



**CHRIST  
IN YOU  
THE HOPE  
OF GLORY**

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By William R. Hunt

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## Introduction

Would you like to learn more about what it means to live with Jesus? I use the word “with” because God does not ask us to walk this way alone. Although God is high and holy, He is also a personal God, extremely interested in our spiritual lives, our interactions with others, our challenges, and our needs. God does not view us as servants or slaves created only to do His bidding. No! He desires to fellowship with us as friends. Jesus told His disciples in John 15, “Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” (v. 15).

God wants to help you! If you have invited Him to live in your heart (for more about this, see the section at the end of this book titled “Help for Seekers of Salvation”), then He is walking **with** you, offering you **all** the help you need to make it to heaven. This little booklet is an exploration of what that looks like. Bill Hunt shares these principles because he has lived them and wants others to

understand their benefits. His life was completely changed when God got ahold of him. Now he writes from the perspective of many years of walking with God and learning from His Word. In these pages, Bill helps unlock the great mystery that confounds those who do not believe—“Christ **in** you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

## I AM

Jesus gave His apostles and all Christians these encouraging words, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). In verse 18 of that same chapter, He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Jesus did not say, “I WILL be with you.” He said, “I AM with you always.” The words “I AM” mean uninterrupted and continuous presence. We should engrave Jesus’ words “I am with you always” on our hearts and minds as a reminder that whatever circumstances, storms, frustrations, or temptations come our way, Jesus is present. He has the power, wisdom, and resources to sustain us under our load. Place all your confidence in Jesus. His presence will be with you in every circumstance of life.

## **Immutability**

God cannot lie. That fact and His immutability (unchangeability) bring strong consolation, reassurance, and comfort. Compare Genesis 22:17, 18 to Hebrews 6:13, 14. God made a promise to Abraham, and because “he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” We can follow the results of God’s promise to Abraham. Israel never lost its identity, and Jesus never lost His ability to transfer a person from the power of sin to the power of God. Many nations, past and present, have endeavored to destroy Israel, yet God is still showing the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed by an oath.

## Unity vs. Division

Jesus said, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). The book of Acts records that when the apostles and disciples were of **one accord**, the church grew (Acts 2:1). “And the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). Satan is a master at using people to hinder the church’s growth. One of his most powerful tools is “my opinion.” We see an example in Acts 6. The Grecian widows said, “In **my opinion**, I am being neglected.” In 1 Corinthians 3, opinions caused great division. One person said, “In **my opinion**, Paul is the greatest preacher.” Another said, “In **my opinion**, it is Apollos,” and yet another, “In **my opinion**, it is Cephas.” Those words caused division rather than unity then, and still do today.



## Surrounded by God

God surrounded the following men. Notice the position indicators listed here: behind, in front, beside, above, underneath, face to face, and in.

1. God said, “Abram, walk before me” (Genesis 17:1).
2. David said, “He leadeth me” (Psalm 23:3).
3. Isaiah said, “I saw also the LORD . . . high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1).
4. It is written, “Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9).
5. Moses said, “Underneath are the everlasting arms” of the eternal God (Deuteronomy 33:27).
6. The Lord spoke face-to-face with Moses (Exodus 33:11).
7. Paul said, “The Spirit of God dwelleth in you” (1 Corinthians 3:16).
8. Jesus referred to “He that abideth in me, and I in him” (John 15:5).

Where is God in relationship to you? What God has done for others, **He will do for you, if you allow Him to.**

## Friends

When I worked in real estate, I was taught to make friends with everyone, but to make bosom friends with bankers and businesspeople. Those contacts can make your business very successful. Others may want to buy real estate, but bankers and businesspeople do it. As a Christian, I urge you to make friends with all people, of course, but your best friends should be Christians who, like Jesus, have determined to do the will of God no matter the cost. Except for John, all the apostles were martyred for their faith. They are great examples of committed Christians. Jesus said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother" (Mark 3:35).

