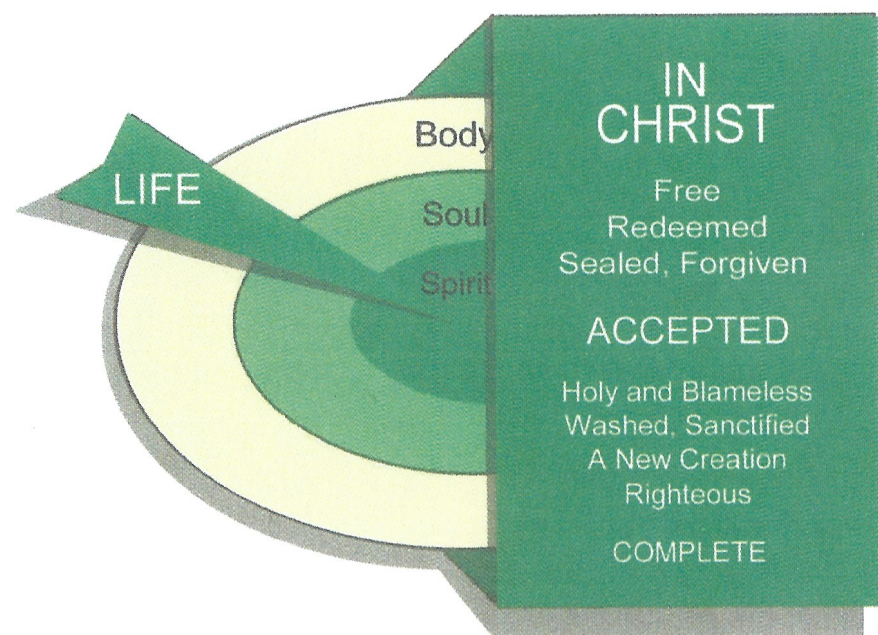


The *first wonder* of Life is that Christ by the Holy Spirit puts His Life into our spirit. From there, He begins to transform us into His likeness.

The *second wonder* is that, meanwhile, He puts us into Christ so that we are acceptable to God and perfect in Christ while this transforming work takes place.

The *final wonder* is that we can experience this Life and even reign in Life here on earth as well as enjoy His Life and presence forever!



"Few authors have seen the personal reality of Christ as life like Watchman Nee who allowed Christ to flow from his life through his books. I consider Albert Zehr to be one of the few who really understand and convey the heart of Watchman Nee's message. It was a privilege to have "Experiencing Christ as our Life" as the first foundational course taught at our newly formed training center in Richmond."

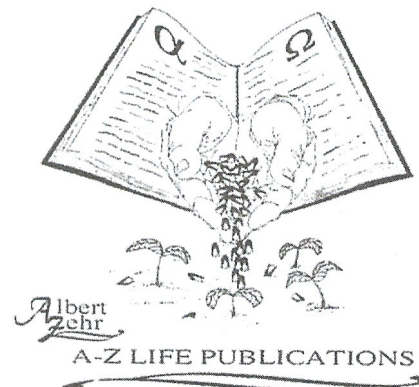
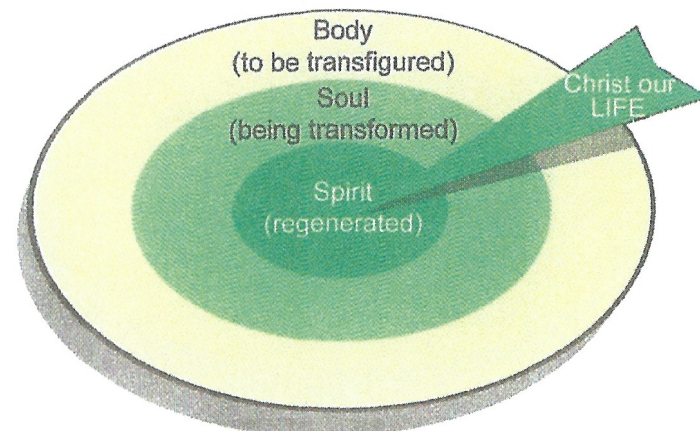
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EXPERIENCING

CHRIST

AS OUR LIFE

God has given us eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has Life. 1John 5: 11, 12.

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EXPERIENCING CHRIST AS OUR LIFE

Introduction

Galatians 2:20 is one of the great verses of the New Testament. In it the Apostle Paul unveils the secret of his amazing walk with the Lord. I certainly do not want to settle for anything less.

He declares, “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.”

The insights I wish to share in this booklet allowed me to take a major leap from a life of, “doing my best” to recognizing the Life, joy and power of the One who is actually living in me.

HERE IT IS IN A NUTSHELL

God’s purpose and plan is both profound and yet simple. To fulfil this plan He has invested everything, including His LIFE, in Christ.

Christ died for all, so that anyone who accepts His death on their behalf, the sentence of death has been removed and the forgiveness of sin is assured.

Christ’s **resurrection** demonstrated His power over death. In His resurrection He also became a “Life-giving Spirit.” He, now as The Spirit, can enter into our spirit and bring/birth that divine LIFE into us.

This new LIFE makes us “alive” and enables us to relate to God. By the growth and increase of that LIFE, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we can be conformed into the likeness of God’s Son.

Eventually, God’s redeemed and transformed people, the church, will express the fullness of God, and after Christ returns those who learned to live by that Life, i.e. reign in Life on earth will reign with Christ for all eternity.

Experiencing Christ as Life is the highest calling for mankind.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST AS OUR LIFE

Lesson 1 THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE

The first and most basic aspect both physically and spiritually is Life. I knew the Lord for twenty years before this matter was made clear to me. Following an awareness of the principle of Life my spiritual experience took a quantum leap forward, in every aspect. To this day I consider a clear revelation of Life to be central to a deeply satisfying Christian walk.

The word Life as we are using it in this study is a very special form of Life. Not just the life found in animals or plants. The Life we are referring to is beyond the psychological life of man, it is the-divine, eternal Life of God. The New Testament uses a special word pronounced ZOE. To distinguish this Life we will capitalize the word Life.

Largely instrumental in my “discovery” of Life was the writings of

situations we deeply turn to the Lord in a crises and He supplies Life and grace to overcome. One time a secretary came into my office crying. An irate caller threatened law suits and financial ruin to our company, and demanded a call back within twenty minutes. I knew she was a Christian so I asked if we could ask the Lord to intervene and give us His wisdom. She sat by as I called back, and in moments the furious man was calmed down and open to reason. When I hung up my secretary said. “The Lord sure heard our prayer.”

From time to time, in a crisis, as I turn my heart totally to Him, He gives me a timely word that meets the need far beyond anything I could have come up with. That wonderful Life is always available and will carry us through if we really open and allow it (Him) to have His way. We trust that this would become our daily experience.

2. *Constitutional reigning in Life*

While the above special supply of Life for situations is available there is something more wonderful that we long for. That is, that our entire being become increasingly saturated with Life, so that our make-up or constitution becomes Life. By Paul’s later life he not only found Life for situations but Life became the constituent of his being so that he normally responded in Life. So, that Life emanated from his being, and affected others.

I only go to my business office two days a week. One receptionist said to me, “You know that on the days you come to the office there is a different atmosphere here. It seems more peaceful and there is better harmony among the staff.”

Sometimes, after a business lecture someone tells me that they can sense that I am a lover of Jesus. This gives me more joy than any natural complement. I praise the Lord for His mercy in that perhaps in a small way my desire to reign in Life may be bearing some fruit.

My godly mother lived and walked in Life, and became saturated with Christ. Even in her old age, even with Alzheimer’s, her being overflowed with God’s love and grace. Many commented about there being something special about her. It was not even the words she spoke, but even something you sensed when you were in her presence. At times I remarked after I returned from visiting her, “I feel like I just spent time with Jesus.”

At her funeral I was honoured to tell everyone that her specialness was a result of the Treasure in that earthen vessel. “In fact,” I said, “That specialness that many commented about but few understood, is the sweet fragrance of the radiance of Christ Who became everything to her.”

Yes, it is possible to know Life, to live by Life, and even to reign in Life! Be assured that if you make this your pursuit, God will be for you, the Spirit will work in you, and Christ will be glorified. So may it be. Amen!

supposed to be in charge went into panic, but Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself, we are all here!” Everything is under control. Jesus is Lord. He is in charge and we are in Him!

