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BIBLE COLLEGE

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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“RECEIVING FROM GOD”

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RECEIVING FROM GOD

Many people have the misconception that we must put our lives in order before we can come to God to receive from Him. However we know this is impossible, for we cannot deal with sin ourselves. We can only put our lives in order by coming to God in repentance, believing in the Blood of Calvary, and receiving from Him not only His forgiveness but the empowerment we need to gain victory over sin. In this way He can not only make us clean, but also put us on the road to victory through the transforming power of His glorious Gospel.

ROMANS 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation (of spirit soul and body) to every one who believes

This teaching will bring you into the knowledge of how to receive from God without having, as many think, to earn His blessings. Our Heavenly Father has provided for our every need in the Covenant we have in Christ. We need now only place ourselves in a position to receive, by living according to God's Word through the power of the Divine Nature.

“. . . We can only put our lives in order by coming to God in repentance, believing in the Blood of Calvary, and receiving from Him. . . .”

Our Legal Position In Christ

Background Reading: Ephesians Chapter 2

As we know, the word “Gospel” means “good news,” the good news of salvation. As Christians, we have been freed from the bondage of death's eternal grip. We have been redeemed from the authority of darkness and have been placed into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:12-13).

When we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we became true sons of God and received a mighty inheritance.

JOHN 1:12 But as many as received Him (Jesus as Lord), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on His Name

As sons of God, we are also heirs of God and thus joint heirs with Jesus.

ROMANS 8:16 The (Holy) Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit (witnessing constantly to us), that we are the children of God:

ROMANS 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ . . .

And through Christ we have become citizens of heaven.

EPHESIANS 2:19 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the Saints, and (members) of the household of God

In this position, we have all the legal rights of heavenly citizenship. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing, and have been given authority to operate in the power of God as we fulfill the conditions of faith, love and obedience.

EPHESIANS 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings (all the Atonement brings) in heavenly places in Christ (*the Divine Blessing has its ground and reason in Christ; it is ours by reason of our being "in Him," which was brought about by the Cross : E.S.B.*)

EPHESIANS 2:6 And has raised us up together (His Resurrection was our resurrection in a spiritual sense: Romans 6:3-5), and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (our citizenship is in heaven: Philippians 3:20; we are no longer of this world)

These verses outline the inheritance we have in Christ. Indeed we are privileged in that legally, all this belongs to us. This is the good news of the Gospel of salvation. Amen!

The reason all this is legally ours is because of the finished work of Christ on the Cross. At the Cross, Christ paid the price for our release - from the state of sin and the power of sin, including the domination of the sin nature, a position into which we were born.

The Cross, indeed, must be the proper object of our faith. Fasting, faith, study, prayer, etc. are all needed. But without a proper object for our faith which gives us a proper focus, then all truth will be blurred, and we will miss the mark. This will prevent us being able to obtain God's graces to run the race set before us in strength and wisdom. We need to understand, believe and trust that all we have and will have in God comes to us via the Cross. This is why it is so important to be taught about the Cross consistently, and from every angle possible. One can never learn too much about this subject, for all that we are as children of God is based on the Cross. We need this knowledge also because we are weak and possess a flesh nature which is waiting for any given opportunity to spring back into life and act as a tyrant in our lives. Continually being refreshed with the teachings of the Atonement helps us focus on the things that matter, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). As we do this we will be better led of the Spirit rather than by things which appeal to the flesh.

“ . . . Without a proper object for our faith which gives us a proper focus, then all truth will be blurred, and we will miss the mark. . . ”

Now being raised in “*newness of life*,” we are partakers of the Divine Nature, and we have both a human nature, and at a positional level, a decommissioned or dethroned sin nature. Note that the sin nature is not extinguished, but rather decommissioned (in a positional sense). If we choose to sin in any area, the sin nature, at a conditional or experiential level becomes enthroned, giving us the power to do the wrong we have chosen

to do. To bring our condition into line with our position in Christ, we need to count ourselves as dead to the sin nature and alive to the Divine Nature, the “*newness of life*” which is ours to live in through the Cross (Romans 6:4) (KJV).

ROMANS 6:1 What then shall we say? Shall we habitually sustain an attitude of dependence upon, yieldedness to, and cordiality with the sinful nature in order that grace may abound? (Wuest)

ROMANS 6:2 May such a thing never occur. How is it possible for us, such persons as we are, who have been separated once for all from the sinful nature, any longer to live in its grip? (Wuest)

ROMANS 6:3 Do you not know that all we who were placed in Christ Jesus, in His death were placed? (Wuest)

ROMANS 6:4 We therefore were entombed with Him through this being placed in His death, in order that in the same manner as there was raised up Christ out from among those who are dead through the glory of the Father, thus also we by means of a new life imparted may order our behaviour. (Wuest)

This says it all! We are to “*order our behaviour*” by means of the Divine Nature - as we yield to the Holy Spirit and so receive the empowerment to act righteously (Philippians 2:13). In this way, we are supplied with the power we need to both desire and then to do God’s will.

“. . .We need this knowledge also because we are weak and possess a flesh nature which is waiting for any given opportunity to spring back into life and act as a tyrant in our lives. . .”

Salvation In Christ

The word “salvation” can be defined in terms of such words as deliverance, freedom, completeness, liberty, soundness, preservation, safety, health, victory, prosperity, restoration and wholeness. And the word can be applied to both spiritual and physical dimensions. Spiritually speaking, it refers to soundness of the spirit and the mind (soul). Physically speaking, it refers to soundness of the body. This we know because we are three-part beings (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Through regeneration we have been delivered from the wrath of God which is destined to be executed upon the ungodly at the end of this age. And regeneration, as we know, refers to the salvation of the spirit. Legally speaking, however, we have also been delivered from all bondage associated with sin in every other area of our lives. This also refers to the salvation of mind and body.

