

# ***Knowing Christ in Divine Order***

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The Woodlands, TX*

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*For those who see the need for spiritual revolution  
instead of religious reformation.*

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## **Endorsements**

"In every generation God raises up brethren to revisit, rearticulate, and bring into focus once again the important insights in Christ regarding the mechanics of spirituality and the importance of a fully Christ-centered life. David has given this generation just that, and in a way that is concise, clear, and helpful."

**Tom Sparks**, Knowing Him Together Ministry, Eagle Creek OR

"I highly recommend Knowing Christ in Divine Order and encourage others to read it. I found it to be excellent in content and a greatly needed subject to be addressed and implemented into the lives of all believers."

**Dan Hubbell**, ChurchRestoration.org, Winnsboro, TX

"Flowers has simply yet profoundly explained knowing Jesus Christ. If the reader opens himself to the truth the Lord is communicating through this book, he will begin a journey that can never be taken in the flesh - the journey from religion to relationship."

**Chris Pack**, nooxygen.com, Woodland Park, CO

"Few authors have written on a subject that has as much importance as knowing Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth. David offers a simple yet deep reminder that there should be a great desire for the true disciple to know Christ from the inside out... instead of the outside in. I highly recommend this book to both new and seasoned believers."

**Jake Davis**, Spring, TX

"This is a wonderful little book. It takes the reader on a journey to a deeper understanding of what it means to live as a Christian in this world. This is not a book for those who want to define Jesus in their own terms. This is a book for Christians who want to have their lives defined and led by the power of the Holy Spirit."

**John Lamoreau**, author of *Waging Peace*, La Grande, OR

"After salvation, the most thrilling aspect of our Christian walk is fellowship with our indwelling Lord. Peter writes to the churches that they are to be devoted to Christ, "in your hearts" (I Pet.3:15). But such interior fellowship with our indwelling Lord has been overlooked and under-taught by the church leadership. David's little book, *Knowing Christ in Divine Order* goes a long way in correcting this profound neglect. The Latin word "florilegium" signifies a "literary bouquet." David's last name is, quite appropriately, "Flowers." Thank you David for this "Bouquet of the Spirit."

**Clark Wade**, "Little Portion Fellowship," Crescent City, CA

"My fear is that saints will enjoy this book and completely miss the point, for 'soulish' believers will erroneously convince themselves they know Him in spirit. Surely this was the very mistake I made until Christ graciously loved me out of it."

**Grant Shipman**, The Woodlands, TX

## **Preface**

This book has been written to expound on a forgotten teaching of Scripture that I believe gives us great insight into knowing Jesus. It is my desire that this small book will provoke its readers to draw near to the Lord in order that they would receive greater revelations of Jesus Christ and know the power of his resurrection life.

There is a terrible trend today that the church has accepted. As an avid reader, I have noticed the plethora of Christian books and other writings that offer a “new” word and promise a way out of spiritual despair for a return to authentic Christianity. Yet, little seems to come of the many attempts to jump start the church individually or corporately. I humbly believe I know why this is happening. If you would do me the honor of continuing to read this book... I believe you will agree with me and the many saints who have left us with the keys to spiritual revolution.

**“We have almost forgotten that God is a person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can.”<sup>1</sup> A.W. Tozer**

It is not my concern to be trendy or to present something that would look good on a bookstore shelf. I am writing in hopes that Christ may use my words to reveal something about his Person to you. For it is my strong conviction that *all* our problems and concerns in our lives and the Christian church... are resolved in knowing Christ in spirit and in truth. This is the very reason that we have been placed on this earth... to know Christ and make him known.

**“Though most believers are comfortable speaking of a ‘personal relationship with Jesus,’ few concepts are so greatly celebrated and little experienced.”<sup>2</sup> Wayne Jacobson**

This book is about us knowing Christ intimately and experiencing him daily. It is about the way Christ has prepared for us to meet with him and walk with him moment-by-moment. You will find nothing in this book that will excite the outward man to respond by his own intellect and emotion. However, you will find spiritual things that beckon the governing of Christ’s Spirit in your inner man.

My intentions are not to rest solely on a lost teaching, but to move on to experience and application. However, it must be known that I myself have only just begun to implement these things into my life. I am still running

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<sup>1</sup> A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine*, (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 2007), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Jacobson, *Tales of the Vine*, (Visalia, CA: BodyLife Publishers, 1995), 73.

the race. It is my hope that you would prayerfully consider the content of this little book. It is the Lord that must teach us how to follow the divine order of knowing him.

Therefore, this book should be read as an invitation. Would we be so bold to trust Christ to be our leader and head? Would we trust the Lord Jesus to give us the experience of knowing him in divine order instead of looking to a man to guide our steps? Only those who wish to surrender to Christ as teacher will find satisfaction in what I am passing on to you. May we allow Christ to be central and supreme in our lives. Let us deny the life that has become dependent upon man's words and the many religious gimmicks that leave us empty time and again. Let us return to our first love.

**"We are past the point of revival; we have gone beyond the possibility of repair through reformation. Christianity must experience a vital revolution!"<sup>3</sup> H.J. Stanley**

Finally, I have written this book to Christians everywhere who are dissatisfied with their current knowledge of Christ and see the great need in the church for spiritual revolution instead of religious reformation. Is there more to Christian spirituality than you are experiencing? You bet. Are we missing something in the midst of all the ecclesiastical drama today? No doubt. Do I have all the answers? Absolutely not. But I am confident that I am beginning to know the One who does.

I pray that your reading of this book will not be a judgment on my limitations and short-comings as a writer. It is the message that I hope you will hold up to the testimony of Scripture and take to the Lord in prayer. May the Lord speak to you in spite of me.

Your Brother,

David D. Flowers  
The Woodlands, TX  
June 1, 2008

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<sup>3</sup> These words were written by H.J. Stanley in the "Introduction" to *The Ultimate Intention* by DeVern Fromke.

*"I have never stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called. I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people. I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence."*

Paul, Ephesians 1:16-23



## Introduction

**“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Paul, 1 Thessalonians 5:23

In my journey with Christ, I have found there to be a biblical distinction between what the Scriptures refer to as man’s spirit, soul, and body. This divine order has been deemed the “tripartite” or “three-fold” nature of man.<sup>4</sup> It has become much more than a meaningless theological bullet-point for me. My walk has been tremendously impacted by this truth as I have seen this biblical teaching become a reality in my life. If a believer will receive this biblical teaching, he will begin to see Christ come to fuller expression in all that he does.

The apostle Paul wrote, “I want to *know* Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:10-11). To the Colossians he wrote, “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may *know* the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:2-3). For Paul, there was clearly no greater calling or purpose except that he know Christ and make him known.

You may be wondering, “Why is this issue of the *tripartite man* any importance to me spiritually? What does it have to do with me *knowing* Christ?” I know at first this may seem like a worthless topic of discussion that ought to be reserved for the world of religious seminarians. When in reality, it has everything to do with the Christian’s daily journey with Christ. For, I believe, that it is because of the ignorance of this divine order that many Christians fail to know Christ as he intended and experience the power of his resurrection.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man, Vol.1*, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 6.

Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ*, (Cornwall, UK: Diggory Press, 2007), 159-160.

Watchman Nee is a major proponent of the tripartite nature of man. I believe his books, “The Spiritual Man, Vol.1” and “The Release of the Spirit” will be a great help to interested readers. In “The Spiritual Man, Vol.1”, Nee has written a wonderful exhaustive account of the truths presented in this book. My purpose is to make the same truths more accessible and readable to my generation. It is my prayer that these same truths will give way to spiritual revelations of Jesus Christ. \* The tripartite view contrasts the popular teaching that man has a bipartite nature comprised of soul (spirit) and body. There is no distinction made between man’s spirit and his soul in the dichotomous teaching. The dichotomist perspective reflects a Platonic dualism more than it does a biblical whole composite of man.

<sup>5</sup> My intention is not to major on what appears to be a clear-cut doctrinal division of spirit, soul, and body. My goal is to distinguish between the different aspects of man’s nature and then embrace Christ in our entire being.

**“...you and I will never be Christians, or servants of the Lord, in real spiritual life and effectiveness beyond the measure of our inward apprehension of the Lord Jesus.”<sup>6</sup> T. Austin Sparks**

This short book is about you and I *knowing* Christ and apprehending him inwardly in our spirit. For the disciple, there is nothing else that matters in this world. My hope in writing is that believers would move past a mental and intellectual ascent of the tripartite nature of man in order that we might know and experience the depths of Jesus Christ. My purpose in writing is born of a deep desire for others to hunger for a spiritual revolution that is firmly planted in a biblical Christology.<sup>7</sup>

**“Jesus Christ is not merely a figure of the past. Therefore, our Christology cannot be confined to a study of the past.”<sup>8</sup>**

Jonathon R. Wilson

There is great benefit in studying the historical Jesus of Nazareth. There is no doubt much to be learned from the many scholars who have worked to paint for us an accurate picture of Jesus and the true impact of his Person and work in real human history. I would not dare belittle the importance and the responsibility every believer has in learning of Christ with their intellect. Knowing Christ with our mind can be most helpful in our desire to reflect him in all compartments of life.<sup>9</sup> However, if there is ever to be a complete and *balanced* knowledge of Christ for the purpose of knowing the power of his resurrection, we must first enter in by our spirit. It is with our mind that we may learn of the historical Christ of the past, but it is with our spirit that we know of the living Christ today.

**“Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.”<sup>10</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Those who read for the simple pleasure of acquiring head knowledge or for the sole purpose of debating doctrines will *not* find this book a satisfying

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<sup>6</sup> T. Austin Sparks, *The Centrality of Jesus Christ: The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol.1*, “The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ”, (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing House, 1997), 10.

<sup>7</sup> Christology is the study of the Person and work of Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathon R. Wilson, *God So Loved the World: A Christology for Disciples*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 187.

<sup>9</sup> It was through my academic studies that I stumbled upon a historical Jesus of Nazareth that contradicted the Jesus I had learned about in Sunday School. What I discovered through my mind compelled me to learn of this same Jesus in experience by way of the spirit. I have listed several books under *Suggested Reading* that have contributed to my renewed Christology.