The jailer fell before them asking what he must do to be saved, and he and all his family were baptized. Eventually, the officials escorted Paul and Silas out of the prison and asked them to please leave. The officials could, not withstand the dignity and authority of these men who were reigning in Life. Before they left the city they first stopped and encouraged the new church at Lydia’s house, this is reigning in Life!

4. Paul when ship wrecked Acts 27:21-25

Read this story and be again impressed by observing a man, who being in Christ is reigning in Life, even in disaster and calamity. Although he was a prisoner, bound in chains, he in fact was in charge and directed even the captain of the ship! Lord, make us such overcomers, not by getting out of situations, but by reigning in Life in the midst of them.

5. Many saints, Martyrs and Overcomers

Madam Guyon, an early Catholic saint, who suffered in prison, for her faith declared:

“A little bird I am, shut from the fields of air,
And in my cage I sit and sing, to Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be, because my God it pleases thee.

Nought have I else to do, I sing the whole day long;
And He who most I love to please doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing;
But still He listens to hear me sing.

My cage confines me round, abroad I can not fly,
But though my wing is closely bound, my heart’s at liberty;
For prison walls cannot control the flight the freedom of the soul.

O it is so good to soar, these bolts and bars above!
To Him whose purpose I adore. Whose providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find, the joy, the freedom of the mind.”

This is reigning in Life!

F. Personal experiences

‘ Please forgive me for using personal examples, but if we have none to give then our teaching is just talk.

1. Situational reigning in Life

We certainly all should have occasional experiences when in certain

Watchman Nee, a Chinese believer whose writings have led many to the deeper truth of the Christian Life. His mentor, a missionary lady, M.E. Barber would take him to different Christian meetings and ask him what he observed. She followed this by asking, “But was that Life?”

It took time for him to recognize that noise, exuberant singing, proper doctrine or great teaching is not necessarily Life. A manufactured plant may look identical to a live plant but it is not from a life source! Only the increase of the life in a seed is real life. May the Lord by His Spirit grant us revelation to see and to know Life.

A. Life the central matter - from Genesis to Revelation.

From Genesis 1 to Revelation there is the matter of Life. After God created man He placed him in a garden, at the center of which was the tree of Life. Even though man fell, the tree of Life still remains even in Revelation 22. Although Adam lost access to the tree of Life we now can experience and enjoy this Life. Although this Life is eternal Life, we do not have to wait for eternity to enjoy it, it is available to enter into and enjoy now!

1. Life is a hidden truth - requires revelation.

The matter of Life is quite hidden and requires revelation. In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prays for a spirit of revelation which is necessary in order to grasp the truth of this Life. Unfortunately, for many Christians this matter seems to be hidden.

If we look at the hymns and songs we find very few that really touch the matter of Life as we are referring to it. I probably know more than 400 hymns, yet I find very few that clearly touch this matter of Life.

We also can not find many books which clearly apprehend and focus on this matter. Most expect us to try to deny ourselves and try to live like Jesus did, rather than realize that He desires to live His Life through us.

2. Crucial for abiding in Christ and growing up into Him

Knowing Life is crucial to intimate fellowship with Christ now. Most Christians love the Jesus who lived and walked in Palestine. They love the Jesus who is now in heaven, and they long for His coming back again. They spend time reading the Bible to see how He did things and to learn what He said we should do, and then try to be like Him. They study the writings of Paul to get a clearer picture of what to believe and how to behave in order to please God and be like Jesus. All this is not Life.

Christ who lived in Palestine is NOW alive with present intentions and desires! Most would say yes, but where is He now? If I am regenerated then He is in me as Life now! His very Life is in me and desires to become my Life. -Galatians 2:20

Life is intimate, real and actively present now! It communicates and responds constantly. We must never forget that “Christ is Now!” Yes, He is coming back in a physical sense and yes, the kingdom is coming, but meanwhile

the kingdom is now within me. The kingdom is that sphere over which He has full charge and control. It is that which issues out of the extension and increase of His Life. Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:21

If we know Him as Life we will have such a clear spiritual taste for Life that we will be able to discern and measure everything else by that Life. This will be like recognizing the difference between a real and artificial apple by tasting it! This is the essence of discernment and is desperately needed in these last days!

B. God is the exclusive source of Life

We know from Genesis 1 and 2 that God created all the physical life, man, animals, and plants, even to the minute creatures in the sea and on the earth. Job came to realize that God is the source of all life, “You gave me life and ... watched over my spirit.” Job 10: 12, and, “The breath of the Almighty gives me life.” Job 33:4.

Psalms 36:9 says, “For with you is the fountain of life...” All physical and psychological life is all from God. God is also the source of divine Life. In John 5:26 Jesus says, “...the Father has Life in Himself ...” It is this Life which John 1:4 tells us was in Christ. Since I have received that Life I have an added Life! All human beings have a biological life and physical life, but they can also have and enjoy a spiritual, i.e. zoe Life. I want to treasure it and experience it!

C. Life is the basic element of all existence

1. Gives meaning, function and growth.

Creation without life would be meaningless. It is life that gives meaning and allows function and growth; otherwise, everything would be stagnant, there could be no activity and no capacity to develop. We can make things, but they will always remain just like we made them. without growth or development. Life only comes from life.

I just planted some radish seeds. In a month or so there will be a round white ball with a red skin. A few inches away an onion seed will develop and have its own character. Where does the taste and colour come from? **From the life in the seed.**

The very essence and nature of life is already in the seed in an undeveloped form. We do not need to add colour, flavour and shape. We waste most of our Christian life trying to add behaviour to believers, rather than watering and encouraging the seed of Life to grow. If every few days I pick on the radish, instruct it, and put some red paint on it to make it look good, it is not the real thing anymore. Many Christians try to look and act like Christ but it is an artificial man-made performance. It is not the growth or increase of the nature of the real Life. May we see that the natural goodness we are so easily proud of is not Life.

D. Three aspects of human Life

We can represent the human person by three circles. The larger outer circle is the body. Within this circle a smaller circle representing the soul, which

in Acts where a viper had latched onto Paul’s arm, but he shook it off into the fire and was unhurt. At that point he determined in his spirit to shake this viper of discouragement off and into the fire, and he got released! This is reigning in Life.

1. Jesus on trial John 18:4-24; 33-39; Luke 22:66-70

If you read the verses on Jesus trial you have to be impressed with His great dignity. When He is before Pilate it becomes obvious that really Jesus is the royal One and is far above Pilate. Who’s trying who? Look and you will see that it really was the authorities that were on trial, not Jesus! With no fear and no self-vindication Jesus is the ultimate example of reigning in Life!

2. Stephen when stoned Acts 7:54-60

Here even while the stones were hitting him, Stephen was praying. He was far above the evil rage of those who threw the stones. ‘He saw that Christ was standing at the Father’s side, and he prayed for those who were stoning him. This is not the natural self-life defending itself, but standing-in the surety of Life and reigning in Life!

3. Paul in prison Acts 16

Paul is not a person trying to behave himself and being spiritual, but one who practiced to be in Life in all circumstances. We see here the characteristics of a man who had been a persecutor and foremost sinner, but now lives by that Life. In Acts 16:13 we find that they were going to a place of prayer. This is an indication of seeking to be with others in Life. There Paul speaks in Life, this Life is overflowing from his spirit, and it penetrates the heart of Lydia; she responds, is baptized, brings them into her house, and a church is begun. The fruit of Life!

Next, there appears a girl who shouts that these are servants of the Most High God. But, Paul being in Life, is not swayed by the praises of man but discerned that she had an evil spirit and rebuked it and cast it out. This was the incident that caused the uproar. Reigning in Life threatens the rule of Satan, and may well cause a reaction.

The reason the city was in such uproar was because Paul’s action affected their profits. A characteristic of a one reigning in Life is that they do not care for money. Paul cared rather for the girl’s need for salvation. Here again Paul had the authority because He had God’s Life working in Him. If we reign in Life we bear His authority.

They were beaten and put in prison. This has been the portion of many of the great saints who reigned in Life. Their imprisonment, their prayers and writings have demonstrated to the whole universe that there is a Life that overcomes any adversity. Their testimonies have strengthened millions of God’s children and will judge all of their accusers in eternity.

Acts 16:25 begins, “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.” Only those reigning Life can sing in the darkest hour. Who was in, charge that night? Even though in stocks, Paul was reigning. After the earthquake the jailer who was

in Life, which might be considered a facet of reigning in Life.