“...The word “salvation” can be defined in terms of such words as deliverance, freedom, completeness, liberty, soundness. . . .And the word can be applied to both spiritual and physical dimensions. . .”

COLOSSIANS 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, Who has (qualified and) made us meet (fit) to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light:

COLOSSIANS 1:13 Who has delivered (saved) us from the power (authority) of darkness (in every area), and has (past tense) translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (by means of the Cross):

COLOSSIANS 1:14 In Whom we have redemption through His Blood (this was the price paid), even the forgiveness of sins

In its fullest context, Colossians 1:12-14 is referring to every area of our lives and includes deliverance from all types of sickness, disease and emotional torment such as worry, fear, depression, suicidal thoughts, confusion, unbelief, etc. However while the spirit is completely delivered from the authority of darkness at regeneration, the mind, at an experiential level, is not. The spirit is completely delivered from the authority of darkness when we are born again. This includes deliverance from the sin nature which once resided in our spirit. It has been evicted by the saving presence of God through Jesus Christ. This saving presence continues to surround our spirit and guard it from darkness. While our spirit is clean, as we have said, our mind, at an experiential level, is not. The sin nature in regard to our mind needs to be dethroned through the empowerment of the Divine Nature. This takes place as we yield to the Holy Spirit (the will of God) and receive empowerment to do that which we have chosen to do. This must be a daily focus.

“...The sin nature in regard to our mind needs to be dethroned through the empowerment of the Divine Nature. . .”

To know the will of God, scripture tells us, our mind must be constantly renewed through the washing of the water of the Word (Romans 12:2; John 17:17). In this way our mind can be gradually brought towards a condition which matches our position in Christ, a condition of righteousness where our thinking agrees with God's thinking. This is also known as “ongoing sanctification,” a process which is ongoing and will continue until we go to be with the Lord. Our body may also be afflicted in various ways and we may need healing because of this. So salvation of mind and body, though legally ours, needs to be appropriated or received through a proper focus on the message of the Cross - the place where Jesus paid for our deliverance. All the grace we need in order to be healed, delivered and progressively sanctified can be appropriated through the Cross.

In order to gain a greater understanding of these verses of scripture we will expand the following words from Colossians 1:12-14.

The word “*delivered*” can mean “rescued,” “released,” “freed,” “liberated,” “saved” or “set free.”

The word “*translated*” can mean “transferred,” “re-established,” “repositioned,” “removed,” “placed,” “transported” or “relocated.”

So as we place these alternative words in Colossians 1:13, we can see we have been rescued and released from the dominion of the Kingdom of Darkness that would keep us in bondage and we have been re-established and placed into the Kingdom of Light that would give us liberty and freedom. We have submitted ourselves to another master, that being our Heavenly Father, God Almighty, and so we have come under His authority and protection.

***“. . . All the grace we need in order to be healed,
delivered and progressively sanctified can be
appropriated through the Cross. . .”***

This wonderful salvation is only possible because of Christ’s shed Blood - for without the Blood sacrifice of Jesus, there would be no redemption, and therefore no hope of salvation (Hebrews 9:22).

The word “*redemption*” means “payment” or “deliverance,” and the word “redeemed” means “paid in full,” or “delivered.”

“Redemption” can be defined as deliverance from the power of an alien dominion, and encompasses the idea of enjoyment of resulting freedom.

As we have learned in regard to God and mankind, God was man’s original father, but through Adam’s high treason, God lost His paternal rights to man. Through Christ’s sacrifice, however, in which His Blood was shed, God was able to regain His legal right to man - as man’s Father. After the Cross, mankind was offered a pardon that would cause him to become “the redeemed” through accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The redemptive price has been paid for all mankind to be released from the enemy’s grasp in every area of their lives. However as Believers, in order to reap the benefits of this deliverance (salvation), we must place ourselves in a position to receive at a conditional level.

We can be set free from the enemy and indeed any bondage by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11). But if we remain ignorant of some of God’s promises, then we will be missing out on our full inheritance.

So being set free from Satan and his kingdom in regard to our salvation is just the start - admittedly a very important start! We must then constantly renew our minds and act

according to that renewal if we are to live in our full inheritance. This process of ongoing sanctification is needed so that our condition (how we think, speak, act, live) can be brought into line with our position in Christ.

Responding To God's Invitation

Let's turn to John 3:16.

JOHN 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His (one and) only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in (and receives) Him (Jesus) should not perish, but have (with God) everlasting life.

In this particular verse of scripture, God has not asked us to clean ourselves up before we come to Him. Rather, He bids us to come with a humble heart to receive His love through Jesus. This love is ministered to us through His grace (unmerited favour). Similarly, if you have sickness, poverty or sin in your life and you want to be free from it, you may be saying, "Lord take this sin / sickness / poverty. I don't want it any longer." However God doesn't want it either. He doesn't want our sickness, He doesn't want our disease, and He certainly doesn't want our sin. In order to be freed from such things, we need to receive God's grace into our lives. If sin is involved we need to repent. Then we need to come into the throneroom, just as we are, in our time of need. As the scriptures tell us:

HEBREWS 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace (*presents the Seat of Divine Power, and yet the Source of boundless Grace*), that we may obtain Mercy (*presents that which we want first*), and find Grace to help in time of need (*refers to the Goodness of God extended to all who come, and during any "time of need"; all made possible by the Cross*). (E.S.B.)

