey to the Jordan at Gilgal. As stated Gilgal means a whirlwind, a moving wheel and represents the moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the

believer.

God's plan according to which we His children are to live is a plan of living, being moved, of being motivated by the Holy Spirit.

The operation of the Holy Spirit in your life is of utmost importance to your Father God.

Do you understand and see this?

Our life is to constantly to be led, guided, directed by the Holy Spirit.

This active leading and directing of the Holy Spirit has its beginning in being filled with the Spirit (being Baptized with the Holy Spirit of promise) and in the continual filling of the Spirit.

For emphasis, to help us see the need to be filled with the Spirit, being moved, led and motivated by the Spirit, we want to look at the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life and activities of Jesus.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

1. Conceived by the Spirit - Luke 1:35
2. Baptized by the Spirit - Matthew 3:16
3. Led by the Spirit - Matthew 3:1, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1
4. Empowered by the Spirit - Luke 4:14
5. Healed by the Spirit - Luke 4:18
6. Cast out devils by the Spirit - Matthew 12:28
7. Justified by the Spirit - 1 Timothy 3:16
8. Offered up by the Spirit - Hebrews 9:14
9. Resurrected by the Spirit - 1 Peter 3:18

Thus we see that Jesus from His conception to His death and resurrection was led, moved, directed and motivated by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:34 -

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 2 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - EPHESIANS 5:18, "BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT"

INTRODUCTION

In last lesson we began talking about *God's plan for our Spiritual Maturity*. This plan of God is revealed in 2 Kings 2:1-15 in the meaning of the four places mentioned, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and the Jordan.

We noted that the progression of the journey was and is from Gilgal, to Bethel, to Jericho, and then to the Jordan.

Gilgal - lit. Hebrew means a whirlwind which represents to us the filling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Bethel - lit. Hebrew means House of God, representing to us the local church which is the

place where healing begins, where restoration takes place (where the believer is unwrapped from his death wrapping) and is a training center for ministries.

Jericho - lit. Hebrew means a delightful fragrance. Here we see the maturing process in operation; the believer is taking on a delightful fragrance as he is being grounded, seasoned in the foundation truths of the Christian faith and is letting these truths direct his life and conduct. Jesus is growing up in him.

Jordan - lit. Hebrew means the descender. In God's plan for spiritual maturity the Jordan speaks of the disciple submitting to his spiritual father, in order that, he might receive the double portion of his spiritual father's anointing.

THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our journey to spiritual maturity; that is, moving from being little children spiritually to becoming young men and women spiritually to becoming spiritual fathers and mothers [1 John 2:12-14] has its beginning at Gilgal with BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. This initial filling of the Holy Spirit is know as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Let us note that Gilgal which is a whirlwind, a moving wind speaks of more than just being baptized with the Holy Spirit, it speaks of being moved, led, directed, motivated by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, Gilgal represents the active leading and directing of the Holy Spirit, having its beginning in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and in the continual filling of the Spirit.

Let us understand that without the power dimension [Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8] which the Baptism with the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian Walk, the child of God will remain a child or baby spiritually. He will not GROW UP in Christ and be the overcomer that his Father God would have him to be.

The reason so many of God's children are having such a difficult, frustrating Christian walk is that they do not recognize and understand the need of the Holy Spirit.

Paul in Galatians 5:16 says that if we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

In this statement of the Apostle Paul, in capsule form, is the way to overcome our negative attitudes, criticism of others, hatreds, anger, frustrations, strife, jealousies, bitterness or any other of the sins that so EASILY BESET US [Hebrews 12:1]. Walk in the Spirit.

Do you desire, BUT find it most difficult to show LOVE? I mean, self-denying, self-sacrificing, selfless acts of love to your brothers and sisters in Christ. Do you desire to be continually full of the joy of the Lord; always at peace even in the midst of chaos; to be patient and tolerant of the faults and weaknesses of others; to be gentle, kind, full of faith; to have self-control (the self under control)?

Do you desire these things? You can have them by WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

Do we understand that if we do **not walk in the Spirit**, our lives are being directed by lusts of our flesh and not by the Spirit and we will find ourselves doing all the things which we know we should not be doing. And we will not be doing the things we know that we as children of God should be doing.

Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh (your own efforts).

The solution to a Christ centered walk is walking in the Spirit.

Now walking in the Spirit has its beginning in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. If a person has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit, there is no way he can walk in the Spirit.

Likewise, let us understand that being baptized with the Holy Spirit will not automatically

guarantee that you will walk in the Spirit.

To walk in the Spirit you must know (be consciously aware of) that you NEED the Holy Spirit and the power dimension which he brings to your life and then be continually filled with the Spirit.

You see, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the Spirit will have His way in our Life. If we are filled with self, then the self will have it's way in our life.

Thus as we realize the need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit our lives will be led, directed, motivated and moved by the Holy Spirit and we will be walking by the Spirit and will not be fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Amen?

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

To further cement this truth in our hearts, let us look at what the Word of God has to say about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Galatians 3:3 -

John 3:3-5 -

John 14:17 -

1 Corinthians 6:19 -

John 14:26 -

John 15:26 -

John 16:7-14 (13,14)

Ephesians 1:13; 4:30 -

Romans 8:16 -

1 Corinthians 2:10 -

Romans 15:13 -

Romans 15:19 (Acts 13:2) -

Mark 16:20 -

Remember, Gilgal speaks of more than just being baptized with the Holy Spirit. It speaks of walking in the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18, ". . . **BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.**'

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 3 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN BEING BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE NEW BIRTH

In this lesson we would continue the topic "**GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY**". This plan of God as we have seen is revealed in 2 Kings 2:1-15 in the meanings of the four places spoken of - Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan.

We have noted that the progression to spiritual maturity is from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho, then to the Jordan.

Gilgal - whirlwind, this speaks of the filling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer

- spiritual maturity cannot begin without the Holy Spirit.

Bethel - House of God, this speaks of the need to be in a local church (body of Christ). Here in the local body of Christ the maturing, perfection process begins as the believer submits himself to the leadership in the local church and to the ministry of the local body. Here healing and restoration takes place and the WAYS OF GOD ARE LEARNED.

Jericho - delightful fragrance, becoming a disciple, dying to **self so that the sweet fragrance of Jesus comes through. It speaks of being seasoned in the** Word. Here we find the disciple submitted to the teaching ministry of the pastor and elders of the church.

Jordan - the descender, speaks of submission to a spiritual father to receive a double portion of his anointing.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, our journey to spiritual maturity - that is moving from being little children spiritually to becoming strong young men and women spiritually, to becoming spiritual fathers and mothers - has its beginning at Gilgal - that is BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, which initial filling is known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

As we have seen in previous lessons, Gilgal which means a whirlwind, a moving wind speaks of more than just being baptized with the Holy Spirit, it speaks of being moved, led, directed, motivated by the Spirit.

Thus Gilgal speaks of the active leading and directing of the Holy Spirit, having its beginning in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and of the continual filling of the Spirit.

Let us understand that without the power dimension which the Baptism with the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian Walk, the child of God will remain a child or baby spiritually. He will not grow up in Christ and be the overcomer that his Father God would have him become.

In our last lesson we spoke of the need of the Holy Spirit in our lives if we are to overcome the LUST OF THE FLESH - those SINS WHICH SO EASILY BESET US (overcome us).

In this lesson we want to talk specifically about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as a separate experience from being born again and secondly about how one receives the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Let me repeat what was said a few minutes ago.

WITHOUT THE POWER DIMENSION WHICH THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS TO THE CHRISTIAN WALK, THE BELIEVER WILL REMAIN A CHILD, A BABY SPIRITUALLY. He will not grow up in Christ and be the overcomer that his Father God would have him become.

You see, without the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, a believer must depend on his own abilities, on his own knowledge and intellect. Now the result of a believer depending on his abilities and knowledge will be failure, frustration, striving and disappointment. Now if that person has a strong, stubborn personality and character he may be able to walk in the basic principles of Christ but he will become legalistic; he will become locked into one way of thinking and stubbornly hold to his opinion; he will interpret the Scriptures to fit his way of thinking (theology) and according to his experiences; there is no room in his mind for his theology to expand.

This person sounds and looks and acts "very spiritual" when in fact he is very carnal, he is legalistic and really cannot tolerate (even though he may say he does) differing opinions. Because he does not have the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (or at least he is not walking in the Spirit if he has received the Baptism) he cannot walk in GRACE AND TRUTH which typifies the life of Jesus.

All he can do is walk in the Law of Moses, because the revelation of God that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ comes only through the Holy Spirit. For only through the Holy

Spirit can one have a full complete revelation of Jesus. John 16:13 says,

"...when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."

QUESTION, doesn't every believer receive the Holy Spirit when he is born again? **ANSWER.** ***YES, but only in a limited way.*** He does not receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5 tells us that when a person is born again the first installment of the Holy Spirit is deposited in his heart. "...earnest of the Spirit" in the KJV translation means "the first installment", a down payment which obligates the contract party to make further payments.

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit with it's continual fillings is the receiving of the balance of the promised Holy Spirit and is a separate and distinct receiving of the Holy Spirit. It is a receiving of the Holy Spirit "without measure.

Let us look at some examples of this distinction between the new birth experience and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

Compare and contrast the following Scriptures:

John 4:14 with John 7:38-39

John 20:22 with Acts 2:4

John 1:12 with Acts 1:8

Thus the "new birth" is one experience of receiving the Holy Spirit (a deposit of the Spirit, a limited receiving), while the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is another experience (receiving the Holy Spirit without measure).

QUESTION, Why a separate experience?

Luke 11:13 -

God in his wisdom wants the believer to specifically ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. When the believer asks for the Holy Spirit he is deepening his commitment to and his dependency on God and is saying Father I want all you have for me and I know I must depend on you to receive it.

Acts 2:38,39 -

Secondly, we see that the promised Spirit comes after one REPENTS of his sins. Repentance comes ONLY after a person has been born again, NOT BEFORE. You see repentance is something that we do and until Jesus comes into our hearts, takes up residence in our spirit, through the new birth, we cannot do anything. The unbeliever is an enemy of God; going away from God and not toward Him.

Why repentance before the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? Why? because the Holy Spirit is HOLY! Amen. To be Holy means to be without sin. Thus because He, the Holy Spirit, is holy, He cannot dwell in an unclean vessel - a vessel where there is unrepented sin.

We would also note that if there is unrepented sin in our life we are quenching the Holy Spirit and even though we may have been Baptized with the Holy Spirit of promise, we through our unrepented sin have stopped His work in our life.

Thus repentance is necessary to prepare the heart for the coming of the Holy Spirit in His fullness.

HOW DOES ONE RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. The heart must be prepared by repentance toward God. (Acts 2:38).
2. One must hunger for the fullness of God in their lives. (Matthew 5:6).

3. Ask to receive. (Luke 11:13).
4. Expect to receive. (Luke 11:13).
5. Believe you have received. (Mark 11:24; Galatians 3:14).