1. Walking in the spirit

According to the scripture it is possible to, “...live according to the Spirit.” Rom 8:4, and “...live by the Spirit...” and, “keep in step with the Spirit”. Gal 5:16, 25. It is also possible to: “Live as children of Light.” Eph. 5:8, and “...continue to live in Him ...” Col. 2: 6

Let’s reiterate again, to live and walk in Him, is not the result of trying to do right and good. It is not a matter of being positive or religious. It is accepting our position in Him and responding to His desires and His initiatives. It is a matter of surrendering our big ego called “I” with all of its ambition and pride and let it be replaced by Him. .

2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is at the absolute heart and center of the new birth and the “carrier” of the Life which we are talking about. At the same time it is important to recognize that the baptism, or outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is necessary for empowerment. The book of Acts makes the importance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit very clear.

Sadly, due to ignorance; error, or prejudice many of God’s children have been robbed of much joy and blessing by disregarding this gift that is available to all true believers.

3. Living by the anointing 1 John 2:20, 26

Before I knew about the matter of Life, or experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I processed everything by knowledge and reason. At that time my father who I considered to be “off the deep end,” kept saying, “Don’t you know that we have an anointing that teaches us?”

My reply, “Yes, dad, but God gave us a mind to use ...” Some years later when I came to know Life. I was thrilled to find that I too have an anointing and it does teach me. The Lord is jealous to speak directly to each of us.

4. Through prayer and intercession.

Oswald Chambers who certainly knew this Life states that prayer is the way that the Life of God in us is nourished. As we begin to see prayer primarily as communing and fellow-shiping with God it becomes and exercises that Life. 7

Eventually, in true intercession, by our mutual Life with God, we are simply reflecting, and responding to His burden and desires at that moment. Our requests are not for our interests, but as His representatives on earth we release Him to implement His will on earth as it is in heaven.

E. Practical examples

Recently a brother from Africa who bears heavy responsibility caring for a number of churches told me that a short time ago he was being attacked by discouragement. In Philippians he read about rejoicing. But how? Then He read

includes the mind, emotions and will. Within this circle we draw a third circle, because as Job 32:2 tells us there is also a spirit within man. (See diagram on front cover.)

When God created man, (see Gen. 1 and 2,) He made the physical body from the earth, and breathed into man the breath of life which-made man a living soul, with thoughts and feelings. He also left a container within man, a-spirit, with great anticipation that within that container He would put the Divine Zoe Life which we are talking about.

1. Body-biological life “Bios”

The Greek word Bios refers to the body. From this we get the word biology which refers to the .physical aspect of man. This is the lowest level of human life. Every level of life relates to and substantiates its own dimension. If I want to physically feel or substantiate something physical I must use my body. A corpse can not feel anything because the body is dead, only an alive body can relate to its physical counter part.

2. Soul -psychological life “Psuche”

The second level of man, contained within the body, is the soul. I can hurt a person psychologically, as with words, without touching him physically, because we also have a psychological life. Here we see again that each level of life relates to its own realm. The soul relates to thought, emotion, desires and intentions and can engage others on the psychological level. .

3. Spirit –spiritual Life “Zoe”

At the center of man’s being is the spirit. Only by our spirit, after it has been made alive can we relate to the real spiritual realm.

According to Eph. 2, before regeneration, I was dead, meaning. I was dead in my spirit. That’s why until my spirit was made alive I could only speculate about God. Do you realize that when you confess your need as a sinner and open your heart to Jesus a new Life comes into you and makes your spirit alive? The Life of God comes in and we are now alive in the central and highest part of our being.

When a person’s spirit is not alive they can only speculate about spiritual things by engaging their mind, a psychological organ to try to substantiate spiritual things. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that, “God is Spirit and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit...” John 4:24.

The three parts of man are clearly shown in a number of scriptures. As in-1Thess. 5:23 when it asks, “that your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless ...” and Heb 4: 12 talks about the dividing between soul and spirit.

A major aspect of maturing in Christ is to learn to know the soul from the spirit, especially the emotions from the spirit. At a certain level of the Christian Life we may have great emotional experiences which the Lord may grant us. It is easy to latch onto and even fall in love with emotional feelings. Sooner or later

those emotions won't come no matter how much we shout or jump. Eventually, we will realize that Life is far deeper and more substantial than feelings or emotions.

E. Each Life has it's own inherent nature

A bird is a bird even when it is in the egg, it already incorporates the bird nature. When it hatches we do not need to teach it that it is a bird and should fly because that quality is inherent in the bird life. How many lessons have you given your cat to say meow or to catch a mouse. All we need to do is feed and care for our creatures and their specific and unique nature will develop.

In the same way everything we need of Christ is in that seed of Life which was sown in our spirit when we were regenerated. Of course, it needs to grow and mature.

F. Regeneration imparts divine, eternal Life

According to 2 Peter 1:4 " ...you may participate in the divine nature ..." By the Holy Spirit the divine nature has been imparted into our spirit. We simply need to allow that nature to grow and flourish. For this to happen we must decrease, allow our old nature to be put to death, and be replaced by the new man

1. Evidenced by consciousness of Life

If we preach the gospel and a person receives this new Life, we should begin to see some evidence of that Life. For example, there should be at least some increasing uncomfortable sensations about ungodly conduct. Words like, "I just don't feel right about this or that or, I lost my craving for something." are a wonderful sign of Life consciousness beginning to awaken and develop.

At first it may be like the baby in the high chair, but, even reaching for food is an indication of Life. It is easy to tell and teach new believers how to behave. If they learn the right things to do and say they may begin to talk and act spiritual. But eventually we may be let down when we find tis to be mere performance not the true growth in Life.

2. True growth in Life results in the likeness of Christ

The real evidence of the growth of this Life is an ever increasing likeness of Christ. Full growth is, "...attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:13. Another indication of true growth in Life is a growing awareness of and concern for the body of Christ. A sign of Life is a concern for others as well as an increasingly intuitive sense of the Lord's speaking. Gradually there will also be discernment for recognizing what is Life versus religion. Also, becoming less impressed with eloquence and natural talk and recognizing Life in others.

Lesson 2 CHRIST AS LIFE

In our first lesson we established the fact that Life is the dominant theme in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In this lesson we will see that Christ is the essence, source and totality of that Life. In fact we could use Christ or Life

to the word Amen! When God said to Abraham, "Pack up and move." Abraham said, "Amen!" When he asks us to move, so often we answer, "What about this and that?"

This is further shown in 2 Cor. 1:20, where we are told that all the promises in Christ are YES, and AMEN! Learn to affirm them, say yes, Amen, and then act on them. This is regarded as righteousness because it is affirming what God says.

2. Rejoice give thanks -praise

When Paul was writing the letter to the Philippians he was confined in prison and under much hardship. Yet he speaks of joy, he even says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ...Do-not be anxious about anything ..., And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:4-7

This is reigning in Life! While Paul was in that prison, he was really in Christ, and he was far above the depressing situation. To rejoice is a way we bring ourselves into the overcoming Life, in this state our sensitivity to the sense of this Life is more easily apprehended.

3. Resting from self and strife

Another aspect of reigning in Life is to rest from our own effort. Jesus said that He did nothing of Himself, but simply observed and did what the Father was doing. John 5:19, 30; It seems that when we struggle and strain the Lord sits back and lets us exhaust ourselves, but when we come to .rest He shows us His desire. Then, we can enter into His perspective and work with Him instead of for Him.

4. Learning to sit and set

"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus ..." Eph. 2:6 Dear Ones, if we would realize where we are when we are in Christ we would be happy to be seated. Claim your seat and relax, and while you are here, "Set your mind on things above; not on earthly things." Col. 3:2 If we would spend our time setting our mind on things above instead of the newspapers, TV, and the gossip all around us, then the Life would become much more vibrant and active and bring us into reigning in Life!

5. Casting down imaginations. 2-Cor.10:5 .

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Let's just do it!

D. The practical application

Just how do we reign in Life? Is it really possible? Who has done it? What does it look like in everyday living? The term reigning in Life is not very familiar. Let us consider some more familiar terms which are involved in reigning

B. Based on who and where we are in Christ.

When we are in Christ, this greatly affects who we are!

1. Chosen called, destined 2 Cor. 1:22 .

God chose us not in a last minute impulsive decision. On the contrary, “He chose us in Him before the creation of the world.” Eph. 1: 4. His intention was that we would be holy. Furthermore, He did this with certainty because, “...it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.” To guarantee this, “He anointed us, set His seal in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” 2 Cor. 1:21- 22.