“ . . . God has not asked us to clean ourselves up before we come to Him. Rather, He bids us to come with a humble heart to receive His love through Jesus. . . ”

Ephesians Ch.2 tells us:

EPHESIANS 2:4 But God, Who is rich in mercy, for (because of) His great love wherewith He loved us,

EPHESIANS 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us (made us alive) together with Christ (*this new life is imparted to us through our identification with Christ in His Death and Resurrection : E.S.B.*) . . .

EPHESIANS 2:8 For by grace (the goodness of God) are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (the gift of His Son and His finished work on the Cross)

So it is by God's unmerited favour (grace), through faith in His Word, that we have been delivered from the bondage of sin and have become partakers of the salvation that is ours in Christ.

God did not want anything of value from us (the unregenerated man) for we had nothing of value to give Him. Neither could we do anything which would earn His favour. We were surrounded by death and therefore owned by death and darkness, and in regard to obtaining favour with God, all our so-called "righteous acts" were as filthy rags before the Lord (Isaiah 64:6). We could give nothing that God would want. We could do nothing that was worthy in His sight. But God wanted us to receive His free gift of salvation by accepting Christ as our Lord and following Him.

Note: Many people accept Jesus as "Saviour" but do not allow Him to be "Lord." The term "Lord" means master, the one who possesses supreme authority. From the outset of His ministry, this term was commonly used to address Jesus, for He was often called "Lord." In order to receive our inheritance in Christ - all that He has for us - and to walk in our potential in Him, we need to know Jesus as our Lord as well as our Saviour.

Jesus said in John 16:23-24:

JOHN 16:23 "And in that day (following Pentecost - Jesus was teaching His Disciples while He was with them) **you shall ask Me nothing** (in a personal sense as you do now). **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name** (after Calvary and His finished work), **He will give it to you** (*He places us in direct relationship with the Father, enjoying the same access as He Himself enjoys* : E.S.B.).

JOHN 16:24 **Hitherto** (up until now) **have you asked nothing in My Name** (He had not gone to the Cross at this point in time so His Name could not be used then as it is now): **ask** (in that day), **and you shall receive** (every part of our inheritance comes through the Cross), **that your joy may be full."**

These words were not just meant for the Disciples but for all who are called by His Name. Therefore **when you have a need** (e.g. for healing), Jesus said to ask the Father in His Name, believing and trusting according to the Word, so that your need can be met by the power of God.

“. . .In order to receive our inheritance in Christ - all that He has for us - and to walk in our potential in Him, we need to know Jesus as our Lord as well as our Saviour. . ."

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites all who thirst for life, righteousness, deliverance, peace and joy to come and receive from Him the power to do His will. Indeed He still says:

MATTHEW 11:28 "Come unto Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (from your own works).

MATTHEW 11:29 Take My yoke (the cross of self-denial: Luke 9:23) upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.

MATTHEW 11:30 For My yoke is easy (when we carry it in His strength), and My burden is light.”

The prophet **Isaiah** also spoke out God’s invitation, which is still current today - for the Lord would have us come to Him, to receive that which cannot be purchased.

ISAIAH 55:1 Ho, every one who thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he who has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy (priceless spiritual) wine and milk without money and without price (but to seek, find and embrace : Revelation 21:6).

ISAIAH 55:2 Wherefore (why) do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfies not (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4)? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness (abundance of joy).

There are four general areas of need which compel us to go to the throneroom to ask for God’s help and to receive from Him. These are:

1. Being in a state of sin (being unsaved).
2. Having actions of sin (needing forgiveness and cleansing).
3. Having a need for healing, deliverance, peace, provision, wisdom or direction for oneself or others.
4. Desiring to commune with Him at a Father - son /daughter level.

Jesus states in the Gospel of John:

JOHN 4:14 “. . . whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

JOHN 10:10 “. . . I am come that they might have life (spiritual life, eternal life, the source of this life being Jesus Himself), and that they might have it more abundantly (through the Lord’s leading and empowerment).”

Looking at the scriptures we can see that Jesus is bidding us to receive all the riches He has obtained for us - the Kingdom of God and all its blessings. Some people relate this to material wealth, but the primary blessings of the Kingdom of God are truth, wisdom and power. These are the true riches we are to seek and find, and to use in Christ’s service for the sake of our fellow man. This can only happen, however, as we receive and act on God’s Word of truth in the power of the Divine Nature.

Receiving Forgiveness And Deliverance

Background Reading: Luke 7:36-50; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20

Through Jesus' sacrifice, forgiveness has been made available to the whole world, for Jesus paid in full the debt of mankind's sin by the shedding of His Blood. If we fall into sin after salvation, we can receive God's forgiveness and the cleansing of all unrighteousness in order to be set free. And 1 John 1:9 tells how this is done.

1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess (and repent of) our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In order to be delivered from any bondage, we must trust God and lean on His understanding, not our own strength (Proverbs 3:5-7). Firstly, however, we must acknowledge that any bondage is a consequence of sin - from Adam's sin to our sin, it is someone's sin.

Christ took care of the sin problem (and the enemy who promotes sin) at the Cross. We must develop a proper focus for our faith, knowing that this is true. The power of sin has been dealt with and overcome. We need only appropriate in our own lives the victory that has already been gained. Only as we yield to the Holy Spirit can we receive the energies and graces of God's Divine Nature to do this.

“. . .Firstly, however, we must acknowledge that any bondage is a consequence of sin - from Adam's sin to our sin, it is someone's sin. . .”