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 4 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - "SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES"

In this lesson we would continue talking about "**Living According to God's Plan**". God's Plan for our Spiritual Maturity is revealed in the meaning and order of the four places referred to in 2 Kings 2:1-15, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and Jordan. We have noted that the maturing (growing up) process of the child of God begins at Gilgal which speaks of BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. The initial filling of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is referred to as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Gilgal, however, since it is whirlwind, a moving, powerful wind, speaks of more than just being baptized with the Holy Spirit. It speaks of being moved, led, compelled, directed, motivated, energized by the Holy Spirit which then entails being continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now in our last lesson we spoke specifically of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as a separate and distinct receiving of the Holy Spirit from the receiving the Holy Spirit one is born again. In the new birth the Holy Spirit is received in a limited measure. The believer receives the first installment of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 1:22). But in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit is received without measure.

The topic of this lesson is "**SPEAKING WITH NEW TONGUES**", Mark 16:17 says,

"And these signs shall follow them that believe...they shall speak with new tongues..."

Speaking with new tongues (languages) is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and is the usual evidence that one has been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

By means of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit the believer receives the ability to "speak with new tongues".

NOTE, we have said that through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit the believer receives THE ABILITY to speak with new tongues". We say this because the experience of many, myself included, is that the manifestation of "speaking with new tongues", (the actual speaking forth with the mouth in an audible sound) came at a later date and in some cases at a much later date than the actual Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

However, this is the exception, rather than the rule. We must be careful that we do not let our personal experience dictate our theology of "speaking with new tongues". Amen. We do not want to emphasize the exceptions but rather look at the pattern which has been established in the New Testament.

SO, WHAT IS THE PATTERN?

Mark 16:17, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name . . . they shall speak with new tongues . . . "

First of all we want to note that it is Jesus who says,

"These signs shall follow them that believe."

Secondly, this Scripture passage says that those who **BELIEVE** - not just some that believe but them that believe (all believers) shall speak with new tongues.

Thirdly, Jesus says that believers **SHALL** speak with new tongues. Shall says this is God's promise - it is not a command it is a promise and like all of God's promises to His children, this promise is also conditional.

The conditions to receiving this promise are:

1. Repentance
2. Asking for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit
3. Believing you have received the Spirit
4. Allowing the Spirit to have full control

Fourthly, the believer being baptized with the Holy Spirit must speak out what the Spirit is placing on his heart.

Now you may have learned or heard that Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in some of the earliest Greek manuscripts and therefore cannot be used to show that believers (all believers) "shall speak with new tongues".

If this be the case then praise God for it proves that the church still believed and was teaching that the pattern for believers even in the 12th and 13th century after Pentecost was to speak with new tongues. Amen Thank you Jesus.

Let us, also note, that speaking with new tongues was the common occurrence in the early Church. This is evidenced by the fact that the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 is giving direction for the use of tongues.

Now let us turn to the Book of Acts where we have five instances where believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues in at least three of them.

Acts 2:1-3 -

Acts 8:5-18 -

Acts 9:1-18 -

Acts 10:34-48 -

Acts 19:1-7 -

In three of the five instances in which believers received the baptism with the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues immediately.

Paul at least spoke in tongues at a latter date (1 Cor. 14:18).

In the fifth instance (Acts 8:5-18) there was some noticeable manifestation of the Spirit.

Let us now make a distinction between "speaking with new tongues" as referred to in Mark 16:17 and the "gift of tongues" and interpretation of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

FIRST of all we note in Mark 16:17 speaking with new tongues is for all believers where the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:10, like all the gifts of the Spirit is an anointing of the Spirit for a special manifestation of the Spirit (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:11).

SECONDLY we see that the direction of the speaking with tongues which is for all believers is toward God. It is the believer speaking to God (1 Corinthians 14:2). It is the praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20); and the praying and singing in the Spirit spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14:14,15.

Whereas, the speaking in tongues with interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12:10 is God speaking to man, either in prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge etc. (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:6). Because God is speaking to man an interpretation is necessary so that the believer will have understanding and be edified, encouraged and comforted (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Therefore Mark 16:17 speaks of believers speaking to God in a new tongue. Praying in the Spirit allows our prayers to bypass our mind, our intellect, our experiences and communicate our needs directly to the Father without our intellectual interference.

The gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10) is God speaking to us in the language of the Spirit for our instruction, etc.

Speaking in tongues plays a very important part in the life and maturing process of the child of God.

Jude 20 -

Romans 8:26-27 -

1 Corinthians 14:2 -

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 5 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

In this lesson as we continue the topic "**LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN**" **WE** want to talk about **THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** from 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 31.

Concerning the "Gifts of the Spirit" we see from 1 Corinthians 12, verse 7 that these gifts are the manifestation/evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. **THEY ARE A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS POWER THROUGH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

THESE GIFTS ARE:

supernatural in nature - 1 Corinthians 12:6

under the operation of the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 12:11a

given according to the discretion of the Holy Spirit -1 Corinthians 12:11b

we are to seek (covet earnestly) best gifts. The gifts which best suit the area of ministry you are in. 1 Cor. 12:31

all of the gifts need to be in operation in local church. These gifts are tool given to the church by God for the building of the church. 1 Corinthians 12:7

Let us now look at the operation of each of these nine gifts.

1. WORD OF WISDOM

"the utterance of wisdom - the power to speak wisely"

Keep in mind that this is speaking not from natural wisdom which comes from experience or book learning, BUT RATHER this is SUPERNATURAL WISDOM WHICH CAN COME ONLY FROM GOD. James 1:5

an utterance, words of wisdom given by Holy Spirit

given to the believer (Matthew 16:15-17).

a spiritual illumination for the common good

promised by Jesus (Luke 21:14-15)

EXAMPLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Stephen (Acts 6:10)

Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 2:4-8)

We need the operation of the gift in our church. How can we understand the mysteries or secrets of God without the wisdom of God? We need to covet earnestly the best gifts. We need to pray for this utterance of wisdom, not for self interests or our own profit, BUT for the building up of our church.

2. THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

knowledge of things which are unfamiliar, unknown, and beyond you; not acquired knowledge (through books, study);

knowledge

a. of God and things of God (Acts 4:1-14 [13]; Matthew 16:16,17, John 7:15).

b. about people (John 4:16-18).

Warning: Knowledge without wisdom can cause great damage in the Body. We need to use knowledge wisely. When used with wisdom the utterance of knowledge is a tremendous tool for the building of the local church.

3. FAITH

This is not DOCTRINAL FAITH, but a MIRACULOUS FAITH.: It is faith that allows you access to God's abundant grace in Jesus Christ.

Faith that lets you believe without doubt for that which is absolutely unbelievable.

Faith that can remove all obstacles and stumbling blocks.

A receiving and commanding faith (Mark 11:23-24)

Faith that challenges the host of darkness and wins in the name of Jesus.

Faith that works miracles of healing, casts out demons and pulls down the strongholds of Satan.

Not a passive, but an active faith. Faith that is creative in power (Mark 11:23).

It is the faith of God (Mark 11:22, Galatians 2:20)

4. GIFTS OF HEALING

Jesus is the Great Healer (Jehovah Rapha). He desires a well body (local church). For this reason He has established within the body three ministries (covenants) for divine healing (NOT healing by medicine BUT healing by divine power).

1. Mark 16:17-18 - for all believers

2. James 5:14 - for the Elders in local body

3. 1 Corinthians 12:9 - special anointing of the Holy Spirit on those whom He has chosen.

Whereas the healing covenant to be exercised by all believers as well as the healing covenant given specifically to the Elders is primarily for the healing of the SICK, these gifts of healing spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:9 are for miracle healings (blind to see, the lame to walk, casting out demons) and are always instant healings. They are an extraordinary demonstration of the super supernatural power of God. They are SIGN miracles.

only gift mentioned in plural

5. WORKING OF MIRACLES

Miracles come in many and varied kinds BUT the one thing common to all of them is that it is an occurrence that could ONLY be accomplished by the supernatural power of Almighty God.

the feeding of the five thousand and four thousand

the raising of the dead

Peter walking on water

coin from the mouth of a fish

stilling of the storm

6. PROPHECY

There is the office of the Prophet, one of the five gifts of Christ to the Church (Ephesians 4:11) and there is the gift of prophecy. **All prophets have the gift of prophecy, BUT all who have the gift of prophecy are not prophets.**

1 Corinthians 14:3 shows that the purpose of prophecy is:

for edification (building up)

for exhortation (encouragement)

for comfort (consolation)

According to 1 Corinthians 14

verse 22, prophecy ministers to the believer

verses 24,25, prophecy convicts of secret sin "the hidden things of the heart."

verses 29-33, prophecy has its place in the assembly

verse 39, gift of prophecy to be coveted

7. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

This is not a discernment of the message given but, rather a discerning of the spirit behind the message or person.

There are three spirits which can be operating

man's spirit (spirit or attitude of the soul)

evil spirit (seducing spirits, lying spirits etc.) (1 Timothy 4:1)

a. fallen angels

b. demons (disembodied spirits)

the Spirit of God

1 John 4:1 says for us to try the spirits.

Examples: John 4:19; Acts 5:1-10

8. & 9. DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES: THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

Speaking with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives utterance is the UNIQUE SPIRITUAL gift identified with the Church of Jesus Christ. Before Pentecost all the other gifts were in evidences. On the Day of Pentecost "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

The use of tongues in the setting of the local church was ordained by God.

1 Corinthians 12:28

1 Corinthians 14:21 (Italics of KJV not in Greek)

- Joel 2:28-29 (Cf. Acts 2:16-21)

1 Corinthians 14 gives two primary purposes of the gift of tongues.

1. verse 6 - for revelation, knowledge, prophecy, doctrine

2. verse 22 - sign to the unbelievers

Let me once again make a distinction between "speaking with new tongues" as referred to in Mark 16:17 and the "divers kinds of tongues", with interpretation in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

Mark 16:17 speaks of new tongues for all believers, whereas, 1 Corinthians 12:10 is speaking of tongues as a special anointing of the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose at a specific time and is not for all believers, but for whomsoever the Holy Spirit chooses to use.

The speaking with new tongues of Mark 16:17 according to 1 Corinthians 14:2 is SPEAKING TO GOD - praying in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14,15, Jude 20) and has the purpose of self-edification.

Whereas speaking in tongues with interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10) is GOD SPEAKING TO MAN, to the Church in prophecy, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, revelation, doctrine etc. (1 Corinthians 14:6). Thus it is God speaking to us in the language of the Spirit for our instruction and edification of the body.

For this reason there must be an INTERPRETATION. Otherwise there would be no understanding and thus no edification for the Church (1 Corinthians 14:6).

We would also note, it is an interpretation and not a translation. Interpretation is an explanation of what was said, whereas a translation is simply word for word in another language.

These gifts of the Spirit are given when the Holy Spirit discerns a need for them. Then He moves through those that are filled with the Holy Spirit, being led and directed by Him.

When these gifts are being exercised by the Holy Spirit, they are a demonstration of His power and evidence of His presence and are signs to the unbeliever and for the edification of the the believer.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 6 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - GILGAL - THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

This lesson, THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, concludes the series on GILGAL - "Be filled with the Spirit."

The fruits of the Spirit are those good fruits that will be evident and demonstrated in the life of the believer when he is "walking in the Spirit." Therefore the lack of them in the believer's life is an indicator that he is not walking in the Spirit. Amen?

We would note that the fruits of the Spirit can not be worked up, nor do we need to seek them. That which we need to do is nurture and cultivate them. Their expression in our lives is the evidence of our relationship with God. The evidence and proof of the reality of Christ in us, and our abiding in Him (John 15:4).

