

*The Practice
of
Divine
Light*

Second Edition

by Jerry Johnson



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The Practice of Divine Light

Second Edition

written by Gerald (Jerry) Thomas Johnson

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(Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are from the New King James Version)

Author's Plea

For technical and practical reasons, I have not included in the body of this essay the full text of every passage of Holy Scripture to which I felt it important to draw your attention. I would consider it an honor if you would take the time to keep your favorite Bible handy to refer to it personally in each of these occurrences, even if you feel you have a good recollection of the verses referred to. This is important enough to me, the author, that I can say that I would not consider myself as having read this work unless I had done so. Consequently, I recommend that you give this paper more than one reading. Maybe you could go over it initially with some economy of time to get the gist and then pursue each Biblical reference in subsequent, more thorough readings. Needless to say, I think, and I pray that the exercise and the energy and the time spent would be of benefit to your soul.

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light,
Sun of righteousness, arise!
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Day-spring from on high, be near!
Day-star, in my heart appear!

Dark and cheerless is the morn,
If Thy life is hid from me;
Joyless is the day's return,
Till Thy mercy's beams I see;
Till they inward light impart,
Warmth and gladness to my heart.

Visit, then, this soul of mine;
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, radiant Sun divine;
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.

-Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Introduction

Is grass green? Simple question. I think most people would say that, yes, grass is green. But it is not quite that simple is it? What shade of green is grass? Is there grass that is another color? Does grass change colors? But, grass is generally green enough for us to say that the short answer is indeed, yes, grass is green.

There is a parallel observation to be made in the course of this short study. In the scriptures quoted you will find several places where two words are inserted in the text - "(gift)" and "(response)." "Gift" indicates something that the Father has done or something that He does or something that He provides (GIVES) to His children. "Response" follows a statement that indicates our reaction, or our receiving (TAKING), or our responding to, or the consequence in our life to His gift. God holds His hand out graciously and patiently with His gift and we respond by reaching out and taking (or responding to) that gift usually with some degree of praise and thanksgiving. You could call this the economy of "give and take" in God's Kingdom.

To put this in the most practical terms, let me ask you a question. In the relationship of a father with his child, who is the giver and who is the receiver? The father gives and the child receives. The father teaches and the child learns. The father corrects and the child is corrected. The father initiates and the child responds. The child does not get up one morning, go to the breakfast table and announce to his parents that he thinks it is time for them to get together and conceive him. That decision is made completely independent of the wishes of the child. And, no matter how knuckle-headed and rebellious the child may be, the child will never not be his parents' child.

*Consider the scripture: "**We love Him** (response →) **because He first loved us** (←gift)." (1John 4:19) His gift to us is love. Our response to His gift is to love Him back. [Note: the arrows are there to indicate that the "gift" actually precedes the "response" even though they are reversed in the text.]*

*Here is another example: "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock** (gift). **If anyone hears My voice and opens the door** (response), **I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**" (Revelation 3:20) God's gift is to approach us, to beckon us, to call us, to "knock" on our heart's door. Our response is to heed His call and open the door.*

*Now there is a catch here: the "gift" and the "response" are BOTH the work of God in our hearts. [**For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.**" **Philippians 2:13 KJV**] God is a person, for sure, but He is not a normal human being and He does not act like us or think like us. And He is not restricted by any of the fleshly parameters that plague all of us. He is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. And He is eternal. And He understands everything. And He made everything. And He had a specific*

*purpose for everything He made. This is why we call Him...GOD! He has known you since before you came into existence. He knows what makes you tick. He knows what you really want. He knows what you really need. I say again, He is GOD for heaven's sake!!! If you know Him personally, the only way that could happen is if He birthed you from above (John 3:3). Therefore, He is, literally, your heavenly Father. And your heavenly Father has an infinite treasure chest of glorious plans and provisions for you and He knows how to bring you to the place of surrender to His grace. The Father **KNOWS HOW** to parent His child! The Father **WILL** parent His child! It is on this reality that we base our statement: the "gift" and the "response" are BOTH the work of God in our hearts.*

Most any healthy disciple of Christ will religiously study His written Word, the Holy Bible, if they are able. As the Scriptures become more familiar to us, we begin to notice many, many references to the supremacy of His reign in Heaven and on Earth. Also, we see instructions about His absolute power over and complete knowledge of physics, nature, time, space and matter. Finally, most troublesome or most reassuring, depending on your point of view, is the discovery from the Biblical record that God is sovereign over the hearts and lives of human beings. AND, as we will see in the course of our discussion in this work, all of God's supremacy and power and knowledge and sovereignty are brought to bear especially in His care and guidance for His children.

On the sovereignty of God over His creation, and especially His focus on His children, for examples see Genesis 18:14; Exodus 4:10-12; Numbers 11:23; 1Samuel 14:6; Job 42:2; Psalm 138:8; Proverbs 16:1, 9; 20:24; Isaiah 46:10; Jeremiah 10:23; 32:17; Matthew 3:9; 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; Romans 8:28-30; 1Corinthians 1:8; Ephesians 2:4-10; 3:20; Philippians 1:6; 3:21; 4:13; Colossians 2:12; 1Thessalonians 5:24; 2Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 3:4-6; Hebrews 12:2; 13:20-21; James 1:17-18; 1Peter 1:2-3.

*Yes, God Almighty, sovereign Creator of heaven and earth - **YOUR FATHER** - has a specific, divine will for your life! God Almighty has the power and the love to stick it out with you as His Child to see to your spiritual growth and maturity. We must immediately stress that we, His children, participate willingly. We say, "Amen!" all along the way. Sometimes with tears as He in His wisdom must chastise us, sometimes with joy at the hand of His blessing, but, "Amen!" all the same. God's children are not robots or mindless amoebas. We are not slaves in our wills so that we have no choice as to follow God or not. Indeed, we have choice, free will, and **only God Almighty could take the challenge and make the promise** to change us! Through the maze of our daily lives, in light of our faults and failures, in the mix of our confusion and our selfishness, in the face of our willfulness our infinite God is infinitely intimately involved in the transformation of His New Creation in our souls. And, in the end, if we are enslaved in any way, it is by our love and adoration for our Heavenly Father!*

God, in His sovereign omnipotence, which is wielded by His infinitely loving

wisdom, is working in our lives. And you can trace the indicators of that process in the Bible by looking for these two actions - **His gift** (or initiative) and **our response** (or receiving)...**BOTH ARE THE PRODUCT OF HIS WORK IN THE LIVES OF HIS CHILDREN!** No one can truthfully say that they have independently figured life and salvation out on their own and therefore have outsmarted God and put Him in debt to them to give them His divine nature and everlasting life. No, my dear friend, if you have a saved bone in your body, it is the kindness and patience and love of God to which you are eternally indebted. **On our own, there are none "good" - no, not one** (Psalm 53:3, Luke 18:19; Romans 3:10, 12). Without God taking the initiative to birth His new life in our inner man we are without eyes to see His light, without ears to hear His voice. Concerning the truth, we are clueless until we are born again, born from above. Yes, we prayed a prayer, or we made a decision, or we went to the altar, but it was God Almighty, out of His infinite love and mercy, that kindly brought us to that place in our lives. He was there, working all along! It did not "just happen."

You may be asking yourself, "How does this relate to the idea of green grass?" Well, as you study Scripture, you will see this "gift/response" phenomena often. But, we cannot say that we can see it universally in every transaction between God and man. We might be able to make a case for it, but it would be a stretch. There are times when it appears, Biblically and experientially, that our walk with the Lord is just one long string of blessings and impartations from the throne! So, it is safe to say, like the color of grass being green, the process by which we realize salvation in our lives follows this general pattern of God gifting us with some otherwise unobtainable blessing and then us reacting to the impartation of that gift with a response that He wisely and omnisciently deemed predictable. See Ephesians 2:8-10. Certainly, **all good** flows from God's hand and we want to be careful not to over simplify or formulate His dealings with His child.

Also, you will see in Scripture that, at times, God initiates something in our life and when we respond accordingly that response triggers another gift from God. So (Surprise!, Surprise!), there is solid Biblical evidence of an ever upward spiraling life of beneficial change (maturity) for the healthy born-from-above child of God.

On the note of maturity, as we grow in our walk in the light, **we begin to take the "initiative" in our relationship with God**, to which **He responds** accordingly. This often takes the form of what is called "intercessory prayer" - prayer that we offer up to God out of a heart of compassion on behalf of someone else (e.g., 2Timothy 4:16; 1John 5:16). Other actions that we "initiate" (from our point of view) toward God would be praise or worship or thanksgiving (Jeremiah 33:11; Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 29:2; Psalm 95:2; 1Chronicles 16:34). You can be assured, God responds to such "initiatives" - all of which are actually a product of His loving, on-going intervention in the lives of His children.

We must reiterate the universal truth that there is no light but what comes

*from God (James 1:7). Every step we take, every claim we make on the salvation of Jesus Christ is the product solely of His loving, unmerited favor. Yes, we are exhorted to be "working out" our own salvation (Philippians. 2:12) but the truth is that it is God Himself who is "working in" us to **want** to do His will and it is God Himself who is empowering us to actually **do** it (Philippians 2:13)!*

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (response →);

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (← gift). (Philippians 2:12-13)

Without the Father's "working in" there can be no "working out!!!"

As we look into the Heavenly Father's marvelous gift of light to His children, let us be constantly reminded of His amazing enabling grace to walk in it!

...without which we have no true hope.

Practice/Walk & Light/Word

This paper is about the "practice" of Divine light. By our use of the word "practice" we are talking about how we normally conduct ourselves. This would include not only our actions, but also our words, our motives, and our thoughts. Practice has to do with the overall tenor or substance of our lives. So, when we use the term practice, we are referring to the general direction in which we are going with our lives, what kind of heart is exposed by what we do and say (See Matthew 12:34).

*Scripture, which we quote in this paper, refers to our "practice" as our "walk." People learn how to walk at a very early age. In fact, it is one of the two major milestones of infant development that parents make over the most: what their child's **first word** was (probably "Mama") and when they **first began to walk**. These are huge milestones in every baby's mental and physical maturation! They are the first major signs of the understanding of human concepts, the ability to intelligently communicate and the effective use of self-control. As you continue to read, you must note that we are dealing metaphorically with the phenomena of both of these indicators in the development of early human life. You will see that God has used these physical examples of our natural maturing process as a means to communicate to us the "nuts and bolts" of the spiritual maturing process. So, in the context of "**word**" and "**walk**," there is a very important parallel here between the natural baby and the spiritual baby.*

PRACTICE / WALK:

Using the term "walk" to refer to our "practice" has a very enlightening idea wrapped up in it. Walking has to do with movement. Not just any random movement, but, hopefully, walking has to do with progress. So, walking would be getting from one place to another. Walking would be leaving the location where we currently are and moving, progressing, going to that different place where we really want to be.