## Christ in You

Genesis 3:22 is a great foreshadowing of Christ: “. . . lest he [Adam] put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and **eat**, and live for ever.” For man to live forever, the fruit of the Tree of Life had to be **inside** him. Jesus said, “I live by the Father: so he that **eateth** me, even he shall live by me. Many therefore of his disciples . . . said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:57, 60). “Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them [the disciples], and said, Take, **eat**: this is my body” (Mark 14:22). “If Christ be **in** you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Romans 8:10). John 15 pictures Christ as the Vine. The nature of the Vine is also in the branch. Is Christ in you?

## The Wilderness

Jesus said to Peter, “Follow thou me” (John 21:22). Jesus asks the same of everyone: “Follow Me.” It is said that Jesus “knows the way through the wilderness.” The “wilderness” is populated with many towns: Doubt, Discouragement, Loneliness, Fear, Anxiety, and more. Jesus knows the way through them all. Follow close to Jesus. He will lead you through. In one hazardous place, three towns join as one. Their names are Lust of the Eyes, Lust of the Flesh, and The Pride of Life (1 John 2:16). Because of the attractions there, many people get lost in this group of towns, and lose their focus on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus; He will also lead you through these towns.

## Love for God's Word

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). We are commanded or compelled to include two components in our worship of God—the spirit and truth. God’s Word is absolute truth from Genesis 1:1 to the “amen” in Revelation 22:21. The Bible is not like a restaurant menu. We cannot pick and choose what we like. To worship God in spirit and in truth as God requires means we must develop a love for all of God’s Word. This kind of love for God’s Word comes when we prioritize it. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16) are great enemies to developing a love for the truth in God’s Word. Therefore, the deeds of the body must be mortified (put to death) by the Spirit (Romans 8:13).

## World Changers

The church of our day must include men and women who are willing to face the crises of our day, who have studied the passion of Christ, who have learned the business of prayer, and who are willing to wrestle with the Lord in prayer like Jacob until the Lord gives them power with God and man. The world's analysis of the praying church of the first century was that "these. . . have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Those who had "turned the world upside down" had an absolute transfer of trust from themselves to Christ. They believed that Christ's commitment of His church's future to them was the highest honor that could be conferred upon them. Their chief business was making prayer a controlling factor in their lives (Acts 6:4).

## Focus

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7). Wow! What a picture of worldwide spiritual darkness; of selfish, power-hungry men without God and hope. It is a picture of kingdoms in chaos—of inflation, sickness, and people in distress. It is a picture that should awaken followers of Christ. Christians must focus on Christ, and avoid being distracted by others’ chaos and attitudes. Just as focusing on the car ahead is essential when navigating rush hour traffic, so is keeping our eyes on Christ rather than on the chaos of the world around us. “Call upon me in the day of trouble” (Psalm 50:15).

## Head or Tail?

I began my ministry in 2013. My chief goal ever since has been to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 reveal that when God's people live pleasing to Him, they are the "head." It also tells how God's people become the "tail." The central theme through both chapters is that selfish choices destroy and keep God's people from being the head. Beginning with Adam and Eve, all people have had free will. Everyone has the freedom to choose what he wants. One of the results of the fall of man was that man's will was perverted or tainted by Satan. It became selfish. But man **can** live pleasing to God by choosing to submerge his will into God's. Is your will submerged into the will of God? Is your focus on people, your opinion, or God's will?



## God Hates Divorce

God was silent for four hundred years just before the birth of Christ. Why was Malachi 2:16 (“For the LORD . . . hateth putting away”—divorce) one of His last messages before that period of silence? God ordained marriage, not man (Genesis 1:28; 2:21-24). In Genesis 1 and 2, we see clearly that God ordained that families should begin with the marriage of a man and a woman. We can conclude from Scriptural principles and examples that 1. divorce divides what God has joined together; 2. living together as an unmarried couple teaches children that marriage is not sacred; 3. divorce can result in another family existing out of wedlock; and 4. divorce is a root cause for chaos in a nation.

## Reflections

When Jesus comes, “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi . . . that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness” (Malachi 3:3). This prophecy was given just before God went silent for four hundred years. The sons of Levi were priests and keepers of the Tabernacle. Four hundred years later, the Old Testament priesthood was changed to a Royal Priesthood for followers of Christ (1 Peter 2:9). A refiner of silver heats the silver and removes impurities that rise to the top. The silver is declared pure when the refiner sees only his reflection on its surface. “He [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). God’s plan is for Christians to reflect the divine nature of Christ as the silver reflects the face of the refiner (2 Peter 1:4).

