

# **THE ORGANIC GOSPEL**

## **FOR AN**

### **ORGANIC CHRISTIAN LIFE**

#### **ORGANIC/ORGANISM VERSUS ORGANIZATION**

For the purpose of this teaching we are considering that organic refers to something that derives its life from a life source, primarily a seed, and is dependent on an environment where that life can grow and develop. The end product will be a development and a full expression of that life which was in the original seed. A genuine organism is the result or product of the inherent growth of the life that has its origin in the seed.

An organization, on the other hand, is something that is produced and developed by applying information and knowledge to arrange matter or persons in order to produce certain results. The result may be a building, a corporation or even a beautiful, but artificial flower. The end product requires behavioral co-operation and its success is measured by its progress toward the established goal. This is the way organized religion works. But, we declare that the Christian life is an organic life process! It is the growth of the Divine seed of Christ in our spirit, growing to the full measure of the stature of Christ! “...*that you may participate in the divine nature...*” (2 Peter 1:4)

Our Christian life can be much more than just religion, and even more than a disciplined effort to live like Jesus. It all begins when the seed of Life is established in our hearts. After that, it depends on whether we decrease and allow that Life to grow into its full expression of Christ, or are taught to strive to behave like a Christian? First we will deal with some very important foundational misconceptions, that typically sell us short of a rich, full ‘organic’ Christian experience and then we will pursue an ‘organic’ revelation!

#### **LIMITING CONCEPTS**

As a boy, I remember a preacher who wore a long coat. He would unbutton it and then begin to button it again from the bottom connecting the first button mismatched. We all watched as he closed the buttons, and when he got to the top, of course, it was mismatched.

The point is clear; if you don't start right no matter how long or how hard you work you will end up short.

I am afraid this is too often the case in our Christian experience. Unless we are properly aligned in the basics, we may, as Paul said, end up with 'wood', 'hay', and 'straw'. (1 Corinthians 3:12) Instead of allowing that organic Life to grow and mature we simply will become more religious.

Before we set forth the fundamental organic basis of a genuine Christian life, we will look at what we consider to be some sincere, yet limiting misconceptions.

### **Assumes salvation is just about forgiveness and assurance of heaven**

A typical evangelistic Gospel call proceeds like this: 1) convince the candidate that they are a sinner and condemned to hell. 2) if they acknowledge this and accept Jesus as Savior their sins will be forgiven and they can be assured entrance into heaven. This is re-enforced by what is commonly called 'the sinners prayer,' which goes something like this. "Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I acknowledge You as my Savior and want to make You Lord of my life."

### **Requires the spiritual discipline of Christian behavior**

The assumption, then, is that if the person sincerely prayed that prayer he is now a believer i.e. a Christian. If he is serious and willing he is encouraged to get into a "Bible believing" church. Here he will be taught to pray, to study the Word, and be encouraged to follow the Lord and live by the Bible principles. In some cases he will be taught about the Holy Spirit and how to hear and walk by the Spirit. His growth will be measured by how well he performs and lives as a Christian should.

While none of the above is wrong, personally I found this very limiting and far short of the deeper revelation of what we here refer to as the 'Organic' Christian Life. A few years after I accepted Jesus I told an older believer that I felt that I was not living up to what the evangelist had promised. His answer was that we just need to try harder. It was only years later that the following revelation brought my Christian life into a whole new exciting dimension of meaning and reality. I only

wish that I had known this much earlier. I pray this for every reader who will persevere to grasp the following revelation! It will take some concentration to grasp the following points.

## **SALVATION –SAVED FROM WHAT?**

The Gospel is referred to as the ‘Good news’, and accepting it to being ‘saved’ or salvation. Salvation is intended to be the ultimate solution to humanities universal problem. But before we can fully understand the solution called salvation we must consider what the problem is, or what we are saved from. If we are not clear about the problem the solution may fall far short of dealing with all the aspects of the problem. Let’s take some time to recognize that we have a two-fold problem which needs to be addressed for a complete, ‘organic’ salvation

First it is necessary to understand what happened in what we refer to as “the fall,” as seen in Genesis 2 and 3. Initially man was in full fellowship with God. He was warned in Genesis 2:17 that if he ate of the forbidden fruit of tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that he would die. We know that Adam did partake and that act is referred to as ‘original’ sin.

## **TWO PROBLEMS SIN AND SINS**

### **Sin inherited from Adam, affecting all creation**

What Adam did, being the representative of all mankind affected all of humanity including you and me. In effect we were all in Adam. This is why Paul, in Romans 5:12, speaks of death coming to all mankind through Adam, and in 1Corinthians 5:22, “*in Adam all died.*” Not only did this sin separate us from God, it became our nature! And since sin is our nature it bears fruit and this fruit is what we call sins. So we see that now we have two separate problems, sin and sins, each needing a specific remedy. But our most basic fundamental problem is sin not sins! The reason I commit sins is because my nature is sin.

### **Sin requires death of the old creation**

It is clear that Adam did sin and thus sin came through Adam. It not only affected all of creation and the consequence is death. In other words, the penalty for sin is death, and someone must pay that penalty.

For us to benefit it must be paid in a way that, we will also be included. Since we were all in Adam, so there must be a way they we can be placed in the one who will be the solution. If Christ is the solution there must be a way that we can be in Him just as we were in Adam.

### **Christ was not affected by sin, so He could die on our behalf,**

Since Christ did not sin He did not owe a death, so was able to die on our behalf. *“God made Him who had no sin to become sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21.) The price for Him was crucifixion, death on the cross. Having paid the penalty He was declared ‘righteous’. This means that if we are in Him, then His righteousness can become our righteousness.