Today, a guarantee is considered very significant. Our spiritual potential is irrevocably guaranteed by God Himself, if we simply allow Him to do it His way. We must believe that God set us apart from birth.

2. Sonship, -both in nature and position

When we call on our God as Father our spirit confirms that we are not mere slaves but sons. It should be obvious that anyone who is a son is also an heir, and this makes us co-heirs with Christ. Rom 8: 15,16; “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave but a son.” Gal 4:5-6; 2 Peter 1:4 takes us even one step further, “...you may participate in the divine nature ...”

Being sons, and heirs, and participating in the divine nature makes it clear that God intends that we reign in Life.

3. Having the Spirit as guarantee

Now, both to convince us, and to enable us to attain the goal we, “... have the first fruits of the Spirit.” Rom 8:23

In 2 Cor. 5:5 the Spirit is referred to as “...a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” All this gives us no excuse, but empowers us to believe, declare and enter into the full experience of living by that wonderful indwelling Life.

C. The practical awareness

1. Laying hold of -faith, believe, amen

To contain and even to be aware of all the above is wonderful but it must be engaged. It's like having a super computer. First, I must become aware of its features and capacities. But, then I must also apply or “lay hold” of it and learn how to activate the features available. ...

Some psychologists say that the average human uses only about 10 to 20% of their brain capacity. This is even more the case spiritually. Many Christians probably employ or experience only a minute amount of what is available to them.

Dare to “... take hold of the eternal Life to which you were called..., the Life that is truly Life.” 1 Tim. 6:12, 19. Yet again as we see from Abraham, the biggest part for us is to believe. ~see Rom. 4:3. In Hebrew word believe is similar

interchangeable as we are using it here.

A. The tree of LIFE is Christ Rev.22:1-3

From Col. 1:16 & 17 “For by Him all things were created ... He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” we see that Christ was very much involved in creation. In Gen. 1:1 and v. 26 the Hebrew word for God is plural, showing Christ as one of the Trinity even at that time.

There is also reason to believe that Christ is the tree of Life as found in Gen. 2. This becomes clear in Rev. 22 where we see that the river of water of Life, from which grows the tree of Life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. At regeneration that river flowed into us! John 4:14

1. Available to supply LIFE to man

In Genesis 2 this Life was made available as the tree of Life. It's placement in the middle of the garden shows it's significance in God's view and it seems it should have been an obvious choice for man.

2. Man's free will allowed a choice

God however created man with a free will to choose Life voluntarily. Even in the garden He gave man an option, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man took the alternative and the consequences are still being felt. The sadly even after many believers are regenerated still revert back to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not knowing that even the knowledge of good is not Life.

3. Life withheld until sin is dealt with Gen 3:22-24

After man rejected God's offer and took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, access to the tree of Life was forbidden and guarded by cherubim and flashing fire! Why? Because the cherubim representing God's holiness could not allow access to Life until sin was dealt with. God does not want man to live forever in sin. Only after Christ atoned, paid the penalty for sin, could access to the tree of Life be allowed. In this way Jesus Christ has become the door and the only way to eternal Life.

4. After sin is dealt with, Life is available Heb 9:11-12, 26-27

In the above references in Hebrews we see that Jesus fully dealt with sin and opened the way into the most holy place which is also a type of the tree of Life.

B. Christ came as LIFE I John 1:2

It is important to see that when Christ came He came as Life. 1 John 1:2 “The Life appeared ... and we proclaim to you the eternal Life which was with the father and has appeared to us.” This Life was Christ!! “In Him was Life and that Life was the light of men.” John 1:4

When we receive Christ, Life enters into our spirit, and when we preach

Christ, that Life issues forth from our spirit. We are not just trying to persuade people to be Christians instead of Muslims; we are offering them Divine Life. This is the well of living water springing up from our innermost being which Jesus promised to the thirsty woman at the well, that she would receive, if she believed in Him. John 4: 10 -13.

1. Life intended for man John 10:10; 5:40; 17:2

John 10:10 which refers to abundant life (KJV) is often quoted with the suggestion that this tells us that if we believe in Jesus we will be blessed with more fun, a bigger house, a better job and less troubles. These things may come to us, but this refers to something much higher. It is telling us that the reason He came was that we may have the wonderful divine, eternal resurrection Life indwelling us. And, if we tap into this Life we can commune with, know the mind and desire of God, and even impart that Life to others.

Limiting concepts rob us of the present experience of that Life. For some these verses mean that God is sitting in heaven with a barrel full of hand outs for those who behave and ask for them. And, that some day He will welcome us into a place we refer to as eternal Life. There is so much more. He wants an intimate relationship with us today and to be our Life right now!

John 5:39-40, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal Life yet you refuse to come to me to have Life.” Just coming to the Scriptures is not adequate; since He is Life we must come to Him. If we come to the Scripture and we do not contact or have any personal involvement with Him, then we didn’t come to the Word but to a history or story book to learn facts. Even when we are regenerated it is possible to gain much knowledge, but if we do not engage our spirit to contact Christ we will know little of Life.

2. Broken so He could become Life John 12:24

When Jesus talks about the grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying to produce many grains He is talking about Himself. Just as the Life of the original grain is released through its death while in the ground, so through Jesus’ death His Life was released enabling it to be multiplied. Now as the Spirit of Life, His Life can be imparted into many people, so that we now become the many grains. He did not die to convince anyone, He died to release Life!

C. Bread of Life John 6: 27, 35

In another sense Jesus’ death also allowed Him to become the bread, or food, to nourish that Life which He initially imparts. In John 6 He refers to Himself over and over as the bread and water of Life. Life requires sustenance for growth and development and maturity. For this reason it is so important that we spend time in the Word, in spiritual songs and in fellowship. The Psalmist David considered the word to be food. He meditated on, or we might say he ate it, day and night! “How sweet are your words to my taste ...” Psa. 199:103 .

“For if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ” Romans 5: 17 Reigning in Life means to live up to what we have, and are, in Christ. It means to actually live by His Life. It may also be referred to as “living by the Spirit,” “walking in the anointing,” or, “being found in Him.”

Reigning in Life is a result of knowing what Life is, seeing it, believing it, and living in it by faith. To take by faith is to receive it into our very being, so we absorb it until we live by it.

A. Based on who God is

The surety not only of our initial salvation, but also of its completion is based on the fact of who our God is. He is not only the I AM He is also, “...the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father...” Eph. 1:17

1. His omnipotence Eph.1:19, 20; 3:7

The above verses speak of His incomparable great power for us who believe, even the power that raised Christ from the dead. But, the fact that needs to penetrate our awareness is that this great power is at work in us! And this power becomes the basis for us to reign in Life!

As a boy I waited to hear the minister conclude the service by quoting Jude 24 -25. “No to Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy - to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for ever more! Amen.”

It signalled to me that the long meeting was over. But, I confess that only years later did the awe and wonder of this word penetrate my heart. This is the power of One who is able, and is at work in us. These words can infuse such faith into us, so that we will reign in Life!

2. His sovereignty Rom 4: 21; 8:38; 2 Tim. 1:12

The apostle Paul had such a strong assurance that he could declare that he was fully persuaded that God was able, and that neither life nor death, nor angels, or demons nor any other power is able to separate us from the love of God. He also proclaimed that he knew in Whom he believed and was convinced that He was able to complete what He had begun. As we grasp and fully accept these facts we will find ourselves spontaneously reigning in Life.

3. His intention Rom 8:28-30ff

In Ephesians 3:10 we see that, “His intent was that now through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known ...” After developing this matter he concludes in verse 20 with, “now to Him who is able ...”

If God has an intention, and is able, we can be assured that His intention will be realized if we give Him our Cooperation.