If we have sinned, however, we need to repent. The start of repentance is the will to not want to sin. Then we must yield to the Holy Spirit and will to turn around from that sin, believing that it is nailed to the Cross with the old man. We then need to believe for the empowerment to live as God wills. This comes through the Divine Nature that we were made partakers of when we were born again. As we yield to the Lord, our human nature can be enriched with the energies and graces of the Divine Nature so that we can gain both the desire and the power to do God's will.

Knowing this, and trusting in God, we can then, through His power at work in us, turn around from that sin, determining with a holy desire to forsake it completely. This is the first step. The second step, which can only be taken after the first, is to accept God's forgiveness, and the cleansing of all unrighteousness. The third step is, when sin presents itself, to exercise our will against this sin and to believe God for His grace to work in us so that we may overcome. To do this we need to activate our faith in regard to the realities of the Cross which are applicable to our life.

In point form, the steps we need to take are as follows:

1. **Step 1** - to acknowledge sin and to repent of it.

2. **Step 2** - to receive:
 - (a) God's forgiveness
 - (b) the cleansing of unrighteousness

3. **Step 3** - when sin presents itself, to exercise our will against this sin and then to believe for God's empowerment to overcome that sin and not be overtaken by it again. Remember, it is through the Divine Nature that we receive the power both to desire and then to do that which pleases God.

“ . . . As we yield to the Lord, our human nature can be enriched with the energies and graces of the Divine Nature so that we can gain both the desire and the power to do God's will. . . ”

We can see that because of Jesus' finished work, we do not have to deal directly with sin. Therefore, we do not have a sin problem so much as a receiving problem - receiving the empowerment which comes through the Divine Nature to overcome. Some people teach that we must give up many things before we can enjoy the benefits of salvation. However, we will never have the strength needed to give up most things (bad habits, bondages, sin) until we have received Jesus Christ as Lord. Then with Him by our side and the Holy Spirit empowering us, we can conquer any obstacle in our lives. As the scriptures declare:

ROMANS 8:37 . . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through (and only through) **Him Who loved us.**

Because:

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 . . . it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you (i.e. those who allow Him, through the process of Divine enablement) - **energizing and creating in you the power and desire - both to will and to work for His good pleasure . . .** (Amp.)

Therefore we can declare:

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens (empowers) **me.**

Permanent liberation from the authority of darkness can only be obtained through God's power being made available to the person seeking freedom. Only in Christ's strength (by God's power) can we, in the long term, overcome, and remove all the enemy's inroads into our lives.

Note: "God's power" can be defined in simple terms as:

- (a) The strength to overcome

(b) That which we know and experience as the love of God and even the presence of God.

(c) That which cleanses us from all evil and keeps evil at bay.

It is impossible to know the power of God in our lives via our own set of rules and regulations - for God's power only comes via the Cross as we exercise faith in His Word and fulfill His conditions of love and obedience.

Also, many people allow Jesus to be Lord of some areas of their lives and not Lord of every area. Consequently they are unable to receive total deliverance. Romans 6:16 clearly states:

ROMANS 6:16 Know you not, that **to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey** (in any area), **his servants you are to whom you obey** (in that area); **whether of sin** (the devil's way) **unto** (which leads to) **death, or of obedience** (God's way) **unto** (which leads to) **righteousness?**

“. . . Therefore, we do not have a sin problem so much as a receiving problem - receiving the empowerment which comes through the Divine Nature to overcome. . .”

Many Christians live with one foot in the world and one foot in Christianity and wonder why they are not growing in faith and living in the freedom the Gospel declares. Such Christians are trying to obtain the promises of God on their own terms under the government of self-rule. However Christians will only experience freedom from every spiritual and mental bondage when they allow Jesus to be Lord of every area of their lives, and submit themselves to a government in which God rules. We must submit completely to His Lordship, for even as Christians, the devil is our master in those areas in which we do not allow Jesus to be Lord. So whether we are blessed or cursed in any area will depend on which master we are submitting to in that area. And it is always ultimately our own choice - for it is we who cast the deciding vote, with God supplying the power, if we so choose, to do things His way.

Wuest comments on the Spirit-controlled life in these terms:

“The Lord Jesus waited for you and me to recognize Him as Saviour before He saved us. The Holy Spirit indwelling a believer is waiting to be recognized as the One to come to that believer's aid. Salvation is by faith from start to finish. It is a work of God for man. But God waits for man, unsaved or saved as the case might be, to avail himself of the salvation he needs, by means of faith. One of the reasons why the Holy Spirit has so little control over many Christians is because they think He works automatically in their hearts .

. . . .
“If any man thirst” (John 7:37) refers to a desire on the part of the believer that the Holy Spirit be the One to control his every thought, word, and deed. We do not take a drink of water unless we are thirsty. We do not appropriate the control of the Spirit unless we

desire Him to control us. A desire for His control will include among other things, a desire that He cause us to judge sin in our lives, a desire that He put sin out of our lives and keep it out, a desire that He separate us from all the ties we might have with that system of evil called the world, a desire that He dethrone our self-life and enthrone the Lord Jesus as absolute Lord and Master; a desire that He produce in us His own fruit, a desire that He make us Christlike, a desire that He lead us and teach us. Such a desire is a serious thing. It involves crucifixion of self, and self dies hard. The Spirit-controlled life is a crucified life.