### **When we accept Him God sees us as having died in Him**

But there must be a way for us to be included. This then is why Paul speaks about us being ‘in Christ.’ *“It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus...”* (1 Corinthians 1:30.) Not only did He die for us, but we also died in Him. Herein lies a great mystery, but once grasped it can revolutionize our Christian walk. *“For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”* (Colossians 3:3)

Just like our being in Adam constituted us sin, so we can be constituted righteous by being in Christ. From God’s eternal view this becomes an accomplished fact when we apply it by accepting Jesus death on our behalf. So, just as He was crucified so in God’s eternal view our old nature was crucified. However, since we live in the temporal world this is still being ‘worked out’ in our daily lives. This explains why at times the Word speaks of us **being in Him**. This is different than **Him being in us**. Later we will talk about Him being in us!

### **Sins are the results or the fruit of our sin nature**

Now we must see that sins, those activities counter to God’s nature, are the result or the fruit of our still functioning by our old sin nature, rather than by the new nature/Life which is **His being in us**. These activities frustrate our spiritual walk and defile us. In this condition our fellowship with God is compromised but fortunately there is a remedy.

## Sins require the shedding of blood.

Sins require the shedding of blood which activates forgiveness and cleansing. Jesus took our place when **He died** on the cross to **save** us from sin. He shed His blood **to cleanse** us from sins. Even though sin has been dealt with by His death, its effects are still active if we live in the old sin nature, which is also referred to as the ‘flesh’, or our ‘old man.’ We must come to understand that nothing of that sin nature or its fruit is of eternal value nor can it inherit the kingdom. In fact, it has been judged, disqualified and is passing away. . *“You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.”* (Romans 8:9)

## The Good News ‘Organic Life’

After Jesus died and shed His blood He did not remain in the grave, but arose and became the *“life giving Spirit.”* *“The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a Life giving Spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 15:45.) Here is where Christ **in us** becomes significant. Now His resurrected Life as the Spirit initiates a new creation in us. At the ‘new birth’ His **Life** in us becomes the seed of the new creation **and only His Life and the increase of this LIFE in us is the new creation.**

## THE IMPORTANT MISSING FACTORS

### Old fallen creation ‘terminated’

Now we can see that Jesus accomplished much more on the cross than dying for us and offering forgiveness. All of creation had fallen and come under the penalty of death. After He paid that sentence **He initiated a new creation.** Due to the fall, the sinful old creation cannot enter the Kingdom of God, but instead is condemned to a slow but ultimate death. Meanwhile, mankind and even religion has been working tirelessly to maintain and improve the old creation. This may make life more comfortable, but eventually it will end in the grave. While dying on the cross Jesus declared, **“It is finished,”** and He also released His spirit. *“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) It is understood that He was declaring that the accomplishment of the atonement was complete, but we must also see it to mean that the old creation was finished.

This may seem quite harsh, but there are many references that speak of the old passing away. *“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”* (1 John 2:17)

This is actually what baptism symbolizes. *“Or, don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ 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, so we too may live a new life.”* (Romans 6:3-4.)

### **New creation initiated**

From the above verse we see that, as symbolized in baptism, we buried with Him so that we can live a new Life. It is critical to recognize that Jesus not only died on the cross, but also that He arose and became a ‘life-giving’ Spirit. This Spirit, also referred to as the Holy Spirit is the seed which can now enter and bring that Life into our spirit! *“And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’.”* (John 20:22)

Fortunately, along with the ‘termination’ of the Old Creation on the cross, He became the seed of a New Creation! He became the, ‘firstborn’ of a New Creation. *“For those God foreknew he also predestinated to conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brothers.”* (Romans 8:29)

In order to accomplish this Jesus became the ‘seed’ of the new creation. Now whatever is produced from or is an enlargement of that seed has both an eternal source and an eternal value. *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new Creation, the old has gone, the new has come.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17) Now we begin to see not only how critical it is to recognize and receive that Life, but also to allow it to grow and increase until He (Jesus) becomes the source of everything we say or do.

My dear mother had a beautiful saying: “Only one life, it will soon be passed, only what is done for Jesus will last.” I would change it just slightly, to say, “Only what is done **by** Jesus, will last.” Now that we appreciate this new, “organic, kingdom Life seed,” in us we will consider how we can care for it for maximum growth and fruitfulness.

## THE THREE PARTS OF MAN

To fully grasp the process of salvation it is necessary to understand the tri-partite nature of man. “*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.*” (1 Thessalonians 5: 23)

### Our Body

Let us assume three circles, a small circle inside two larger concentric circles. The largest circle represents the most obvious part of our being, our physical body. With this part we relate to physical matters around us. We can touch and substantiate wood, stone, or even the physical hand of a friend. While very essential the body can only relate to the physical world around us. The Greek translations generally use the word *bios*, from which we get the word biology when it refers to this part of our being. The eventual hope for this part of our being is called transfiguration. This will not transpire until after our physical death when we will be given a new “body.”

### Our Soul

The next circle within the larger one represents our soul. This is the psychological part of our being. With our soul we can relate to thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. While we can hit and hurt someone by striking them with our hand, we can also strike someone with words and hurt their soul/psychologically. The Greek word *psuche*, from which we get the word psychology generally, refers to this part of our being. The expectation for the renewal of this part of our being is called transformation. Transformation takes place day by day as we yield to the His New Life in our spirit and are willing to die/decrease that He may increase, until we are steadily transformed to His likeness.

### Our Spirit

The third and smallest circle represents our spirit. Except for some sensations of conscience, man is usually not aware of having a spirit. In fact, since the fall this area of our being is somewhat dead. In Ephesians 2:1 and 5 where Paul says that we were once dead, he is referring to our spirit prior to being born again. Meanwhile we are dependant on and governed by our soul.