*Learning **to** walk is one thing, an important thing for sure, but the ability to walk is just the first step in learning **where** to walk. Have you ever had the feeling that you were aimlessly wandering around; that you were moving, existing, but really going nowhere in life? Is it not much more enriching and fulfilling to be intentionally pursuing and progressing toward a desirable goal? There is a big difference between intentional and random. Random conduct of life is a slothful, wasteful application of our God-given strengths and talents. Conducting our life (our practice, our walk) with intentionality involves bringing to bear these strengths and talents to accomplish something that we deem worthy of our time and effort. As we will see, though, just **any** intentional accomplishment is not the point. We could be walking to the bank*

to rob it, or, we could be walking to the store to get medicine for an elderly neighbor.

*You have heard the phrase, "In light of recent events..." What is meant by the use of this phrase is that plans or understanding, etc., are adjusted to accommodate the new information and insights, etc. afforded by the "recent events." This adjusting our actions and our words and our motives and our thoughts to new input is what maturing is all about. In Scripture this "input," at least in one sense, is called, "LIGHT." So, the Scripture quoted in this paper (see #11, Galatians 5) that we mentioned above says, "WALK in the LIGHT." AH-HA! Don't walk just anywhere...**WALK IN THE LIGHT!** Let your practice be to walk in the light. Let the light determine where you walk, when you walk, why you walk, how you walk.*

*The big word here is - drum roll - intentionality. **We must intentionally walk in the Light.** An example would be the practice of a major league pitcher. He wants to throw the ball with a certain windup, with a certain speed, with a certain spin, at a certain place in relation to where the batter stands with a certain result. In order for him to be able to predictably do that he has to "practice."*

Even so, you want to be kind and patient in the trials of life because your heavenly Father wants you to be kind and patient, right? (John 13:34; 1Corinthians 13:4) Well, if your "practice" for kindness and patience is that you wander through your days in random vanity and foolishness, focused on self and sin, then what will probably be your success at hitting the mark of kindness and patience in the trials of life? Kind of a dumb question isn't it?

To continue with the baseball metaphor: If you do not swing the bat with the intention of hitting the ball when the ball comes over the plate, then you will most certainly NOT hit the ball. And if you will go to batting practice, you will greatly increase the odds of hitting the ball in the game when it counts most. Get the picture? PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! Intentionally TRY to be kind and patient in the context of everyday life, intentionally holding your heavenly Father's hand all the way because you know you cannot be that kind of person alone in your own strength...this is the practice of divine light.

LIGHT / WORD: *There are many sources of "input" in the world. There are many voices speaking many different "languages," all of them full of incredibly divergent ideas and directions and instructions. On any level, you can always find someone who knows better how you should conduct yourself than you do. Some are right, are they not? But which ones? Ultimately, the only One qualified to tell you how to make your way through this walk of life is the One who designed it and made it. This One, incidentally, has a **specific** will (generated by infinite love and wisdom) for the where, when, why and how **you** walk. It is in the LIGHT of His WORD that we, as His children, are to WALK.*

*Maybe you remember someone trying to explain something to you and you were having a hard time getting what they were saying. Then, suddenly, "the light comes on" and you say, "Oh, I've got it! Now I understand!" That is an example of "seeing the light." Once you understand, then what they were saying goes from just being "words" to becoming "light." When "the light comes on" what they were trying to communicate is transformed from a string of confusing information to a blossoming enlightenment of mental illumination and understanding. But here we must make a distinction between human comprehension of human concepts, even human "religious" concepts, and the revelation of spiritual truth and reality which comes only from God. **This revelation of spiritual truth and reality is a personal, experiential transaction of "give and take" between you, the individual, the infant child of God, and God Himself.** (See #17, Matthew 11:27.) "Seeing the Light" is a divine, supernatural, spiritual impartation from the very mind of God! "Walking in the Light" is a divine, supernatural, spiritual empowerment from the very Holy Spirit of God! This "seeing" and "walking" is extremely important business. There is no room for foolishly getting puffed up here with pride. We are completely dependent on God's grace for every shimmer of Light that we see and for every step we take along the way. Everything in the universe, everything in reality, everything in existence (spiritual and temporal) originates and exists by and for the WORD OF GOD - the LIGHT OF HEAVEN!!! (see #1, John 1:1-4 and Colossians 1:16-17)*

*You will notice as you continue to read that there is little in this work to provide the reader with a formal definition of "the Light." Well, in my defense, when we are talking about Divine Light we must remember that we are handling infinity. How sadly and grossly mistaken someone is if they have the notion that once they obtain the information of a good dictionary definition of "The Light" then they have **The Light**. It would be like someone going outside on a bright sunny day with a quart jar, holding it up to the sun and slapping the lid on it quickly and screwing it on real tight, then putting it on the shelf in their closet, expecting to go in late that night and take the lid off to illuminate their shelves. Light doesn't work that way, does it? If I presumed to offer a textbook description of The Light it would be like trying to describe the color yellow to someone who was born blind. I can give metaphors and examples and adjectives and discuss all the ramifications and implications of the color yellow, but the only way someone can understand the color "yellow" is if they can see it for themselves. You cannot bottle up light! You can only walk in it! You either see it or you do not. The Light is not just the intellectualization and memorization of facts and figures...NO! **"The Light"** is an experience of God and it is only God-given! If you "see" you are miraculously waking up to and beginning to walk in divine, supernatural reality...only by the unmerited grace of God!!!!!!*

Exciting, if you think about it. Can you imagine?

Scripture Highlights

In many of the scriptures we quote in this paper, we have used special markings or "highlights" to draw our attention to "the Word" and "walking in the light"

*As you read on, you will encounter several words and phrases in the scriptures quoted that are marked this way - **the Word**. Each one so marked has, in the opinion of this writer, something to do with illuminating the biblical concept of "the Word."*

*You will also see several words and phrases in the scriptures quoted that are marked this way - **walk in the light**. Each one so marked has, in the opinion of this writer, something to do with illuminating the biblical concept of "walking in the light."*

Both of these styles of marking are there to draw your attention to synonyms and similar concepts of these two major themes of this paper.

Before you read any further, it may be a good exercise in meditation, and an excellent preparation for understanding the message of this work, to go through this paper and look at these specially marked words and phrases. See if you can pick up on the possible synonymous characteristics that they share. Consider each one in its scriptural context. Let them build in your mind a broader, wider view of these two biblical concepts, "the Word" and "walking in the light."

"The Light of Men"

*Now, on to the meat of the matter - **The Practice of Divine Light**. Let's begin with this classic passage of Scripture from John 1:1-5:*

- 1) Jn 1:1-5 In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
- 4 In Him was life, and the life was **the light of men**.
- 5 And **the light shines** in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Philosophically speaking, when we boil our thoughts down into a "word" it reflects all that we are, all that we know, all that we feel, all that we think, all that we have experienced and dreamed. It is all packed in there. It all stands behind this simple little thing we call a "word."

*It is a **huge event** in the course of human history for you to speak a word.*

*And, if your speaking a word is a huge event, then it is **an enormously huge event** to have someone else hear that word and process that word into the vast ocean of who they are and then respond to that word in an understanding, intelligent, rational, sensitive way so that you know they have accurately realized what you meant by your effort to communicate with that word! Just for it to happen **ONE TIME** is huge!*

And how blithely and thoughtlessly we constantly jabber away!

Yes, we often take words lightly - the things we say and the things we hear others say!!! In fact, in some cases this is justified. One of the most popular features on a TV remote is the "mute" button. A lot of what is being spoken in the world today is more damaging to the soul than edifying, especially to a child of God!

But, on a more esoteric level, to be able to communicate is, to some philosophers at least, the very definition of life itself! The ability to speak a word and communicate an intelligent thought is a huge asset - a huge gift - a huge event on the time-line of all history.

Consider the sentence - "See Dick run." We tend to take the event of the communication of such a statement (ANY statement for that matter) with a grain of salt. It is just another person blabbing, more verbal invasion, more intellectual noise pollution. Talk is cheap, right?

In the huge volume of words we ejaculate and with which we are constantly bombarded it is so easy to lose sight of how important and how rich it is to speak a word that communicates something that is of value to us to someone who is important to us. Indeed, the philosophers have a point: it is nigh on impossible to really know someone if they never communicate with us.

*Now read #1, John 1:1-4, again. God has sent us His WORD! **He has spoken to us in the person of Jesus Christ.** It is extremely important for us to consider and understand how utterly precious a thing it is that God spoke a WORD to us! ...a WORD that gives LIFE, that gives LIGHT to our hearts and minds. Oh, how miserable we would be if we had no light, no understanding, no truth, no assurance of how "THE OTHER" feels and what HE is thinking!!!!!! Communication from God is to our soul, to our minds, to our emotions what natural light is to our eyes.*

Look below at #16, 1John 1:5. The "message" is that God is light. God is the source of pure truth, wisdom, understanding, etc., these being fully imbued, permeated, and saturated with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc. (see below - #11, Galatians 5:22-23).

*Oh how important it is for us to understand that God's WORD to us is so much more than the intellectualization of printed matter and the orderly compilation of factual religious concepts! Certainly we read and study and discuss the written record of THE WORD, but, ultimately, THE WORD is a living metaphor - a pure, accurate, precise communication or "expression" of the thoughts and ways and character of God! Perhaps one reason why THE WORD had to be a living person is because the eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God is a living person. Everybody knows that what a person does, and the attitudes that a person has, and the motives they demonstrate, and the knowledge that they communicate, all with verbal AND non-verbal methods, is what demonstrates the kind of person that they are. This is what Jesus Christ did. He showed us the Father (John 14:8-10). The Son communicated to us exactly the character and the person and the will of God the Father. **JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE - JESUS IS THE LIGHT AND THE LIFE OF THE CREATOR GOD!!!** (John 1:1; Colossians 1:15, 19, 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-4)*

*If you have to have it on more fundamental terms, then consider who God the Father said that Jesus Christ was: "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, **hear ye Him!** (Matthew 17:5 KJV)" **Listen** to what Jesus said. **Listen** to the "WORD" of Jesus. **Listen** to the description which we have been given in Scripture of who Jesus said He was and what He did that proves it (John 14:11). Either Christ was a raving lunatic, or an egotistical maniac or... (drum roll)...He was who He said He was! **He was the WORD of God!***

***THIS WORD** is an ever-engaging, awe-inspiring "word" is it not? Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Word of God, the Light of God, the Bread of Heaven, the Way, the Truth, the Life, this man Jesus is God in the flesh! Release your mind to embrace the Son of God, fresh and anew. Open your*

heart to the very heartbeat of God in Christ Jesus. Look again and again full into the very face of sovereign kindness and tenderness and gentleness. Let the revelation, the light of this "word" blossom bold, new, expansive, living views in your soul of the love and the joy and the peace and the mercy and the power and the forgiveness and the immediate presence of Divine Light in your life. Embrace the Life of Divinity, eat the Flesh of Reality, drink the Blood of Truth: **believe THE WORD. BELIEVE THE WORD!**

"In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (vs. 4, above). Believing THE WORD is letting the Light in! Believing THE WORD is Divine Life Eternal, in its essence...IN YOU! (John 3:16) This is a supernatural transaction between God and His child. Without the light of God in you there is no life in you! Without the life of God in you there is no Light. Without the Light, the Life of God in you, you are darkness; your being is darkness. The essence of who you are is darkness if you are not birthed from above (John 3:3), that is, spiritually inseminated by the Being of Infinite Divinity. Man's wildest imaginations couldn't dream this stuff up! ...something so full of brilliant wonder, such magnificent glaring illumination in concept AND reality! Indeed, **"eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"** (1Corinthians 2:8 KJV). Think about what we are saying here and look at these scriptures:

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23) Dark light? How much of the message that you communicate to others by your words, your deeds and your attitude is "dark light"? What do you see with your spiritual eye? What perspective, what mindset, what world view guides your meditations? Listen to your own thoughts! Listen to yourself think about others. Compare your perspective, your meditations, your thoughts to what you know the Bible says and what the Holy Spirit is saying to your heart. If you do not care or know what the Bible says or if you do not hear the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart then you better get serious with God...real quick. This is dead serious! PRAY!