“ . . . One of the reasons why the Holy Spirit has so little control over many Christians is because they think He works automatically in their hearts . . . ”

The other requirement is trust. Our Lord said, “He that believeth on Me, out from his inmost being shall flow rivers of living water” : John 7:38. The trust here in this context is not only trust in Him as Saviour, but trust in Him as the One who fills with the Spirit. The Spirit-controlled life is a matter of trust. Salvation is by faith. We received our justification by faith. We are to receive our sanctification by faith. It is this constant desire for the Spirit’s control and a trust in the Lord Jesus for the Spirit’s control that results in the Spirit-controlled life. When one faces a new day, it is well to include in our prayers thanksgiving for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, the expression of our desire for His control, and a definite assertion of our trust in the Lord Jesus for the Spirit’s control during that day. It is well at intervals during the day when we are faced with temptation, or when we have a definite piece of Christian service to perform, or are in need of instruction from the Word or of strength for some duty, to recognize quietly the ministry of the Spirit and depend upon Him for all needed guidance, wisdom, and strength. He is waiting for us to recognize Him and trust Him for His aid. He is there, the indwelling Spirit, always at the service of the believer. But the point is that He comes to our aid when we avail ourselves of His help. There are just two things therefore which the believer must do in order to be controlled by the Spirit, desire that control and trust the Lord Jesus for that control.”¹

(underlines and scriptural references added)

The Smoke-Filled Bottle

We will now use a natural illustration to demonstrate how we can receive God’s delivering power. Let’s take a bottle which has an inlet valve and an outlet valve. This bottle is filled with smoke which we will equate with sin or unrighteousness. To displace the smoke in the bottle, we will add water through the inlet valve. As this valve is turned on, the water enters, causing the smoke to leave via the outlet valve, as it is opened.

We could parallel this illustration with the condition of the spirit before regeneration. The bottle is a man’s spirit and the smoke represents sin. As the man believes and acts upon God’s Word, entering into relationship with his Creator, the inlet valve is opened and God

begins to pour in His living water. As a result, the unrighteousness which is in the man's spirit is forced to leave.

Concerning the illustration, did we have to concentrate on removing the smoke from the bottle? No. Similarly, as we did not have to concentrate on removing the smoke from the bottle, neither did we have to give up unrighteousness before we could receive God's grace into our lives. We needed only to repent of sin, thereby opening the spiritual valve of our heart so that God's saving grace could flow in.

This shows us that we should not be totally sin conscious, but rather God conscious - for through our spiritual understanding in Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16) we will become aware of that which is wrong. Only if we have a proper holy relationship with the Lord at an experiential level can we be at one with God through the Divine Nature energizing our human nature to believe as God believes. To do this we must be seeking, finding and embracing the Word and will of God daily.

The only time we can turn on the valve to receive from God is when our will is in line with His will and we are depending on the Holy Spirit to live our life in a righteous way.

We know that smoke and water do not mix - and such is the case with light and darkness. We cannot mix God's ways with the devil's ways and expect to live in the victory Christ offers. The result will only be a mediocre Christian lifestyle which lacks both fruit and blessing. In other words, there is no neutral ground. In each area of our lives we are either living according to God's will, which promotes blessing, or the devil's ways, which promote bondage.

***“. . . We cannot mix God's ways with the devil's ways
and expect to live in the victory Christ offers. . . ”***

If we allow God's living water to enter, the spiritual smoke (sin) in our lives has to leave. However if we choose not to seek truth (not to continue receiving the living water offered), the supply will diminish and a vacuum will be created which will allow the smoke to return. Jesus spoke of this principle in Matthew 12:43-45.

MATTHEW 12:43 When the unclean spirit (or unrighteousness) is gone out of a man, he (the unclean spirit) walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

MATTHEW 12:44 Then he says, "I will return into my house from where I came out;" and when he (the evil spirit) is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished (unoccupied).

MATTHEW 12:45 Then goes he, and takes (brings) with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first (he is worse off than before) . . .

This shows us the importance of continuing to receive from God. Many Christians reach a certain level of spiritual growth in God. They then feel comfortable and tend not to move on in their faith-walk. As we know, however, there is no such thing as a "status quo"

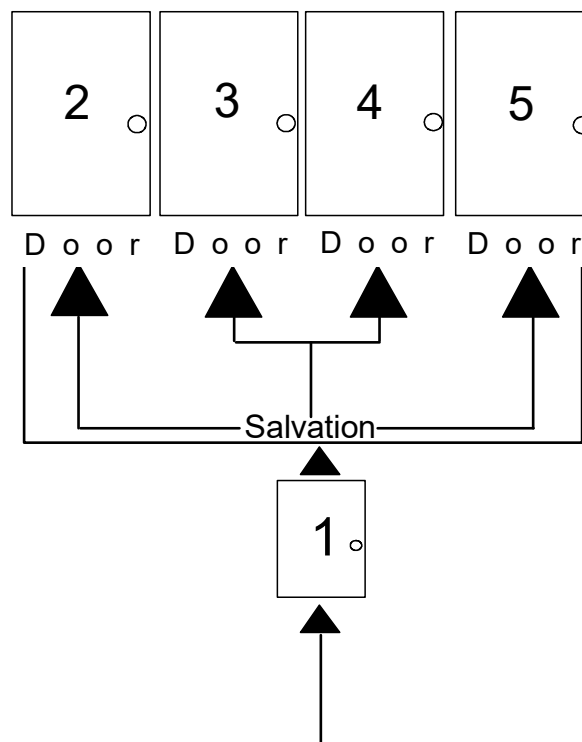
in this area - we are either moving forward, progressing in God, or we are regressing. If we are not moving forward and receiving the water of life, we can allow the smoke of the past to return, and with it, potentially, greater bondage than before. Again, the scriptures state, *“For unto whom much is given, of him will much be required”* (Luke 12:48). God will, nevertheless, always allow us to make our own choices, and He will never force us to receive His Words of life and deliverance. The Kingdom of God for the Christian is meant to revolve around an ongoing and progressive relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the power of the Spirit. Also involved is progressive revelation about God’s Kingdom itself, and this can only come through the message of the Cross. Our lives within the Kingdom are not supposed to remain static, but to progress in spiritual knowledge and wisdom through a deepening relationship with our Lord.