The wonderful news is that our spirit is precisely the place where the Divine seed of the Spirit of Jesus enters our being! This matter is called regeneration. In John 3: 7 Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, and He also said, “*Flesh gives birth to flesh but spirit gives birth to spirit.*” (John 3:6)

In John 4: 24, Jesus told the woman at the well, “*God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.*” So, let us be clear that only our spirit can be the receptacle for the Divine seed which is Spirit. It is when our spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit that our new Life begins. Our spirit becomes the beachhead for God’s involvement with us. And it is critical to remain aware that this is the center and focus of our ongoing Christian experience. “*Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*” (Galatians 3:3) After our spirit is regenerated the process of transformation can take place as our soul yields to the Spirit!

## **THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE**

### **All life originates from our Creator, GOD**

Life originates from our Creator, God! He is the only source of all life. He is the fountain of Life. Psalm 36:9. In John 5:26 Jesus said, “*...The Father has Life in Himself.*” He is the source both of natural and spiritual Life. We are born with a physical and psychological life; both are essential for human existence. Finally, there is the word “*zoe*” which refers to the spiritual life. This is the Life aspect that we are dealing with in this booklet. This is why when we use the word Life in this sense we will capitalize it as in Life.

### **Begins with a seed containing the inherent Life**

The continuation or perpetuation of life is primarily accomplished by the planting of a seed. A seed simply carries that particular life that it was derived from. Hence we see that each seed shall bring forth after its kind. (See Genesis 1:11, 12, 21.) It is easy for us to understand how plants are propagated by seeds. But we also realize that the life of the physical body and soul is also carried by a human seed. If the nature of the new creation is spiritual it must be conveyed by a spiritual seed and can only be received by our spirit.



## **Seed contains the DNA/ inherent nature of its particular life**

Every seed already contains the innate essence of what will be realized in its full development. The color, the flavor and the characteristics of the final plant are already in its seed. The growth process is simply a matter of those characteristics coming into their full expression.

In the same way it is important to be aware that the seed of the ‘Divine nature’ being the Spirit of Christ, which is imparted into our spirit at the moment of the new birth contains all the elements and qualities of Christ.

## **Growth is the development of that nature**

The challenge relative to the development of any life is to create an atmosphere that will allow and enhance its growth and development to take place. For a natural plant this requires healthy soil, water, sunshine, clean air and time. The actual growth potential is already in the seed. Any actions taken to override this growth process will produce negative or what we may call non-organic results. Today a plant can be created artificially to appear very much like the real one, but it is not the result of the growth of life. This is similar to much of Christian behavior development. It may look like the real thing. But if it is not an organic development/growth of Life it is not a part of the New Creation.

## **THE APPLICATION**

### **The natural realm as a shadow of the Spiritual**

In the following teaching we will see that the natural birth, function, and development are a template for the Spiritual. The natural is referred to a shadow of the Spiritual. A comparative analysis of the aspects of birth and growth requirements can be a great help for us in enhancing our own spiritual growth.

### **A Time to be born**

Just as we need to be born naturally so we need to be born spiritually. Salvation begins at the moment when we acknowledge our sin and need, and open our hearts and invite Jesus to live in us. This experience referred to as the NEW BIRTH is the wonderful beginning

of a life long process which the Bible refers to as Salvation. What we refer to as the New Birth is a onetime initial action when the Holy Spirit imparts Himself as a Spiritual seed into our spirit. This is also referred to as being BORN AGAIN. From this time on we can say that Christ as the Holy Spirit now lives in me. This should become clear as we carefully read the following verses.

*“But if **Christ is in you**, your body is dead because of sin, yet your **spirit is alive** because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead **is in you**. . . .” (Romans 8:10, 11)* *“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that **Christ is in you**...” (2 Corinthians 13: 5)* *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but **Christ lives in me**.” Galatians 2:20;*

These and many more scriptures specifically speak of Christ in us. Understanding and holding this truth ever in our hearts and minds not just as a slogan, but as a reality will give us the basic foundation for true ‘organic’ spiritual growth.

**We must be clear on the reality of What or Who this ‘seed’ within us in order to understand that the development and enlarge-ment of this seed is all we need. Every seed already bears its own life and nature, including all the qualities of the life of that seed. True genuine Christian growth is organic in the sense that it is simply the increase of the genuine Life elements already inherent in that seed.**

## **A Time for Growth**

It is vitally important that we understand from the start that after the new birth the next step is not behavior. After a dog is born it is not important to teach it how to act like a dog. That quality is an innate part of the nature of the dog life and will emerge organically if it is allowed to grow. In the case of a child the most critical matter is to be sure that it begins to get care and nourishment. Even it’s walking, and talking while it may involve some teaching; must correlate with the actual growth of the human life.

In the same way a new believer must first be cared for, nourished, and allowed to let the growth of that Life be the dominate factor in their development. Otherwise the person may appear to make great progress,

but eventually it will prove to simply be trained behavior. They may appear to be making advances in a religious or worldly progress. But if it is not the fruit or increase of the new Life it will only have temporal value.

## **From Regeneration to Transformation**

The process of receiving this new Life in our spirit is referred to as regeneration. The further process of our soul (our mind emotion and will) being conformed to the likeness of Christ is referred to as transformation.

While regeneration can take place in an instant, transformation is a life time process. This process is a daily matter of ‘being saved’ from all the snares, temptations and impulses of the natural man. But, we must realize that even transformation is a matter of God working in us! “...*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.*” (Philippians 2:12.)

When our spirit is first made alive there is often a surge of joy and great advance. However, since the soul has always held the dominate place in its role of self, it will soon begin to resist the advance of the Life in our spirit. Initially it seems that the untransformed soul gets caught up with the new excitement, but before long it begins to recognize this new Life as a threat to its self dominance. The mind then often begins to ridicule and protest the ‘invasion’ of this new Life.