Romans 8:10

TRANSFORMATION of our soul

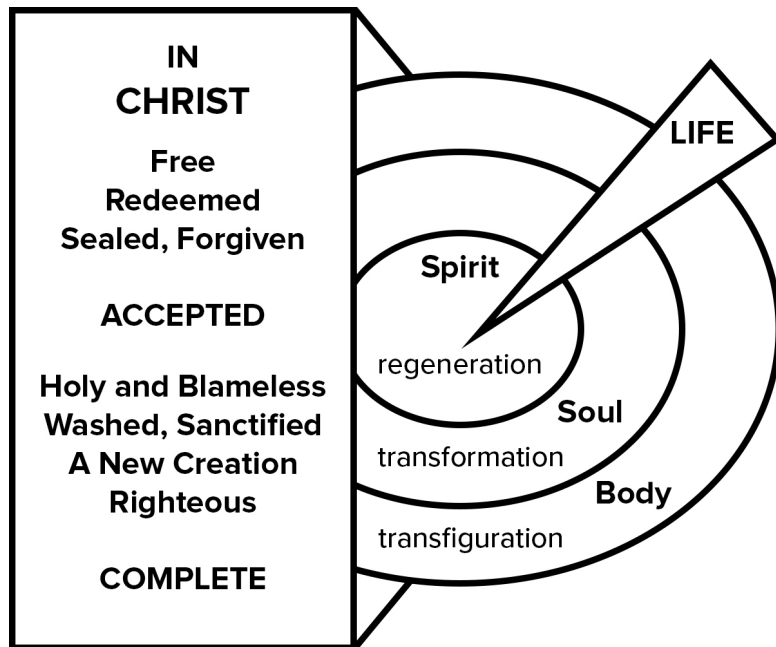
Life is spreading from the spirit to the soul by denying the soul and setting the mind on the Spirit. Romans 12:2

TRANSFIGURATION of our body

Eventually our body will be transfigured even like His own glorious body. Philippians 3:21

IN CHRIST

Meanwhile, I am accepted in the Beloved because my life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:3



Lesson 5 REIGNING IN LIFE

Reigning in Life is no doubt an unfamiliar term. Perhaps this will allow us to grasp it without preconceived ideas. First, let us establish that it is Biblical, and then try to define it and thirdly we will consider actual examples of reigning in Life.

D. Water of LIFE John 4:13

When Jesus talked to the woman at the well in John 4, He realized that she was dissatisfied, dry and empty. She having tried four husbands was a picture of the emptiness, and the inability to find satisfaction. Here Jesus presents Himself as the water of Life, if you drink of Me as Life your thirst will be satisfied. There is a thirst in the spirit of man that only Life can satisfy. Christ as the water of Life will not only satisfy that thirst, but will even cause it to overflow to others.

Just as there was a need for His death to become the bread, so He needed to die for the water of Life to be released. According to John 19:34 “...the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side ... bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” The blood released was to atone for our sins.

The shedding of His blood also means that the tree and river of Life are now again available. But note that water also flowed out with the blood. This water indicates that His death not only dealt with sin, but also released Life!

E. The Light of Life John 1:4; 8:12

In John 1:4 we see that, “...that Life was the light of men.” Here we find that the Life is also the Light, in John 8: 12 Jesus refers to Himself-as “the Light of Life.” The more Life we have the more Light we have. When things are not clear-and discussion goes on endlessly the problem is a lack of Light. For only light shows things as they really are.

This morning I put on black pants and black socks, however, when I got into the daylight I discovered that the socks were dark blue. Light makes manifest and lack of Light indicates a lack of Life.

As a boy I used to wonder how God would keep men from arguing at the Judgment. Now I realize that He will simply show up as the Light. In a dark room we can debate and even divide over what colour all the items in here are. Only light will resolve the debates and end the disagreements? Let the “Son” shine in!

Many times our uncertainty is not due to a lack of study or knowledge, but a lack of Life as Light, and perhaps an unwillingness to let the Light of Life shine in.

F. No Life apart from Him John 5:21, 26,39,40; 6:68

It is very important to see that there is no Life apart from Him. In John 6, after others had left, Jesus asked the disciples if they too would leave. They replied in verse 68, “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal Life.”

“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives Life, even so the Son gives Life to whom He pleases to give it.” John 5: 21.He even chooses those to whom He gives Life!

“For as the Father has Life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have Life in Himself.” John 5: 26.

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word ... has eternal Life and will not be condemned; he has passed from death to Life.” John 5:24.

1. Work outside His life of no eternal value 1Cor. 3:12-14

Here is where it will affect us and our work. God is not in the business of improving the old nature, not even our good self. Our old self is condemned and must be crucified on the cross. With our cooperation with the Spirit through self denial, it is crucified, terminated and replaced with the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4

If we look at 1 Cor. 3: 12 ff we see that just as the substance of the foundation is Christ, Who is Life; whatever is built on it must also be Life, as expressed by gold, silver, and precious stones.

Gold typifies God himself; silver typifies Christ and precious stones the Holy Spirit. So, we see that only the fruit of the very increase of the new nature being formed in us will survive. On the other hand, wood, natural source building materials, and hay or straw, the flesh which is as grass, all may make a good impression and may be done with good intentions but they will not stand the test of fire.

If we have been regenerated and have that Life in us we will not perish, but if our work originated from and was just an extension of our natural self it will not survive. How I wept when I came to realize that for so many years I laboured to work for God, but not necessarily with Him, much less out from His Life.

G. God's new beginning as Life 2 Pet 3:10 ff

From the above and other verses we realize that the world and all of its activities are passing away. All of creation came under God's judgment at the fall and is now temporary and will be consumed by fire. So, whoever and whatever is outside of Christ has no long term future.

1. His death terminated the old creation and issues in the New creation. 2 Cor. 5:17

For us, the cross at Calvary becomes the gateway to Life. In effect God put the old creation into Christ and on the cross He terminated it and pronounced it, finished. Upon His resurrection the New creation was released and now as He imparts His Life into our Spirit the new creation increases. 2 Cor 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!"

While we may do many things to alleviate the pain and frustrations of the old creation these activities have temporal value. Only the increase and the fruit of His Life will have eternal value.

This is why eventually many will say, "Didn't we do this and that in your Name." Matt. 7:22. But He will say, "I never knew you." This means I was not the source of that activity so I do not recognize it as a part of my new creation. You did it with good intention, but it was not the fruit of my Life and therefore is not the new creation.

2 The church, the corporate increase of His Life Eph 3: 10

The church comprises those who have received this new Life. Therefore it is the corporate expression of that Life. We see in Ephesians that it was through the church that God intends to make Himself known to the world. This can only

God has been preparing such leaders and young people are waiting for, genuine men and women of God to follow. The issue is not will we follow, the issue is do we have the discernment to know who is leading in Life and the willingness to follow? 1 Tim 5:17

E. Being Found in Him

In Philippians 3:9 Paul expresses his desire to be found in Christ. Many of our troubles, fears, frustrations and problems would vanish if we would simply claim our place in Christ. So much is ours; so why live in poverty and misery, when all the spiritual blessings God has available for us are ours if we simply claim them by faith.

The story is told of an old woman who died in starvation and misery with newspapers piled high and filth all around. She never left her house' and spent no money, Later it was discovered that there was a million dollars tucked in her bed and throughout the house. Was she poor or rich? Even while she was rich, she lived in poverty.

1. Not counting on own righteousness 2 Cor 5:21

A subtle trap believers fall into is to try to be righteous and thereby please God. The only cure for this condition is a clear understanding of God's view. 2 Cor. 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God." This is why after Paul declared in Philippians 3 that he wanted to be found in Christ. He talks about not having his own righteousness. Rather he banks on the righteousness that is his through faith in Christ

2. Working out our own salvation

As mentioned before, all the while we are hidden in Christ, His life is working within us. In fact we are covered in Christ, our cocoon, but, are at the same time, being infused with His transforming Life. Eventually we should become perfect even as He is.

In Revelation 19 it speaks of the righteousnesses of the saints. The longer we walk intimately with the Lord, and the more we deny the self, the more we should become righteous. Eventually, it is God's anticipation that if He would take off our outer garment of Christ, He would find that we have become just like Him.

To some extent the cocoon will no longer be necessary once the worm has fully become the, mature butterfly. Let us cooperate fully by letting the Life spread from our spirit to conform our soul to His likeness. And the best way to accomplish this is by abiding in HIM!

The following picture attempts to illustrate the various aspects of our experience of Life.

REGENERATION in our spirit.

The spirit has been made alive by receiving Christ as the Life giving Spirit.

If our fellowship is in Christ, and in His Life which we share in common then we will enjoy a beautiful oneness. Matt. 18:20 “For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.”

1. Holding a common LIFE with all believers

Rom 12: 5 “So in Christ we who are many form one body in Christ.” and Eph 4:4 “There is one body and one Spirit...” show us that there is a common factor in all believers. It is more than holding the same beliefs, it is a common Life! In order to be the same body there must be the same Life in each member. This is why when we meet another believer we immediately sense a commonality which we do not sense with a person who is not in Christ.