Galatians 5:22,23 lists the fruit of the Spirit which we are to nurture and cultivate.

1. LOVE - agape love, selfless, self sacrificing love.

The "fruit of the Spirit **IS** love, joy, peace..." Notice it is singular: IS, not ARE. This indicates that love is the fruit, and from it stems all other fruits. Love is primary. Agape love finds its expression as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Paul says that without love we "...become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Now 1 Corinthians 13 is in the context of the GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. Here we see that the gifts of the Spirit are not to be exercised except by the fruit of the Spirit, which is love. Love is all-important. Love never seeks its own (1 Corinthians 13:5). Love is always doing something for others. Gifts of the Spirit are always to be exercised in (under the covering of) and for the Church.

2. JOY is a fruit of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus wants you to have in your life. He came that we might have joy. 1 John 1:4 says, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. These things were written that we who are the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ might really enjoy life. Are you enjoying life? Joy is a fruit of the Spirit.

3. PEACE - the peace of God. Religion can never give you this peace of God. This peace, deep down peace, only comes from Jesus. "...being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

4. LONGSUFFERING - that is, patient and long tempered?

5. GENTLENESS which means kindness, tenderheartness.

6. GOODNESS which means being kind but firm.

7. FAITH - here has meaning of faithfulness.

8. MEEKNESS - meekness is not mildness and it is not weakness. Meekness means that you will do God's will, that you are willing to yield your will to the will of God.

9. TEMPERANCE - which is self-control. It is having the self under control and not self in control.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 7 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - BETHEL - "THE LORD ADDED UNTO THE CHURCH"

The Apostle Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 2:8,9 says,

"For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it (faith) is the gift of God: not of works (self-effort), lest any man should boast."

As we discuss, "Living according to God's Plan (Ways)" it is most important that we NEVER loose sight of the fact that we are saved, made members of the kingdom of God, that we are in Christ Jesus and Jesus is in us, NOT because we are worthy of this honor, NOT because we deserve any thing from God - BUT, rather we are saved as it plainly states there in Ephesians 2:8 by the GRACE OF GOD without any help from us. God in His grace GAVE us faith (saving faith) as a gift of His love.

"Saving faith" is a faith that believes in, latches onto, stands firm in the eternal truth of God, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God and that in Him (Jesus) there is life and salvation for whosoever will believe and trust in Him as their personal Savior from sin, death and hell."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

We are saved by the grace of God. Not by anything we do or have done. Not by repentance. Not by Baptism. Not by "living according to God's plan". We are saved BY THE GRACE OF GOD WHO LOVES US AND GAVE HIS SON, JESUS, FOR US, BY FAITH THAT IS WORKED IN US BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WORD OF GOD. Amen?

It is important that we never loose sight of the fact that we are saved by the grace of God because if we do, Satan will come and bring confusion and as we discuss the ways and plan of God for our living, we will begin to think that these are things which God requires of us if we are to be saved (keep our salvation).

You see Satan cannot do anything about the fact that you are a child of God. But if he can bring confusion into your life by taking your eyes off of Jesus, causing you to lose sight of the fact that you are saved by grace through faith and that not of yourself but the gift of God, then Satan will be able to rob you of the abundant life your Jesus came to give you.

WHY? because you will become so involved in the self-effort of survival and striving to please God that your Father God through the working of the Holy Spirit in and through you will not be able to bring you into His order.

You see, it is as we REST IN GOD'S GRACE that His order is established in our lives. Amen?

As His order is established in our lives the outworking of the Holy Spirit will enable us to LIVE ACCORDING TO THE PLAN WHICH GOD IN HIS INFINITE WISDOM OUT OF LOVE FOR US HAS DEVELOPED. This plan of God if followed by His children will have the results of you, His children enjoying the fullness of His provisions for you bring success to everything you do. Amen!

I for one appreciate the fact that my God is a God of order and that He wants to work His order in my life, that I through His OUTWORKING, may live and enjoy the abundant life.

In this lesson we want to continue talking about **GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY** as revealed in 2 Kings 2:1-15. His plan is revealed in the meaning of the four places mentioned - Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan.

We have noted that the progression of spiritual maturity is from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho, then to the Jordan.

Gilgal = whirlwind - it speaks of the filling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Let us understand that without the power dimension which the Baptism with the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian walk, the child of God will remain a child or baby spiritually. He will not grow up in Christ and be the overcomer that His Father God would have him become.

Bethel = house of God - it speaks of the need to be in a local church (Body of Christ). Here in the local church is where the maturing (perfection) process begins. As the believer submits

to the leadership in the church, and to the ministry of the Word, healing and restoration begins to take place. Here in the local church the ways of God are learned.

Jericho = delightful fragrance = becoming a disciple = dying to oneself. As we die to our self the sweet fragrance of Jesus is upon us. We are being seasoned in the Word.

Jordan = the decender = submission to a spiritual father in order to receive a double portion of his anointing.

We have for the past several lessons been talking about Gilgal - "Be filled with the Spirit". The baptism with the Holy Spirit being the initial filling.

With this lesson we begin to discuss the second step in **GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY**. This step is revealed in the second stop of Elijah and Elisha on the day Elijah was taken up.

The next stop after Gilgal was **Bethel**. **Bethel** means the House of God. This speaks of the local church which is the Body of Christ. Ephesians 1:22,23 says, "...the church, which is His body..." **Bethel**, also, speaks of the need the believer has to be in a local church.

Why does the believer need to be in and part of a local church? Why? Because the Church is the Ark of safety and protection which God in His infinite wisdom has provided for His children.

It is not without significance that the children of God are referred to as sheep in the Bible. Referring to the child of God as a sheep speaks of his helplessness.

You see, sheep are the most helpless and vulnerable of the animals which God created. If they are not watched over and cared for, they will scatter and become prey to the beasts of the field. They have to be led to food and water. Left to themselves they would soon perish.

Like sheep, we are helpless and vulnerable. If left to our own devices, to do our thing we would soon scatter from the fold and perish at the hands of our Satan, our enemy.

As you come into, and become a part of a local body of Christ, local church, you come under the covering of God. You are abiding under the shadow of God the Almighty. You enter into the the Ark of His (God's) safety and protection.

Secondly, the believer needs to be in a local church for here is where the perfecting process begins. Here as the believer SUBMITS himself to the leadership - the Elders in the local Body - healing and restoration begins to take place. This healing and restoration is the beginning of the maturing process. Let us also note, healing and restoration will not take place unless the believer is under the covering of a local church and is in submission to the Elders of the local body of Christ.

Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls . . ."

Through the guidance, direction and counsel of the Elders the healing and restoration process takes place and the child of God by following this counsel avoids the hurtful pitfalls which doing one's own things will bring.

We need the guidance and counsel of the Elders in the church. There is not a single one of us, who of ourselves can and will at all times make the right decision, the right judgment, or do the right thing. We need help with the oversight of our souls. Our soul, our self is not competent to oversee, watch over itself. Amen.

Jeremiah 10:23 puts it this way,

"O lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

A word concerning submission. The primary element in submission is trust, NOT

AGREEMENT. I say this because there are some who believe that unless there is complete agreement in everything they cannot submit to the one they are under.

Also, here at Bethel as the believer submits himself to the leadership in the body, he then begins to learn the ways of God from those who God has ordained and set in as teachers in the local church.

Thus we want to see and understand that the local church is, also, to be and is a training center for ministry. In the local church the child of God, is taught, disciplined under the anointing of the Holy Spirit as he submits himself to those whom God has anointed to teach His Word.

Once again, Bethel which speaks of the local church, then is speaking of the need of the believer to in and a part of a local church if the child of God is to grow up and become a mature Christian. God's plan for the spiritual maturity of His children is in the local church which is the Body of Christ.

Now from the book of Acts we see that the order of spiritual maturity as revealed in 2 Kings 2:1-15 is confirmed. Acts, chapter two begins with the 120 disciples being baptized with the Holy Spirit of promise. Then in chapter 2:41-47 we see God placing in the church those who believed, accepting Jesus as their savior. God immediately added them to the Church, the ecclesia, the local assembly. They were not placed into some nebulous, mystical, invisible body of Christ, but into the local church, the assembly which He was building there in Jerusalem.

In Acts 2:47 we read,

"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

You see, our Father does not want His children out in the world fending for themselves, rather He wants them in a local church so that they can be nurtured, fed, have fellowship and pray one with the other.

O, that our Father God would give us the vision of the local church as an institution which He has established for us, His dear children because He loves us. If we had that vision we would not neglect our assembling together as the manner of some is. Rather, we would with eager anticipation, look forward with great excitement and expectation assemble together with every opportunity made available, not allowing anything or anyone to hinder us. Here in the local church the Holy Spirit is at work in all His power and glory. Amen.

QUESTION, what can one expect to find going on in the local Body of Christ.

Worship, praise and glorifying the God of heaven and earth, 1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15.

Winning souls for Christ, Mark 16:15.

Providing ministries for the perfecting of the saints, Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28.

Sharing the power dimension of the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:8

Being a House of Prayer, Luke 19:46.

Fellowship, Acts 2:42.

Ministering from house to house, Acts 5:42.

Now let us look at God's promise for those who are rooted in the local church. Psalm 92:13-15.

Psalm 92:13-15, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no

unrighteousness in Him."

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 8 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - BETHEL - THE LOCAL BODY OF CHRIST

In this lesson we want to continue talking about **GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SPIRITUAL MATURITY**. We see this plan revealed in the meanings of the four places mentioned in 2 Kings 2:115, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho and the Jordan.

We have talked about Gilgal - "Be filled with the Spirit."

That next stop after Gilgal is Bethel. Bethel means the House of God. This speaks of the local church which is the Body of Christ. It speaks of the need of the believer to be in a local church for here the perfection process has it's beginning. Here in the local church as the believer SUBMITS himself to the leadership of the Elders in the local Body, HEALING AND RESTORATION takes place. Healing and restoration is the beginning of the perfection process. The process of growing up in Christ.

Oh, let us understand, this healing and restoration will NOT take place unless the believer is under the covering of a local church and is in submission to the Elders of that local Body of Christ.

As we noted in the last lesson the primary element of submission is TRUST, NOT AGREEMENT. We make this distinction because there are those who believe that unless there is absolutely complete agreement in every thing they cannot submit to the one they are under.

Another facet of the local church is that of a training center for service (ministry). Here the believer as he submits himself to the Word being taught he learns the ways of God from those whom God has ordained and set in as teachers.

We, also noted in the previous lesson the importance of being in a local Church is seen in Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." You see our Father God doesn't want His children out there in the world fending for themselves. Rather, He wants them in the church so that they can be nurtured, fed, have fellowship, and pray with and for one another.

God has established the church to be the HUB around which the child of God moves.

We see an example of this with the children of Israel in the wilderness. The tabernacle was located in the center of the camp of the Israelites. The different tribes were located around the tabernacle (Numbers, chapter 2).

You see, it was never meant for the church to be just a fragmentary part of the life of the child of God. The church as established by God is of such a nature as to provide the child, having been called out of the world, a place where not only his spiritual needs can be met, but also where his social needs could be met.

Our Father God does not call His children out of the world and the ways of the world and then not provide a place for them. The church then is that place which God has provided where the child of God can be established in a new way of life. A way of life which is compatible to his new nature.