<sup>10</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 59.

read. On the other hand, those who seek to place things of the Spirit over the religious games of man will find rest for their soul.

This book is about meeting the living Christ within our spirit. Christ is the sum of all spiritual things. The following message is about us all recognizing that truth and allowing it to make us disciples of a living indwelling Christ.

**“Recognizing that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of all spiritual things will change your prayer life. It will change your vocabulary and the way you think and talk about spiritual things. And it will ultimately change your practice of the church.”<sup>11</sup> Frank Viola**

While many within pop-culture Christianity run after the outward works of the soul-life through ministries, movements, passions, and purposes... the reader who has exhausted himself of every resource and found their concept of Christian spirituality wanting... ought to find solace in what the Lord wants to reveal to them by the liberating truths presented here. For all those who recognize that the Person of Christ has been pushed aside for other *things* that are void of real life changing power... this book is for you.

I would like to encourage you to read this book in solitude when you are in a contemplative mode of spiritual reflection. This book has been divided up into two parts. The first part is mostly teaching and instruction. It will require patience and an intentional desire to rethink your faith.

The second part of this book will move toward application and present a strong challenge to our *American* Christianity. I recommend that the reader even consider reading over the content several times. My personal experience with these matters required a great deal of time and inner reflection. It is unlikely that truth will spring on you all at once.

May the Lord give us revelation into his Person. Without the light of Christ to illuminate our path... we will forever walk at a distance from our Lord.

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<sup>11</sup> Frank Viola, *God's Ultimate Passion: Unveiling the Purpose Behind Everything*, (Gainesville, FL: Present Testimony Ministry, 2006), 267.

## Tripartite Man in Scripture

The tripartite nature of man is presented in Scripture from the moment of man's creation. In Genesis 2:7 "Yahweh formed man with the dust of the ground." With this act, God created man's *body*. The verse continues, "And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." "Breath" is derived from the Hebrew word *neshamah* which, significantly, is translated "spirit" in Proverbs 20:27: "The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit (i.e. *neshamah*) of a man; it searches out his *inmost* being." God breathed into man the breath of life and produced *man's spirit*.

Zechariah 12:1 corroborates the creation of man's spirit by telling us that just as Yahweh stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth, he also formed the spirit of man within him. Genesis 2:7 concludes, with the joining of man's spirit to his body, "man became a living *soul*." The soul (man's seat of personality) was the result of the breath of God entering into the nostrils of the body that came from dust. Therefore, the Spirit of God gave birth to a spirit of man. This spirit is the center and innermost part of a man. The soul is intimately connected to man's spirit. It bridges the spirit of a man with his body.



In the New Testament, Paul recognizes this tripartite distinction in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 "May you whole *spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless..." and confirms the created order we see in Genesis. The author of Hebrews writes, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing *soul and spirit*, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (4:12). The word of God is sharp indeed! Since the spirit and soul are so intimately connected to one another, many believers are not able to discern the difference between them... in doctrine or in experience. We will look more intently into these things later. For now, it is accurate to affirm that the biblical record of the three-step creation of man clearly reveals him to be tripartite in nature.<sup>12</sup>

I have only given you a brief presentation of the biblical evidence for the tripartite nature of man. Please bear with me as we look closer at how the Scripture speaks of spirit, soul, and body in divine order.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.tripartiteman.org/scriptural/index.html> This website is an excellent 'simple' resource when trying to understand the tripartite nature of man. I will give further biblical references as you continue to read. If you are looking for a treatise by a biblical author on the tripartite man... you will not find it. You're also not going to find one on the Trinity. However, the biblical evidence is there for those who wish to move toward a truly spiritual life.

## The Spirit of Man

**“If a believer does not know what his spirit is, he will not know how to fellowship with God in the spirit...”<sup>13</sup> Watchman Nee**

First, let us begin with the core of our being. Watchman Nee and Jeanne Guyon both describe the spirit as the "inner" or "center" part of a man.<sup>14</sup> Before the Holy Spirit regenerates a believer, the spirit is inoperative in a person. Paul wrote, "But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:10) In order for Christ to make your spirit alive by his righteousness, it must first be dead to God in unrighteousness and inoperative in function.

God is an eternal spirit. He has imparted this same nature to all human beings. It is what makes us all eternal creatures. However, some will have their spirit regenerated with God's Spirit to eternal life and others will go on into eternal death... not having their spirit made alive by Christ. Clearly, eternal life goes beyond an immortal "everlasting" life to a life that has been connected to the very Person of God himself.

**“The spirit that was received in the beginning is not the life of God that we received at the time of our regeneration. The life which we received at the time of our regeneration is the life of God Himself; it is the life represented by the tree of life. This spirit of man is eternal, but it does not have the 'eternal life.'”<sup>15</sup> Watchman Nee**

Christ is "eternal life." The tree of life in the Garden of Eden is representative of the eternal life God supplies in his Son Christ Jesus. Adam and Eve were cut off from this kind of life. The life that God seeks to give us is not merely "everlasting," but it is a life of a different sort, the very life of God himself. When a person receives Christ, he receives his Spirit (i.e. God's life) unto their own. The spirit of a man is where Christ meets with us once he has saved and regenerated us. It is this place that he has come to indwell and make us alive to God; alive to spiritual things and dead to the

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<sup>13</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man, Vol.1*, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 15. Nee would say that many believers do experience the Lord in spirit, but are unaware that this is what they are doing. Most Christians live a "mixed life" of spirit and soul. Since they are not able to clearly distinguish between spirit and soul, they are not able to effectively worship Christ in divine order. The order of spirit, soul, and body is a road map to knowing Christ. If you know the way to enter into his presence, you may, with certainty, go there as often as you like.

<sup>14</sup> Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, Library of Spiritual Classics, Vol.2*, (Jacksonville: SeedSowers Publishing), 53. Nee and Guyon refer to the spirit of man as the "inner" part of man for good reason. Their language is reflective of the Scripture (e.g. Ps. 51:6; Prov. 20:27; Isa. 16:11; Rom. 7:22; Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4). This "inner" language was also used to speak of the Holy of Holies within the Temple. I will discuss this further in *The Temple and the Tripartite Man*.

<sup>15</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man, Vol.1*, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 6.

world and sin. The Spirit of Christ operates out of man's spirit. God's spirit becomes one with our own (1 Cor. 6:17). This is the inner place that the Lord has divinely ordered that we might share in his riches and know him fully.

**"So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit."**

Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:45

The apostle Paul knew that it was in the spirit that we are to meet with Christ and out of that intimate fellowship our lives would freely pour forth a work that reflected the very commands of Jesus. Not only are we born anew in spirit by the Spirit of Christ, but we are also to serve and function out of this spirit daily. We live by the Spirit in our spirit (Gal. 5:16). Paul wrote, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in proclaiming the gospel of his Son" (Rom. 9:1). He goes on to write, "we serve in newness of the spirit" (Rom. 7:6). A fresh look at the Scriptures with this new understanding of "spirit" will allow the Lord to reveal himself to you in new ways.

"Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in *spirit*" (Psa. 34:18).

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast *spirit* within me" (Psa. 51:10).

"The *spirit* is willing, but the body is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

"Jesus, knowing fully in his *spirit*" (Mark 2:8).

"he (Jesus) was deeply moved in *spirit* and troubled" (John 11:33).

"When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his *spirit*" (John 19:30).

"We serve in newness of *spirit*" (Rom. 7:6).

"The Spirit testifies with our *spirit* that we are God's children" (Rom. 8:16).

"he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in *spirit*" (1 Cor. 6:17).

"I will pray with my *spirit*..." (1 Cor. 14:15).

From a brief look at the Scriptures, we can see that it is the spirit of a man that is the point of regeneration by the Holy Spirit of Christ. The spirit is the innermost part of a man. It is in the spirit that we come to know Christ and learn that in him is the absolute centrality and supremacy of all things. It is there that we will discover the light of life; the eternal spring of living water; the yoke that is easy and the burden that is light. It is in the secret place of the spirit, the inner chamber, that we meet with Christ and come to know him as the resurrection and the life.

## The Soul of Man

**“It is impossible for the spirit to control the body directly; it requires a medium. This medium is the soul, which was produced when the spirit touched the body.”<sup>16</sup> Watchman Nee**

The soul is formed when man’s spirit and his physical body are joined together. As the spirit of a man is known as the “inner man,” the soul of man is known as the *outer man*. In creation, man is characterized by his soul. The soul is the seat of each man’s unique personality. The soul is comprised of three main elements: will, emotions, intellect (i.e. mind).

The will is the chief function of the soul:

“if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes [lit., according to her soul]” (Deut. 21:14).

“So that my soul would *choose* suffocation, Death rather than my pains” (Job 7:15).

“And do not give him over to the *desire* [lit., soul] of his enemies” (Psa. 41:2).

“Now *set* your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God” (1 Chron. 22:19).

The soul also includes the intellect or the mind:

“How long will I bear *concern* in my soul” (Psa. 13:2).

“Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul *knows* it very well” (Psa. 139:14).

“Keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul” (Prov. 3:21-22).

“Also, that the soul be without *knowledge*, it is not good” (Prov. 19:2).

“Know also that *wisdom* is sweet to your soul” (Prov. 24:14).

“Surely my soul *remembers*, and is bowed down within me” (Lam. 3:20).

The soul also includes the emotions:

“Therefore, you shall *love* the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your *soul*, and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5).

“that the soul of Jonathan was *knit* to the soul of David, and Jonathan *loved* him as himself” (1 Sam. 18:1).

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul *pants* for Thee, O God” (Psa. 42:1).

“Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (Psa. 116:7).

“My soul *yearns* for you in the night” (Isa. 26:9).

“Now is my soul *troubled*” (John 12:27).

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<sup>16</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man, Vol. I*, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 9.

Man is conscious of his own existence through his soul. Man's soul is the avenue of which to express things of the spirit. Because of the soul, man is able to express free will, think, love, hate, express ideals, make judgments, etc. Man is able to engage the physical realm through the activities of the soul.