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). "...you were..." "...you are..." These words are reference to a state of being; not what you want God and others to think, but what really is. The phrase, "Walk as children of light" cries out to every born-again believer to consider your ways; consider your words, your deeds, and your attitudes. Don't just presume you are "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), ask yourself, "Am I the light of Jesus Christ to the world of specific circumstances and relationships that God has sovereignly placed me in? Am I LETTING my LIGHT shine? Or is the "light" that others see in me really darkness?!"

"...for you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness" (1Thessalonians 5:5 LEB). See? Are you? Am I?

"While you have the Light, believe in the Light, in order that you may become sons of Light" (John 12:36 LEB). BELIEVE!!!!!!! Faith is the doorway into the passageway of HOPE! "...that you may become..." If you are a child of God, you are a child of Light, **and**, you are "becoming" a child of Light. You are not as far along in your maturity as a Child of God as you could be but you are much farther along than you were. You proceed with every step by faith. You are pulled along in your journey by hope: hope that is anchored in the solid reality of God Almighty in your life, manifested by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your heart. So, hope is not based on a "theory." Hope is based on a relationship that begins and proceeds by your faith in Jesus Christ who lives IN YOU! You "believe in the Light" and, consequently, you are "becoming" more and more a being of growing Light - FAITH and HOPE.

Let us look again at vs. 5 of John 1: **And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.** Darkness cannot, will not, does not understand or comprehend divine Light. Darkness is powerless to grasp, comprehend, understand the meaning and the message of God's Word. To understand the implications and the solution to a "problem" or question is to "overcome" or "overpower" the problem. Darkness cannot do this of Light. Only the "sons of Light" can comprehend the communications of the Father of Light (James 1:17). Oh, what a wonderful vista into the depths of love and mercy and divine care of the Father for the child! This gives special, spiritual meaning to the phrase **"...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"** (Ephesians 6:4 KJV).

We bear after our own kind. It is a law of the universe: flesh bears flesh and spirit bears spirit (John 3:6; Romans 8:1-9; 1Corinthians 15:47-49). What is given birth by the flesh is flesh. What is given birth by the spirit is spirit. What is given birth by darkness is darkness. What is given birth by Light is light. What is given birth by the temporal is temporal. What is given birth by eternal life is eternal! And this life, this Light that you are is to be made plain and obvious in the temporal world - **"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"** (Matthew 5:14-16). If you are a child of Light then you are, your being is...drum roll..."the light of the world!" ...individually and corporately. And this being the light of the world is not a big super-spiritual sweat. It is not a huge regimen of hokus-pokus callisthenics in some monastery in the Himalayas. Being the light of the world is not some iron-pumping asceticism or giving your body to be burned for the cause or brow-beating everybody to their knees who do not agree with you. No. Being the light of the world is a function of "letting." **"Let your light so shine..."** You either ARE light or you are not. Let it shine! You either hold your heavenly Father's hand or you do not. That's the exercise. That's the practice. Your Father is God...let Him rule. Your heart is illuminated by the Light of Jesus Christ...let Him shine. Your being is inhabited by the Holy Spirit...let Him teach.

"The Express Image"

2) Hebrews 1:1-4 God, who at various times and in various ways **spoke in time past** to the fathers by the prophets,
2 has in these last days **spoken to us by His Son**, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;
3 who being the brightness of His glory and **the express image of His person**, and upholding all things by **the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

*Not just to be funny, but you may have heard the phrase, "The apple doesn't fall very far from the tree." We use this word-picture to illustrate how similar a son is to his dad. Well, Jesus is "the Son" of God in bodily form. Jesus is a real human being who is the only One ever begotten by the Heavenly Father in the womb of a woman. As such, Jesus is the faithful expression of "the Father," true to every aspect of the Father's character and nature. If you want to know how God thinks, look at Jesus. If you want to know how God responds to the plight of mankind, look at Jesus. If you want to know what it means when the Bible says that "God is love" (1John 4:8, 16), look at Jesus. If you want to know what kind of person the God of the Old Testament is, look at Jesus. If you want to know what kind of person you are going to be judged by in the last day, look at Jesus. If you want to know what God thinks is important, look at what Jesus thinks is important. If you want to know what God has to say to you, listen to Jesus! **This is worthy of our attention and our extended meditation.** And in the most practical terms, if you would like to know what it would be like to sit down and converse with the Creator of the universe, then prayerfully, respectfully, believingly open your Bible, starting with the first four books of the New Testament, and read until you hear His voice to you! Think about all the things you think about every day. Is any of it as important as what you think about Jesus? Couldn't we spend a little more time thinking about Jesus in light of how much time we spend thinking about all that other stuff?*

"...the express image..." The root word of "imagine" is "image." This brings up a very important dimension of our relationship with God. It is vitally important for us to engage the nature and character of God with our imagination; to allow God to fashion and expand our thinking about Him and His love for us by His written Word, and by His Holy Spirit in our hearts. Let us pour all the faith God endows us with into our imagination as we gaze on the wondrous realities of His Light. I do not mean that we dream Him up with our vain fantasies or conjure up some weird being to our own liking. What I mean is that we look at the record of who Jesus Christ is, what is recorded of Him saying and doing when He walked among men, and taking that information as material for our minds to begin to blossom awesome, amazing,

gorgeous pictures of what kind of person He is (Matthew 11:29). Imagine the truth is true! Let God have your imagination. Let God challenge your thinking and your imagination with His kind of questions: what kind of power and authority does He have (Matthew 28:18)? What does He think of mankind (John 3:16)? How does He deal with adversity (Luke 22:40-44)? Imagine how He feels about your attitude toward difficult circumstances (Luke 8:25). Imagine what He would say to your neighbor when he brings his dog to do its business in your front yard...all the time (Matthew 5:44). Imagine how the Father feels about His only begotten Son (Matthew 3:17). Imagine you actually loving other believers the way Jesus loved his disciples (John 13:34). Imagine Jesus opening your understanding of the Scriptures the way He did His disciples after He was resurrected (Luke 24:45). Imagine a world where God dwells with men in harmony, where there are no tears, no more death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain - FOREVER! (Revelation 21:3-4). Just imagine!

This is what I mean. Use your imagination. Why do you think God gave it to you in the first place? Using your imagination in meditating on the Word of God and reflecting on His hand in your life is like opening the venetian blinds of your thoughts to the Light of God. Just imagine all the stories of Jesus' miracles and imagine you were there and imagine how you would feel. Imagine you were sitting at His feet when He gave us the Sermon On the Mount. Imagine if you could talk to Him and ask Him questions about what He taught. Imagine He is in your heart right now.

*Imagine...**"The Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."** (John 1:1, 14 KJV)*

*Imagine...**In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** (1John 4:9 KJV)*

*Imagine...**Jesus is the only express image of the only true God!***

"Thy Word"

3) Psalm 119:105 **Thy word** is **a lamp** unto my feet, and **a light** unto my path.

"Thy word" - *The WORD is the light by which we walk. There are many strong and confident voices in the world that promote lies and hate. There are many intelligent people who argue for causes that seem good and reasonable on the surface but are founded on rebellion against the Truth. There are many soft and pleasant songs being sung that are full of poison and death.*

There is only One who can truthfully say, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

There is only One who can truthfully say, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9).

There is only One who can truthfully say, "...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (Joh 4:14).

There are many roads that lead to Rome, true. But when you get to Rome you will be the same lost soul that you were when you started your journey. God's Light will not lead you to Rome. God's Light will guide you to a new life - eternal life.

If we do not have God's Light, God's Word, God's Truth, to guide us then we have to just pick any door and take our chances. If we have no Light the world is a huge, dangerous, deadly trap. To companion with those who also have no light gives graphic meaning to the phrase, "the blind leading the blind." Do you see how important it is to listen to the WORD of God? To give heed to His every utterance? To meditate on every recorded aspect of His life on Earth? We are lost without His WORD. His WORD brought the worlds into being (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29; Hebrews 11:3) and His WORD sustains them (Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17). We are kidding ourselves if we think we are smart enough to get along fine while ignoring His WORD.

"a lamp and a light" - *You are not the source. You do not have the power, the insight, the wisdom, the understanding, the intelligence, etc., in and of yourself, to make your own way to eternal life in joy and peace. You are going to face eternity on God's terms, not yours! You do not have the wherewithal to avoid it. PERIOD. And you can be certain that you will exist for eternity - God's Word says so (Jude 1:13; 2Peter 2:17; Revelation 14:11; Luke 16:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Psalm 16:11; John 3:16) - but will it be*

"LIFE"? Who can tell? Who has the answers for life's most important questions? Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Is there a god? What is he like?

*Maybe you are thinking right now, "I don't care about all these far out issues!" Well, you will some day. Better now than later! Or, you may be thinking, "What makes you think you know it all?" The answer is that I do not know it all. But, I do know the One who knows it all. And He wrote a Book. And I read that Book religiously. Wouldn't you? And, weak and fallible and imperfect as I am, I walk and talk with Him. He LIKES to walk and talk with us...He loves us! His **WORD** says so (Romans 8:37; Ephesians 2:4; 5:2; 2Thessalonians 2:16; 1John 4:10-11, 19) and **HE, personally**, says so to my heart (John 14:16, 26; Romans 5:5; 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6).*

"The Light of Life"

4) John 8:12 Then Jesus **spoke to them** again, saying, "I am **the light of the world** (gift). **He who follows Me** (response) shall not walk in darkness, but have **the light of life**."

If we are not following Jesus Christ, we are lost, plain and simple. If we are not following Jesus, we have no life! If we are not paying close attention to His communication to us we are fooling ourselves with false hope and the endangerment of "strong delusion" (2Thessalonians 2:11). How many leaders can one man follow? To follow Jesus Christ is to have the path of true life illuminated at our very feet.

"Light of Life..." Look back at #1, John 1:5. Darkness does not comprehend - or understand - light.