In this lesson we want to talk about the church as to what it is and what our relationship

is to be to the church.

Let us begin with the definition and usage of the Greek word ECCLESIA which is most often translated church in the New Testament.

Ecclesia, literal means the called out ones (ek/out, kaleo/to call). From its usage, however we see that the full meaning is the assembling of the called out ones.

For example: the usage of ecclesia among the Greeks before and during the time of Christ primarily had reference to a body of citizens gathered together to discuss or carry on affairs of the town, state etc. (cf. Acts 19:39,41). Also, had meaning of assembling for specific purposes (cf. Acts 19:32).

Ecclesia is used in the Septuagint (Gk. translation of the O.T.) to designate the gathering of Israel, summoned together for any definite purpose (cf. Acts 7:38).

Thus the primary and basic meaning of ecclesia is the assembling, gathering together, the congregating of ones who have been called out. The assembling, gathering together makes the ecclesia local in nature.

Ecclesia is used in the New Testament to designate:

local churches, Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 4:16; Galatians 1:2, 22; Acts 14:23

house churches, 1 Corinthians 16:19b, Colossians 4:15; Romans 16:5

churches collectively, Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:32; Philippians 3:6; Acts 9:31; 20:28; Gal. 1:13

the Body of Christ, Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18

Ecclesia is never used in New Testament to designate:

a building, such structures apparently not built until 3rd century. When they did come into existence they were called kuriake, "The Lord's House." (Scottish, kirk meaning church).

We might, also note that the origin of the English word "church" is the Greek word kuriakon (belonging to the Lord) NOT ecclesia (the assemble of the callout). Thus the Mystical, Invisible, Universal Church is a reference to the body of believers who belong to the Lord (the kuriakon) and not to the ecclesia.

We must, also note that since the Body of Christ is the ecclesia and therefore is local in nature it is incorrect to speak of a mystical, invisible, universal Body of Christ.

What is the Church/Ecclesia?

The Church/Ecclesia is the body of Christ, made up of citizens of the Kingdom of God (the kuriakon, those belonging to the Lord) who are gathered together to carry out the designated purposes for which it, the church was established by God.

The Church/Ecclesia as the Body of Christ is a living being (organism) and not an organization. A living organism whose life is provided by the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9).

Christ is the head, the ecclesia is the body, Colossians 1:18.

The believers relationship to the Church/Ecclesia:

Member of the body, 1 Corinthians 12:20, 27

One with the body (unity), Ephesians 5:30,32; Romans 5:12.

The Believers responsibilities in his relationships with the other members of the Body:

love one another, Hebrews 13:1; Romans 13:8

submission to one another, Ephesians 5:21 (accountability)

preferring on another, Romans 12:10

esteem other better than themselves, Philippians 2:3

exhorting/encouraging one another, Heb. 3:13, 10:25

regular and faithful assembling with the members of the body for worship, partaking of Communion, fellowship, ministry, and teaching. Hebrews 10:25; 2:12; 1 Cor 10:16,17; Acts 2:42,46,47; 17:11

openness, James 5:16

praying for one another, James 5:16

One further note concerning the Church/Ecclesia. As the Body of Christ, the Church/Ecclesia is the PHYSICAL manifestation of Christ on earth today. Therefore you relate to Christ in a like manner as you relate to the Church which is His Body. Thus if your relationship with the Church is right, then your relationship will be right with Jesus and vice/versa.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 9 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - JERICHO - EPHESIANS 5:24, "PUT ON THE NEW MAN"

This lesson on **LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN** brings us to **JERICHO**

Jericho = a fragrance. When a person is born-again the stink of death is still on him (see, John, chapter 11, Lazarus).

Jericho is the process of getting rid of the stink of death and taking the sweet swelling fragrance of Jesus, it is growing up into Christ.

It is the **HOW TO** of the maturing process. The **HOW TO** of the maturing process of the believer is simple stated in Ephesians 4:24,

"...put on the new man..."

PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN is a three fold process:

1. Putting on the new man has it's beginning in getting an **ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT**.

That is adjusting our attitude **FROM** one of independence, of I am going to do my own thinking, be my own. person and do my own thing, my way; **TO**, I am going to watch and see the way my Father thinks and acts and that is the way I am going to think and act. What He thinks, I am going to think; what He does, I am going to do and what He would not do, I will not do.

I am going to adjust my attitude to one of knowing I can do it because the ways of God are my ways, for I am a son/daughter of God. I have the nature and character of God because He is my Father. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). Amen!

It is my prayer for you that you have decided to make that ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT; or if you have not, that you do so right now. If you have the desire to make that attitude adjustment, Philippians 2:13 says,

"God...worketh in you...both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

2. Now having made the proper attitude adjustment of submission and obedience to the will of the Father, the **NEXT STEP** in the putting on of the new man is **DEVELOPING GOOD, GODLY THINKING HABITS, THINKING PATTERNS**. The Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:8 says,

"..think on these things."

2 Corinthians 10:5 says,

"...bringing into captivity every THOUGHT to the obedience of Christ."

Simply this means that every thought which comes into our mind which would not be a thought Jesus would think on we are to get rid of it. If Jesus would not think on it then we are not to think on it.

Therefore we are to REPLACE all bad thoughts (thoughts Jesus would not think on) with GOOD THOUGHTS. In this way you are developing godly thought habits and patterns. This is putting on the new man.

3. The **THIRD STEP** in the putting on of the new man is that of developing good habits of **DOING**.

Paul in Ephesians, chapter 5, equates this developing, putting on of Godly habits of doing as **WALKING...**

- walking in love (verse 2)
- walking as children of light (verse 8)
- walking circumspectly (verse 15)

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 10 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - JERICO - EPHESIANS 5:25-27 - TAKING A SPIRITUAL BATH

In this lesson we want to continue talking about our Father God's plan (His way) for the **PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS**.

We, now, come once again to Jericho, which means a fragrance. Jericho is the process of getting rid of the stink of death which a believer brings into his new life as a child of God. It is placing yourself under the microscope of the Word of God, letting God's Word reveal to you, expose the the ungodly attitudes in your life; expose your bad, ungodly, sinful, **HABITS OF DOING**.

These bad attitudes, stinking thought patterns and sinful (ungodly) habits of doing are the ways of the flesh, the world and satan that a believer brings with him into his walk with Christ. It is death, having the "stink of death" all over it. The stink which attaches itself to

the person who has been living (or is living) in the "pigpen" of the world.

It is a "stink of death" that is quite noticeable to everyone EXCEPT the one who is covered by the smell.

Let us understand that our individual faults and weaknesses are seen and noted by those around us. That's why it is so important for us to love one another, to see the Jesus in one another, to accept our brothers and sisters as they are, stink and all without being critical and judgmental. Amen?

It is easy to find fault with one another because our bad attitudes, our stinking thinking, and our ungodly ways stick out like a sore thumb.

Thus part of our growing-up process is learning to accept each other, love each other faults and all.

However, as we have stated, Jericho speaks of us getting rid of the stink of death which is on us. Therefore, even though we are to accept our brothers and sister and love them, faults and all, **THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE TO ACCEPT OURSELVES AND THE STINK OF DEATH IN OUR LIVES.**

There are many believers who have through the mirror of the Word seen themselves, their faults, weakness, sinful habits and who under the deception and lies of satan have said, *"that's just who I am, I am a sinner, saved by grace, so you have to accept me like I am, what you see is what you get."*

Their attitude is such that regardless of how much they stink of the world, that, that is just the way they are, they can't, or really they don't want to change, they like their life and have no intention of doing anything about it.

Let us see, YES, we are to accept our brothers and sisters and love them in spite of their faults and weaknesses. BUT, that acceptance of others does not apply to our accepting the sin and stink of the world in our own lives.

You see, we are not to be satisfied and accept the way we are. We have a **RESPONSIBILITY** (as one's who have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, who are born again children of God) to our Father God, to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to our brothers and sisters in Jesus, to our husbands and wives, to our children to our parents, to our friends and neighbors, to those with who we work, to the world, and to ourselves TO GET OUR ACT TOGETHER and begin getting rid of the stink of sin and death in our lives. Romans 12:1,2 says...

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Ephesians 5:8-14, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is ACCEPTABLE unto the Lord. And having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. WHEREFORE HE SAITH, AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT."

We are children of the LIGHT, those who are asleep in the deception of the enemy are TO WAKE UP AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, PUT OFF THE OLD MAN AND PUT ON THE NEW MAN

WHICH IS AFTER THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS.

This is our "**REASONABLE SERVICE**". It is an obligation which we have to God, to ourselves and to those around us. You see our spiritual maturity depends on getting rid of the stink of death, the smell of the pigpen of the world (this is, the world's attitudes, thinking patterns and habits of doing) and taking on the sweet fragrance of Jesus.

We are called by our Father God to be "imitators of Jesus." Jesus is to be our pattern for living.

Jericho, therefore, speaks of the process of taking on the sweet fragrance of Jesus, becoming a sweet smelling savor to God and those around us.

Jericho speaks of denying oneself, taking up your cross and following Jesus.

Jericho is the next step in the Christian walk. It is becoming a disciple, a learner, a follower of Jesus.

The process begins when we, like the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) "**come to ourselves**". That is when we see the reality of who we are in Jesus Christ and see the reality of the situation in which we find ourselves (that we are to a great extent living in the pigpen of the world and that our "stink" is an offense to God and those around us).

Secondly, the process continues, when we make the determination and commitment to do something about the situation in which we find ourselves..

Let me lay this on you - until you see the reality of the situation and make that commitment to do something about it - you are a "PRODIGAL SON" playing and living in the pigpen of the world of self-delusion.

Now having made the determination and commitment to do something about our situation, we are in a place where our Father God, through the working of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, can begin to clean us up.

Ephesians 5:25-27 (26).

We need to be BATHED in the Word of God.

Therefore, Jericho speaks of sitting under, and submitting to the teaching ministry in the local church, letting the Word bath us and cleanse us of all our unrighteousness.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY

LESSON 11 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - THE JORDAN - SUBMISSION TO YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

In this lesson we want to summarize and conclude the series of teachings entitled "**God's Plan for Spiritual Maturity**". Our Father God's plan for "Perfecting the Saints."

This plan of God as previously noted is revealed in the meanings of the four different places mentioned in II Kings 2:1-15 - GILGAL, BETHEL, JERICHO, AND THE JORDAN RIVER.

We have noted and would once again emphasize the progression to spiritual maturity is from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho, then to the Jordan. THERE IS NO SHORTCUT. AMEN?

The background for II Kings 2:1-15 is the ministry of Elijah as recorded in I Kings and especially the call of Elisha in I Kings 19:19-21. Let us note that after Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha that he in no way urged or encouraged Elisha to follow him. Elisha's following

Elijah was a decision he made. The strength of Elisha's commitment is seen in verse 21 where Elisha slew the oxen with which he was plowing and used the plow and yokes as fire wood. He was burning his bridges behind him. We also note that Elisha went and ministered unto Elijah, who became his spiritual father. The events of II Kings 2:1-15 took place at least 10 years later and we find Elisha still following Elijah.

Now back to II **Kings 2:1-15**.

GILGAL means a whirlwind, a moving wind - This speaks of the infilling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The initial infilling being known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the **MEANS**, the **ENABLER** of spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity cannot begin without the initial infilling of the Holy Spirit.