This soul-life is to be governed by the Spirit of Christ within the spirit of man. This is the divine order. When a man's soul is not governed by the spirit, he acts no different than a man who does not know Christ. A soul that is not governed by the spirit is like a plane without a pilot. The plane may be able to fly great distances on its own through the auto-pilot function, but if it is not operated by its pilot it will in time meet disaster. In the same way, we may be able to operate completely out of our soul and impress ourselves and all those who believe Christ is in control. Yet, in time... we will surely meet with sorrow and despair.

Only those who have yet to have their spirit made alive to God in Christ are left with no choice but to rely totally on the soul-life. They have only their own will, emotions, and intellect to steer their dead lives. The Christian, however, has a regenerated spirit that can govern the soul and use it most effectively. A soul that is governed by the spirit is a beautiful song to the Lord. O the music it can make to the Lord! The soul may appropriately express itself when governed by the spirit and under the headship of Christ.

We must recognize the distinction between our spirit and soul or we will not be able to discern whether or not our soul's activity is coming from our spirit, which is governing by Christ's power, or is born of self and driven by selfish desires.<sup>17</sup> We may mistake an emotion of the soul for a word in our spirit. Many sins are committed as a result of believers not being able to recognize things born of God in our spirit and those things that seem right to us in our soul-life independent of Christ.

When man has learned to turn inward to his spirit and meet with Christ there, he is then able see his soul function under the control of Christ in divine order. His intellect and his emotions are then working for him and for Christ. Christ gains control of the soul-life through the meeting place of the spirit. Instead of us trying to live the Christian life in the strength of our own soul-life, Christ is able to naturally live his life through us by way of our spirit. He meets with us in spirit and freely takes over our soul and body. This divine order produces holy living. There is no other order that produces

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<sup>17</sup> I will discuss man's sinful nature and his "flesh" in the next section, *The Body of Man*.



a holy pleasing life to God except for the divine order of spirit, soul, and body.<sup>18</sup>

**“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must *deny himself* and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his *life* will lose it, but whoever loses his *life* for me will find it.”** Jesus, Matthew 16:24-25

Jesus says that his followers must deny their own lives. The word for “life” in the original language is *pschye*, which is the self or the *soul*. Notice, Christ calls us to deny this soul-life in order to follow him. What is he asking us to do? He calls us to divine order! We are not to live and be driven by our soul-life. We have been asked to use the chief function of the soul, the will, and choose to surrender our old way of living by our own desires, emotions, and thinking. He calls us to a spiritual life that is only known by a complete denial of self. The soul surrenders to the spirit and is able to turn inward by denying its ability to rule.

**“My *soul* yearns for you in the night; in the morning my *spirit* longs for you.”**  
Isaiah 26:9

Dear reader, please understand what Christ is asking of us. Our soul-life is only pleasing to the Lord in divine order. It must be governed by a truly spiritual life if we want to be his disciples. We must learn to live in spirit and act out of spirit where Christ’s life springs forth and pours out into our entire being. “Christ in you” (i.e. your spirit) is the “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

It is in this order that we find that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. It is in this life that we find the freedom to follow Christ apart from the burden of religion and Law. If there is no denial of soul-life for surrender to the spirit, there can be no discipleship. Christ does not force himself in. He waits to be invited there. He waits for you to open the door by denying your soul-life... that he might come in and give you greater revelations of himself.

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30

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<sup>18</sup> We gain control of our entire being by turning inward to the spirit. Asceticism and all forms of harsh treatment upon man’s soul and body is an outside-in approach to spirituality and is no spirituality at all. The divine order is an inside-out approach (e.g. Col. 2:20-23). We must work with the order that God himself has laid down for us to follow if we want true Christian spirituality.

## The Body of Man

**“The body is the “world-consciousness,” the soul is the “self-consciousness,” and the spirit is the “God-consciousness.”<sup>19</sup>**

Watchman Nee

The body is the dwelling place for spirit and soul.<sup>20</sup> The body is the shell of the soul as the soul is the shell of the spirit. The divine order teaches us to know Christ in the spirit, absorb him in the soul, and express him through the body in the physical realm.

The spirit is the first part of man. The body is in contact with the material world and is the last part of man. However, we should not believe as the Gnostics of Paul’s day and think that it doesn’t matter what we do in our bodies... for our bodies are the temple of Almighty God. “Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (1 Cor. 3:16-17). No, dear friend, God is redeeming all of you: spirit, soul, and body. He will resurrect all of you on that great Day. None will be lost! He will surely bring about the consummation of the work he has started in you (Phil. 1:6). This resurrection has already begun by way of the divine order. Our renewal begins in a life governed by the Spirit of Christ within our own.

When the divine order is reversed, we will most definitely sin in the body. To live in the body is to sin in the body. A man that is not governed by Christ in divine order will live to please the body. Be assured, this is not the order that God intended. To reverse the divine order is to pervert the very image of God. Christ has come to set right the order that the first Adam reversed.

It is in the body that the power of sin seeks to have us. The power of sin stirs up the soul within us and seeks that we would choose to accept evil in our bodies. Those memories of the old unregenerate man remain because of our knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge seeks to reverse the divine order. Do not be dismayed, the old nature has been condemned in Christ and is being condemned even now! We now have Christ to will against the power of sin and choose the perfect order of God. We have been given the power of Jesus to choose that the spirit would govern the soul and the body.

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<sup>19</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man, Vol. I*, (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1998), 8.

<sup>20</sup> I am in no way implying that the body should be viewed as of lesser importance. The order here is not hierarchal, it is chronological.

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Rom. 8:1-5).

Do not confuse your identity with the body’s familiarity with the sinful nature. You are not that man! You are now in Christ and Christ is in you! Do not mistake your memory of who you were without Christ, practicing the perversion of the divine order, with who you are now. Embrace Christ in the spirit and the divine order will have precedence. In time, you will experience the life of Christ in wonderful ways and your familiarity with the old nature will fade. Christ has made this possible by the cross.

**“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”**

Paul, Galatians 2:20

Who was crucified? Your old nature that was once bound to the power of sin that produces flesh was crucified! Your old identity has been *exchanged* for a new identity founded in the Person and work of Christ. Therefore, the power of sin and death has been nailed to the cross of Jesus. This does not allow for you to produce your own faith and righteousness, but to accept as a free gift... the faith of the Son and inherit his own goodness. The life we live in the body, we now live by way of this new knowledge and this we do in faith. If we are to experience the natural faith of Christ and know his righteousness, we must first turn inward to the spirit where he has first come to dwell. Then it will be well with our souls and our bodies will overcome the power of sin that rises up against us.

The soul and body is where the enemy can cause us harm (Matt. 10:28). He can't touch the resurrected and regenerated spirit of a man where Christ dwells. He does not work from the "in-out" but always from the "out-in." The Accuser gains victory over us when we will the reversal of the divine order and operate out of the soul. When we operate primarily out of the soul-life, the opportunity for sin arises. We should will to operate out of the spirit according to the divine order of man's tripartite God-given nature... not according to the soul which leads to sin in the body. Do not be

mistaken. We will not gain control of the body by treating it harshly. The soul and body can only be governed by turning inward to Christ in the spirit.

Listen to the words of Paul...

"We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my *inner being* I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25).

Paul has stated plainly, it is in our inner being (i.e. the spirit) that we delight in obedience and find the power to overcome our sin. We must retreat to the spirit where Christ dwells. Paul's struggle above is due to an attempt to live according to the Law by way of the soul that was once corrupted by the sinful nature he calls "flesh." We are not slaves to sin in the body; we are slaves to righteousness in Christ!

We will know the freedom that is in Christ once we have seen ourselves as crucified to the sinful nature. We must recognize there is no goodness in our selves. None! There is nothing good apart from Christ. If we are in a habit of mastering sin by our own disciplining of the body (as if sin could be mastered apart from the indwelling Christ), God will make it clear to us that this sort of living will produce the old struggle we once had with that old nature. We must recognize this way is futile and retreat inward to our inner being where Jesus longs to give us victory.

My friend, if you have made a fair living of holding back sin in your own strength, know that this too does not please God. You are not following the divine order and Christ is not the one conquering, for only he can conquer. You can only suppress evil; Christ destroys it. You must forsake all measures of attempting to conquer sin by thwarting the divine order and come the way Christ has prepared for you to come.

When you have surrendered to Christ's way of living you can expect the power of sin to flare up within you. Overcoming the power of sin by knowing Christ in divine order is the only sure way to mature in our faith and experience the power of his resurrection life. Be aware brothers and sisters! Retreating inward to Christ will release the floodgates of sin, for you have turned your back on suppressing evil. And when this evil returns and comes up against you, turn inward to Christ. It is there that you will, in time, know the victory that Christ has given. He will defeat the power of sin in your life and you will experience the power of knowing him in divine order.<sup>21</sup>

"So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:42-47).

Would we allow for the redemption of the tripartite man: spirit, soul, and body? We may speed this redemption by knowing Christ in divine order. It is here that we shall know the power of his resurrection.

**"Resurrection isn't a fancy way of saying 'going to heaven when you die.' It is not about 'life after death' as such. Rather, it's a way of talking about being bodily alive again after a period of being bodily dead."**<sup>22</sup> N.T. Wright

Eternal life in Christ is knowing that our redemption has already begun. We were dead, now we are being made alive. The resurrection of the tripartite man is already taking place. All of creation is undergoing this great renewal. Until Christ comes and relieves the tension of the "already, but not yet,"<sup>23</sup> we press on toward the goal. Until we receive our new glorified bodies and undergo the complete redemption of the body, we recognize that we are being renewed everyday (2 Cor. 4:16; 5:1-5; Col. 3:10).

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<sup>21</sup> Knowing Christ comes before defeating sin. Our life ought to be characterized by an endless pursuit of Christ, *not* a fight against sin. When we are knowing Christ, he will overcome our sin.

<sup>22</sup> N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 114.

