

# Christ, Who Is Our Life

Article #01

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September, 2007

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, IS REVEALED, THEN YOU ALSO WILL BE REVEALED WITH HIM IN GLORY.** (Colossians 3.1-4 NASB)

There is no greater subject in Scripture than Christ, who is our life. He is the very foundation of the Christian life. As Paul wrote: *For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ* (1 Corinthians 3.11 NASB).

It is essential to come back to our solid foundation. This foundation is Christ who is our life and what He is doing. We must grasp the significance of Christ. In fact, there is only one object central and supreme in all of Scripture—the Person of our Lord Jesus. Our *vision* must be *of* Christ, our *work* must be *through* Christ and our *relationship* must *in* Christ. We are nothing apart from Him, and we can do nothing of value to God without Him.

There are three points that I want to bring to light. First, Christianity is not a religion; it is a relationship. Second, this relationship is with Christ who is preeminent and supreme. Third, all that we do as we wait for our Lord to come from heaven must come forth through this relationship. We must be doing what Christ is doing until He comes. These three points sum up this matter of Christ, who is our life.

To begin, let us start with Paul and the Way.

## ***The world names.***

Prior to his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus when he met his Lord (Acts 9.3-20), Saul, as a zealous Pharisee, sought to persecute the sect that he called *the Way* (Acts 9.2; 19.9, 23; 22.4; 24.22). He believed it was a false sect that had to be destroyed. Those who believed on Jesus and followed Him as His disciples were a threat to Judaism. Their way was the opposite of the Jewish religious system, and it threatened all for which Judaism stood. The nation of Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens on earth and demanded that their Messiah be crucified, but the Way was seeking for the kingdom and embraced the resurrected Messiah. The Way literally followed a way that was unlike any religion of the world. Praise God; instead of destroying the Way, Paul became one of its most fervent disciples.

However, the people of the Way also were called Christians. It was not a name that they took on themselves but which was given to the early disciples of Christ by the world. When Paul was brought to Antioch, it is recorded: *And it came about that*

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*for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH* (Acts 11.26 NASB). In other words, the world (Antioch) looked at the disciples of Christ and their behavior (their way) and decided that they were followers of the Anointed One, the Christ. In short, they were different not only from Judaism but from the world. They were Christ-followers.

This is as it should be. The Lord's people do not have to take on names or titles or anything that draws attention to themselves according to the standards of the world. The world system in which we live must put labels on people, organizations, institutions, or anything that operates in the system of the world. Names and titles divide the world into various factions and camps. This is the result of something that happened nearly 5,000 years ago when man (collective man) decided to build for himself a city and a tower whose top would reach into the heavens (Genesis 11.4). Man wanted a name for himself. It was not good enough to be known simply as man. He wanted to be exalted even to the heavens. In that day, God came down and destroyed man's work, confused his language (Genesis 11.6-9), and scattered him across the earth. Therefore, the name of the city was called Babel, which means confusion. Since that day, confusion is the best way to describe the plight of man, which has led him to label everything with a name. Within fallen man, who is in confusion, there is this need to describe what he sees and put a name on it.

This same heart is found amongst many Christians in the world today. There are so many names of Christian "churches," assemblies, groups and ministries, and so many titles given to those who are associated with them, that Christians appear as confused and as divided as the world. It is no wonder that the testimony of what is called the church today is no different than that of the world or of religions of the world. Instead of following a different way, the church today has embraced the many ways of the world. In fact, much of the church that we see in the world today has adopted the ways of the world that is passing away (1 John 2.17). The Lord's people, instead of being in the world but not of it, are *in it* and *of it*. The world's ways are the church's ways. She has become wed to the world. Today, according to the view of the world, even the religious world, Christians are viewed merely as another religion or institution with a name attached to it.

However, this was not the case in the early *ecclesia, which is the body of Christ*, when the world had not infiltrated into their ways. They were different, and the world as well as the religious of the world knew it. They looked at the early disciples and labeled them the Way and Christians. Back then, something made them look different; they were not a religion or an institution or an organization. The Person of the Lord Jesus made them different. They lived as ones who were raised up with Christ. They were seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Their minds were set on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. This world system was not His realm, and the early church lived in His realm.

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### *Christianity – religion or relationship?*

Were the early Christians part of a new religion? Did Christ die to start a religion? Today, there are many religions in the world and many religious people. The world even calls Christianity a religion and those who follow the Lord religious people. Even Christians call themselves religious people who belong to the Christian religion. But is this correct? Is Christianity truly a religion? Are we who have been bought with the precious blood to be known as a religious people, as the world would define religious? Did God send His Son to die for sinners so that a new religion would be born? Is God looking for a religious people to come into the kingdom of God? Is this what it is all about?

To answer these questions, we must ask: What is religion? Surprisingly, the Bible does not contain many references to this word. As found in the New Testament, *religion* means “ceremonial observance.” It implies external things such as ceremonies, rituals, traditions, creeds and outward forms of piety. In other words, religion is an outward expression. It is something that must be done repeatedly with little consideration of the heart of the person. A good example is Judaism in its current form with all its outward form of ceremony and tradition (Acts 26.5). Some people even take on extreme outward measures involving the body to deal with fleshly indulgences. In this way, they try to attain to an outward form of piety; that is, they try to be religious. Paul referred to this type of religion as self-made and of no value.

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in **self-made religion** and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, {but are} of no value against fleshly indulgence. (Colossians 2.23 NASB)

Only in the book of James do we find a reference to a pure religion in the sight of God.

This is **pure and undefiled religion** in the sight of {our} God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, {and} to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1.27 NASB)

What is the heart of visiting orphans and widows? **Love!** Also, notice that James includes keeping oneself unstained by the world. Oh, how much stain has come into the Christian life of today?

But this leads us back to our question: Is Christianity a religion or a relationship? It should be unnecessary to ask such a question because it should be apparent to every begotten from above child of God. Unfortunately, the leaven and the confusion have done a good job of corrupting the mind of many believers; therefore, it is needful to address the question.

At the very heart of Christianity is the Person of the Lord Jesus. Christianity is a relationship with the Son of the living God. It is *not* a religion. It is a life to be

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lived—His life. This is why the teaching of Paul emphasizes repeatedly that we have been placed in Christ (1 Corinthians 1.30; Ephesians 1.3; 2.6, 10, 13) and Christ has been placed in us (2 Corinthians 13.5; Galatians 2.20; Ephesians 3.17; Colossians 1.27). What is the value of His life being in us if we are not intimately related to Him? The answer to this question sets Christianity apart from religion. There is no religion, past or present, that has ever had a God and a Savior who died for them, was raised from the dead, who is seated upon a throne in heaven and who dwells in His people and they in Him—hidden with Christ in God. Who ever heard of such a thing?