2. Realizing Him in the fellowship of the body

A practical aspect of the fellowship of the body is realized in that His Life and presence is magnified when a number of believers are together, Sometimes a small discrepancy in our life does not manifest itself when we are alone. But, when we come together in corporate worship or fellowship immediately, the intensified light brings us to conviction and the need of repentance. Often the sense of the Lord’s presence is more intense, His direction is clearer when we are together.

A further implication lies in that we also need to be practically connected with a specific body of believers. While it is possible to walk alone, it is almost impossible to have a balanced, healthy, spiritual development while walking alone.

At times the Lord also gives direction to us through His body. This sometimes comes through the leadership which have been designated to represent the body. To refuse the fellowship of the body can be the same as rejecting the fellowship of Christ. Let us be open and sensitive to the body as well as to Christ directly.

3. Recognizing spiritual authority

This topic has become very touchy. There has been much abuse of authority and at the same time we live in a world of rebellion and self assertion. There is, however, an order in all life. In society, in business, or in the family, so also in the church there must be order and leadership. In each case this order must be recognized and accepted. 1 Peter 2:13ff;

If we really know Life we will sense that certain ones have a calling to leadership, and the Life in us is asking us both to respect and honour them. To know and to fear God may be just a theory until we know and have a deep respect for God’s delegated authority in the body. Don’t ask to see it if you are not ready to obey, it can be spiritually damaging. 1 Cor. 11:30

I have been involved in spiritual abuse; however, this does not negate authority in its proper place. I believe that as the Lord’s body is restored there will be clear and awesome authority with priority of heart and humility under Holy Life anointing. Those who know and fear the Lord will respect it and come under God’s blessing and grow in Life.

be done by the increase of His Life. What a mercy that we come to see that only the increase of His Life, not our good works, can truly satisfy Him. His body is only the increase of His Life.

Lesson 3 HIS LIFE IN US

In the first lesson we looked at the principle of Life and we saw that Life was God’s way in the very beginning and in Revelation 22 the River of Water of Life and the Tree of Life still issue out of the Throne. For eternity God’s Life will be our supply so we have received that Eternal Life when we are born again.

God imparts His Life into man by putting His divine Life into Christ, then releasing that Life from Christ as the Spirit into our spirit then this Life continues to sustain us throughout eternity.

In the second lesson we saw that in the entire universe, everything else is in death, except Christ Who is now the exclusive source of Life. In God’s view, everything else is cancelled, or written off, so to speak. He has starting over by producing a whole new creation in Christ by reproducing Christ as Life in us.

A. Man dead apart from Christ Eph. 2:1, 5

Eph. 2:1, “And you He made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins ...” and v: 5 “...even when we were dead in trespasses ...” Here we see that man apart from Christ is dead. We are also told that we who were dead in sin have been made alive. Obviously we were not necessarily dead in our body or soul, but in our spirit.

Anybody who is dead is hopeless, unless they could be made alive! And since Life is exclusively found only in Christ, He is our only hope. For this hope to be realized there must be a way that that Life can enter into man to bring Life to his dead spirit. The problem is even more complex, because man is also sin by nature and sinful in actions.

1. Consequence of sin (nature), and sins (deeds) Co12:13

It is helpful to see and understand that the matter of sin is a twofold problem involving both sin and sins. Sin is the old nature we inherited from Adam.

Even if we would never commit one sin we would still have a problem of death and alienation from God because of our sinful nature. Being descendants of Adam, we were in Adam and so when he sinned it affected all of mankind.

The evidence of our being in sin is shown by its fruits which are the sins which we all commit. Any nature can be determined by what it produces. If sins are forthcoming obviously it is the fruit of the sin nature. Since man naturally is selfish, greedy, and deceitful his nature must be sinful.

Colossians 2: 13 “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ...” This verses shows both of these problems in one verse.

Just to ask for forgiveness of sins is like getting a haircut. The hair will keep growing in again, unless the roots are dealt with. So we are going to have to

deal with the original problem of sin before dealing with the forgiveness of sins has any significant value.

2. Sin requires death -shown in the Passover Exodus 12

In Exodus 12 Egypt typified the world which is in sin and under God's judgment of death. Since the Children of Israel were held in captivity in Egypt they were under that same sentence of death. To deal with this crisis the Lord required that each Israelite family kill a lamb, and apply some of its blood on the door frames of their houses. That night the death angel struck the firstborn in every home but passed over and spared those where the blood had been applied.

The death of the lamb was accepted as a substitute. The lamb of course, was a type of Jesus Christ who offered Himself and shed His blood on our behalf. Now if we accept His death, i.e. apply the blood, the sentence of death will be removed and our sin nature will no longer be held against us. God can now relate to us because we are now, "accepted in the beloved" see Eph. 1:6 KJV. From this we see how Christ has dealt with our first and primary problem of sin.

This was done only once to show that it required only one offering, and that we need accept and apply this only once. Christ died once and my acceptance of His death covers my being born in sin and that acceptance applies permanently, just as the new birth is required only once. Sins, however, are another matter.

3. Sins require sacrifice -shown in the altar Exodus 27, 38, Leviticus 1ff

Later in Exodus and Leviticus, Moses was instructed to build an altar on which various kinds of offerings were to be made to deal with sins which reoccur and need to be dealt with frequently.

Jesus fulfilled the requirement of our being dead in sin, by dying and shedding His blood only once. When we accept this we are made alive. As to our sins (plural) we need to apply the blood whenever we commit sins. See Hebrews 9-10.

When we have accepted His death on our behalf we have the assurance that we are accepted by God. But when we commit sins, we sense guilt, uncleanness, fear, and a sense of separation from God. At this point when we confess and apply His blood, which cleanses us it gives us boldness to enter His presence and to fellowship with Him in an atmosphere of love and full acceptance.

B. Goal of Salvation is Life

Now we can have access to God with no barriers or hindrance. This is quite wonderful, and to the realization of most believers that is adequate. But, this is somewhat like rescuing a bottle from the mud, and washing it. Getting picked up from the mud is akin to being made alive; being washed is akin to having our sins forgiven. While that is wonderful, the bottle is still empty. Although it may now be used for display and demonstration, it is still empty. Yes, God delight in seeing that we are now no longer in death and forgiven of our sins. We must see that the "clean-up" is simply to prepare us to be a container of Life and be able to fellowship with, and express, God!

2. Now no condemnation Rom. 8: 1

If we understand our position in Christ, we will begin to understand why in Rom. 8:1, Paul says that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ..." It does not say, for those who are perfect, or for those who didn't blow it, but for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why; because our acceptance by God is not based on our righteousness, i.e. our condition, but on our position, i.e. in Christ. Since He is righteous God attributes that to us, and then as always, our standing before God is secure not based on our righteousness but on His.

If I sin, I confess and accept God's forgiveness and the cleansing of the blood of Christ. Prior to my confession my fellowship with the Lord may be strained. This is a signal for me to deal with the matter, but it does not require condemnation. We must learn to reject condemnation by distinguishing between it and the Spirit's convicting us of sins which need to be confessed.

It is very helpful to see how a lie can control us and become our experience even though it is not true. For example, suppose a certain man committed a crime and is sentenced to life in prison. A pardon is issued by the governor and he is set free. When he is about to leave the prison the capable prosecutor convinces him that being guilty he has no right to be free, and actually shames him into staying in prison. Is he now free or not? Ask the governor and he will say, yes he is free. In the matter of fact he is free, but since he believes the lie, he does not experience the fact but the lie becomes his experience.

Even so, many times although we are free from condemnation and victorious, we believe the lies and mope in condemnation and wallow in defeat. Let us believe, declare and live according to the truth, and the truth will set us free.

3. Acting in His stead 2 Cor 5: 20

When we are living according to the truth and abiding in Him, He also identifies Himself with us and we become His representatives.

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." 1 Cor. 5:20

We actually can act and speak on Christ's behalf! Jesus personally confirmed this in John 13 where he stated. "I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send, accepts me..." This is awesome, and I believe we will experience this reality' more and more as we learn to truly abide in Him.

In a further sense, when we spend time with someone, actually Christ is with them. Since Christ is in us and we are in Him, where we go He goes. When we have lunch with someone, they should have some sensation that Christ had lunch with them.

D. Fellowship in Him and His body

Not only am I in Christ, but so are you and all the other believers. In fact, His entire body, the church is in Him. This should give us a renewed sense of closeness to, and a deeper fellowship, with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

If our fellowship is in our opinions or doctrines we will have problems.