## Living for Jesus

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23). “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the **glory** of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, emphasis added). “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). These verses were written to help us know how to live pleasing unto God and for His glory. Many nominal Christians give this very little thought. The verses above show there is sufficiency and power in Christ that enables us to live for God’s glory. I encourage you to make it your goal to live for God’s glory and honor. You will never be sorry you did.

## **Jesus Is the Light**

God is a God of provisions. “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years” (Genesis 1:14). Think about how sunlight surrounds and engulfs you. That light is necessary for the physical needs around you and in you. That light is God’s provision for your soul, spirit, and body while you live on earth. God has made another provision for us: His Son, Jesus. Jesus is just like the light but for your spiritual needs, both outward and inward. Those spiritual provisions are for “whosoever” totally follows Jesus (Mark 8:34). God, thank You for Your numerous physical and spiritual provisions!

## Faith Is the Key

In His Word, God said that there are four things mankind needs: truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding. “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23). Each is priceless, and marks the pathway to faith. Faith is the key that opens the door to God’s grace. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Start with truth, and follow it through to faith.

## God Cares

The first three chapters of Genesis and the last four chapters of Job reveal God's wisdom, love, weapons, power, knowledge, rewards, mercy, provisions, His ability to hear both the righteous and the unrighteous, and . . . His care for animals. Job 39 reveals that God knows when the wild goats give birth. God made the wilderness a home for wild donkeys. God gave goodly wings to the peacock. Basically, God was saying to Job, "Do you see how well I care for the animals? Yet you are more valuable than they." Reader, God desires that we have high, holy, and right concepts of Him. I challenge you to read those seven chapters with one goal: to gain an accurate conception of God. That will result in more confidence in Him.

## **It's a Miracle!**

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” (John 2:5). This is one of the Bible’s most significant pieces of advice. It was pertinent when Jesus’ mother Mary said it, and it is relevant today. Jesus and His mother had been invited to a wedding. The wedding party was nearly over, but those in charge had miscalculated how much wine would be consumed. Jesus spoke to the servants. The servants obeyed His instructions. The need was met. No one knew about the miracle Jesus performed except the obedient servants. But the servants’ obedience to Jesus’s request that day resulted in a great blessing for many. The account is still a blessing to people today. That first miracle was a display of Christ’s divinity. Through it, He showed that He was master over everything.

## God's Laws

At the time of creation, God set physical laws in place. A few of the laws are as follows: 1. Newton's laws of motion, 2. the law of gravity, 3. the laws of thermodynamics, and 4. the laws of motion. My college physics professor was very emphatic that if a law of physics was ever broken, it was no longer a law. It was a theory. These laws reveal the stability of God's character. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He not only created physical laws, but spiritual laws as well. After the fall of Adam and Eve, man's nature was twisted and warped. Man has since rebelled constantly against God's spiritual laws, yet rejoiced in the physical laws because of their stability. Spiritual laws also bring stability, but too often, they are ignored by many Christians.



## **Job and Jesus**

Let's look at some similarities between Job and Jesus. Both were rich and then became poor. Both had family members who had no confidence in them. Both had miserable comforters. Both experienced times of darkness. Both felt forsaken yet kept their confidence in God. Both held good concepts of God even while in agony. Both suffered exceedingly. Both ended up praying for their accusers. Both were obedient to God. Both ended up rich. Satan was the root cause of the pain both endured. God the Father knew what both were going through, but He did not reveal Himself. God said both were perfect. Both showed the frailty of man's humanity yet kept their confidence in God. One day, you will stand before God. What will be found in God's book on that day about your similarities with Christ?

## Love in Us

Jesus prayed that “the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26). This request is one of the greatest prayers in the Bible. It should be every Christian’s cry, goal, desire, and longing for this prayer to be answered for him personally. Denominational divisions would fade away. Church splits would end. Selfishness would be crucified. The counting of noses and pennies would be replaced with the will of the Father. Position-seeking would be a thing of the past, and replaced with the question, “What can I do to glorify my God?” Contentment of place and position would bring satisfaction. Father, I am asking You to answer that prayer for me. Father, awaken Your people to their needs and the magnitude of this love.