If when we first believe on the Lord Jesus we believe we join a new religion, then our Christian faith will be religious. In other words, we will live our Christian life as an outward expression of ceremonies, rituals and traditions that we believe we must perform to please God. It will be an outward expression and not the inward reality of the life that dwells in us. The result is that we will not know that there is a new life dwelling in us and by this life we are to live. This life alone pleases God. Further, through religion, we will not come into the place of abiding or remaining in this life (read 1 John).

Is it possible that we can say the name of Jesus, pray in the name of Jesus, sing about the name of Jesus, dance to the name of Jesus, attend some form of worship every Sunday in the name Jesus, plan some strategy in the name of Jesus, start some new movement in the name of Jesus, raise a lot of money in the name of Jesus, start a new church in the name of Jesus, show all sorts of excitement over the name of Jesus and do many things in the name of Jesus, and yet not truly know the One who is Jesus? Yes! It can be mostly outward show, a religion with very little inward reality of Christ in our lives. It can become a performance that we must continually strive to maintain. This is religion, not relationship.

The one vital need today for the Lord's people is to come into an intimate, personal, love relationship with Christ who dwells in them, and they dwell in Him. The very heart of being a Christian rests upon this one issue—*relationship*. We must be in relationship with our beloved Lord. After all, isn't this what love is all about? If we are not in relationship with Him, under the leadership of the spirit of God, then the things we do will be mere religion, even if they all are done in the name of Jesus. If we have this relationship, then what is expressed outwardly in our lives will be an expression of His life that is being formed in us. The life of Christ will be expressed in a natural, outward way, and we will have an abundant entrance into the coming kingdom of our Lord. The life is in the Son!

John, the apostle of love, wrote: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men* (John 1.1-4 NASB). In Him was life. In 1 John 1.1-2, we are told that He is the Word of life and this life was manifested. What does this mean? It means that very essence of life is the very Person of the Son of God. This life did not just appear nearly 2,000

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years ago when the Son came to this earth. This life was with God in the beginning. It is the uncreated life of God. God created our life; but the Life of the Son is the very life of God, that has no beginning or end. It is a totally different life from ours, and it is given to us only in the Son.

When we believe on Jesus, we receive a born from above life. Christ becomes our new life, *for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God* (Colossians 3.3 NASB). Have these words penetrated into your heart? You have died. When did you die? You died on the cross with Christ. *Our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin* (Romans 6.6 NASB). Our old life that we inherited from Adam had to go to the cross; it has no value to God, and it will not enter into the kingdom of God. If we do not have Christ in us, then we do not have life indeed. Why? Because Christ is the life! Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life."* However, He is not only the life, but He is *Life*. The life of the Son was breathed into creation. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man (John 1.1-3; 5.18; 8.12; 20.28-29; 1 Corinthians 8.6; Philippians 2.5-7; Titus 1.2-4; 2.13-14; 3.4-5; Hebrews 3.3-4; 2 Peter 1.1-2). Do not be deceived by those who teach that Christ was a created being who somehow attained to Deity. He is the Son of God! He is the Word who was with God in the beginning and the Word was God (John 1.1). He is the One who declared, ***"Let their be light,"*** and light went forth. He is the Light of the world and the Light of Life (John 8.12). Remove His life from creation and the creation will cease. Oh hallelujah; the gift of God is Jesus Christ Himself. Thank God; when we believe, this life is placed in us, for we receive the seed of God (1 John 3.9). Our entire Christian faith depends on this one fact: ***Christ in you and you in Christ!***

### ***In Son.***

Now, before proceeding with our relationship with the Lord, it is vital that we not lose sight of the One in whom we have this relationship. Our relationship is with God *in Son*. I realize that to some reading this, God *in Son* might be a rather strange statement. However, this is what we are told in the book of Hebrews.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us **in {His} Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. (Hebrews 1.1-4 NASB)

The subject of Hebrews is the world or the age to come, the Kingdom Age (Hebrews 2.5). However, the writer of this letter made it abundantly clear right from the start that the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the center of this age to come. In fact, without Christ there is no future kingdom on earth or in heaven to

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discuss or to understand. Apart from Christ we have no future, no hope. Thank God; our God has spoken, and He has spoken of one thing, *His Son*.

Throughout the era of the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets in many portions and in many ways. They spoke of what was to come; but no one person saw the complete picture, no one man touched upon all that was on God's heart. The spirit of God only revealed bits and pieces of what was to come. In many respects, much of it was in mystery (secret). The prophets spoke of Messiah, the King to come, but it was still an incomplete understanding of what was God's full purpose and plan. It took the Son Himself to humble Himself and take on the form of man for God to reveal all that was hidden in His heart. God spoke all that was in His heart, and He spoke it in His Son.

However, the original Greek text does not have the word *His*; it is simply stated that God spoke *in* Son or *as* Son. In other words, God has spoken *as the Person of Son*. In times past, the prophets were the mouth of God, and He spoke through them, although they were vessels of many weaknesses. But in these last days, God manifested Himself on earth in the Person of Son, and He spoke. Every word that proceeded from the mouth of Christ was of God for He is the exact representation of God, for all the fullness of Deity dwells in Him in bodily form (Colossians 1.19; 2.9). If we see the Son, we see God the Father and His glory. The Son was (is) all God and all man, and unlike the prophets of old, no weakness was (is) found in Him (Hebrews 4.15).

If we hear the Son, we hear God. He upholds all things [or holds all things together (Colossians 1.17)] by the word of His power. His word is God's word, and it cannot be broken. When He speaks, it is *the* truth. His word stands and by it all things hold together.

God's voice boomed throughout creation when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and when He was transfigured on the holy mountain; and it will boom once again when His Son sits upon His own throne.

**"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."** (Matthew 3.17 NASB)

**"Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee"** And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me" (Hebrews 1.5 NASB)

**"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"** (Matthew 17.5 NASB)

Yet to **the Son**: "Thy throne, **O God**, is for **the eon of the eon**, And a scepter of rectitude is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest injustice; Therefore Thou art anointed by God, Thy God, with the oil of exultation beyond Thy partners." (Hebrews 1.8-9 CV)

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God the Father has declared the summation of His purpose and plan—*My Son*. His Son is the Son of God, and He shall receive a kingdom and His throne will last for the eons (ages). There shall be no end to the increase of His government (Isaiah 9.6-7 NASB).