Christ. Just as we share in His sufferings we may also share His glory. Rom. 8:17. Christ now also refers to us as His brothers. Whereas, he was formerly referred to as God's only son John 1:14; 3: 16, Jesus is later referred to as the first of many brothers. Rom. 8:29. In Heb. 2:11 "...Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers ..."

4. Accepted in the beloved

Eph. 1:6 (KJV) states that we "are accepted in the beloved." We must see that our acceptance with God lies in the fact that we are in Christ and not in how good or right we are at any given moment. **When God looks at us He sees our position not our condition!** Even while His Life is working at transforming us from within, God sees us as already perfected because when he looks at us He sees Christ.

While the worm in the cocoon it is not yet a butterfly, and even though we see only the cocoon, we have a full assurance that the butterfly is the inevitable result. Eph. 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

There are many scripture verses which speak of who and what we are in Christ. We find that we are free, redeemed, sealed, holy, blameless, washed, sanctified, righteous, complete, etc. This is all summarized in Eph. '1:3 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who 'has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Let us be clear and convinced that every spiritual blessing is ours because we are in Christ.

C. Living and Abiding in His LIFE John 15

In John 15 we see the wonderful picture of the vine and the branches showing how we are in Christ and how we must abide there.

1. Abiding -living IN Him John 15

To abide means to remain, to stay, or to live there. So, we need to desire and endeavour that being in Him would be our daily constant experience. The more we do this, the more the fruit of the spirit will issue from our life. The secret is not a matter of trying hard to behave ourselves and to do and say things like Jesus would, but to remain in Him so that His Life in us can express itself.

That we are in Christ is a fact, but to experience this requires our remaining there. The world, our self-interests, and Satan are all actively distracting us so that we step outside of Him into our old nature as was our ingrained habit from before our regeneration. The moment I wake, I exercise my spirit, by talking to the Lord, "Lord I thank you for a safe night, and for this day, I commit myself to you. I want to be found in you in every thought and action. Cleanse me from anything that frustrates my fellowship with you. Lord what is on your heart?"

"As I read your Word, I want to be washed by the water in the Word, but most of all I want to contact you in my spirit, Renew my mind so it will respond to Your speaking in my spirit. Lord, I love You and I want to abide in You all day. When I wander, call me and help me to share your Life with others today ..."

1. Man created for fellowship with God

In Genesis 2 and 3 we see that God created man to have a relationship of fellowship. He talked to him, and gave him instructions, Gen. 2 :16,17 and in Gen. 3: 9, 11, He further expressed His desire to relate to man. Because of man's sin this fellowship was disrupted, but God's intention and desire for fellowship with man was never revoked. Through the Old Testament God found ways to relate to man, but full and intimate fellowship became possible only after Christ dealt with sin.

2. Divine fellowship only possible in Life 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:7

As we saw earlier, for a relationship there must be similar levels of being. Since God is Spirit and His essence is Spiritual He can only relate fully to man's spirit who share that Life.

Man whose spirit is dead because of sin can only exert his mind to relate to God. To do this he must reason and rationalize spiritual things and can only accept what is intellectual and rational. But, to apprehend spiritual truth the mind must defer to the spirit and accept its Life sense by faith. Paul wrestles with this matter in I Cor. 2. He speaks of "words taught by the Spirit," and declares that the man without the Spirit, i.e. using only his mind, does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, they are spiritually discerned.

Therefore, in order for God to relate to man spiritually, He must find a way to not only deal with sin and sins, but also a way to impart Life into man's spirit. Praise the Lord, He found a way to make this possible through the work of Jesus Christ, in that he "...called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord ..." 1 Cor. 1:9.

C. He came to be Our Life

We see according to John 10:10, "...I have come that they may have Life ..." Jesus came not only that we might be forgiven, but that we might have Life and that we might enter into a rich and full experience of that Life. This Life enables us to relate to God Himself and to others who have learned to fellowship in the spirit.

1. Life "encapsulated" in Christ John 1:4;1 John 5:11, 12

When Jesus was born the angels could have announced, "Here comes Life!" and in fact John did this in John 1:4, "In Him was Life ..." Even in his later years, John still proclaimed Jesus as Life. 1 John 5:11-12 "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son. He who has the Son has Life; he who does not have the - Son of God does not have Life."

It is not that we want to condemn other religions, nor that we are better than anyone else. The fact is, however, that God decided to put Life into His Son, and whoever has the Son has Life, and he who does not have the Son does not have Life. Jesus personally declared Himself to be the resurrection and the Life. John 11:25. This Life which was "encapsulated" in the Son, after Jesus arose, can

now come to us by the Holy Spirit who now gives Life. John 6: 63, 2 Cor. 3:6

2. His death released Life to all believers 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 13:5

In John 16:7 Jesus said, “...It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” His disciples loved Him so much they did not want Him to leave, but He told them in effect, If I do not go away, meaning to the cross, then I can not come back as Life. Life is locked up in Me, but after my death that Life can be released to enter into you!

After this was accomplished the Apostle Paul could declare, “you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” 1 Cor. 3 :16, and “...Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you ...” 2 Cor 13: 5. ‘

D. Regeneration imparts Divine LIFE into our spirit

John 1:12, “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right-to become children of God ...” To be considered children one must contain the same Life as ones father. Can you believe it? Through regeneration we acquire the very Life of God!

1. The seed of LIFE enters when we are “Born again”

John 3:3, 6, 36, “... no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”, ‘Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit.’, “whoever believes in the Son has eternal Life ...”

1 Peter 1:23 “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”

When I was born again, an imperishable seed entered into me, the seed of Life, which cannot be corrupted and will never end or die! That seed is the seed-of Life and it is the Life .of God.

In the garden Satan’s primary strategy was to keep Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life. Just so, today, he will do everything he can to keep us from accepting Christ as Life. When we do he must employ a secondary strategy, which is to lie to us and blur our vision from the reality of what we have received and keep us from experiencing it. How can we weep and mope and think about how poor we are if we realize that the Life of the very God of the universe is in us? It doesn’t matter how I feel, God’s Life is in me and I can experience and live by it.

2. Not a mere ticket to Heaven - but eternal life Now!! 1John 3:2

Many dear believers spend much time dreaming about eternal life as a future state, but our eyes must be opened to see what 1 John 3:2 tells us, “Dear friends, now are we the sons of God!” Let’s not be cheated by waiting for the sweet bye and bye. We already have Life! His Life is in me now, and I can get to know him now, hear His speaking now, and enjoy fellowship in Life in my daily living at this very moment.

This is further confirmed in Romans 5 :12 “...just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men ...”

2. Adam a pattern of Christ

The good news, however, is that just as sin and death came through one man, Adam, so also Life and hope came through one man, Jesus, as we see from 1 Cor. 15: 21 and 22 above. This is even clearer in verse 45 where Christ is referred as, “the last Adam....”

B. Death to Adam sets us free

The nature of sin and the sentence of death that we inherit from Adam seem hopeless. Is there a way out? Yes, but it is not self improvement, it is death! Could it be possible that we could be so identified with another that their death could answer our death sentence? This is precisely God’s ingenious way.

The judge, God Himself, determined to put forward One, Christ, who does not have a death sentence. Then he must put the convicted one (Adam aka mankind) into that One, (Christ) and have both crucified. If the One (Christ) can then rise from the dead, the convicted one “having died,” be raised with Him. If this all sounds astounding, consider:” I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live ...” Gal. 2 :20, and, “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Rom. 6:3,4.

1. Put into Christ - a new position before God

Now that we have died with Christ we are free from Adam’s death sentence. But, where are we now? Alive in Him!” ...buried with Him ...raised with Him ... God made you alive with Christ.” Col. 2:12,13. Now let’s hear what Paul tells us in Col. 3:3 “For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

It is even more exciting that since we are no longer in Adam, we are now in Christ, we’re a new creation. 2 Cor. 5:17.

2. Inherit all that is His by being in Him

When we were in Adam, everything he did and passed through was ours. In the same way now that we are in Christ, everything Christ passed through and did is now ours. This is the key to a solid and secure relationship with God. Not seeing this principle is probably the main reason for frustration, condemnation and defeat in the Christian life. Perhaps the utmost in security lies in being clear as to who put us in Christ. 1 Cor. 1:30 tells us that it is of God that we are in Christ Jesus. And in Col. 3:3 we are assured that our life is, “... now hidden with Christ in God.” We are hidden with Christ, and it is God Who put us there.

3. Now Co-heirs and Brothers.

The Father now identifies us not only as heirs but also as co-heirs with

every one of us. Amen!!

