

THIS NEW LIFE



In Acts 5:20 the imprisoned Apostles had an angelic visitation! They were given very specific instructions! "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life." (NIV) There's, a couple of things of importance to be gleaned from this. One, there's a **new life** people need to hear about and two; there's a **"full message"** that needs to be told.

1) Introduction

On occasion I'm reminded of the elderly lady (evidently a true story) who for years lived in severe poverty and eventually died a broken hearted old women. As they were settling the estate it was discovered that hanging on the wall was a painting worth several million dollars. Had this woman only known what was rightfully hers she could have chosen to live a totally different life!

There's continues to this day the need to hear, **"the full message of this new life"**. Are we really experiencing God's best right now? Have we caught hold of God's vision for this generation?

God's Heart Is Exposed:

In the heart and mind of God, Jesus was crucified before the foundation of the world. This tells us a little something about the Creator. He's the God of Vision. He not only saw what He wanted for the world at creation, He saw what He wanted for our lives today. He saw us redeemed through Christ. He saw us blessed and filled with the Holy Spirit **enjoying the "Jesus Life"** now!

Jesus paid a great price to purchase our freedom from sin! The salvation plan of God is certainly beyond human comprehension. The thought that God would leave His place in heaven to become the "God - Man" Jesus Christ is amazing. The humiliation of the Creator taking on the form of the created! To think that Jesus, the sinless One, would take upon Himself the sin of the world; that He who did no wrong would be so brutally and ruthlessly accused, condemned and finally crucified! Can you fully understand this?

During the crucifixion Jesus was so severely beaten that Isa. 52:14 says, **"Many were amazed when they saw Him - beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one could scarcely know He was a person."** Jesus' death on the cross was extremely brutal. He was mocked and spit upon! The hands that healed the sick were nailed solid, forbidden to reach out in compassion. The feet that carried the Saviour, likewise nailed to the cross, forbidding them to take Him any longer to the lost with the Good News of Gods willingness to forgive sinners. The mouth that spoke such gracious healing words was given bitter vinegar. Jesus endured pain, disgrace, humiliation and physical death to pave the way for eternal life. For what! So sinners like you and I could enjoy the blessings of forgiveness of sin and eternal life!

What would those final minutes, those final seconds prior to His death have been like? What must He have felt when He was aware that He had been left completely alone to bare the punishment of God for sin? The anguish of his soul can be heard through his words on the cross, "[My God My God why have you forsaken me.](#)" (Math. 27:46) Why endure all this when at any moment He could have called out to the Father and been freed by angels. What was it Jesus was envisioning for our lives? Why tolerate such excruciating pain? What was it all about?

The prophetic words given to Joseph concerning Jesus, were, "[He will save His people from their sins.](#)" (Math. 2:21) This is still the major concern in the heart of Jesus today. He's very much interested in saving us from sin. Sin always produces death. Jesus has come to give us life and to give it fully. Salvation is even more than sins forgiven! Its about living free from the bondage and damage sin produces!

It's my sincere desire that as you continue through this Series you will discover something about "This New Life" that will cause you to be both inspired and encouraged to believe God for more of the "Jesus Life" in the "here and now".

Suggestion: I'd like to suggest that you follow through the Series in sequence. I think you'll find it the most rewarding approach.

Note: This series has been formatted with the Internet user in mind and is not meant to be an exhaustive Study on this subject. If you have any questions or would like something clarified more fully please feel free to contact us. You are free to copy any and all of our Study materials for and in none profit and none commercial usage.

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Note: Unless otherwise stated Scripture quotes are from the New Living Translation (NLT) of the Holy Bible.

2) Repositioned "In Christ"

Position is Everything

The three key words to success in the Real-estate business are: Location, Location, and Location. Basically, if you're in the right place at the time right all goes well. Know where will this be more relevant than when God opens His Account Books. **Position determines destiny!**

Negotiators, of all kinds, prefer to work, from what is called, a position of strength. Because they have a lot going for them from that position there's more confidence for favourable results. They're bolder in their demands and more aggressive in their pursuit! As we start seeing our true spiritual position we too become much more aggressive in our pursuit of Christ-likeness.