This is when we must learn to recognize and be keen to “*put to death the deeds of the flesh*” and “*set our minds on the Spirit.*” Two chapters; Romans 7 and 8 deal with this matter. It is important to recognize that in a disciplined person even the soul can be trained to behave like a Christian. In fact, this is often more agreeable to our natural man than to “be put to death.’ But our determination is to learn to live by the Spirit and bring our entire being into subjection of the Spirit.

For the Life in our spirit to prevail and overcome and activate genuine transformation it must be “well nourished’ and strong. This is why we will now focus on the growth of the Life in our spirit. If the

Life in our spirit is allowed to grow, as we deny our soul, the soul will gradually be changed/transformed and changed into the likeness of the one Who indwells our spirit.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUAL PARALLELS

We have seen that just as the natural begins with birth, and so it is in the spiritual. Now we will consider some aspects or requirements for natural/physical health and growth, and then to apply what we might consider spiritual parallels. Remember, the natural is a shadow of the spiritual!

To grow and be in good health and vitality it requires: Air/breathing, drinking, eating, resting, exercise, and elimination.

**Breathing** is physically required continuously, beginning at birth and necessary to sustain life. A lack of deep breathing of fresh clean air results in a lack of oxygen and produces lethargy and loss of strength and stamina. A person can not survive for long without breathing. We will equate natural breathing spiritually to prayer.

**Spiritually breathing** Could be referred to as analogous to **prayer**. In 1 Thessalonians 5: 17 Paul admonishes the believers to “*pray continuously.*” He also mentions that he prays continuously. (See: Romans 1:9; 1 Thess. 1:3 & 2:13; 2 Tim 1:3.) While natural breathing is not necessarily loud or obvious, it involves a continuous dependency on a life/oxygen source outside of us. When I lectured as a health advisor I often remarked that many people could improve their health just by better breathing. Today I would offer that same advice to those who desire to improve their spiritual health. Practice inhaling not just in your physical lungs but in your spirit, as you breathe the name of JESUS! This aspect is also developed in John 15: 4, where Jesus says, “*Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine...*”

**Drinking** Liquids, primarily water are a further necessity for a health body. The absence of water can cause death but even an inadequate supply can cause dehydration, toxicity and general health deterioration. While an immediate result of drinking can bring refreshment and enjoyment its benefits to overall health are profound.

**Spiritual drinking** Worship could be referred to as the spiritual equivalent to drinking. **Worship** brings us refreshment, cleansing and enjoyment. The Psalmist compares it to a deer finding the refreshment of the water brook. (Psalm 42:1-2.) Paul in Ephesians 5:18 seems to imply that just as one can get physically drunk with wine, a person might get drunk in the spirit by a, ‘drinking worship bout.’ To remain spiritually hydrated and detoxified worship is a daily essential for an organically growing believer.

**Eating** As refreshing as drinking can be, eating wholesome healthy food is necessary for health, particularly for stamina, endurance and the capacity to labor. Fresh food and a good variety are a regular necessity.

**Spiritual eating** The Word is often referred to as our spiritual food. (See Jeremiah 15:16; Ezekiel 3:3 and Revelation 10:10.) Listening to tapes and messages might be considered milk or predigested food. Only a personal diligent time digesting the Word ourselves will produce a healthy and strong ‘organic’ inner man. I have noticed that some believers love to spend time in worship. This may produce joy and refreshment, but when deep trials and testing come those who are well nourished in the Word will have a greater endurance to stand.

**(For more on eating the Word see Appendix A)**

**Resting** A wholesome healthy physical life also requires rest. This is a time when all efforts and activities are laid aside and the body is allowed to rest and restore itself. The physical body is amazingly self healing and able to rebuild and restore itself. This is done most effectively and efficiently while one is resting. After a rest or a good night’s sleep the body is not only more efficient, its depleted resources can be refurbished. Without time for restoration the body may simply give out before it can fully mature.

**Spiritual resting** Rest is a time of fully trusting in God’s sovereignty without striving or being anxious. Just as in natural sleep one allows oneself a time to be defenseless and at peace, so there is a Sabbath rest we can practice. We must allow times when we lay down all our cares, concerns and obligations and relax in His presence. In natural sleep, dreams may come to us involuntarily, so in meditation or spiritual rest, revelation may come to our mind from our spirit.

**Exercise** While rest is necessary we are finding that exercise is also important and often overlooked in the physical realm. Rest allows muscles to be rebuilt, activates circulation and gives a sense of purpose and accomplishment. While some people do not exercise because of a lack of energy, the fact is that exercise actually produces energy. Besides a low energy, a lack of exercise also contributes to obesity.

**Spiritual exercise** As in the natural so in the spiritual, exercise is something no one else can do for you. Simply put, it means get off the couch and do it! The Apostle James known for his practical applications left us with good advice. *“Do not just listen to the Word and deceive yourself, do it!”* (James 1:22.) As in the natural, many people today have become spiritually obese. They eat and sleep and are fed much milk, but they do not practice or act on what they hear. If an appendage of the body is never exercised it becomes very weak and eventually begins to atrophy and becomes useless. In the same way if our spirit is not exercised it becomes weak and ineffective. We may also consider “praying in the spirit” as an important form of spiritual exercise. *“He who speaks in a tongue (i.e. prays in the spirit) edifies/improves himself.”* “...I will pray with my spirit...” (1 Corinthians 14:4, 15.)

Paul advises his spiritual son Timothy to: *“...exercise yourself unto godliness.”* (1 Timothy 4:7)

**Elimination** A subject somewhat more difficult to deal with but vitally important for good health is elimination. This involves eliminating all toxic and waste matter. I saw in my health profession that many people’s health was dramatically improved when this area was addressed particularly through detoxification and colon cleansing.

