

Overcoming ADDICTION

by the
Spirit of Christ



Joseph Herrin

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Foreword

A word of explanation is necessary at the start of this book. In this work you will find the writer using names in reference to God the Father and God the Son that are more faithful to their Hebrew original than the names and titles generally in use by the church today. The name Yah, or Yahweh, will be found in reference to God the Father, and the name Yahshua will be utilized when speaking of the Son.

This usage is not intended to be divisive, nor does it serve as a renunciation of the usage of titles such as Lord or God. Neither is it a condemnation of those who choose to call the Son of God Jesus. My intent as a teacher of the Bible is simply to illumine and instruct. There is great meaning in the Hebrew names of the Father and the Son, and these names are directly related to one another. Many of the people whose lives are portrayed in Scripture also serve as types and shadows of God, bringing to light truths that might otherwise be hidden.

For example, Joshua, the Israelite leader who led the people of God across the Jordan and into battle to take possession of the land of Canaan, bears the same name as the Messiah. They both were called Yahshua. Like Joshua in the Old Testament, the Son of God began His ministry at the Jordan River as He was baptized by John. Both men labored to establish a kingdom dedicated to Yahweh, the first external and natural, the latter internal and spiritual.

Yah is the name used in reference to the Father on forty-nine separate occasions in the Old Testament. Most Christians have utilized this name of God without knowing that they were doing so. Whenever the word *hallelujah* is uttered, the speaker is literally exclaiming "Praise Yah," for this is the meaning of the Hebrew word from which it is derived. The longer name *Yahweh* is found an additional 6,828 times.

The name of the Son is likewise significant, for Yahshua is understood to mean "Yah's Salvation." The Gospel writer indicates that this is the meaning of the name given to the Savior at His birth.

Matthew 1:21

"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yahshua, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

It has been the practice of this writer for many years to use these names, which more clearly represent their Hebrew originals. It is my hope that their employment in this book might aid the reader by bringing forth light on relationships that are obscured, as well as promoting an increased intimacy with God the Father by calling Him by His memorial name, instead of a title which men have substituted.



Introduction

The Son of God spent most of His time upon this earth ministering to those whom the religious crowd sought to avoid. He did not go to the rich and powerful. He rarely was found in the homes of esteemed members of society. No, the Son of God went to the outcasts. He spent time with the prostitutes, the impoverished, with those enslaved to sin. Those who were religious criticized Him for this, but His answer reveals that their hearts were not aligned with the heart of God.

Matthew 9:10-13

And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Yahshua and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?" But when He heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

The church is referred to as "the body of Christ." In effect, those born again of the Spirit of Christ become His hands, His feet, His mouth, His ears, etc.. As His body, these individual members are to continue the work that Christ began when He walked in bodily form on this earth. He still walks this earth, continuing His ministry through His sons and daughters.

A tragic thing has occurred in the churches of God. Christ's body has lost its connection to its Head. It has largely become self-directed, and due to this it is failing to act as Christ desires. Rather than reaching out to the lost, rather than going to the sick and the sinners, she has turned her focus upon her own entertainment and a pursuit of worldly success. Just visit any Christian bookstore today and observe how many of the best selling Christians books are focused upon 'Becoming a Better You,' or 'Achieving Success, Prosperity, Health and Blessings.' Then look as hard as you will and see if you can find a best selling Christian book on ministering to sinners, and healing the morally and spiritually sick of society.

There are some in the church who realize that the body of Christ has strayed from the will of her Savior and Lord. Some are convicted as they read the Gospels and the Acts of the apostles, noting that the church today is not reaching out to the despised and rejected members of society as Yahshua and His disciples did. I was often convicted of this as a young man growing up in the church. I remember thinking upon this on a number of occasions.

Like a great number of those raised in the Church in the West today, I was brought up in a good home in a middle income family. I grew up in the suburbs. My friends, and those I associated with, had similar lives. I did not rub shoulders with prostitutes, alcoholics, drug addicts, the homeless and poor. Because I did not know any people like this, I adopted a mindset of fear toward them.

As a child growing up in church among “good people” I was reminded that “bad company corrupts good morals.” I heard stories about those who used illegal drugs. I was told that people who used crack cocaine, or other commonly abused substances, would turn into demented, violent thieves and murderers who would as soon stab a person as look at them. My only knowledge of these people came from the headlines of the newspaper, and the horrific accounts of the evening newscast.

My isolation, coupled with the stories I heard, served to create a barrier that prevented me from being used of Christ to reach the very ones He came to save. There were occasions when I prayed to the Lord about this matter. I confessed my desire to do His will, while also admitting that I felt woefully unprepared. I lacked familiarity with this portion of society. I did not understand their struggles. Neither did I consider myself knowledgeable about the solution to their problems. I only understood that Christ was God’s solution to man’s slavery to sin, but the actual details of how Christ could help the addict and alcoholic were hard for me to define.

God is able to prepare His people for service. Christ does not expect us to figure things out for ourselves. He will not give to His children a ministry and expect them to carry it out in their own strength, and according to their own wisdom. Those whom He calls, He will qualify.

I did not anticipate where the Spirit of Christ would lead me in the years since I confessed my desire to be used by Him according to His will. It has truly been an adventure. There have been many trials, sorrows and heartaches along the way, but there has also been an abundance of grace to enable me to stay the course. As I have followed the Good Shepherd I have found myself being prepared to serve as His hands, His mouth, His feet. He has led me to the very ones God has always had compassion upon. He has taught me many things along the way. I have learned the struggles of this segment of mankind, and I have learned the details of Christ’s salvation in such a deep and profound way that explaining it to others now flows from my innermost being as water from a spring.

For the past three years I have found myself living and working at an inner city rescue mission. I did not choose to come to this place. The Spirit ordered my steps and brought me to it. And what a profitable experience it has been! Even as Joseph was prepared for a ministry in Egypt as he toiled in Potipher’s house and then in the prisons of Pharaoh, I have found myself being prepared for a ministry. This is not MY ministry. It is CHRIST’s ministry. It is also the ministry of the entire body of Christ.

This book declares the things the Spirit has taught me, and I believe it will be profitable for those who also are hearing the call to be Christ’s body, as well as for those to whom Christ is reaching out, the captive, the downtrodden, and misunderstood members of this Adamic race.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding as you read.

Joseph Herrin

Chapter 1 - Slaves to Sin

A brother in Christ who attended a local Bible Study with me made the following insightful remark. He said, "In order to get people saved today, you first have to convince them that they need saving." He went on to explain that he had found that most men and women do not understand their sinful condition. They had not come to a place of honesty where they would confess that they were enslaved to desires and impulses that they could not control.

It is necessary in leading you to understand the enormity of what God has done in sending His Son to earth to become the Savior of mankind, to clearly present how desperate man's condition is. You must come to agree with God's testimony concerning your condition. You must understand that you are a slave to sin, and without the least hope of being able to break free of this captivity through any human means. Willpower cannot break the bonds of sin. No amount of instruction will set you free. Twelve step programs that proclaim a generic view of God and a works based solution will not loose the bonds of sin. Only Christ can set men free from the bonds of sin.

We must back up a step further, for, in order to understand the salvation that God offers, you must agree with God that your addiction is sin. Many have not admitted even this basic truth. Psychiatry and the medical profession today most often classify addiction as a sickness, or a disease. Yet they cannot tell you how a person contracts this disease, nor how it can be scientifically identified. Neither can they prescribe a cure. They can only suggest a treatment, and this treatment is not promised to cure anything. It must be continued all the days of one's life.

The reason that the medical profession lacks a clear diagnosis and remedy for addiction, is that it is not actually a sickness at all. At least it is not a physical sickness. Addiction is merely a symptom of man's sinful condition. Addiction is the fruit of our first ancestor's transgression of the will of God while in the Garden of Eden. In his letter to Rome, the apostle Paul share the following points (Romans 5:12-19):

- through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...
- by the transgression of the one the many died...
- the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation...
- by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one...
- through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men...
- through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...

Let us examine what is said here to be sure that it is understood thoroughly. In the opening book of the Bible we read of God creating the first man and

woman. He placed them in a garden that He had planted, and instructed them to tend it. At this point there was no death in the creation, no decay, no sickness. Man would never know death if he continued in this state.

Yahweh told the man and his wife that there was one thing they were not to do. It was forbidden for them to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Nothing else was off limits. There was only this one thing they were not to do. Yahweh warned Adam and Eve that in the day they ate from this tree they would most assuredly die. Death would enter into their beings. Decay and sickness would begin to take hold of them until their bodies finally succumbed and life was no more.

Death is the fruit of sin. It was due to sin that death entered the creation. Sin is departing from the will of God. It was not Yahweh's will that man should eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. To do so would be a departure from God's will, and this is sin. If man ever embraced a path of sin, he would not be able to depart from it apart from God's help. If man were to choose disobedience to God's will, he would become a slave to disobedience. It was therefore critical that he never start down this path.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

God, through His Holy Spirit, has inspired men to record for us the history of our first ancestors. We are told that there was present with them in the Garden of Eden the serpent. This serpent was none other than Satan, the adversary of God and mankind.

Revelation 12:9

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...

The serpent first approached the woman in the Garden. Through craftiness and deception he enticed her to eat of the forbidden fruit.

Genesis 3:1-6

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she

took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Some have concluded that this account is nothing other than a fantastic tale. Mention of talking beasts, and fruit with miraculous powers has led them to conclude that it is merely a fictional account that early man devised to explain the presence of evil in this world. The Spirit of Christ testifies differently. What is described here actually occurred, and the events are not only historical, but they serve as a spiritual parable. To understand the parable, we must look at the context of the entire creation account.

In Genesis chapter one we read the account of Yahweh creating the earth. Genesis chapter one recounts the six days of creation in which God created the earth, culminating in His creation of man on the sixth day. God then gave the man and his wife a command. It was the first command given to man, and is therefore filled with prophetic importance and tremendous significance.

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

It has always been the practice of God to reveal, and hide, truth through means of parables. Christ declared that He did not speak anything to the people during His ministry without the use of parables. Christ did not speak the first parable during His life as a man on earth, however. We are told that Christ spoke the creation into existence.

John 1:1-3

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 through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, is called "the Word of God." We are told that He spoke the creation into being. He has always spoken through means of parables, and the creation story and the fall of man, though historical, is one great parable. The first commandment God gave to mankind was to subdue the

earth, and rule over all the beasts. What does this mean? How are we to understand this parable?

The earth is a symbol for mankind. We are told that mankind's body was made from the dust of the earth. The apostle Paul further tells us:

I Corinthians 15:47-49

The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

The natural man who was created on the sixth day is closely associated with the earth. In particular, man's flesh is directly linked to the earth. From dust we are made, and to dust we shall return. The commandment to subdue the earth can be understood as a parable of God's desire for man to rule over his own flesh. The command to subdue the beasts and rule over them, serves as a parable of Yahweh's desire that mankind rule over all the things that dwell inside his soul (the depths of the sea), all the things that reside in his flesh (the beasts and all creeping things on the earth), and to rule over all spiritual forces in the heavens (the birds of the air).

(If a more thorough study of this parable is desired, I would recommend the book *The Mark of the Beast*.)

The serpent that appeared unto Eve in the Garden was a beast. In Chapter three of Genesis the serpent is twice described this way.

Genesis 3:1, 14

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made... Yahweh God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field..."

Yahweh's command to the man and woman was to rule over the beasts. This they failed to do. Rather than making the beast submit to them, they submitted to the beast. Rather than demanding obedience from the beast, they became obedient unto the serpent. Remember then the words of the apostle Paul.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...

When Adam and Eve presented themselves to the beast for obedience, they became slaves to the beast, becoming subject to the spirit of the beast. What was the spirit of this beast that they obeyed? We can define it as we see how the parable continues.

Genesis 3:14

Yahweh God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life..."

The nature of the serpent is described in the curse that Yahweh spoke upon it. The words "on your belly you will go" are filled with symbolism. The spiritual sense of this statement is that the serpent would be ruled by its appetites, it would go forth on its belly. The next phrase is also symbolic, "and dust you will eat all the days of your life." This too is a parable pointing to the type of appetites that would rule the beast. Man's flesh was formed of the dust of the earth, and here is symbolized an appetite for fleshly things.

When Adam and Eve presented themselves to the beast for obedience, they fell under the rule of the beast nature. They began to be driven by the appetites of their flesh. The apostle Paul alludes to this form of slavery in the following words:

Philippians 3:18-19

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame - who set their mind on earthly things.

Christ referred to Satan as "the god of this world." This fallen sinful world lies under his dominion, and those who are citizens of this world are ruled by their belly. Their minds are set upon earthly things. They are dust eaters. Paul also defines for us what many of these fleshly appetites are to which man is enslaved.

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Addictions of all types certainly fall inside the scope of this list. Some are addicted to various forms of immorality and sensuality. Some are addicted to idolatry, they covet the material possessions of this world. Some are addicted to anger and all that goes along with it. Others are addicted to drunkenness and carousing, which would include addictions to all types of substances that alter one's mood and mental state.

All these fleshly appetites entered into the human race through our first ancestors. "Through the one man's transgression, the many were made sinners. Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

As we understand that the accounts of the creation and the fall of man are historical, as well as being spiritual parables, we begin to perceive many things. Consider for a moment how a serpent kills its prey. A serpent injects venom

inside the victim's body, and this poison begins to spread death through the entire body. Eventually the vital organs shut down and death results.

This too is a parable, revealing the manner in which Satan has poisoned man's being. Satan enticed the man and woman to eat of that which was forbidden, and in doing so sin entered into their being. Sin always results in death. It is a toxin that is present in all mankind from the day they are conceived. The very seed of mankind is infected with sin, and so death and sin are the portion of all who are born of the lineage of the first Adam.

The apostle Paul has aptly described the condition of all men under the curse of sin.

Romans 7:18

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh...

When you and I are born, sin is already present within us. We are born enslaved to the desires of the flesh. A child does not have to be taught to lust, and covet, and act selfishly. No man needs to go out searching for an addiction, or an enslaving desire. These things are present in our flesh, for we are all under the curse of sin.

Romans 7:14

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

I have met many addicts as I have lived and worked at a rescue mission. Many have been struggling with addictions for as long as they can remember. I have sat in meetings with them and heard them testify of their resolve to do better, and to finally overcome the appetites of their flesh. I have watched these same men fall, some almost immediately after purposing to not do so. I have seen the look of resignation in the eyes of the more honest ones. They have given up the delusion that they might somehow free themselves from their captivity by a further act of willpower, or from some renewed commitment. The emotion of the moment always fades away, and some moment of weakness comes and they fall once more.

The first thing you must do in order to be set free from your slavery to the appetites of the flesh is to agree with those things God has testified concerning your condition.

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

It requires humility to agree with God concerning our human condition. The proud man or woman wants to believe there is some good in them. They want to testify that they can accomplish anything they set their mind to. They

want God to acknowledge that they are inherently good, when He testifies that our condition is just the opposite.

Some might argue that they have heard of instances of men and women who overcame their addiction quite apart from God. I too know of some rare instances where men and women have ceased taking illegal drugs, or put away a life of drunkenness, and some of them knew nothing of the salvation of Christ. This is merely part of Satan's deceit to keep men and women perpetually trying to improve themselves by their own efforts.

What those who point out such examples are not acknowledging is that though these men and women might have put away one manifestation of the sin that resides in their flesh, that the poison yet remains, and it always manifests in some form. Some have been able to quit drinking, but they have then made the pursuit of their life the acquisition of material possessions. This is an addiction that is not condemned by society. Even a carnal church speaks highly of such a pursuit. Christ, however, sees that nothing has changed in the person's life. They are still going forth on their belly, living to satisfy a hunger for fleshly things. There is actually much more written in Scriptures to condemn a pursuit of material possessions, than there is to condemn a life of drunkenness.

So do not be deceived. No man or woman has ever in history overcome the power of sin that is resident in their being, apart from the deliverance provided through Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah. Neither will you be able to do so. If you can receive this as truth, and are humble enough to admit your inability to free yourself from the raging appetites inside your being, then you have taken the first step to receiving true deliverance through the Son of God.



Chapter 2 - Separated by Sin

I have met a large number of men in recent years through my association with a rescue mission who have been struggling with addiction. It has been my experience that the majority of them have little problem confessing that they have a problem with evil desires that reside within them. Most will also freely confess that they have tried many times unsuccessfully to overcome their addiction. I believe that men who have been held captive by cravings for alcohol and drugs are quicker to recognize and acknowledge their captivity to sin than those who have never struggled with these issues.

It is more difficult to bring men who are not enslaved by some sin that society finds abhorrent to admit that they too have a sin problem. Yet all men suffer from the same problem. We are all the offspring of Adam. We are all born in the condition where no good thing dwells in our flesh. As mentioned earlier, some men simply channel their selfish desires and fleshly appetites into some form that society does not condemn. Many give themselves to the pursuit of material gain, or to a pursuit of entertainment and a life of ease and pleasure. In God's sight all of these things constitute sin.

Some men also have become ensnared to addictions that are more easily hidden from society than alcoholism and drug addiction. A vast number of men are enslaved to an appetite for sexual stimulation. This is an area that was once a source of great shame and frustration in my own life.

As a young boy around the age of thirteen I had my first encounter with pornography. I had gone over to a friend's house. This friend had older brothers, and he took me into a room in the house that his brothers used to hang out. On the walls were pictures of naked women taken from the pages of some pornographic magazine. My flesh was immediately enticed. I did not ask for these desires to be present within me. They were simply there.

Having once experienced the physical stimulation of viewing such pictures, my body and mind desired to repeat the experience. I knew that doing so was sin, for I had for many years been raised in church, and I had a sincere conversion experience when I was ten years old, followed by the act of baptism in the church my family attended.

Becoming a Christian, however, does not mean that the sinful desires of the flesh go away. These appetites will be present with us for as long as we inhabit these bodies of flesh, but we can come to a place where they no longer rule over us. We can enter into a place of victory over the flesh, its passions and desires.

As a young man growing up in the church there were many things that the ministers and teachers of the church failed to teach me. I believe this was largely due to their own lack of understanding of the dynamics of spiritual warfare, and the absence of a clear conception of the process of ruling over the flesh. I heard many things that were contradictory and confusing.

Some ministers proclaim the false message that when a person becomes a Christian they will no longer sin, or even desire to do so. They usually build such a doctrine upon one or two isolated Scriptures pulled out of their proper context, and entirely misunderstood. Following is one such verse.

I John 3:9

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

This seems like a very cut and dried statement. Some ministers use this verse to tell their congregation that if they are sinning it is proof that they have not been born of God and are therefore not members of the body of Christ. A perusal of Scripture will reveal that this is simply not true. Men and women do not cease struggling with sinful desires when they are born again of the Spirit of Christ. Nor do they always walk in victory over sin. The apostle Paul in writing to the churches spoke much on the need to rule over the sin within our being. He even testified the following regarding himself.

I Corinthians 9:27

I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

No, the desire to sin, and the passions and appetites of the flesh, do not go away when a person comes to Christ. They must still be faced, but God has given us a way through Christ to walk victoriously over these things. In his letter to the church in Galatia, Paul gives us this further insight into our struggle.

Galatians 5:16-17

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another...

It is obvious from these words that becoming a Christian does not bring an end to our struggle with evil desires that reside in our flesh. But it does provide all that is necessary to begin walking victoriously over these evil appetites. Failing to overcome the desires of the flesh does not imply that a person is not a Christian. It simply reveals that they have not yet become spiritually mature. They are still fleshly in some area, or areas, of their life.

There was a city called Corinth that was a part of the Roman Empire in the days of the early church. The apostles Paul and Apollos both preached there. A large number of the citizens of this city came to faith in Christ, and experienced spiritual birth. This was a very wicked city, filled with idols and sensuality. The pagan temples employed prostitutes to engage in sexual activity with the devotees of the various gods and goddesses.

The apostle Paul had to strongly rebuke the members of this church because they had been united to Christ, but had not separated themselves from the lusts and desires of the flesh. Some Christians were still going to these pagan temples and having sexual relations with prostitutes. The apostle admonished them in the following way.

I Corinthians 6:15-20

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "The two will become one flesh." But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

That Paul is speaking to Christians who have been born again of the Spirit of Christ is apparent from the words here. Paul declares that he is speaking to members of the body of Christ. He is speaking to those who are temples of the Holy Spirit. Only those who are Christians can be described in this way. Yet these Christians were sinning. That a person is troubled by some besetting sin, or has fallen into some addictive behavior, is not evidence then that they are lost, and separated from the life of Christ. Many people are lost, and acting sinfully is something they cannot avoid. But there are those in the church who are what Paul describes as "carnal Christians." The word *carnal* means *fleshly*.

I Corinthians 3:1-3

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

When Paul asks them whether they are not acting "like mere men," he is speaking of them acting as if they have never been born of the Spirit of God, but are still Adamic men, no different than those who are foreigners to the life of Christ. It is possible for a Christian to walk in sin, but it is not the will of God that they do so. Yahweh has made every provision for His children to overcome every desire and passion of the flesh.

I was not presented these truths as a young man growing up in the church. When I found within myself a desire to view pornography, and entertain lustful fantasies, I became troubled with thoughts that I might not be a Christian. These thoughts tormented me for many years. Many nights I would lay awake wondering whether I would be cast into hell and separated forever from the presence of God. I had been told that Christians don't sin, and I knew I was sinning.

I know now that God allowed me to experience these torments that I might press in to know the truth of the matter, and that I might be able to instruct others regarding the truth. I am therefore glad that Yahweh did not spare me these experiences.

There have been a few occasions when men at the rescue mission have suggested that I was not qualified to address their problems with alcohol and

drugs, since these things have never been an issue in my life. I have never been drunk, nor have I ever taken illegal drugs. I have, however, struggled with addictive desires in many areas. Sexual lust, covetousness, and an appetite for foods that are unhealthy have all been areas in which I have found myself tempted and failing time and again. Yet God has shown me that victory is possible in every area, and I am now walking as an overcomer in these things.

Sexual lust was perhaps one of the strongest and most shameful of the addictive desires that plagued me. From the time of my first exposure to pornography, I found the desire would not go away, and instead grew to become an obsessive thing. When I was sixteen years old I took my first job, working at a small, family owned grocery store. At the store there was a magazine rack where several different pornographic magazines were sold.

At the age of sixteen I could not purchase pornography, nor would I have openly done so. I had been raised in the church, and I knew that this constituted a great sin. I therefore began taking magazines off of the rack and sneaking them out behind the store to view them. Later I began stashing the magazines out back, and I would return after work and retrieve them and take them home where I would hide them in my room.

Such behavior is identical to that of many men and women who become addicted to illegal drugs. They are ashamed of their habit when in the presence of family, or others who do not participate in such things. They will also resort to stealing to provide that which their flesh desires. Their life becomes one of subterfuge and deception, and worries of being found out, and brought to open shame often trouble their minds, even as it did my own.

Viewing pornography was a love/hate experience for me. My flesh craved it, yet the immediate aftereffect was a feeling of guilt and shame, and a knowledge that my sin had brought a separation between myself and God. This separation from God is what troubled me the most. I felt like I could not pray to God after having viewed pornography, and usually I waited until the next morning to confess my sin and ask God to forgive me.

This experience of separation from God is normal for those who engage in sin. The first occasion of sin, that of Adam and Eve in the Garden, reveals the effect it has upon mankind. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned we read the following.

Genesis 3:8-10

They heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden. Then Yahweh God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

Our sin causes us to feel exposed and naked before God. We know that He sees all things, and He is aware of what we have been doing. Our natural reaction is to run away from that which exposes our failings. Fear becomes a part of our life, and we lack the confidence to enter into the presence of God.

Sin and the concept of separation from God are inextricably woven together. Sin always brings a break in the fellowship that Yahweh desires to have with mankind. This separation produces other harmful consequences.

If we return to the record of man's first sin, and we begin to see that which is revealed in the parables contained therein, we can discern more about sin and its relationship to separation from God. The words of the serpent as he enticed the woman are filled with insights of profound importance.

Genesis 3:4-5

The serpent said to the woman... "God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

There is truth mixed in with the words of the deceiver. The most deceptive lies always contain an element of truth. The serpent was speaking truth when he said that eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would grant Eve the ability to be "like God" in a way she had not formerly known. This area was in the ability to know good and evil for herself, apart from hearing from God.

Of all the creatures that Yahweh created, including the angels and mankind, He did not grant to any the authority to know good and evil, right and wrong, apart from Him. In order to know what was good and evil, all creatures had to hear from God. Only God had the authority to determine what was good and evil. For the creation to continue in harmony, and endless life, it needed only to abide in God, receiving the knowledge of God's will, and walking in obedience to it.