### ***Supreme and preeminent.***

Oh, we need to see that God *in* Son is central in God's purpose and plan. He will head up all things in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1.10; 1 Corinthians 15.24-28). He is to have first place in all things. He is to have the supremacy in all things. He is to be preeminent in all things. Consider the way three translations of the Bible proclaim Christ in the same verse.

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have **FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING**. (Colossians 1.18 NASB)

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have **THE SUPREMACY**. (Colossians 1.18 NIV)

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have **THE PREEMINENCE**. (Colossians 1.18 NKJ)

This is God's heart for His Son. He is to have first place in everything. He is the first Man to overcome death and be resurrected from among the dead with an indestructible, immortal life. This places Him at the Head of a new race of people, the one new man in Christ, the body of Christ, which is the ecclesia (church, assembly). As first in all things, He is supreme and He is preeminent. Our Lord Jesus is not to be merely dominant in heaven and on earth; He is to be preeminent. *Dominant* means that He is numbered along with many other things that have importance, but *preeminent* means that there is no one else in view but Him. Nothing compares with Him; nothing can compete with Him; nothing can shine brighter than Him; nothing has greater importance than Him; nothing is higher than Him; nothing is more supreme than Him. *He is all*, and *He is in all*. This is the meaning of preeminent. Not only is He preeminent, but He is central. Everything centers upon the One who created all things and who holds all things together. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Remove Christ from this universe and all of creation will cease to exist. Our very existence is *in* Him. He is the Life! There is no life beyond Him.

When He speaks, the Father speaks of the Centrality and Preeminence of His beloved Son: ***Listen to Him!*** What does the Son say?

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“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”  
(Matthew 16.27 NASB)

Let us listen to *the* beloved Son while it is still *today!* *For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness* (Psalm 96.13 NASB).

Dear brethren, we need the eyes of our heart to be enlightened to see the fullness of Christ. We have made Him too small in our thinking. Far too many Christians see Him as Savior who died for their sins and never see beyond this point. We need to see all of Christ. We need to rise above the smallness of this earth to the heavenlies to see the greatness of our Christ. Of course, this is a spiritual seeing until He comes and we behold Him with our eyes. However, until that day, we see Him as revealed in the word of God.

Oh, but the good news is this: We are called into a relationship with the One who is beyond all comparison. We are called into relationship with the One who is far above all. We are called into relationship with the Supreme and Preeminent Son. This is far more than being saved from our sins. Has this fact registered in your heart?

### ***Why were you saved?***

As Christians, we need to ask ourselves: Why did God save us? Why is He saving us? Why did He give us the life of His beloved Son? Why did He place His Son in us and us in His Son? The primary answer is that God loves us. We praise and thank God for His love. God is love, and the foundation of all of His actions is love. God’s heart speaks out to all His children, telling us how much He loves us; and this love is expressed in and through His Son. Apart from the Son, we will never fully know the love of God.

But in His love, why has God saved us? Why would God pay such a high price of sending His beloved Son to this earth to take on the form of man and die for sinners? What does God desire? What is His heart? What is His purpose?

God desires a likeness for His Son, a people that are His like and who will be wed to His Son as a bride, a wife, and a helpmate in His coming kingdom in the oncoming eons. Those who have believed and trusted on Jesus and are (have) conquered through His love have the most tremendous destiny placed before them. Their destiny is the throne and the privilege of ruling and reigning over the earth (among the celestials and on earth) with the Son of God for the 1,000-year reign that follows Man’s day. Meditate on this tremendous destiny.

Today, His likeness is to be found in the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ. He is the Head and we are the body (Colossian 1.18). A head and a body are intimately connected—one cannot live without the other. This means that we *must* be related



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to our Head because His body is to be the dwelling place of God on earth today. Praise God; one day this body will rise from the grave to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4.13-18) and usher Him to this earth. His body is growing into a dwelling of God in spirit that will become the corporate temple of God, the wife of the Lamb, **New Jerusalem** (see Ephesians 2.19-22; Revelation 21-22). This is almost beyond our comprehension, but it is true, and it will come about because our Lord is Faithful and True (Revelation 19.11).

Until that glorious day we are called into a relationship that is not a far-off, distant one, like a relative we have not seen for years. We are not to be strangers but to be lovers of God and of our Lord Jesus.

### *A living, reverent, love relationship.*

When we consider our beloved Lord Jesus and who He is, we must be awed and brought to a place of reverent love. He is not like a good old friend with whom we chum around. No! He is the Son of God! He must command our utmost respect and reverence, even in His love. We must guard ourselves from this love becoming too familiar, too common. We must have a reverent love for Jesus!

Consider what God declared when He made man from the dust of the earth.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1.26-27 NASB)

Why did God create man in His likeness and in His image? Because God created man to be in fellowship with Him—Adam was to have a continuous relationship with God. He was created to be in union and communion with God every day. When Adam was in the garden, the Lord appeared to him in the cool of the day. This relationship was to grow as Adam learned from the Lord and daily trusted Him. In this daily life, Adam was to partake of the tree of life that represents the Divine life and character of God that gives man the wisdom to rule over the earth. The life of God was to be manifested in Adam, and a whole race was to be brought into being that would be in oneness with God. The garden was to be built into a glorious city that would have the glory of God. God was to dwell among His people; and His glory—His full satisfaction and delight—was to fill the earth. It was to be a full expression of God. God was not only to be in this world in testimony in a people but, more importantly, to dwell with His people upon this earth. It was to be a place to which God could rest and be at peace with His family. It was to be His home. Man was to rule over the earth with God as his King.

However, Adam failed and his race entered into death, which leads to a cessation of that relationship, for the dead do not know anything (Ecclesiastes 9.5). But thank God; what was lost has been restored fully in the Son of God. Through His death, resurrection and ascension, He now saves us and brings us into the relationship always intended for man. The nature of the first Adam and his fallen race has

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been left in the grave. The last Adam, the second man, our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead and is now the Head of an entirely new race that is to manifest His life and character. It is the **one new man** (Ephesians 2.15 NASB), a **new creation** (2 Corinthians 5.17 NKJ).

God's heart is to make His abode in this new race, to dwell in and among His people (2 Corinthians 6.16-18; Revelation 21.3-4). This is a very profound thought—to consider that our God and Creator wants to take up residence in us and to be with us. This is why we are to pray *Thy kingdom come*. When the kingdom comes, we will begin to enter into all that God intended for man in the beginning. God will enter His rest, along with the one new man who will rise from this earth to reign over and upon the earth with God's Anointed King. Although this is a coming reality when Christ comes to take the scepter of His kingdom, it is to be a reality in the heart of a people who have been called out of this world and joined to God's Son.