## Jesus Prayed for Them

In John 17:26, Jesus prayed that the love the Father had for Christ would be in His disciples. What does the Bible say about their characters? They had kept God's word (v. 6). They believed Christ came from the Father, and that the Father had sent Him (v. 8). They were worthy of having His joy fulfilled in them (v. 13). They were not of the world even as He was not of the world (v. 14) Christ had sent them into the world (v. 18) just as the Father sent Christ into the world to seek people like the Samaritan woman (John 4:17, 18). Those for whom Jesus prayed had an intimate relationship with Christ. They were willing to suffer rejection and even death to reach the lost.

## Jesus—the Great Example

In John 17:26, Jesus prayed that the love the Father had for Christ would be in His disciples. If we look at the character of Jesus, we will better understand what is pleasing to God. The cry of Jesus' heart was that He would perform the will of God. Total obedience to God was His goal. He was truthful, benevolent, and graceful. Jesus's supreme priority was fulfilling God's mission. He did not reject those who rejected Him. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. He wept over them and prayed for them. It did not bother Him to give up riches and fame to reach the lost for His Father. This led to His becoming a homeless outcast. "The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). Are we willing to follow His example?

## Wanted by God

When people reach old age (mid-70s), society often throws them on the trash heap. They are deemed “fit” only for U.S. President, senator, representative, or judge. But I have great news for older adults! God is searching for an old Abraham and Sarah,<sup>1</sup> an old Moses,<sup>2</sup> an old Simeon,<sup>3</sup> or an old Anna.<sup>3</sup> But wait!! God is *also* looking for dedicated teenagers. He’s looking for a Mary,<sup>4</sup> an Esther,<sup>5</sup> a Daniel,<sup>6</sup> or a Shadrach, Meshach, or Abednego.<sup>7</sup> Today, God is looking for “whosoever” will come to Him. As long as man draws breath here on earth, he is not worthless to God. Will you allow God to use you anywhere?

(<sup>1</sup>Genesis 18:11-14; <sup>2</sup>Acts 7:22-30; <sup>3</sup>Luke 2:25-36; <sup>4</sup>Luke 1:27-35; <sup>5</sup>Esther 2:2, 4:15-5:3; <sup>6</sup>Daniel 6:3-5; <sup>7</sup>Daniel 1:3-7.)

## **The Power of God's Word**

“God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). This passage is a great revelation of God. It reveals God’s transcendence. God’s word is far above any power that man can conceive. God created the heavens and earth. “The earth was without form, and void” (Genesis 1:2). When God said, “Let there be light,” the earth was instantly formed, and light spread throughout the heavens. Man’s finite mind cannot comprehend such power as God’s word. In the New Testament, we see the same power in Christ’s words when He said to the stormy sea, “Peace be still” (Mark 4:39). Instantly, the wind ceased, and the sea calmed. God’s word is the power of God. It will change lives, governments, and even nature itself.

## Wisdom

In His Word, God tells us that wisdom is available. In Proverbs 8, we learn wisdom can be found in high places (v. 2) and at the gate (v. 3). Her voice is available to the sons of men (v. 4). She speaks excellent and right things (v. 6). Her instructions are better than gold (v. 10). Wisdom is better than rubies. Nothing can compare to her (v. 11). Wisdom dwells with prudence (v. 12). Wisdom is opposed to pride, arrogance, evil ways, and hate (v. 13). She says, “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me” (v. 17). She carries with her riches, honor, and righteousness (v. 18). Wisdom has an inheritance for you (v. 21). Will you claim it? Wisdom is available to you for the asking. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

## Study of Sardis

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Revelation 3:1). The author was not the one saying the people of the church of Sardis were dead. **God** said they were dead. God said He would not blot their names out of the Book of Life—**if** they would change. Apparently, they lived such good lives that they fooled their friends. But God said, “I know you are dead.” They rebelled against God’s spiritual laws, too. Jesus said, “Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). Those are strong words from the mouth of Christ, but you can also see the love in His words. God loves His children and will take care of them.