<sup>23</sup> The "already, but not yet" is well known in biblical scholarship. It teaches us that we live in the tension of two worlds. The rule of the Kingdom of God has broken through to the kingdoms of this world and has already begun its redemptive work of restoring creation. The principle of the "already, but not yet" is that Christ's promises are not entirely future... they are present... they are here... they are now. We should allow this teaching to penetrate all of our theology and Christian living. I recommend reading *The Gospel of the Kingdom* by George Eldon Ladd and *Simply Christian* by N.T. Wright.

We seek to apprehend Christ as he has apprehended us. It is in spirit, soul, and body we live to know this Jesus that is restoring his good creation. It is in knowing Christ that our entire being is being resurrected to a new way of living. This resurrection has already begun in our spirit. And it is making its way to our bodies.

Soon we shall meet Christ in the air and we will come into the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. We will finally know him in our fully resurrected and glorified bodies. On that day our redemption will be complete. Until then, we continue to practice the divine order on this side of eternity. We are working out our salvation and speeding the Coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:8-13). We are ushering in the total resurrection of spirit, soul, and body.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> I believe N.T. Wright is today's leading New Testament scholar. Although he would not recognize the nature of man as three distinct parts, I believe his most recent book "Surprised By Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church" can help us better understand the Scripture's presentation of resurrection. His writings are phenomenal and his voice is in many ways revolutionary in Christianity today.

\* Furthermore, I want to conclude my presentation of the tripartite nature of man by submitting that I am not severing the whole composite of man. I am simply distinguishing aspects of his nature. I agree that spirit and soul are used interchangeably, and at times, synonymously. Truth in Scripture is presented in tension-filled pairs and gives us many parts that are to be embraced as one. The tripartite nature of man is another one of those truths. To ignore the workings of Christ in our inner man is to forfeit a true knowledge of him. I am not promoting a Gnostic idea that spirit is more real than body and that body is somehow of lesser importance. I am only pointing people to the way by which we may properly experience Christ as resurrection of spirit, soul, and body. Our entire being is knowing the resurrection of Jesus and being redeemed in the divine order of spirit, soul, and body.

## The Temple and the Tripartite Man

**“The Lord is only found within your spirit, in the recesses of your being, in the Holy of Holies; this is where He dwells.”<sup>25</sup>**

Jeanne Guyon

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:16, “don’t you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Paul compares man to the temple. What do we know of this temple? We know it was divided into three parts. The temple was made up of the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies.

Let’s briefly look at the temple. The outer court is where outward worship to God took place. Everyone could come and go there. If we were to go in further, we would find the Holy Place. Only priests could enter the Holy Place. It is here where the blood, the oil, the incense, and the bread were offered to God. The Holy of Holies was the place that only the high priest could enter once a year to offer atonement for the sins of the people by pouring blood upon the mercy seat of the Ark. It was in the Holy of Holies that God’s presence dwelled. All men were cut off from the divine presence. This separation was represented by a veil.

The tripartite man ought to be viewed like the temple. We have already seen man’s three parts and how they are similar to the worship practiced in the temple. The outer courts represent the body of man. This is the place of outward expression. This life is seen by everyone. The Holy Place is like man’s soul. In the soul, a man experiences the emotions produced by the sights, sounds, and fellowship of other men.

Many believers worship only in the Holy Place and the outer courts. Most believers live to stimulate their emotions while doing things in their bodies. They believe this is what the Lord wants of them. They base their closeness to God on a feeling and their merit by their outward works of worship. There may be times of retreat where they experience Christ in spirit, but it is not spiritually discerned. They cannot distinguish between soulish activities and spiritual ones.

In time, they base their entire Christianity on the activities of soul and body and find that knowing Christ in spirit isn’t as exciting as the nervous activity they can do in their soul and body. Moments of stillness are rare. Their

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<sup>25</sup> Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, Library of Spiritual Classics, Vol.2*, (Jacksonville: SeedSowers Publishing), 11. Guyon is specifically referring to our intimate knowledge of Jesus. It is in the spirit that we meet with the person of Jesus.

soul-life has such a great hold on them... they believe the Tent of Meeting is for monks who live lives of seclusion.<sup>26</sup>

**“You will come to know Him in that still place. You will come to fellowship with Him in the stillness of your own spirit. This is the place of boundless peace and rest. This is your fortress and refuge from all the invasive noise and busyness of the natural world. This quiet temple is the place where you will go to meet with your Lord.”<sup>27</sup>** Milt Rodriguez

In the Holy of Holies it is still, it is dark, it is only you and the Lord. In the original temple it was a very frightful thing to enter into this sacred room. In the temple of the tripartite man there remains a stillness. But now it is a room of light, a room of freedom and joy! The veil has been torn because the ultimate price has been paid. It was paid not only for your eternal redemption, but also for your sanctification. This salvation has made you a friend of the living God.

Jesus said, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you *friends*, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (Jn. 15:15). Now that we are friends of God, we may know his Person who is our salvation. And we may enter in to the inner place as often as we like. For in this new tabernacle we will find that an object has been replaced with a Person.

Entering in to the Holy of Holies, the inner place, is no longer a function of one man. It is the opportunity of every believer. The veil has been torn from top to bottom! Christ, the high priest, has made atonement for our sins by his own blood and has given us access to the Holy of Holies by making us all priests (1 Pet. 2:9). Would we begin to function in this holy priesthood and not merely give lip service to it in the church? Christ has made it possible for us to know him as a Person and function as priests. And as priests we may bear witness of Christ to a lost world. Let no man instruct you otherwise. Christ is the only Head of the body and there is no other mediator between you and the Father (Heb. 9:15).

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,

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<sup>26</sup> See Exodus 33. Moses met with the Lord “face to face” (i.e. intimately) in the Tent of Meeting. God has said in his Word, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10). We should seek to know Christ in stillness, leaving behind the distractions of the soul.

<sup>27</sup> Milt Rodriguez, *The Temple Within: Fellowship with an Indwelling Christ*, (CO:The Rebuilders, 2004), 83.



having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:19-22).

The Lord of heaven and earth is closer to us than anything else that we can see with our own eyes. He wants a relationship with you and waits there in the inner place of your spirit. Aren't you tired of relating to God as an object? Have you grown weary of seeing God as some distant deity who resides in the clouds or is hidden in darkness and commands you to work for his favor? How long will you rely on a man to tell you what you can know about God in Christ? Isn't it time for you to experience his life for yourself?

Christ has not limited himself to the sermons of principle preachers. He has not only come to a few ordained people, he has come to the ordinary and said, "Abide in me, and I will abide in you" (Jn. 15:4). This is the great news of the incarnation. This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ! God has come to us in a Person, that we might know him as we are known! This Person is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, his Son, the agent of creation, the lover of our souls.<sup>28</sup>

May this be the song of our soul to the Lord who loves us beyond limits...

*Take me past the outer courts  
Into the Holy place  
Past the brazen altar  
Lord I want to see Your face  
Pass me by the crowds of people  
The priests who sing Your praise  
I hunger and thirst for Your righteousness  
And it's only found one place*

*Take me in to the Holy of Holies  
Take me in by the blood of the Lamb  
Take me in to the Holy of Holies  
Take the coal, cleanse my lips, here I am  
Take the coal, cleanse my lips, here I am<sup>29</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> At this point in my life, I rarely mention the name of "God" unless it is in direct connection to the Person of Jesus. I find that the name of "God" is spoken of in many unbiblical ways and only serves to conjure up old images of a god that I had created by projecting myself upon the God of the Bible. I have discovered this God as a Person I can know in Christ instead of an object that I can learn a lot of things about from a distance.

<sup>29</sup> Dave Browning, *Take Me In*.

*Please stop and pray concerning all that you have read thus far. Ask Christ to give you light into all these things. Ask him to prepare your heart for the challenge to come in the remaining sections of this book.*

## Discovering a Religionless Christianity

Let's be honest, most believers walk at a distance from their Lord. It is not uncommon for believers to know only brief moments of his presence during spiritual highs and "mountaintop" experiences at scheduled events we call "revivals" or "church camps." Is this the sort of spiritual life that Christ has promised us? Do we *need* to be stimulated by modern sermons, loud music, and other activities of the soul in order to know Christ in a deep way? Could it be that the common path of Christian living has got it all wrong? And if so, are we willing to partake in a spiritual revolution and forsake all the hype?<sup>30</sup> We may find what is common, is in no way normal.

Yes, if we are honest, many believers live a "mixed life" of walking in the spirit and the soul. What's worse... they can't tell the difference between the two. The greatest evidence of this can be seen in the scores of Christians who are tired of the church and are not very happy with the Christ that has been presented to them. Their lives are marked by extreme highs and extreme lows. They have ADHD of the soul! This kind of walk with Christ is consistent with the religious Christianity that is so prevalent today; a Christianity that concerns itself solely with doing things for Christ and is built upon unnatural rules and systems of man. The concern of religious Christianity is doing a lot of things in the name of Christ while claiming there is a genuine concern to know him.<sup>31</sup>

In my journey with the Lord, I have observed something horrendous within religious Christianity. Once a person comes to Christ, they are then told they must have a ministry, a work, and a purpose to invest in until their death or the Lord's coming. This then replaces knowing Christ and everything then centers on that work. Christ is pushed aside and our relationship with him is always at a distance. We then see God as a drill sergeant father who we are never able to gain favor with. We are always working as if our merit is established by all the things we are *doing* for him. Even our trials are seen as a means to further our work and our *calling*.

When the *doing* is at the center of our existence we naturally see trial and tribulation as a preparation for some *greater* work, instead of God's means to draw us in to our spirits where we are truly able to know him. Falsely believing in a greater work or that God is preparing us for "something big"

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<sup>30</sup> I recommend reading *Revolution* by George Barna.

<sup>31</sup> The institutional church fuels the work-centered faith and they are married to one another in life and death. If you were to renew the center with knowing Christ in community, I am convinced that Christianity would no longer see the need for the institutional church as we know it; a new church life would be born, an organic church life that is whole-heartedly concerned about the centrality and supremacy of Christ and knowing him in divine order. For more on the biblical errors of the institutional church and the need for an organic Christ-centered church, I recommend reading *Going to the Root: 9 Proposals for Radical Church Renewal* by Christian Smith, and *Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of our Church Practices* by Frank Viola and George Barna.

will cause a person to bring many needless trials upon themselves. Praise God that he is able to use those trials brought on by our stubborn hearts and selfish pursuits. In his great mercy he will use our mistakes to fashion us into the image of his Son.