“. . .there is no such thing as a “status quo”. . .we are either moving forward, progressing in God, or we are regressing. . .”

Receiving The Promises Of God

Background Reading: 2 Peter 1:2-11

We can also liken our lives to a box which has a series of compartments. Each compartment has a door by which access is gained.



Receiving From God

The first section represents the salvation of our spirit. At regeneration, we allowed the light of God to enter this room when we received Jesus as Lord. However if we deny Christ in a major way (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10), this will block out the light from the first compartment, and the whole box will again be in complete darkness.

Once the first door is opened, however, and the light fills that compartment, there are doors to each of the other compartments which can also be opened so that light can enter. For example, the second compartment could represent our health, and the third compartment could represent our peace of mind. Other compartments could also represent our family life, our financial affairs, our witnessing to others of the Gospel, etc.

In order to begin to open the doors to these compartments, we need to first have knowledge of God's promises concerning these areas. We need to know what His Word says, for example, concerning the area of our needs:

PSALM 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Because:

PHILIPPIANS 4:19 . . . my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Concerning the second room, the Word states:

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne our griefs (paid the price for our sickness and disease), **and carried our sorrows: yet we did** (ignorantly) **esteem** (consider) **Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded (pierced) **for our transgressions** (rebellion), **He was bruised** (crushed) **for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace** (punishment that brought us peace) **was upon Him** (and Him alone); **and with His stripes we are healed** (and made whole).

Concerning the third room, the Word promises:

ISAIAH 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed (focused and centred) **on You: because he trusts** (completely and utterly) **in You.**

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding (is beyond all human comprehension), **shall keep** (guard) **your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.**

However knowledge alone is not sufficient to open these or any other doors. Knowledge only informs us of what is available. We can then receive God's promises by faith.

As we believe and trust fully in the finished work of Calvary, and allow Jesus to be Lord in each area, the doors will open and the rooms will become illuminated - filled with light. Knowing it is God's will for us to receive these promises, having faith in the promises and then acting upon them will bring them into reality. All this can only happen if we yield to the Spirit of Truth, our Teacher, and the Divine Nature enmeshes with our human nature so that we may believe and trust that which God has said.

Nevertheless, if we allow doubt, unbelief, fear, or self to enter and take control, the door to that area of our lives will slam shut. The result will be that Jesus is no longer Lord of that area and we cannot therefore receive the promises which pertain to it, e.g. our needs will no longer be met in Christ. The promises are still available, but we will have blocked God from providing for us in that area - for our needs are only met in Christ as we abide in His Word in faith and trust it completely. As we focus our faith at the Cross, the Spirit will give to us the power needed to run the race set before us. Amen.

HEBREWS 11:6 **But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.**

JAMES 1:6 **But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering (without doubting). For he who wavers (vacillates, not being single minded) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.**

JAMES 1:7 **For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord (for faith is heaven's currency).**

JAMES 1:8 **A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.**

Christians who continue to think as the world thinks (logically or naturally) while at the same time trying to operate in faith, will not be in a position to receive from God: e.g. 1 Corinthians 2:14 (in any particular area of promise). Indeed such Christians will always find themselves in a state of double mindedness. In other words, confusion will reign and it will be impossible for them to consistently focus on God's truths and principles. Indeed two things are needed. The first is proper focus and the second is the empowerment which comes through the Divine Nature.

Christians desiring to receive from God should first go back to the message of the Cross and understand its absolute significance (Romans 6:3-4). Once they have properly focused themselves on the truths of the Cross which form the basis of our inheritance, they can then go on through the energies and graces of the Divine Nature to believe God for the fulfillment of any particular covenantal promise they are desiring. Only in the power of the Divine Nature can the Christian properly believe (have holy faith) and make proper demands on heaven's power - to receive that which is His will for them to receive (1 John 5:14, 15.)

“ . . . Christians who continue to think as the world thinks (logically or naturally) while at the same time trying to operate in faith, will not be in a position to receive from God . . . ”

The Reality Of Faith

Background Reading: Romans 4:17-25

Many Christians presume to have “Bible-faith” when in fact what they have is mainly faith (trust) in their senses. These people may have small victories in some areas. It will only be a matter of time, however, before such Christians are faced with reality, that reality being bondage. The problem is that they are primarily only mentally assenting to the fact that God’s Word is true. There is little real holy faith in their hearts.

Unfortunately, some Christians will only believe when they see physical signs and wonders. Those people who base their belief on signs or manifestations are led by their senses, and this will hinder them from receiving fully from God. They believe for a time, but when there are no immediate results, they usually lose hope and so whatever little faith or trust they had is lost from their hearts (Mark 4:16-17). Indeed many Christians do not have much in the way of faith because they do not know what has happened to them, who they really are in Christ and the riches of their inheritance in Him.

“ . . . Many Christians presume to have “Bible-faith” when in fact what they have is mainly faith (trust) in their senses. . . ”

Having true spiritual abundance comes from having a relationship with Him not only at a positional level but at an experiential level, and so having the Holy Spirit’s energizing power to then believe and trust in His Word wholeheartedly with no shadow of turning. This allows God to honour His Word and make His promises a reality in our lives. However the Word must first be digested into the heart of man before it can be evidenced in people’s lives. This, by the Spirit’s power, produces transformation, and this is what God desires. God deals first with the heart, so that righteousness will follow - and then everything else that is needed.