It does not matter how much knowledge you have of the Bible or how well you know the ways of God - If you have not been filled and are not being continually filled with the Holy Spirit - If you are not being moved and directed and motivated by Him - If you are not walking in the Spirit, under the Spirit's power, **YOU ARE FULFILLING THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH** (Galatians 5:16) which simply means you are **NOT BEING "PERFECTED"**. You are not growing up spiritually. Amen?

However, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the subsequent continual fillings is **A MEANS TO AND END, AND NOT THE END IN IT'S SELF**. The goal of spiritual maturity is to cross over the Jordan and return in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I mention this because with many believers the receiving of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit becomes their goal and once they receive it and begin to walk in some of the gifts of the Spirit, spiritual pride and independence sets in. The result being they either neglect or refuse to take the next step in God's Plan for their spiritual maturity. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit has become the end of the maturing process instead of the beginning. They stay at Gilgal instead of going to Bethel.

BETHEL means the House of God. It is the **PLACE** where spiritual maturity takes place. Bethel speaks of the Local Church, which is the body of Christ. It speaks of the need of the believer to be in a local church and to **BE IN SUBMISSION TO THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY** of that local church. Which Oversight/Bishop Ministry is administered by the Elders of that local body of Christ.

NOTE the correct order of submission to the oversight ministry of the local church.

The men, married or single, are to be submitted and find their place directly under the oversight ministry of the Elders in the local church.

With married women where husband and wife are both members of the local church, submission of the wife to the oversight ministry begins with submission to her own husband and through her husband to the Elders.

Married women whose husbands are not members of the church are considered spiritual widows and thus come directly under the oversight ministry of the Elders.

With single women in the body, submission is to the Elders.

With children where parents (one or both) are members of the church submission is to their parents and through the parents to the Elders.

Children in the body whose parents are not members of the church (neither mother or father or legal guardian) are considered spiritual orphans and therefore come directly under the oversight ministry.

Now when the believer becomes a member of the local church and has placed himself/herself under the oversight ministry of the church the primary element of submission is **TRUST**. Because of his own spiritual immaturity and lack of knowledge and

understand of the word of God, he must learn to trust God and those whom God has placed. in authority in the local church, IF the maturing process is to begin.

Here in the local church the believer under the direction and guidance of the Elders begins to grow up as:

healing and restoration takes place;

the transforming process of the Word becomes a reality;

a new way of life is learned;

he begins to walk in this new way of life;

he receives encouragement and help from brothers & sisters.

Let us understand, for the child of God to receive and keep the right perspective of life, to become a whole person, **THE LOCAL CHURCH** needs to be in the center of his life, **THE HUB** around which his life and activities revolve.

The primary reason there is so much confusion and congestion in our lives is because we are being pulled in so many different directions. In the local church we find peace and stability because we are where our Father God has placed us.

Thus Bethel speaks of the local church and its place in the life of the believer. It speaks of the believer in submission to the Elders, the overseers of his spiritual life. It speaks of brothers and sisters in Jesus loving and caring and encouraging and helping one another. It speaks of a place where the believer can find refuge and separation from the world and its ungodly ways.

Bethel, the local church, also, is **A TRAINING CENTER FOR MINISTRY**. Here in the local church Under the teaching ministry of the Elders and teachers, the believer studies and learns the Word of God, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one believing. This brings us to Jericho, the next step in the maturing process.

As we have seen, Gilgal is the **MEANS** (enabler) to spiritual maturity. Bethel is the **PLACE** of spiritual maturity. **Jericho is the HOW TOO of spiritual maturity.**

JERICHO means a fragrance. It speaks of the believer in the local church submitting himself/herself to the teaching ministry of the Elders and teachers of the local church. Jericho, thus, speaks of the believer becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, a learner of the Word of God.

As a disciple he, the believer, allows the Word of God to save him, deliver him, wash and cleans him from his bad attitudes, his stinking worldly thinking, and his bad habits (sin habits) of doing.

The believer who is now a disciple is learning the ways of God and is beginning to apply godly principles to his life letting Jesus be his pattern for living. He is learning the need to die to himself, to his wants and desires, so that Jesus might increase in him. He is learning to take up his cross and follow Jesus. Learning to become an imitator of Jesus.

He, the believer, who is now a disciple, a learner, a follower and imitator of Jesus is becoming a sweet smelling savor (fragrance) to his Heavenly Father.

Jericho, therefore, is the believer, who is a disciple, abiding in Jesus, and His Word (the word of Jesus) is abiding in the believer, with the result being that much fruit is coming forth in his life.

At this point in the believers life there is the danger of spiritual pride setting in, the attitude of, see how God is using me, bringing with it spiritual independence. Here God's plan for spiritual maturity brings the disciple to the banks of the Jordan River.

As stated above, crossing the Jordan and coming back across under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit is the **GOAL** of God's plan for spiritual maturity.

JORDAN means the descender. It speaks of the disciple in **submission to a spiritual father**, under which Father God has placed this believer, so that, in Father God's timing, he can himself become a spiritual father, receiving the double portion of his spiritual father's anointing.

Let us, by the grace of God, see and understand the need for spiritual fathers in the body of Christ. Let us see the need to be in submission to the one the Lord leads us to be under.

Submission on the part of the disciple who has reached the banks of the Jordan in his journey to spiritual maturity takes on a deeper and more complete meaning than at the beginning of his Christian walk.

At the beginning of his walk with Jesus he was just a baby spiritually and had knowledge or understanding of spiritual things. For this reason it was necessary for him through faith to trust God and to trust those whom God had placed in the local church as teachers and Elders.

Now, however, the disciple at the banks of the Jordan, has through his submission to the oversight/bishop ministry of the church and by his submission to the teaching ministry of the church has reached a high level of spiritual maturity in the Lord Jesus, the fruit of this maturity is evident in his life.

He has spiritual stability; he has become in reality an overcomer; he is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; perhaps he has become a teacher, or a deacon, or an Elder in the local body; he has grown-up in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord; he is chewing and digesting the meat of God's Word; he is being used greatly by God in the work of the ministry.

Now, because, he is being used by God; because he does have discernment and understanding of spiritual things, through his knowledge of the Bible and the ways of his Father God; because of his strength in the Lord - **HE IS FACED WITH THE GREATEST DANGER OF HIS CHRISTIAN WALK.** He is in danger of spiritual pride and spiritual independence.

If he is to cross the Jordan and return in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit - receiving the double portion of the Spirit, his submission **MUST** be more complete than at the beginning of his Christian walk.

He must know and acknowledge that even with all his Bible knowledge and spiritual understanding that he can not and must not lean on his own understanding.

He must know and understand, even as the Lord Jesus knew and understood that of himself he can do nothing.

He must submit to the fact and confess with Jeremiah,

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him self: it is not in man that worketh to direct his steps" Jeremiah 10:23.

He must humble himself under the mighty hand of God (the mighty hand of God is represented by the five fold ministry); submitting himself to his spiritual father, knowing that he is not yet ready to go out on his own, but that he still needs to listen to and accept the wisdom and counsel of his spiritual father.

This total submission to God and his spiritual father takes him across the Jordan, where he is now in a position to **ASK for and RECEIVE** a double portion of the Spirit's anointing which rests upon his spiritual father.

His return to the other side of the Jordan is in a demonstration of the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. And those disciple and believers on that side of the Jordan on his return will acknowledge that "the spirit of Elijah doth rest on" him. They will come to meet him and bow in submission to him, acknowledging him to be in fact their spiritual father.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 1 - THREEFOLD SALVATION - PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Our Father God would remind us , Psalm 81:8-16, that He desires to:

completely and quickly subdue our enemies;

bring even the unrighteous into submission to Himself;

to give you, His children, the very best He has;

completely satisfy you.

Our Father God is telling us that He will do all those things **IF** we will walk in His ways; if we will order the course of our lives according to His plan for us. Father God wants us to live in victory. Amen? Thank you Jesus.

Previously, we have discussed that the foundation and beginning for ordering one's life according to God's Plan is FAITH TOWARDS GOD. Romans 1:17 says, "The just shall **live** by faith." Galatians 5:6 tells us that the faith by which we are to live is faith that is activated, turned on, energized by selfless, self sacrificing acts of love, "... **but faith which worketh by love.**"

This love which activates faith toward God will be evident in our lives as we deny ourselves and let Jesus in us live His life through us.

Now specifically God's ways for you, His children, has the purpose of accomplishing in His children His goal for their lives. This goal of God for you is that you "**...grow up into Him in all things...**" (Ephesians 4:15).

You see, our Father God's desire for us is that we grow-up and become spiritually mature.

As we have seen, our Father God is at work "perfecting the saints" and to accomplish this He has outlined for us in His Word the plan which He in His infinite grace and mercy has designed to accomplish his purposes in our lives.

Now this lesson as we continue to learn the ways of God so that we can walk in them and receive God's full blessing in our lives, we want to understand and see (lest we get entangled and caught-up in striving) that the accomplishment of God's plan for the "Perfecting of the Saints" is **NOT OUR WORK**, but rather, is **HIS (GOD'S) WORK**.

"Being confident of this very thing; that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform (lit. Gk., complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

You see, God began that good work in you, when the Holy Spirit through the Word of God created faith in you which received Jesus (latched unto/received Jesus Christ) as your personal Savior. God began that good work. You had nothing to do with it. The faith which accepted Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross of Calvary was a gift of God's grace.

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that (faith) not of yourselves; it is (faith) the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians

2:8,9) "

"...when we were DEAD in sin, (God) hath QUICKENED (lit. Gk., made alive) US together with Christ, for by grace are you saved." (Ephesians 2:5)

Let us understand that this life which we now have in Jesus Christ is solely and completely the work of God's grace and mercy. It is a miracle "new birth". It is a resurrection from DEATH TO LIFE.

I want to lay to rest the idea many have that salvation is a result of a sinner (one who is dead in sin) REPENTING AND MAKING A DECISION FOR CHRIST.

QUESTION: Have you ever seen or have personal knowledge of a dead person who had the ability to make any kind of a decision; much less the ability to make the decision to begin living?

Now, isn't that what you would be saying if you contend that a dead person must repent of being dead and make the decision, while he is still dead, to accept Jesus as his Deliverer, Savior from that state of death? Or, how can a dead person resist being dead?

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 puts it this way,

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are! lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Lazarus, in John, chapter 11, is a picture of what we are talking about. Lazarus was dead. Jesus, who is the Word of life, speaks to this dead Lazarus and life begins to flow through Him. Lazarus had nothing to do with it. It was a resurrection from death to life.

That's what the new birth is all about. It is God, the Holy Spirit, speaking the "Word of Life" to the one who is "dead in trespasses and sin"; the one whose mind is spiritually blinded by satan; to the one who is an enemy of God. The "word of Life" which is the power of God unto salvation, creates out of death, life and that person who was dead is now alive. He has been "born again". He is now a new creation in Jesus Christ.

"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17)

The point is that the new birth which makes us a member of the family of God is the BEGINNING of God's Work in us. Which work is solely and completely accomplished without any help on our part. IT IS THE WORK OF GOD.

Let us now see from the Word of God what this beginning work of God has accomplished.

John 1:12,13

2 Peter 1:4

1 John 4:17

2 Corinthians 5:17

Romans 8:11

Why no condemnation?