**“You busyworkers, remember that all your work, in the Lord’s mind, can never take the place of an opportunity which He craves of being able to speak fuller things into your heart.”<sup>32</sup> T. Austin Sparks**

God’s concern is that we know him in our spirit where his Son has come to dwell. The Christian who has placed his or her work at the center of their existence will find many frustrations waiting for them. This is because knowing Christ is not at the center of their being, but only a means to their own ends. Therefore, their identity is not found in Christ, but in their work, their position, and their calling. They will fail to see the Lord’s love when he places obstacles in the path of their personal pursuits. The obstacles are there for the working of the cross upon their flesh, that they would deny their soul-life, that they would deny their own will, emotions, and intellect in order that Christ might speak his will into their spirit.

The believer who has placed anything other than knowing Christ at his center will discover many frustrations indeed. It should be recognized that the Lord’s will can never be truly known for the one who continually forces all of life into their own personal work-centered paradigm. It is not until we give up all that we think we know about Christ and our work that he is able to whisper his truth into our spirit. Once we are willing to lay our work-centered, religious Christianity on the cross... we will find a sweet release of Christ’s Spirit within our own spirit. We will discover a religionless Christianity that operates off of the natural faith of Christ.<sup>33</sup>

What is the natural faith of Christ? It is life born out of *being* instead of doing. Reflect on this, please. Christ’s life is burden free! He said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:30) Be careful that this verse has not fallen on deaf ears or become cliché to you. If your faith is causing you anger, unfulfillment, frustration, disappointment, depression, burn-out, or suicidal thoughts even... this is not Christ’s life! You are not *being* Christ. You are not drawing life from his Spirit within your spirit. Instead, you are *doing* things, which you intend for Christ, out of the soul-life... and you are doing them apart from the eternal Christ that governs the spirit.

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<sup>32</sup> T. Austin Sparks, *The Centrality of Jesus Christ: The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol. I*, “The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ,” (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing House, 1997), 25.

<sup>33</sup> I have adopted the phrase “religionless Christianity” from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I seek to discover its meaning for us today by radically redefining the true unnatural nature of religion.

I call these works born of the soul: religion. It is nothing more than outward works of soulish living that temporarily satisfy the self, but ultimately lead to an empty riverbed of hopelessness. Religion makes the commands of our Lord an obligatory burden instead of a natural responsive act of love born in freedom. A life that ignores the divine order of spirit, soul, and body... is a life that will continually be ensnared by the chains of religion.

In religion, we will quickly find ourselves blaming God for him not keeping his promises to us. This is because we do not see him rightly. We see our Lord as a cosmic Santa Claus and expect him to act accordingly. We ultimately blame God as a result of him not fitting the mold which we have created for him. We blame a false-image of God that we created for not helping us to accomplish something he never asked us to do to begin with.

God is not the drill sergeant father we envision and he has not asked us to place a work or a calling above knowing him in Christ. Our favor and merit, our entire purpose, is found in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son. We need to see that there is no way our Lord is pleased in this selfish man-centered life of religion. This life, eventually, is depleted along with our physical strength. Once your basic level of human energy is used up you throw up your hands and say, "I quit!" Obviously, life that is born of our own strength will end in a soulish grave. However, life that is born of the Spirit reaps heavenly rewards.

It is life born of Christ's Spirit in our own spirit that is able to endure the cross. And it is bearing the cross which will make way for our spirit to continually govern our soul and body. Then we may know the natural faith of Christ and discover a religionless Christianity centered on knowing Christ in divine order. We must give up our work-centered faith and inherit the natural faith of Christ that is born in our spirit. Herein lies the key to experiencing the joy of our salvation: Christ Jesus our Lord!

God is love. And he compels us to know him and make him known by that love. His desire is that we would simply love him in return and be satisfied by being in his presence. Once we have learned to rest in his presence and find complete satisfaction there, we will then see a work that is born of the Spirit in our spirit and that is sustained by the love of Christ. This love is issued in freedom and goes forth in freedom. There is no anxiety or burden that accompanies Christ's work. When Christ is our life, we are happy to serve in whatever way he chooses, for our identity is not found in our work, but in the Person of Jesus Christ.

**“The simplicity which is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart.”<sup>34</sup> A.W. Tozer**

Christianity is about knowing the Person of Jesus Christ. It is not a work, a passion, a purpose, a ministry, or a movement. It is a living intimate relationship with Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God. And this must become a reality in your daily life. It is simply not enough to tip your hat at this point and move on to serving God. If you are not learning to connect with Christ in your spirit and walk in his presence moment-by-moment, you cannot serve him in the way he has called you. You can't even know what he has really called you to do.

You may be thinking, “What does it mean to let my knowing of the Person of Christ spring forth a new kind of work and service?” If any of you are left longing to understand how Christ can do all of this in you, then set your sights to learning from him. Learn of Christ through the Scriptures, learn of him through experience, learn of him through song, learn of him through trials, learn of him through study, learn of him through sorrow, learn of him through prayer, learn of him through community, learn of him through marriage, learn of him through work, learn of him through learning, learn of him in it all! Place all other pursuits aside. Let him be your one and only passion. Learn of the school of Christ... and this will equip you for every good work.

I pursued other passions and purposes in the past and I found that my heart was in the wrong place. I pursued these *things* instead of Christ. My language was Christ-centered, but my experience was not relational... it was merely a memorized mantra formed from a mix of indoctrination and isolated spiritual episodes.

**“God shows us that our power is not a thing; it is simply Christ. Our power is not the strength to do things; rather, it is a Person. It is Christ who manifests himself in us, instead of our using Christ to display our good works.”<sup>35</sup> Watchman Nee**

It was a hard thing to consider. I had to be honest and ask myself, “Do I desire to replace Christ with a *thing*?” By no means! Yet, this very thing became obvious to me. I found myself wanting and longing for everything but Christ and him alone. My life was a mixture of Christ's life and works

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<sup>34</sup> A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine*, (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 2007), 17.

<sup>35</sup> Watchman Nee, *Christ: The Sum of All Spiritual Things*, (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1973), 17.

done in the soul. My heart desired notoriety and a piece of fame. I had my way mapped out. I knew what I wanted and I knew how to get there. And the Lord interrupted my "passions" and held a mirror up to all the *things* I was pursuing outside of him. I was confronted with a question.

**"Is it to some thing that I am devoted, or is it to secure for the Lord Jesus Christ His absolute centrality and supremacy?"<sup>36</sup>**

T. Austin Sparks

How long will we try to convince ourselves that it is Christ that we seek in all these *things* of men? When will we realize that Christ's life is not found in things? The Spirit within us is reaching out for all things Christ! We can hear his voice if we will only be still. Yet, we are busy attempting to fill our void with programs, passions, ministries, and movements. Will our purpose be something else besides knowing the power of the resurrected Christ? Will we use up all of our mortal days attempting to fill our lives with dead *things*? Only Christ is living! Therefore, those things which are not born from the natural living faith of Christ are born from the flesh and will only produce dead cold religion. Other religious people may admire you for these religious works done in the flesh, but the Holy Spirit is grieved. For the Spirit knows that you will only be satisfied in Christ. In your spirit, you know this to be true as well.

The apostle Paul was used mightily by God and did a great work for Christ. We should pay close attention to the testimony of Paul. As much as Paul did to serve Christ in the work he did not find his identity and his purpose in it. Paul's purpose was not tent-making! It also wasn't being a good itinerant worker and church planter. He writes of his identity and purpose and leaves us with an example to follow.

"My purpose is that they may know Christ" (Col. 2:2-3).

"I want to know Christ... I consider everything else a loss... I press on to the goal that is Christ" (Phil. 3:8-14).

"Our hope in life is Christ" (1 Cor. 15:19).

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

"I am in chains for Christ" (Phil. 1:13).

"I suffered for Christ... that you might know him" (2 Cor. 10-11).

"I bear all things so that others may know Christ" (2 Tim. 2:10).

"To live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

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<sup>36</sup> T. Austin Sparks, *The Centrality of Jesus Christ: The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol. I*, "The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ", (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing House, 1997), 14.

Would you be willing to trade in your “calling” and your purpose for a new center of being? Would you be willing to discover a Christ-centered Christianity where your identity and purpose do not pass with time or waver due to the actions of men? If so, we must allow for a complete paradigm shift. We must redefine our calling and purpose. We must let Christ truly be our all in all.

**“the call to discipleship must precede the call to service.”<sup>37</sup>**

Stephen Kaung

Dear friends, do not put the cart before the horse. Knowing Christ must be central and supreme in your life. You must learn what it means to know him in spirit before you can be sent out to do the work. If we fail to know him in spirit and attempt to do the work first, we will inevitably call others to a work-centered religion instead of a Christ-centered relationship. We will misinterpret our true “calling” and set off to do something Christ has not asked of us. Unfortunately, this is exactly what is happening all throughout the church today. We must teach all men to press on in Christ from the moment of salvation until we see him face to face.

**“Brothers and sisters, if Christ is not life, we have to do the work; but if He is life, then we do not need to struggle. Repeatedly we say that life is Christ himself, and work can never substitute life.”<sup>38</sup>**

Watchman Nee

Religionless Christianity is about shifting our focus from the work-centered faith to the Christ-centered faith. It is about moving from the unnatural to the natural; from the counterfeit to the genuine; from the organizational to the organic. It is about recognizing that Christ does the work in us as a result of us walking in his presence daily. It is time to return to that simple relationship that began not so long ago. Return to that place where you were satisfied with him alone. Return to him and receive the Person that is able to do the work for us.

**“The command of Jesus is hard, unutterably hard, for those who try to resist it. But for those who willingly submit, the yoke is easy, and the burden is light.”<sup>39</sup>** Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Let us now return to Jesus’ words and ask the Lord to give us light that we might begin to walk in the Spirit of Christ by divine order without the burden of religion. It is only Christ’s words that can free us from religion’s chains.