**Spiritual elimination** I see confession and repentance as a spiritual form of elimination. Anything that is not useful for the healthy process of the inner man must be confessed and repented of. As this takes place it is eliminated from the spiritual life. If this is not done regularly the person’s health begins to deteriorate, and often they begin to exude obnoxious spiritual odors. An evil thought, an offence, jealousy or envy, if allowed to remain in our heart will begin to poison our thought life and stunt our spiritual growth. If we deal with/eliminate these things regularly we will remain healthy.

## **Health Maintenance Better Than Medication**

It is important to recognize that our physical body is created to be self-healing and if properly cared for it will remain healthy. When illness or disease occurs it is usually because of neglect in diet or health maintenance. Meanwhile our body is aggressively attempting to regain a healthy state. The pain or discomfort is merely a symptom. To address the symptom by medication often disregards the body's organic function. Before taking measures to try to "fix" poor spiritual health check to see if the health principles listed above are being maintained. How is your eating, drinking, breathing, etc?

## **FIVE PHYSICAL SENSES COMPARED TO SPIRITUAL**

Having looked at the physical spiritual parallels as they relate to maintaining good spiritual health we will now consider the five senses as they relate to functions of our spirit/inner man.

While these analogies may be somewhat difficult to prove, I put them forward as helpful principles for maintaining spiritual good health!

**Smelling** The physical capacity to smell is unique in that it validates an invisible reality. Some time ago a friend related how she had recently lost her sense of smell. She realized that she was missing out on some enjoyment. One day her daughter found her cleaning the bathroom and warned her that the cleaning fluid fumes were dangerously strong. Suddenly my friend realized that not being able to smell could also be dangerous. A strong sense of smell can substantiate the reality of that which is invisible.

**Spiritual smelling** Fragrance/presence -While I was pondering what the spiritual equivalent of smell might be the friend went on to share two further concerns. They had just begun to attend a new church. She observed that often as the worship was just beginning to ascend it would suddenly be ended. It was like they didn't seem to recognize the fragrance of the presence of the Lord. Her other concern related to her grown son who had wandered from the Lord. Although he occasionally obliged her by coming to church, he said that he did not sense anything special about being there.

Suddenly I realized that both of these cases were related to the inability to “smell” spiritually. The fragrance of the Lord’s presence is like a sweet smelling odor. The worship team had a weak sense of “smell” and was responding to time and schedule rather than to fragrance. The son having lost his sense of smell was oblivious to the fragrance of the Lord’s presence.

**Tasting** In the natural, taste is very much related to smell. It also gives us pleasure and enjoyment but at the same time gives us a protection if we accept its responses. A significant part of the enjoyment of eating relates to taste. However, if something is inedible or toxic our sense of taste can warn us to avoid what might otherwise be detrimental to our good health.

**Spiritual tasting** May be referred to as the ability to discern whether something would enhance Life or activate death. Psalm 34:8 invites us to; *“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”* This implies that goodness can be determined by our capacity to taste. (1 Thessalonians 5: 21.) *“Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”* could be paraphrased taste everything.

Hebrews 5:14 speaks in the context of spiritual food, of those who have trained themselves being able to distinguish good from evil. Oh, that we all might have such a keen spiritual taste that we might abstain from so much “contaminated food” that bombards us. How many believers are weak and ill because they “eat” dead food through certain movies, books, magazines and TV? Disregarding our sense of spiritual taste and eating contaminated food not only produces spiritual illness but also cause us to have no appetite for the Word or Spiritual food.

**Seeing** To see in the natural is to be able to apprehend and appreciate what is actually there and would be hidden to us apart from this faculty. Seeing unveils to us what is there. In this sense it brings revelation. It allows us to appreciate and enjoy the realities. We may be able to observe pathways and obstacles. Seeing does have limitations relative to knowing when and where to go. It is possible to see something but not necessarily to understand what it means or what to do about it. Generally understanding comes by hearing.



**Spiritual seeing** We propose that spiritual seeing is primarily a matter of revelation. Through our spiritual eyes we should be able to perceive what is there, but at the same time is not accessible to those who do not have spiritual sight. In Ephesians 1:18 Paul prays, “. . . *that the eyes of our heart might be enlightened . . .*” Why? That we might be able to “see” by revelation what are “*the riches of our glorious inheritance*” which are otherwise hidden. (Acts 28:26-27) equates hearing to understanding and seeing to perceiving. Fanny Crosby, the physically blind song writer had such amazing spiritual eyes that she could write, “Once I was blind but now I can see, the light of the world is Jesus.”

If I am a seeing believer I should be able to see spiritual matters that make no sense to a person whose spiritual eyes have not been opened. There are times in our lives when dark clouds, perhaps worry, trouble or turmoil closes in and we seem not to be able to see clearly. A wise elder gave me this advice, “Never question when you are in the dark, what you saw clearly when you were in the light.” Taking this advice has kept me from discouragement or depression even in the darkest nights.

**Hearing** To hear in the natural as in the spiritual is also a wonderful gift of God. Proverbs 20:12 reminds us that, “*Ears that hear and eyes that see –the Lord has made them both.*” Although we rely much on the visual, I believe hearing is very important relative to knowing when, where and how to proceed, as well as to understand what is being seen. Even though in our time instructions are often in printed form we receive them as though by hearing what we are reading rather than by just seeing it.

**Spiritual hearing** -Generally understanding, or direction comes through hearing. For this reason it is critical for us to develop keen spiritual hearing ears. In Revelation the critical need for the churches was to “hear” what the spirit is saying. In John 10 Jesus emphasis the critical need to hear the voice of the shepherd. “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.*” (John 10: 27) In these days especially, this involves being able to distinguish which is the shepherd’s voice from among all the other voices of our time.