Life for the first man and woman was very simple. They had been created for God's pleasure, and their highest fulfillment and happiness would be in accomplishing that for which they were created. God spoke to the man and woman and told them what was good, and what was evil. He told them that it was good for them to be fruitful and multiply. It was good for them to tend the garden that He had placed them in. It was good for them to rule over the beasts. It was evil for them to eat of the fruit that was forbidden.

Although mankind had not received the Spirit of Christ to indwell their being at that time, they were walking in the initial stages of what God desired for them. He has always desired that mankind should receive the knowledge of good and evil, the direction for their actions, and even the very words they are to speak, from Him. Receiving the knowledge of good and evil from God keeps man ever dependent upon God, and ever abiding in Him. We dare not lose our connection to Him if we are to do that which is pleasing to Him in all circumstances.

Satan offered to the woman the ability to know good and evil apart from communication with God. He told her that if she ate of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, she would become like God and be able to know good and evil herself. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of this tree, they gained the ability to look inside of themselves and determine good and evil, right and wrong. They truly became "like God" in having this ability. However, it was not an ability God wanted mankind to possess. The inevitable consequence of

mankind looking inside of themselves to discern good and evil is that they would no longer look to Him for this knowledge. They would become separated from God.

As soon as the man and woman ate of this fruit, separation occurred. They had embarked on a path where they would begin to determine what was right and wrong by their own innate ability gained through an act of disobedience. Rather than seeking the face of God every time they were faced with a decision, or desired to know what they should be doing, they looked inside of themselves and found the answer. (This subject is discussed in greater depth in the book *SABBATH*.)

God planned from before the foundation of the earth that man should become complete and mature as He placed His Spirit within man's body. Man was destined to be a temple, and a dwelling place for the Spirit of God. Yahshua spoke of this desire of God in the following words.

John 14:16-17

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

God formerly sent His Spirit to abide WITH mankind. This was the experience of Abraham, of Moses, of the prophets and priests of the Old Covenant. God had envisioned a day when man would enter into a fuller communion with Himself. It was never His desire for mankind to walk independently of Him. Yet, He allowed the man and woman to choose this course, and in doing so He has allowed mankind to understand the great folly and tragedy of becoming separated from their Creator.

This separation always leads to a loss of light and life. This separation always ends in darkness and death. Why is this so? It is because all light of the truth, and all life is found in God. The apostle John spoke of the Son of God in this way:

John 1:4, 9

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men... There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

Yahshua confessed the following:

John 8:12

"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

All light and life are in God, for light and life are His very nature.

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Sin is a turning away from God to do our own will. We often find ourselves sinning when some desire of the flesh makes its will known, and we set our entire being to accomplish this desire. When a desire is contrary to Yahweh's will for us, then inevitably we must turn away from Him. In turning away from the source of light and life, we find that darkness and death become our portion.

Understanding the nature of sin, and of man's plight in this way, we can begin to make some application to the problem of overcoming addictive desires. The world's solutions only treat the symptoms of addiction. They never get to the root of the problem, and therefore they offer no real cure. The only real answer to the problem of addictive behavior is to restore light and life to our beings. Since all light and life are found in God, the solution to addictive behavior by necessity mandates that we be restored to God. When the life of God becomes resident in our being once more, we are able to put the desires of the flesh to death, and to walk according to the will of the Father.



Chapter 3 - Christ Repairs the Breach

The first two chapters of this book could be summed up in the statement, “All mankind is born under the dominion of sin, and this sin has caused a separation between man and God.”

It is my hope that you might understand and acknowledge these first two foundational truths that we might proceed further to build upon them. The next foundation stone that needs to be laid is the understanding that sin always must be atoned for. The word atone actually came into existence by combining the words ‘at’ and ‘one.’ The underlying sense of the word is to bring forth a unity between two or more parties.

Adam and Eve’s sin caused a separation to occur between God and man. It was not Yahweh’s desire that this separation should remain. Sin, however, could not simply be forgotten. Sin always bears a cost, even as breaking the law of man incurs a penalty. To comprehend the penalty of sin, we need to understand a couple things.

As was mentioned in the last chapter, sin is actually a turning away from life to embrace death. What man needs is a return to life. God has determined that mankind can only be restored to life through the sacrifice of another life. In effect, someone, or something, must surrender their life in order for the penalty of sin to be blotted out and for life to be restored to mankind.

In the Old Testament we see that it was the life of an animal that served as this atoning sacrifice to bring man back into harmony with God. Sin had to be covered by the blood of an animal. This animal effectually surrendered its life that man might not die, but might be restored to the life of God. This substitutionary sacrifice to deliver mankind from the penalty of death was most clearly seen in the Passover lamb.

For 430 years the descendants of Abraham dwelt as slaves in the land of Egypt. They were treated harshly and ruled over by stern taskmasters who put them to forced labor. Their condition was very bitter, and their history serves as one more parable that Yahweh has provided in order to lead us to understand spiritual truth.

The descendants of Abraham, were known as God’s chosen people. They stand as a type and shadow for the children of God today. We too have been subject to slavery from the moment of our birth. We are held under bondage to sin. This servitude is extremely vexing, and no matter how much we long to break free from sin’s dominion, we find that sin, like Pharaoh, is too strong for us. Sin/Pharaoh will not willingly allow any to leave their service. Even as Moses repeatedly told Pharaoh “Let my people go,” and Pharaoh refused to do so, so too does sin decline our repeated entreaties.

The children of Israel in bondage in Egypt is a parable of mankind in bondage to the sin that rules in their flesh. Israel was unable to leave Egypt until God performed one final act against the land of Egypt. God had already sent nine plagues upon the land, bringing judgments against that which enslaved His people. But one final judgment was yet to come, and only then could Israel go free.

Yahweh spoke to Moses and told him to inform the people to prepare to leave in haste. What was about to take place would foreshadow a day when Yahweh would suddenly free mankind from slavery to sin. He instructed all Israel to take a lamb into their households on the tenth day of the first month. It had to be a male lamb, one year old, and it had to be without spot or blemish. After the lamb lived with them in their home for several days, they were to slay the lamb on the fourteenth day of the month, and they were to place the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel at the entryway of their home.

Yahweh said that on that night He would send forth the death angel, and the firstborn male of every family in Egypt, and the firstborn male of all cattle, would die. Only if the death angel saw the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel of the home, he would pass over that home and none would die.

Although the Israelites did not understand it at the time, what they were signifying by the blood of the lamb applied to their doorways, is that this lamb was serving as a substitutionary sacrifice for them. This lamb was giving up its life that they might live. Prophetically this looked forward to the day when Yahweh would send His Son as a Passover lamb to shed His blood and surrender His life that mankind might live.

Sin must always be atoned for by blood. As the apostle Paul declared in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 9:22

And with blood almost all things are purified according to the law, and apart from blood-shedding forgiveness doth not come.

[Young's Literal Translation of the Bible]

Apart from blood-shedding forgiveness does not come! What is significant about the shedding of blood? The Scriptures declare the following:

Genesis 9:4

“You shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

The life of a creature is in the blood. As we study the Hebrew word used in these verses that is translated into English as *life*, we find that it is the word *nephesh*. This word is also translated as the English word *soul*. What God is revealing to mankind is that the blood of an animal contains its soul, and the soul of the animal is given to make atonement for the soul of man. “For it is the blood by reason of the (*nephesh* - soul) that makes atonement.”

It is important that all mankind understand that sin is never simply forgiven and forgotten. It must always be atoned for. “Apart from blood-shedding forgiveness does not come.” This makes the consequences of our sin very serious.

Consider for a moment how attached an Israelite family would become to the year old lamb that they brought into their home at Passover. For several days they would feed this lamb by hand. The children would play with it. It might even sleep in their beds. But on the night of the Passover they had to take this little lamb and kill it. They had to take the blood of the lamb and put it upon their door so that they would be spared by the death angel.

I recently read a true story about some men who invited a minister to join them for lunch. They decided to serve lamb from a farm as the meat for lunch. One of the men came to the minister around two in the afternoon, and apologized that the lunch was not ready yet. He said that he and two other men had gone out earlier that morning to kill and butcher the lamb for their lunch. However, when they saw the lamb standing there, so trusting and innocent, they all began to bawl at the thought of killing it. It took them three hours before they were able to bring themselves to slay the lamb. I am sure that they were thinking of the Son of God who went as a lamb to the slaughter and freely laid down His life for man, and this was part of the reason for their great emotion.

The penalty of sin is always death. The life of some creature must atone for sin. The soul of one creature must be surrendered in place of the soul of another. By the death of one, another receives life.

Throughout the Old Testament Yahweh declared that the blood of animals could be used to atone for the sin of mankind. Bulls, goats, sheep, and even birds were killed, and their blood offered up to God in order to make atonement. These sacrifices were never permanent, and had to be offered again and again, until a perfect sacrifice should come that could make a perfect atonement for man. Only another man could make such an atonement, and this man had to be without sin, even as the Passover lamb had to be without spot or blemish. We understand that this perfect man was Yahshua, Yah's Salvation.

Hebrews 10:1

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

Hebrews 9:13-14

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

What is declared here is that the Law delivered to the children of Israel by the hand of Moses contained only a type and shadow of the perfect atonement that God would one day provide for the sin of man. The blood of bulls and goats would serve as a substitute for the life of man until the blood of the Son of God was freely given up as a perfect and eternal sacrifice on our behalf. When the Son of God gave His life as a ransom for the life of sinful mankind, He put away for all time

the penalty of death that was the consequence of sin. Never again would another animal need to shed its blood to atone for sin.

I Corinthians 5:7

For Christ our Passover... has been sacrificed.

It is necessary for all men and women who wish to overcome their addictive behavior to understand these things. BEFORE victory over sin can be attained, the penalty of sin must be atoned for. You must be brought back to union with God in order to walk victoriously over sin, and union with God is only obtained as the penalty of death is paid. Yahshua has willingly given His life as a ransom for yours. He received death that you might receive the life of God.

Matthew 20:28

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

It is imperative that you understand that sin can only be overcome through the life of God. When man sinned in the Garden of Eden he became separated from the life of God. Christ came to restore the breach. He came that we might have life once more.

John 14:6

Yahshua said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

There is only one way to attain spiritual life and be able to rule over the passions and desires of the flesh. Yahshua is the way. He has shed His blood as a ransom for mankind, but we must apply the blood to the doorposts of our heart. We must by faith claim the blood of Yahshua as the atoning sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin.

Romans 10:8-11

"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Yahshua as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."

You must have the penalty of sin atoned for. The sin that is present in your flesh, the power of sin that holds you captive and will not let you go, must be broken and its dominion over you destroyed. This breaking of sin's dominion is accomplished by the blood of the Passover Lamb being placed upon your life.

When Christ was crucified at the order of the Jewish High Priest, the Jewish leaders did not understand that they were acting out the foreordained plan of God. What they did in ignorance, and with evil intent, God in His love and mercy

had determined should be done to break the power of sin over mankind, and call a people back into fellowship with Himself. When Pilate, the Roman government official over the territory of Jerusalem, said he found no fault in Christ, he was acting as the Old Testament inspectors who were to examine the Passover lambs and insure they were without defect, spot, or blemish. Pilate examined Christ, and said, "I find no fault in this man." When Pilate hesitated to put an innocent man to death, the jealous Jewish religious leaders induced the people to demand that Christ be slain. We read.

Matthew 27:25

And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

Indeed, the blood of Christ was shed for all mankind. We must individually make public confession that we receive Christ's life as a ransom for our own. If you have not done this, I urge you to do so now. Then as a public testimony of your faith in that which Christ did on your behalf, the Scriptures instruct you to be baptized.

Baptism serves as a parable of what God has done for you through His Son. A person is baptized by being submerged in water and then raised back up. Waters are symbolic of death. What is pictured in baptism is the believer being joined with Christ in His death. In effect one is testifying, "When Christ died, I died, for Christ died in my place." When one comes back out of the water it is symbolic of being joined with Christ in resurrection. Christ did not remain in the grave. On the third day after His crucifixion He rose again. Baptism is a symbol of the believer rising with Christ to a new life where sin no longer reigns over them.

Romans 6:3-6

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Yahshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that 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...

Overcoming addiction is wrapped up in this issue of no longer being slaves to sin. There is only one way to be freed from sin, and therefore freed from addiction. This is by faith in the atoning work of Christ. Do you believe that He died to pay the penalty of your sin? Do you believe that He died that you might live? Then confess it, and be baptized in obedience to the command of Christ. Begin to testify by your words and your actions, by confession and baptism, that God has made a way for you to come out from the captivity of sin into the freedom of life in Christ.

The following Scriptures testify of the awesome work of Christ as the deliverer of man from the captivity of sin and the penalty of death.

Luke 4:18-19

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

Colossians 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

What awesome things are proclaimed in these verses. Through Christ we have been delivered from the power of darkness. We can now walk as children of light. We have been redeemed, ransomed, atoned for, by the blood of Christ. We have received the forgiveness of sins. Hallelujah! Our sins caused a separation between us and God, but Christ has repaired the breach!

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Yahshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.



Chapter 4 - Faith to Believe

The foundation stones we have laid so far can be summed up in the following way:

- All mankind is born under the slavery of sin.
- Sin has caused a separation between God and man, and has brought death.
- The Son of God came to repair the breach and bear upon Himself the penalty for sin that man might live.

Yahweh has done all that was necessary to restore man to life and fellowship with Himself. Sacrificing His own Son that man might live was an act of the most profound love. Yahweh could have demanded that man bear the consequences of his sin, but He is a God of mercy and tremendous compassion, as the Scriptures state.

Psalms 145:9-10

Yahweh is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Yahweh, and Your godly ones shall bless You.

Although Yahweh has done all that is necessary to provide atonement for the sin of man, and He has made a way for men and women to come back into fellowship with Himself, there is something required on our part. We must believe that these things that have been testified thus far in this book are true. Not all men and women acknowledge that they are slaves to sin. Not all recognize that death, both physical and spiritual, is the portion of mankind due to our sin. And not all men believe and confess that Yahshua is the only way to obtain forgiveness of sin and be restored to fellowship with God.

Our part is to both believe these things and confess them. Man has ever sought another way to cover over their sin. Men have often sought to cover their sin with some work of their own. They have sought to improve themselves, and thereby make themselves acceptable unto God. This was first symbolized in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve took fig leaves and sewed them together to cover their nakedness (Genesis 3:7). Yahweh judged their covering to be deficient and unacceptable. He then provided an acceptable covering for them.

Genesis 3:21

Yahweh God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

In order to make garments of skin, an animal had to be slain and blood had to be shed. The covering of nakedness is a spiritual parable of man's shameful sin being exposed before the eyes of God, and needing a covering. When Yahweh rejected the fig leaf covering of the man and woman, and provided His own

covering, it is to be understood that all man's attempts to resolve the problem of sin fall short of God's approval. As the Scriptures testify:

Isaiah 64:6

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Even the wind could have blown apart the covering Adam and Eve made for themselves. Their covering was as a filthy garment, for it was made by the efforts of sinful man. Sinful man cannot cover themselves with righteousness. Their best attempts, their most righteous deeds, appear spotted and stained in the eyes of a Holy God. Only God could provide an acceptable covering.

Adam and Eve were the forebears of the entire human race. They had not had any children yet when they sinned. The Scriptures declare that we were all present in Adam at that moment, for we existed in the form of his seed from which all of mankind would arise. When God made a covering for Adam He symbolically covered all of mankind, for we were yet in Adam. By doing so Yahweh was showing that a covering would one day be provided for the sin of the entire human race.

I John 2:1-2

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Yahshua Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

The word *propitiation* is found four times in the New Testament. There are two different Greek words that are translated into the English word *propitiation*, but both Greek words come from the same root. These are the Greek words *hilasterion*, and *hilasmos*. I have often looked up the meaning of Greek and Hebrew words in the reference work *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. In this book we find the following definition for the Greek word *hilasterion*.

an atoning victim, or (specially) the lid of the Ark (in the Temple)

This same reference work reveals that this Greek word is translated in two different ways. It is translated as *propitiation*, as well as *mercy seat*. When Yahweh gave Moses instructions for constructing the Tabernacle in the wilderness, He also gave him directions for building the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a wooden box overlaid with gold, and it had a lid of similar construction that rested upon the top as a covering. This lid is often called The Mercy Seat.

I believe the words *Mercy Seat* are a poor translation, being misleading to most English speaking people. There is no seat upon the top of the ark, there is only a covering, or a lid. The Hebrew word used in the Old Testament which has been translated *mercy seat*, actually indicates a cover. All things in the Tabernacle's construction are symbolic, and serve as parables for spiritual truth.

The lid of the ark, which I prefer to call the Merciful Covering, is a type and symbol of that which God uses to cover the sin of man.

A certain day was set aside by Yahweh to be commemorated year by year where an animal was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. The blood of this animal was to be sprinkled by the High Priest on, and in front of, the Merciful Covering that rested upon the Ark. This day was called "The Day of Atonement." When the blood was sprinkled on this covering over the Ark, God would see and exercise mercy for the children of Israel by forgiving their sin.

We see then that Yahweh has given us many different parables to reveal His plan of salvation. In the covering of skins that God placed upon the man and woman, in the symbolism of Passover, and in the blood placed upon the covering of the Ark, God was demonstrating that He has made a provision for the sin of man to be forgiven, and for man to be restored to fellowship.

In the New Testament we read that when Christ was crucified He ascended into heaven and placed His own blood on the lid of the Ark, whose original has always been in heaven. Moses merely made a copy of that which was in heaven.

Hebrews 9:11-12

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

God has made a perfect provision for the sins of man to be atoned for. It is our part to believe that this is so, and to confess it. This belief is referred to by the word *faith*. Before Christ came and was crucified upon the cross on the day of Passover, the people of God looked forward in faith to that which God would do. When the Israelites shed the blood of animals as a sin offering, they were looking forward in faith to that which Christ would perform.

In the days of His life, many men and women observed the Son of God, and a number of them have borne witness as being present at His crucifixion, and also having seen Him after He arose from the dead. We have their testimony recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Further witness of these things is also recorded in the book of Acts, and in the other New Testament writings.

Those who saw Christ after His resurrection had the honor of seeing with their eyes, and touching with their hands, the risen Savior.

I John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us - that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Yahshua Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

These early disciples were blessed if they believed and confessed those things that Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection. Since that day a much greater number of men and women have had to manifest faith in those things that they have not personally seen.

John 20:29

Yahshua says to him, "Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed; blessed are those who not having seen, have believed."

The faith to believe is not something that we can manufacture, nor is it present in the heart of all men and women. The faith to believe is given to mankind as a gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

This verse testifies that faith is a gift given to mankind by God. Other verses bear witness to this truth.

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...

God grants to some the faith to believe, while others are not granted this same gift during this age. Even as God is the only One who can provide a solution to mankind's problem with sin, He is also the initiator of reconciliation between God and man. He must choose to draw men to Himself, or no man would ever come to Him. He alone chooses those to whom He will display His mercy in this age.

John 6:44

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

Romans 9:15-18

For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy... So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Are you sensing the Spirit of Christ drawing you to the Father, urging you to be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ? Do you have the faith to believe that Yahshua, the Son of God, is God's provision to release you from sin's captivity and to pay the penalty of your sin? Then God has granted you a great gift, and now is the time to receive that gift.

Do not say, "I believe these things to be true, but I may wait until a later time to confess these things and begin to obey God." If you reject the gift of faith today,

Yahweh is not obligated to present it to you at a later time. Understanding that faith is not something that you can muster up on your own, you need to come to God while the door is open and the Spirit is drawing you.

The Scriptures declare that God will not strive with man forever. He will not perpetually convict a man or woman of their sin and their need of being saved from its power and penalty. He has warned mankind that there is a point past which He will no longer strive with us, but will give us over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are evil. Do not be as the rebellious children of Israel whom Yahweh rejected.

Acts 7:51

"You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

Genesis 6:3

Then Yahweh said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..."

In the gospels a parable of Yahshua is recorded where He speaks of God's attempts to bring forth good fruit from the life of a man or woman. The message contained in the parable is that although God is patient and longsuffering, He will not grant an endless amount of time for a person to repent of their life of sin and begin to produce the fruit of righteousness. He is patient, and He earnestly desires for each of those people whom He calls to receive the blessings of life in Christ, and the inheritance belonging to the overcomers in Christ. But if a man or woman stubbornly resists the work of the Holy Spirit He will uproot them and give them over to judgment.

Luke 13:6-9

And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.' "

Perhaps you have been experiencing the drawing of the Spirit for some time in your life. This is evidence of God's grace being given to you. He is extending to you a precious gift, the gift of faith. If you have not taken hold of this gift and begun to use it as the Lord intends, then I urge you to do so now. Confess your faith in what God has done for you and be baptized in obedience to the command of Christ. Embark now on a path of righteousness, breaking free from the captivity of sin.

Hebrews 4:7

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

Today, if you hear His voice, yield to the drawing of the Spirit of Christ. Tomorrow that voice might be silent. Then it will be too late. God has provided a covering for mankind. We cannot be restored to God through our own self-efforts. The work that Yahweh has given to us is to believe.

John 6:29

Yahshua answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."



Chapter 5 - Guided by the Spirit of Christ

Having laid a firm foundation upon faith in the Son of God, we are now able to build upward from the foundation. Faith is ever required of us as we progress further on with God and embrace a victorious life of overcoming sin. God has done much more for us than simply pay the penalty of our sin, and restore us once more to fellowship with Himself. He has made a provision for us to no longer be bound to sin's captivity. He has given us all that is necessary to walk righteously before Him.

Romans 6:11-14

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Yahshua. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you...

Once we begin to exercise faith in the things God speaks to us, we must forever continue to manifest faith. We begin by believing that we are sinners, as He has testified. We believe that apart from God we can never break free of the bonds of sin. We believe that only in Christ is their deliverance and forgiveness for sin.

These things all require faith to believe and confess. Faith then requires that we begin to act upon the things God has said are true. If we confess that Christ has set us free from sin's dominion, then we must by faith begin to walk as free men. We must not believe the lie of Satan that we are still bound to his tyranny, and that we are not truly free from sin.

Consider once more the history of Israel as they left the captivity of Egypt, for it serves as a parable from which we can learn many more things. We read that on the night of the Passover that all the firstborn males in Egypt died, but the children of God who had placed the blood of the lamb on their door were passed over. Immediately after the death angel had brought this judgment against the land of Egypt, Pharaoh summoned Moses and told him that the children of Israel were free to leave. The Israelites then left in haste, for they already had made themselves ready.

All Israel departed from the land of Egypt on the night of the first Passover. They traveled out into the wilderness, and a short time later Pharaoh regretted that he had let them go. Pharaoh then gathered his army and set out after them with the thought of bringing them back to Egypt to serve as his slaves once more.

Once you begin to see this historical account as a spiritual parable, and you begin to recognize what various people and things stand for, it becomes easy to discern the meaning of the parable. Pharaoh is a type of Satan and sin. Mankind has been held captive under this harsh rule. God has sent a Deliverer to free us from sin's captivity. This deliverer is His Son. Yahshua shed His own blood that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and the penalty of death. He has brought us out of our slavery with a strong hand.

Satan had no power to resist God's Deliverer. He could only let his captives go free. Satan, however, has not resigned himself to this defeat. He pursues the people of God and seeks to bring them back into slavery to sin. The apostle Paul, recognizing this, exhorts the children of God to not allow this to happen. He says, "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin... Do not let sin reign in your mortal body."

Satan can only regain dominion over the child of God if they permit it. Through fear and unbelief a Christian can be persuaded to return to a life of sin. If the child of God continues to manifest faith in God, believing and confessing that they are no longer bound to sin, then Satan will be unable to bring them back to captivity.

Satan will not allow any of his former captives to leave without some attempt to bring them back. He often launches an attack by beginning to speak words of doubt and unbelief to the newborn Christian. He will say, "You don't really believe you are free from sin's dominion, do you? Remember all the times you thought to overcome sin in the past and you failed. It will happen again. My power over you is too great."

The Christian's defense under such attacks is the shield of faith. The Christian must respond, "It is true that I tried many times to overcome sin, and I failed. But I tried to overcome in my own strength. Now I have a mighty Savior. He has been tempted in all ways as I have, yet without sin. He has exchanged His life for my own. He has atoned for my sin. He has broken the rule of sin over my life, and now I am able to walk in victory."

Faith is our shield from the enemy, and our offensive weapon against him is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. When we confess the things that God has declared to be true, we wound the enemy and he is forced to withdraw from us. Although Satan will always seek to bring the Christian back to a life of sin, he can be resisted and overcome.