[The word "comprehend" in John 1:5 is translated from the Greek word, katalambano. In Strong's Greek dictionary, the definition of this word means "to apprehend, obtain, perceive." In other words, in a mental sense, it refers to the ability to understand something. For example, in Ephesians 3:18 it is used of the Christian believer's capacity to comprehend with all saints the measureless love of God. Conversely, as we see here in John 1:5, the word is used to explain the inability of the heart of the unbeliever to know or perceive the revelation of God made in Christ. On this also see John 12:35. - from Dwight M. Pratt, as quoted in the Online Bible's notes on John 1:5]

When Christ Jesus told Nicodemus that "unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:4) He was addressing directly the Pharisee's hopeless inability to see what Jesus was talking about unless God performed a miracle in his being. (See #11, Galatians 5:17 and #15, Romans 8:5-8) As is the case with everyone, even this highly educated religious leader had to be "born from above" in order to have any understanding or experience of the light in Christ's words! Note that Jesus was audibly speaking to Nicodemus words of light but He did not comprehend (John 3:5). This educated man was dumbfounded. He was blind. This highlights the fact that no matter how educated you are about the Bible, you cannot grasp even the simplest, foundational truths of God unless you are a "new creature in Christ Jesus," EVEN IF YOU COULD HEAR WITH YOUR NATURAL EARS GOD HIMSELF SPEAKING IT TO YOU!!!!!! (1Corinthians 1:18; 2:14; 2Corinthians 5:17). Nicodemus was looking God Himself directly in the face of Jesus Christ and he was listening precisely to the "Word" of God on the lips of the Lord and he still had no clue to what Jesus was talking about because he did not yet have the spiritual ears to hear it and the spiritual eyes to see it. Darkness does not understand light.

But to those to whom God has given ears to hear and eyes to see (those who

have been "born from above" or "born again") there is an endless ocean of wonderful, healthy truth and awesome life-giving wisdom to bathe in for eternity! Consider these four scriptures:

"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Psalm 119:18). Wow! Is it not a great gift to look at the "law" through spiritual eyes and being able to honestly say, "That is wonderful! That is awesome! I want more of the LAW!"

"And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45, see vss. 1-49). I think it can be said here that "opening our understanding" is the spiritual parallel of "opening our eyes." Oh, how dark is the understanding of those who have no eyes...whose eyes are not capable of seeing the TRUTH...the LIGHT...the WORD! The "He" here is Christ. He is the Shepherd, remember? If He does not open the door of the sheepfold to you, you are NOT getting in (see John 10:1-9). Though we may have memorized them - verbatim - from cover to cover, if God does not open the Scriptures to us personally, if God does not open our spiritual eyes, then we have no comprehension, no understanding of what they mean for us, what they mean to our eternal soul. How humbling it must have been for these devout Jewish disciples of the innermost circle of Jesus' followers, who had been with Him day and night for three and a half years, to suddenly realize they had no understanding of the law of Moses, the Prophets, or Psalms (all of which they had studied religiously their whole life) until God supernaturally enlightened them. How priceless is that?!!! **Do we see** what a precious thing God has done in our lives, to open our spiritual eyes to see the "amazing grace" of the Son of God? ...**ONLY BELIEVE?!!!**

"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Corinthians 4:6). What? What does it say? "...LIGHT to shine OUT OF DARKNESS"? How can this be? Go look in the mirror and watch yourself sing "Amazing Grace" from the bottom of your heart and you will see light shining out of darkness! We are completely, hopelessly full of darkness in and of ourselves. If there is a modicum of sincere "believeth in Him" in our heart we are a supernatural manifestation of the miraculous power of God to call light to shine out of darkness...just as real and actually far more momentous than when He called Light into being in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:1-5). In fact, when He first opened your eyes to the TRUTH of who Jesus Christ is and what He did for you, it was **the primeval beginning** of the creative life of God in the universe of your soul!

"Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14; Ezekiel 37:4-10; Isaiah 60:1-22). God says, "AWAKE!" God says, "ARISE!" God gives light.

Light is truth, but not just "accurate facts" - light is truth with understanding and discernment and wisdom and compassion and faith and so much more. Light is the basking of the soul in the infinite sea of the love and care of God

Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. Light is the medium, the atmosphere, the ethos of communion, true communion, true spiritual communion with the Prince of Peace. All the action figures, and all the super-heros that all the professional gamers and Hollywood dreamers can concoct don't come close to the reality of what believers are called to swim and revel in!!!!!! Oh God, help us put into shoe leather what You mean by "walking in the Light!"

*Does anyone lack wisdom? Does anyone lack understanding? If you know your grasp of spiritual truth is shrouded with doubt and confusion, if you know you lack insight for living, or strength for believing, or love for giving, then humble yourself before God to ask Him to give such marvelous, priceless gifts to you and He - who gives generously - will bless you with light for your path! (James 1:5-8). Can you hear the Savior calling? Do you see Him walking alone in the garden of your heart, patiently waiting for your company? Is the tug of His Holy Spirit pulling on your conscience? Respond! Answer! Take! Receive! Reach out to Him! Cast all your care on Him (response→), for He cares for you (←gift) ! (1Peter 5:7). We have wasted enough time! Life is short and we will give an account of what we have done with this man Jesus. Therefore let each of us determine by the grace of God to turn our backs on sinful deeds and idle hours, and let us arm ourselves with a **dynamic, ongoing, conversational, loving relationship** with the Lover of our souls! ...the only Father of the only Light! (Romans 13:12).*

[Note the acronym "DOCLOR" formed by the first letter of each word in the emboldened phrase above.]

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. 46 I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." (John 12:44-50)

"The Covenant"

5) Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put **My law** in their minds (gift), and write it on their hearts (gift) ; and I will be their God (gift), and they shall be My people (response).

This "new" covenant is the agreement that God has made with those who put their faith in the work and the person of Jesus Christ. We know that this Old Testament (Old Covenant) passage applies to us today, those who are called into a personal relationship with Christ by faith in Him, because the writer of the New Testament (New Covenant) book of Hebrews says so (See #6, from Hebrews 8 and 9. See also Hebrews 10:19-23, 27-39, esp. vs. 39.)

[It is not within the scope of this paper, but you will see in this passage which we refer to in Heb 10 that there is a difference between the "faith" that dabbles and explores with reserve and the "faith" that does not quit believing. THIS persevering faith that is spoken of in scripture is the faith that brings salvation. This is "saving faith." This is the "hearing and doing faith" that Christ spoke of in the Sermon On the Mount (Matthew 7:24-25). This is John 3:16 faith..."whosoever believes and keeps on believing!" Anything else is less than true, God-given faith and will not prevail with God. There will be tests. There will be ups and downs, but there will always be the unwavering, heart-felt, foundational, unfeigned confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and His teaching is true and His promises are sure and His sacrificial work on the cross for us is sufficient to cover our sins in the Father eyes. This supernatural gift of "saving faith" is the fundamental manifestation, the evidence, the substance of the new birth (Hebrews 11:1). Anybody can mouth the words, but only God's child can say it and mean it from the bottom of their heart (Romans 10:1-10; 1Peter 1:20-25).]

*A covenant is usually a legal agreement between two parties. But this covenant that God is proclaiming here in Jeremiah is from Himself which He declares without consulting mankind. It is an unconditional promise. In this case, God is saying that He will make such a binding, unqualified promise between Himself and with those whom He calls - those to whom He gives spiritual senses (new birth) to discern His voice as He creatively speaks His WORD of faith, His WORD of life, into their being. This supernatural insemination of divine life into the heart and mind of the human being is the initiation of a new creation, a new child of God, and it is given without regard to the natural merits of the child. It is real and it is tangible. This new, divine life is spiritual, yes, but sensate just the same. You cannot open your eyes and see daylight after being totally blind for all your life and not know it! On the basis of this Father/child relationship, the Father agrees to do everything necessary, meet all the conditions, for Him to be their unreserved God and for the child to join His family as a fully accepted member. The Father does it! He effects all the necessary conditions in the heart and mind of His child! **This is the New Covenant.** God commits to effect this necessary transformation IN US*

because we CANNOT do it ourselves.

So, what are these necessary conditions that God will perform? God will illuminate our minds and our hearts by the light of His Law - His Word - His Truth - His Light! And this illumination is not a fleeting fad or a vain outward show. This illumination is a recording forever on our hearts the Word of God. Surely you remember, out of our heart comes our words, our deeds, our motives and our thoughts (Proverbs 23:6-7; Matthew 12:34-35; Matthew 15:18-19; Mark 7:21; Luke 6:45).

God says He will change the modus operandi of our very core. God says He will not just shine a flashlight through the window - He will indelibly inscribe His Law on the center of our being, on our heart. God says He will not just put it in the middle of the cake and make do with the rest - He will write His law on our hearts AND put it in our minds. This means we will be wholly, pervasively transformed from a fallen creature to a wholesome, holy Child of God - center to circumference.

Listen to the words of Zephaniah, 3:17 (ESV): The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty One Who will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.

*God is optimistic about His children growing up! Hard to believe, is it not? May God Almighty deliver us from calling Him a liar, a promise breaker and an impotent, puny god! We know better, if we know Him!!!!!! God grant that each of us stand up to His call in our life. God grant that we take the challenge to accept and walk in His infinite gift of eternal life. God grant that we open our mind and our heart to His creative-conceiving voice. (See Psalm 51:10) Let us pray for God to grant that we climb out from behind the fig leaves of our pious religiosity and embrace the transforming, flaming, double-edged sword of His Word - to be convicted by the **RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH** of His judgment and made new by the **MERCY AND PEACE** of His love (see Hebrews 4:11-16; Psalm 85:10; Romans 14:17).*

Believe! Receive! Be made whole. Be healed. CONCEIVE in the deepest depths of your soul the promise of your Creator - He is there to breathe life into your dormant nostrils (Genesis 2:7). He is there to set His Loving Life blazing in your breast. LET your LIGHT shine! (Matthew 5:16) LET this mind be in you that was in Jesus Christ! (Philippians 2:5) Believe that Christ is YOUR Savior; that His blood seals the New Covenant with the Father ON YOUR BEHALF!

Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:20)

Oh, most Holy Father God, stir us, fill us, move us, change us, awaken us, empower us to stand before You, with all our faults and all our flesh, and look You square in the face and cry out loud, "YES, MY GOD, I SAY, 'YES!' TO YOU! I SAY, "YES !" TO YOUR SON, JESUS CHRIST! CHANGE MY HEART, OH GOD!" (Psalms 119:32; 139:23-24; 143:8,10)

"A Better Covenant"

6) Hebrews 8:6-13, 9:15 But now He [*Jesus*] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah –

9 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

10 "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 in their mind** and **write them on their hearts**; and I will be their God (*gift*), and they shall be My people (*response*).

11 "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall **know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

12 "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called (*gift*) may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (*response*).

Though we could do another complete paper on the subject of the several wonderful differences between the Old and New Covenants, suffice it to say, this "New ...BETTER...Covenant" has a very distinct advantage over the "Old Covenant." First and foremost, God promises to put His laws in our minds and write them on our hearts. All else that God does and all else that we do in response to His New Covenant with us flows out of this marvelous, miraculous, priceless gift! Again, we must say it: GOD DOES IT! All of the "accomplishments" we achieve in our Christian walk are a function and a consequence and a product of this divine, supernatural operation of God's grace in our being. [If at this point you can no longer hold it back and you want to jump up and start shouting for joy, please do not let me stop you!]