## Results of Sin

What are the results of sin? Genesis is an excellent place to start looking for that answer. Genesis 3 records the man's first sin. It was a very small sin. Eve only took one bite. When sin enters the picture, it always wants company. Eve gave her husband a taste. Sin separated Adam and Eve from God. Sin always separates. Later, Adam appeared unhappy with God's gift—his wife. Adam told God, "It is Eve's fault." Adam was still in his wife's presence, but he was not edifying his wife or defending her. Adam laid the ground in that moment for domestic violence. At this point, Adam's heart was separated from the gift God had given him. Sin has caused many people to separate from a God-given gift. Sin has separated many a husband and wife.

## Jesus, the Vine

Have you ever walked by a vineyard and heard the branches of the grapevines saying to one another, “This is not my calling. I can’t do that . . . I’m not qualified. It takes a special branch to do that type of work. I don’t know if that branch is real. That branch is favored; it gets more attention than I do”? What does Jesus say about the branches? In John 15, Jesus said, “I am the Vine. My Father prunes the branches that abide in Me that they may bring forth more fruit. I am the Vine, and you are the branches. He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit.” The nature of a vine is also the nature of its branches. The branches will reproduce the same fruit or nature as the vine. Resting in Jesus is glory, joy, and peace.

$$2 + 2 = 4$$

Faith equals the confidence we have in a person or thing of interest. It pays to make God our primary interest. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing God's Word. The more we learn about God, the greater our confidence will be that He is who He says He is. As our confidence increases, so will our faith. If you want to have strong faith, read God's Word whether or not you understand it. It will build your confidence. Confidence in God will lead to a relationship like a vine and its branches. Read John 15. In eternity, not one person who had confidence and faith in God during his probationary period here on earth will be sorry for doing so. Probation ends when death comes and eternity begins. At that point, our confidence in God will be richly rewarded.

## 3 + 3 = 6

Faith is equal to confidence. Confidence + faith = trust. Confidence + trust + faith = reliance. All are built on the foundation of God's Word for anyone who seeks after God and desires a relationship with Him. I believe Jesus summed up this principle when He said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Jesus's words here are very strong. Remember this: God always provides before He requires. How do we become as a little child? By reading God's Word—the Bible. When a seeker after God reads the Bible (whether he understands it or not), he will eventually learn to rely on God like a child.

## Sacrifice

On the cross, Jesus said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). If God did not forsake Jesus, that statement would equal hypocrisy. He was forsaken because He took man’s sin upon Himself. Mark 15:34 shows yet another prophecy fulfilled by Jesus (Psalm 22:1). God the Son was slain by God the Father for our sins (Isaiah 53:4). Genesis teaches that sin separates people from God. On the cross, Jesus experienced God’s wrath against sin. We also see God’s love for humanity in His endeavor to reconcile sinful man with a holy God. Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb slain for the sins of whosoever would choose to forsake sin and follow the risen Jesus. I was born a Hunt. I had no choice in that. But in becoming a son of God, I had a choice!

## The Folly of Worldly Wisdom

“Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Corinthians 1:20, 21). The results of the wisdom of this world can be seen on the big screen of the United States: uncertainty, lack of trust in leadership, fear, frustration, hopelessness, anxiety, depression, etc. In Genesis 1 and 2, we see God’s love for man. God instructed man by His own voice. In Genesis 2:16, 17, God granted man free agency—the privilege of choice. When a man uses this world’s wisdom as a foundation for his reasoning, he travels a road that inevitably leads to chaos. I urge you to put your faith and trust in God, and not in the wisdom of this world.