James 4:7

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

God brought a final judgment against Pharaoh at the Red Sea. God parted the waters of the sea and the Israelites walked through on dry land. When Pharaoh and his armies sought to follow the children of Israel, Yahweh sent confusion among them. Their chariots and horses could not drive straight. Then God closed the waters of the sea upon them and they drowned.

What is demonstrated here is that God will fight for us. The enemy will never be able to take the Christian captive again to slavery to sin as long as they trust God and follow Him. This last phrase is critical. Our victory over sin is only assured as we continue to trust God and obey Him. Had the Israelites not trusted God, and had they proven unwilling to cross the Red Sea as directed, the enemy could have taken them back as slaves.

Once Israel had left Egypt, Yahweh began to lead them in a most remarkable way. He sent a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night to be with them and to guide them. This pillar never left them, and it stands as a symbol of the Holy Spirit that is given to the Christian to always be with them, and to guide them in the way they are to go.

Exodus 13:21-22

Yahweh was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

We are only assured of victory over sin as we are careful to follow the Spirit wherever He would lead us. Yahweh gave the Israelites the following instructions concerning the pillar.

Numbers 9:17-23

Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. At the command of Yahweh the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of Yahweh they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep Yahweh's charge and not set out. If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of Yahweh they remained camped. Then according to the command of Yahweh they set out. If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out. At the command of Yahweh they camped, and at the command of Yahweh they set out; they kept Yahweh's charge, according to the command of Yahweh through Moses.

God has provided a very clear and detailed account of this matter for mankind. The reason for doing so is that these words serve as instruction for His children today. Yahweh wants all men to understand the vital necessity of constantly looking to Him to know what His will is. What He says, we are to do. Where He says go, we are to go. When He says "Do not go," we are to stay put. Our very lives, safety and continued liberty are dependent upon our obedience.

You may ask, "The Israelites had the pillar of cloud and of fire to follow. What has God given me to follow?" The Christian is given the indwelling Holy Spirit. Yahweh has promised His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him for it. He knows we need the Spirit to walk as He would have us to. We need the Holy Spirit to overcome the sin that dwells in our flesh. We need the Holy Spirit to deliver us from our adversary, Satan.

Consider the message of the following parable of Christ as it relates to the Christian receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:5-13

Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?**"

Receiving the Holy Spirit is similar to becoming a partaker of the atoning work of Christ in that both require faith. We must believe what Christ said here is true. We must believe that if we ask for the Spirit that we will receive it. We must believe that "all who ask receive." If we have confidence in God's character, knowing that He is a loving heavenly Father, then we will not doubt that He will provide that which His children ask for, and which they desperately need. He will not withhold any good thing from His children, but He wants us to ask Him for these things, and He wants us to trust Him.

The Holy Spirit is sent as the Helper to the children of God. He is unlike any other helper one can imagine. This Helper will make known to us the mind of the Father. He will reveal what the Father wants us to do in every situation. He will provide the strength we need to walk in righteousness, and to fend off the attacks of the enemy. This Helper knows our weaknesses, and in every area where we are weak He is strong and will supply the strength of God on our behalf.

Romans 8:12-16

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God...

Romans 8:26-27

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

What an awesome ministry the Spirit of Christ provides to the child of God! He enables us to overcome sin. He leads us. He bears witness to us that we are God's children, and that we belong to Him. He even helps empower our prayers when we do not know how to pray.

Yahshua said that He would send the Spirit to indwell His disciples, and that the Spirit would serve as His voice within them. The Spirit would lead them as a shepherd guides the sheep.

John 10:27

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me...”

Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years before it occurred, that God would send His Spirit to man to serve as a guide in all things. This Spirit would lead us as surely as the pillar of fire and cloud led the children of Israel in the wilderness.

Isaiah 30:20-21

He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

Our victory over addictive desires, and the passions that reside in our flesh, is only guaranteed as we go where God would have us to go, and do what He would have us to be doing. As we look further at the example of the Israelites in the wilderness we can see that they were only assured of victory when they closely followed where God told them to go. When they departed from the direction of God they had no power to resist their enemies.

The New Testament also reveals that following the Lord wherever He would lead us is vital to those who would walk as overcomers. In the book of Revelation we find the apostle John describing a vision of a group of overcoming saints standing with Christ on Mount Zion. Of these victorious believers we read the following:

Revelation 14:4-5

These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.

This is a trait of all those who would walk in victory over sin, Satan and the world. They follow Christ wherever He would lead them.



Chapter 6 - The Spirit is Life

In the first chapter of this book the statement was made, "The only real answer to the problem of addictive behavior is to restore light and life to our beings." Death, physical and spiritual, is the natural consequence of sin. Mortal man needs to receive life back into his being in order to walk in victory over sin. When we receive the divine life of God into our being we are able to walk as spiritual men, both desiring and performing the will of God.

Philippians 2:13

For it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.

[Amplified Bible]

The life of God must enter into man's being in order for man to live a life of righteousness. Apart from the life of God, all we have in these bodies is death, the principle of sin at work in us. Yahweh has made a way for men and women to receive His life inside their mortal bodies. This is through the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Yahshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The Spirit of Christ is imparted to the believer to do much more than act as a guide. Not only does He reveal those things that Yahweh wants each individual to do, but He produces the desire to do God's will, and supplies the power to do it. This is the result of the very life of God being present in us.

In the previous chapter we spoke of asking God to give us His Holy Spirit. Without this Spirit dwelling in us we have not truly changed. We may be forgiven for our sin by the shed blood of Christ, but we have no power to walk in victory over sin until the we receive the Spirit of Christ into our being. Without the Spirit we can have forgiveness of sin by faith in Christ, but our bondage still remains. That faith in Christ's atoning work and the impartation of the Spirit are two separate works, is shown in the following Scripture.

Acts 19:1-6

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Yahshua." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the

Lord Yahshua. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them...

Salvation in Christ Yahshua incorporates both of these events. By faith we believe and confess that Christ has atoned for our sin, and has restored our fellowship to the Father. This provision allows us to stand before God and appear righteous before Him, no longer separated by sin. The second part is equally as important. Christ does not merely provide forgiveness for sin, but He supplies all that is necessary to no longer walk in sin. This is accomplished as He sends forth His Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

The entire plan of salvation through Christ is pictured in the events of Israel leaving the slavery of Egypt and journeying through the wilderness to take possession of the Land of Promise. The Holy Spirit being given to the people in order to enable them to live lives pleasing to God is also foreshadowed there. This occurred at Mt. Sinai when Moses went up on the mountain to meet with God and he brought back down with him the Law inscribed by the finger of God on tablets of stone.

Like all the other symbols we have looked at thus far, this event provided only a shadow and a type of the good things to come. It was not the perfect provision Yahweh envisioned for man. Even as the blood of a lamb was deficient in that it was unable to completely remove the penalty of sin for all time, nor could it remove the consciousness of sin from a person's life, so too did the Law fall far short of accomplishing those things that Yahweh envisioned for man, and would one day bring forth. Even as Yahweh planned on that first Passover to one day send His Son as the perfect sacrifice to atone for the sin of man, so too He planned on the first Pentecost to send His Holy Spirit into the hearts of men and women to create in them the desire and the power to do His will.

Yahweh chose to give mankind many parables through which we might understand the nature of His salvation, and the particulars of His plan of redemption. These shadows were not the actual thing, nor were they intended to remain perpetually, for they would one day be replaced by that which was perfect. Even so, the covenant that God made with the Israelites in the wilderness was a temporary covenant that would remain only until it was replaced by that which was perfect.

Hebrews 8:6-13

But now [Christ] has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new covenant With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; For they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their

hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete.

Even as it is no longer necessary to sacrifice a lamb each year at Passover, for Christ has been slain now at the end of this age, one time for all sin, so too has Yahweh sent forth His Spirit to produce in us a life of righteousness, bringing an end to the Law's role in this matter. The Law was never able to make men and women righteous. The testimony of Scripture is abundantly clear concerning this. The reason it could not do so is that the Law had no capacity to produce spiritual life in the hearts of men and women. Without the life of God present within us, we cannot walk in righteousness.

Galatians 3:21

Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

With these words, the apostle Paul reveals the true deficiency found in the Law written upon tablets of stone and delivered to Moses. It was unable to impart life. This event where Moses received the Ten Commandments inscribed by the finger of God on tablets of stone, looked forward to a day when God would write His law on the hearts of men.

The fact that Yahweh wrote the first Law on tablets of stone was itself a spiritual parable. He was declaring to mankind that they were presently walking in a condition of being hard-hearted. They were hardened against doing His will, desiring rather to seek their own ways. What was really necessary in order for mankind to change, to be freed from sin and begin to live a righteous life, was for mankind to receive a new heart. Mankind needed a heart that was soft and which would respond with eagerness to Yahweh's desire for them.

Ezekiel 11:19-21

"Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says Yahweh God.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Until the day when mankind would receive the Spirit of Christ to indwell them, they would remain in their stony hearted condition. Our stony hearts could not obey the ordinances of God, always going astray. The result was broken promises and a broken covenant. The Israelites upon hearing Moses read the Law of God to them, said that it was good, and they agreed to be bound to it. However, they were never able to keep it.

This breaking of the Law was also foreshadowed at Mount Sinai. As soon as the Law had been written Moses descended the mountain to find the children of Israel worshiping before the idol of the golden calf that they had fashioned. The first of the ten commandments was a command against idolatry. Yahweh said:

Exodus 20:3-5

"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God..."

The words had barely been written on the tablets of stone before the Israelites broke the command. We see the truth of man's condition when Moses observed the sin of the people and he cast the tablets of stone to the ground and broke them to pieces. Whenever the Law of God is written on a heart of stone it will be broken. We need to receive a new heart and a new spirit within us.

The Law of Moses therefore became a minister of death to those who received it. Rather than producing in men and women the life of God with its desire and power to walk in obedience to Yahweh, the Law merely exposed their inability to keep the commands of God. The Law revealed that men were slaves to sin, and therefore death, not life, was working in them. On that first Pentecost in the wilderness, after Moses cast the tablets of stone to the ground, he called for those who had transgressed the Law by worshiping the golden calf to be slain. On that day three thousand men were killed.

In a direct contrast to this event, on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the Spirit of Christ came upon those disciples who were waiting in an upper room. Peter then went out in the power of the Spirit and preached a message to those gathered in Jerusalem and on that day three thousand men were saved. The Law was a minister of death, but the Spirit brings life. The apostle Paul describes what happened at that first Pentecost in the wilderness when the Law was given.

Romans 7:9-12

And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

The apostle Paul speaks much of the effect of the Law upon the life of one who does not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them. The Law stirs up sin, leading us to want to do the very thing that the commandment forbids. Apart from

receiving the life of Christ, no man can live a life pleasing to God. Paul further tells us:

Romans 7:5-6

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

The giving of the Law at Mount Sinai serves as a parable looking forward to that day when Yahweh would remove the stony heart of man and give them a heart of flesh. He would produce men and women whose desire was to do His will, and who had the power within them to carry it out. If you have been born again of the Spirit of Christ, then you have this Spirit dwelling in you, producing divine life in your members. If you have not received the Spirit of Christ, then you need to ask God to give you His Spirit.

When Yahshua walked upon this earth during the years of His ministry, He revealed to mankind an image of what man could be like when they received the indwelling Spirit. The Scriptures declare that Yahshua was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. This was due to the life of God in Him. Yahshua did not overcome sin by the power of the flesh, nor by willpower, nor by gaining some hidden knowledge. He overcame by the life of God present in Him.

John 6:63

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing..."

Yahshua demonstrated before the eyes of His disciples that a man who is walking in the Spirit can overcome every desire and passion of the flesh. He then told them that He was going to depart from them in order that He might send His Spirit to indwell them, even as the Spirit was in Him.

John 16:7

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

Perhaps you are beginning to understand now why the word *Helper* seems inadequate to describe all that the Spirit of Christ does for Believers. Understanding these truths is vital to a walk of victory over addiction. There are many people who go to twelve step programs in order to seek to overcome their addictive desires. But any twelve step program that does not include the truths we have been looking at here cannot set men and women free from the things that hold them captive. If a twelve step program does not point men to Christ alone as the One who has made atonement for sin, and if this same program does not direct men and women to their need to receive the indwelling Spirit of Christ, then it presents a false message of victory over addiction.

John 8:31-32

Then Yahshua said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Any program that does not include the truth of God which we have been setting forth here, cannot set men free. If a program teaches men that it is acceptable to hold to a concept of a "god of their understanding," and it declares that any god will do, it is a work of deception. There is salvation in only one name.

Acts 4:10-12

Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Yahshua Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

Only in Yahshua, Yah's Salvation, is there deliverance. Any program that does not direct people to their need to receive the life of God into their being by being born again of the Spirit of Christ, has not declared that which men and women need to hear and understand. They are doing no more than placing a fig leaf covering over mankind, while leaving them in bondage to sin. They have not touched the problem of mankind's stony heart. We must receive a new spirit and a new heart within us to begin to walk as overcomers in this life.

Receiving the Spirit is so vital to that which Yahweh desires to accomplish in the lives of His chosen people, that this matter is set forth as the true test of whether or not we are Christians.

II Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Yahshua Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test?

Christ dwells in His children by the Spirit who has been given. You may then ask, "How do I know for sure if I have received the Spirit of Christ?" The answer is that the Spirit Himself testifies to us that we are God's children.

Romans 8:15-16

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God...

There are certain branches of Christianity that teach that the proof of having received the Spirit is that one will speak in tongues, or experience some other manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. This teaching is taken from examples in Scripture of some men receiving the Spirit who had these things occur.

Acts 19:6

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

Speaking in tongues is a manifestation of the Spirit, as is prophesying, but not all men and women experience these things, nor were they ever stated by Christ or His apostles to be a test of having received the Spirit. In another place the apostle states that the indwelling Spirit does not produce these manifestations in all people.

I Corinthians 12:28-30

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

These are all rhetorical questions that the apostle is asking. The implied answer in each instance is “No!” If all men and women spoke in tongues immediately upon receiving the Spirit, then Paul could not have asked this question.

We have read that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Perhaps you are unsure of this witness, however. There are a number of reasons why you may be uncertain, even if you have received the Spirit of Christ. You may be walking in sin. Sin separates us from God, and makes it difficult to hear His voice. You may have been disturbed by false teaching, and have unrealistic expectations of what happens when Believers receive the Spirit. As mentioned before, some believe a Christian will never sin, nor even be tempted to do so. Others declare that speaking in tongues always accompanies the receiving of the Spirit.

Many ministers fall into the ditch on the opposite side of the road as they tell people that all they need to do is pray a sinner’s prayer and confess Christ and believe they have been born again of the Spirit. Such teaching is ill informed.

I have found that it is not prudent to try to convince people that they have received the Spirit, any more than it is prudent to badger a man or woman to say a sinner’s prayer. We are told that it is the Spirit that draws men to God, and it is also the Spirit that testifies to us that we are His children.

Now, don’t misunderstand me, I am not saying that I do not believe in evangelism. If that were true I would not be writing this book. As Christians we are instructed to be led of the Spirit in all of our actions and words. We must allow the Spirit to direct us to those whom He has prepared to hear the good news of

salvation in Christ. Yahshua Himself urged His disciples to use discernment in their ministry.

Matthew 7:6

“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

There are some things that a person needs to wrestle with for themselves. I have often heard the example cited of a chick emerging from an egg, or a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. At times an inexperienced person will witness this struggle, and fear for the chick or the butterfly and will attempt to help them out. But the struggle is necessary in order to acquire the strength to survive. Many have “helped” a chick out by removing the shell from around them only to watch the newly freed chick die as a result. The same is true of the butterfly.

It is good for people to manifest the effort required to obtain that which they need. Someone who truly realizes their sinful condition and the salvation offered in Christ should not need to be prodded to pray to God confessing his or her need. It should be impossible for us to hold them back. We would do better to pray for those who are manifesting a careless attitude toward their soul, asking God to impress upon them the peril of their condition.

The same is true concerning the indwelling Spirit. We are naturally compassionate toward the struggles of others, and are desirous of giving them some relief. However, it would be tragic for us to convince a person that they have received the Spirit if in actuality they have not. It is a healthy and desirous thing for each man and woman to press in themselves to achieve the assurance of both their salvation and their reception of the Spirit. This is why the Lord urged those who needed the Spirit to “ask,” “seek,” and “knock.”

The actual words the Lord used denote a continuous activity. They can be translated as “keep on seeking, keep on asking, keep on knocking,” until you have received the Spirit from the Father. In the same passage, which was cited in an earlier chapter, we read of the Lord’s parable where He spoke of a man needing some food to set before his visitor that arrived at a late hour. This man went to his neighbor and knocked on his door and asked for some bread to set before his guest. The neighbor replied that he had already gone to bed and could not get up. But the man persisted at the door and would not go away until his request had been satisfied.

These things the Lord spoke as an example for us. We are to manifest perseverance in receiving the Spirit. We are to be confident that if we do not go away, but keep on asking, that the Lord will see our unwavering determination, and He will give us what we ask for.

Just like the chick and the butterfly, it is necessary for the Christian to begin his new life in Christ with such an effort. Life in Christ is full of challenges, and many fall away when the going gets tough. Some have been hindered by well meaning saints who sought to spare them the early trials of faith. My advice to all those who are unsure of their having received the Spirit is to press into God until

you are sure. Seek the answer from Him alone. Storm the gates of heaven until you obtain an answer of peace to your question.



Chapter 7 - A New Creature

This book is written both for those who are strangers to Christ, as well as those who are Christians. I have found that many men and women who have been Christians for years have not come to an understanding of the ways of God, and even the foundational principles of Yahweh's work among mankind is little comprehended. Partly due to the many misconceptions there are regarding life in Christ, many who have long been Believers are not walking in victory over sin. This chapter seeks to explain one more critical truth that we might proceed in the following chapters to begin to address a practical daily walk that will lead to victory over every addiction and besetting sin.

Many men and women hold to the misconception that when they became a Christian they remained essentially the same, but Christ forgave their sins. Not understanding what had changed in their life, they believed they would be more pleasing to God simply because they would now try harder. Such a mindset is far from the truth.

When a man or woman receives the Holy Spirit of Christ into their being, the Holy Spirit transforms them into an entirely new type of creature than they were before. They receive a new dimension to their being that other men and women lack. In truth, there are two entirely different types of men and women walking this earth today. Some are what can be called an old creation, and some are a new creation. The apostle Paul states it this way.

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

If you are "in Christ" then you are no longer the same type of man or woman that you were formerly. A very fundamental change has occurred. This change is so radical that it is almost as if you had become another species among God's creation. The Scriptures tell us exactly what has changed in us. In the following passage the apostle Paul contrasts the first creature which is seen in Adam, to the new creature that is observed in the person of Christ. The word *Adam* means man. Therefore we see Paul referring to Christ as the second Adam, or second Man. What Paul is declaring is that there are now two distinct types of men walking this earth.

I Corinthians 15:45-49

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Let's look closely at what is stated here. The first man, Adam became a living soul. In the opening chapters of the book of Genesis we find the creation of Adam described. Yahweh reveals to us that the first man was a two-part being consisting of body and soul.

Genesis 2:7

Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The word for soul in this verse is the same Hebrew word *nephesh* that we looked at in an earlier chapter. It is apparent from this verse that at this time man consisted of only two parts. He had a body formed from the dust of the ground, and he had a soul that was formed by the breath of God. Paul states that the last Adam (Christ) was a different type of man. He is not described as a living soul, but as a life-giving spirit. So too are all those who are in Christ. In the New Testament, when the apostles describe the parts of a Christian, they speak of a three-part being.

I Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Yahshua Christ.

When a person receives the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit does an unseen work in the midst of their being. He causes a new part of their being to be birthed into existence. This is the spirit of man. It is by virtue of obtaining this spiritual part of our being that we are said to be "new creatures in Christ."

It was Yahweh's plan from the very beginning for all of mankind to become three-part beings. He declared in Genesis Chapter one, "Let us make man after our image. Let us make man in our likeness." God is also a three part being. We see these several parts in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet God's plan to make man a three-part being like Himself was largely hidden to mankind, even though the prophets of the Old Testament spoke of the day when this would happen.

Ezekiel 36:26

"Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you..."

When Yahshua walked upon this earth He was the first of this new type of man to appear. Because He was a new creature, a spiritual creature, He was able to walk in victory over sin where all other men failed. One evening a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a teacher from among the Jews, came to Yahshua. He began to tell Christ that he recognized Him as being sent of God, and he acknowledged Christ as a teacher. He came to see what Christ would teach him. What he received was totally unexpected.

John 3:3-8

Yahshua answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Yahshua answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The only type of birth which Nicodemus was familiar with was that of flesh. He understood that man came from woman through the natural birth. This is what Yahshua referred to as being "born of water." There is a water birth that immediately precedes a baby coming forth from the womb. All who are born of woman are living souls. They have a body and a soul.

Yahshua told Nicodemus that in order to become all God desired, men had to be born a second time. This second birth is a spiritual birth. It is accomplished by the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit cannot be seen by the natural senses, and therefore His work is hidden, but we can observe the results of His work in our lives. This hidden work with noticeable results is what Yahshua is referring to in the last verse quoted above. We cannot see the wind, but we can tell where it is by observing its passage through the trees and among the grass. We therefore know the wind has passed by.

Spiritual birth is like the passage of the wind. We do not observe it as we do the natural birth, but we can see that something has indeed been born that was not present before. We find that there are new desires in our being, urging us to walk in a manner pleasing to God. There is also a new power to walk in righteousness that we did not have before. We are able to see things that were formerly hidden to us, even as Yahshua declared "unless one is born again he cannot **see** the kingdom of God."

Yahweh has set many things in the creation to serve as parables of spiritual truth. As we observe them, and have our understanding opened, we are able to discern more about God's work in our life. One such parable is found in the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.

The caterpillar and butterfly are the same creature at two different stages of life. They are so vastly different, however, that they are referred to by different names. The caterpillar is like unto the first Adam. It is a creature of flesh. Its appearance even resembles a lump of flesh. It is earthbound, and it has appetites for things that grow close to the earth. This too is like the first Adam. When we are born of woman we are fleshly creatures. We have appetites for earthly things. Even as the serpent was cursed to eat dust all the days of his life, so is man, for he submitted to the serpent for obedience. The natural man's appetites are those things that satisfy the cravings of sinful flesh. Even as a caterpillar cannot leave the earth, the natural man is unable to rise above the captivity of the flesh.

A magnificent thing happens in the life of this creature we call a caterpillar. After a period of time in his fleshly state, he enters into a cocoon. This cocoon

serves as a hidden chamber where a marvelous transformation occurs. What happens is hidden from sight, but after emerging it is apparent that something of profound substance has taken place. So too do we find that the work of the Spirit in our life is largely hidden from sight. Yet when the Spirit has completed His work we will be as radically different from the men and women we were formerly as the caterpillar is distinct from the butterfly.

A butterfly truly is a new type of creature. A butterfly has wings while a caterpillar does not. Therefore a butterfly is no longer bound to the earth. It can now soar in the heavens. This speaks of the spiritual life of the Believer. It also speaks of our being able to rise above the captivity of the old Adamic nature which was captive to sin. The butterfly has appetites for different things than that of a caterpillar. Caterpillars are largely leaf eaters, while butterflies live on the nectar of flowers. This too contains a symbol. The new creature in Christ is now drawn to those things that are beautiful in the sight of God, and we feed on that which is sweet, even the word of God.

Psalms 119:103

How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The natural man has no appetite for the things of God, but the spiritual man craves that which comes from God.

I Corinthians 2:14

A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

In the cocoon a remarkable transformation occurs. The fleshly form of the caterpillar disappears, and a new creature adapted to life in the heavens arises. This is a parable of what the Father seeks to perform in the lives of men and women. The old man we were in Adam, with its fleshly appetites, its captivity to earthly things, and its sinful nature must be diminished. The new creature born of the Spirit that seeks the pleasure of God must increase.

Our growth as spiritual creatures parallels our growth as natural men. No one is born as an adult. Life begins with the implantation of a seed into the uterus of the woman. This seed begins to divide and multiply, and divide and multiply again. Over time it begins to resemble that which it will one day be. Even as the natural man must pass through these formative stages into infancy, then childhood, until it arrives at a mature man, so too must the spiritual seed pass through these stages until we come to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

As Christ is being formed in us the old man is being diminished. Even as it is impossible for both a caterpillar and a butterfly to emerge from the cocoon, it is impossible for us to take on the likeness of Christ while still being the old creation that we once were. The old must pass away, and the new must come. This process is expressed in numerous ways in the Scriptures.