Whatever else this "putting" and "writing" are about they certainly have to do with us possessing the LIGHT in our minds to see God's truth and His wisdom and His love in His Law, and the LIGHT in our hearts to believe and understand it! If we seek to respond to the righteous demands of the Law of

God - the Word of God - on any other level it is impossible to do. We may "agree" to it, but it will not be a commitment from the heart. (See #7 through #10, and #15, vss. 5-7) This is the background to the momentous proclamation of Jesus Christ to Nicodemus in John 3: In so many words He says, "You must be born from above. You must be born again. Otherwise, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God! And this birth is totally different from being born in the flesh - it is being born in the spirit!"

Here is the miracle of "putting" and "writing." In our natural-born selves we are dumb to and indifferent to and even at war with the Law of God. Then, in the course of a divine miracle in our being, we are awakened to the Truth. We are astounded and moved by the Light. We embrace the Light - the Law - the Truth - the Word - the Way - the Life of God! How exciting is THAT?! What power! What super-transcendence! What wonderful divinity that infuses our humanity. Our being is transformed to the level of communion with God Almighty. Babes? Oh, babes in Christ, indeed. But new creatures most assuredly - creatures of immortality and supernatural, unailing, abiding, remaining faith, hope and love! (See 1Corinthians 13:13.) All Scripture begins to come alive to the soul thus converted. The Law is not a burden but a Light to them. The Word becomes a person with Whom they walk and talk in the garden of their hearts!

O, Lord, "put" and "write" away!

"No King in Israel"

7) Judges 21:25 In those days there was **no king in Israel**; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

The social and cultural atmosphere in Israel, in the last days of the period of the Judges was moral chaos! Why? Because, at its foundation, right and wrong was conditional to the likes and dislikes of each different individual. There was collective "morality" but it was dependent on popular whim - political correctness - God's role was relegated to "ideas" they could use or not use based on convenience or opinion. Their Creator was supposed to have direct control of their society for it to work properly but He was not consulted, much less revered - oh yes, they had religion, BUT no real relationship with the Lord. Everyone's moral compass was exclusively influenced by the pull of their own desires and their own opinions rather than the magnetism of God's wisdom and His love. The truth was replaced by superstition and religious notions. For the flow of the whole story, read Judges 17:1 - 21:25.

This social rot of everyone doing what is right in their own eyes is paradise to an anarchist! There are many different alternatives to such moral chaos: a dictator could set the standards, or the "majority rules" could set the standards, or Parliament or Congress or liberals or conservatives or your mother! But the only legitimate source of "right and wrong" is our Creator.

The Designer (Father God) and the Manufacturer (Holy Spirit) and the Captain of the ship (Jesus Christ) is/are the proper author(s) of the SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for the crew and their equipment. Life just doesn't work properly any other way! If you were given responsibility to run a sea-going vessel (yes, you, just as you are right now) wouldn't you be thrilled and relieved to have a manual telling you how to do it? AND, wouldn't it be really great if the Designer/Builder/Captain were to join you personally for the voyage to guide and correct you as you go on your way? This is a metaphor of what we are talking about in this paper - walking in the LIGHT.

The Israelites were trying to run their country and their cities and their families and their own lives without any guidance or assistance from the Designer/Builder/Captain. And today, many, nay, MOST are doing the same thing with their own lives - they are making their way through the pilgrimage of life with begrudgingly little real input from their Creator! They love the darkness rather than the Light (John 3:19-21). It is no wonder why individual morality today is more or less a game of chance based on whim and confusion. It is not a mystery why our political landscape is in such turmoil! The majority can cooperate with God in ruling properly only if the majority is ruled by their relationship [their DOCLOR] with Jesus Christ.

*Even among us "observant Christians" our decision making process is more likely than not a masterful, self-deluding concoction of what's convenient from the Bible mixed with what **WE** want to do when the two are at odds. And what a pity! For Scripture says a "double-minded man receives nothing from the Lord!" (James 1:5-8) It is no wonder why we see so little power in the Church and in our personal walk with the Lord!!!!!! "...every man doing what is right in his own eyes" ...tragedy of tragedies!!!!!! The TRUTH is that we are like little children trying to operate our own ship - we are not only going to have a hard time getting anywhere, we don't know where we are going, and our end can only be disaster. It will not be an accident if we get to heaven - it will only be by our obedient submission to the Captain. **Only if we WALK IN THE LIGHT!***

Dear Christian, ask your Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, to search your heart. Let Him have access to every nook and cranny of your being. Invite Him into your imagination, your meditations and your deepest, most personal thoughts. Do not be afraid. Do not hide anything from Him. And listen to His wisdom and His love and His mercy as He gracefully unravels the chaos and the mess you have made of things. Let Him heal and comfort and replace the guilt and the mourning with peace and joy! You have proven you cannot do it. Let Him have His way!

...His Way is the only Way.

Only God knows how to operate the ship of your life. Only the magnetism of the Holy Spirit in your life can point your moral compass in the right direction. Only God knows the way through the wilderness.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5 ESV)

"Slave of Sin"

8) John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."

Do you sin? Do you do what is right in your own eyes? Sometimes? What an enormous paradox! We think we are free because we are ignoring or making excuses for not doing God's will when all the time we are actually enslaved by the very prideful, lustful things we give in to that we think are an exercise of our freedom! NO! It is not freedom. It is rebellion against the legitimate authority of our Father. And the "rebellion" was instigated and is being led by the most diabolical creatures under Heaven - Satan and his minions! If we think we are in charge of our lives we are living with a chamber pot over our heads.

As God's child, if we are indeed "born from above," we must be blisteringly honest here: to do what is right in our own eyes is the opposite of "walking in the light." Doing what is right in our own eyes, deciding for ourselves what is right and what is wrong, is walking in darkness. It is sin. It is believing we are just as capable as God is in determining how we should conduct ourselves in our deeds, our thoughts, our attitudes and our motives. We are not talking here about whether we should brush our teeth more than once a week or not. What we are talking about is the whole decision making apparatus at the core of our being. We are talking about what makes us tick, what is the main spring of our life, what is at the center of our interests and our affections, what is the driving force behind the things we decide to do, say and think.

Remember Adam and Eve? ...eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? ...deciding for themselves what is "good" for them and what is "bad" for them. (Genesis 2:15-3:24)

Who planted the seed of that thought in their minds? Remember?

1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" **2** And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: **3** But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." **4** And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: **5** For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." **6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. **7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and

made themselves aprons. (Genesis 3:1-7 KJV)

The purpose for fruit is not just our pleasure in eating it. The purpose for fruit is the seed, the mechanism for the propagation of a species. Satan planted in Adam's and Eve's minds that seed of deciding for themselves right and wrong and it sprouted into an evil, dark, self-centered spirit within man that is poisoning our hearts and minds to this day! We are not condemned just for what we do. We are self-condemned by who we are and who our "father" is! It is not just a matter of our "doing." It is a matter of "being."

*You **must** be born the second time, from above! You must be a totally different "being," a new creation, a child of God.*

"Your Father the Devil"

9) John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

My dear friend, Christ Jesus spoke these words to the most "right" religionists on earth at the time! The leading Jews, to whom He was speaking, ostensibly had the right God, they had the right blood in their veins, they had the right Book, they had the right Temple, they had the right territory...but they had the wrong DNA! The Devil's! This is hard for us humans to swallow but it is the painful brilliance of God's pure LIGHT. Ever heard the phrase, "The truth hurts!"? Well, if you see what this means for your life and if you see your need for a new birth by a new Father then you are standing in the spotlight of God's love and mercy. Embrace Him. Listen to Him.

Do not believe the lie that you are just as capable of deciding right from wrong as the next guy. Do not believe the lie that success is in the pleasure of having what you want when you want it. We could make a long list here of the things that our whims and fancies obsess on. But, if there is a glimmer of "Light" in your heart then you know there is a war in your members between your will and the Will of God. The seed of Satan has birthed something in the modus operandi of mankind. We could call it "quintessential self!"

Look again at the words of Jesus that we quote above. Note the portion that is underlined. "...he speaks from his own resources..." This sounds a whole lot like "what was right in his own eyes," does it not?

*As God Almighty, our Father, begins the process of eradicating our perverted, pervasive habits of self and sin, we must open our eyes to "see the light" on this issue. The illumination of how dark our life is without Christ is the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and it is a great gift from God. It should become more and more obvious to all of us as we travel the path of Light just how dependent we are on our heavenly Father for **any** progress **every** step of the way. That selfish nature to which we were born enslaved has to go! It is painful, is it not? As He taught the disciples in the Upper Room, how poignant that our Lord referred to the Holy Spirit as "Comforter" AND that He would be our teacher as the Spirit of Truth. The TRUTH hurts! The lessons of Jesus are very hard...the need for comfort is great!*

*16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the **Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, **whatsoever I have said unto you**.

7 Nevertheless **I tell you the truth**; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, **he will reprove the world** of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet **many things to say unto you**, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that **he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you**. (John 14:16-18, 26; 15:7-15 KJV)

Thank You, Heavenly Father, for sending the Spirit of Truth into our hearts to confront the nasty rags of rebellious unbelief, filthy self-righteousness, and hopeless guilt that we have "adorned" ourselves with for so long. And thank You, Father, for giving us the Spirit of Truth to live with us as our Comforter, our Helper as we struggle with this transformation that You so mercifully are effecting in our lives...THE NEW COVENANT! You ARE keeping Your Word to put Your law in our minds and write it on our hearts!

Hallelujah! Have at it, Lord!

Amen.

"Hears God's Words"

10) John 8:47 He who is of God (*gift*) **hears God's words** (*response*); therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.

This is exactly what we are trying to say! "He who is of God...!" When God gets a hold on your life your ears become tuned to His frequency. Before, His input was static and confusion...after, God intervenes in your heart and your whole reference to reality changes and your world view begins its transformation to God's point of view and your sense of right and wrong enters the process of losing the deceptions of devils and delusions of the flesh. You hear. You were deaf to God, for all practical purposes, and now you can hear Him clearly. You were blinded in the darkness you so enthusiastically embraced and now you are squinting at His marvelous Light - the Truth - THE WORD! The plugs in your ears and the scales over your eyes are removed. In fact, you could go so far as to say, you had no eyes and you had no ears until God Almighty intervened in your life by His everlasting Mercy and Grace and birthed in your being that "new creature," that brother of Jesus Christ, that child of God!

Oh, dear Christian friend, this is what is happening in your life. In the midst of your struggles and your fears and your doubts and, yes, your disobedience, God is doing an eternal work in the core of your being! The Divine Gardener is awakening the seeds of life that He has been planting in your heart for decades. As little seedlings of divinity we have little notions, little lights, of what our destiny is, but The Father knows and He sees our impotence and our weaknesses, but He also knows our potential. He knows where that little infant stirring in your breast - crying, scared, frustrated, confused - came from. He knows where you are going. Your Heavenly Father knows the hard lessons you need to learn and He knows you will not learn them left on your own. So, He is directly managing your life. He is setting about the business of putting His Word, His Law, His Light in your mind and writing it on your heart - AS HE PROMISED TO DO! (See #5 and #6.)