## Trust Him

“Nathanael said unto him [Philip], Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Apparently, Nazareth did not have a good reputation. Think about Christ’s early years: He was born among animals, and then God told His parents to flee to Egypt to save their Son’s life. Next, God sent Mary and Joseph to raise His only begotten Son Jesus in Nazareth—this town with a bad reputation. Is God trying to tell us that if we are as obedient and devout as Mary and Joseph, He will help us with our children no matter where He sends us? Is He saying He will help us raise our children for God? We humans quickly forget that God has control of every situation. I love the song “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

## **Necessity of Full Obedience**

At a camp in Washington, Indiana, in the 1970s, God asked me to do something. I said I would, but on my terms. (That was a mistake. Later, I did exactly what God asked.) I was immediately thrust into a valley of darkness that lasted around two years. There was no sense of God's presence, nor did I receive any instructions from God. I was at the altar nearly every time the church opened for any service. Whether they gave an altar call or not, I went. I told the Lord, "I may die without a sense of Your presence, but I will still be seeking You when I die." On the cross, Jesus said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). After Jesus died for our sins, God raised Him up. After I died to myself in 1980, God came with new life for me, too!



## God's Voice

God gave us a great lesson when He said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast **obeyed my voice**" (Genesis 22:18). We can also have such an intimate relationship with Christ that we come to know **His voice**. "My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Christ goes before His sheep. In a time of intense discouragement, the great man of God Elijah heard God's still, small voice (1 Kings 19:11, 12). He was encouraged, and he obeyed the voice of God. This might be a good prayer for all of us: "Search me, Lord; examine every nook, crack, and crevice of my heart. Help me to cleanse out everything that is not pleasing to You. Give me ears to hear and, like Elijah, to know Your voice."

## Purpose

The cry of every living person's heart should be, "What is God's will and purpose for my life, and how can I find it?" The first three chapters of Leviticus teach that God's purpose for Adam and all his descendants, from the richest to the poorest, was that they would voluntarily, willingly, and freely offer themselves totally to God. Through the writer of Romans 12:1-3, the blessed Holy Spirit confirms what I have written about Leviticus. "I beseech [call, invite] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God [the only way and means], that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (v. 1). What is that "service"? It is to know that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God . . . by faith.

## God's Absolutes

God set up some absolutes throughout creation. For instance, our bodies **must** have nutrition, water, and oxygen. Trucks **must** have fuel, oil, and water. Plants **must** have food, moisture, and air. In physics, before a theory can become a law, it **must** be concluded that no exceptions are possible. We also find some musts in the spiritual realm. Jesus told Nicodemus that he “**must** be born again” (John 3:7) to receive the Spirit of God. Having the Spirit of God is a **must** for Christians. The spirit of this world leads one to feed on the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The Holy Spirit leads us into the will of God, and away from all of that. Which spirit is leading you?

## **The Blood of Christ**

Consider the following Scriptures: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). The cross, death, empty tomb, and resurrection of Christ are inseparable concepts. Together, they result in Satan’s defeat. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22b). The blood of Christ gives mankind access to the Holy of Holies where God the Father dwells (Hebrews 10:19). Humans cannot approach God except through a priest. In the Old Testament, priests were the mediators between God and the people. After Christ’s death and resurrection, He became our great High Priest forever (Hebrews 7:17). We have an open invitation to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16).

## Characteristics of Conquerors

Jesus left us with this command: “Go into all the world. Begin at Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria, and then go to all parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8, paraphrased). The Christian life is not one of isolation. It is a life of conquest. The early church demonstrated such. “These have turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). This conquest brought persecution, death, and imprisonment to the early church. Those who were conquerors displayed Christian character traits such as faith, virtue, valor, courage, and moral stability; knowledge or moral discernment to order and rule one’s life; temperance or wise life management; refusal to step into the world’s mold; godliness; and modeling the passions of Christ.

## Christ's Bride

“Do I look like a bride?” The question startled the man. He looked up into the sparkling eyes of an older lady awaiting his answer. Face radiant, the woman explained the death of her husband, and how she had found a new love. “I just got married today. Do I look like a bride?”

What if we ask the same question of ourselves? On this day, in this situation, in this place, do I look like Christ's bride? Am I a glowing and radiant testimony to His love for humanity? Is my behavior reflective of His love for me? Can those around me tell I am in love with Jesus? “For thy Maker is thine husband the LORD of hosts is his name” (Isaiah 54:5). A bride wants to look her best for her groom, and Christ's bride (the church) is admonished to be glorious and without spot or wrinkle—without blemish.