Positioned by Natural Birth: "IN ADAM"

One thing we all have in common; we've all been positioned in this physical world through natural birth! We didn't have a whole lot of choice in the matter but here we are! Being birthed into the human race, the physical family of Adam, results in an inheritance. Because of our position in Adam we receive from him the fallen human nature otherwise known as the sinful nature. This brings with it major problems. 1 Corinthians 15:22 - *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*(NIV) Our birth right in Adam just happens to be death. Take a few minutes and look at the Adamic nature. **Below is a character trait list of the sin nature**

The Adamic Sin Nature = The Old Self or Human Nature

Mk.7:20-23; Rom.1:29,30; Gal.5:17-21; Eph. 4:19-22,31; Col. 3:5-8

evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, foolishness, hate, envy, murder, fighting, deception, malicious behavior, gossip, backstabbing, hating God, insolent, proud, boastful, disobedient to parents, breaking promises, heartless, unforgiving, impure thinking, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild partying, greedy, rage, malicious behavior, slander, dirty language **This is not an exhaustive list of the old nature**

The death spoken of here embraces the spiritual as well as the physical. For the soul and spirit to be separated from the physical body at death is one thing. To have them eternally separated from God is totally another! Death is much more than a physical departure!

To be "in Adam" is to be an object of Gods wrath. Ephesians 2:3 - *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.* The dilemma facing Adams race is how to rid ourselves of sin and to get out from under Gods wrath. The death penalty for sin makes this pursuit humanly hopeless. There's simply no way for Adams race, by human methods, to establish "right relationship" with the holy and just God. Ephesians 2:12 - *In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from Gods people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.* Into this hopeless, helpless picture steps the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repositioned by Spiritual Birth: "IN CHRIST"

As the "God Man" (He was mothered from earth but Fathered from heaven (Rom.4:3,4) Jesus was holy and completely without sin. 1 Peter 1:19 - **He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.** God came to this earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lived in the same world as you and I, tempted in every way yet did not sin. Hebrews 4:15 - **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.** As a result of His sinlessness He had no death penalty of His own to pay and therefore was the only One capable of rescuing the human race.

Seeing that God was the offended party in the rebellion of sin He's the One that must be appeased and He's the One who's chosen the method of appeasement. He has said that no one can even see the kingdom of God unless they are "Born Again". (The meaning of "Born Again" is to be born from above or to be born of God.)

How did we get into Adam? We were birthed into him! How do we get into Christ? By being birthed into Him! 2 Corinthians 5:17 - **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (NIV)** I believe it's essential to really understand this. When we repent of sin and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour a spiritual birth takes place. We enter "Christ's race of the redeemed". We are a "new creation" in Christ! When "in Adam" we have Adams fallen sin nature, when in Christ we have His divine nature. Take a few minutes and look over the new nature . It's a big help if we know what to expect in our lives. **Below is a "character trait" list of the new nature.**

The Jesus Nature = The New Self

Gal. 5:22,23; Col.3:12-15; 1 Cor.13:4-7; Jas 3:17; Eph.4:32

loving, joyful, peaceful, patience, kind, good, faithful, gentle, self-controlled, tender-hearted, merciful, humble, gentle, making allowance for other's faults, forgiving, thankful, not jealous, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not demanding, not irritable, not holding a grudge, not glad about injustice, rejoicing whenever the truth wins out, hopeful, enduring, willing to yield to others, not given to partiality, sincere, tender-hearted **This is not an exhaustive list**

A New Creation With A New Position Of Strength

I want you to stop and think about this next statement! If you are truly "born of God" you can no longer honestly say, "I'm only human". At salvation we not only enter into Christ, He enters into us. Col.1:27- **For it has pleased God to tell his people that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory.** Jesus by His Holy Spirit is resident within us. He has become apart of us, resulting in a whole new species! A new creation! Something the world had never seen before! 2 Cor.5:17 - **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** Were different! We have new life and therefore should expect to experience and live in the dynamics of that new life. There will be distinct changes take place in our if behaviour were really Born of God . Take a few minutes and look over some Scriptures that help clarify our position of strength, "In Christ".