Let us never consider the cross of Calvary as some sentimental exercise on the part of God, as if He had pity on us so He wanted to help us. Never! The cross was not the end; it was the beginning. Unfortunately, many people, once they are saved by grace, stop at this point and do not enter into the very purpose for their salvation. We are saved for a life *in love with God*. God's heart of love will not let us go. He sent His beloved Son to earth to take on the form of man, to die for man, and to be raised from the dead so that He might live in man and be forever joined and identified with man.

Today, we are called to live in an intimate relationship with our Lord and God. Read the following verses and meditate upon them, asking the spirit of God to speak to your heart that you may feel the heartbeat of God for you.

“If anyone **loves** Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will **love** him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.” (John 14.23 NASB)

“I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us....” (John 17.20-21a NASB)

“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst **love** Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17.24 NASB)

“...That the love wherewith Thou didst **love** Me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17.26b NASB)

Do you sense God's heart for a relationship with His people? This is not the heart of a God who is far off but One who is very near; One who desires to be close, even very intimate; One who wants to be related to us every moment, not just at convenient times. This is a living relationship. It is a relationship of life based on

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love. God is love! It is a living, reverent, love relationship! It is a life *in* love with God.

### ***Knowledge or knowing?***

If we believe this is the heart of God, then it means that we must have more than knowledge of Christ; we must know Him and be in continual communion with Him. Consider the one burning drive of Paul as he shared with the Philippian believers: *That I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him...]* (Philippians 3.10a <sup>AB</sup>).

The letter to the Philippians was a very personal letter in which Paul expressed his innermost desire—to know Christ. Paul was a Hebrew of Hebrews who had great training and mental understanding of all that Judaism represented, and yet he counted it all loss to know Christ. He saw that all his religion was of no value. All that mattered to Paul was to know Him intimately, and this one thing was his sole ambition.

This leads us to an essential question that is vital to our pressing on toward the goal to receive the reward of the inheritance (Colossians 3.24) of glorified, immortal bodies like our Lord's body: Do you know Christ or do you know of Him? We can have a great mental understanding of the Bible, with great recall of Scripture. We can explain historical facts and recall many of the characters and stories. We may be able to recount all the miracles, parables and stories of Jesus. Some may be able to conduct great theological discussions or preach great sermons. Yet, all of this can be a lot of information merely stored in our heads with little touching our hearts. We can have knowledge of Christ in our heads but not a living reality in our hearts. We can *know of* Jesus Christ but not *know Him*.

For example, there was a young man who was proudly declaring that he had memorized hundreds of Scripture verses. He would recite them as fast as he could. It was obvious that he had a level of knowledge. However, one day a friend told him that the Lord is coming back very soon. The young man gave no response, even when he was told this several times. There was no response, as if he was totally oblivious to the glorious day. He had no desire for or expectation of seeing the Lord personally. Why? Because he had little relationship with his Lord! All he had were Scriptures committed to his memory, but he had little heart relationship with his Lord. We could say that his Christianity was all head and no heart. His Christian walk was knowledge, not relationship; and this is as it is with many Christians. Now, do not fall into the trap of believing that people such as this are not saved. Only God knows; but most likely they are saved, but they lack the one thing in their life that truly counts—a love relationship.

You might be wondering: What is the difference between *knowledge* and *knowing*? Simply, one leads to mere religion; the other leads to a glorious relationship with God and the receiving of the reward.

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Suppose you are introduced to someone you have never met. You are told the person's name and you meet him face to face. Now, you have a name and a face, but do you truly know the person? No! At this point, you only *know of* the person.

But if you begin to spend time with this person and a real relationship develops, you begin to know the person. You begin to know what the person likes and dislikes, how the person thinks, how the person feels, what the person desires in life, what the person hopes for. For the unmarried, if one person is male and the other is female, then the friendship could lead to marriage and over a lifetime of being together the relationship will grow and become very intimate. They know each other. They are no longer strangers. When they say the name of the other person, they have an intimate knowledge of the person, even a fondness based on an intimate, love relationship. We are called into this type of *knowing* our Lord.

To carry this thought a little further, we need to see that this relationship with the Lord Jesus can be compared to being in a room where you are on one side and He is on the other side. You can look across the room at each other and you can speak to each other, but you are still separated. However, the living relationship means that you are standing next to each other, even so close to each other that it is as if there is only one person in the room. Is this not the picture of a bride and bridegroom who are wrapped in each other's arms, embraced in love? We have been joined with Him in such a way that there is no need to yell across the room because we are one. This is why Paul could write: ***It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*** (Galatians 2.20 NASB).

Which relationship do you have with the Lord Jesus? Is He on the other side of the room, or is He in your heart? Do you know of Him, or do you know Him? Do you know of Him in your head, or do you know Him in your heart? The answers to these questions could indicate whether you are living according to an outward form or an inward reality, according to religion or relationship.

We need to be clear that God is not after a religious people, or a people who are filled with great knowledge, or a people who are doing a lot of great things. *Please hear this:* He is not after our building work, after the many things that we can do in His name. He is after a living relationship, a relatedness to His people; and this relationship is found only in His Son. By God's own doing, we are complete in Christ (Colossians 2.10 NASB), who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1.30 NASB). It is God's desire and highest expectation for us that His Son be fully expressed in our lives, and this comes forth through a living relationship, today. If we come into this relationship today, then we will enter into *the reign of Christ in the day of Christ*.

Again, let us consider the heart of the beloved Paul. In Philippians 3, Paul poured out his innermost desire to the saints in Philippi.

Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth,

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and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One). (Philippians 3.8 AB)

Paul's one passion was to intimately know Christ. He gave up all things to come into this place of knowing his beloved Lord. Knowing Christ was a priceless privilege. He could not put a price tag on it like the world prices things. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2.3). In Christ are all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1.3). To Paul, nothing compared to Christ. He is all by Himself in value, and no one or no thing will ever, ever match or come close to the value of knowing Christ.

Paul lost everything for Christ. From the world's view, Paul lost no small thing. He had the highest credentials of any one of the Jewish people. He was from the best stock of Israel (Philippians 3.5), and he lost it all to gain Christ. He considered what he lost as rubbish, of no value. Christ was set before him, and he purposed to know no one but Christ. He was out to win Christ.