Corinthians 15:3

Romans 7:20

John 10:28,29

NOT BAD FOR A BEGINNING, IS IT?

BUT, THAT IS NOT ALL - IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF OUR SALVATION. Philippians 1:6 continues by saying,

" . . . He . . . will perform it (will complete it) . . . "

God will complete the work which He has begun. Amen?

QUESTION: What else needs to be done?

ANSWER: The sin in us needs to be gotten out of us.

The first phase of salvation was an instantaneous act and delivered, saved us from the guilt and condemnation of sin, The second phase of salvation is both progressive and conditional. Here as God is continuing His work in us we are being delivered, saved from the power and control of the sin which dwells in us.

There is yet a third phase of salvation which will take place when Jesus returns for those that are His. This is the beginning of what is know as the day of Jesus Christ. This phase of our salvation is referred to as the redemption of the body. Here we will be delivered, saved from the very presence of sin.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 2 - CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION - PHILIPPIANS 2:12,13

In the previous lesson we began talking about GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION. We said that salvation is NOT our work, but is a work of God in us. A work of God which we can add nothing to or take any thing away from it.

"...He which bath begun a good work in you will perform it (continue to completion), until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6).

God began that good work when the Holy Spirit through the Word of God created faith in you which received Jesus as your Savior.

Now that good work which was begun in you was solely a work of God, without any help from you. Amen.

"For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast. for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10).

As we talked about in the previous lesson, this good work is the FIRST PHASE of a "threefold salvation" which God in His grace and mercy has begun in us.

The purpose of this beginning work of God was to give us a new STANDING, RELATIONSHIP with God. This beginning work of God ushers us into the kingdom of God.

We who were "dead in trespasses and sins", who were enemies of God; are now through this beginning work of God re-created in Christ Jesus; resurrected from death unto life; being born into the family of God.

THEREFORE, our new STANDING before God is that of a CHILD OF GOD. God is our Father, we are His children. Amen?

In this lesson we want to begin talking about the 2nd phase of God's plan of salvation.

Which, once again, is NOT LABORING, WORKING TO KEEP OUR STANDING WITH GOD.

When you were born again you entered into that COMPLETED WORK OF GOD BY FAITH. 1 Peter 1:5 says that you are

"...kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last times."

As Paul would say in Colossians 2:10, "**You are complete in Him...**" Amen! Glory! Thank you Jesus!

Why is it so important for us to see and understand that we are to cease from our effort to keep our STANDING with God? WHY? because if we don't we will be so caught up in working and striving to keep our standing and relationship with the Father that we will not produce the fruit of the 2nd phase of our threefold salvation.

This 2nd phase of salvation, or sanctification, is God our Father conforming us into the image of Jesus. Here we are being delivered from the power and control of the sin dwelling in us.

Philippians 2:12,13 is speaking about this phase of your salvation or deliverance.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. FOR IT IS GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Notice it does not say "work for your salvation". What it literally says is "work" your salvation. Work your salvation as a farmer works the land. You are to cultivate your salvation in Jesus Christ so that it will bring forth good abundant fruit. You are to cultivate that completed salvation, that work which God has begun in you through faith in Jesus Christ.

That salvation which has been worked in you and which you then are to work is beautifully summarized in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (Lit. GK. creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

With that though in mind, look again at Philippians 2:12, "Cultivate your own salvation", would mean that you are to cultivate this new creation (person) which you have become as a result of the good work which God began in you.

This, then agrees with 1 Corinthians 3:9 which says that,

"...we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry (lit. Gk. tillage), ye are God's building."

The born again child of God is **GOD'S TILLAGE (GARDEN)**. Our soul is the garden of God and we are to keep it, tend it, cultivate it (Genesis 2:15).

Now, when you cultivate a garden (especially a new garden spot), what do you do?

clear the ground

break the ground (plow it up)

fertilize the soil - add the needed nutrients for specific seeds you are to plant

plant the seed

water the seed

hoe out the weeds

keep out the insects and birds of prey that would destroy the plants before they can be harvested

harvest the fruit, so that you might enjoy the fruit of your labor

How does this relate to the cultivating of who we are in Christ Jesus? The cultivating of our salvation?

As the purpose of planting and cultivating a garden is the fruit which it produces, so the cultivating of our soul is for the purpose of producing good, godly fruit in the garden of our soul.

Now look, once again at verse 13 of Philippians, chapter 2.

"For it is God which WORKETH in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

BOTTOM LINE - sanctification is God completing the good work which He has begun.
AMEN? AMEN!! Thank you Jesus!!

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 3 - REASONS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION # 1 - THE FATHER'S CHASTISEMENT - HEBREWS 12:11

In the previous lesson we talked about God's plan of salvation, which salvation is a 3-fold salvation.

Philippians 1:6 describes this plan of salvation as:

salvation which God in Jesus Christ has begun; salvation He is continuing to complete; salvation which will be completed by Him (God) in the day of Jesus Christ.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 10 is also speaking of 3 fold salvation, we read, (God)

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

This beginning salvation, delivering us from so great a death, which deliverance is wholly the work of God without any help from us has delivered us, saved us from the guilt and condemnation of sin. It has saved us from the eternal punishment of sin in the lake of fire and has through the new birth in Jesus Christ given us an eternal **STANDING WITH** God as His very own dear child.

The 2nd phase of the 3 fold salvation is a salvation which God our Father is in the process of working in us. This phase of salvation is delivering us from the power and control of the sin, which sin, Paul in Romans chapter 7 verses 17 and 20 says is dwelling in us.

This phase of our salvation is progressive and here we as co-labours of God are instructed in Philippians 2:12,13 to cultivate our salvation. To cultivate that new creation which we have become as a result of our new birth in Jesus Christ. We are to cultivate our salvation, as you would cultivate a garden, for the purpose of bringing forth good fruit. Amen?.

Now in this lesson we want to begin looking at the reasons for being co-labours with God, cultivating our salvation (That is allowing our Father God, through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to mold us into what He wants us to become.)

Before we look at the reasons for yielding ourselves to God, let us understand two truths (facts).

First and of foremost importance is to know and understand that nothing and/or no one (not even yourself) can take away the salvation that God has begun in you. You are a CHILD OF GOD AND HAVE BEEN SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE IN THAT STANDING.

Ephesians 1:13,14 says,

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were SEALED with the Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest (or guarantee) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Again in Ephesians 4:30 Paul tells us that our salvation is SEALED by the Holy Spirit and thus made sure.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Secondly, let us understand that with or without you being a yielded vessel, God will accomplish His purposes in your life. Amen?

WHY THEN, if we have an eternal standing with God, eternal life and God is going to accomplish His purposes with or without my yielding and consent, WHY WORK YOUR SALVATION?

Why not just continue doing what we have always done? God is going to complete the work He begun, so why should we put out any effort to Cultivate our salvation?

The first reason we want to look at for entering into a co-labor relationship of cultivating our salvation with our Father God is a **NEGATIVE REASON - GOD'S CHASTISEMENT.**

Hebrews 12:1-11(6)

Ephesians 4:30

1 Thessalonians 5:19

If we grieve the Holy Spirit by continuing in sin, by not cultivating our salvation (that is getting the sin in us out of us) we will eventually quench the working and moving of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Genesis 6:3

Specifically, what will grieve, quench the Holy Spirit and eventually cause the Spirit to stop striving with the believer? WILLFUL SIN!!! Hebrews 10:26-27 says,

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

Willful sin will be judged with a consuming zealousness (zeal). the Lord says, Exodus 20:5,

"...I the lord Thy God am a jealous God..."

Now the purpose of judgment on the part of God is to DEVOUR THE SIN (adversary).

In 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 we have of an example of this as Paul instructs the Corinthian Church to deliver the one who is living in sin with his father's wife to satan, for the destruction of the flesh (sin) that he might be saved.

In Matthew 18:34 the unjust servant is delivered to the tormentor until the sin is devoured

Take note: a case of miseries in your life may indicate that you are under the hand of the tormentor because God is judging willful sin in your life. JOB is a classic example of sin being

judged by God permitting the hand of the tormentor to be upon the person who is not himself judging the sin in his life.

Isaiah 5:1-7 speaks of the child of God (the believer) as being the vineyard (garden) of God and that living in willful sin, unrepented sin will result in God removing His hedge of protection

Matthew 21:42-44 tells us that not falling on Rock (not repenting of sin) causes the Rock to Fall on the one who is living in willful sin.

Oh, let us understand that WILLFUL SIN will bring the judgment of God upon that sin with the purpose of getting rid of the sin through repentance.

You see, if you will not willingly get the sin dwelling in you out of you, God in His grace and mercy will help you get it out.

Now what is WILLFUL SIN? Willful sin is sin which we commit knowingly and voluntarily. It is sin which comes out of our will (soulish), out of our desire to do what we want to do. It is indulging our flesh.

Willful sin often begins with the child of God saying something like this, "**I know I should or should not do this or that, BUT...**" Then comes the rational, logical excuses for doing or not doing it.

Here is seen an attitude of God as a gray haired Grand Father who will allow His children to do what they please as long as they don't do anything really bad.

Or, an attitude that believes if you have a good reason for not doing what you know you should do that God will agree with you and thus excuse your disobedience.

Willful sin, also can and often does have it's beginning in defiance and rebellion against God. It manifests it's self in a stubbornness that says, "I don't care what God says, I am going to do what I want to do."

THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S CHASTISEMENT is seen in Hebrews 12:11.

"Now no chastising for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless AFTERWARD IT YIELDETH THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS unto them which are exercised thereby."

WHY CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION? Reason # 1 simply stated says,

"Even though the eternal consequence of sin has been removed from the born again child of God, there still remains for the child of God, the temporal consequence of not yielding to the will of the Father which according to Hebrews 12:6 is Father God chastising and whipping those whom He loves when they are disobedient."

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 4 - REASONS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION # 2 - THE BETTER RESURRECTION (PART 1)

In our last lesson we began looking at the **REASONS** for being co-labours with our Father God in the cultivating of our salvation. That is, why we should cooperate with God, being willing to allow our Father God to mold us into what He wants us to become as His children.

WHY? if when we were born we were saved, delivered from the eternal guilt and punishment of sin, that is the eternal consequence of sin; and if God is going to complete

the work He has begun in us even if we don't cooperate with Him. WHY? should we put out any effort to live a Christian life, cultivating our salvation?

Why? Reason # 1 which we talked about in the previous lesson simply and clearly stated is this:

Even though the eternal consequence of sin has been removed from the born again child of God, there still remains even for the child of God the temporal consequence of sin which according to Hebrews 12:6 is Father God chastising and whipping those whom He loves, when they are disobedient.

Now the purpose of these corrective measures on the part of our Father, however severe they may be, is to produce fruits of righteousness in the lives of those being corrected by God.

Therefore, to the extent or degree to which we actively get involved with God in the cultivation of our Christian walk, that is getting ourselves, our attitudes, our thinking, our way of life, lined up with God's Plan for our lives, to that degree we will not have to be on the receiving end of our Father's corrective measures.

Now if avoiding the correction of God is not motivation or reason enough for ordering our lives according to God's Plan, the Holy Spirit would reveal to us in this lesson another reason for cultivating our salvation.