Yes! Stop and smell the roses, but notice how many more thorns there are than buds. Pain and suffering are a real part of every true believer's life. Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation..." (see John 16:33 for the whole picture). You are the offspring of God and He is tending to His child. He is teaching and correcting and chastising and disciplining His own (Deuteronomy 8:5; Psalm 94:12; Proverbs 3:11; Proverbs 13:24; John 15:2; Hebrews 12:5-11; Revelation 3:19). This is God "working in" you to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Stand up to your destiny. Accept the real, primitive state of your spiritual maturity (compared to the standard of Jesus Christ) and embrace your responsibility to grow up as a child of the King. Growing up is not easy! Quit living for self. Quit chasing the whims of the flesh. Listen to your Savior's voice. See the guiding Light of His life in

your heart and mind. Follow HIM!!!!!! How poignant the song writer's words: "When we walk with the Lord in the Light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way. While we do His good will, He abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey." - words by John H. Sammis, 1846-1919.

TRUST...AND...OBEY.

It's just the way it is. Deal with it. (...and keep reading.)

"Walk In the Spirit"

11) Galatians 5:16-25 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

*Here is the rub: that "old man," that human nature, that "carnal mind," that "flesh" does not, will not, cannot NOT want to fulfill its own desires and lusts! The flesh will not give of itself sacrificially (unless, ironically, it serves its own self interests to do so). It will whine. It will nag. It will resuscitate itself under the most strenuous discipline and the most ascetic treatment. We are not talking about just needing a drink of water and a bite to eat to sustain life. We are talking about the pursuit of physical desires to the exclusion of all other interests and concerns; to the exclusion of common sense; to the exclusion of what is best for others; to the exclusion of what God has to say about any of the various appetites of our body and our pride. The flesh grinds and strains and struggles and stretches and pushes and cries and screams and drives for what it wants. The flesh is relentless. The flesh is deaf, mute and blind to the love and mercy of God. The flesh is at war against God and all that He stands for. The flesh will lie, cheat, steal, murder, scheme, plot, connive, deceive, fake, feign, cry, weep, whine, writhe in anguish, vie for pity, plead ignorance, plead innocence, and profess the highest motives, etc. to get what it wants; to have its own way; to satisfy itself. And its satisfaction is fleeting. **The flesh is never really satisfied.** The more you feed it the more it wants. It takes and consumes and digests and then feels more empty than if it never had in the first place. The very memory of the satiation of the pleasures of the flesh nag us in our minds for more, and this nagging desire can increase to a distracting scream for, "More! More!" The flesh often tires of the kiddie rides quickly - if you really want to placate the flesh then every roller-coaster must be higher, scarier, more radical, more thrilling, more fun, more lasting and the cheaper the better. The flesh never wants to pay for its indulgences. The flesh wants to dance but never wants to pay the band. The flesh enjoys the thrill of flirting with death but always expects to somehow escape its clutches.*

A note here on hypocrisy - many do not have the nerve for anything other than the kiddie rides. They are committed to the kiddie rides. In fact, they are obsessive about the kiddie rides. The kiddie rides of the flesh are actually made out to be "good." It is those radical roller-coaster riders that are "bad." All the time, the kiddie riders are just perpetuating the open door that introduces the braver lot to go on to more thrilling risks. The rotten social system of the world order is self-sustaining and self-propagating. What one generation is willing to experiment in, the next generation makes a concerted commitment to it.

No doubt, you have noticed that in this particular aspect of our discussion we have not mentioned Satan yet. Oh, he often stays in the background. When he does show his slimy, venomous head it is with premier stealth and

subtlety. And his job is often made easier since the flesh WANTS to be lied to about the motives and the consequences of the satiation of its desires. Any encouragement or logic or rationale will do to justify for the flesh its unlawful, rebellious, self-centered pursuits.

The fleshly nature of man always ignores the reality of God's plain warning: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7 KJV). You will see, then, that we cannot, in our own natural strength, save ourselves. To turn to Jesus Christ for our salvation is anathema, is suffering and death to the flesh.

"Walk in the Spirit." - *You cannot walk in the power and wisdom of something that you do not have! You cannot walk in the light if you have no light. You cannot begin to comprehend the WORD until you have the eyes and ears to see and hear "it," and then you cannot understand or comprehend "it" without a relationship with "it." "The Spirit" is not a thing. He is not a "force." He is a person! To walk in the Spirit is to have an ongoing symbiotic relationship with Him. To walk in the Spirit is to embrace His input, His ways, His thoughts, His direction, His instructions, His exhortations, His commandments. In short, you cannot, will not, do not walk in the Spirit unless you love Him. As Christ said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:23).*

Let me frame the picture here in words that reflect the interaction of "love Me" and "keep my commandments:

"You will walk in the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit,

if

you have a

Dynamic, Ongoing, Conversational, LOving Relationship

(a DOCLOR)

with Me."

*The crucial, pivotal, focal point here in this verse is NOT that we keep Christ's commandments!!! The big deal in this simple observation by Jesus is that we will - automatically - keep His commandments **if** we love Him!*

The source for the authenticity and genuineness of our claim to eternal life is in our heart where we walk and talk with Holy Spirit...where we embrace and enjoy the assurance of His "seal" on our eternal life through a DOCLOR with Him (John 17:3, 2Corinthians 2:2; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). The "natural," practical expression of this DOCLOR is in our performance. Our heart does not follow our performance. Our performance will follow our heart. This is axiomatic. Quit trying to kill yourself keeping the commandments (if you

haven't already just given up, thinking this "being a Christian" thing is hopeless and a farce!). Rather, take Holy Spirit's hand and let Him lead you, one step at a time, out of the miry clay of vain religiosity and into the ever upward spiraling joy and peace of the practice of divine Light. There are very painful milestones in this journey that the Lord leads us on. Sometimes He must do major surgery on our hearts. But the fruit gets better and better as the Master Gardener prunes and tills and pulls up the weeds of sin we have so arduously cultivated in our lives.

The only reason He goes to all this trouble is because He loves us. The only reason we will stay the course with Him through the struggles of Christian maturity is because we love Him. Never forget this. "If you love Me, you will keep my commandments."

(Picking up here, #11, Galatians, chapter 5)

17 For the flesh lusts against **the Spirit**, and **the Spirit** against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are *led by* **the Spirit** (*gift*), you are not under the law (*response*).

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of **the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ's (*gift*) have crucified the flesh (*response*) with its passions and desires.

*Life is not intended to be a static condition. It is dynamic, moving, changing, growing, maturing. Maturing is crucifying to who you are today! This is true because you cannot go through the changes of growing up and stay the same as you are both at the same time. In this sense, who you are today has to die in some dimension for you to become who you should mature into tomorrow. Notice in verse 24 above, that those who are Christ's do not just get "holy water" sprinkled on their heathen heads and, "Voila!" now they are perfect little saints. No! What God is working in our lives to accomplish is a transformation of being. And this transformation we eagerly, willingly participate and engage in consciously. Christ does not kill the flesh. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength, the power to do it ourselves (Romans 8:13). WE crucify the flesh (Colossians 3:5). This is the work that He will complete: to bring us to full, persistent surrender of our own volition! **We will crucify the flesh, the old sinful nature, because we want to!** In other words, what He works in, we work out. This should sound familiar by now.*

Remember what we are focused on in this paper, "the practice of Divine Light." These scriptures reflect the optimism of God, that the work He has begun in us, He will complete it! (Philippians 1:6) His exhortation to us to walk in the Spirit, the Light, the Word, the Truth is strictly a component of His empowerment. **When we are given an exhortation or an instruction or a commandment in scripture it is with the understanding that we, in our natural selves, cannot obey it.** It is impossible for us, on our own, to rise to the challenge of godliness. WE kill. WE crucify. Christ brings the resurrection!

How many more different ways can we make this point? As our Lord, Jesus Christ, said, "Abide in me, for without me you can do nothing!" (John 15:5) What does N-O-T-H-I-N-G mean to you? But let's listen to what the Master is saying: "Abide in Me and you can do everything! " ...or, more exactly, "Abide in me, and my WORD in you and whatever you ask will be done FOR YOU!!!!!!!" (John 15:7) As Paul writes, "I can do all things **through Christ** who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)

(Again, picking up #11, Galatians, chapter 5)

25 If we live in the Spirit (*gift*), let us also walk in **the Spirit** (*response*).

To put it another way, if you have the divine life within you so that you can **see** God's LIGHT and **hear** His WORD, then follow His path and give earnest heed to His instructions! What kind of crackpot would not want to do this?

Are you having difficulties with this? Good. Then ask the Lord Jesus to help you. Ask Him to bring you to that place of self-denial...that place of spiritual empowerment at the expense of your fleshly nature and your sinful desires. What else do you think Christ Jesus (John 15:7) and the Holy Spirit through Paul (Philippians 4:13) were talking about? ...getting a pink Cadillac with a chauffeur to drive you around and caviar with filet mignon for dinner? What's important to the Father is important to the child. The focus of God on our spiritual well-being is a totally different world from what the values and interests are of our fleshly nature that rages with hormones and appetites and desires and self-centered interests. As the Holy Spirit points out with the pen of James: (Go on to the next chapter.)

"Grace to the Humble"

- 12)** James 4:1-10 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?
2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.
3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? (*gift*)
6 But He gives more grace (*gift*). Therefore He says: **"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."** (*gift*)
7 Therefore submit to God (*response*). Resist the devil (*response*) and he will flee from you.
8 Draw near to God (*response*) and He will draw near to you (*gift*). Cleanse your hands, you sinners (*response*); and purify your hearts, you double-minded (*response*).
9 Lament and mourn and weep (*response*)! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom (*response*).
10 Humble yourselves (*response*) in the sight of the Lord (*gift*), and He will lift you up (*gift*).

Have you ever felt the gloom of sin in your life? Have you ever wept with remorse and conviction for your iniquity in the sight of God? Sin is filth on your hands and you cannot hide it from an omniscient God. Dabbling in the lusts of the flesh while at the same time pitter-pattering around in a "relationship" with God is impurity - arsenic on a perfectly good steak! Going to a perfect, loving, kind, patient, merciful God and asking Him to help you feed the filthy wants of your flesh is spiritual adultery. You are playing like God is your best friend with one hand and you are caressing the filth of the world with the other! You are not fooling God. God hears your evil thoughts and He sees your selfish motives and He can smell your hypocritical intentions a mile away!

The only remedy? Humble yourself before the throne of God - you cannot save yourself - you cannot pick yourself up - but God can! Do the most painful, humbling, soul-piercing thing you can do - rather than run and hide like your flesh is screaming for you to do - like the old Adamic nature is howling for you to do - draw NEAR to God! Actually take a step toward the very source of the pain you feel in your old selfish nature! (That's right, go ahead, take a step toward the Lord...as your fleshly, selfish nature screams bloody murder!!!) God's response to your feeble gesture of approach? Will He bust you up side the head with a baseball bat and throw you in hell?