[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death.... (Philippians 3.10 AB)

To Paul, this knowing was not a one-time affair, but it was a progressive knowing. He desired to become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him in his daily experience. It was as if Paul continually strained every muscle of his body to press on to know Christ. He exercised everything in his being to win Christ in that Day.

Paul knew that out from the power of His resurrection, the way to glory was to suffer as Christ had suffered when He was persecuted as He walked this earth heading to the cross. Paul was not speaking of the suffering of the cross because only Christ could suffer for the sins of the world. But there is a suffering for all who want to follow Christ and to come into this intimate relationship, into this *mature* knowledge of Him. There is no other way into glory. We must be conformed to His death through the fellowship of His sufferings.

Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what

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lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3.12-14 NASB)

Paul saw the day of Christ set before him and never lost sight of the day. He desired with his whole heart to be found worthy at the judgment seat of Christ, to be approved to enter the reign of Christ (1 Corinthians 9.27) and to ascend to the throne of the Lord (Revelation 3.21). When Paul went to his death at the hands of Rome, he intimately knew his Lord who stood with him and strengthened him (2 Timothy 4.17). He had come into the mature knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 1.17; 2 Peter 1.2).

What is our testimony? Can we say that we have a heart like Paul's heart? Do we love the Lord so much that we are willing to lose all for the sake of gaining and knowing Him?

Are we so in love with our beloved Lord that the cry of our heart is: "*O Lord, come!*"?

### ***Being filled up.***

In unfolding God's purpose and plan of the eons in Christ, Paul was caught up in prayer.

For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; {and} that you, **being rooted and grounded in love**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and **to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, THAT YOU MAY BE FILLED UP TO ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD.** (Ephesians 3.14-19 NASB)

Paul was so caught by the love of Christ that he prayed that Christ and His love would dwell in the hearts of those in Christ. God's love in His Son is beyond knowledge. Why? Because it is to be expressed, not understood merely in some mental way. When we are filled with love, then the life of Christ must flow out from our life to the glory of God. The love of God must be expressed.

John the Baptist saw the need for the fullness of Christ when he stated: "*He must increase, but I must decrease*" (John 3.30 NASB). John, the mighty prophet, the forerunner of the Prophet, knew that his ministry had only one purpose, and that was to point the nation of Israel to the One who was greater than he was. John had to decrease so the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world could increase (John 1.29).

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It is no different for every begotten from above child of God. We must get out of the way so that Christ can increase. This does not mean that we disappear. Never; our Lord loves who we are. He created each of us as we are, and He desires, even loves to fellowship with us as we are. However, it means that our old life, the old nature that is set against God must decrease, and the new life of Christ in us must increase. Christ is to be formed in us (Galatians 4.19), and as He is, this life overcomes or conquers. We are to be conformed to His image, to be transformed into the same image from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3.18), from faith to faith (Romans 1.17), through grace upon grace (John 1.16).

**For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Colossians 3.3-5 NASB)**

Paul has stated something so tremendous, but has this truth sunk into our hearts? Our old life of the flesh is dead, and the life we now have is hidden with Christ in God. If you will, picture yourself in Christ and then picture Christ in God. Now, ask yourself: Who can touch a life that is totally immersed in God? Nothing, absolutely nothing can come against this life because it is the very life of God in which every child of God has been placed. *We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in {the power of} the evil one* (1 John 5.18-19 NASB). Do you see what John has written to encourage us? The evil one does not touch one who is hidden with Christ in God. Why? Because we are begotten of God! **But of God!**

Christ is our life! Let this fact sink into the very fiber of your being. We have no other life apart from Him, and when He is revealed, we will be revealed with Him in glory. When will this occur? When He comes to take the scepter of His kingdom to reign over this earth with the ecclesia, which is His body. Hallelujah! Does this bring a shout of acclamation from your heart? But then Paul writes: "Therefore." In other words, you have so great a salvation ahead of you; now consider the members of your earthly body as dead to everything that will not have a lot or inheritance in the coming kingdom (1 Corinthians 6.9-10; Galatians 5.19-21; Ephesians 5.3-7). Flee from it (1 Timothy 6.11; 2 Timothy 2.22). Live according to the life that dwells within you, the *Christ*-life, and do what this life leads you to do.

### ***What is Christ doing?***

Once we are clear on this matter of *Christ who is our life*, we must consider a very important question. If Christ is our life and we can do nothing apart from Him, then it only follows that we must be doing what Christ is doing. But what is He doing? Of course, the simple answer is that He is building *His* ecclesia (Matthew 16.18). But you might wonder: What does this mean to me? After all, aren't I to be

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doing things *for* the Lord? Actually not; you are to be doing works *through* the Lord, through His life.

Today in what many call the *church* (I prefer the *ecclesia*, which is the body of Christ), there is much being done in the name of the Lord Jesus. But we must ask if all these things are of the Lord. Is He in all these things? Is He the source of all that we do? Is Christ doing it?

Of course, we really cannot answer the question of whether the Lord is in all that is done in His name, and we don't need to dwell upon this particular issue. But there is a higher and more perfect way into which we, as the Lord's people, are called. To put it another way: God has given us the way to know His perfect will, and He calls us to pursue this way and enter into it. In fact, this way is God's highest will and it is His longing that we pursue this way. So what is it? It is God's only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is *the Way*. To God the Father, His will *is* His Son and it is manifested in what the Son is doing. This is what is meant by the question: What is Christ doing? What our Lord Jesus is doing is God's highest, perfect will.

Someone once wrote: **Christ—the standard of present perfection and the dispenser of future reward.**

Do you realize that God has only one standard for man? It is His Son. If we want to know God's standard, God's mind, God's thought and what God is doing, then we must know Christ and what He is doing. In God's view, His Son is the first and the last and everything in between. We cannot go beyond Him, and we cannot discover God's heart apart from Him. We are to be ruled by Christ so that our thoughts, our words, our deeds, and our actions come forth from fellowship with Him. It all must come out of an intimate relationship with Him. It is very simple: Only as we do things out from this relationship are we assured that we are in God's highest, perfect will; and only in this way will we receive future reward.

Dear brethren, so often our understanding of works is all backwards. The real work begins *in* us, not from us. God's primary work is to conform us to the image of His Son, and then out of this work comes the life of Christ and the works that are in Christ. Consider Paul's words: *{For I am} confident of this very thing, that He who began A GOOD WORK IN YOU will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus* (Philippians 1.6 NASB). Who has begun a good work in you? God has! What is God's work in you? It is to bring you to spiritual maturity (perfection) in Christ. What is God's purpose in this work? That you will attain unto the day of Christ, holy and blameless (Philippians 1.10). This is the purpose of God's work in you and in every child of God. The life of Christ will commend us in that Day.