—Shawna Wright

## Prayer

Radio preachers are once again emphasizing prayer. I believe that is due to the chaos present in modern America. Jesus realized and modeled for us the importance of prayer. Here are some examples of Jesus spending time in prayer. Early in the morning, Jesus got up and went to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35). “And it came to pass in those days, that he [Jesus] went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). “And it came to pass, that, as Jesus was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). By watching Jesus, the disciples also learned the necessity of prayer. Do you identify with the disciples? I do. If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we need to do the same?

## Christ in Us

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The cry of God’s heart has always been to abide in the hearts of men. John 15 teaches that God dwells *in* those He saves. “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (v. 5). “Abide in me, and I in you” (v. 4). Romans 8:9 states that if the Spirit of God is not in us, we are not saved. Romans 8:11 expresses that spiritual life comes from the indwelling of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul says, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” Ephesians 1:13 reminds us that we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise when we became Christians. In Ephesians 3:17, we read that Christ dwells in us by faith, and 3:19 is a prayer that we be filled with all the fullness of God. Christ gave His life freely so that He might live in you.



## The Great Mystery

To make heaven is a good goal. But God offers an honor more significant than just making heaven. This honor was hidden in a mystery for ages and generations. Christ had to die a cruel death on the cross before this mystery's great honor and glory could be revealed. God chose to disclose it to the Colossians through Paul (Colossians 1:27). The secret is this: Christ abides *in* all men who are faithful to Him. It is no wonder that Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). I hope you will catch a glimpse of the honor and glory God has for you. Rejoice in the wisdom of God!

## God's Eternal Word

Today's electronic gadgets make it easy to fill our minds with the "soap bubbles" of this world. In many places, the Bible teaches clearly that this world will pass away. The heavens (atmosphere) and earth are temporal. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). Man ought to be filling his heart and mind with something eternal like the Word of the Lord. Man's spirit is eternal. The Bible teaches that man chooses whether he will spend eternity with God, or in the lake of fire that has been prepared for the rebellious angels. Both are eternal. God's Word is eternal. God's Word is powerful. God's Word cleanses. God's Word is truth. God's Word is a love letter to us. I encourage you to develop a love for God's Word.

## Warnings

In Matthew 25, Christ gave us three warnings. #1—INDIFFERENCE. Half of the virgins were indifferent to spiritual things (Matthew 25:1-12). #2—UNGRATEFULNESS. A third of the people did not use wisely what had been given to them (Matthew 25:14-30). #3—BUSYNESS. Jesus speaks of the judgment when He will return with all the holy angels. He refers to the righteous as the sheep, and the unrighteous as goats. The sheep had a passion for the Lord, His leadership, and His will. The goats were too busy to do the Lord's will. They were too busy to do visitation or to help the hungry or strangers (Matthew 24:31-46). Jesus' words for them were these: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). In each example, some made bad choices. When it comes to eternal things, choices are extremely important.

## Be Filled

“Be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). To be filled with “all the fulness of God” is inconceivable. The statement implies the impossibility of the existence of any mixture. Heart purity would be certain. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Time and maturity should bring clearer thinking, greater and higher concepts of God, and a greater love and compassion for all people. Passion for God’s will and God’s house, love for the truth and the benefits of the cross, and a deep hunger to be identified with Christ and God’s people—all will begin to blossom and bring forth fruit when we are filled with God’s fulness. Will you pray this prayer with me today? “Father, I am asking You to fill me with *all* the fullness of God.”

## **Benefits of Fullness**

“Be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:19). In time, the fullness of God brings to us the following:

- A greater love for the Bible
- A greater passion for souls
- A longing for God’s glory
- A longing to see Jesus
- A love for all people
- Better concepts of God
- Better priorities in life
- Better thinking
- A better relationship with God
- A better understanding of life
- A better understanding of the nature of mankind
- A better understanding of how hideous, evil, and abominable sin is to God
- A better appreciation for the cross.