Prayer Suggestion: Heavenly Father, thank you for all you have done for we through the Lord Jesus Christ. Help we to understand and to fully embrace the full message of this new life that you have given me. Help me to see that you have given me a whole new position "IN CHRIST". I want to receive all that you have for in the here and now and I want that you would be blessed through what you are able to accomplish in and through my life. In Jesus name! Amen

3) Jesus' Victory

This New Life Reality:

To really appreciate the strength of our new position "In Christ" we need to see His position. If we really are "In Christ" then of necessity we must be, positionally, where He is. If we see our new position the possibility of living This New Life becomes a much greater reality.

A Look At Jesus:

A Series on "This New Life" can be bit overwhelming! It's quite a vast subject! Where to begin? It's said, that at the Mint, where they manufacture our money, the quality control inspectors are trained by having them observe only perfect product. That way, anything imperfect appears quite obvious. The best place for us to start this Series is by looking at Jesus.

Heb. 1:1-3 - Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. ³ **The Son reflects Gods own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly.** He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.

In a nutshell "This New Life" is about experiencing Jesus victory in all areas of life in the "here and now". Victory suggests battle. Lets consider the personal victories of Jesus! Where He was an "overcomer" is where He has purpose us to be "overcomers".

Where Jesus came to earth He was on assignment! Three basic areas of life needed to be addressed if there was to be any hope for people to live as God envisioned. There needed to be victory over **sin, Satan** and **the world**. All three of these are in direct opposition to God and His Kingdom.

Jesus Victory Over the World:

The first thing Jesus confronted after the Holy Spirit came upon Him was the worldly temptations brought to Him by the devil. This is really a separate study! For the sake of time I'm just going to give a quick overview. Jesus temptation in the wilderness is covered in Mt. 4, Mk. 1, and Lk.4 It's very interesting to find that Jesus was confronted with the same areas of temptation Adam and Eve faced in Gen. 3. ¹ John 16 lists the three avenues through which all sin is channelled. - **For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world** .(NKJV) Notice, these three points or avenues are of the world! The devil uses these to entice us into sin.

It was the world Jesus first confronted and gained total victory over. Adam and Eve lost the battle! Jesus won it! **John 16:33 - ...But take heart, because I have overcome the world.** The battle to gain victory over the world was very real. Even the angels came and ministered to Jesus at this time. (Mt.4:11) After such a battle we discover something very interesting and encouraging about the Lord. **Luke 4:14 - Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power.** Jesus victory wasn't marginal! He came out of this battle in the power of the Holy Spirit, totally victorious and in complete control.

Jesus' Victory Over Sin

1 John 3:8 - He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devils work. All human suffering in its various forms can be traced right back to the origin fall of man. Sin always results in death. It knows of no other destination.

Jesus came to conquer this enemy. To master this enemy, on behalf of the human race, required victory over sin in his own life. Had Jesus not lived free from sin He could save no one. Here's a couple of Scriptures revealing Jesus sinlessness.

Hebrews 4:15 - This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin.

1 Peter 1:19 - He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, **the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.**

Jesus' sinlessness was not effortless! He experienced the battle against sin. For example, when in the garden of Gethsemane the struggle against sin was so severe that the sweat of forehead was, drops of blood. Luke 22:44 - He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. In the Scripture this kind of resisting against sinning falls in the category of suffering. Hebrews 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (NIV)

Suffering is never easy! We should understand that when Jesus resisted temptation He experienced the inner suffering that goes along with it. He exercised a holy determination to say no to sin and yes to the will of God. He learned through personal experience what it takes for a human being to live in obedience to the Word of God. Hebrews 5:8 - Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered. (NIV)

Jesus' Victory Over Satan

When Jesus was birthed into this world there was much more than an infants perspective. Jesus was on assignment! He left His heavenly home with full intentions of disarming Satan and breaking the power of sin! Heb.2:14 - Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death- that is, the devil. The results are recorded! Colossians 2:15 - And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (NIV)

Jesus death on the cross was the price He paid to gain legal authority over Satan on behalf of the fallen human race. Jesus is completely victorious over all the powers of darkness.