All that we do as the Lord's people must find its source in the Lord and it must come out from His life, not our own life. We must yield to His life, allowing Christ to live in us and out from us by the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Only in this way will we have assurance that we are in the very center and heart of what God is doing today.



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Now, let us look at the life of our Lord Jesus while He walked on this earth because in this Life we find the perfect way.

### *A dependent life.*

In Jesus, we discover that God's standard for man is a life absolutely dependent on God. How do we know this? Because the life that our Lord Jesus lived while on earth was a life of total dependence upon His heavenly Father. The Scriptures testify to this fact.

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless {it is} something He sees the Father doing**; for whatever {the Father} does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel." (John 5.19-20 NASB)

**"I can do nothing on My own initiative.** As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5.30 NASB)

Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am {He,} and **I do nothing on My own initiative**, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (John 8.28-29 NASB)

**"I have not even come on My own initiative,** but He sent Me." (John 8.42c NASB)

"For **I did not speak on My own initiative**, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me." (John 12.49-50 NASB)

Do you see how dependent the Lord Jesus was on the Father? It was 100% dependence. He was God's bondservant. We must be clear that this was the will of God trumping the will of His Son; Jesus laid down His life and submitted to His Father's will in all things, including death on the cross. Consider what Paul the apostle tells us about our Lord's dependence.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped**, but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bondservant, {and} being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him,

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and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2.5-11 NASB)

Why was the Son of God so exalted? Why has He been given the name above every name? Why must all bow to Him and confess that He is Lord? Because He emptied Himself of all His rights as God, became a bondservant, and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. In Hebrews 5.8, we are told that Jesus learned obedience from the things that He suffered. Why? Because there is no one above God; to whom can God be obedient? But Jesus, the Son of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. In other words, He emptied Himself of His rights as God, assumed the place of a bondservant—one without any rights—and willingly suffered that we might receive of His life. He placed Himself in the Divine hands of His Father, and He refused to initiate anything on His own.

As God in the flesh, was it possible for Jesus to do many things on His own initiative? Did He have the ability to do many miracles and perform great signs and wonders in His own right as the Son of God? Of course, He did. But did He ever exercise His own will? According to the Bible, Jesus *never* did anything according to His own will or desire, even to the point of denying Himself and going to the cross to suffer for the sin of the world. Not once did Jesus do anything, even a good thing, that His Father was not doing or calling Him to do. In other words, His actions were 100% in obedience to the will and commands of His heavenly Father. His life was not based on what was right or wrong to do. Even if He had taken action on His own initiative, in one sense, He would have taken the right action as the Son of God; but He would have been disobedient to His Father's will. All that He did was based only on what His righteous Father called Him to do.

Consider what John the apostle recorded: *Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me"* (John 7.16 NASB). Jesus did not have His own teaching. He only taught what His Father gave Him to teach. Further, He only did His Father's work. *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work"* (John 4.34 NASB). *But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working"* (John 5.17 NASB). Jesus said that His food, or His sustenance, was to do the will of His Father. This is what sustained Him while on earth. He came to do the Father's work. His Father was working in heaven, and Jesus was working out from the Father's life, doing what He was doing. This is the dependent life. But why was it essential that Jesus be dependent on God, doing nothing on His own initiative? This question goes to the very heart of what kind of man God sought when He created Adam.

### ***An obedient life.***

God desires a man of obedience. When God formed Adam out of the dust of the earth, he was to be a man of obedience, a man totally dependent on God, partaking

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of the tree of life. Through this life, man was to reign, to have dominion over the earth. But Adam failed in accord with the will and plan of God, and his whole race entered into disobedience.

Thank God; Jesus is the man after God's own heart who did not fail. He is *the* Man of obedience; and He is the firstborn and the Head of an entirely new race that has the Divine life of God. Where Adam failed to obey and led all men (the many) into death, Jesus obeyed in all things and now leads all men (the many) back into life and the glory of God. Paul shared this truth with the believers in Rome.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.** (Romans 5.17-19 NASB)

Through the disobedience of one man, we all were made sinners; but thank God, through the obedience of *the* one Man, we are brought into life. Today, through the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, we are called to reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. We who believe now have that new life of obedience residing in us, and it is this life that satisfies God.

Thank God; our Lord Jesus obediently came to do the work of His Father.

"But the witness which I have is greater than {that of} John; for **the works which the Father has given Me** to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." (John 5.36 NASB)

"We must work **the works of Him who sent Me**, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work." (John 9.4 NASB)

There was one work that Jesus was to do—to take on the form of man and die for the sin of the world to reconcile all mankind without exception back to God. Out from this one work were many works done to prove His mission on earth. The works authenticated, or made legitimate as a fact, the authority and purpose of God that was and still is being worked out in and through His Son. Jesus Christ was *the* authentication and authority of God on the earth. As seen in many Scriptures, He was sent to earth with a heavenly mandate.

### ***A sent life.***

Throughout the book of John, the Lord said at least 29 times that He was sent by the Father: "the works of *Him who sent Me*"; "the will of *Him who sent Me*"; "the glory of *the one who sent Me*"; "*the Father has sent Me.*" Or consider this passage:

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*Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me" (John 7.28-29 NASB).*

Jesus was fully God and fully Man. He came down out of heaven, sent by His Father. Though He walked on earth, His entire perspective was heavenly or celestial. His very character and nature were heavenly, not earthly. There was a great difference in this Man, and it was authenticated by the fact that God the Father sent Him. In turn, Jesus authenticated the Father who is in heaven. If you saw the Son, you saw the Father; and the Son was on earth by the authority and will of heaven. There was a stamp of approval, a heavenly seal upon Him that said that all He spoke, all He taught, and all He did were out from heaven. It was all true. He was not doing anything on His own initiative. If anyone had a problem with His words or His actions, then they had to take up their complaint with the God who rules from heaven. He answered those who accused Him: *"I have come in My Father's name"* (John 5.43). As God's bondservant, He laid aside all His rights. He walked in humility and obedience. He did not even come in His own name.

Thank God; because this sent life was obedient, today our Lord Jesus holds *the* name above all names. But why did He come in only one name, in the name of His Father? Because there is only one life!

### ***One life.***

The Father and the Son were never separated while Jesus walked this earth. They were in intimate communion: *"I and the Father are one"* (John 10.30 NASB). *"The Father is in Me, and I in the Father"* (John 10.38b NASB). They were in continual fellowship with each other. The Father and the Son were one.