REASON #2, which we will talk about this lesson says, **FOR THOSE WHO YIELD THEMSELVES IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD AS INSTRUMENTS AND VESSELS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ORDERING THEIR LIVES ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN THERE WILL BE A REWARD.**

What is the REWARD (prize) for overcoming the sin which dwells within us. Hebrews 11:35,

"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."

Philippians 3:11 identifies and describes that better resurrection as an OUT-RESURRECTION, that is a resurrection out from, distinct from, BEFORE THE GENERAL RESURRECTION of those belonging to Jesus.

Point of clarification. The Greek word translated resurrection in Philippians 3:11 is ec-anastasis. In every other instance in the New Testament resurrection is a translation of anastasia NOT ecanastasis. Ec is a Greek prefix which means out, in front of, out from. Thus the literal translation of ec-anastasis in Philippians is out-resurrection not resurrection nor is it resurrection out from the dead.

With this understanding we can see what Paul is saying in Philippians 3:11-14.

"If by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching unto those things which are before. I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF God in Christ JESUS."

Now that we might see this more clearly we need to look at what the Bible says about the Rapture and resurrection.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The Rapture means the departing or catching away of the church, spelled out in 1 Thes. 4:16-17.

Evidence for the rapture is certainly not insignificant. The Doctrine of the Rapture of the

Church has various interpretations and doctrinal positions in the evangelical churches.

Pre-tribulation rapture

Post-tribulation rapture

Mid-tribulation rapture

Overcomers, Pre-tribulation rapture with carnal church going into tribulation.

1) Out or better resurrection, Phil 3:11; Heb 11:35; Rev 3:10; Lk 21:36; Rev. 4 (Saints in Heaven before Tribulation begins); Rev 12:5

2) Church in Tribulation, Rev 7:14-16; Rev 13:7; Rev 12:6,13,14,17 (Woman = church)

3) Church will not go through "Day of God's Wrath" Rev. 6:17; Jer 30:7; Rom 5:9; 1 Thes 1:10; Rev 15:1-4 (Cf. Rev 4:6)

Thus the BETTER RESURRECTION which is the prize, the reward for being co-labours with the Father in the cultivation of the garden of the soul is an escaping of the suffering under the persecution of the Anti-christ during the 1st 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation by means of the Rapture.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 5 - REASONS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION # 3 - THE BETTER RESURRECTION (PART 2) - THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

In this lesson we want to continue talking about 3 Fold Salvation which is God's plan of complete salvation for His children.

We have talked about how the 1st phase of our salvation has birthed us into the family of God, as His dear children and therefore has delivered us from the eternal punishment of sin, giving us an eternal, permanent standing with God as a child of God.

We have, also talked about the 2nd phase of our 3 fold salvation, which salvation is in the process of delivering us from the power and control of the sin dwelling in us.

As we have noted this phase of our salvation is progressive and here we are co-labours with our Father and are working, cultivating that salvation for the purpose of producing in our lives the good fruit for which we were re-generated, re-created in Jesus. Which good fruit is to be useful to the Father in the work of the kingdom.

Now for the two previous lessons we have been talking about REASONS for cooperating with our father as co-labours in getting the sin dwelling in us, OUT OF US. Why we should be cultivating this new creation which we have become by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

REASON # 1 says, "Even though the eternal consequence of sin has been removed from the child of God through being birthed into God's Family as a child of God, there still remains, even for the child of God, the TEMPORAL consequence of sin which according to Hebrews 12:6 is our Father chastising and whipping His children for their acts of disobedience."

Why the chastising? Because He loves them.

Therefore to the degree that we get our act together, that is get ourselves, our attitudes, our thinking, our life style in line with who we really are in Christ Jesus, to that extent we will not be on the receiving end of God's corrective measures.

REASON # 2 which we began talking about in the previous lesson says, "For those who yield themselves in obedience to the will of the Father, cultivating their salvation, they will receive a REWARD (PRIZE) for being co-laborers with their Father God in this phase of their salvation."

Specifically the reward for overcoming the sin which is in us is according to Hebrews 11:35, **A BETTER RESURRECTION.**

This better resurrection is identified and described in Philippians 3:11. It is a resurrection, out from, distinct from, separate from, before the general resurrection of those belonging to Jesus.

This better resurrection is known as the Rapture which takes place before the Tribulation. Thus those who are in the process of overcoming the sin dwelling in them, watching and praying (Luke 21:36), persevering in the Word (Revelation 3:10) will be RAPTURED before the Tribulation starts. As a result they will escape the suffering of those children of God, who through their disobedience and carnal living will go into the Tribulation.

First of all we see that the BETTER RESURRECTION is an escaping of the suffering under the persecution of the anti-christ during the 1st 3/12 years of the Tribulation for those overcomers who are alive here on earth at the time of the Rapture by being raptured out of the world before the Tribulation.

Now, since the Tribulation will be a physical tribulation, a persecution of the believers who are living on earth, the overcomers who will benefit by being raptured as we stated above will be those who are still living on earth when the rapture takes place.

Keeping this in mind, how will the overcomers who have passed on to be with the Lord before the Rapture benefit from the better Resurrection? What will be their Reward/Prize for persevering in the Word, as they will automatically escape the suffering of the Tribulation by virtue of having gone on to be with the Lord? What will the OUT-RESURRECTION have, for them?

It is to the BETTER RESURRECTION for the overcomer who has passed on, who is asleep in Jesus, as well as to the ones living at the time of the Rapture we want to address in this lesson.

To answer these questions we must carefully consider what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3.

2 Corinthians 11:1-3, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

In this passage we see that those who belong to the Father through the new birth have been ESPOUSED, PROMISED TO Jesus. These espoused ones are to be presented to Christ having been prepared and made ready, A CHASTE VIRGIN (pure [undefiled], pure [undefiled]). Ones who have not been deceived by; Satan; whose minds are not corrupted; whose minds have been transformed; who have their minds on Jesus.

What is the basic process of becoming an OVERCOMER, A PURE PURE BELIEVER (a chaste virgin)? Is it not a process which begins with the Holy Spirit convicting us of the sin in our lives with the purpose of bringing us to repentance? That is bringing us to the realization that we have sinned against God our Father, which brings on godly sorrow, resulting in our decision to get that sin out of our life and then doing it through the power of God dwelling in us.

Thus daily repentance, or as Luke 21:36 says, "Watching and praying always", KEEPS US A

CHASTE (PURE) VIRGIN (PURE) BELIEVER, AN OVERCOMER.

It is the **CHASTE VIRGIN, the OVERCOMER** (the one watching and praying always, persevering in the Word **WHO WILL BEIN THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**).

Note: The Bible does not say, nor does it even imply that the church/Body of Christ or the body of believers is the Bride of Christ; but rather it is espoused, engaged to be the Bride. Amen?

We see this more clearly in Matthew 25:1-13.

- verse 1, all are virgins (new creations in Christ Jesus, having been made pure through the blood of Jesus, all are born again)

- verse 2, there are 5 wise virgins and 5 foolish virgins

- verse 3, the 5 foolish had their lamps but no reserve of oil. Oil = Holy Spirit. They either have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit or if they had received the Holy Spirit Baptism they had grieved and quenched the Spirit or had neglected continually being filled. Which ever, they are called foolish.

- verse 4, the 5 wise took oil for their lamps. Even though the wise child of God has sin in his life, he knows that through repentance he is restored to the close presence of God. Thus he daily repents of sin in his life and is full of the Holy Spirit) through daily praying to be filled. He applies the Word of God to his daily life. Thus he is wise. Wisdom = applying your knowledge of the Word to your life.

- verse 5, While bridegroom tarried all 10 virgins slumbered and slept. Even the wise at times slumber, rest from their active obedience of the ways of God. However, when Jesus, the Bridegroom comes, that which keeps them prepared, CHASTE VIRGINS, is their watching and praying. Even in their slumbering and sleeping their heart is on the Bridegroom. They are filled with the Spirit of Promise.

- verse 10, shows the foolish virgins not being prepared when Jesus returns for His Bride, so they miss the Rapture and go into the Tribulation where they will be persecuted by the Antichrist (there we be weeping and gnashing of teeth).

- verse 12, Jesus says to the foolish "I know you not", literally it says I did not have a close intimate, relationship with you. The foolish virgins did not hunger and thirst after Jesus and His righteousness. Amen?

As this applies to those virgins (born again children of God) who are living when Jesus returns, so also it applies to those who are asleep in Jesus.

If those who are asleep in Jesus were watching and praying when God took them home, they are the wise virgins, the OVERCOMERS, and thus will be in the Bride of Christ.

If they were not watching and praying when God took them home they will miss out on being in the Bride of Christ.

To be part of the Bride of Jesus is then another of the BENEFITS OF THE BETTER RESURRECTION and thus is A REASON for Godly living. Amen.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 5 - REASONS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION # 3 - THE BETTER RESURRECTION (PART 2) - THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

In this lesson we want to continue talking about 3 Fold Salvation which is God's plan of complete salvation for His children.

We have talked about how the 1st phase of our salvation has birthed us into the family of God, as His dear children and therefore has delivered us from the eternal punishment of sin, giving us an eternal, permanent standing with God as a child of God.

We have, also talked about the 2nd phase of our 3 fold salvation, which salvation is in the process of delivering us from the power and control of the sin dwelling in us.

As we have noted this phase of our salvation is progressive and here we are co-labours with our Father and are working, cultivating that salvation for the purpose of producing in our lives the good fruit for which we were re-generated, re-created in Jesus. Which good fruit is to be useful to the Father in the work of the kingdom.

Now for the two previous lessons we have been talking about REASONS for cooperating with our father as co-labours in getting the sin dwelling in us, OUT OF US. Why we should be cultivating this new creation which we have become by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

REASON # 1 says, "Even though the eternal consequence of sin has been removed from the child of God through being birthed into God's Family as a child of God, there still remains, even for the child of God, the TEMPORAL consequence of sin which according to Hebrews 12:6 is our Father chastising and whipping His children for their acts of disobedience."

Why the chastising? Because He loves them.

Therefore to the degree that we get our act together, that is get ourselves, our attitudes, our thinking, our life style in line with who we really are in Christ Jesus, to that extent we will not be on the receiving end of God's corrective measures.

REASON # 2 which we began talking about in the previous lesson says, "For those who yield themselves in obedience to the will of the Father, cultivating their salvation, they will receive a REWARD (PRIZE) for being co-labors with their Father God in this phase of their salvation."

Specifically the reward for overcoming the sin which is in us is according to Hebrews 11:35, **A BETTER RESURRECTION.**

This better resurrection is identified and described in Philippians 3:11. It is a resurrection, out from, distinct from, separate from, before the general resurrection of those belonging to Jesus.

This better resurrection is know as the Rapture which takes place before the Tribulation. Thus those who are in the process of overcoming the sin dwelling in them, watching and praying (Luke 21:36), persevering in the Word (Revelation 3:10) will be RAPTURED before the Tribulation starts. As a result they will escape the suffering of those children of God, who through their disobedience and carnal living will go into the Tribulation.

First of all we see that the BETTER RESURRECTION is an escaping of the suffering under the persecution of the anti-christ during the 1st 3/12 years of the Tribulation for those overcomers who are alive here on earth at the time of the Rapture by being raptured out of the world before the Tribulation.

Now, since the Tribulation will be a physical tribulation, a persecution of the believers who are living on earth, the overcomers who will benefit by being raptured as we stated above will be those who are still living on earth when the rapture takes place.