Jesus' Present Power & Authority

When Jesus had successfully completed His assignment on earth He was powerfully raised from the dead! He then took His rightful place at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

1 Peter 3:22 - who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand- with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Matthew 28:18 - Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth."

Having a good working understanding of what Jesus has accomplished and His present power and authority is important as it pertains to experiencing more fully "This New Life". What we can experience of the "Jesus Life" in the "here and now" has been determined by Jesus' victory over sin, Satan and the world. What we can experience of Jesus' blood bought salvation this side of heaven is the direct result of Jesus Himself.

Jesus' Victory Gives Realistic Objective

As we continue through this Series a couple of things should become crystal clear. One, Jesus lived a life that glorified God and secondly, because He did, so now can we. To enjoy the dominance of Jesus life in us should be our pursuit. Have you ever seen illustration of how donkeys are motivated. A long stick extending 3 or 4 feet past the end of the nose is strapped on its back. A carrot is then tied to the end of the stick and allowed to dangle in front. When the donkey sees the carrot in front of him he moves forward to get it. The carrot's fixed position on the stick is enticing but allusive. As hard as the old donkey may try he can never reach his objective. This method may indeed get you started but it, won't be long before discouragement and disillusionment sets in. What God promises us, is always attainable by, His grace! He'd never think of deceiving us! If we're not getting it! There's, reasons why!

Prayer Suggestion: Father in Heaven open my understanding so I can see more fully what Jesus accomplished on my behalf. Help me to fully embrace the salvation that you envision for my life in the "here and now". In Jesus name! Amen

4) People of Destiny

The Value of Vision

As a result of our Repositioning, "In Christ", we have a new destiny. That means there's a whole "new vision" that we're required to embrace. This New Covenant vision for our lives originates in the heart of our God! Each generation has the unique challenge of embracing that vision!

Embracing a vision is like establishing a target! It gives us something to aim for! It gives goals and objectives! It's also instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of personal disciplines.

Embracing the "Spiritual Vision" of God is vital to successful Christian living! The Bible is emphatic about it! In Pr. 29:18 of the old King James Bible it says, "**Where there is no vision, the people perish:**" What does this really mean? What does it mean to perish? Other more up to date translations of this verse seem to almost distract us from the implication of perishing. For example the NLT says, "**When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.**" For the Christian, "to run wild" is to live without divine guidance. That's how we used to live before we met Christ! Aimless, pointless lives, is what we inherited from Adam.

The God of Vision:

Over and over throughout Scripture God comes to His people and shares His vision. God is without question an Envisionary! Rom.4:17 - **...the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.** He calls things that are not as though they were! In other words at the time God shares His vision with people there is no physical evidence to substantiate His words. In fact when God shares His vision everything in the natural screams, impossible! For man yes, yet with God, nothing is impossible! This simple basic truth needs to be fully embraced! Out of nothing God created everything seen and unseen.

God has a very specific vision concerning His people here on earth in this generation. **That vision is our spiritual destiny today!** There is a plan and a purpose for your life. The challenge of every generation is to embrace the vision of God for our lives, allowing Him to powerfully affect the impossible with eternal life giving Word resulting in His vision being realized.