4. Labour with His energy.

Consider Col. 1:29, a verse that just came alive to me recently. “To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.”

Eph. 3:7 and 20 speak of, “the working of His power,” and, “His power that is at work within us.” Are these not total assurances that His Life is working in us while we are in Him?

Paul declares in Gal. 2:20 that it is no longer he that lives, but Christ that lives in him. So, we can also come to the place where we simply allow His energy to perform His work in us.

Lesson 4 OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

We have now seen that after crucifixion Jesus became the Spirit of Life, or as 1 Cor. 15:45 says ...a Life giving Spirit.” He also is the seed of Life which germinates in our spirit when we are born again. This Life must gradually become our life, so that it can increase until we become mature and attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

After seeing the matter of Christ indwelling us we must also come to see the matter of our life in Him. In our experience we may have some subjective sensations of His Life in us, but the matter of our being in Him must be taken by “raw” faith, just because the Word says so. Yet, when we take it by faith it becomes a defence against condemnation and an absolute necessity for victory and spiritual warfare.

A. Before Christ,-all are in Adam; Rom.5:12-15

In this entire world there are really only two places where we can be, in Adam or in Christ. Our life was obviously in our parents and it came from them, so everything we are we inherited from them, and they from their parents. Eventually, we see that we were all in Adam and our human condition is inherited from him. If your grandfather had died at the age of ten, you could not be alive today because in effect you would have died in him.

We are told in Hebrews 7: 10 that Levi, who was a descendant of Abraham, even though he was not yet born, paid tithes to Melchizedek because he was in the body, or loins, of his ancestor.

1. From Adam we inherit sin and death.

1 Cor. 15:21-22 “For since death came through a man the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” When God told Adam, (in Hebrew MAN thus representing mankind) that the consequence of sin would be death He addressed Adam in the plural or collective form of mankind. Since Adam contained the seed of all mankind he acted on behalf of all man, thus the sentence of death included all who can ever be classified as man.

3. “Born again” once – “saved” continuously Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23; 1 John 4:7

While we must be born again, this experience as in any birth it happens only once. This is that moment when we receive His Life into our spirit and new Life has been germinated in us. Although we often use the term being saved in referring to the new birth, they are not in fact the same. We are born again only once, but we are saved by that new Life daily, in fact moment by moment.

Our salvation begins when we are born again, but is worked out day by day and is completed and consummated when we finally arrive with the Lord forever. Looking back we will see when and how we were saved from, fears, temper, our pride, our ambition, from sickness, etc.

Being “saved” is different from being born again. Clarity on this matter it could settle a lot of debates and avoid a lot of confusion.

There is a plant called resurrection plant. It looks like a fern and grows in the desert. If it is picked up and left dry in a dish it will shrivel up and turn brown and stay dormant for years. If you then place it in water in a few hours it begins to open up. After a day or so, it will, begin to turn green. If it is taken from the water it will again dry up. When it is dry and dormant it does not need to be “born again” it needs to be saved. Though it has life it must be saved from being dormant and dry by the water of life. So, if you have been born again, but are dry and seem to be dead, you don’t need to be born **again**, again, you need to get some water, get refreshed, and open to the flow of the water of Life.

Occasionally I meet people who have been born again, but are now quite dry and dormant. They are often confused. Instead of trying to get them to be “born again again” I just splash water on them and help them to drink. It is a real joy to see them become refreshed and smiling with Life rising up in them, just like the resurrection plant.

E. All inclusive Life brings light, love, etc.

2 Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”

Yes, this Life gives us everything we need! If we could see this it would no doubt revolutionize our Christian life as we move into the experience of the all-sufficiency of Christ in every dimension. I remember an old song which goes, “Jesus Christ is all I need. Wisdom, righteousness, and power, holiness forevermore, He is all I need.”

We all sang it, but, I for one didn’t understand it. I thought He would give us these things as gifts. Only later did I realize that He is these things to us by His Life in us.

1. His Life includes all that He is - I AM John 14:6; Eph 3:16, 17; Co12:17

When Jesus used the phrase, “I am” as in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the Life,” He was using it in the same sense that God used it when He spoke to Moses and His people in the Old Testament. He meant that what HE IS includes the very essence of love, light, truth, etc. It also means that to the extent

that we believe and receive Him, to that same extent those aspects become ours.

Many people receive the Lord as Life and then keep asking Christ to give them love, peace, rest, joy and patience, as though they were handouts which He might be persuaded to give them. This misses the point that Jesus is love and joy and everything we need. All of these are attributes of Christ and are in the seed of Life which I have received. What we need is for His Life to increase and saturate us, to move and spread out in our, bringing His very essence to our mind, emotion and will. As it does, year by year that old temper will become weaker and weaker, as His patience increases in me.

2. *Nourish and allow Life to grow in all these aspect*

The rate at which this happens will depend on what I feed and nourish. If I constantly feed my natural and soulish thoughts with TV, trash, fiction novels, and newspapers they will remain strong. If on the other hand, I feed my spirit with the Word, with prayer, worship, and fellowship that Life will grow stronger. Eventually, a situation comes up that five years ago would have put me in orbit. This time my stronger spirit rises up, and I overcome. This is not just a matter of learned self-control, this is genuine real transformation. Praise the Lord for His Life!

3. *The more we have of Him, the more love, light, joy, etc.*

Rom 8:6 “The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is Life and peace ...”

Do I have Life and peace because I disciplined myself so much? No, but by setting my mind on the Spirit

There is a difference between Life and performance. We don't need to worry so much about being .right or wrong, about being peaceful or loving, we just need to be in Him and let His Life flow through us. The result will be more love, joy, and peace in reality.

F. We decrease as His Life increases

John 3:30 “He must become greater; I must become less.” This was John the Baptist's testimony. He was the pivot between the Old and the New Covenant, and also the pivotal picture between the old man and the new man. John recognized that the old creation needed to fade away as the New Creation increased.

Sometimes I tease a brother who I will not see for some time. I tell him, “When you return I hope to see less of you.” Do you understand? I hope to see less of the old you, that is, the old creation, but more of the increase of Christ. Isn't this what we all desire?

We all have our own flavour, and our old, but isn't it wonderful to see that flavour decreasing and the fragrance of Christ increasing as we mature in Life? As we abide in Him and allow His Life to increase, certainly that Life will bring us more and more toward the image of the fullness of Christ which is our goal.

1. *The more we see Him the more we see ourselves*

Psa 36:9 “For with you is the fountain of Life; in your light we see light.” Here we see that an aspect of Life is Light. The light not only shows us more of our wonderful Christ, but it also exposes our fallen and needy condition.

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he saw himself in comparison and declared, “Woe is me!” I cried, “I am a man of unclean lips ... and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Isa. 6:5

Ezekiel realized this same aspect of the light, “Then you will remember your evil ways and your wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.” Ezek.36:31

The real evidence that we are experiencing Christ as our light and have been in the Lord's presence is our awareness of our condition. Anyone who is self-assured-and proud knows little of God's light. In His light I realize .that even the good I do in myself is for the advancement of my own interests and to inflate my ego. Then, I can only plead, “Lord, I fall so short, I thank you for your light. I make-no excuses, forgive me, I must yet decrease and pray that your Life would increase.”

2. *Need His death applied to-our old nature*

Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me ...” And also Rom -6:6,8 speaks of being crucified with Him and that we have died with Christ.

We might ask, “Has this been accomplished already, or is it now happening?” The answer is, both. I have been crucified, yet it is still going on. I am already complete in Him. Yet in my experience it is still happening. Remember that the seed contains the entire plant but as a sprout it is still quite undeveloped.

Keep adding water and take care of the Life and eventually the fullness of what was in the seed will be realized. That very Life which we so much enjoy has already passed through death and is already perfect. It will accomplish everything as it is given time and opportunity. We must simply be willing to cooperate, by remaining in Christ.

3. *Must allow His Life to spread/take over our whole being*

From Gal 4:19 “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pangs of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,” Paul anticipated that the Life which the believers had received would come to full maturation.

When we are first born again that Life is not very developed. But because we are in Christ, as far as God is concerned, everything is assured and in process. By Him being in us, there is a continuing formation and a development taking place. This wonderful Life in us keeps growing until we arrive at the full measure of the stature of Christ. By then this Life has saturated and taken over our entire being. This is the wonderful hope we have.

1Thes 5:23 “May God Himself, the God of peace sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, mind and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,” May this prayer be fully answered in each and