## “Yet”

“Go ye up unto this feast; I go not up *yet* unto this feast; for my time is not *yet* fully come” (John 7:8, emphasis added). “Yet” is an important word. It reveals much about Jesus. Jesus was in Galilee because the Jews sought to kill Him (v. 1). Galilee was His home. His brothers did not believe He was the Messiah, and using their worldly wisdom, they challenged Jesus to go to Jerusalem. Jesus’ brothers did not know that He was following His Father’s will and timetable (John 4:34 and 6:38). Those two “yets” reveal Jesus’ character and determination to accomplish His Father’s will by offering Himself as the Sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Jesus knew that on the cross He would experience painful agony and the rejection of people and His Father.

## The Cross

George Bennard's song "The Old Rugged Cross" has stirred millions of hearts. The benefits of the cross are too numerous to write. The cross was instrumental in opening the door for all men to access God's mercy and grace, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. Mankind can experience hearts purified by faith (Acts 15:9). Because of the cross, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the Comforter was sent to the world to reprove the world of sin (John 16:7, 8). Because of the cross, Christians are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Because of the cross, Christians find out they were chosen before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1:3, 4). We have been "chosen by God"—wow! Those words are music to the ears!

## Delight

What we delight in is what we consider valuable. Many people do not take time to consider the value of their soul. The value God placed on the soul of man resulted in God's only begotten Son (the Messiah, Jesus Christ) being rejected by His people, crucified, and buried—to the delight of the high priest and other high-ranking religious Jewish leaders. But because of God's delight in all mankind, Christ arose on the first day of the week. Christ's resurrection opened the door for all who, by faith, willingly repent (turn from sin) and accept Christ's sacrifice as a substitute payment for their sins. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" for sin (Hebrews 9:22). In what do you delight?



## Unstoppable

Good news! The world's spiritual darkness could not prevent Jesus' birth, nor could it kill Him after He was born. Jesus said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18). Spiritual darkness begins when men disregard God's Word, and endeavor to make the Word fit their lives rather than fit their lives to the Word. When that happens, wickedness gravitates to the top and into church and government leadership. When that happens, state leaders become anti-Christ. The good news is that spiritual darkness cannot stop God. Remember: Jesus was born in Bethlehem amidst great spiritual darkness.

## God Does the Impossible

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). Mary displayed her belief in God. She said, “Be it unto me according to thy word” (1:38). The foundation for Mary’s belief was the Word of God. Mary knew she had possibly legally sentenced herself to death. When Joseph found out that his espoused wife was pregnant, he knew that Mary’s death was the punishment required by law. But like Mary, Joseph chose to believe the Word of God. “The angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:20). God performed the impossible through Mary and Joseph both of whom believed God’s Word. Emmanuel, meaning “God with us,” was born.

## Help for Seekers of Salvation

*What does Jesus offer to ALL people?*

*Answer: Forgiveness from sins*

To be saved, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. You must believe you are created by God and have enough faith to believe God's Word. Forgiveness is for "who-so-ever" shall confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in his heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. The Bible says *that* person "shall be saved" (Romans 10:9). St. John confirmed this when he said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "Whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15). The gospel of Jesus Christ is for you!

*What does Jesus have to offer to the world?*

*Answer: Removal of sin*

If a person travels straight north until he reaches the North Pole and then he keeps moving, he will begin going south. If a person travels straight east, though, he can continue indefinitely, never meeting the west. **“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).** God will “subdue our iniquities” and cast all our sins “into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19b). God said, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). Not only does God remove sin and remember it no more, but God also said, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

*What must I do to receive God's salvation?*

*Answer: Believe that God will forgive you of your sins when you ask Him.*

Reader, you, too, can be saved and have a personal relationship with Christ. Here is a suggested prayer. "Lord, I know I am a sinner and need to be saved. Lord, I know Jesus arose from the dead and that His blood was shed for my sins. Lord, I'm asking You to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. Lord, help me grow in Jesus and develop a love for Your Word. **Lord, above everything, help me to keep my eyes focused on You and not on people.** Lord, Your Word has confirmed that You would save me; I believe You *have* saved me. Please give me a witness from Your Spirit to my spirit that I am Your child. By faith I believe Your Word; still, my faith is weak. Lord, increase my faith. Amen."

Name and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35-39).

“. . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

## Scriptures for Times of Doubt

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:37-39).

“The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:11).

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower” (Psalm 18:2).

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears” (Psalm 18:6).

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock” (Psalm 27:5).