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<sup>37</sup> Stephen Kaung, *Disciplined to Christ*, (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., 1976), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Watchman Nee, *Christ: The Sum of All Spiritual Things*, (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1973), 16.

<sup>39</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 37.



## **In Spirit and in Truth**

Let's begin making our way toward applying what we have learned of the divine order and begin moving toward spiritual revolution.

Jesus said, "God is *spirit*, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

First we must recognize that God's nature is of another realm altogether. Jesus said, "God is spirit". This does not mean that he is distant. It simply means that there is a way prepared for us to come before him and know this God who cannot be seen with the physical eye or be touched with human hands.

Since God is eternally a spirit, his nature and person can only be accessed in kind. God has made this possible by forming us in his image. Man is able to approach God in spirit because he has shared his nature with us by creating us a spirit as well. As we have seen already, those who have yet to experience a regenerating of their spirit by the Spirit of Christ cannot know God who is spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-16). Their spirit is inoperative and dead until they take from the tree of life and eat of Christ.

Jesus said, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in *spirit* and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is *spirit*, and his worshipers must worship in *spirit* and in truth" (John 4:23-24). It is important to note that the word "worship" is *proskuneo* and literally means "forward to kiss."<sup>40</sup> Therefore, "worship" can be accurately described as an intimate moment of connection with God himself. That intimate moment of worship takes place in the spirit of man. The place of worship is not in a particular building or any sort of outward expression of the body. If we want to meet with Christ, we must turn inward to our spirit where Christ has come to dwell.

**"The lamp of the LORD searches the *spirit* of a man; it searches out his inmost being."**

Proverbs 20:27

Not only is our spirit that initial place of new birth, it continues to function to receive Christ as the Spirit for the rest of our Christian journey (Ezek. 11:19; 2 Cor. 3:5-6; Gal. 6:8). The Lord prophesied of this reality in Ezekiel 36:26: "I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you." Jesus told Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the

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<sup>40</sup> Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 882.

kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-8).

Jesus said his worshipers must worship in spirit. God is spirit. Therefore, his followers must come to know him in spirit. How do we know him in spirit? Does this worship consist of a particular song and dance? Can this worship only take place in a sacred building? How are we to know him in spirit? Jesus has given us his life as the perfect model of worship in the spirit. We must learn from his example.

Jesus said, "But you, when you pray, go into your *inner room*, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (Matt. 6:6). What is Jesus telling us? He is telling us that God has called us to an intimate personal relationship.

It would be foolish to assume Christ means that prayers should never be voiced aloud in a gathering. Yes, the prayers of the hypocrite and the religious leader should be seen for what they are. But, the greatest concern of the Lord in telling us to retreat to the "inner room" is consistent with the way in which we are to worship God; the way in which he himself told us we are to come and enter into his presence. He is characterizing the closeness of relationship that we may enjoy with God. He is in fact speaking of the divine order. We have only failed to see this call to intimacy until now.

What were the real reasons for Jesus' frequent retreats to the mountainside early in the morning and late in the evening (e.g. Matt. 14:23; Mk. 1:35; 6:46; Lk. 6:12)? Clearly, the Lord cherished those moments with the Father and believed those moments to be special. He took the time before and after the day to experience them. Yet, these moments of solitude were not merely examples of prayer in seclusion. Christ knew of the importance of this retreat and the privilege to do so.

When you pray, how easily are you distracted? How often does your mind begin to wander? How frequently do the matters of the day and the concerns of your soul pull you away from turning inward to Christ? Too often, I would say. Your senses are hard enough to master in seclusion, how much more in a place of profound distraction? And Jesus knew how distracting the soul life can be and how weak the body can be without the governing of the spirit.

Jesus told his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For though the *spirit* is willing enough, the body is weak" (Matt. 26:41)! Remember the context that Jesus made this statement. He sees his time on earth is nearing its end. And he foresees the weakness of the disciples. There is much to distract the souls of them all. Jesus is distracted in a way we will never know. Yet, his is able to gain control by turning in to the spirit and by surrendering his will to the Father.

**"When your soul is turned within, it actually becomes separated from your external senses; and once your five senses are separated from your soul, they receive no more attention. Their life supply is simply cut off."**<sup>41</sup> Jeanne Guyon

The disciples, not understanding the full significance of the moment, are overtaken by weariness and fatigue. However, I would like to know what is the greatest distraction of the soul: pending death by crucifixion or being tired? And Jesus denies his own life overcomes his senses and this great distraction of the soul by retreating to the inner room. Therefore, Christ knows how to lead us into the spirit to pray even in our deepest moments of despair and distraction. He has interpreted his own teaching by acting upon it.

The author of Hebrews has written, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).

Our Lord knows our struggle and he is able to lead us through our greatest moments of trial to that secret place where the Spirit of God has come to dwell. Where did Jesus gain his peace and strength in his darkest moments of despair? He found it in his Father who met him in his own spirit. Even Christ turned inward past the body's weakness, through the soul's anguish, to the inner room of tranquility; the place where God has come to live. And he lived, died, resurrected, and ascended... that we might know this same power that is able to overcome sin and death. He came that we might share his nature.

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<sup>41</sup> Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, Library of Spiritual Classics, vol.2*, (Jacksonville: SeedSowers Publishing), 50-51.

This is what it means to know the power of his resurrection. The life of Christ within us is undoing death and renewing our tripartite nature. Paul said, "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection comes by way of the Lord coming to be expressed in our whole being until his glorious appearance! It is by knowing Christ in divine order.

Now that Christ has accomplished this mighty work of salvation, we are able to approach the throne of grace with confidence! Because of the righteousness and the faithfulness of the Son, the Father has granted him all authority in heaven and earth.

Paul writes...

"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-- not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-- continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:8-13).

God's good and ultimate purpose is for you to be formed into the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29). This is the salvation that ought to be worked out! His eternal purpose is for you to know him in the Person of Christ and be known by him in the church. It is in the community of believers that we learn what it means to worship "in truth". It is the truth of God's Person that we must come to know. This requires that we see him rightly. A person is able to grasp *some* truth of God's Person apart from the community of saints. Yet, it is ultimately within the Body of Christ that we discover the worship of God "in spirit and in truth".

**"Truth is not something in itself, which rests for itself, but something that happens between two. Truth happens only in community."**<sup>42</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Not only are we able to see God rightly in community, we are also able to see ourselves rightly. Peter saw the Lord rightly when he proclaimed, "Go away from me, Lord" and fell to his knees. In that moment, Peter was given

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<sup>42</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978), 50.

a revelation of the true Person of God in Christ. In that same instant, Peter, in light of the truth he saw in Christ, was able to see his own self rightly, "I am a sinful man!"<sup>43</sup> Jesus did not try to convince Peter otherwise. However, he did embrace Peter into the community of the Twelve. Peter would later be the first to receive a revelation from the Spirit in his own spirit and confess to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16). And this confession was made among the community of Christ's closest disciples.

Jesus has fully shown us how to live in divine order. He enjoyed an intimate relationship with the Father and taught those within his own community the way to worship in spirit and in truth. He revealed to them the way by which to overcome evil by walking in the Spirit and what it means to see God and ourselves in truth. He has done this and promised us, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Do not miss this! Christ has not left us with stories and teachings alone. He has not left us with doctrines and nice adages to post up on our refrigerators. He has come to dwell within our spirits that we might know the very Person of God and the power of practicing his presence daily. It is for this reason and purpose that we are able to make disciples, teach them to obey all that he has commanded us, and baptize them in the name of the Triune God. This kind of living will bear witness to the Kingdom that is coming.

Are you knowing Christ in spirit and in truth? Are you being changed from the inside out? Modifying behavior and memorizing doctrines will not bring about revolution in your heart. Only a revelation by the Spirit in your spirit will allow you to see God and yourself rightly. And only then will you be able to learn of the natural faith of Christ.

You need Spirit to connect with spirit and have an experience grounded in the truth of God's Person! Christ has revealed this way to us and now resides within us to carry it out once again. Step aside and let him fulfill his promises to you.

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<sup>43</sup> Luke 5:8

## **Knowing Christ in Divine Order---The Journey**

At this point, you might be wondering, "How can I know Christ in divine order? What does knowing Christ in divine order look like in my daily life? Where do I begin?"

*First*, we begin turning inward to our spirit by seeing Christ rightly. Knowing Christ means to first see him rightly. As I have mentioned previously, this is what it means to worship God in spirit and in "truth" (Jn. 4:24). The *truth* of God's Person allows for a mighty work to be done in you. As long as we hold to a distorted view of Jesus... the depths and riches of his Person will be cut off from our spirit. Our view of God himself is distorted and our experience of him will be shallow. When we do not see Jesus as he truly is, we will not realize God's daily presence experienced moment-by-moment.

If knowing Christ in divine order is first dependent upon us seeing him rightly, we must understand that there is only one way that this will happen. We must turn inward to our spirit with our knowledge of Scripture and ask the Lord to give us eyes to see him as he truly is.

This is only possible if we are willing to surrender our preconceived ideas of Jesus and lay them on the altar of sacrifice. If our views of Christ are correct, he will return them to us richer than before. However, if what we were told and believed about Jesus is incorrect, he will give us new insight into his Person and accompany it in his time with experience. We must hold to Christ's word to us about himself. In time, he will give us the experience we desire.

It is possible that you do not see yourself as he sees you. You may believe that Christ is now functioning as judge instead of savior and Lord. You see him as always condemning you for your failures and find it hard to believe your sins are forgiven. Your distorted view of Christ causes you to go headlong into sin and become frustrated by the Christianity you see with your blurred vision. You are not able to respond in true freedom to Christ's love. For if you saw Christ rightly, his love would compel you to walk freely in his mercy and grace (2 Cor. 5:14). You would know that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

**"As long as we worship a God who is only a projection of ourselves, we fear a tremendous and insatiable power who needs to see goodness in us and who, for all the infinite clarity of His vision finds nothing but evil, and therefore insists upon revenge."<sup>44</sup>**

Thomas Merton

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Merton, *The New Man*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), 96.