NO!!!!!! What will God Almighty do? He will draw near to you. He will lift you up! (vss. 8 and 10 above).

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if **by the Spirit** (*gift*) you put to death the deeds of the body (*response*), you will live. (Romans 8:13)

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

"New Spirit Within"

13) 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 (*gift*),

20 that they may **walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them** (*response*), and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

21 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 the Lord GOD.

Here in Ezekiel 11 God reiterates the blessings of His covenant with His children. Talk about getting a face lift! What about a heart lift? ...a spirit lift? The flesh He is talking about here is not a reference to our old sinful nature, but to the difference between the stone of a heart we have before we are born again and the soft, pliable, gentle, kind, meek nature that God is replacing it with - it is His promise.

*Look at what the gift is in verse 19. God says **He** will give, **He** will put, **He** will take. Here you might want to look back at #4 and #5 again. No wonder Jesus asked Nicodemus, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" Nicodemus knew the Old Testament Scriptures inside and out. Evidently, the total understanding of the religious mind in Israel by the time of Christ was that salvation is completely dependent on performance. "If I do this and don't do that then God will approve me as good enough to have heaven on earth." Today, we translate this "salvation by works" into all sorts of variations on the same theme with a few very dangerous, not so subtle twists that boil down to "every man doing what is right in His own eyes" with the assumption being that that is what "Amazing Grace" means! In other words, "I'm saved because I think I should be." Another way to put it: "I believe in Jesus, so what I do does not matter." You get the picture.*

Read Deuteronomy 5. Do it. While you are there, look especially at 5:29. Then read Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and 7:8. God knew all along that the children of Israel did not have a heart for really, truly fearing Him and keeping His commandments. Of course God knew. The problem was, and is, that all mankind, from their natural birth, are completely incapable of consistent, worthy performance from their heart. This is because the heart of man, the core of his being, "is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9; see also Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Psalm 53:1-3; Mark 7:21-22). We get it from our dads, all the way back to Adam and Eve who got the seed of it all from Satan who called God a liar (Genesis 3:4)...and Adam and Eve entered into willful rebellion against God because of their poisoned hearts! That corrupt seed that Satan inseminated in the hearts of Adam and Eve is still bearing fruit in the hearts of men to this day (John 8:42-47).

But God has had a plan from before the beginning of time! (Ephesians 1:3-6; 1Peter 1:1-5 That's right, go read it!) God's plan was and is bullet proof. All mankind had and has a heart problem...a rotten heart. So God, as He planned from the beginning, worked and prepared and orchestrated and guided and controlled and determined and provided for Himself a little maid who would say, "Let it be!" (Luke 1:38). And God inseminated the world of matter and time and space with HIS SEED!

"...and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!" (John 1:1, 14; Luke 8:11; Romans 9:29).

***THAT SEED**, "the only begotten of the Father," **GOD PLANTED** in the ground. And **THAT SEED** died and germinated and sprouted and began producing fruit and more fruit and more fruit! (1Corinthians 15:35-58; Romans 5:5-21; John 5:24-27; Romans 8:2-17 Please, please, I am praying you will read these passages we refer to.)*

*"...they shall be my people..." (Ezekiel 11:20 above) God is preparing for Himself a people. He is preparing for Himself a new creation made up of His children who follow His ways of thinking and acting from the core of their being - from their heart. He is preparing for Himself a people who want to live and fellowship with Him and with whom He wants to live and fellowship; people who love Him; people who bask in the practice of divine Light (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 1Peter 2:4-5; 1John 3:24; 4:13, 16; Revelation 21:3). They will be His people not based on their performance but on who they are in their heart...their pure performance will be a pure reflection of their pure heart! **"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes"** (Psalm 118:23 KJV). This is where God is going with His hand in our life, and His Spirit in our heart. He did the stupendous, marvelous, wondrous, amazing miracle of literally conceiving His own flesh and blood in the womb of Mary and took on the being of man (Philippians 2:5-11), lived a perfect life (2Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15) which He humbly offered as the perfect sacrifice, taking upon Himself the act, the guilt, the condemnation and the sentence of death of all the sins of all mankind! (Isaiah 53; John 1:29; 1Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:3-4; 1Peter 2:20-25; 1John 2:2) ...that whosoever believes and keeps on believing in Him (who He was and is, and what He did and does for them) will not perish, but have everlasting, eternal life (John 3:16)!*

O dear soul, dear child of God, by the presence of infinite divinity within your very being, God Almighty is working interminably in your heart to take that old rock out and put there a heart like His! Trust Him. Believe Him! O, Blessed Assurance! Jesus is Mine! Let the Light of Heaven flood my soul. Let me walk where I see it shine!

***"...as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things..."** (Ezekiel 11:21 above) If you still think this is all a cakewalk in the park on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, read verse 21 in Ezekiel 11 again. God is not*

going to beat you up because He does not like you. You are going to bring His righteous judgment on your own head with your own hard-heartedness and your own rebellion against the very rudimentary laws of nature that He has instituted.

If you feel even the slightest tug on your conscience as we deal with this reality of sin and righteous judgment, consider it a monumental gift from God! Yield to His still, small voice calling to you to surrender in whatever way He is leading in your heart. Take a step toward His judgment and find your gesture received by His loving, merciful hand.

Do you call yourself a Christian? Do you know the touch of His kind hand? Have you heard His voice calling you? Can you see Him standing at your heart's door, patiently knocking?

"Whatever a Man Sows"

14) Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

*Walking in the Light - "The Practice of Divine Light" - does not give us an excuse for our sin. **Walking in the light is God's pathway for deliverance from our sin and self.** (See #15, Romans 8:13 below) If you think you are OK just the way you are with your bad habits and your sinful ways; if you think your selfishness is just the innocent trappings of your personality; if you hold onto the idea that your evil thoughts and your prideful behavior and the excesses of your fleshly habits and the affections for the world's ways that you embrace are all to be ignored or even enjoyed then the warning here is most appropriate for you: "DO NOT BE DECEIVED!"*

Walking in the Light is the exact opposite of doing what is right in your own eyes. God knows what is best for you. You do not know what is best for you. If you know the Lord, if you have been born again, if you have a personal relationship with God, if you are a child of God then this passage of scripture should really get your attention. Oh, it applies to everyone, but not everyone hears God's voice of guidance, correction and direction.

Can a person ignore God's instructions and get away with it? To help you answer that question, ask Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:16-19). Ask Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12:1-10). Ask King Saul (1Samuel 15:24-26). Ask Uzzah (2Samuel 6:6-7, Numbers 4:15). Ask Jonah (Jonah 1:1-11). Ask Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). This issue of thumbing your nose at the Word of God is very serious business. We are told that eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner brings judgment. Many are weak and sick and many even sick unto death for this sin! (1Corinthians 11:27-32)

We often act as if we think life is a joke and what we do with it is of no consequence. Be not deceived! Whatever you sow in thought, word or deed will sprout to bear fruit after its own kind! God set the universe up. It runs according to His design, not ours.

In the light of Galatians 6:7 consider this passage in James:

12 Blessed [that is, blessed or favored by God] is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 **Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.**

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.
18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth [that is the Divine Light], that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

19 **So then**, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness **the implanted word** [that is, the Divine Light in the person of the indwelling Holy Spirit], which is able to save your souls. 22 **But be doers of the word** [that is, the practice of walking in the Divine Light], and not hearers only, **deceiving yourselves**. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but **a doer of the work**, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:12-25)

I know this all sounds so very harsh and arbitrary. We may want to ask, "Where is this loving heavenly Father we read about? What happened to Him?"

5 ...you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. (Hebrews 12:5-8)

*Your heavenly Father has made a commitment to you, to put His Word, His Divine Light, in your mind and write it on your heart. God is keeping His promise! Halleluiah! Don't run from His chastening hand - embrace it. **Practice** walking in the Divine Light of God. That's right...TRY! Work at it. **Work OUT** what God is most definitely, most faithfully, **working IN!***

"Led by the Spirit"

15) Romans 8:1-17 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (*gift*), who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to **the Spirit** (*response*).

In other words, if your life is absorbed by your relationship with Christ Jesus, you are walking away from the darkness of sin and self and toward the light of His liberating, loving conviction and guidance. God will not condemn the one who He is forgiving. See the path lighted by the Holy Spirit in your heart and walk in it. See the light before you, leading you to the courage to honestly compare yourself to His will for your life, the power for repentance and the power for ministry and love for others: "walk according to the Spirit!" ...walk in the Light!

*How many books have been written and how many sermons have been preached around the subject of "in Christ Jesus"? It is certainly a marvelous concept to feast our meditations on. But, of all that has been said and will be said on the topic of being **IN** Christ Jesus, we must not lose sight of the practical side of the equation: walking according to the Spirit...living out our life in shoe leather in the pathway of His leading, in the light of His will, in the new life of the Spirit, **NOT** the old life of the flesh! In other words, we must not lose ourselves in the fleshly pride of our "spiritual theology." Rather, let us walk humbly under the rulership of God's Spirit in our hearts. To be in Christ Jesus is to walk as He directs. To be in Christ Jesus is to let Him actually determine what we do, what we say, what our attitude is, what we think. In this light it's kind of easy to see now how "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." It is not just theological, it is as down to earth and practical as it can be!*

(Picking up #15, Romans, chapter 8.)

2 For the law of **the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh (*gift*),

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (*response*).

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be **spiritually minded** is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Here is the battleground - your mind! What do you think about with love and affection? What are you absorbed by in your thoughts? What thoughts would you be ashamed of if they were broadcast tonight on the nightly news? If you say, "None." then go back and start reading from #12 again. If you think you are so special that your Heavenly Father doesn't care who you are on the inside, where it counts the most, then you have a rude awakening in your future!

*Do not be deceived! In this paper, though it may be full of shortcomings I readily concede, I am telling you the truth as clearly as I can. I am giving you light right out of God's Holy Scripture. I am not making this up and I am not trying to twist the meaning of The Word. This is the message of the Holy Spirit to His children - wake up! Run to Him. Give up your worldly, sinful, prideful self to His mercy and grace - find deliverance from your sinful ways and your guilt, on a daily basis, at the foot of the Cross! **This is the pathway of life...this lifestyle of willing, submissive change...this lifestyle of humble surrender to the precious Lamb of God...this DOCLOR with God!***

(Picking up #15, Romans, chapter 8.)

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit (*response* →), if indeed **the Spirit of God** dwells in you (←*gift*). Now if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he is not His.

10 ¶ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but **the Spirit is life** because of righteousness.

11 But if **the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through **His Spirit** who dwells in you (*gift*).

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh (*response*).

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but ***if by the Spirit*** (*gift*) ***you put to death the deeds of the body*** (*response*), you will live.

"you will live." Go back and look at "live" and "life" in this passage from Romans 8 (vss. 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 13). "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (#1, John 1:4) All the claims we lay on salvation through Jesus Christ - "eternal LIFE" - rests completely on God's grace. This "amazing grace" that we sing about and that we depend on so completely, is His gifting in our being, in our minds, in our souls, in our life to have the Holy Spirit in our heart, to have the Light of God's Word in our minds AND to "walk in the Spirit" ...to walk in the Light! ..."The Practice of Divine Light" in shoe leather! This is "Eternal Life" being worked into our hearts and minds AND worked out in our daily lives by God's grace...on the ground of His promise to His children.