**I feel that this matter of hearing is such a critical factor in growing spiritually we will deal with this further in Appendix B**

**Touching** All of the earlier mentioned senses can be realized without any actual physical contact. The physical quality of touch requires closeness and sensory contact. It suggests intimacy and an exchange or transference of feeling.

**Spiritual touching** Could this be referred to as anointing? The spiritual counterpart to touch is quite difficult to ascertain. In the Old Testament anointing involved pouring oil, a tangible substance, over the head of the candidate. This symbolized the Holy Spirit tangibly affirming the person's call or commission to a certain task or calling. Presently when we sense that someone who is ministering is particularly moving under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit we might say they were under a heavy anointing. Or, when we feel a strong almost tangible sense of God's presence we at times declare that there is a strong anointing in this place.

## THE ALL INCLUSIVE CHRIST

As we have mentioned, all of the qualities of the plant are already in the seed but require an atmosphere for its development. Here we want to explore some of those qualities that should increasingly be in evidence as we allow that seed to grow and mature.

**Grace** –When we do not have the capacity to be patient with others, or the ability to endure we may say that we are short of grace. So, how do we find more grace? When Jesus is first introduced in the Gospel of John, we are told that He came from the Father, full of grace. Since He was full of grace, that quality should be in the Life seed in us. If this is the case then He is both the essence and the source of grace. I have suggested that grace could be summarized as **God's Resources At Christ's Expense**. This implies that we do not need to pray for grace as a hand-out from God, but we simply need to draw on the resource i.e. His Life within us. Our measure of grace, patience and endurance is an indication of the measure of how much this Seed has been allowed to grow in us. Note that the Greek word for spiritual gifts is *charisma*, which is just an extension of the *charis* which is the Greek word for grace. This tells us that the spiritual gifts are various ways in which grace, a vital aspect of this Life, is ministered to us and activated in us.

**Love** We may have some capacity as human beings to exercise a measure of love. The Bible refers to this as *phileo*/brother love, or

*agape*/human love. But God alone is the source of *Zoe*/divine love. Fortunately, that love was in Jesus who loved us and died for us. Now, that same love is ours in that He as the divine seed/the Holy Spirit indwells us. Here again our capacity to love as He loves is dependent on how much we have decreased and allowed him to increase in us. Eventually we will see that all we need is in Christ and available to us through Christ and out from Him! In a sense, we do not need more love, we just need more of Him!

**Light** Light is actually a by-product of Life. *“In Him was Life and that Life was the light of men.”* (John 1: 4) Darkness covers and conceals truth and reality. Light overcomes and drives away darkness, revealing what is real and true, and exposes the lies and deception of darkness. The enemy, Satan, operates in a realm of darkness, which allows deception and fear. Since He is now the Prince of this world, the Bible refers to the world as being in darkness, and Jesus came as the exclusive source of true light. So now although the world prefers darkness to light, we can walk and live in the light. *“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”* (1 John 1: 7.)

**Abiding in the Vine** John 15 gives us a wonderful “organic” picture of how it all works. *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5) This indicates that the source and the resource is in the vine. But, as we are a branch, connected in a Life sense, the resources are available to us. Our bearing fruit will be indicated by us exhibiting the nature and qualities of the source.

But, how can He say that apart from Him we can do nothing? This refers to our earlier point. Of course we can do many things, but they will simply be for the enhancement of the old creation and not have any eternal value. Consider the following: *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons, and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!”* (Matthew 7: 23-24) Here He is saying, in effect, that if the source of your doing is not out from my new creation Life I can not recognize or own it.

The Apostle Paul gives a similar warning in 1 Corinthians 3:12 that we must be careful not just how but with what we build.

He says that our work/fruit will be tested by fire. That which has a natural source, wood, hay, or straw will be burned, whereas only that of divine source, gold, silver and precious stones will remain. Gold is often symbolic of God, silver refers to Christ and precious stones refer to the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:10 tells us that the earth and everything in it will be burned up. So, why would we want to invest all our time and effort for what will eventually pass away? Why not take Jesus' advice and lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...*" (Matthew 6:19-20) I realize that this is often used to persuade people to give their money to spiritual activities. Hopefully by now we will see that there is a deeper meaning relative to the source.

## **Bearing Fruit**

Bearing fruit is a natural organic result of the growth and development of a seed. The fruit however will be in keeping with the source. An apple seed will produce apples, etc. So the Holy Spirit will produce those qualities and character of Jesus as described earlier, i.e. love grace joy peace. "*But the fruit of the Spirit is, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control...*" (Galatians 5: 22.)

These characteristics will motivate and direct us to live and function as He, the source of that Life does. There was a popular slogan WWJD, "What would Jesus do?" This prompts us to try to learn from what He did in the Bible times and then try to transpose His actions to now. If we really see the 'organic' gospel truth we would change it slightly to: "What is Jesus, (the One living in me right now) doing?" This may mean that I do not act out of natural self pity or respond because of past experience, but act by His present time inward life!

An example: Suppose a child is disobedient and is sent to his room from the diner table without being allowed to eat. Now suppose a kind sibling brings him some food. Is this a good act or not? In a natural sense it may be kind but in a spiritual sense it is interfering with the parents' discipline of the child. Only the Son fully knows the Father's

mind, and we must bring our mind into conforming with the, “mind of Christ.”

Fruit bearing is often thought of in terms of, ‘winning souls’ or evangelizing. This may be true, but if the “seed of Life in us” is allowed to grow and flourish it will re-produce itself. The unbelievers do not have faith, but when we speak from that faith which is in us, into the hearts of others, it will begin to activate a hunger and if they receive the seed it will take root and they will become organic believers. “... *The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is the word of faith we are proclaiming...*” “*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the hearing of the word of Christ*” (Romans 10:8 & 17)

### **Recognizing the difference between behavior and growth in Life**

Please let me share a rather intimate personal experience to illustrate this point. My relationship with my father included times of frustration and disagreements. Eventually the Lord spoke to my heart. “It is not according to my order for a child to rebuke or even attempt to correct his parents. Your place is to honor your father not to try to adjust or correct him.”