Ephesians 4:20-24

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Yahshua, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Our victory over sin is assured as we allow this process of transformation to go forward. The old self is laid aside and the new self is put on. Once a person receives the Spirit of Christ this process begins, and it is as natural as a physical babe growing into an adult. Our transformation into the image of Christ is not something we have to force to happen, neither do we need to figure out how to make it come about. All we need to do is surrender to that which the Spirit is doing in us. We can, however, resist this work and cause this new creature to not develop normally as it should.

Yahshua said that of those born of woman there was none greater than John the Baptist. Yahshua testified that there existed no greater prophet than John. Perhaps the reason for this high praise was that John recognized clearly that Yahshua was the Son of God and that He was the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world. John also testified of this very key work of God where Christ must become more and more within mankind, while the old self must become less and less. John declared this truth in the following words.

John 3:30

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

This occurrence of Yahshua increasing in us, while we decrease, is the natural result of a life surrendered to the Spirit of Christ. Hear what I am saying. "This is only the natural result of those SURRENDERED to the Spirit. Many Christians continue in bondage to the flesh, and they fail to overcome addictive desires, because they RESIST the Spirit.

We will look once more in the next chapter to the parable of Israel in the wilderness to discern both how we can surrender to the Spirit, and how we resist Him.



Chapter 8 - The Bread of Heaven

There is a modern adage that states “You are what you eat.” There is much truth to this at all levels of our being. What we eat physically impacts our bodies in profound ways. There are many authors who have provided tremendous evidence that the vast majority of diseases in western culture are due to diet. What we eat either promotes health, or promotes disease.

This same principle of what we eat shaping who we are is true in the realm of man’s soul. Yahshua declared the following:

Matthew 12:34-35

“You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.”

The heart often serves as a symbolic reference to the inner man. As the men Yahshua was speaking to were not yet born of the Spirit, the heart here is a reference to their soul. Yahshua declared that whatever filled their heart would be revealed in their words and actions. Whatever these men had spent their time feeding upon during the years of their life had made a tremendous impact upon their soul. It had literally shaped their soul. If they fed on truth and righteousness, their soul would be shaped by this and the result would be seen in their words and actions. If they fed upon lies and impurity, then their soul would likewise be shaped by these things.

What we eat has a tremendous influence upon our being. This is why there is so much written about clean foods and unclean foods in the Bible. We should not think that Yahweh’s primary reason for speaking about foods was the health of man’s physical body. Christ stated that the more important matter is what we feed our souls.

Matthew 15:11

“It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”

In the previous passage of Scripture we read that what comes out of the mouth is what is in the soul of man. Whatever our soul has been feeding upon will be revealed in our words. For example, a man who spends his life in the pursuit of worldly possessions will spend much time feeding upon that which his soul craves. He may subscribe to magazines such as Fortune and Forbes, or papers such as The Wall Street Journal. He will go directly to the stock reports, when he looks at the news online, and he will seek out other people with whom he can converse about finances and investments and the economy. When this man is engaged in conversation it will be apparent what his soul has been feeding upon.

Not only is the man’s conversation affected, but so are his values and his actions. If a man has focused all his life upon making money, he will begin to view situations through this lens. When meeting a person he may consider whether

they are someone who can help him to achieve his desires of financial wealth. If they are not, he may avoid them. If they are deemed valuable to his goals, he may seek them out, often without even recognizing that his motive is selfish. When faced with a business decision, his actions will be dictated by his desire for profit. He will do whatever helps him to achieve the desire of his soul.

We could use many different examples. We could speak about men who are consumed with thoughts of sexual desire. What they look at, what they read, who they associate with, the tenor of their conversations, are all influenced by that which is driving them. They will feed their soul what it wants, and consequently their soul will be shaped by what it feeds upon. It is very difficult for a Christian man who feeds upon such food to view an attractive woman in an unselfish manner. He will not look at an attractive Christian woman as a sister in Christ who is to be protected and supported, but as an object of sexual desire. The same thing occurs when he sees an attractive non-Christian woman. Rather than having an evangelistic mindset that seeks her eternal welfare, he will see her through the carnal desires of his soul.

We see then that we are shaped by what we choose to feed upon. As this is true concerning man's body and soul, it is also true regarding the spirit of a man or woman. We can learn much about the food that nourishes and strengthens the spirit of a man by looking once more at the parable of the Israelites in the wilderness.

While the Israelites were in Egypt they ate what the Egyptians ate. I will mention once again that Egypt stands as a symbol of the world. While they were enslaved to Egypt, the Israelites ate a worldly diet. Their only source of food was Egypt, and because they were slaves, the diet of Egypt was just fine with them.

I trust you can see the Scriptural parallels in this. While we were slaves to sin in the world, we fed upon a diet that was worldly. Because those in the world are enslaved to lusts of all types, their diet is that which satisfies their lusts. That which is broadcast on television, at the movies, and provided through magazines, radio and the Internet is what satisfies the soul of sinful men and women. The more they feed upon this food, the more they are shaped by it, and their desires grow even greater.

A thing observed about our appetites, both physical and soulish, is that they are not satisfied long with the same food. They want something more sensual, and more stimulating.

When I was a child growing up we did not eat very spicy food. When I was twenty I moved across country and lived with an aunt and uncle for a period of time. One of their favorite meals was tacos, and they had them regularly. The first time I ate tacos with them I was urged to try some hot sauce on my taco. I put one or two drops of Tabasco Sauce on my taco and my mouth felt like it was on fire. I liked the taste and sensation, however, and I kept putting Tabasco Sauce on my tacos. I found that very quickly my body adjusted to this and soon I was splashing lots of hot sauce on my tacos.

This same phenomena is seen in many types of food, and it is true regarding that which we feed our soul as well. Most men who start out being enticed by an appetite for sexual stimulation are at first satisfied to look at pictures of women wearing sensual clothing. As time goes by they want to see more skin and begin to

look at women in bikinis. It would be hard to estimate how many teenage boys are enticed into a life of lust as they are exposed to the annual swimsuit issue of Sport's Illustrated. This is one of Satan's most successful traps as he takes young men who are enthused about sports and ensnares them in a life of sexual lust.

It does not take long, however, until women in bikinis do not offer enough stimulation to satisfy the soul. Softcore pornography is the next step, and then hardcore pornography. Should a man be taken completely captive by the desires that he has been feeding, these desires will become a raging monster inside and lead to a life of adultery, fornication, or worse. Sexual predators do not become what they are overnight. Their soul is shaped over time by that which it feeds upon.

Those who struggle with drug addiction experience this same progression. I have listened to many men who stated that they first engaged in underage drinking, perhaps having some beer with friends. This then leads to a search for greater stimulation. Liquor or marijuana is often the next step, and then cocaine, and other drugs with a more powerful effect upon the body. The drive to satisfy the cravings for these drugs grows more intense over time, until a person finds themselves stealing in order to acquire that for which their body is now clamoring.

This principle of being transformed by that which we feed upon, is not all negative, however. We can feed our souls on positive and healthy foods that shape us in very beneficial ways. We can also feed the spirit of a man, and find that we are increasing in conformity to the Son of God.

As the children of Israel prepared to depart Egypt they observed the very first Passover Festival. As part of this event they were instructed to remove all leaven (yeast) from their houses. Leaven is an ingredient added to many breads and baked goods that causes the batter, or dough, to rise. Throughout the Scripture bread is a symbol for man's flesh. Leaven is also a symbol for sin.

The apostle Paul said "In my flesh dwells no good thing... Sin dwells in my flesh." Sin is that which causes the flesh of man to rise up. The Scriptures tell us that in Christ there is no sin. He was the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. He was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. Just before Christ was crucified He partook of the Passover meal with His disciples. A part of the Passover meal was the serving of unleavened bread. As Yahshua took up the bread, He said, "This is My body broken for you. Take and eat in remembrance of Me." There was no leaven in this bread, for it was a symbol of the Son of God Who is without sin.

Just prior to the Israelites leaving Egypt they removed the leaven from their homes, and they kneaded dough without leaven which they took with them as they left Egypt. This is symbolic of a change of diet. They were to leave behind the diet of Egypt, and begin to eat that which was cleansed and purified. As the Israelites were going forth into the wilderness, they would need to continue to eat, and God wanted them to continue to eat that which would shape them into an image of godliness. He did not want to feed their flesh. He wanted them to become like He is, holy and righteous.

The Israelites could not carry enough food to sustain them in the wilderness, so the Father did a remarkable thing. He gave them the bread of heaven.

In the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground. When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which Yahweh has given you to eat... The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey.

Yahshua testified that this bread from heaven was given to serve as a type and symbol of Himself.

John 6:32-35

Yahshua then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Yahshua said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

We see then that both the unleavened bread of Passover, and the manna in the wilderness, serve as images of Christ. Interestingly, one of the most common titles the church uses for Yahshua is the word "Lord." This word is derived from an old English word that meant "loaf ward." The loaf ward was the steward, or master of the house, whose duties included providing bread for the servants. This is an appropriate title for Christ, for He provides bread for His household to eat, and this bread is His own body.

John 6:53-58

So Yahshua said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

Yahshua was using symbolic speech when He uttered these words. He was speaking of His disciples feeding upon the life that was in Him. This life is imparted to the Christian by the Spirit of Christ that comes to indwell them. We learn some important lessons that have great bearing upon the issue of overcoming addiction as we examine the account of the Israelites and their response to the manna Yahweh provided for them.

Numbers 11:4-6

The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

God provides us with a perfect food. It has everything necessary in it to promote life and spiritual health. As Yahshua testified, those who eat the bread He gives them "will live forever." What we have been testifying throughout this book is that divine life is the answer to the problem of sin. As we receive the life of Christ into our beings we are filled with the desire to please God, and the power to accomplish these desires. When we eat the Bread of Heaven we become filled with the fulness of Christ. He ever lived to do the will of the Father, and so will we.

We understand through the parable of the manna that this receiving of life is obtained as we feed on that which Yahweh has provided for us. The food that God provides for the Christian to eat is designed to increase Christ in us. However, this bread from heaven does not appeal to the flesh. The rabble in Israel provide a type of those who are called out of the world by God, but who are not satisfied with His will for them. They still crave evil things, and are not willing to lay aside their former appetites. They begin to complain about the things God provides for them to feed upon. Rebellious men and women look at God's provision and say, "Who will give us flesh to eat? There is nothing to look at except this manna!"

When a child of God is born spiritually, they receive a new spirit within them that desires to do the will of the Father, yet they still are clothed in sinful flesh. The flesh will always desire that which satisfies the flesh. It will continue to crave sinful things. God has revealed through the history of Israel that when He calls us out of the world we are to immediately change our diet. We are to cease feeding our flesh, and begin to feed our spirit. Only in this way will we find the statement fulfilled, "I must decrease, but Christ must increase."

Many Christians have been called out of the world by God, yet after many years they are still fleshly creatures, bound to the appetites of the flesh. The reason is that they rejected God's provision of food for them, and have yearned to eat those things they once fed upon while in the world. Like the Israelites they cry out, "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic."

It has been shown through numerous surveys by a number of companies that there is as much sin in the church today, as there is in society outside of the church. The reason is that they are both feeding upon the same diet. They watch the same television shows, go to the same movies, read the same magazines, listen to the same music, and pursue the same pleasures. It does not matter if the Christian has been called out of the world by God, if they continue to feed on the same worldly offerings then they will not find Christ increasing, and self decreasing. Victory over the flesh will elude them.

Because the Israelites cried out to God for flesh to eat, despising the manna, He told them He would give them what they wanted.

"Say to the people, "Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat **flesh**; for you have wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying, "Oh that someone would give us **flesh** to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt." Therefore Yahweh will give you **flesh** and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected Yahweh who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"""

The church is walking in a mirror image of the path that the Israelites walked. They have despised Yahweh's provision and have demanded that which will satisfy their flesh. Yahweh has therefore given them their desire. He has given them ministers who will tell them the things their flesh wants to hear. He has granted them ministers who proclaim a message of worldly prosperity, and comfort and worldly success. Most Christians remain fleshly and are persuaded that God is pleased with them. Professing Christians fill churches the size of football stadiums to listen to these men who answer the cry of their heart, "Who will give us flesh to eat?"

Churches today shy away from telling people that they need to be cleansed from all the evil of the world. Ministers know that most people do not wish to hear such a message, so they say nothing to their members concerning removing leaven from their lives and leaving the ways of the world behind. Instead, the new Christian is assured that they can remain as they are. They need not change their appearance, their pursuit of worldly entertainment, or their pleasure focused lives. Many churches have come to resemble entertainment centers, offering to Christians everything that they loved in the world, from rock concerts to cruises. If these ministers understood the parable of Israel's transgression in this matter, they would fear God's judgment upon what they are doing.

Numbers 11:31-33

Now there went forth a wind from Yahweh and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground. The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten omers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. While the flesh was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of Yahweh was kindled against the people, and Yahweh struck the people with a very severe plague.

Whether you are a brand new Christian, or have been one for many years, you will find that your victory over sin is contingent upon your accepting the food that Yahshua has provided for His disciples to feed upon. If you continue feeding upon fleshly things, you will remain in bondage to sin. If you feed upon Christ, you will find yourself becoming more like Him. You will have more power over sin, and the flesh's power will diminish.

How then do we feed upon the Bread of Heaven? The answer is found as we look at a few Scriptures that will open our understanding. In the Bible the word of God is compared to food. Christ is called the Word of God, and He is also the Bread of Heaven, so we can see that Christ is food, and divinely breathed words are spiritual food. We see this further in the following verse:

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart...

There are a great number of Scriptures that use the imagery of words being likened unto food that a man eats. Following is another.

Hebrews 13:9-10

Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

In these verses the apostle Paul compares teachings to foods. He is declaring that many are carried away with teachings that do not profit them, the result being that their hearts (inner man) are not strengthened. As mentioned already, there are many such foods being served up to Christians today. These foods appeal to the flesh, but do nothing to build up the inner man.

The last phrase recorded above is also filled with meaning. "Those who serve the tabernacle" refers to those who are focused on the flesh of man. The body is merely a tabernacle in which the Spirit of God is to dwell with the spirit of man. There are those whose focus is upon fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and they cannot eat from the same altar from which the overcomers in Christ eat. The altar of God provides food for the spirit.

As we understand these things we are able to discern that it is very important that the Christian who wishes to decrease, that the life of Christ in them might increase, must feed upon the word of God. In one sense this word is the Bible. There are many admonitions for the Believer to study the word of God; To meditate upon it; To hide the word in their heart. It would hardly seem possible to overestimate the value of this, particularly in a society where Christians rarely read the word of God today.

As we stare intently at the glory of Christ revealed in the word of God we will find ourselves being transformed into His image. There is a wonderful example of this occurrence foreshadowed in the Old Testament. In the Tabernacle of Moses there was a table set up in the Holy Place that was called the Table of Showbread. On it were placed twelve loaves of fresh bread that were replaced weekly. This bread was called in the Hebrew *paniym*, which is translated "The Bread of faces." This bread was considered holy, and only those of the tribe of Levi could eat it.

The tribe of Levi was chosen to be the priestly tribe of Israel because they stood apart, and did not participate in the idolatry of Israel, when Aaron made a golden calf for them to worship. What is pictured in the bread of faces is the food

that those who keep themselves set apart unto God may eat. We read later in Scripture that David took some of this holy bread and ate it, even though he was not from the tribe of Levi. Yet God allowed this for David was a man after God's heart.

Feeding on the word of God, and beholding the face of God, are therefore intertwined. The Christian begins to take on the glory of the Lord as He feeds on the word and beholds the presence of Christ. Conversely, if we spend our time pursuing the things of the world, and setting impurity before our faces, we will take on the image of that which occupies our minds. The apostle Paul wrote:

II Corinthians 3:18

But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

[Darby Bible]

It is not just by reading the Bible that we are transformed. We are also transformed as we commune with Christ through the indwelling Spirit. We are called to be temples of the Spirit of Christ, and our bodies are to serve as a house of prayer. In these bodies we are to abide with Christ, dwelling with Him in fellowship and communion. This is not as mysterious as it may sound. It is simply an acknowledgment that we dwell in the body God has given to us, and if we have received the Spirit of Christ, then He dwells along with us.

How can two dwell together in the same house and not enjoy the presence of one another? Yahshua said, "My sheep hear My voice." When the Spirit comes to dwell in a man or woman, He comes to commune with us. The word *commune* is the root of the word *communicate*. To commune with someone we must keep open the lines of communication. Christ speaks to us through the written word of God. He also does so by the presence of the Spirit within us. The Spirit was given to be Christ's communicator.

John 16:13-15

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you."

I find myself speaking to Christ all throughout the day. Sometimes I get down on my knees and pray. At other times I find myself speaking to Him as I am going about my daily tasks. Our lives are to be filled with such communication, and please note that the word *communication* begins with the prefix "co," which infers two parties are both speaking and listening.

The food that Yahshua gives to His children does not appeal to the flesh of man. If given a choice to watch an hour of television, or spend an hour in reading the Bible and prayer, those who are fleshly are inevitably drawn to the former

activity while despising the latter. However, if a person has truly been born again of the Spirit they will find that there is something deep inside them that is drawn to these latter pursuits, and which finds them highly satisfying. Even so, the child of God must rule over the desires and passions of the flesh. They must wrest control of their body away from the flesh, and allow the spirit man to rule. The apostle Paul put it this way:

Galatians 5:16-17, 24-25

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another... Now those who belong to Christ Yahshua have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

You and I will only “LIVE” as we are surrendered to the Spirit of Christ. As this chapter has indicated, there are very practical things to be done to promote this spiritual life. We must rule over our appetites. We must choose to eat from Yahweh’s table, and ONLY from His table. In this way we will be assured that the old man who is enslaved to sin is diminishing, and the new creature in Christ is increasing. You are what you eat, so feed upon Christ!



Chapter 9 - He has Promised Us the Victory

Everything we have looked at thus far in this book is a necessary part of overcoming addiction. There is nothing we have addressed that can be skipped over. Let us review what we have observed to this point.

- All men are born under the dominion of sin, and by ourselves we will never be free.
- Sin has caused a separation between God and man, and this separation results in darkness and death entering our being.
- Sin cannot simply be forgiven, it must be atoned for, and this atonement is only accomplished by the shedding of blood.
- The Son of God came to offer Himself as Yahweh's Passover Lamb. By His death, and through His shed blood, our sins are forgiven and the breach between God and man is repaired.
- Salvation is two parts. It includes the forgiveness of sin, as well as the impartation of divine life into our being through the Holy Spirit. As we receive the life of Christ into our being, we are empowered to live a life of victory over all sin.
- We are Christians if we have been born again of the Spirit of Christ. This Spirit then begins to lead us in all things. We must follow the Spirit wherever He leads, as well as wait upon Him when He tarries, or we will find ourselves separated from the presence of God once more.
- To grow as spiritual creatures into the image of Christ, we must feed upon that which God sends us. The Scriptures, and the indwelling Spirit, serve to reveal Christ to us. As we behold Him we are transformed into His image.

As we have seen, the history of Israel coming out of bondage to slavery in Egypt, their wilderness journeys, and their conquest of the land of Canaan are all given as "types of us." These things were written for our instruction, and we can find the way to overcoming every addictive desire, and achieve victory over every sin as we combine understanding with faith and obedience.

The account of this portion of Israel's history reveals both the causes for Christians failing today, as well as the way to attain victory. Israel's call to take possession of the land of Canaan serves as a parable of the Christian taking possession of the land of their flesh. Consider the following parallels between Israel's accomplishments and the Christian's calling.

Israel	Christians
Leader - Joshua (Hebrew Yahshua)	Leader - Yahshua
Sought to establish God's Kingdom	Sought to establish Kingdom of God
Canaan filled with sin	Our bodies filled with sin
Began conquest at Jordan	Christ began ministry at Jordan
Commanded to conquer all enemies	Commanded to rule over all sin in the flesh
Led by the Spirit in all battles	Led by the Spirit in all battles
No enemy could stand before Joshua	No sin can stand before Yahshua who indwells the believer

Many more parallels could be demonstrated, but the point we are making is that we can discern how to overcome addiction, and everything that stands in opposition to the Kingdom of God, as we observe the history of Israel and understand the parables the Father has given to us. We can also discern the reasons why some men and women never attain victory over the flesh, for in Israel we see an entire generation, save two men, who fell short of Yahweh's desire for them.

The pattern that God gives to us in the Scriptures is first we see a natural example, then we arrive at the spiritual fulfillment. The Old Testament is filled with the natural history of men and women, peoples and nations. They serve as types and shadows of that which we find fulfilled in the New Testament. Even as Joshua led the children of Israel into the land of promise to establish a kingdom upon the earth, so too is Yahshua at work to establish the Kingdom of God. Yet the Kingdom Yahshua is focused upon is not a kingdom that is external to man, but one that is internal. It is a spiritual dominion where God will rule over every part of our being.

Luke 17:20-21

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

Christ plainly declared that He was not seeking to establish an earthly kingdom. He sought no nation, no piece of earthly real estate. His kingdom is in the hearts of men, women and children.

John 18:36-37

Yahshua answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Yahshua answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Every kingdom has a king. The king can only be said to truly be ruling over his kingdom if everything in the kingdom has been brought under subjection to his rule. Since the kingdom of Christ is within mankind, all who would be a part of this kingdom must bring everything within them under the rule of the Son of God. Yahshua made this very plain in the following words.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."

Christ's words are quite clear. We cannot enter into the Kingdom of God by a mere profession of faith. Words alone are insufficient. We must do the will of God in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He only rules those who are submitting themselves to Him for obedience. Anyone who claims allegiance to God, but fails to do His will, has no part in His kingdom.

Luke 6:46-47

"And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Christ's question here reveals how easily men and women are deceived. Many do not do the will of Christ, but they call Him 'Lord.' Are they not deceived when they do so? Yet Christ is not deceived. He knows those who are His.

Even as much of the Old Testament is focused upon the natural nation of Israel as a type of the Kingdom of God, so is the New Testament focused upon the establishment of a kingdom. One day every knee will bow before Christ, and every tongue confess Him as Lord, but there will be no reward for those who resist His kingdom in this present age. It is only now that we can come and freely offer ourselves to Him for obedience and attain a reward.

Many battles must be fought, and hardships endured, in order to establish the Kingdom of God in these pieces of earth which we occupy. Our Lord is not unjust that He would not reward those who fight valiantly for His kingdom. The magnificent part of this whole matter is that Yahshua has so taken up the side of those who would follow Him into battle, that all who obey Him will come forth as victors. There is no possibility that we will be unable to conquer any foe. There is no chance that those who obey Christ will not be able to completely subdue every enemy in the land of their flesh. He has promised us the victory!

We see this promise of victory over every sinful passion and desire that resides in our flesh foreshadowed in Yahweh's words to Joshua as he prepared to embark on the conquest of the land of Canaan.

Joshua 1:1-5

Yahweh spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life."

In the same way, Yahshua, the Son of God, has promised us the victory over every sin. Yahweh is with us, even as He was with Joshua and those who entered the land of Canaan with him.

Romans 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Romans 8:37

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

We are not only promised to conquer, but to overwhelmingly conquer. How does one overwhelmingly conquer an enemy? They do so by being so superior in power and wisdom that the enemy has no chance of defeating them. This is the situation of the Christian.

I John 4:4

Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

Consider the message of the following verses of Scripture which the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth.

Romans 8:10-11

If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Yahshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

When we come to Christ our bodies are very much like the land of Canaan. God waited to dispossess the Canaanites until their sin had reached its fulness. When all the inhabitants of the land were completely given over to sin, then He said it was time for Israel to go in and conquer the land.

In the same way, the land of our flesh has fallen completely under the influence of sin. The result of sin is death, therefore God declares that "the body is dead because of sin." Yet the promise is given to those who have been joined with Christ through baptism, that even as He arose from the dead, so too will they. Our mortal bodies will be raised to life through the power of Christ.

How much of a resurrection is promised? Will we only be able to bring a portion of our being into subjection to the rule of God the Father? Will we be freed of some sins, while remaining captive to others? No! God has promised us a complete victory. This is not some promise that will only be attained when we leave this sinful flesh and ascend into heaven. This is a promise given to all of God's children now.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

How much of Christ was raised from the dead? Did any part of His body remain behind in the tomb? Of course not. So we too are promised that we might walk in a similar newness of life. The Scriptures declare that even as we were once ruled over by sin, even more so will divine life now reign in our members through Yahshua the Christ.

Romans 5:17

For if by the transgression of the one (speaking of Adam's sin), 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, Yahshua Christ.