It is essential that we understand that until those last three hours on the cross when our Lord Jesus took on the sin of the world and even became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5.21 NKJ), He was never separated from His Father. They were one in the Spirit. It took the sin of the world to separate them for a time when our Lord hung on the cross and cried out, ***"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"*** What tremendous grief and agony there was for both the Father and the Son as their intimate communion was broken by our sin and the Father crushed His Son on the cross (read Isaiah 53). We will never truly comprehend the depth of the love that was poured out that day. Throughout eons to come, we will be praising God for the priceless gift of His Son and for the immense price that was paid to redeem us back to God.

But thank God; on the cross, our Lord cried out, ***"It is finished!"*** and the work was done. His sinless life defeated death itself and the grave could not hold Him. With His resurrection and ascension back into heaven to the throne of God, Jesus' prayer was answered and the Father and the Son were once again reunited as one in glory.

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### *A glorified life.*

“I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” (John 17.4-5 NASB)

Praise God that through Jesus’ absolute obedience unto death on the cross, His glory as God was fully restored. Today, the Son of God is seated at the right hand of God the Father, reigning in glory. How do we know this? We know He is at the right hand of His Father because the first recorded martyr of the Pentecostal ecclesia, Stephen, a man full of grace and power, looked up into an opened heaven and saw.

**But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”** (Acts 7.55-56 NASB)

Stephen saw this awesome sight before he was stoned to death, and the Lord Jesus received his spirit. This is proof positive that our Lord is in glory today. Do you notice that according to John’s gospel, the Lord’s prayer to His Father before He went to the cross deals with being glorified: “Glorify Thou Me *together* with Thyself”? The key word is *together*; and this together is more than just two people occupying the same space, being close to one another. It is oneness or union. They are one, not two. *“I and the Father are one.”*

This oneness is the glory of God. *“Glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”* The Son longed to be united with His Father. When the Father and the Son are together, united in the Spirit, there is such love and oneness that God is fully satisfied. When God is satisfied, there is glory.

### *God’s expectation.*

Now, if our Lord Jesus is the standard of God and this standard is a dependent life, an obedient life, a sent life and a glorified life, then what is God’s expectation of us? Can it be anything less than God’s standard? No! But who can live up to this standard? Can any of us truly say that we are totally dependent on God; we are obedient in all things; we have a heavenly mandate because we are doing those things commanded us out of heaven; we are living a glorified life? We cannot because we all are born of Adam’s fallen race. Then how can we attain to this standard? There is only one way, and it is *in* Christ. Only He can live this perfect life before God. But thank God; His life has been given to all who are begotten of God with a new life, the life of Jesus Christ.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together

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with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly {places} [among the celestials], in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages [eons] to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2.4-7 NASB [CV])

Oh, how we must praise God for His tender love, grace and mercy. Of God's own doing, we have been made alive together with Christ and we are in Christ. Do you realize that we are being brought into glory, and it is in Christ Jesus?

Our Lord Jesus, before He exited this earth through the cross, desired that we would have His glory so that we would be one like He and the Father are one. We truly will not understand glory until we stand before our Lord and behold Him; but in His high priestly prayer, we are given some understanding that glory and oneness with God and with one another as the body of Christ are intimately linked.

“And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one.” (John 17.22 NASB)

As God, the Son has a glory that is only God's to possess; but as the second Man, the last Adam, Jesus received a glory that is bestowed upon the one new Man. He is the first man to rise from the grave and enter into heaven and take on glory for all of mankind. Man was created to possess the glory of God, but it was lost when Adam sinned. But thank God; the obedient Son recovered glory for man and now He is the Man in glory.

One day when our beloved Lord appears, we will enter into His glory; but today, we are being transformed from glory to glory as we behold Him as in a mirror (2 Corinthians 3.18). Again, we must come back to Paul's word to the Colossians: *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory* (Colossians 3.3-4 NASB). Notice that your life is hidden with Christ *in* God. The Father and the Son cannot be separated, and when the Father and the Son are one, there is glory. This one life is the essential nature of the new race found in Christ Jesus our Lord. Oneness is the nature of the one new man that Paul described in Ephesians 2.

### ***A life in union.***

What is oneness? It is union with Christ. What is union? It is “the uniting of two or more things into one,” or “something made into one.” We are one with Him. There is really only one life, and it is expressed through who *you* are in Christ. Never remove the person from the life in union, for when you do, the relationship ceases. There must be two to have a relationship.

It is only through this union that God's work is done. The work of God has been entrusted to the Man in glory. He said, “*I will build My ecclesia.*” It is not our work but His work, and it must come from His life. Apart from Christ, there is no true

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work of God; there is no true building of His ecclesia, which is His body. Jesus said, *“Without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15.5 NKJ). We have been forever joined with Him, and we are to live according to His life. Christ is our very life. Who we are and what we do are to be found in Christ.

On earth, this matter of union with His Father governed Jesus. All the works of God came from this union; there were no exceptions. For us, there also must be no exceptions.

Let us look at this matter from another view. If absolute dependence and obedience were true of our Lord Jesus, how much more must it be true of us? We must do likewise, for how can we, who are flesh and blood, do anything differently than our Lord? Actually, we have far more reason to do only as He does. We are not God. We do not have the ability or knowledge in our own right to do what God wills. Our old nature is in rebellion against God. We must be clear on this point that the old man that lingers in us is a rebel against God. Do not be deceived on this point. We do not have the ability to obey God as our Lord Jesus did. So how are we to obey? It is only done as we see ourselves in union with Christ and lay hold of His life. It is *no longer I, but Christ* (Galatians 2.20). We must leave the old man in the grave and choose to let the life of Christ live. Paul reminds us: *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* (Galatians 5.24 NASB).

It is only the life of Christ that is obedient, so we must allow His life to live in us and through us. Another way of stating this is that we must be broken for His life to come forth. We often think that a lot of activity in the name of the Lord is sacrifice, and it is what God wants. We think that we must be doing great works, always being busy for the Lord, sacrificing ourselves through “doing things for the Lord.” This is the thinking of the world that constantly runs to and fro, doing things to satisfy the flesh.