We need to know the true love of God in Christ and let all false ideas of his love be cast into the deepest sea. Many believers have not truly touched the Lord's heart for us. Their understanding of his love may have been tainted by years of force-fed religion and indoctrination. Many believers still see themselves as sinners instead of saints. We need to see ourselves rightly.

Let's be honest, your work-centered faith may have only allowed for a few isolated moments of experience with God's love. You need a new revelation of Christ's love in your life. Man's love is dependent upon goodness. God's love is dependent on himself alone. And this is what he wants to produce in you. Not your own goodness, but his own Person. For it is Christ's goodness and his faithfulness that the Father has found favor. Therefore, we must receive the Person of Jesus in the spirit if we wish to know this love that is a fountain flowing deep and wide (Rom. 8:35-39).

**"If anyone should ask you, "What is the one thing in life that is certain?" before saying, "Death and taxes," a disciple must answer, "The love of Christ."... What had been cloaked in mystery is clear in Jesus—that God is love."**<sup>45</sup> Brennan Manning

My friends, until Christ's love has touched down in your heart, you will be spiritually immobile. You will only have old revelations and stale memories to speak of in the present and no living experience with his Person. You must have a fresh revelation of Christ's love if you desire to see him rightly; if you wish to press on in divine order. Some of you may simply need to stop this very instant and ask Christ, "Would you love me with *your* love, O Lord?" Ask until he has answered. And be ready... he may answer when you least expect it. He may answer with his indescribable love when you expect condemnation and when you believe you deserve it.

This is where Christ will show you the depths of his love. In time, you will find his love so overwhelming and compelling that you will even begin experiencing this love in the same moment that sin is crouching at your door. You will know his love and it will carry you through the greatest moments of temptation. His love will do all of this.

When we see him rightly, we will choose his love over the temporary pleasures of sin. We shall find that his love has disarmed the power of sin. Resisting the power of sin and the wiles of the devil then become subject to the work of Jesus. Christ will take your place and stamp out the evil that

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<sup>45</sup> Brennan Manning, *The Signature of Jesus*, (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1996), 155, 157.

desires to have you. Turning inward to Christ will cause the devil to flee (James 4:7-8).

Once you have caught a glimpse of Christ's unfathomable love... you will find fellowship with the same Jesus we find in the pages of Scripture. Until you believe on this loving Christ of the Gospels, you will not know his Person that brings freedom and peace. You must ask him to reveal his true Person to you. Continue doing this until he gives you the experience that you so desire. He may hide himself from you until you have emptied yourself and have become completely reliant upon his Spirit inside your own spirit. For the Lord will at times hide his presence from you in order to stir you from your spiritual laziness and cause you to draw near to him.<sup>46</sup>

*Secondly*, you must continue to deny your soul-life. Seeing Christ rightly while turning inward to your spirit will make way for the soul to continue in willing its own denial. In doing so, you make the choice to turn inward to your spirit where Christ dwells. Denying the soul and turning in to Christ will assure that the power of sin never manifests itself in your body. If you are unwilling to allow the breaking of your soul-life by the cross of Christ, you will not be able to turn inward to the spirit. Let the Lord break your outer man for the release of his mighty Spirit in your spirit. Deny your self, your own will, your emotions, your thinking and the Lord will lift you up in due time. Surrender your own will to the Divine will and you will find Christ dwelling within your spirit. If you will choose to come this way you will know the Lord and your spirit, soul, and body will find rest.

Discipleship is a daily, moment-by-moment, denial of the soul's ability to rule and an inward retreat to the inner part of our being. We can deny the soul's ability to rule by turning from external distractions in order that we might hear Christ in the spirit. You must decide what those distractions are and remove them for Christ's sake. This doesn't always mean our situation and circumstances must change before we can experience the divine order. The Lord may choose to remove your thorn; then again, you may be required to rest in his grace that is sufficient in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

Do not be surprised if you are expected to turn in to Christ in the midst of your distractions. Instead of relying on the shifting of external things, he may want you to experience the move of internal things right where you are. Would you be willing to accept the discipline that is required for the mature believer? For the Lord would desire that you ask to know him in the middle

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<sup>46</sup> Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, Library of Spiritual Classics, Vol.2*, (Jacksonville: SeedSowers Publishing), 27. Guyon's book is the most practical book on experiencing Christ by turning inward to the spirit. You will treasure her ability to describe the process of turning inward to Christ. I have benefited greatly from her discussion on "Periods of Dryness" and "Abandonment."



of the storm, not that you pray for its removal. And when that trial brings with it the power of death... you would echo, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Lk. 22:42).

If the spirit is going to govern, the soul must be denied its ability to rule.<sup>47</sup> Denying the soul will allow you to reach the spirit where Christ dwells within. When you have denied the soul, your spirit will step up and take precedence. There Christ will be made manifest in you. The more you practice this inward turning to the spirit... the more familiar the divine order will become to you. This is where we will know Christ and this is how will we make him known. Our encounters and experiences with Christ in the spirit will determine the depth of our inward apprehension of him. The more encounters and experiences we have with Christ in the spirit, the closer we will come to knowing the power of his resurrection.

Remember, his ultimate passion is that you would know him. You were created for this very purpose. God seeks to share his Person with his creation that we might know of his infinite goodness; that we might be formed into the image of his Son. He does not drag you through trials and hardships because he wants to make it hard for you to know him. He knows that this is the *only way* for you to know him. You must come in divine order! He has made a way for you to know him. Therefore, for us to see him rightly and know him for who is truly is, we must disarm the power of sin by the work of the cross in us. We must will with our soul that our spirit would govern; that we might know the mind of Christ.

Now, follow this order. The next time the power of sin comes up against you like a flood, allow Christ to reveal the divine order to you. You should immediately deny the soul's ability to govern the body. Give up the soul's ability to choose life without the governing of the Spirit of Christ in your spirit. Do not attempt to overcome your sin with the strength of your soul. If you do this, in time, you will form two deadly habits. You will learn to walk by your own strength to achieve something only the spirit was divinely ordered to do. Thus, you will have a false hope that leads to pride, hypocrisy, self-reliance, and legalism. You will learn the way of the Pharisee. The other is to fall headlong in to sin. You will discover that both paths lead to a miserable existence and a forfeiting of what Christ has already given you. You will forfeit the fruit of the Spirit which is Christ in you.

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<sup>47</sup> This is where I believe we find the spiritual benefits of fasting. The purpose of fasting is to deny your soul its ability to rule you. Man does not live by bread alone, but by the words that come from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). Those words come to us in our spirit. Practicing the denial of the soul... truly is practicing the presence of Christ. We must grow accustomed to denying our self if we wish to follow Jesus and know him personally. And we should be prepared to use whatever means necessary to know the Divine will.

Let us, therefore, turn inward to the spirit where Christ dwells. When the power of sin comes, turn inward to the spirit and stand firm in Christ's love! Deny the soul's ability to rule and continue turning inward to the spirit. There you will discover the "Christ in you" and the victory of the cross. Christ will come forth with your spirit and give direction to the soul. This in turn will control the body. Then you will know the power of his resurrection and the defeat of sin by the cross will become a reality in your life. Do not let your thoughts carry you away by making this practice difficult. The Lord's way is not difficult. Remove yourself from the throne of your heart... and let the Lord be the Lord. Surrender your innermost being to him and he will show you what this looks like in practice.

Knowing Christ comes by experience of this order daily: spirit, soul, and body. The order never changes and the cycle of joy in the midst of trials will continue until we receive in our bodies our heavenly reward, until faith becomes sight. Those who seek to come to Christ by some other way will only know themselves as weak and will continually discover that they are empty and in need. Some may labor on in this way until their death, but most will tire in their efforts.

Therefore, those who come to Christ in divine order will find that it is in weakness his strength is made perfect in us. Only in the divine order will we discover the true nature of Christ's life. In time, you will discover that all of this happens at once within you. You should not think on these things too intently. Christ will take your reading knowledge of these things and give you a testimony born from experience. In the beginning, you should be aware and continually mindful of the divine order. You must not become impatient. The Lord works in his time. Do not attempt to produce something spiritual in your own strength. Simply wait on the Lord. Come in the way he has prepared and as time goes by you will find that the Lord is alive in experience.

Brothers and sisters, even if it were possible for me to perfectly lay out steps for all to follow you and I would not be able to follow them like instructions for building book shelves. We are dealing with spiritual things. Ultimately, the journey of knowing Christ in divine order is entirely up to the Lord giving you the experience of all these things in an instant. This experience will not come by following step-by-step instructions. Only the Spirit is able to bring you to Christ. Knowing Christ in divine order will become more natural with every passing day. Do not be impatient and think too much on these things, we were created for this journey! Christ will teach us what we need to know.

## Conclusion—The Invitation

**“If, in our orthodox churches, abiding in Christ—the living union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and keeping—were preached with the same distinctness and urgency as His atonement and pardon through His blood, I am confident that many would be found to accept with gladness the invitation to such a life.”<sup>48</sup> Andrew Murray**

We have come to the point of invitation. You may feel a bit overwhelmed by what you have read in this little book. If this is the case, fear not! This is a common response to spiritual things. You may have a lot of questions and concerns. Your mind is trying to grasp what only your spirit can fully take hold of. If your knowledge of the divine order has not brought the sudden spiritual breakthrough that you were hoping for, rest easy. This is because a teaching will not bring the freedom that comes only by spiritual experience. This is only the beginning. You have the road map; you have the directions. What you need now is to ask the Lord for the experience.

If you have understood and embraced the way of the divine order in your heart and mind, please take notice, it is solely the work of the Lord and not the organized thoughts and words of this book. Man cannot reveal spiritual things to man, only the Spirit of God has been authorized to do such a thing. If any spiritual thing has been revealed to you, it is the Holy Spirit of Christ that has so graciously removed the scales from your eyes! Therefore, intellectual assent simply will not do. What you need is for the Lord to make the theoretical, practical. You need him to take you there and teach you in experience. Because his greatest desire and passion is for you to know him, he will not delay.