Gods Vision For His People:

The most significant revelation of "God's Vision" for "This New Life" is seen through the Exodus. In fact the whole New Covenant plan of redemption is evident there! In Ex. 3:7,8 we discover Gods original intent for the first generation of "Exodus Israelites". **"You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey..."** Its very important that we catch the full vision of God here. The vision is basically two-fold, **"out of"** and **"into"**. It includes both Israel's escape from Egypt and their settling in the land of promise. In the heart of God its never enough for Him that sinners are simply forgiven! He has proposed that they enter and settle in the land of New Covenant Promise. For Israel it was **"out of"** Egypt and **"into"** Canaan! For us it's **"out of"** Adam and **"into"** Christ! For us its **"out of"** the kingdom of darkness **"into"** the kingdom of Light, **"out of"** worldliness **"into"** righteousness, **"out of"** sin **"into"** holiness.

There's a lot we can learn about human nature from the Exodus experience. We know God loved His people and that He had big plans for them. Before they ever set one foot into Canaan land, and before they saw their first enemy defeated, God told them, it was their land. God had given it to them and as a result it belonged to them. It was God's gift to them! It was what He had envisioned and lovingly purposed for them. God has the New Covenant vision of "This New Life" for His people of this generation!

Each new generation of God's people face the challenge of accepting His vision for their lives. How did the first generation of "Exodus Israelites" do? Did they say, "yes and Amen to the promises?" Did they boldly go in and take possession of what was rightfully theirs? We most likely know the answer to these questions only too well. These people failed to embrace God's vision for their lives and instead chose to lean on the arm of humanism. They, like us if we're not careful, reasoned God right out of the picture. All they saw was their own human limitations! They just couldn't seem to get their eyes off themselves and onto Jehovah!

"This New Life", like Canaan, is humanly impossible to enter into and, once entered, is humanly impossible to live. It was always God's vision that Israel enter and settle in the promised land! It was however never His vision that they do it through humanism of any kind. To fully inherit the land would mean trusting the Saviour.

History proves that God's original vision for the "Exodus Israelites" was not beyond His capability to fulfill. Under the leadership of Joshua the second generation of "Exodus Israelites" chose to believe God. They looked away from the doubt fear and unbelief of their forefathers and instead trusted the Lord to do for them what they could not do for themselves. Ps. 44:3-8 says, [They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you, favoured them and smiled on them. You are my King and my God. You command, victories for your people. Only by your power can we push back our enemies; only in your name can we trample our foes. I do not trust my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me. It is you who gives us victory over our enemies; it is you who humbles those who hate us. O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name.](#)

It's been said by some, "true Bible Christianity is very hard to live". What must be seen is, **Christianity isn't hard to live, its impossible to live.** Totally and absolutely impossible! But God! There's the key!

God's "Bible Vision" for His people in the twenty first century is **possible because Jesus Christ lives!** Ph. 2:13 tells us, ["For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him AND the power to do what pleases Him."](#) Whatever you do don't miss the word "AND" in this verse! This has to one of the greatest revelations of "This New Life" in the Bible! God at work in the hearts of His people motivating them and giving them the power they need to live the kind of life that will glorify God! Wow! Think of it! Can the "Jesus Life" happen now? Can it happen for you, for me? Yes it can! Jesus is alive in us!

God's Vision Is Personal:

It can be easier for some to accept a broad vision like the whole nation of Israel going in and possessing the Promised Land. Yet for these same people it can be difficult to embrace this vision for themselves personally. God has often shared His vision with one person. It cannot be over emphasized that God's vision today is for you personally.

What is the vision God wants us to embrace? For Noah it was a new world! For childless Abraham, it was an extra large family! For Israel it was Canaan, the land of Promise! For Gideon it was a life change! Lets take a few minutes to consider Gideon and the vision God shared with him. In many ways it serves as a great example for us.

At the time God decided to share His vision with Gideon the nation of Israel was living in great fear of a very ruthless and vicious enemy. Not an awful lot unlike our enemy, the devil. Gideon was hiding down in a winepress threshing grain fearful if seen the enemy would swoop down on him and steal the grain. At this very humiliating time he receives an angelic visitor who was commissioned to share Gods vision with him.