I repented and stopped debating or arguing no matter what he said even if I thought it was incorrect. My change of behavior caused our relationship to improve remarkably. Some time later the Lord spoke to my heart again, “You are behaving very well, but in your heart you still adjust and correct him, even though you do not express it.”

I broke down and told the Lord that this was true, and I could only change my behavior, but open wide to let Him do whatever it takes to change my heart. He began to give me revelation to see that I held my insights as being superior to those of my father. He showed me that I was filled with expectations and was making demands of my father which were impossible for him to meet. I saw myself walking behind a limping boy and kicking him because he did not walk properly.

As my self centered demanding heart got exposed I wept and repented before the Lord for my arrogance. At that point my heart was filled with God’s love for my Dad. I lost sight of all his weakness and my judgments were replaced by love and honor.

From then on no matter what Dad said, nothing in me rose up in judgment. Something in my soul life had been put to death and was replaced by the love of that LIFE in me.

Good behavior is certainly necessary, but we must be serious in recognizing whether we are simply behaving, (holding it in) or whether it has become an “organic” fruit of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. When I recognize that I am simply acting in good behavior, I immediately give the Holy Spirit permission to do a deeper work in me.

### **Let’s not settle for behavior adjustment**

Consider two words; conform and transform. Conform is defined as: To be similar in form or character, to adhere to prevailing forms or customs. Transform: Is to change or alter completely in nature, form or function.

I am afraid that most people settle for conforming rather than allowing the process of transformation to take place. Eventually, the difference will show. I may learn to control my temper, but at some time an unexpected situation will bring it to the surface before I can control myself. If on the other hand I have allowed the Holy Spirit to expose my temper and let the cross crucify my flesh and the seed of Life to become my person the temper will be gradually weakened and even be replaced by Christ’s emotion.

I have at times been saddened when I visit old believers, who at one time seemed very pious and spiritual. But in their late years they begin to act carnally and have little depth or reality of Christ. I can only conclude that they had been primarily conforming and not paying the price for deep transformation. After their capacity to conform becomes limited the untransformed nature comes back to the surface. May this not be our case. Conforming may appear adequate but it is not ‘organic.’ Only genuine transformation is permanent and will stand the test of both time and eternity. Only that which came from the increase of that organic seed will be part of the new creation.

### **What about behavioral directives in the New Testament?**

There are two types of directives in the New Testament. One: those that direct us to and inform us as to how to activate and facilitate that Life within us. Such as: *“For this reason I remind you to fan into*

*flame the gift of God which is in you. . .*” (2 Timothy 1:6) Two: those which could be seen as behavior directives. Are these a ‘to do list’ for us to try to live up to? Are they simply revised Old Testament laws, or perhaps a school master to bring us to LIFE? Actually they can also be seen as the characteristics, or a measure of that Life within us. From them we can determine how much of that Life has been gained in us. And, as we ‘feed on them’ their reality will grow in us and be expressed through us!

## **HOW CAN THIS BE POSSIBLE?**

### **The enabling power of the Holy Spirit**

We have talked about us being in Christ and Christ being in us. There is yet another aspect which enables and empowers us to live and function beyond our own capacity. We might call this the Holy Spirit coming upon us, also referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After Jesus arose He breathed on the disciples. *“And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”* (John 20:22.)

At this point we could say that they received Him in their spirit. However, they were told to remain in Jerusalem until they would be clothed with power from on high. Luke 24:49. Obviously, according to Acts 2 something took place on the Day of Pentecost beyond what they had earlier experienced. While this matter is debated and contested, from my experience I simply believe and have enjoyed a much greater measure of anointing and empowerment since I yielded to this experience. This came after we said, “Lord if there is more than we are now experiencing, we are open, we want all You have for us. We do not want to get to the end of our journey and discover You had much more for us and we missed it!”

### **The Life that lives in us and is perfect**

I trust that these points will open deeper insights into verses we often read lightly, especially those in the beautiful epistle of 1 John. Consider, *“He who has the Son has Life, He who does not have the Son does not have Life.”* (1 John 5:12) *“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in Him and He in God.”* (1 John 4: 15.) 1 John 2: 27 *“As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you and you do not need any man to teach you. But, as His anointing teaches you all things...”* And, how do we understand? *“No one who is*

*born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in Him, he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9)*

These verses were a puzzle to me, especially while studying in seminary. From this later verse came a doctrine of sinless perfection. But now I see that this refers to the One who has come into our spirit, as that Divine incorruptible seed. To the extent that I live by His Life I cannot sin. Meanwhile let's be inspired to learn how to recognize and live by that One. The more we live by and out of Him, the more those amazing possibilities will become our reality.

### **This Life is a corporate Life**

It is important also to realize that this Life we have received and need to live by is the same Life that indwells every believer. This means that the unity we seek is actually the unity of the Spirit in our spirits. Our natural minds are conditioned by our past experiences and studied opinions. We will never find true unity beginning from that realm. This is why Paul tells us, *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Ephesians 4:3)

Furthermore the church (*“ek-laysia”* Greek meaning called out ones) is not just those called out physically but also called out spiritually. It means called out of their carnal natural individualism and into the corporate appreciation for and living by the Life of the seed in us. Each believer expresses a particular aspect of the beauty of Jesus, and together when the church meets we should experience a fuller expression of the heart and mind of Christ!