**“It is not possible to have or know anything of all the fullness which God has shut up in His Son without the Holy Spirit’s revelation of that in an inward way.”<sup>49</sup> T. Austin Sparks**

If you have questions, do not think that man’s answers will satisfy a longing only the Lord himself can fulfill. Only the young and immature believer longs for complete understanding with the mind. It is the Spirit of Christ within the spirit of man that will reveal the truth in this book. There is no other way by which one can learn these truths. There is no other way a person can know Christ in divine order. We must let the Lord work in our

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<sup>48</sup> Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ*, (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1979), 8.

<sup>49</sup> T. Austin Sparks, *Ministry: The Works of T. Austin-Sparks, Vol. III*, “The School of Christ”, (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing House, 1997), 31.

lives through any and every season we find ourselves in. We must press on in divine order and in his time he will have his way in us.

You must understand that the Lord is working this very moment. He is ordering your life to answer your cry for a greater revelation of Christ. Chances are, you are experiencing this already. You simply have not recognized it until now. God has ordered all of your trials, your tribulations, your situations and your circumstances. What you may have misunderstood for punishment and judgment (or a round of bad luck) is actually the Lord lavishing his love out on you. He is working all things together that you would retreat inward to the spirit where Christ dwells. We must wait upon the Spirit to illuminate our own.

In the past, the Lord has allowed many things to come your way that were "good" things, but were not his divine will. He has been building a testimony in you of Christ. He has shown you that nothing will satisfy the longing of your heart except an intimate knowledge of Jesus. In the past, you may have thought your hope was in a purpose, a ministry, a Bible study, a teaching, a human leader, or a new method of doing church. Now you know "To live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). To live is not to new emerging ideas. To live is not to the church. To live is to Christ! Now you may experience the living Christ who dwells within your spirit. You have set out to learn of the power of his resurrection, that you may know that "to die is gain." Glory to Christ! He has revealed himself in you!

I invite you to join me on this rewarding journey with Christ. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let him be your everything. For in him is all that your spirit, soul, and body cry out for. Let us come to know him in this divine order that has been made possible by his very own blood. Let us press on toward the goal of knowing him fully as we are fully known. May we strive to abide in Christ in every moment of every day in order that our whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless until his Coming. And let us make disciples according to the divine order of knowing Christ.

**"If a new convert were introduced to real prayer and to a true inward experience of Christ as soon as he became converted, you would see countless numbers of converts become true disciples."<sup>50</sup>**

Jeanne Guyon

Dear saints, we do not disciple young believers. The living Christ discipled these precious babes. It is time to allow for the knowing of Christ to

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<sup>50</sup> Jeanne Guyon, *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ, Library of Spiritual Classics, Vol.2*, (Jacksonville: SeedSowers Publishing), 117.

revolutionize every area of faith and practice. Gathering men and women around teachings and doctrines is not our commission. We have not been called to multiply ourselves and puff up men with head knowledge that is disconnected from the indwelling Christ. We have been called to bring others to the Teacher. Like one disciple said to another, we are crying out, "Come and see!"<sup>51</sup> The *future* of the church is dependant upon our ability to call those who have decided to follow Christ to *abide* in Christ. The *hope* of the church is Christ. The church begins in confession of Christ and it grows in a continual apprehension of Christ. The key to revolution is in Jesus Christ alone.

**"Since Paul's day so very much of Christian activity has been the furthering of a movement, the propagating of a teaching, the furthering of the interests of an institution... it is not converting people to Christianity, or getting them to be followers of a movement; it is receiving Christ, God's satisfaction."<sup>52</sup>**

T. Austin Sparks

Our proclamation of Christ is from beginning to end. There never comes a time in our walk with the Lord that we are to depart from him. He is our highest goal and our greatest accomplishment. There is no movement of man or method of church life that will bring us the revolution that is so desperately needed. Christ is the movement! Be done with the religious gimmicks and the hype that surrounds some "new" teaching. In Christ we will all become true disciples. In Christ we will take hold of that which our spirit is longing for. Let us return to the headship of Christ as individuals. And we shall see corporately the church, the Bride of Christ, unchained and free!

My prayer is that Christ would not be ill-defined in our lives and in our local assemblies. May our one and only pursuit be to see Jesus come to full expression in our lives that we would walk in the power of his resurrection by knowing him in divine order! Finally, this is the journey we have been invited to embark upon. This is the way of revolution. The invitation has been given to you. And Jesus waits there in the secret place; in the inner chamber. He reclines at the table of your heart.

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<sup>51</sup> John 1:46, Nathaniel did not believe that anything good could come from Nazareth. He was skeptical about the person of Jesus and the works he was doing. Philip, in response to Nathaniel's doubts, replied, "Come and see!" There are two parts involved in Christ's call to discipleship: "Follow me" and "Abide in me". See Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*. Some have falsely believed the call of discipleship to be: "Join our institution" and "Be faithful in attendance." A New Testament church simply echoes the call of Christ.

<sup>52</sup> T. Austin Sparks, *The Centrality of Jesus Christ: The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol. I*, "The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ", (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing House, 1997), 11, 13.

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."*

Paul, Ephesians 3:16-21

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Thank you for taking the time to read my writings. Wow! I am humbled and blessed that you would take time out of your busy lives to consider the words of this young learner. I appreciate your attention and concern. Pray that my life will reflect my passion for Jesus. May you be filled with his glorious riches, so that in all things Christ might have the supremacy. I look forward to hearing from you on your journey with Christ.

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## **Suggested Reading**

### Spiritual Classics

*The Spiritual Man (3 volume set)* by Watchman Nee

*The Release of the Spirit* by Watchman Nee

*The Normal Christian Life* by Watchman Nee

*Christ: The Sum of All Spiritual Things* by Watchman Nee

*The Centrality of Jesus Christ (The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol. 1)*

*"The Centrality and Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ"*

*Ministry (The Works of T. Austin Sparks, Vol. 3)*

*"The School of Christ"*

*Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ* by Jeanne Guyon

*Abide in Christ* by Andrew Murray

*The Deeper Christian Life* by Andrew Murray

*The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine* by A.W. Tozer

*The New Man* by Thomas Merton

*The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence

*The Jesus I Never Knew* by Philip Yancey

*The Signature of Jesus* by Brennan Manning

*Bone of His Bone* by F.J. Huegel

*The Ultimate Intention* by DeVern F. Fromke

### Christology

*Christ the Center* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*Christ and Culture* by H. Richard Niebuhr

*The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change*

*Everything* by Brian McLaren

*Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* by

Richard A. Horsley

*The Gospel of the Kingdom* by George Eldon Ladd

*The Upside-Down Kingdom* by Donald Kraybill

*Who was Jesus?* by N.T. Wright

*Who Moved the Stone?* by Frank Morison

*The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for*

*Jesus* by Lee Strobel

*The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the*

*Identity of Christ* by Lee Strobel

*The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* by Gary R.

Habermas

*The Historical Figure of Jesus* by E.P. Sanders

*Jesus and Judaism* by E.P. Sanders

*God So Loved The World: A Christology for Disciples* by Jonathon R. Wilson

## Theology

*Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living* by Stanley Grenz

*Theology for the Community of God* by Stanley Grenz

*Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God* by Stanley Grenz

*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* by James D.G. Dunn

*Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* by Michael J. Gorman

*Paul: In Fresh Perspective* by N.T. Wright

*Theology of the Reformers* by Timothy George

*Evangelical Theology* by Karl Barth

*A Theology of the New Testament* by George Eldon Ladd

## Radical Discipleship

*Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World* by Lee Camp

*The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is*

*Destroying the Church* by Gregory Boyd

*The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*Discipled to Christ* by Stephen Kaung

*Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* by N.T. Wright

*The Politics of Jesus* by John Howard Yoder

*God is Not... Religious, Nice, "One of Us," An American, A Capitalist"* by Brent Laytham

*The Anatomy of a Hybrid: A Study in Church-State Relationships* by Leonard Verduin

*The Subversion of Christianity* by Jacques Ellul

*Christian Anarchy: Jesus' Primacy over the Powers* by Vernard Eller

*Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* by N.T. Wright

*Resident Aliens* by Stanley Hauerwas

*The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* by Shane Claiborne

*Jesus for President* by Shane Claiborne

*Foxe's Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe

*Martyrs Mirror: The Story of Fifteen Centuries of Christian Martyrdom From the Time of Christ to A.D. 1660* by Thieleman Van Bragt and Joseph F. Sohm

## Ecclesiology

*Going to the Root: 9 Steps for Radical Church Renewal* by Christian Smith

*Paul's Idea of Community* by Robert Banks

*Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*Bethanies: The Lord's Thought as to His Assemblies* by T. Austin Sparks

*Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices* by Frank Viola and George Barna

*God's Ultimate Passion* by Frank Viola

*Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity* by Frank Viola  
*So You Want to Start a House Church? First-Century Styled Church Planting For Today* by Frank Viola  
*The Untold Story of the New Testament Church* by Frank Viola  
*Gathering in Homes* by Frank Viola  
*Jesus Has Left the Building* by Paul Vieira  
*So You Don't Want to go to Church Anymore?* by Jake Colson  
*The Normal Christian Church Life* by Watchman Nee  
*The Glorious Church* by Watchman Nee  
*The Misunderstanding of the Church* by Emil Brunner  
*The Christian Woman... Set Free: Women Freed from Second-Class Citizenship in the Kingdom of God* by Gene Edwards  
*Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up: A New Look at Today's Evangelical Church in the Light of Early Christianity* by David W. Bercot  
*Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* by N.T. Wright

#### Biblical Hermeneutics & Scholarship

*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce  
*The Canon of Scripture* by F.F. Bruce  
*Reflections on the Bible* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer  
*How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* by Fee & Stuart  
*Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* by Duvall and Hays  
*Is There a Meaning in this Text?* By Kevin J. Vanhoozer  
*The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell  
*The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations?* by James R. White  
*Caesar and Christ (The Story of Civilization III)* by Will Durant  
*Backgrounds of Early Christianity* by Everett Ferguson  
*A History of Christianity, Vol. 1 & 2* by Kenneth Scott Latourette  
*A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* by David W. Bercot

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