It is vitally important that we believe the testimony of Scripture in this matter. We must believe that because God is for us, no enemy in the land of our flesh can stand against us. If we do not believe this to be true, we will not be able to conquer every addiction. Unbelief will prevent us from bringing all things inside our beings into captivity to the rule of Christ. We see this fact proven clearly through the failure of the Israelites.

Do you think there is any enemy in the land of your flesh that God cannot conquer? Do you think there is any sin He will not give you victory over if you follow Him? Our confession reveals what is in our hearts. I have heard many men and women confess that some addictive desire, or some stronghold of the flesh, such as anger or lust or fear, was too great. They had no hope of being able to overcome these things, for they had experienced many defeats against these foes in the past.

If a person is not a partaker of the Spirit of Christ, then they are right to doubt that they will achieve victory. But a Christian should never anticipate defeat. Yahshua has already defeated every enemy. He was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. He now wants to lead us forth into battle with these same enemies as He demonstrates to us His power in laying all our foes beneath our feet. After Christ has brought us to victory over every enemy within, He will then lead us to victory over every enemy without. He will even place Satan under our feet.

Romans 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Satan's dominion over the children of God has been broken. Christ has set us free. We observe this freedom now as we go forth to conquer every enemy in the land of our flesh. Yet Satan can still afflict the saint through outward persecution. Many have been martyred, beginning with Stephen in the book of Acts. Many more have been persecuted in various ways. Yet a day is soon coming when Satan will lose even this power. He will be crushed, all his power destroyed, as he is placed under the feet of this saints of God.

There are certain Scriptures that I learned when I was younger that have been precious to me over the years as they testify to the truth of our victory being assured. God has promised that we will never be overmatched by any sin or temptation.

I Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

What an awesome promise is revealed in these words! God is faithful! He will never allow us to be subjected to a temptation that is greater than our ability to resist. He will ALWAYS provide a victorious way through the trial. This is again affirmed by the apostle Peter.

II Peter 2:7-9

If He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation.

One of the writers of the New Testament was Jude, whose name in Hebrew is Judah. Judah means praise. His small epistle is filled with the high praises of God. It ends with these magnificent words.

Jude 24-25

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

He is able to keep us from falling. He has provided everything necessary for us to conquer the land of our flesh. He has destroyed sin's dominion. He has purchased for us the victory. If you doubt, then you are looking too much at yourself and your own weakness. Faith arises as we look to the victorious Christ who has sent His Spirit to indwell us. Read the following words spoken to the Israelites and consider what they are signifying for the Christian.

Deuteronomy 20:1-4

“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for Yahweh your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. Now it shall come about that when you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. And he shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, for Yahweh your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.’”

There was a time when I was struggling against the tyranny of sexual lust and an addiction to pornography, and I had lost hope that I would ever defeat this enemy that continually brought me shame. Its strength was greater than my own, and the Lord allowed me to realize this was so. The Lord did not bring me to this realization that I might be cast down and resigned to defeat. He wanted me to begin to reckon according to His mighty power that was at work in me. I had formerly only reckoned on my puny strength, and I recognized my inability to cast down this enemy on my own. But where I am weak, He is strong. In Christ all enemies are overmatched, and none can stand against us.

It is necessary that we begin to place a greater weight upon the testimony of God than we place upon our past experiences. It is by faith that every enemy is cast down. As we consider that Yahweh is on our side, and He will fight for us, then we need not be afraid of any enemy. This same testimony is found in the New Testament.

Romans 8:31-32

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

II Peter 1:3-4

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

(from New International Version)

As we combine these words of the apostles Paul and Peter, we can arrive at the following true and magnificent statement:

“God will freely give us all things necessary for life and godliness in order that we might participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

What an awesome thought! This should be the foundation for all of our reckoning when we enter into battle with some stronghold of the flesh. We should

never fear that our addiction is greater than our ability in Christ to overcome. He has promised us the victory, and as we believe and obey we will place every enemy under our feet.



Chapter 10 - Faith Seals the Victory

The history of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan is well known to most Christians, as it comprises a major portion of the books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible. Yahweh promised the Israelites that He would lead them forth to a land flowing with milk and honey which He would give to them and to their children as a possession. He told them they would need to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, but He would be with them and He would fight for them.

Those familiar with the history of Israel know that the generation which came out of Egypt failed to enter into their possession. All those above the age of twenty who came out of Egypt died in the wilderness, except for Caleb and Joshua. This generation spent forty years wandering around in wilderness places, until their generation had passed away. The reason for their inability to enter the land of Canaan and establish the kingdom of God was unbelief.

It is ever God's design that those who are called out of the world as His children should proceed quickly to begin a conquest of the land of their flesh. Many Christians, however, mirror the historical account of Israel. Even after it has been many years since God first called them, they have made no progress in subduing the land of their flesh. A great number of Christians spend their entire lives wandering in a barren wilderness where there is no fruit from their lives that comes forth for the glory of God. They are still ruled by the sin in their flesh, and the kingdom of God has not been established in them in righteousness and peace.

The reasons for Christians failing to take possession of the land of their flesh are the same today as they were for the Israelites 3,500 years ago. Chapter eight focused upon the need to lay aside the diet of the world and begin feeding on the Bread of Heaven. It is only as we do this that our faith is built up and our spiritual strength is increased. We know the Israelites despised the food God sent them and demanded flesh to eat. Therefore they were unprepared when it was time to go forth in battle and take possession of the land. In the same way, if we are not feeding on the Word of God we will be ill equipped for the spiritual warfare to which we have been called.

It was only a relatively short time that God would have kept the Israelites in the wilderness. Yahweh would have led the Israelites very quickly from the receiving of the Law into the conquest of the land of Canaan, but their disobedience kept delaying things. God would also lead us very quickly from receiving His Spirit to a conquest of the sin that dwells in our flesh. Yet, like Israel, we can delay our victory over all the enemies that reside in our flesh. By despising the Bread of Heaven, through idolatry (loving the world and the things in it), and by rebellion against God's authority, we can delay that which God would have us to perform quickly.

When the Israelites finally arrived at the border of the land of promise, Moses sent forth twelve men to spy out the land and bring back a report. These twelve men spent forty days walking across the length and breadth of Canaan. They saw an exceptionally good land. It was fertile and well watered. There were vineyards and farms and orchards already planted. It was something to be greatly desired, and it held forth the promise of a magnificent dream come true for those

who had known nothing but slavery all of their lives. To have their own land as a possession, and to serve God in freedom while enjoying many blessings, was more than any of them could have anticipated while living in bondage to Egypt.

The spies also saw large numbers of people dwelling in the land. There were strongholds and walled cities which would have to be conquered. And there were giants in the land. It is easy to judge the people of Israel as lacking courage, but we must remember they serve as “types of us.” Most Christians do no better when Christ calls them to go forth and take possession of the land of their flesh.

We too have giants in the land. Our bodies are inhabited by many enemies, and there are strongholds and walled cities that must be conquered. What are the enemies you have identified in the land of your flesh? As this book is addressed to those struggling with addiction, I would suspect that many have identified alcoholism, drug addiction and pornography as giants they must fight. When you look at these giants, how do you see yourself in comparison?

Yahweh desires to completely change your life. He desires to take a land that is polluted by sin, and filled with desires and passions that are at enmity with Him, and establish peace and righteousness. He wants to take your spiritually barren life and transform it into a fruitful garden. He has given His children His Spirit that they might find the fruit of the Spirit flourishing within them.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

This fruit is absent from our lives when we come to Christ. If we have been ruled by sin and addictive desires, we cannot say that we have goodness, or self-control. If we have walked in selfishness, we have not manifested love, for the Scriptures state “love does not seek its own.” If we have been depressed or anxious even to the point of taking prescription drugs to seek to counteract these enemies in the land, then we have not had peace. If we have wanted our fleshly desires satisfied immediately, even to the point that some would resort to theft, then we have manifested neither patience nor kindness. None of the fruit of the Spirit are present in our lives when our bodies are ruled by these enemies. Therefore the enemies must all be conquered.

Can you envision your life becoming a land of abundant fruitfulness that is pleasing to God? Can you envision your entire being filled with the presence of Christ and experiencing love, joy, peace and all the other fruit of the Spirit? Can you imagine a life where you are no longer looking over your shoulder waiting for judgment to catch up with you, but instead your only expectation is the Father’s praise as He looks at your life? This is Yahweh’s desire for you, and He has promised to make it a reality if you will trust Him and obey.

As great and precious as the promises are, many fall short of possessing them due to the warfare that is required. They are daunted by the enemies in the land. They manifest either a lack of desire for the things God has promised, or a lack of confidence in Yahweh’s power and good intentions. Listen to the report of the men who spied out the land of Canaan.

Numbers 13:25-33

When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak (the Anakim were giants) there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan." Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

As you consider the giants in the land of your flesh, do you see yourself as a grasshopper in comparison? If we were left to our own strength and resources this is truly how we should see ourselves. But, as we read in the last chapter, we are not left to face the enemies in the land of our flesh by our own strength and wisdom. God has said He will fight for us, and that together we will *overwhelmingly* conquer all enemies.

Caleb and Joshua were the only two men who went in to spy out the land who calculated their ability to take possession of it by reckoning on God being with them. We read further the words of Joshua and Caleb.

Numbers 14:6-9

Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If Yahweh is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us -- a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against Yahweh; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and Yahweh is with us; do not fear them."

This should be the mindset of all those who have been called out of the world by God. If you have received the Spirit of Christ to indwell you, then you should do all your reckoning with the knowledge that you are not alone. God is both present with you, and He will fight for you. The protection has been removed from all of

our enemies. Addiction cannot stand before the child of God who will believe and obey. It has no more power against God than a house of cards has to resist the force of a hurricane. Addictions of all kinds are so overmatched when compared to the power of God working in us, as to make their chances of victory laughable. The God who created the Universe with a word, and Who holds all things together by the strength of His might, is not daunted by the enemies that dwell in our flesh.

It is not a lack of available power that will keep any man or woman from conquering the enemies in the land. It is unbelief. Consider the words of those who did not share the faith manifested by Joshua and Caleb.

Numbers 14:1-4

Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is Yahweh bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

Fear and unbelief are perpetually the enemies of faith. Fear and unbelief will cause us to despise faith even as the sons of Israel despised Moses and Aaron. When Joshua and Caleb persisted in telling the people that they were well able to go in and take possession of the land, the people responded by speaking of stoning them to death.

There are many Christians today who view the battles God would lead them forth into, and they are met with the fear and unbelief of their flesh. They begin to look for other leaders who will not make them face their enemies. It does not matter if their only options are to die in the wilderness, or to return to the bondage of Egypt. They prefer these things to facing the giants in the land of their flesh.

Yahweh is greatly displeased whenever He encounters such a heart of rebellion, fear and unbelief in one of His children. He knows there is no reason for a person to give themselves over to these things. He has demonstrated in the most profound way that He is for them. Some have criticized the Israelites for acting in such a cravenly manner when they had observed the power of God in bringing them forth from Egypt. These Christians believe they would never have acted in a similar fashion. The Israelites witnessed the plagues that decimated the most powerful nation on earth, so they should not have feared the inhabitants of Canaan. God had proven to Israel that He was for them, and He would fight for them. It was not by the Israelites' power that the armies of Egypt were destroyed in the Red Sea. God had vanquished the enemy they dreaded.

The Christian should consider that God has done even more for us. We need look no further than the cross of Christ to see how God has taken up our part. The authority of Satan over mankind was destroyed at the cross. God was willing to go to the most extreme lengths in order to redeem us from the power of sin. He sent forth His Son, Who was more precious to Him than anything else, and He asked

Him to lay down His life that we might be delivered. By His mighty power God then raised Christ from the dead, and He has sent forth His Spirit that we might become partakers of this same resurrection life. We have the dynamis (the dynamite power) of God within our beings.

How then can we doubt when we are faced with the giants in the land? Do we even begin to suppose that God will ask us to fight our battles on our own? Has He not sufficiently proven that He will take up our part in the most extreme way? Even as God assured Israel that He would give them the land of Canaan, and that He would give them victory over all those who dwelt there, He has given the same promise to you and I.

Because there is no reason for us to doubt Yahweh's good intentions for us, He is justifiably angry when we begin to accuse Him of a lack of caring. The Israelites said, "Why is Yahweh bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder." There was no foundation upon which to make such an accusation against God. The complaint was totally unjust, having its origins not in the truth, but in fear and unbelief which the people were not ruling over.

Many Christians do not realize what a tyrant fear is. They have not understood how much evil is brought about by allowing fear to remain in our lives, unchecked and unconquered. Fear will lead men and women to make baseless accusations against God, and it will persuade them to choose slavery to sin over a life of righteousness. This is why God has declared that above all others, the fearful will be the first to be cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8

But the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

You may say, "I don't believe I am afraid of my addiction. I do not understand what fear has to do with it." If you see your addiction as greater than your ability through Christ to overcome, then you are not walking in faith, but fear and unbelief. How common is it to hear a comment similar to the following, "I am afraid that I am not able to conquer this area of my life"? I have heard such confessions many times.

The Scriptures reveal that we will never be able to take possession of the land of our flesh, we will never be able to drive out the enemies, apart from faith. We must believe what God has said is true. We must put a greater weight upon the promises of God than the report of our eyes and ears. Only those who are feeding upon the Bread of Heaven will find this faith arising in their hearts.

Yahweh was so displeased with the response of the Israelites that He told them that they would receive exactly what they asked for. They had said, "It would be better that we had died in this wilderness," so that is exactly the judgment He brought upon them. Their own words sealed their fate.

In the next chapter we will look at the importance of guarding our lips against speaking careless words of unbelief. I want to end this chapter on a positive note, however. Rather than taking Israel's history as a negative lesson, I

would like us to see the positive things that were revealed in the lives of Joshua and Caleb.

Although most of those alive who came out of Egypt failed to obtain the promise, ***everyone who believed obtained the promise***. This should serve to encourage those who see so much defeat everywhere around them. What the story of Joshua and Caleb reveals is that even if all who are around you are falling short of victory due to evil desires, rebellion, fear and unbelief, those who will follow the Lord with a whole heart will ALWAYS obtain the promises of God. Yahweh will not disqualify you due to the unbelief of those around you. All those who have faith to take possession of the land of their flesh, will do so.

Joshua and Caleb witnessed every male over the age of twenty from their generation die in the wilderness. They observed that none of these entered the land to drive out the inhabitants that dwelt there. But they held fast to the promises of God, and they went into the land and have received the testimony that among all those of their generation, they were pleasing to the Father. This can be God's testimony concerning your life as well.



Chapter 11 - Overcoming by Our Words

In the previous chapter we read of Israel's great failure to trust Yahweh when He instructed them to go forth to take possession of the land of Canaan. What I want to emphasize in this chapter is a matter of great importance that the Lord has impressed upon me over the years. What the Spirit has declared to me could be summarized in this way:

*It is unavoidable that doubts and unbelief will attack our minds. We will all be faced with trials and beset by fear. There are times when thoughts of unbelief, fear and even rebellion will be present in our hearts, **but the transgression only arises as we give voice to these thoughts.***

Yahweh would not have prohibited the Israelites from entering the land of Canaan simply because they were troubled in their hearts by fear and unbelief. It was when they allowed these thoughts to manifest in the form of speech that was offensive to God that the transgression came in, and they incurred judgment.

Let me explain this matter more fully. The mind is one of the main battlegrounds where our warfare is waged against sin. It is therefore unavoidable that there will at times be many unworthy thoughts present in our mind. Satan also has access to our minds, and he can suggest things to us that either stir up sin in our members, or that are contrary to what God would have us to do and think. It is not sin for us to have these thoughts present in our mind. It is only sin when we entertain these thoughts when we should be casting them down. This sin is further compounded when we allow these thoughts to manifest in words and actions.

II Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...

It was not sin for the Israelites to find that there were thoughts of fear and unbelief in their minds. It became sin when they did not rule over these thoughts. Instead, they embraced the fear and unbelief and then gave voice to it. When we voice those thoughts that are contrary to the will and truth of God, then we have set our course and have revealed that we prefer a lie to the truth. God will judge us for preferring a lie over the truth.

II Thessalonians 2:10-12

Because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

As we look at the Israelites, we can discern how they fell under the judgment spoken of in these verses from the apostle Paul. The Israelites did not embrace a love of the truth. This was evident in their despising the manna that Yahweh sent them. This manna, as we have seen, is a symbol of Christ, Who is Truth. Because they did not love the truth God allowed them to believe that which was a lie. When Yahweh was testifying that they were well able to take possession of the land, the enemy, and their sinful flesh, were presenting another message. This false message said that they would be killed by their enemies, and their wives and children would be preyed upon. Because they did not love truth, they were given over to a lie. That these same people took pleasure in wickedness was evident when they made the golden calf in the wilderness and began to commit indecent acts as they reveled in its presence.

If we take pleasure in wickedness, we will not be anxious to embrace the inheritance that Yahweh has set before us. Many men and women prefer the pleasures of sin rather than a promise of a life of righteousness and peace. It is true that all men and women are plagued by these unrighteous desires to some degree, but not all people give themselves over to them. Some are ashamed at these unworthy thoughts, and they struggle to cast them down.

The Israelites, other than Joshua and Caleb, did not cast down these unrighteous thoughts. They embraced lies and then spoke them forth. There is tremendous power in our speech, much more so than most men and women realize. Our entire course in life is set by the words that proceed forth from our mouths. This is why when we come to Christ we not only must believe the truth concerning salvation in His blood, but we must confess it. Things become a part of us as they are spoken.

Romans 10:8-11

But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Yahshua as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Thoughts become concrete and substantial as they are voiced. This is why Yahweh judged Israel for speaking words of fear and unbelief. To them the lie had become more concrete than His promises to them. They placed more weight on the false report of their senses, and the fear in their heart than upon that which Yahweh swore to them.

Those who would walk in victory over their addictions must guard their confession. It is absolutely necessary to keep words of unbelief in check and to not speak them forth. The Bible declares the following about the power of the spoken word.

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue...

God has created man in His own image. Yahweh is a creative God, and the method of His creation is the spoken word. Yahweh literally spoke, and the world came into being.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

God has also granted this creative ability to man. Our world is also framed by the words we speak. If we speak words of unbelief, we will experience a life of defeat. If we speak words of faith, we will experience a life of victory.

We can observe the power of man's speech in two different events from the life of Peter. When Yahshua ascended He gave power and authority to His disciples. They were to be in the world, even as He was. This extended even to the disciples being granted supernatural power in their speech.

Acts 3:2-8

And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple... Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Yahshua Christ the Nazarene -- walk!" And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

We see in this a clear example of the words of man producing life where there was death. A man who was crippled from birth was able to receive life into his legs and go forth walking and leaping. We also can observe similar examples of the power of death in the words of man. In the book of Acts we read of a husband and wife who were practicing lying and deception against the Holy Spirit. Peter once more was used to speak forth the words of God and this time they resulted in death.

Acts 5:9-10

Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

We see then that by means of a spoken word either life or death can result. What is not commonly understood by Christians is that this principle is always at work. Our words are a creative force. We do not always see the result in such an immediate and spectacular fashion, but our words always have an effect. I have at

times shuddered as I have listened to Christians speak unguarded words that have arisen from an impure source. Rather than confessing the truth that Yahweh has declared to them, they speak forth all the fear and unbelief that is in their soul. I have observed these same ones crippled in their spiritual walk as it has become exceedingly difficult for them to embrace the promises of God. It is therefore necessary that all those who are seeking to rule over sin and addictive desires be careful to control that which comes out of their mouth. If you are confessing that your addiction is too strong for you, then it will be.

It is not my intent in this book to campaign against worldly programs for those who struggle with addictions, but I feel it is necessary to declare something here. Many people in and out of the church are led to participate in 12 step programs that are not the product of the Spirit of Christ. I have sat in on many of these meetings. As the meetings open, every person introduces themselves and a common declaration is made by those in attendance. They say, "My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic." If they are a drug addict, they simply substitute this for the word alcoholic.

Satan understands the power in our words, and he has accomplished a great victory in bringing untold millions of men and women to make a confession of their continued bondage to sin in this way. Such a confession is contrary to the truth of God. The apostle Paul wrote the following to the Christians at Corinth.

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Yahshua Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But this is not who Christians are. Our confession is always in the past tense regarding our slavery to sin. "Such WERE some of you." Christians are not these things now, though they may have been in the past. Christ breaks every bondage. He has set the captives free. You were washed. You were sanctified (set apart as holy to God). You were justified in the name of Christ.

To continue to declare that you are an addict or an alcoholic after being born anew of the Spirit of Christ is a false confession. It is the same as if the Israelites had gotten out into the wilderness, and had seen Pharaoh and his armies drowned in the sea, but they continued to confess that they were Pharaoh's slaves. How preposterous! Neither are the children of God slaves to sin anymore. We must put on a new mindset, and we must begin to confess those things that God declares concerning our identity in Christ.

Those who spoke in agreement with Yahweh's promises to them were able to enter the land and defeat the enemies that dwelt therein. Those who confessed their weakness and inability, and who failed to reckon on the presence of God in them, failed to enter and overcome all adversaries.

Numbers 14:22-24

“Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.”

Caleb made the good confession. He spoke no words of unbelief. He was careful to insure that his words were in accordance with Yahweh’s promises, and he and his descendants reaped the rewards. No enemy could stand before them. Caleb continued to make a good confession during the entire forty years that he waited in the wilderness for his generation to die. As he maintained a good confession he grew strong. We read the following concerning him.

Joshua 14:10-11

"Now behold, Yahweh has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that Yahweh spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in."

Caleb’s strength for warfare had not diminished even when he was 85 years old. When the Israelites went into the land, Caleb put many who were much younger to shame. He had spent forty years making a positive confession of Yahweh’s power to defeat His enemies. He was completely transformed by the words he spoke, and the result was that he did greater exploits than any other man when he entered the land.

Yahweh had promised Caleb that he would be able to choose any part of the land he desired when Israel entered in, for he had believed God. There was a very choice part of the land. It was hill country and had streams and fields and was very fertile. It was consequently also very well defended, and the greatest of the giants dwelt in this area. Yet Caleb went to Joshua and said this was the very portion he desired. He said that if Joshua would allow him to have it that he would slay the giants that dwelt there. The Anakim lived there, and these were the giants of old.

Joshua 14:12-15

Now then, give me this hill country about which Yahweh spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps Yahweh will be with me, and I will drive them out as Yahweh has spoken." So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed Yahweh God of Israel fully. Now the name of Hebron

was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.

Caleb was surely tested by fear as other men, but he refused to allow fear to rule in his mind. He cast down the fear in his mind, and he embraced faith in God. When this one area of land had been unconquered due to the great fortresses there and the tremendous size of the giants, Caleb was not daunted. It is interesting to note that this same city of Hebron was later to be the place where David, the man after God's heart, would be made king. David manifested the same heart as Caleb. David slew the giant Goliath, and he did so by the power of his confession.

I Samuel 17:45-47

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day Yahweh will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that Yahweh does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is Yahweh's and He will give you into our hands."

As you see the giants that reside in your flesh, let this also be the manner of your confession. Boldly proclaim that this enemy that stands before you in defiance of God will be laid at your feet. Declare that you will remove its head, which is a symbol of cutting off its authority over your life. Oh that Yahweh might have many such men and women of faith in this hour who will arise to destroy the works of Satan and bring in the Kingdom of God!

As you destroy the enemies in the land you encourage the hearts of those who doubt. If you are valiant as was Caleb, Yahshua may even allow you to choose to fight an enemy that others have been unwilling to fight. In doing so you will encourage the hearts of those who have been tormented by this enemy. Your victory will enable them to stand and defeat that which has stood in defiance before them.

I have some family members who have been taken captive by the giant of fear. The Lord spoke to me a few years back and told me that if I would face this giant and overcome it, that my victory would serve to loose those I love from this evil tyrant. Let us therefore be valiant. Let us feed upon the Word of God and become strong. Let us cast down every thought that exalts itself against the true knowledge of God.

Our words have power in them. By them the enemy is defeated, By our words we win the victory.

Revelation 12:11

“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

Guard your lips, for the power of life and death are in the tongue.



Chapter 12 - Christ, Our Counselor

It is normal when struggling with some addictive desire to want someone to give you a specific set of ordered steps that you can follow in order to attain victory. What we have seen thus far in this book are some foundational things that must be attended to in order to have any hope of overcoming addiction. There are also things a person should be doing every day in order to build up the spirit man. But overcoming is not found in a series of ordered steps. It is found as we walk in the Spirit.