However, *the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise* (Psalm 51.17 NASB). *“But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word”* (Isaiah 66.2 NASB). Brokenness is the way to deeper fellowship with our beloved Lord, and it is the way into the kingdom of Christ. How do we know this? Because our Lord Himself has told us: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5.3 NASB). Brokenness means we know that we are poor in spirit and that we desperately need the spirit of God to lead us. We are totally dependent on the spirit, for only God’s spirit can direct us in the way in which we are to go. Where will He lead us? Into Christ and His coming kingdom when He sums up all things in the heavens and on the earth (Ephesians 1.10)!

As the Lord’s people, do we have any business doing things, even good things, our own way? We must see with the eyes of our heart that it is possible for us to do something that seems right and good, and yet it is not in the will of God. Are we to act upon our impulses to do good? Did Jesus act upon good impulses? Did He do

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things based on “rightness”? No! For example, He did not heal everyone He saw. Oh, He had compassion on people, but He was not moved by this compassion to touch everyone. Again, He did only what His Father commanded Him to do. In the same way, God is after His will being worked out in a dependent, obedient people. Oh, may the Holy Spirit reveal this truth to our hearts.

We must do only what Christ is doing! Do you know that you are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that you should walk in them (Ephesians 2.10)? Where are these good works? In Christ Jesus! How do we walk in them? In Christ Jesus! Paul tells us: *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, {so} walk in Him”* (Colossians 2.6 NASB). This is the life in union with Christ—not just two together as if strangers but two united into one in relationship; and not just two but the whole body of Christ united into one. After all, this is the very heart of salvation. We have been saved to be joined with Christ, to be in union with Him and with one another.

### ***A life in communion.***

But how is this union lived out practically? It is done through daily communion with our Lord—through an intimate daily relationship. When we are in communion with Him, we begin to see as He sees, and we begin to sense His heart; and we, out of obedience, do only as He directs us. If we are not in daily communion, we will not know what to do. However, there is a danger. Some of the Lord’s people might take these words and think, “Well, I am in Christ, and He is in me; therefore, all that I do or say is His will.” The result may be a lot of activity in the name of the Lord that has its birth in man and not in God. May the Holy Spirit convict us of such an attitude!

We cannot just say the right words and then go about our own lives as an independent people. Much of the lack of true spiritual progress and growth in our Christian life and in assemblies is the result of not walking in communion with the Lord Jesus, and this walking requires practice and time. Paul told the Ephesians: *For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ... trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord* (Ephesians 5.8, 10 NASB). A life in communion is a life yoked with the Lord. *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light”* (Matthew 11.29-30 NASB). The one who is yoked to the One with the gentle, loving heart is the one who knows what is pleasing to the Lord.

We must learn, and learning only comes as we are yoked with Him and walking in daily communion. When He moves forward, we move forward; when He turns, we turn; when He stops, we stop; when He sits and waits, we sit and wait; when He acts, we act. This is love for our beloved Lord Jesus.



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### *A life yielded in His presence.*

Where does this daily communion and walk begin? It begins in His presence. We must commune with our Lord, worship Him, seek Him, desire Him and meditate upon His Word, allowing the spirit of truth to teach us. As we do, we will hear the still, small voice of the spirit of God speaking to our waiting and longing heart. As we seek Him, we begin to yield our will to Him: *Not my will but Thy will be done.*

Now, let us be clear what this communion is and what it is not. It is a relationship in which two are in communication with one another, which requires listening, especially on the part of the believer. To him who has an ear to hear! We must learn to listen for and discern the voice of our Lord. This should not be confused with prayer that many Christians practice. Some Christians stand pacing a room all night, yelling at God at the top of their lungs because they think that this is the way to communicate with God. But is it? Is God deaf? Further, if we are continually yelling at God, how can we hear Him? How can we be in fellowship with Him? Others might not yell but they pray non-stop with petitions, requests etc. We must wonder if, at times, God wants to speak but He cannot because we are not listening. However, even if He did speak, we might miss His voice because we are drowning it out with either noise or non-stop prayers.

Obviously, there are many aspects to prayer that may take on different forms, particularly intercessory prayer. But the type of prayer that we must practice in our daily life is that which communicates with God and which leads to hearing His voice in fellowship. *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock [on the door of the heart of My people (saved ones)]; if anyone [of My people] hears My voice [My sheep hear My voice, the lost cannot] and opens the door [desires intimate fellowship with Me], I will come in to him, and will dine with him [have fellowship with him], and he with Me [he will know the intimate thoughts of My heart]”* (Revelation 3.20 NASB). This is the word of the Lord that is going out to His people in these last days. It is a call into fellowship with our beloved Lord. The yielded life comes through this type of relationship.

As we yield to the Lord under His gentle yoke, we will discover that our Lord’s life begins to live out of us. He becomes like our daily breath. We become more and more dependent on Him until we cannot live without Him. We find ourselves doing things with a new purpose in mind. We only move when we are sure that God sends us. We only speak as our Lord speaks to us. We have no teaching but His teaching. We desire that His name alone be lifted up, that His name be glorified. We no longer want to build a monument to our name—our name does not matter anymore, our reputation does not matter anymore, our good works do not matter anymore, our great plans and strategies do not matter anymore. We lay our lives down and take up our cross. The only thing that matters is our Lord and what He is doing today.

However, all of this takes time. We must learn to wait upon the Lord in all that we do. It must be His initiative, not ours. God through the spirit must conceive it from

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heaven. When this occurs, all we can say is: “God did this by His spirit; we can take no credit. It is all His doing. It is to His glory!”

### *A life in love.*

Finally, a life yielded to Christ in communion is a life *in love*. The Lord concluded His prayer to His Father: “*I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them*” (John 17.26 NASB). Love sums up this whole matter of Christ who is our life. Do you realize that the Father’s love for the Son is in you? *The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us* (Romans 5.5 NASB).

How are we to live until He comes to take the scepter of His kingdom to manifestly rule over the nations? Through Christ who is our life and through the love of God! When He comes, we will be revealed with Him in glory! Let us live daily in His presence, seeking to know Him with all our heart and to love Him, and we will come into glory. Until that glorious day, let us do what our Lord is doing.

### *Postscript.*

There are many things, even legitimate things, being emphasized in these last days. God’s people have a tendency to become fixed on these things and take their eyes off the very heart and foundation of what matters most, which is *Christ Jesus our Lord*. He must be central and supreme in our lives. Unfortunately, we can become centered on many other things and cease being *Christ-centered*. Let us return to Christ who is the love of our life. Let us sharply focus on the One we long to see.

Christ is our life, our love and our hope! Look off unto Jesus!

### Scripture Abbreviations:

AB	Amplified Bible
CV	Concordant Version (Literal New Testament)
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NKJ	New King James Bible