PSALM 34:15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open (attentive) to their cry;

MATTHEW 6:33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God (allow Jesus to have first place in your life), and His righteousness (seek to live a holy life); and all these things (everything you need) shall be added unto you (*this gives the “conditions” for God’s Blessings* : E.S.B.).

To obtain the faith God requires to work through, we need to be unwavering in our belief. In all of our affairs in life, if we lack wisdom, we need to ask God to supply it (James 1:5). Then we can pray in faith, knowing God's will on the matter, being certain in our hearts that what we are believing for will come to pass, even though it may not yet be manifested in the physical realm, and regardless of the time it may take. In all of this we will need, from start to finish, God's grace to work in our lives.

We have seen that one key to opening the doors of our lives is to receive God's Word into our hearts, to digest it so that we may be transformed, thereby receiving faith to believe the truths which have been digested. As we then use that holy faith, the door will open and the power of God will enter into that situation. This could concern healing, our needs being met, etc., for God has given us many, many promises in His Word, and the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5:16).

Christians must allow God to develop His holy faith in their hearts so that they can then believe on God's promises at a holy level, a Spirit-energized level, and so give Him permission to fulfill these promises in their lives. Many are missing out on God's blessings simply because they choose not to partake of, and act on, His truths - in the power, the belief and trust, which comes through the Divine Nature.

There are people, both saved and unsaved, who have an intellectual knowledge of the Bible, and may even be able to recite whole chapters by memory. However we see many of these people in bondage, leading unfruitful or frustrated lives. And God's Word tells us that this is the case because they lack knowledge. How could this be so?

This is the case because it is only as we have revelation (heart) knowledge of God's Word and act upon it, that His power is activated in our lives and His promises are brought to fruition. We gain revelation knowledge as the human nature absorbs the graces and energies of the Divine Nature, and the Holy Spirit writes His truths on our hearts. Quite often this comes about naturally as we yield to the Spirit of God.

Concerning the unsaved:

1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know (understand) them, because they are spiritually discerned (unsaved man cannot understand spiritual truth).

Concerning the saved:

HOSEA 4:6 My people (today this means Christians) are destroyed for lack of (revelation) knowledge . . .

Many may know certain teachings of God's Word, but only on an intellectual level and not as a living reality in their hearts. This is why we need to meditate, with the help of the Spirit's graces, on God's Word. As we do so, the Holy Spirit can deposit truth into our hearts as revelation (heart) knowledge. This kind of knowledge, when properly acted upon, will produce good fruit in our lives, fruit of eternal value.

“ . . . We gain revelation knowledge as the human nature absorbs the graces and energies of the Divine Nature, and the Holy Spirit writes His truths on our hearts. . . ”

God has given to mankind everything that is needed for spiritual abundance. It is up to each of us to place ourselves in a position where we can receive that which God has provided. We must simply seek God’s Word and will, find His Word at a heart level and embrace His will (all with the help of the Holy Spirit) in our hearts and lives.

2 PETER 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2 PETER 1:3 According as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (He has given us everything we need to live a Godly life), through the knowledge of Him Who has called us to glory and virtue:

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and Precious Promises (*pertains to the Word of God, which alone holds the answer to every life problem*): **that by these (Promises) you might be partakers of the Divine Nature** (*the Divine Nature implanted in the inner being of the believing sinner becomes the source of our new life and actions; it comes to everyone at the moment of being “Born-Again”*), **having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.** (*This presents the Salvation experience of the sinner, and the Sanctification experience of the Saint.*) (E.S.B.)

The belief and trust which constitute faith come to us through God’s grace, given as we flow with Him. This faith cannot come by willpower. It is developed as we yield to the Spirit of Truth and flow in the energies of His Divine Nature of which we in Christ are now partakers. Therefore one of the greatest blessings after salvation is to flow in the river of truth proceeding from the throne, not in our own strength, but as we become one with the Holy Spirit Who dwells within. We then move and have our being in His strength whereby we can believe and then trust, so gaining the proper, holy faith we need to receive from God. This inheritance, given at the Cross, then becomes a living reality in our lives.

“ . . . Therefore one of the greatest blessings after salvation is to flow in the river of truth proceeding from the throne . . . ”

As we activate our faith in regard to God’s Word of promise, we allow Him to protect us and provide for us, and to remove any obstacles that may be diverting us from the path He wants us to take.

So receive God’s living Word of deliverance and provision. Receive Jesus as Lord (Master) of every area of your life by reverencing His Words of life and peace that are written in the Book. Allow the Holy Spirit to give you the grace needed to digest God’s

Word so that you truly become one with His truths. You will then be able to know what it is to live in the abundant life He won for us at Calvary.

May you have the victory in Christ.

TIME LIMIT - Due on or before.....

*This time limit is based on a minimum of hours of study per week
You should allow as a general guideline, hours to answer the questions.*

TOTAL ALLOWANCE hours.

If you are having problems completing this study within these guidelines, you may need to seek assistance from those in charge of distribution.

STUDY QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to assess how much you have understood and retained from your studies.

Answer and number all questions on line-ruled paper, giving two or three scriptures with each answer whenever possible. Also give an explanation, whenever possible, of how you arrived at your answer.

Answer these questions according to the instructions given regarding the grade you have chosen to work at, i.e. either Intermediate Grade or Ordinary Grade.

If you do not understand a particular question, contact those responsible for distribution.