The church has a tendency to package things into a nice neat packet of rules to follow, or principles to adhere unto. I listened to a preacher named Dudley Hall share a revelation on this matter. He said that he had a conversation with a friend who had told him that he had finally found a list of ordered rules that truly worked. When asked what they were, Dudley's friend replied, "The first rule is 'Do the next thing the Spirit tells you to do.'" He then stated, "The second rule is 'Then do the next thing the Spirit tells you to do.'" He concluded that all the steps were the same.

I thought this was wonderful advice, and it is in keeping with the counsel of the word of God.

Romans 8:14

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

It is not Yahweh's desire that His children should be led by a book full of rules and regulations. Living in such a way tends to lead men to distance themselves from the presence of God. When we look to a body of legal code to tell us what to do in every instance, then we neglect to seek the face of God. Our Father desires that we should be in communion with Him daily. He wants us to ask Him for understanding, and to seek Him for direction. As we do so, we are kept in communication with Him.

Consider the following analogy. Suppose your earthly father gave you a book when you were young, and he had written down instructions to guide you in everything you were to experience throughout your life. When some situation arose in which you were unsure of your father's will, you would get out the book and find some instruction that would guide you in that particular situation. The result of operating in such a way is that you would spend far less time in the presence of your father. This is not a result that Yahweh desires. Practically, such a book would be impossible to write. Even the Bible does not contain specific instructions regarding the Lord's will in all situations.

For example, consider a young man that is considering marriage. There are Scriptures that lay out some general principles on marriage. A Christian is only to marry another Christian is one such instruction. But the Bible does not tell you what specific person you should marry, or even if you should marry at all. Perhaps you are struggling with knowing whether you should marry Susie, or if it would be better to marry Sally. The Bible will not tell you, and God has designed it this way for a purpose. He wants us to speak directly with Him. He doesn't want His children to walk apart from His presence.

The Believer's life is to be one of abiding in Christ. We must always stay connected to the source of divine life. We dare not walk away from His presence. The Spirit of Christ dwelling in us is capable of the most intimate and specific instructions.

I Corinthians 2:11-13

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

If you are a Christian, you have received the Spirit of Christ to instruct you and lead you in all things. This even includes the specific instructions regarding how you are to overcome your addictive desires. Do not make the mistake of thinking that because the Lord led one person to do a particular thing, that He will lead everyone in the same manner. He will not. There may be general principles that we must all follow, but the specifics of our battle to overcome addiction will be tailored to us as individuals.

We can see the truth of this as we once more look at the history of the Israelites as they went in to take possession of the land and drive out all the enemies. Yahweh gave the people specific instructions for each battle. Each city they conquered was fought in a different way.

The first city that Yahweh led the people to conquer was Jericho. Under the leadership of Joshua they were shown precisely what to do, and it was a most unusual battle plan. Yahweh instructed all the people to march around the city of Jericho once a day for six days. As they marched they were to remain silent. On the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times, and after the seventh time around the priests were instructed to blow the trumpets and all the people were to shout. Yahweh promised them that as they did so the walls would fall down.

Now, you or I would never in our wildest imagination have come up with such a peculiar plan of battle. Our knowledge of how battles are conventionally fought would have most likely shaped our idea of how Jericho should be conquered. We might have thought of laying siege to the city, or constructing some type of towers, or using battering rams on the gates. I do not think any of us would have come up with the idea to simply march around it as Yahweh instructed them to do. But Yahweh's plan worked. When the people shouted the walls of Jericho fell down and the people of the city were undefended. Israel then went in and easily conquered the city.

There is absolutely nothing written in Scripture that is without a purpose. We should anticipate that there are great lessons for us in the detailed description of Israel's conquest of Jericho. Yahweh wants us to understand that the battles in our lives are not to be fought according to the wisdom of the world. We are always

to get our battle plan from Him. He will direct us with great precision, and as we do exactly as He says, He will insure that we come forth victorious.

After the conquest of Jericho, the Lord instructed the Israelites to go up against the city of Ai. If the Israelites had done as many Christians do today, they would have concluded that what worked at Jericho would surely work at Ai as well. But had they marched around the walls, and then shouted on the seventh day, all that would have resulted would have been a spectacle. The people inside the walls would have laughed at all the blowing and hollering going on, for nothing would have happened.

Yahweh had a different plan of attack for Ai. Joshua, however, failed to immediately consult Yahweh to know His mind. We read that Joshua sent some men to spy out Ai, and they brought back a report. It was a smaller city, so Joshua chose to only send a few thousand men to attack it. The Israelites, though more numerous, were routed and thirty-six of them were slain in the battle. Joshua then did what he should have done at the beginning. He fell on his face and prayed to Yahweh. He waited to hear from God, and God spoke to him.

Yahweh informed Joshua that the Israelites had sinned by taking some of the spoil of Jericho and hiding it. They had been commanded to take no spoil from Jericho, for all was to be dedicated to Yahweh as a firstfruit offering in the land. Because they had sinned, they could not face their enemies. They had to deal with the sin first. If Joshua had inquired of Yahweh before sending men to battle, Yahweh would have surely spoken to him and thirty-six lives could have been spared.

After seeking Yahweh's face, and removing the sin from their midst, Yahweh gave them the plan of battle to conquer Ai.

Joshua 8:1-8

Now Yahweh said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it." So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night. He commanded them, saying, "See, you are going to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And when they come out to meet us as at the first, we will flee before them. They will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing before us as at the first.' So we will flee before them. And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for Yahweh your God will deliver it into your hand. Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. You shall do it according to the word of Yahweh. See, I have commanded you."

We see once again that Yahweh had a very specific plan of attack for the Israelites to follow when seeking to overcome the inhabitants of the land of

Canaan. It was His will that they should ALWAYS seek Him to know how the battle was to be fought. The tendency to judge things by appearances is deeply ingrained in our flesh. This was the cause for Israel's first failure. They went and looked things over, and decided that they would attack according to the way that seemed most reasonable. We are not to judge things by appearance, nor make decisions according to our natural reason. We are called to be a people of the Spirit. "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

We see how deeply ingrained this tendency was in the hearts of the Israelites in an event that occurred next. Dwelling right in the middle of the land of Canaan was a group of people called the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had heard how Israel had destroyed Jericho and Ai, as well as all that God did in bringing them out of Egypt. They trembled in fear at the approach of Joshua and his people. Knowing they could not defeat Israel in battle, they thought to defeat them through deception.

The Gibeonites appointed key men to go and ask Joshua to make a treaty of peace with them. They knew Joshua would not do so if he discovered that they dwelt in the midst of the land God had promised to Israel, so they made it appear as if they came from a far land. They put on worn out clothes. They put moldy cheese and dry bread in their bags. They chose worn and patched water flasks to carry. Through these means they sought to deceive Israel into thinking they came from a far land.

These men came to Joshua and the leaders of Israel and told them that they had come from a land far away from Canaan where the fame of Israel had been heard, and they asked for a treaty of peace with them. The leaders of Israel questioned them concerning where they had come from, and asked if they dwelt in the land of Canaan. The Gibeonites denied doing so, and they showed them their food and clothes and water bags as proof that they had journeyed a long way.

Once more the leaders of Israel neglected to consult with Yahweh. The Gibeonites appeared to be telling the truth. Consequently, Joshua made a treaty of peace with them. A few days later their deception was uncovered, but it was too late. A treaty had already been made and the oath had to be honored. Israel was not able to dispossess this people due to the treaty. This enemy dwelt in their land throughout all their days when God desired for them to be conquered.

In the book of Isaiah there is a prophecy of Christ that declares that He would not do as the Israelites did. He would not judge things by appearances.

Isaiah 11:3-4

And He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge...

How do we make decisions if we are not judging by appearances? We do so by pressing into the presence of God and seeking His counsel. This is how Yahshua discerned what He was to do in every instance. We see this same diversity in the actions of Christ as we observe in Yahweh's battle instructions for Israel. Christ healed a number of blind men during His ministry. Following are a few examples.

Matthew 20:30-34

And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Yahshua was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David..." Moved with compassion, Yahshua touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

Mark 8:22-25

And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Yahshua and implored Him to touch him. Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around." Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

Mark 10:46-52

Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Yahshua the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Yahshua, Son of David, have mercy on me..." And Yahshua stopped and said, "Call him here." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you." Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Yahshua. And answering him, Yahshua said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!" And Yahshua said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

We observe in each instance that Christ healed the blind in a different fashion. He touched one man's eyes. He spit on another. To the third He simply spoke a word and he regained his sight. We should not assume that Christ will lead us to victory over the sin in our flesh by the same method He used on another. Even if a dozen men all have the same addiction, Yahweh will not necessarily deal with each one the same. In order to know how God would have you to overcome your addictive desire, you need to receive His counsel. Whatever He tells you, do it. As you do, you will be assured of the victory.

As Christians, we have a tendency to gravitate towards formulas in our dealings with people and their problems. The reason for this is that it is easier for those who are not comfortable walking in the Spirit. When we follow formulas, rules and policies we are never left guessing what to say to a person, or what advice to give them. We already have things packaged and our response becomes automatic. Those who walk according to the Spirit must maintain their communication with God. This mandates that they have no sin in their life of which they have not repented. Sinful men and women can run programs. But only the righteous can walk by the Spirit.

Recently, a brother and I had a discussion concerning what our response should be to people who come up to us in the city asking for money. This is a very

frequent occurrence where I live. Many of those who ask for money say it is needed to buy food, or gas, but it ends up at the liquor store or in the pockets of the drug dealer. Knowing this to be a frequent occurrence, many Christians simply decline to give people money when they ask. Others give money without question, believing it is their responsibility to give to the one who asks, and it is up to the recipient what they do with it.

As I thought on this matter, and prayed asking the Lord for wisdom, I was anticipating that He might lead me to some Scripture that would provide a means of determining what my response should be in each instance. Instead, the Spirit declared that He did not want me to rely on a formula, but that He wanted me to trust Him to give me direction at each moment as I was faced with these requests. He revealed that some times He would have me to meet the request without question. Other times He would direct me to purchase the item the person said they needed. Still other times He would instruct me to withhold what was asked for, or to respond in an altogether different manner.

I realized that my soul would have preferred that God simply provide some Scriptural formula upon which I could judge these requests. His ways are higher than ours, however. He much prefers that we abide in Him, and that we learn the sensitivity of spiritual listening. As we develop our spiritual senses we will find in the end that it is a much simpler way to walk, and we will always discern that which Yahweh desires when we are attuned to the voice of the Spirit.

Some people who read this book will find themselves involved in some form of ministry to those who struggle with addiction. Your own church may have a ministry, or a program, to reach out to such ones. You may ask, "Is it wrong to have a program, and to have a specified course of instruction and activity that we lead the people through?" I do not believe it is wrong to have a program, but we must keep in mind that no program will ever serve as a substitute for being led of the Spirit.

It should be an emphasis of every ministry to the addicted that those ministering are Spirit led and Spirit empowered in all they do. The ministers must be men and women who are full of the Spirit. We see this pattern in the book of Acts when the apostles were seeking to appoint men to oversee the ministry of caring for widows.

Acts 6:3

"Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."

If the ministers meet these qualifications, then there is no need to concern oneself about how they are carrying forth their duties. Neither is there a need to hand them a book of policies. What will come forth will be a living and breathing ministry, full of the life of the Spirit of Christ. Programs and policies can actually discourage those involved from being Spirit led. Things may be so regimented and inflexible that there is no room for the Spirit to move.

It seems a much more precarious position to take, to allow individuals to hear from God and make decisions, rather than instructing them in all they are to do. Doing so involves risk, but life is risky. God is always leading us into situations

where we are cast upon Him to provide for us and deliver us. Being Spirit led will actually promote fast spiritual growth among those involved in ministry. They will quickly have to learn a sensitivity to the Spirit. They will have to rapidly attain discernment and learn to exercise sound judgment.

It is perhaps helpful to note that in the Bible we never read of God anointing a program, or ministry. His anointing is always upon people and ministers. This is observed in the following verses.

I Kings 19:15-16

Yahweh said to [Elijah], "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

When Yahweh wants some work done, He anoints people. The Spirit is the anointing, and the Spirit is life. Life must be poured into that which it can animate. Programs cannot be animated, but people can. There is no such thing as an anointed ministry. There are only anointed ministers. If you have the best designed program that can be devised, and it is not carried out by Spirit led and empowered people, then it will not produce life.

Any ministry to those struggling with addiction, must of necessity teach those seeking help to hear God's voice for themselves. Their victory will come as they hear and obey. This instruction in discerning the voice of Christ must be a key part of any ministry to addicts. How can they be instructed to discern the voice of Christ if the ministers are not discerning His voice themselves?

We see then, both by the history of Israel, and the example of Christ, that Yahweh would have us to be a Spirit directed people. He wants us ever abiding in Him. The more dependent we are upon Him for all things, the more we will see Him manifesting His power through our lives.

As you seek to know what specific steps to take in order to overcome your addiction, you must look to God. He will give you specific instructions. Some He will tell to relocate that they might get away from evil influences. Others He will tell to remain where they are at. Some He will tell to change occupations. Some He will instruct to take actions that would make no sense to another, but which are necessary in their own life. The Spirit may instruct you to attend a church that you had not been attending, or to quit attending a church you had been. Whatever our battle plan is in overcoming addiction, we must receive it from the Spirit of Christ.



Chapter 13 - His Part and Ours

In order to have our minds fully prepared to do battle against addictive desires and the sin that dwells in our flesh, we must understand clearly what God will do for us, and what He expects us to do. I have heard numerous people who were struggling with various sins declare, "I have asked God to take this away from me time after time, and it has not gone away." I have heard this confession in reference to the desire to drink, or to do drugs, and even from those who are struggling with anger.

I wrestled with the question of what God would do for me, and what He expected me to do, for many years. As a young man struggling with sexual lust and an attraction to pornography I sought diligently to understand this matter. I sought the counsel of pastors and church elders, but never received the answer I needed. I looked for books on the topic, and I even found one that had the same title as this chapter, but I was disappointed when I read the book and found that it was not written to answer the specific questions I had.

My upbringing in church had left me confused concerning the matter of what God's role was in my overcoming sin, and what my own part was. I had heard ministers declare that we must be like Paul who prayed that God might remove his thorn in the flesh. I have found that this is the mindset of many struggling with addiction. Their response before God is to simply ask Him to take the evil desire out of them. When they have prayed this many times, and the desire has not gone away, they are often left confused and doubting. This was my own experience while wrestling to overcome a desire for pornography.

Adding to my confusion was the testimony of many men and women who declared that when they became Christians that some sin they had been enslaved to all their lives was suddenly gone. I have heard reputable accounts of men who cursed like a sailor all their lives, but when they were born again of the Spirit the desire to curse left them, and it was never again a problem. I have heard of men who were marvelously delivered from alcohol or drugs or cigarettes in the same way, and I believe these accounts to be true. I could not understand why God would not do the same in my life, as I had asked Him many times to take away the impure sexual desires.

It wasn't until later years when the Spirit began to open my eyes to see the parables in Scripture that I understood the truth of this matter and received the long sought after answer. The answer to my question was right before me in the account of the Israelites going in to take possession of the land of Canaan. As we have seen, the land of Canaan is a type and shadow of man's flesh. It is in man that Christ seeks to establish His kingdom. The enemies we face are those sinful desires and passions that reside within our flesh.

As the Spirit began to open up to me the parable of Israel's battles, I saw an amazing thing. There were times when God drove some enemy out of the land without Israel having to lift a finger against them. Following is one such account.

Joshua 24:12

"Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow."

Without the Israelites having to enter into battle at all, God defeated these two enemies in the land of Canaan. Yahweh completely drove them out by sending hornets into their midst. This story finds its parallel in the lives of those men and women who have been marvelously delivered from some besetting sin without them ever having to fight a battle against it.

The Spirit revealed to me through Israel's history that although He may choose to drive out some of the enemies in the land of our flesh in this way, He will never drive out all the enemies in this fashion. He will always leave some enemies in the land that we might learn spiritual warfare. Yahweh left some enemies in the land that Joshua's generation did not drive out fully. He did so that future generations might also learn warfare.

Judges 3:1-4

Now these are the nations which Yahweh left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan; only in order that the generations of the sons of Israel might be taught war, those who had not experienced it formerly)... They were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of Yahweh, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses.

This is clearly a spiritual parable for the Christian today. Yahweh wants all His children to experience spiritual warfare. In this way we will not only grow strong and skillful in the weapons of our warfare, but Yahweh will prove those whose hearts are fully given to Him. If we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength then we will not rest until all the enemies have been routed. If we do not love God it will be revealed in our lack of vigor in seeking to rule over the flesh. Yahshua said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments." He has commanded us to rule over the flesh.

As you seek to overcome the desires in your flesh you must understand that God would not have you to pray that He would take the desire away. If He has not freely removed an enemy in our flesh, then He would have us to do battle against it. To ask God to take away the struggle would be similar to an Israelite facing an enemy and saying "God, I don't want to fight this enemy. Please make them go away!" God will not do such a thing. He wants you and I to learn spiritual warfare.

There are many Scriptures in the New Testament that pick up this analogy of the Christian overcoming sin being like a soldier engaged in a battle. Our weapons are not physical, like a sword and a spear and a shield. The Christian has been given spiritual weapons.

II Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...

We are not fighting against a physical enemy. We are waging war against passions and desires and thoughts. Our weapons are those that will enable us to destroy every thought that rises up against the obedience of Christ.

Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

We will look at the weapons of our warfare in more detail in a later chapter. For now we want to make the point that God will not deliver you from addiction without you having to practice warfare. It is vain for a Believer to constantly ask God to remove the desire, or evil passion from their flesh. He wants you to cast it down. He wants you to destroy it, and He has given you everything necessary to face this enemy and prevail.

Satan will seek to tempt us to sin, and he will suggest thoughts to us that are contrary to the will of God. There have been times when some impure thought would enter my mind and I would cast it down only to have it appear again. At times this warfare would last for hours. In this way Satan seeks to probe for weakness. He wants to see if our commitment to obeying God has limits. God also wants to reveal the same thing, so He allows Satan to attack us. We must remember that God has promised to always set a limit to the trial that we might be able to overcome, but we will be pressed severely at times. The Scriptures declare:

James 4:7

Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

This is a promise. If we resist the devil he will flee. However, there is no word here that indicates how long we must resist before he will flee. I have learned that Satan hates to be defeated. When he has determined that we are not going to give in to his attacks, he will cease attacking us in a particular area. If he has any doubt, and he believes he might win, he will continue to press us relentlessly. The best thing we can do is to determine to never give the enemy any hope of victory. When he sees our commitment to obey God, he will tire of attacking us.

In college I took a psychology course and we studied operant conditioning. Tests were done on rats to study their behavior. It was discovered that if a rat pushed a button and received food from it, they would always come back to that

button and push it again. If they pushed a button and never received a food pellet, then they would give up and never go back to pushing that button. However, if there was a button that gave pellets randomly, sometimes providing a pellet, but other times not providing a pellet, the rat would keep pushing the button until he received what he desired. Even if he had to push the button 99 times before receiving a pellet, he would persist because he knew that it would eventually release that which he sought.

Satan operates much the same way in our lives. If he has any hope that in persisting to push our buttons that he will entice us to abandon our obedience to Christ and give into temptation, he will keep on doing so. When he sees there is no longer any hope of producing the desired result of sin, he will give up. Satan's role is therefore beneficial to the Christian. By his attacks he serves to reveal if there is some area of our life where we are not fully committed to obedience.

God wants to prove our love for Him. He could have driven all the enemies out of the land of our flesh when we first came to Him. His goal, however, is not merely to have a land devoid of enemies, it is to have mature sons and daughters who love Him and are fully committed to Him. For this reason He requires that you and I engage in the battle. In this way we are made strong spiritually, and our love for God is proven.



Chapter 14 - The Necessary Fear of God

I urge you to pay special attention to this chapter, even if the topic seems unappealing to you. Some having read previous chapters that spoke of my long struggle with an addiction to pornography may ask how I finally broke free of it. As you read this chapter, you will understand, and you may find these truths to be equally liberating for you.

The topic of the fear of God has fallen out of vogue in this late hour at the end of the age. Many churches have sought to fashion God into an image that is more appealing to sinful men and women. They therefore focus upon the kindness, love and mercy of God while ignoring His equally important traits of justice, righteousness and holiness. It is never wise to neglect any aspect of truth, particularly as it relates to the character and actions of Yahweh in His dealings with mankind.

Fear has come to take on a very negative connotation, and in most cases this view is right. The fear of man, or of Satan, or of circumstances and events brings bondage and torment. Yet there is one type of fear that brings freedom. Though fear is decried in many places in the Bible, this particular fear is never reprovved, but it is praised instead. This is the fear of God.

The apostle Paul had a complete view of God in mind when he wrote the following words:

Romans 11:22

Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

The entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, reveal that God is kind, but He will not allow His children to walk in rebellion and stubbornness without judging them. In writing to the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul warns them to not think lightly of God's kindness, forbearance and patience, so as to take advantage of it in an unrighteous way.

Romans 2:4-11

Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

God is never satisfied for men and women to make a mere confession of Him in their lives. He wants more than the honor of our lips, He demands the obedience of our lives. The Scripture above states that He will be impartial in His judgment. It matters not that you are one of His children, you will be judged according to your actions.

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Whenever we read the words “Do not be deceived,” we can be assured that many saints are walking in deception in the matter being addressed. God wants us to know the truth, He has set parables throughout the creation to help us understand truth. One such parable is seen in agriculture in the process of sowing and reaping. The principle revealed in the natural realm is that you always reap what you have sown. If you have sown corn seed into the ground, you will reap from the ground corn. If you came back at the end of the season expecting potatoes you would be deceived. If you want to reap potatoes, you better be planting potatoes.

This seems so basic as to be almost comical. We might wonder what type of person would be so foolish as to expect to reap an altogether different type of crop from which he or she planted. We would laugh at them if they told us they planted tomatoes, but were really hoping at the end of the season that there would be watermelon in their place.

How then is it that myriads of Christians are living careless lives where they are engaged in sinful and selfish pursuits, and they are expecting to enter into the joy of the Lord when they die? How is it that so many can be walking in sin while they are expecting to receive the reward of the righteous? If they answer, “It is because I am prayed up, and I always ask forgiveness for my sin,” and by this alone they are expecting to reap eternal life, they are deceived. Such unreasonable expectations are exactly what the apostle is seeking to refute when he says, “Do not be deceived....”

I Corinthians 6:9-10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

And again we are told:

Ephesians 5:3-7

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For

this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them...

James 1:22

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

God's word testifies over and over that He will judge us according to our actions, not our confession. The apostle John also sounds forth this same message.

I John 3:7-8

Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

Who will God judge to be righteous? Those who walk in righteousness! Those whose words and actions are in accordance with the will of God! The many Biblical warnings against deception occur most frequently in regard to this one pervasive lie. Men and women falsely believe that their confession alone is all that is needed to be accounted as righteous in God's sight. Yet God says such a mindset seeks to mock His justice.

Consider the example of two men who live in the same town who both pursue the same fleshly passions and desires. Man number one goes to church and the other doesn't. Man number one prayed a sinner's prayer and the other has not. Man number one asks God to forgive him every time he sins, and the other doesn't. Yet they both live the same lifestyle. They both regularly view pornography, or get drunk, or take illegal drugs. Both live carnal lives as they seek to fulfill the desires of their flesh. It would be a mockery of God's justice for the first man who claimed to be a Christian to ask God to judge him differently than the other man. Yet many Christians have such an expectation.

This type of mentality is so prevalent among Christians today that some who read this might be saying, "Hey, I don't believe you are right. Isn't the man who confessed his sins justified before God and considered righteous?" It is just such a message of confession that has become separated from actions that has led to so much deception in the church today. Consider the following parable of Christ, which seeks to make this matter as plain and easily understandable as possible.

Luke 6:46-49

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

This principle is as true for those who are now in the age of the church as it was for those who were under the age of the Law. The basic principle of sowing and reaping has never changed. Consider the words of Christ to the seven churches in Asia whom He addressed in the book of Revelation. Christ was speaking to Christian churches. He was sending a message to those who called Him "Lord." He was speaking to those who claimed salvation through His blood. Yet over and over He began His addresses to these churches by declaring, "I know your deeds." (Revelation 2:2, 2:19, 3:1, 3:8, 3:15) It was by their deeds that He accounted them either righteous or unrighteous. It was due to their deeds that He either pronounced judgment or reward. Christ did not begin each address by saying, "I know your confession." God demands that our belief be proven by acts of obedience.

You may ask why I am speaking about this in a book that is about overcoming addiction. The reason is that when we have no fear that continuing in disobedience will bring severe consequences, we are much more apt to be careless in our resolve to overcome the sin in our life. The scriptures provide the following insight:

II Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Holiness is perfected in the fear of God. If we have been deceived into thinking that we can continue in sin after having become partakers of the grace and forgiveness of God then we will be prone to continue sinning. Yet the Scriptures are very clear that this is not God's will, and those who do such things will incur judgment.