Keeping this in mind, how will the overcomers who have passed on to be with the Lord before the Rapture benefit from the better Resurrection? What will be their Reward/Prize for persevering in the Word, as they will automatically escape the suffering of the

Tribulation by virtue of having gone on to be with the Lord? What will the OUT-RESURRECTION have, for them?

It is to the BETTER RESURRECTION for the overcomer who has passed on, who is asleep in Jesus, as well as to the ones living at the time of the Rapture we want to address in this lesson.

To answer these question we must carefully consider what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3.

2 Corinthians 11:1-3, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

In this passage we see that those who belong to the Father through the new birth have been ESPOUSED, PROMISED TO Jesus. These espoused ones are to be presented to Christ having been prepared and made ready, A CHASTE VIRGIN (pure [undefiled], pure [undefiled]). Ones who have not been deceived by; Satan; whose minds are not corrupted; whose minds have been transformed; who have their minds on Jesus.

What is the basic process of becoming an OVERCOMER, A PURE PURE BELIEVER (a chaste virgin)? Is it not a process which begins with the Holy Spirit convicting us of the sin in our lives with the purpose of bringing us to repentance? That is bringing us to the realization that we have sinned against God our Father, which brings on godly sorrow, resulting in our decision to get that sin out of our life and then doing it through the power of God dwelling in us.

Thus daily repentance, or as Luke 21:36 says, "Watching and praying always", KEEPS US A CHASTE (PURE) VIRGIN (PURE) BELIEVER, AN OVERCOMER.

It is the **CHASTE VIRGIN, the OVERCOMER** (the one watching and praying always, persevering in the Word **WHO WILL BEIN THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**).

Note: The Bible does not say, nor does it even imply that the church/Body of Christ or the body of believers is the Bride of Christ; but rather it is espoused, engaged to be the Bride. Amen?

We see this more clearly in Matthew 25:1-13.

- verse 1, all are virgins (new creations in Christ Jesus, having been made pure through the blood of Jesus, all are born again)

- verse 2, there are 5 wise virgins and 5 foolish virgins

- verse 3, the 5 foolish had their lamps but no reserve of oil. Oil = Holy Spirit. They either have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit or if they had received the Holy Spirit Baptism they had grieved and quenched the Spirit or had neglected continually being filled. Which ever, they are called foolish.

- verse 4, the 5 wise took oil for their lamps. Even though the wise child of God has sin in his life, he knows that through repentance he is restored to the close presence of God. Thus he daily repents of sin in his life and is full of the Holy Spirit) through daily praying to be filled. He applies the Word of God to his daily life. Thus he is wise. Wisdom = applying your knowledge of the Word to your life.

- verse 5, While bridegroom tarried all 10 virgins slumbered and slept. Even the wise at times slumber, rest from their active obedience of the ways of God. However, when Jesus, the Bridegroom comes, that which keeps them prepared, CHASTE VIRGINS, is their watching and praying. Even in their slumbering and sleeping their heart is on the Bridegroom. They

are filled with the Spirit of Promise.

- verse 10, shows the foolish virgins not being prepared when Jesus returns for His Bride, so they miss the Rapture and go into the Tribulation where they will be persecuted by the Antichrist (there we be weeping and gnashing of teeth).

- verse 12, Jesus says to the foolish "I know you not", literally it says I did not have a close intimate, relationship with you. The foolish virgins did not hunger and thirst after Jesus and His righteousness. Amen?

As this applies to those virgins (born again children of God) who are living when Jesus returns, so also it applies to those who are asleep in Jesus.

If those who are asleep in Jesus were watching and praying when God took them home, they are the wise virgins, the OVERCOMERS, and thus will be in the Bride of Christ.

If they were not watching and praying when God took them home they will miss out on being in the Bride of Christ.

To be part of the Bride of Jesus is then another of the BENEFITS OF THE BETTER RESURRECTION and thus is A REASON for Godly living. Amen.

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [NEXT LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN (WAYS)

UNIT IV - GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON 6 - REASONS TO CULTIVATE YOUR SALVATION # 4 - TEMPORAL REWARDS

Beloved in our previous lessons we have within the context of three fold salvation, been looking at reasons, motivations for cultivating the salvation which we have through our new birth in Jesus Christ.

This question has been asked in relationship to reasons for cultivating our salvation, "Shouldn't our love for Jesus, be enough reason for living according to God's ways?" "Didn't Paul, the Apostle, say in 2 Corinthians 5:14, **"The love of Christ constraineth us (compel, motivate us)"?**

Let me answer the question this way - For the Spiritual man or woman, that is the person who is fully, completely, at all times walking in the Spirit - Yes, his/her love for Jesus is certainly enough motivation for cultivating his salvation - walking the walk as well as talking the talk. Galatians 5:16 says,

"...walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts (desires) of the flesh (body).

However, which one of us is that "Spiritual Man or Woman" who all that time is walking in the Spirit? 1 John 1:10 says,

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Therefore, for those times we are not completely walking in the Spirit, we need other motivation for the cultivating of our salvation.

Beloved, not only us today, but, also, the Apostle Paul, who said,

"...the love of Christ constraineth us..."

...also, said as recorded in 1 Corinthians 9:27,

"But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Let me make a point of clarification right here: "cast-away" does not have the meaning of being rejected by God. Paul was not saying God would reject him and thus he would lose His eternal salvation.

Castaway means not to pass the test, it means to be disqualified.

Thus Paul is saying that he did not want to fail the test and therefore be disqualified and lose out. What was Paul not wanting to be disqualified from and thus lose out on? THE PRIZE OF THE OUT or BETTER RESURRECTION. Paul says in Philippians 3:14,

"I press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ."

Thus Paul was not only motivated by the love of Christ; but he was, also, motivated; by the fact that he could be disqualified, set aside, lose his reward. Or to look at from the positive side, Paul was motivated by the REWARD which he would receive if he pressed on and pressed into Jesus by bring his body into subjection.

So what is the answer to the question, "Shouldn't our love for Jesus, be enough motivation, sufficient reason for living according to God's plan. The answer is YES IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH REASON. And it is reason enough when we are walking in the Spirit. But when we are struggling in our spiritual walk, when we are weak spiritually, we need other motivations and reasons for cultivating our salvation. Amen?

Previously, we have looked at 2 reasons why we should be working, cultivating our salvation in Jesus Christ.

Reason #1 says, that for the child of God, there will be temporal consequences for acts of disobedience, as Hebrews 12:6 says,

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth or corrects and scourgeth/whips every son whom He receiveth."

Therefore to the degree we get our act together - getting ourselves, our attitudes, our thinking, our life style in line with God's ways - to that extent we will not be on the receiving end of God's corrective measures.

Thus to that extent we will escape the temporal consequences of the sin sin dwelling in us. Amen?

Reason #2 says, for those who yield themselves in obedience to God's ways, cultivating their salvation as a co-labourer with the Father, will receive reward/prize.

This reward or prize is according to Hebrews 11:35, **"...A better resurrection..."**

Now the "better resurrection" is twofold. The first is identified by Paul in Philippians 3:11, in his use of the Greek word meaning "out resurrection", instead of the normal word used for resurrection in the New Testament.

The out resurrection is a better resurrection because it is out from, distinct from, before the general resurrection of those belonging to Jesus. Which general resurrection will not take place until mid way through the Great Tribulation.

The out resurrection will take place before the tribulation which means that for those who qualify for the out resurrection through their watching and praying always, will escape the suffering of those believers who because of their disobedience and carnal living will be persecuted and suffer in the tribulation at the hands of the antichrist.

The second part of the better resurrection is that those who are prepared and thus qualify for the out resurrection, also, know as the overcomers resurrection, will according to Matthew chapter 25 be in the BRIDE OF CHRIST. Whereas, those disobedient children will miss out on being in the Bride of Christ.

NOTE: the entire church will not be in the bride of Christ. Only those who are watching over their lives, cultivating the garden of their soul and who are praying to keep the vessel full of the Spirit will be in the bride of Christ.

Now before we take up the fourth reason for cultivating our salvation. let us look at what many of God's children, wrongly consider as motivation for Christian living which reason, motivation is a lie of satan.

This lie of satan which holds many of God's children in the bondage of legalism says, "If you do not do this or that, or if you do, do this or that, or if you do not keep yourself pure in a oneness with the Father, THEN YOU WILL LOSE YOUR ETERNAL SALVATION.

This lie of satan is based on scripture passages which are either taken out of context and mis-interpreted; or passages of scripture which are either referring to sanctification, or progressive salvation in our soulor referring to those who were never born-again.

We will not discuss these passages in this lesson, however, there is a paper entitled "PASSAGES WRONGLY USED AGAINST ETERNAL SALVATION" which is available upon request.

Beloved I want you to know and understand having absolutely no doubt, YOU CANNOT LOSE YOUR ETERNAL STANDING BEFORE GOD. Through the new birth in Jesus Christ you have a permanent standing as a child and heir of the Father. This is a finished, completed work which you may with complete assurance REST IN.

You have been once and for all time delivered from the eternal consequence, punishment of sin. Jesus being made that sin for you, in your place was the object of God's wrath and judgment for your sins, past present and future. Jesus was condemned and received the punishment of that condemnation for you. Amen!

Beloved, anything less than salvation completed in Jesus Christ, less than salvation that is eternal is a lie of satan. Your eternal salvation is not conditioned on you doing or not doing

anything. It, your salvation is wholly the work of God. Amen!

Let us now look at reason #4 for cultivating our salvation. Which reason is to receive God's abundant blessings in this life - thus if we will order the course of our lives in obedience to the ways of God, cultivating the garden of our soul **THERE WILL BE TEMPORAL REWARDS.** We will be able to enjoy in this life the fruit of our labors.

In John 10:10 Jesus says,

". . . I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly."

Beloved, Jesus through the moving and working of the Holy Spirit, came into your life to deliver you from death, giving you life and He wants you to have that life abundantly. Now, whereas, the life which He came to give you is unconditional, without any effort on your part; the abundant life is conditional as it requires of you growth in your soul. It requires you ordering the course of your life in accordance to God's plan.

Deuteronomy chapter 28 verses 1-13 shows this quite clearly.

- verses 1-2 gives us God's plan that will produce the abundant life.

First we are to hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord. To hearken diligently means to listen carefully to what God is saying with an attitude of obedience. Then we are to observe and do what He then tells us to do. Amen?

Now, what is God saying to you?

Philippians 2:12 is the Word of God telling you to work your salvation. To cultivate the garden of your soul.

What are the steps in the process of cultivating a garden?

- get weeds, junk and trash out
- break up the ground
- build up the soil
- plant good seed. The good seed you are to plant in your soul is to replace bad attitudes, thinking habits, and bad habits of doing with good godly habits.
- water the seed. Water speaks of the Word of God.
- prune for better growth. We are pruning our soul when we are denying ourselves.
- keep grass and weeds from growing back. You must keep self under subjection.
- then enjoy the fruit of your labor.

Deuteronomy 28:3-13 describes for us this fruit, which is the temporal reward and thus the third reason for cultivating your salvation. Read it again.

AMEN! THANK YOU JESUS! AMEN!

[INDEX](#) - [PREVIOUS LESSON](#) - [HOME PAGE](#)