*For ease of correction **write the actual question down on your answer sheet before answering each question, and please print all answers to the questions.***

Note: If you do not agree with any particular viewpoint expressed in the studies and you have another viewpoint, answer questions relating to this area in the following manner:

The view that the studies teach is

*But I believe
(and state the reasons why you do so)*

Note: Remember the time limit and complete the study and your answers within the allotted period.

If you are studying at Intermediate Grade, you will later be eligible to do the Advanced Questions if you so desire. You will not be able to use your study books or notes to help you answer these questions. In fact all you will be able to use are Bibles and Concordances. So prepare for this by studying properly and answering these questions according to the instructions given.

(See letters concerning how to study.)

RECEIVING FROM GOD

Study Questions

- 1 (a) What do some people erroneously think they must do before they can receive from God, and what is wrong with this belief?

(b) What must they do instead?
- 2 (a) As Christians, what is now our relationship with God?

(b) What other positions do we have in Christ, and what is our legal inheritance?
3. From what were we released at the Cross of Calvary?
4. What must be the proper object for our faith and why?
5. As Christians what is the position of the sin nature in our lives, and what is the role that it can play?
6. How do we overcome the desires of the sin nature?
7. What does the word “salvation” mean, and to how many areas of our lives can it be applied?
- 8 (a) According to Colossians 1:12-14, of what have we become partakers, and what does this mean in its fullest context?

(b) Explain the meanings of the words “*delivered*,” “*translated*” and “*redemption*,” relating these words to us as Christians.
9. Explain what happens to the spirit of a man at regeneration.
10. Describe the process of ongoing sanctification and explain what it achieves.
11. How do we reap all the benefits of salvation in Christ?
12. In relation to God’s Word, what is “grace,” how is it obtained, and why do we need it?
13. When we have a need, we find an invitation in scripture. Identify that invitation in both Old and New Testaments.
14. What are the four general areas of need which compel us to go to the throne for help?
15. What are the primary blessings of the Kingdom of God, and what does Jesus bid us to do in relation to these blessings?

- 16 (a) What steps must we take in order to be delivered from sin in any area of our lives?
 - (b) How important is Christ's strength, or Christ's empowerment, in all this, and how is it gained?
17. Define "God's power" in three simple ways.
18. If we do not allow Jesus to be Lord of every area of our lives, what government are we conducting, who is lord of these areas, and what will this result in?
19. Comment on your knowledge or experience of Wuest's statement, "... *self dies hard. The Spirit-controlled life is a crucified life.*"
20. God will not govern our lives unless we give Him permission. What two things must Believers do in order to lead the Spirit-controlled life?
21. Give a brief explanation of the "smoke in the bottle" principle outlined in this study.
22. Show how the smoke returning to the bottle relates to the story in Matthew 12:43-45.
23. Our lives within the Kingdom of God are not supposed to remain static. If this is the case, what is meant to be taking place?
24. What is the process by which we open doors to areas of our lives so that God's blessings can enter?
25. In any given area of promise, what will be the result if Christians continue to think as the world thinks (logically or naturally) and still try to operate in faith?
26. How do we make proper demands on heaven's power?
27. Why do Christians often only have faith (trust) in their senses, what will result from this and what is the answer?
28. What is the pathway to true spiritual abundance?
29. If we lack wisdom in any area, what does the Bible instruct us to do, and in what way is this important for the development of faith?
30. Explain the difference between intellectual knowledge and revelation knowledge, say how each is obtained, and relate your answer to Hosea 4:6.
31. If faith does not come by willpower, how is it developed?

32. At what grade did you study this booklet and answer the questions, Ordinary Grade or Intermediate Grade?
33. Do you wish to commit yourself to studying at 7 hours a week or 4 hours a week in regard to your next study?

Note: Please send \$..... with these answers for your next study.

***Note:** Under certain circumstances, you may not feel you can commit 7 hours a week to the next study. You can then opt to study at 4 hours a week. The time limits will be adjusted accordingly. Should your situation change, you can increase your time to 7 hours a week - just notify the college or those in charge of distribution.*

WE BELIEVE:

1. The Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative written Word of God.
2. There is one true triune God, eternally co-existent in three persons Who form the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit. These three dwell together in perfect unity, forming one heavenly government called God, and each of the three divine persons we recognize to be God.
3. God the Word stripped Himself of His rightful godly privileges and became flesh, a human being called Jesus Christ. Nevertheless He remained God the Word, being both truly God and truly man.
4. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He was crucified, buried, and then raised from the dead by the power of God. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and is the only Mediator between God and man.
5. In the spiritually lost condition of men - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (are deprived of God's saving presence).
6. Salvation is found in no one else except Jesus, and there is no other name under heaven which is given to men whereby mankind can be saved.
7. In the essential need of the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ. The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.
8. Spiritual regeneration (the new birth) is brought about by making Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour, and by believing that Jesus' precious shed blood was the price needed to redeem man from sin.
9. In the Person and work of the Holy Spirit with His gifts and fruit abiding in the Church.
10. In the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, as the Spirit gives utterance.
11. That believers should be water-baptized, as the Lord commands, by full immersion, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
12. That divine healing is provided in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, by applying faith to God's Word of promise.
13. In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.
14. Jesus Himself shall descend from heaven to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to meet with Him in the air. This event is known as the Rapture of the Church.
15. In the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth along with His glorified saints. This event will take place after the Rapture (the snatching away).
16. That all who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will enjoy everlasting life with Him.
17. That all who do not accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour will spend eternity in everlasting torment in the lake of fire, along with Satan and his forces of evil.

1 Wuest, K.S., Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Vol.III, pgs.105-107.