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Hebrews 10:26-31

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said,

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

These words should cause us to tremble if we are not walking as overcomers after having come to the knowledge of Christ's atonement and having become partakers of His Holy Spirit. The Christian who continues in sin will be judged more severely than the person who has never come to Christ. The reason is that those who are given more abundant grace have more expected from them. In the Gospel of Luke we find another parable given by Christ.

Luke 12:47-48

"And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more."

Those who have known the great gift of salvation through the precious blood of the Son of God shed on their behalf, and who have become partakers of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, have much expected of them. God has given them all things necessary to lead a godly life. For them to trample on the blood as if it is a common thing by continuing carelessly in sin is an abomination in the sight of God. To treat the gift of the Holy Spirit with contempt, when He would make known to them the path of righteousness and provide all power for a holy life is equally contemptuous.

When it is understood that God will not allow such flagrant disregard for His will to go unpunished, men and women are incited to put aside sin and pursue the will of God for their life. In my time with a rescue mission I have met numerous men who confess to be Christians, yet who are still enslaved to their evil desires, and they have shown great carelessness in their attitudes. It is evident that they do not fear God. Some of these men have spoken to me of having had prophetic words spoken over them concerning a specific call of God on their lives, yet they are doing nothing to ready themselves for usefulness. The apostle Paul told Timothy the following:

II Timothy 2:19-22

"The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

I believe that the prophetic words spoken over some of these men were truly from God. Yahweh has a high calling that He would bring them into. Yet if they do

not cleanse themselves from wickedness they will be disqualified and their position and reward given to another. Many have already suffered such a judgment. For this reason, even among the children of God, there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth on the day of judgment. Those who could have had so much will see how foolish they were as they squandered the high calling of God and wasted the precious opportunities Yahweh afforded them.

I know from experience the great value of coming to understand the fear of God. After struggling with pornography for many years it was the fear of God that served as a key to bring me victory. I knew I had a high call upon my life. It had been prophesied, and the Spirit had made it known to me for many years. I had begun to enter into some small measure of service to God, but I was still dabbling with pornography. One day the Spirit spoke to me and said, "If you do not rule over what your eyes look upon then you will be disqualified from that which I have planned for you."

I cannot tell you the anguish that gripped me as I considered what it meant to forfeit the good things God had ordained for my life. I was gripped with a great desire to not disqualify myself, and it was due to this fear of God that I was able from that moment forward to put away pornography and never pick it up again. I have been tested many times since that date. Even while at the mission there have been numerous times when I came across some pornographic magazine hidden away by one of the men in residence. Many times I was in a secluded place with no observers around when I discovered it. Yet every time I was immediately mindful of God's warning, and I would not even open the cover of the magazine, but I would take it to a trash can and immediately throw it out.

Even the greatest among Yahweh's servants can benefit from the fear of God in their life. Consider the words of the apostle Paul after he had been serving as an apostle for many years.

I Corinthians 9:27

I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

The apostle Paul understood that he could act in such a way as to become disqualified from the apostolic calling on his life. It was this fear of disqualification that led him to discipline his body and rule over it.

There have been numerous instances in my life where the fear of God has been a great boon in motivating me to press on to victory over some stronghold in my flesh. One such instance was related to a stronghold of covetousness that had been present through all my adult life. In disobedience to the will of God I went into debt in order to purchase things that I longed for. Time after time God corrected me in this, but I would return to the same error.

Since my youth I have loved the word of God, and I have yearned to understand the mysteries of His word. I have often prayed for spiritual understanding, and I have found the study of God's word to be the joy of my life. One day when I was well into adulthood, and was still walking in covetousness and disobedience, having incurred more debt, the Spirit spoke to me through the following Scripture.

Luke 16:10-11

“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?”

The Spirit spoke very plainly to me. He proclaimed to me that if I could not be faithful in the usage of money, which is an unrighteous thing, then God would not be able to entrust to me the true riches that flow from His hand. I understood these true riches to be the knowledge and understanding of the Kingdom of God and the mysteries of His person. I intensely desired to receive these very precious things from God. I understood that if I did not begin to walk faithfully in what was to God a little thing, the stewardship of money, then I could not receive the greater things.

With this word from the Spirit of Christ I was finally able to press on to victory over this stronghold in my life. It has been many years now since I have had any debt at all, and I am careful to seek the will of God in all my spending. I have learned the contentment of having little of the world's goods, and I have been blessed to receive that which is immensely more valuable, the knowledge of God.

If you would have victory over addictive desires that have long plagued you, then you must feed the spirit, and you must embrace the truth concerning Yahweh's justice and holiness. The wisdom of Solomon declared the following:

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom...

The fear of God is in no way contrary to His merciful nature. If we are walking in obedience to Him then we have no reason to fear anything. He desires that we should always walk in the comfort of His love. Yet as a loving Father, He knows it is not love to allow us to continue in behavior that is destructive and will lead to immeasurable loss. Therefore He balances His comfort with His fear. They walk hand in hand.

Acts 9:31

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Yahweh always seeks the welfare of His children. Even His judgments are beneficial, for He knows the stubbornness and rebellion that is bound up in the heart of man. If He must chastise us severely, He will do so for the sake of love. Let us not foolishly resist His grace, nor trample on His kindness and mercy. A day of great sorrow and immense regret will attend all who do, for God will not be mocked. We will reap precisely what we have sown.



Chapter 15 - The Weapons of Our Warfare

We have learned much about God's provision for men and women to overcome addiction as we have observed the history of Israel. The Israelites were enslaved to the most powerful kingdom on earth. In the same way, we have seen that all mankind are born as slaves to sin, and are under the power of Satan.

John 8:34

Yahshua answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

As Israel dwelt in Egypt for 430 years they were totally dominated by the power of Pharaoh and his armies. We read of no revolts, and no open warfare against Israel's captors. There were no weapons and no armor to be found among those who were enslaved. Neither were there any among them who were skilled in the ways of battle.

While we are slaves to sin, and prior to our release from captivity, we also lack spiritual armor and weapons, and we have no knowledge of their usage. We must be instructed in the ways of spiritual warfare, and we must exercise ourselves in battle in order to become skillful and victorious. If you would go forth to slay giants, to attack fortified cities, and to demolish strongholds, you must know something of the weapons of your warfare.

We have seen that our battle is not against flesh and blood, that is to say, it is not against a physical foe after the manner that Israel fought in the Old Testament. Our enemies are thoughts, passions, desires, and spiritual forces of wickedness that assert themselves in defiance of the will of God. In order to face such foes we must have armor and weapons appropriate for our warfare.

II Corinthians 10:4

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful...

You will not overcome addiction through any carnal instrument, or human method. You need that which is divinely powerful. The world thinks it can cure addiction through pills. A sister in Christ recently sent me an article from Newsweek on the topic of alcohol and drug addiction which included the following statements.

If you weigh advances in neuroscience over the last few decades against social and spiritual progress, it's clear which field is more likely to produce the next breakthrough in treatments...

To the extent that "willpower" is a meaningful concept at all, the era of willpower-in-a-pill may be just over the horizon...

"The idea that we can restore 'self-control' or 'free will' with medication is a very, very exciting one," says Vocci of NIDA. "It could be paradigm shifting. But we need more studies to see how consistently that impacts recovery."

[Source: Newsweek, article 'What Addicts Need']

To declare that there is more hope in mind altering drugs (neuroscience) than there is in Christ, is symptomatic of the pride and spiritual blindness that has descended upon the world in this late hour. Isaiah prophesied of these days:

Isaiah 60:2

For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples...

To suggest that addiction can be overcome by “willpower in a pill” is to not understand mankind’s slavery to sin. We must have armor and weapons that are divinely powerful, and this is precisely what Christ has given to His disciples. The most detailed and descriptive teaching we find in the Bible concerning the Christian’s armor and weapons is found in the book of Ephesians. As we look at this passage again, let us identify each item and then go on to describe it clearly, its function and value in overcoming addiction.

Ephesians 6:13-18

Therefore, take up the full armor of God... Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

We can identify the following from this passage:

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- The shoes of peace
- The shield of faith
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit
- Prayer

Each item here is an essential element in the outfitting of those who would enter into spiritual battle.

The Belt of Truth

The apostle Paul speaks of “having girded your loins with truth.” It is not a mere loin cloth that Paul has in mind here, but the leather belt of a soldier that hung from his waste and covered his loins. David knew much about warfare, and he also makes reference to the role of truth.

Psalms 51:6

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts...

When the apostle Paul spoke of girding our waist with *truth*, he used the Greek word *aletheia*. This Greek word literally means “not concealed.” The message given is that Yahweh desires that there be nothing hidden, or concealed in the inward parts of a man. We can only begin to do warfare as we cast aside all deception and come into agreement with God.

If God says there is pride in us that must be driven out of the land, we must not call it something else. If He says there is fear, we must not say it is simply caution. If He says there is stubbornness, we must not be like King Saul and declare that we do not see it. In order for the Lord to lead us into victory over all enemies in the land, we must agree with Him about the character of all of the inhabitants within us. If He says that something is sin, we must agree.

We must remember that our enemies are not other men, nor is the Kingdom of God that we seek to establish some outward earthly kingdom. The Kingdom of God is within us. We must therefore allow the light of God to shine upon our inner parts and disclose every enemy that dwells in the land. Our inward parts must be covered in truth. We must have the heart of David who prayed:

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart (inner man); try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me...

This is the beginning of our warfare. We must come to the light of truth and allow the Spirit to identify all things within that must be brought under subjection to the rule of God.

Some years back I attended a series of meetings that featured a man named Milton Green as the speaker. He was the former owner of a carpet cleaning business, but had left that occupation to become a teacher to the church. He shared an event that reveals the need for the saints to have their loins girt with the belt of truth.

Mr. Green shared that he had hired a man that had worked in carpet cleaning before, and who had much experience. On his first day working with this man, Milton dropped him off at an office building to clean the carpets, telling him he would pick him up later. When he arrived to pick up the man, he immediately noticed areas on the carpet that were soiled. The man approached him and told him he was through and ready to go. Milton asked the man, “You are done cleaning the offices?” The man assured him he was. Milton then walked over to a dirty area of the carpet and asked the man “What is this?” The man replied, “I don’t see anything.” Milton then asked him to come closer, and he bent down and pointed to the dirty carpet. He asked again, “What is this?” The man made some excuse, so Milton asked him a third time, “What is this?” Finally the man admitted, “It is dirt.”

Milton shared from this experience that if the man could not agree with him that dirt was dirt, then he would be unable to work with him. In the same way, God cannot work with us if we do not agree with Him concerning the sin in our lives. If we try to conceal our sin, or we make an excuse for it, or we call it

something other than the sin which it is, then God cannot work with us. We will not be able to perform all Yahweh's desire apart from agreement with Him.

This is why the first item of the Christian soldier's outfit to be named is the belt of truth. This is our starting point in our warfare. We must agree with God concerning those things to which we are enslaved.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Greek word that the apostle uses here, which has been rendered as righteousness, is *dikaioisune* (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay). Strong's Concordance defines this word as "equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification."

According to the 1933 edition of Webster's Dictionary that I have on my desk, the word equity is defined as: "the administration of law according to its spirit, and not according to the letter."

This symbol of a breastplate of righteousness that covers the heart of a man is filled with insight. Where did God say that He would write His law in the days when He established a new covenant with mankind?

Jeremiah 31:33

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it..."

This same concept is expressed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth.

Romans 7:22

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man...

Another way to phrase this is, "I joyfully concur with the *rule* of God in the inner man." Indeed, this is the definition of the Kingdom of God being established within our being. When God is ruling over all of our parts, then the Kingdom of God will be established in us. The breastplate of righteousness signifies this rule of God over the heart of man.

The administration, or the carrying out of the law of God within us, must be according to the spirit of God's law, and not the letter. This is the definition of righteousness, it is equity of act and character. It is important that we understand the breastplate of righteousness in this manner. The Pharisees claimed to be keeping the law of God, but they were deceived. They focused on the letter of the law, and by their deceptive interpretations they ended up nullifying the intentions of God. The spirit of the Law was violated.

Deception regarding what it means to have fulfilled the righteousness of God is a great danger for the saint in this hour as well. Many hold to the letter of the Law, but they have fallen far short of the spirit of it. They have not arrived at Yahweh's desire for them. The sermon on the mount provides numerous illustrations of such shortfalls. Yahshua said:

Matthew 5:21-22

“You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' (empty head) shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

As God leads us forth to battle against the enemies in the land, we must desire to fulfill the spirit of the command of Christ, not merely to fulfill the letter of the command. Only as we fulfill the spirit of the command will we be considered righteous in the eyes of God. All of the laws of God are summed up in the words “You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does not seek its own interests, but the interests of others. Love will not commit adultery because to do so is a purely selfish act as well as a serious trespass against our neighbor.

In the same way, righteous men and women will choose not to take illegal drugs, or to get drunk, because to do so is a violation of love. It is a purely selfish act. Love is the true spirit behind the Law of God. If we are to go forth and conquer we must have our heart covered with the breastplate of righteousness, which is the perfect law of love.

We see then that these first two parts of the Christian’s armor are closely related to one another. The belt of truth speaks of honesty and agreement with God about those things that dwell within us. The breastplate of righteousness speaks of embracing the spirit of God’s commands as they relate to the enemies in our flesh. We must set our minds on what is pleasing to God, rather than seeking to hold onto those things in which we find pleasure.

Ephesians 5:8-10

You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

As overcomers in Christ, our attitude cannot simply be to know what we can and cannot do. Our attitude cannot be focused upon a desire to please ourselves, or a pursuit of knowing which of our selfish desires God will allow us to keep. Our heart’s focus must be to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Truth and righteousness are those things that must adorn us, bringing all our inward parts into a willing subjection to the rule of God over us.

It is sometimes difficult to grasp the proper application of the parables of the Bible. It may seem somewhat elusive to you to understand how these first two symbols of spiritual warfare apply to your own life. An illustration from the Old

Testament will help us in this matter. In the life of King Saul we observe numerous examples of one who failed to rule over the Kingdom of God properly. As a result the Kingdom was taken from him and given to another. If we will view his life serves as a type, or a shadow, of spiritual truth that Christians can learn from today, we can gain valuable insight.

At Yahweh's command, the prophet Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. After Saul had been king for some time, God instructed him to go to war against Amalek. In the same way God will instruct the Christian to wage war against some sin in his/her flesh. God's instructions were very precise. Saul was to destroy all the people of the land, and he was to destroy all the animals. Nothing was to be left alive. Saul was not to pity or spare anything. Saul went forth into battle as the leader of Israel, and God was with them to give them the victory. Yet Saul did not carry out Yahweh's desire. We read:

I Samuel 15:7-9

So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Although Saul did not carry out the command of God, when Samuel came out to meet him after the battle Saul declared that he had done so. When Samuel pressed him on the matter Saul made excuses.

I Samuel 15:13-21

Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of Yahweh! I have carried out the command of Yahweh." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed..." Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Yahweh anointed you king over Israel, and Yahweh sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' Why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of Yahweh, and went on the mission on which Yahweh sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God at Gilgal."

How stubborn Saul was in this matter. He kept insisting he had carried out God's will when it was very plain that he had not. This account was not recorded

simply for the sake of historical record. It has been written for our instruction. Many Christians today do precisely as King Saul did. God sends them forth to battle an enemy and they only do the job part way and then say they are finished and they expect God to be pleased. The Christian often will get rid of that in their life which appears worthless to them, but those things that are attractive they will spare, even when God says to destroy them.

Working and living at a rescue mission, I have found this to be the pattern of most men. Many come in who want to be delivered of that which is destroying their life, but they do not want to go as far as God would have them to go. When God would begin to convict them regarding those substances they are putting in their body, they immediately begin to divide them up into those things they are willing to get rid of, and those which they are not. Many missions have rules that prohibit smoking cigarettes. At those that do not prohibit smoking, it is not unusual to find that nearly all of the men in a recovery program smoke. Whereas they are willing to forego illegal drugs to be at a mission, for they are not tolerated, they are unwilling to do anything about their equally destructive addiction to cigarettes.

Some men who have been convicted by God to lay aside cigarette smoking, switch to smokeless tobacco instead. They dip snuff, or chew tobacco and they go on as if they have done all that God desires them to do. I have found the same pattern being followed in alcohol consumption. Some who were greatly convicted of their drunkenness would give up hard liquor, but they would continue to drink beer. There are some who even feel they have done the will of God when they have ceased to use cocaine or methamphetamines, but they convince themselves it is okay to continue to smoke marijuana.

All of these things are examples of the type of failure manifested in the life of King Saul. They are also examples of not putting on the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. We must agree with God concerning those things which are sin. If we do not, we will sit back and glory in our victory when we have not done the will of God. King Saul even erected a monument to himself after his defeat of Amalek, and so too do men and women celebrate their victories when they have fallen short of God's command.

The Shoes of Peace

“and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...”

This may seem like a strange description of a warrior's apparel. What does the gospel of peace have to do with spiritual warfare? The word 'gospel' literally means 'good news.' What good news is being referred to here? Evidently it is good news concerning peace. The angels announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds in the following way:

Luke 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

What peace is it to which the angels are referring? It is peace between God and man. Because of sin mankind had been at enmity with God. Sin had caused a breach in man's fellowship with God. In the book of Romans the apostle Paul declares, "while we were enemies Christ died for us." Christ came to bring peace between God and man. He came to cancel out the bill of decrees against us as He bore our sins on His body at the cross.

John the Baptist came as a forerunner of Christ. His father prophesied the following words concerning him.

Luke 1:76-79

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Our peace is accomplished through the forgiveness of sins. Even as shoes are that which man stands upon, so the forgiveness of sin is the foundation for our victory in Christ. Our victory begins with our reconciliation to the Father. Apart from being united with the Father we can have no victory. It was the atoning death of Christ that made peace between God and man, and now that peace has been made man can walk with God as He leads mankind to victory over every enemy.

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Mankind has an external enemy in this battle to establish the kingdom of God within his being. This enemy is Satan, and those forces in league with him. Faith is a key element in the armor of the saint.

Many Christians think only of belief in the atoning death of Christ when they hear the word faith. They only understand faith as it relates to forgiveness of sin. Yet faith is also a critical part of our victory over sin. We saw this in the earlier chapter that looked at the failure of the Israelites to believe that God would give them victory over all their enemies. Because they preferred to believe the report of their eyes, they were not able to enter the land.

When we come to Christ we begin to take an accounting of those things that dwell in the land of our flesh. There are strongholds and walled cities and giants that live in the land. Some of these bear names such as ADDICTION, FEAR, LUST, PRIDE, and ANGER. A man may have been ruled by a violent temper all of his life before coming to Christ. Another man may have been addicted to drugs or alcohol. One man may have been enslaved to sexual lust, while another man has been covetous of worldly possessions. As these men look upon the enemies

dwelling within them, and understand the strength of the enemy, they may be tempted to respond as did the unbelieving Israelites.

Yet God has given us many precious promises of victory over sin. We must stand upon these promises in faith, and we must hold up these promises when the enemy seeks to attack us with fear, doubt and unbelief.

I John 5:4-5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yahshua is the Son of God?

Your response to God's promises is critical. If you do not take up the shield of faith, you will not be able to walk as an overcomer after the pattern of Joshua and Caleb. You will simply die in the wilderness. You will be like those who saw the produce of the magnificent land flowing with milk and honey, but who never were able to enter in. When you stand upon the promises of God then you are able to withstand all the lies that your adversary Satan shoots at you. You are able to withstand the assault of the flaming arrows of fear and unbelief. As you continue to stand your ground the enemy must flee before you.

The Helmet of Salvation

The apostle Paul in writing to the church in Thessalonica provides a little more insight into the nature of this part of the soldier's outfit.

I Thessalonians 5:8

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

The helmet is not just salvation, but "the hope of salvation." We have mentioned before that the word *deliverance* is a synonym for the word *salvation*. We could therefore state that this helmet stands as a symbol of our hope of deliverance. It is symbolic that this helmet fits over the head of man, for this hope of deliverance stands as our defense against thoughts of defeat, frustration and weariness that attack our mind.

I believe the hope in view here is two-fold. There is a hope that we will overcome every besetting sin in this present life. There is also a hope that we will enter into a fulness of salvation in the age to come. There will be a time when we will lay aside these mortal bodies and put on that which is immortal. We will put off these bodies of corruption in which sin dwells, and we will put on glorified bodies without corruption or any knowledge of sin. The Scriptures speak of the hope of a present deliverance from sin, as well as the hope of a future deliverance from the battle that rages between the flesh and spirit of man.

As we enter into the battles set before us we will find that all is not won in an instant. There is a long warfare to take complete control of these bodies in which sin dwells. At times we will find that the enemies are not driven out apart from a

prolonged engagement. The tendency to become weary in the battle will be known to all saints at some time. Even David, the man after God's heart, became weary.

II Samuel 21:15-17

Now when the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David went down and his servants with him; and as they fought against the Philistines, David became weary. Then Ishbi-benob, who was among the descendants of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of bronze in weight, was girded with a new sword, and he intended to kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him.

It is to be noted that after this occurrence, David's men urged him to not go out to war with them anymore, lest he be killed and Israel suffer. David, being weary of war, listened to their words and stayed home when they went to battle thereafter. It was while he was at home idle, when he should have been with his men leading the battle, that he fell into temptation and committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of David's most valiant and victorious soldiers.

We must not give into the weariness that plagues us at times, even when we are looking for the fulfillment of some long awaited promise, or the complete victory over some sin that we have wrestled with for a long season. As the Scriptures state, patience is as necessary in our warfare as is faith.

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

It is our hope of deliverance that gives us renewed strength to stand in the battle. It is hope that every promise of God will be realized that allows us to withstand every assault of the enemy upon our mind.

The Sword of the Spirit

The last two items in the list of our spiritual equipment serve as both defensive and offensive weapons. These are the word of God, and prayer.

And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

In all of the pieces of the soldier's outfit looked at thus far, it is necessary to become familiar with them, and comfortable with their usage. It is especially needful with the sword of the Spirit. We must study its usage diligently and become skillful with it. The apostle Paul instructed the young minister Timothy in the need to apply himself diligently to mastering the word of God.

II Timothy 2:15

Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.
[Amplified Bible]

Your effectiveness in spiritual battle will depend much upon your skillful handling of the word of God. It is essential that all who seek to overcome addiction and progress in a life of holiness should spend much time in the study of the word. Even as a man does not become skillful with a sword without much usage, we will not become skillful in the word apart from a devotion to learning is correct application.

It is symbolic that the sword is gripped in the hand. The word of God must also be near at hand at all times. We must be able to swiftly draw it forth out of its scabbard in time of need. In order to do this, memorization of Scripture is important.

Psalms 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

When I was a youth I began memorizing Scripture in church. Later I was encouraged by a number of older Christians to apply myself to Scripture memory as a spiritual discipline. It became my practice to write key verses down on index cards and to carry them in my pocket during the day. I would take them to work, and everywhere I went, and I would meditate upon them to gain understanding. I would practice reciting them until I could say them perfectly.

I have found the Scriptures committed to memory to have been a great aid throughout my entire life. Many Scriptures now come to mind as easily as a well used sword is drawn forth by the hand of a seasoned warrior. There is tremendous value in the study of the word of God. It renews the mind even as we dwell upon it. The soul is refreshed and the thoughts purified as we immerse ourselves in the cleansing power of the holy word of God.

When Christ was tested by Satan in the wilderness, the word of God flowed forth from His mouth as a two-edged sword. At every parry of the enemy, Christ had the appropriate response.

The danger of neglecting the word of God is that Satan also is familiar with it. Satan quoted Scriptures to Christ when he tempted Him. If a believer is not well grounded in the Scriptures he will be easily misled when Satan seeks to deceive him through a misapplication of the word of God.

Those who love life, and who want to walk in victory, will give themselves to a study of the word. Like David they will seek to implant the word in their heart. Scripture memory is a valuable means of fitting oneself for battle.

The sword of the Spirit is not only the written word. It is also the spoken word of God.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The Spirit will teach us truth as we are attentive to His voice. He will lead us in the path of righteousness. We must train our senses to listen to the voice of the Spirit. It is very easy to allow the temples of our bodies to become so filled with the thoughts of worldly pursuits that the still, small voice of the Spirit is drowned out.

When Christ drove out the merchants and money changers from the temple, He was demonstrating a powerful lesson for us. He said, "My Father's house is to be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves." Our bodies are the temple of God. We have been created to be houses of prayer where God's Spirit communes with our spirit. We too can fill these temples with all the noise of the world as we set our sights on buying and selling, pleasures and various entertainments.