As well, the church is also referred to as the Body of Christ, and Christ is the head of that Body. A body can have only one Life, and every Life needs a head. And yet every part of the body must have the same Life. No wonder Paul declares, *“This is a profound mystery –but I am talking about Christ and the church.”* (Ephesians 5:32)

(See **RELEASING THE BODY** and **THE CORPORATE WALK** booklets by Albert Zehr) [www.azlifepublications.com](http://www.azlifepublications.com)



## Appendix A

### How then do we Eat?

Overall we must grasp the fact that we are talking about spiritual food for our spiritual inner man. To begin with, it certainly means to spend time in/with the written Word referred to as *logos*, but also to experience the *rhema* Word (His voice in our spirit). Briefly let us simply refer to the Logos as the Word which God has spoken and shall stand for all eternity. *Rhema* might be considered that same Word when it becomes revelation to us in our spirit.

One can tell much about one's spiritual strength and walk by looking at their Bible. For example, my mother demonstrated an amazing spiritual strength and solid walk of humility and faith. I believe she read through her Bible at least forty times. Its cover and pages are totally worn. Some of her friends who scarcely touched their Bibles were never able to rise above a mediocre weak Christian life.

But somehow our growth involves more than reading or even studying the Word. It involves drawing its life into our spirit. Perhaps even deeper than meditating, maybe, closer to ruminating: taking the Word into our being and then regurgitate it and chewing on the Word again and again. Growth also involves trusting the Word, and believing it, and believing in its effectual working. This includes the recognition that as food its effectiveness is not limited to our capacity to understand it. This is seen when a new believer devours the Word and we see it having a dramatic effect on his life even if he does not yet understand it! The Word is life and life causes growth not merely in our knowledge but in our spiritual development.

I recommend 'eating' in a number of ways. Find a Bible reading plan, which takes you through the Bible each year. If you can do this along with some others it will make it convenient to fellowship about what you are reading. Besides this, try to 'digest' at least one verse or a short passage each day. If an annual reading program is not possible, at least get into some passage each day. Initially this may be a challenge, but if you make it as much a priority as eating natural food each day, you will be richly rewarded and your spiritual growth will soon show!

Some may say, "I don't seem to be hungry or have an appetite for the Word." To this I reply, "When as a child I said that I was not

hungry at mealtime, my mother would say, ‘eat for the hunger that will come.’” The surprise was that once I began to eat an appetite arose in me and I was soon enjoying the food.

Another helpful practice is to “pray the Word.” This means to simply read it as a prayer to the Lord. We know that the Word is God’s will and it is our portion to pray, or call forth His will through praying the Word.

### **Milk or Meat**

Peter refers to new born believers desiring and needing milk, whereas Paul in 1 Corinthians 3 and Hebrews 5 calls us to go on to meat in our diet. Meat not only speaks of the more difficult spiritual truths, there is also another aspect. Physically, milk is food that has been digested by another, whereas meat requires some personal effort and through chewing. The implication is that we must not just rely on being fed by others, but must ourselves get into the Word personally.

Milk fed believers may show a measure of growth, but their stamina and strength in hard situations will be limited. Tapes, CDs, radio, conferences and great speakers have some value, but anyone who depends only on others for spiritual food will not be able to attain to full potential as a warrior, soldier or overcomer. For spiritual maturity, keen discernment, and spiritual endurance ‘meat’ must be a part of our diet.

### **What about Worship and Intimacy**

The restoration of powerful worship and praise in the recent decades has brought a great blessing to the body of Christ and refreshed countless believers. I would liken worship to ‘drinking.’ Drinking is very important for maintaining good health. It brings refreshment, enjoyment, builds faith, and regenerates zeal and a love for the Lord. We worship not just in meetings, but it should be a part of our daily lives, as common and as frequent as drinking water.

But, while it may supply us, worship in its highest sense is not really for us or about us. We might say that it is providing ‘food’ for God. It is our gift and our offering to Him whom we love, and adore. It is our expression of love and appreciation. Worship is beautiful, and must be an important part of our daily lives, but it cannot produce the

spiritual strength and stamina that only daily feeding on the Word will accomplish. The words; ‘intimacy,’ ‘soaking,’ and ‘spending time in His presence,’ have become popular among believers. This is also a beautiful practice. This can renew our love and cultivate passion for the Lord. But again, they cannot fully replace diligent feeding on the word!

## **Appendix B**

### **Hearing His voice**

This is such a vital topic for Christian growth, but I can only touch it briefly here.

The basic heart of the matter is to learn to quiet the mind and set the mind on the Spirit. After we are regenerated, i.e. born again, relative to spiritual matters our mind must play the role of a servant rather than as a master. Although for some this may seem easy when one first accepts the Lord, it will soon become a challenge. Our mind has had priority and has been our security. Initially we will have to decide whether we will accept God’s Word as truth or let the logic of our mind rule. Of course this is a huge challenge, and this is why it is easier to become a scholar than a simple ‘organic’ disciple! I certainly have experienced this journey.

*“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. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.” (Romans 8:5-7)*

*“For if you live according to the sinful nature you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Romans 8:13-14)*

I recommend the reader to check out Mark Virkler’s *Communion With God Ministry*, teachings on this matter. I briefly summarize his points.

1) Still your minds, focus on Jesus, and pick up spontaneous thoughts that come from the Holy Spirit not from your mind.

2) Be free to appreciate inward visual messages. Bible characters often use the term, “I saw” or “He showed me.” These were not necessarily actual physical pictures but pictures in their spirit.

3) Journal what you sense you are hearing and let it be confirmed by the Word and by trusted spiritual mentors.

I would add, pray in the spirit/tongues. *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans, that words cannot express.”* (Romans 8:26)

At times if we pray in the spirit the Spirit may take us beyond the confines of our mind. Later the Spirit may be able to interpret for us what He had earlier inspired us to pray for.

FOR MORE READING ON THE ORGANIC LIFE;

Romans chapter 8

1Corinthians chapter 2

Colossians chapter 2

1 John entire book