(Picking up #15, Romans, chapter 8.)

14 For as many as are ***led by the Spirit of God*** (*response* →), these are sons of God (←*gift*).

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you

received **the Spirit of adoption** (*gift*) by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father" (*response*).

16 **The Spirit Himself** (*gift*) bears witness with our spirit (*response*) that we are children of God ,

17 and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Suffer? What suffering? ...the surrender of your worldliness and sinfulness and selfishness to the death of the Cross! Read #15, Galatians 5:24 again. If you save yourself, you will die. If you lose yourself at the foot of the Cross you will live! "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" Luke 9:23 KJV. (See also Matthew 10:39; 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-35; 10:21; Luke 17:33; John 12:25.) "...take up his cross daily...." There is no "ticket punching" here and going about our merry way.

*The life of surrender to Christ is a dynamic, ongoing, conversational, loving relationship with Him...in the raw circumstances of time, space and matter. The life of surrender to Christ is the only life - leaving the perversion and the deception and the self-delusion and the moral filth of "normal" and yielding to the guiding light of the Holy Spirit, the example of Jesus Christ and the Word of God Almighty...**LED BY THE SPIRIT!***

*The Perfect One demands no less from you than **He is able to supply** in your submitted, surrendered, humbled life. Remember that what He wants us to "work out" He is busy "working in" us to will it and to do it! (Philippians 2:12-13) Anything short of His will for you is tragedy! Get up. Look to Calvary. Yield to the voice of God in your own heart...and live...one moment at a time!*

You may be thinking, "Who does this guy think I am? I'm not God!"

*No. For sure we are not God. But just figure on what you would have told Jesus Christ in the upper room if you had been there when He commanded His disciples to love one another as He had loved them! (John 13:34-35) Consider how tall that order is! As His offspring, as His child, **THIS** is your destiny. You are going to love like Jesus loves. It is His will for you. And it goes on and on....*

*Exciting isn't it?! Just imagine! ...and **LET** your light shine!*

"The Message: God Is Light"

16) 1 John 1:5 - 2:3 This is **the message** which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that **God is light** and in Him is no darkness at all. [*And we must not forget that Christ is "...the express image of His person..." (#2, Hebrews 1:3)]*

6 If we say that we have **fellowship** with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not *practice the truth*.

7 But if we *walk in the light* as **He is in the light**, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

In the story of the Exodus, Moses was directed to call down upon Egypt a plague of darkness for three days (Exodus 10:21-22). This was the ninth plague, just before the final plague of death for all the firstborn of Egypt. This darkness was so complete that Scripture says you could "feel" it. How dark is that?! But as frightful and palatable this darkness was, Pharaoh did not see the parallel between his blindness to the true God of the universe and the pitch black of that God's curse on his land.

Likewise, when Christ hung on the cross there was darkness "over all the land" for the three hours that preceded His death around 3PM (Matthew 27:45-50). It would not be hard to imagine that at least some of the Jews involved in the crucifixion made the connection between the darkness surrounding the cross and the darkness God brought upon Egypt. When the sun was the brightest of the day, the world was the darkest as devils and men thought they had extinguished the life of the "Light of the world" (John 8:12). Today, as the darkness of pervading sin and pride continues to engulf the hearts of men, if a soul rejects the unalterable claims of Christ in their life they condemn themselves to an eternal destiny of hopeless, loveless darkness and endless death.

We must remind ourselves who it is that God chose to pen these words that we quote above from 1John. It was John the Beloved Disciple. As far as we know, He was the only one of the twelve disciples who stayed with Jesus through His agony on the cross (John 19:26). John stood before the horror of Christ's passion and witnessed the stupendous irony of the darkness surrounding him. He watched our innocent Lord suffer for our rebellious sins. Surely, it is obvious that at some point he made a connection between the black void of any good in the hearts of men and the darkened sun at noonday when His Master was crucified. In fact, John's writings document that "light" was a major theme of Christ's teaching while He walked among men and a focus of the teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The word "light" is used 24 times in 16 different verses in his gospel and 6 times in five verses in the short span of his first epistle.

The message of The Perfect One, Jesus Christ, is that God is light - God is

the source of all truth, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, kindness, mercy, faith, hope and love, etc. - and as we experience these brilliant realities in our walk with Him we are experiencing HIM! This experience of light in our lives, as the children of God, is on an ever ascending scale - the magnitude of LIGHT in God Almighty is limitless - infinite. So, we can draw meaning from John's use of the word, "practice." The LIGHT of God is perfect, there is NO DARKNESS in Him AT ALL! (vs. 5 above). But we can find ourselves professing a good walk while we are really lying to ourselves. So the question before each of us is, what are we "practicing" to do...what are we really, really TRYING to do...fool God, or walk in His light?

*"...fellowship with one another..." This phrase has two applications. The first is that we have no fellowship with our Savior if we are walking in darkness. God's aim in your life is to have fellowship with you. He is always there but the fellowship is broken when our lifestyle and our attitude and our thoughts and our habits originate in the folly of sin. There is nothing in your life that is as important to you as having fellowship with God...and nothing more joyful...and nothing more fruitful. Your eternity with God rests solely on the reality of your relationship with God - **"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."** (John 17:3 KJV See also Matthew 7:21-23) This is not brow-beating condemnation...this is Divine Light for us to walk in!*

The second application of this phrase, "fellowship with one another," is that our fellowship with other believers is adversely affected when we walk in darkness. And on top of this there is the phenomenon of our influence on one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. If our relationship with the Father is in disruption because of guilt and fear and rebellion then we are going to find severe stresses in our relationship with His children who are in fellowship with Him. The potential negative influence that disobedient believers have on others is of great importance to God. If we profess to know Him, if we lay claim on His promises, then we better pay strict attention to the practice of walking in His Light! I want fellow believers to be glad to see me in heaven, not just surprised!

(Picking up #16, 1John, chapter 1.)

8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Of course, as God's children we should not set out to lie to ourselves or God. The safeguard of this danger is the light that God gives us to walk in - His Holy Spirit leading us, His written Word challenging us, His omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent power and love orchestrating our circumstances and speaking to us in our heart of hearts. As we compare ourselves to His perfect light, we will see our own imperfections and sins. Christ is the gauge and it is

our privilege and responsibility to be honest about our shortcomings and the evils of old habits and old ways of thinking and, as we see them in His Light, surrender these to His mercy and His correction and His cleansing and actually confess them to Him...THE PRACTICE OF DIVINE LIGHT!!!!!!

Did you get that? I think we better read that last paragraph again. We are jumping up and down here on what we are trying to say in this whole paper!

(Picking up #16, 1John, chapter 2.)

1 ¶ My little children, these things I write to you (*gift*), so that ***you may not sin*** (*response*). And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

3 Now by this we know that we **know Him** (*GIFT*), if we ***keep His commandments*** (*RESPONSE*).

This last verse (1John 2:3) is the foundation and the crown of our thoughts in this paper! To know Father God and His Son Jesus Christ by the abiding presence of Holy Spirit in our hearts is eternal life. See John 17:3. This is what the Word has shed light on enabling those of us who have eyes to see to perceive the pathway to go on, the truth to walk in, the life to live in the here and now and forever. Indeed, Christ Himself said in no uncertain terms - "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Do you get it? We can look at our own lives and, if we have the grace (gift) of light to honestly see, we can see if we know the Father by whether we can see our attitude and our thoughts and our motives and our deeds aligning with His Word (response). Indeed! "What a Friend We Have In Jesus!!!!!!" To stroll "In the Garden" of our heart with Him is beyond description in priceless privilege. Do you rejoice to hear the guiding light of His Voice in your soul? Or, do you run and hide from Him like Adam and Eve in the Garden, full of fear and guilt and rebellion? Have you heard Him say, "Come. Learn."

"Learn"

17) Matthew 11:27-30 KJV All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will **reveal** him.

28 **Come unto me**, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (*gift*).

29 **Take my yoke upon you**, and **learn of me** (*response*); for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

"The Son will reveal Him!" What light! WHAT LIGHT! ...that the Son would give us the revelation of Father God. ...that we would see Him with the eyes of our own heart and mind and be transformed by the view. ...that our minds would think differently about God because we can see Him. ...that we can see how loving He really is...not because someone else is excited about it, but because we undeniably sense the warmth of His loving kindness and mercy and grace in our very own souls.

*And He **beckons** us to approach Him. He **invites** us to move toward Him. "Come unto Me!!!!!!!!!" What an unspeakably awesome thing, that TRUE LIVING LOVE would unreservedly call us to His side to find rest from our own self-righteous efforts to earn His approval; and rest from scraping and scratching and jerking and snatching to escape the eternal condemnation of our sins. How floodingly fulfilling to embrace His gracious offer to meekly, gently, kindly, restfully teach us in THE WAY OF LIFE EVERLASTING. Oh, the warming light of His absolute truth, the bubbling spring of His eternal joy, the indescribable security of His unshakable peace. Ha! "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus, Just to Take Him at His Word! Just to Lean Upon His Promise! Just to Know, 'Thus Sayeth the Lord!'" - words by Louisa M. R. Snead, 19th century.*

"By this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments!" (#16, 1John 2:3 above). *Oh, may God help us all to plainly see that we cannot help but keep His commandments if we know Him...if we walk humbly in day-to-day fellowship with our heavenly Father. All rests on our knowing Him personally.*

"Learn of Me!" Ray Vander Laan points out in his video series, **"That the World May Know,"** that rabbinic tradition teaches that in New Testament times the doctrines and instructions of a rabbi for his disciples - his followers - was called his "yoke." The idea of "yoke" gives the image of a poor ox laboring under the strain of pulling a heavy cart. In this light, it is a marvelous truth for us to grasp hold of, that the Lord is calling us away from the rigors of legalistic, ritualistic religiosity and encouraging us to embrace constant fellowship with Him in our daily lives.

A **D**ynamic, **O**ngoing, **C**onversational, **L**Oving **R**elationship (a "DOCLOR") with God cannot be overstressed. There is nothing in our lives that even approaches as a competition to how important this is. It is life itself. To be gently, lovingly, rightfully, truthfully transformed into who we really, really long and deeply desire to be is worth what to you?

...so...walk in the divine light of God.

Dear Heavenly Father, grant that we see. God give us eyes to see Your light and give us ears to hear Your voice to us personally, intimately, mercifully. If You do not move upon the chaos and formlessness of our lost souls we have no hope. We cannot save ourselves from the pull of gravity, much less the depravity of our sinful nature. We cannot change who we are in the very core of our being. Only You can change our heart! Kindly search us, O God. Lovingly try our hearts. Mercifully convict us of our sins, for they are many! Grant that we have the courage to confess our sins and humbly surrender to Your Will in sincere repentance and true contrition.

To this prayer we bow our heads with all the godly sorrow and billowing gratefulness that You give us the grace to muster and say.....in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!

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