The pursuit of the world will keep us from hearing the voice of God. When this occurs we are putting ourselves at risk from an attack of the enemy. It is as if a soldier on the battlefield had turned off his combat radio and had tuned in a station playing the music and news of the world. Becoming so fixated on this noise the soldier is unable to receive warnings from his commander. We must be attentive to the written and spoken word of God.

This leads us to the final part of our spiritual weaponry.

Prayer

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

Many people do not include this verse along with the section that describes the spiritual armor of the saint. Yet I see it as being part of the same thought. Who ever heard of engaging in battle without making some provision for communication between the battle commander and those under his leadership? In today's arena of modern warfare, communication has become one of the most important parts of the military's focus. It should also be a priority with the child of God.

Throughout Scripture, and throughout the recorded history of military warfare, we see numerous examples of battles gone awry due to the absence of good communication. Many times the tide of an entire war has turned on this one issue. Armies have turned back when they feared an approaching foe that was nowhere around. Others have been destroyed through poor battle execution when communication was disrupted.

We have seen already in this book that God wants us to look to Him at all times to discern His will for us. We are to move when He moves, and remain still when He does not move. Failing to do so, we will make a shipwreck of our lives.

The only example mankind has been given of a man who walked victoriously over all sin and temptation is found in the life of Christ. It is no coincidence that we observe in His life a devotion to prayer.

Luke 5:16

Yahshua would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

Whether in the morning, or the evening, we find Christ seeking a place apart to pray.

Mark 1:35

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Yahshua got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Matthew 14:23

After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

Apart from a devotion to prayer, there is no power over sin and temptation in the life of the saint. We must remain abiding in Christ in order to receive the divine life necessary to live a transformed life as a spiritual creature. If we neglect prayer, we begin to wither away and we become easy prey for the enemy.

All of these various parts of our spiritual armor and weaponry are needed in order to defeat the enemies that we face.



Chapter 16 - Free in Christ

Perhaps you picked up this book out of a desire to obtain victory over a specific addiction or besetting sin. If so, it seems fitting to end this book by seeking to widen your hope of the victory and freedom that you can experience in Christ. Perhaps it has seemed almost too good to be true, as you have considered the promise that Christ can deliver you from any sin or addiction. There is no giant, no walled city, no stronghold, that cannot be overcome in Christ. These statements are true, but I would urge you to consider something even greater than this precious truth. Not only can Christ deliver you from ANY sin, He can deliver you from ALL sin.

The level of Christian experience has sunk very low in these days due to the wayward heart of mankind. Many who confess Christ love pleasure more than they love God. There has been little pressing in to know how mankind might satisfy Yahweh's desire, as men and women have been more focused on satisfying their own desires.

Few Christians in this hour are able to receive the report that there is a place in Christ where we can rise above all the bonds of this sinful world. We can be filled with the fulness of Christ. His life can be our life. His thoughts can be our thoughts. We can become fully motivated, and completely animated, by the divine life within our members. Our daily walk can be one of unbroken fellowship, and our experience can be one of endless righteousness through the power and presence of the One who dwells in us.

This testimony is hidden from the majority of men and women today, yet the Spirit bears witness of its truth. So too do the many parables of Scripture, as well as the plain speech of the apostles. Yet that which is declared in many ways and in many places has been obscured by the veil that lies over the eyes of men and women who are divided in their affections. Consider once more the parable of Israel's release from captivity in Egypt and her entry into the land of promise.

How much authority did Egypt and Pharaoh retain over Israel after they crossed the Red Sea? Crossing through a body of water is symbolic of passing through death into a new life. What is symbolized in crossing the Red Sea is the complete death to all that had formerly kept Israel enslaved. We find this truth in the following words:

Exodus 14:13

Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of Yahweh which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever."

"See the salvation of Yahweh!" It is a complete salvation. Egypt maintained no hold over Israel. The power of Pharaoh was completely broken as the great army of Egypt perished in the sea.

Exodus 14:28

The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained.

The testimony of Scripture is that the substance of our salvation in Christ is just as complete as the shadow seen in the Israelites' salvation from Egypt. There was no reason for any who came out of Egypt to ever return to bondage there. The Israelites' freedom was complete. Their freedom was as certain as if they had passed from one life, through death, and into another existence. This too is the experience of all those who have been united with Christ through baptism. We have been buried with Him, and we have been resurrected to a new life of freedom.

Colossians 3:3

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Crossing the Red Sea symbolizes how completely the Christian has been severed from the old slavery to sin that formerly held them bound. Crossing the Jordan River under the leadership of Joshua signifies the power we have to conquer all enemies in our flesh.

Deuteronomy 11:24-25

"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours... No man will be able to stand before you..."

Notice the scope of the words in these verses, and consider what they portend for the Christian today. "**EVERY**" place the Christian sets his foot will be theirs to possess. "**NO**" enemy will be able to stand before the one who has faith. Even as our deliverance from bondage is a full deliverance, so too our victory over every sin and enemy of God is boundless.

Christ has not merely given you and I victory over addiction, He has given us an entirely new life. We are new creatures with new appetites, and new minds. The extent to which you and I walk as these new creatures is limited only by our own desire and belief. As the apostle Paul declared to the church in Corinth:

II Corinthians 6:12

You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.

Christ has set the captives free, but the degree to which you or I live in freedom is determined by us. You can choose to live the rest of your life for the pleasure of God. You can give yourself fully over to Christ that He might manifest Himself in you, bringing all your thoughts, words, and actions under His control.

II Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no

longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

All has been provided for the child of God to enable them to live a life immersed in the life of Christ. We need not sin. We can always choose to live for the pleasure of God. His Spirit in us will fill us with His desires, and empower us to carry them out. We must cast off the low thinking that grips the church today, for many Christians believe themselves still to be slaves to sin. The church believes it is more natural for them to sin than to practice righteousness. Consequently, they live out what they believe. Yet the testimony of Scripture is that Christians have died to sin and are alive to God.

Romans 6:11

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Yahshua.

“Consider yourselves to be dead to sin.” How easy it is to pass over these words without comprehension. As a Christian I am dead to sin. It has no hold over me. I am completely free of its authority. The dominion of sin has been shattered. I am now alive to God in Christ. I am a partaker of the divine life. The same Spirit that is in Christ is also in me. It is God’s pleasure that I am alive to. It is His desires that I seek. I am no longer bound to low, fleshly living. I am no longer obligated to fulfill the desires and passions of the flesh. I am free! I am the Lord’s!

Romans 14:8

If we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.

It is with some difficulty that we lay aside our slave mentality, for we come from a long line of slaves. Our ancestors have been enslaved to sin for the past 6,000 years, all the way back to Adam. The mind staggers to realize the freedom that has been given to us in Christ. Can it really be true? Is it really no longer inevitable that I will commit sin? Can I truly walk in righteousness?

Perhaps the most profound expression of the Christian’s new life is found in the words of Paul.

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”

What a depth of transformation is revealed here! “It is no longer I who live.” The old sinful creature I once was is no longer alive. When Christ died on the cross, I died with Him. When He arose from the grave I was resurrected to new life in Him. Now “Christ lives in me.”

How do we enter into such a life? How can this confession become our own? We enter in as we believe the testimony of Christ.

John 8:31-32

Yahshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free... So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

To continue in Christ's word is to rest upon it as truth. The second part of Galatians 2:20 reveals Paul's confession of this.

Galatians 2:20

The life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

What Paul is testifying is that his life is *completely* different now that he has been born of the Spirit of Christ. He lives his life through a daily reckoning upon the presence of Christ in Him. He surrenders to the life of Christ in his being, and as he does so the life of Christ is manifested. The divine life of God is revealed in, and through, Paul. This can also be your experience, and mine.

Such an understanding goes far beyond hoping that we might be able to overcome a specific, troubling addiction. It is to embrace the knowledge that God's Spirit is present in us to enable us to walk as a mature reflection of Himself through the course of this world. God has testified that He is at work in us to conform us to the image of Christ, and Christ said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." It is not heresy then to believe that God desires this same confession to be the normal result of His powerful working in our lives.

From the beginning God said, "Let us create man in our image, and after our likeness." Christ was the first man to attain to this end that God had in mind. He is not the last, however.

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren...

Satan would tell the Christian that it is not possible to walk as Christ did in this world. He would declare to us that we cannot walk in victory over all sin, that such a state is only possible when we leave this world and ascend to heaven. The Scriptures reveal that Satan is a liar, and the father of lies. He has lost his authority over our lives, but he knows he can still keep many from walking in the power of the Spirit by deceiving them. If you do not believe you are free from your chains, you will live as if you are still bound, though the chains lie broken beside you.

You will never rise higher than your faith to believe. Feed your spirit. Abide in Christ. Live in His word, and be transformed as you renew your mind. Your victory is assured if only you will believe.



Addendum

Upon sending out chapter eight of this book to my mailing list, a lively interaction ensued. It was evident that Yahweh wanted His children to not pass quickly over what was written, as He provided numerous supporting witnesses. These affirmations were in the form of parables, dreams and Scriptural insight, and I have included them here that the reader might be further exhorted.

The subject of chapter 8 is embracing a new diet immediately upon being called out of Egypt. Even as Yahweh provided a new source of food for the Israelites to feed upon, as seen in the manna and the unleavened bread of Passover, we are to cease feeding on the leavened and fleshly offerings of the world when we are called out by God.

Following are some comments of a Christian brother who grew up in England, but now resides in Nevada. Those things he received bear witness as having their origin in the Spirit of Christ. He writes:

Dear brother,

I am being edified by your current book, and the latest chapter especially resonated, as Yahweh has been showing me these same truths in greater clarity than ever before recently. I had a few thoughts I wanted to share.

I have never been an avid watcher of TV (growing up my family got rid of ours and I watched none for a good decade or so). However, since moving to America with its hyper-TV culture, it is easy to spend time watching, even if it is a small enough amount to (erroneously) convince myself it is “harmless.” I have always known deep down that TV is garbage spiritually, but this was reinforced a few years ago when I had watched a couple of hours, despite knowing full well I was neglecting the things of Yahweh in doing so. Anyhow, that night I had sudden and severe sickness, that I believed to be food poisoning, and I was literally throwing up all through the night. In the midst of the physical misery I cried out to the Lord “is there a spiritual lesson to this?” I very clearly felt the Spirit say “In the same manner, this is how TV affects you spiritually.”

Despite that lesson, I have flirted with TV and movies in the years since, never truly realizing that I needed to completely cut them from my life. However, I recently received this revelation with such force that I completely stopped watching them. The spiritual growth and renewed focus that has come from this has been amazing...

One analogy concerning this situation that came very clearly to me is as follows: if we are ‘radios’ so to speak, there are only two basic wavelengths we can be tuned to: the flesh, or the Spirit. Almost everything in this temporal realm, and especially this corrupt, decadent culture, is powerful to tune us to the wavelength of the flesh if we allow it. TV, movies and such things will rarely (if ever) tune us into the Spirit. The times I am the weakest in spirit is when I have devoted time to the wrong ‘radio channel.’

All of this is just a roundabout way of agreeing with your chapter, and indeed Paul's writings concerning the flesh and the Spirit. However, the radio analogy has been powerful for me, because it takes away the 'grey areas' and makes it clear that even a little leaven can leaven the whole lump. I am certain Yahweh has the same things on the hearts of those called to be overcomers everywhere, who are realizing the need to leave Babylon without taking any garments or belongings along from that city.

Grace and Peace be with you, Joseph!

Your brother,

Michael Shevlane

Following is another profound witness that brings a very insightful testimony to the effect of a worldly diet on the inner man. This brother from California describes the increase of spiritual sensitivity that was his after he spent a year without watching television or reading other media, but reading only the Bible.

The Air We Breathe

During the fifteen years I flew a private plane I gained a new perspective on smog. After spending most weekends in the clear, clean air of the mountains we would fly home at 11,000 feet with a 200 mile visibility. I never noticed the air at that altitude smelling clean, for clean air has no smell. It is odorless and invisible.

From the air the LA basin has the appearance of a lake filled with a yellow brown smoky substance, 1500 feet deep, and during descent you realize you will soon begin to breathe this into your lungs. As the plane would enter the top of the haze, the sensation was more like getting ready to submerge in a submarine, and my body would take a deep breath like you would before going under water. The instant you submerge the visibility immediately drops from 200 to 3 miles, and, if at night, the stars disappear as an orange haze illuminates the cabin and the sky. As the air pours in through the vents, you first sense the temperature change, then you wait to take your first breath. Then comes the stench, a musty chemical smell, something like burned oil, then tightness grips your lungs as your body gives its warning.

At cruising altitude, it is very peaceful. The plane is on autopilot and all I have to do is enjoy the scenery and watch out for occasional aircraft that, at night, I can see coming over 100 miles away. But, now things become very busy. The radio is active as I begin checking in with air traffic control. The reduced visibility keeps me on high alert watching out for air traffic as I follow my planned route to avoid restricted areas, and peering intently through the haze trying to locate the airport.

Fifteen minutes later, I am safely on the ground and take a deep breath -- AND SMELL NOTHING. It is not that the air no longer smells, but that I don't

notice. I was so busy I didn't even notice the change. It is not just that I no longer smell it. I cannot smell it, no matter how intently I sniff the air.

You see, our senses are given to us to warn us of danger, but once the danger is accepted they automatically reset to a new level of sensitivity. The abrupt change in air one experiences in an airplane, sets off the alarm, yet I have driven the same route in an auto over the Grapevine into LA and never noticed the change in the air. When changes occur slowly, the senses cannot detect it unless we are paying very close attention, constantly sniffing the air for odors.

This situation is well known as the frog in the kettle syndrome which demonstrates that if a frog is placed in a kettle of water and gradually raised to a boil he will die in the water rather than jump out. Yet, he would jump out immediately if he was thrown into water that was slightly over 100 degrees. Some of you have experienced this getting into a hot Jacuzzi. You have to ease into the water to get used to it.

My point in all this is not to alarm you regarding breathing smog, but rather to point to a threat that is far more dangerous to your soul...

God has given us precise images, called similitudes, throughout creation which perfectly represent spiritual truths if we have eyes to see them. And, God provides the sight to those who love, obey and seek Him. In the case of what we are discussing, let us consider the example of lung cancer. A cigarette smoker gets a strong warning from his body the first time he takes a puff. If he ignores it, the body increasingly tolerates the damage to the lungs as it focuses on the pleasure it gets from the nicotine. The warnings increase with wheezing, coughing up phlegm, and finally cancer of the lung which begins to spread death throughout the lungs and the rest of the body.

This physical world example of how the air we breathe can poison our body accurately portrays that which is also invisible in the air that is poisoning our soul. This was powerfully brought home to me at a men's retreat a couple weeks ago. The pastor was addressing the issue of the excuses we give for not memorizing scripture and asked us to complete the following sentence. "There she goes just a-walkin' down the street ..." Most of you are already completing it in your head "singing doo wah, diddy diddy, dum diddy doo." His point was that we memorize things without intending to and we don't even have to know what they mean. Then, he asked us how many of us could name the twelve sons of Israel or the thirty miracles of Christ. The difference is exposure. We absorb what we are exposed to without thinking about it.

The truth of this almost knocked me off my chair. I had felt a little sheepish knowing the words to Doo wah, Diddy diddy, but at least that was a song. My sheepishness quickly turned to anger, however, when I realized I had been forced against my will to memorize "Two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun." By exposing my spiritual lungs to the cultural airways, I have been forced to memorize the ingredients of a Big Mac and I cannot get rid of it no matter how hard I try. It is a part of my soul.

Now think of how the "word" of the culture has become a part of you... All these headlines appeared on one day! Friday, June 14, 2002.

Boy of 17 hacks into missile secrets
WHO confirms Ebola cases
MARTHA'S PRISON EVERYDAY COLLECTION
American Taliban Says Interrogation Violated Rights
Bishops Back Off of Ousting Priests
Dying Grandmother Raped in Hospital Toilet
Senate Cloning Bill Faces New Setbacks
Girlfriend Arrested in Man's Torture - Buttocks Almost Cut Off
ABC Peter Jennings Vetoes Patriotic Song for July 4
Gangs, prison: Al Qaeda breeding grounds?
Bush mulls 'provisional' Palestinian state
Two female would-be suicide bombers arrested
Israelis 'betting on suicide bombings'
China Tackles Locust Plague
Murder Verdict in Infant Starvation
Buddhist Funeral Rites Held for Ape

Stand back and look at what these stories as a whole represent? View them as a collage, not one by one. Did your nose detect them when they appeared? If not, your sense of smell is already seriously diminished and there is some lung damage.

Once this occurs and your spiritual senses have reset, you lose the power of discernment. You will "see" these things, but not notice because they have become accepted by your soul. Paul refers to this as those whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. Other Christians may warn you about such things, (as I am now doing) but you will not see them to be very serious. You may say, "I see your point, but aren't you exaggerating a bit?" I know the feeling, because for thirty years I didn't see it either. I only saw clearly after being cleansed. Even now, there is probably much that I am missing. The only way you can tell if I am right or wrong is to cleanse your senses. You cannot discern polluted air until you breathe clean air.

You see, once you have lost the ability to smell, you cannot will yourself to do so. You are trapped. The only escape is to cleanse and reset your senses.z

Lamp of the Body

The major cause of defeat in Christians comes through the eyes. The evidence is overwhelming. Surveys indicate that over 50% of pastors have a problem with internet pornography, but this obvious problem is not as great an enemy as the shaping of the Christian (and non-Christian) soul by all forms of

world visual imagery. TV, movies, books, magazines, newspapers, billboards, the mall, the beach, and billboards. Everywhere, we find ungodly images which unconsciously make their imprint on our soul. Like our sense of smell, we quickly reach the point where we no longer notice. The images create desires that bring us to failed marriages, financial ruin, and condition us to operate according to the rules of the world...

I can attest that this works. For thirty years I saturated myself with the culture with a primary focus on business. Each night, I would come home and turn on the TV while reading the newspaper, business magazines and journals, and assorted business and self-improvement books... I was 110% focused on the things that were most interesting to me and I was exposing myself to everything else in the culture as a part of the process.

In 1997, the Lord woke me up and taught me the absolute truth of His Word beginning with "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Sometimes change occurs slowly, but my bad habit was used for good. I was already spending 110% effort pursuing the things that were most interesting to me. Now the fear of the Lord made it extremely important to me to understand what He had to say and, without any conscious effort on my part, I completely quit all media (newspapers, magazines, TV, movies, all of it) and began to focus all of my attention on the Bible. At first I understood very little, but I continued because I was certain there were answers there and I wanted them...

I did this for about a year before I saw another TV program. When I did, I was amazed and appalled. I could not believe what had happened to the shows and the commercials. I simply could not stand to watch even a few minutes of it. When I read newspapers and magazines I could see the bias and the blatant promotion of radical viewpoints. In short, I could now see plainly what I was blind to before. As time goes on, that vision continues to improve.

Consider this challenge for a moment. If you read in today's paper that terrorists have poisoned selected water supplies throughout the United States what would you do? Would you continue to drink from the tap as long as it tasted ok or would you begin drinking only purified, filtered water? Your soul is being poisoned as we speak and the only solution is to cut the poison off and begin drinking only from the Water of the Word. Try it for 90 days. Cold turkey. Take all of the time you spend now reading, viewing or listening to any worldly media or entertainment and devote it to prayer and reading and hearing the Word. Spend it with your children. Then, test your eyesight. Pray that the Lord will allow you to see through His eyes and read Time magazine and watch a couple sitcoms at random. Look at the covers of the girls and women's magazines in the grocery store checkout line.

When the boiling frog is removed from the hot water before death and allowed to cool, he will jump out if replaced in water of the same temperature. So will you. We are feeding our flesh and starving our spirit...

My prayer is that you and your family will take the challenge. You are, and are continuing to be, poisoned. Yet, you will never know if I am right unless you take the test and detox. Your life and that of your family depends on it.

Glen Pickren

A Sister Writes:

There is also more confirmation concerning the abstaining from impure food for our minds (spirits, heavenlies). I believe this is an answer to the interpretation of a dream that I had a few weeks back. In the dream I was in my living room and my husband was in the kitchen, and a strange crippled man comes rolling through the living room (right in front of the tv, I might add). This man is so crippled that he cannot stand and must navigate by rolling on a small wheeled cart. I was so shocked to see this man in my home and knew without explanation that he had taken up residence in my house without our knowledge!! I quickly called for my husband, but he wasn't concerned like I was that this stranger was living (hidden) in our home! It was only today that I realized the interpretation... that television and other outside influences were crippling me spiritually. Does that witness with you? The Lord is faithful and good to communicate His will to us in so many ways.

*Bless you, brother,
Kathy Darden*

A brother writes:

Dear Joseph,

Interestingly, the first verse I opened to last night when I got home was the following from Ezra:

1 Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. 2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. 3 Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. 4 Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it."

In the same way the people gathered together and repented for their pagan alliances, Yahweh is calling us together in repentance over joining ourselves to the world ("pagan wives"), and the bad spiritual fruit that has resulted ("those

who have been born to them"). They were given a common heart to put away the unclean thing and become dedicated to the things of the Lord only.

Grace and Peace,

Michael Shevlane

A Parable (Joseph Herrin)

The Lord opened my eyes to the spiritual similitude found in two conversations I had today with men from the rescue mission. One man was speaking to me about the issue of smoking. He mentioned that about eight years ago he knew he had to quit smoking for it was killing him. He has had a number of heart surgeries and has a defibrillator implanted in his chest. He said that when he quit smoking that he simply took his pack of cigarettes and threw it away and made up his mind to never smoke again. He has been faithful to this commitment.

This man's wife is a smoker. She too knows it is detrimental to her health, and she has sought to wean herself off of cigarettes. She has sought to cut back gradually, and now smokes a pack about every three days, where she used to smoke a pack every day. He declared that he does not believe that she will ever be able to quit.

As I listened the Spirit brought application to the matter of the television and movies and other media that His children consume. Many of God's children are trying to wean themselves away from that which is impure and crippling their spirit man by cutting back. However, they have not put that which is deadly completely away. Because they have not made a complete separation they remain enslaved, and their spirit man is being steadily poisoned. It would be much easier if they made a complete break from feeding upon these things.

Later the same day I was speaking with another man at the Mission, and he abruptly changed the topic to his diet. He knew nothing of that which the Spirit had been speaking to me, so my attention was alerted by the change of topic. He said that he was struggling with eating too much food. He said that he would cook a large amount of food at a time, probably enough for five people, but that by the time he got through eating it had ended up being a single meal. The result was an increase in weight, and all he would want to do after eating was sleep.

The parallels to our spiritual man are clearly seen in this. As we feed on the food of the world we become more fleshly, and even when we want to show restraint we end up consuming far more than we had intended. The immediate result is a spirit of slumber comes over our inner man. This is a very dangerous condition for any Christian to find himself in during this late hour when spiritual alertness is necessary. In the parable of the ten virgins we find the Lord speaking the following words:

Matthew 25:5

"Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep."

Although the church often praises the five wise virgins in this parable for having oil in their lamps, it is often ignored that none of these virgins was going to the wedding feast to be married to the Bridegroom. These virgins were not included in the bride of Christ. Certainly, part of the reason for this disqualification was that they all fell asleep while the bridegroom tarried, for the bride of Christ will be watching intently for her Bridegroom's appearing.

During the occasion of the transfiguration of Christ on the mount when Moses and Elijah appeared, we read the following:

Luke 9:32

Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory...

We too will only see the glory of Christ in His appearing if we are fully awake! We must not allow our senses to be dulled by the stupor that comes from feeding upon the world's fare.

A day of great calamity is coming in which men will be caught unaware and suffer great harm because they were not intent on the Spirit of Christ. Many Christians will suffer loss in this hour due to the dullness of their spiritual senses.

I Thessalonians 5:3-6

While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

It is often that which Christians deem as harmless that is the most dangerous for them. We may not think of watching an x-rated movie, for we know it is full of poison, but we may not have the same alertness to the message coming across the evening news broadcast. Yet even the news is reported in a biased manner, and it is intended to deceive the masses and to cause them to be distracted from that which God would have them to be alert unto. Just before the stock market collapse of the Great Depression, the news was reporting that things had never been better. Wealth was increasing, and things looked favorable as far as the eye could see. While they were saying "Peace and safety!" destruction was at their door. Are we so naive as to think that the media is now declaring things as they really are?

We need to be pressing in to the Spirit to know what He is testifying concerning these days. Don't allow the witness of the world to dull your spiritual senses.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days,

Joseph Herrin