[Jud.6:12 - When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." \(NIV\)](#) This could have seemed ridiculous and possibly a bit like mockery to Gideon. He knew very well what the present situation was! He was the weakest of the most insignificant family in Israel. [Jud.6:15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." \(NIV\)](#) How would we respond if the Lord came to us with a vision of how He saw us?

The Bible records various visions that God shared over the years. It also records the fulfillment of these visions. Noah obeyed God and by faith built the Ark. From within the safety of that Ark he witnessed the first flood waters pour down from the heavens. He went on to experience the salvation of his family and the adventure of a new life on an earth that appeared totally different. It all happened just as the Lord said! The same is true of Abraham, Israel, and Gideon. If we will simply respond to the vision of God in obedience that vision will be realized.

God's Vision For Us Now:

Here's a Scripture that if not understood through the grace of God, can seem very demanding. 1 John 2:6 [Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.](#) Is this a real possibility? Is God making an unrealistic demand? How can I ever live as Jesus did? He's the Holy "God Man" and I'm just a sinner! Wait a minute here! How does God see us? What is He saying? What is His vision? 2 Corinthians 5:17 [Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! \(NIV\)](#) If you have sincerely repented of your sins and genuinely received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour then you are "Born Again". To God a "Born Again" Believer is a whole new person. The New Living Translation say it this way. 2 Corinthians 5:17 [What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!](#)

VERY IMPORTANT - Don't Miss This!

Basic to seeing God's vision realized in and through our lives is the need to understand that **God is not in the process of patching up or improving the old self. He's in the business of growing up the new self.** This truth is not always clearly understood! Its possible to spend quite a few years of your Christian life trying very hard to improve the old self. An improved Adamic nature is still Adamic and can never please God. Let's focus on the new self and expect the resident life of Jesus to be more fully released and expressed in us.

What appearance does the new person have? What can we anticipate! What should I be expecting to experience as a Born Again Believer? Ephesians 4:24 [You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in Gods likeness - righteous, holy, and true.](#) The new person is, created by God in His very own likeness! At the heart of the new person is the character and nature of the Almighty God. Its one thing to accept that I'm a new person its quite another to receive the "God Vision" of what that new person is like. **THIS IS A VITAL POINT!** What we do with this will ultimately determine the outcome of our spiritual maturity. Its at this point where we need to respond to the vision of God as Mary did in Lk.1: 38 ["I am the Lords servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."](#)

Prayer Suggestion: Father thank you that you love me and that you desire only good for my life. The vision you have for me far exceeds anything that is humanly possible. Help me to receive and fully embrace your vision for Christ-likeness in me. Help me learn to draw strength from the "Indwelling Jesus". I thank you Father that I can honestly anticipate your help. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

5) Receiving God's Vision

Hearing God's Voice:

In the beginning of creation God had a vision for Adam and Eve. There was destiny and potential. Unfortunately, for them, they failed to realize God's best for them. A number of spiritual factors played into this but one of the most significant is that they chose to listen to the wrong voice. Through the millenniums of time the devil uses the old tricks! He loves to introduce doubt and confusion as it pertains to the Word of God. Did God really say that and if He did, did He really mean it? [Gen. 3:1- Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?"](#)

We have a challenge before us! We need to discover what God has said about this new life in Christ. What is His vision? What is the spiritual potential He sees for us? If there's a lesson to be learned from Adam and Eve it's to fully embrace what God says and not allow it to be stolen from us.

Receiving God's Vision:

Most revelations of God's vision are first of all unbelievable! They often far exceed the potential of human achievement. Many times when God approached his people to share his vision nothing like it had ever been heard of before. God told Noah it was going to rain and that he should build a boat. Can you imagine what could have been going through Noah's mind at that time? Remember it had never rained on the earth before! WOW! Now go ahead and believe God! Well, Noah did and as a result he saw God's vision for him and his family realized. They were saved and the world was lost.

The "God Vision", that most illustrates salvation, and new spiritual potential is the Exodus. The vision was so big, so beyond anything imaginable! These Israelites had been enslaved in Egypt for over 400 years. Slavery is all they knew! Egypt ruled the world! How could they ever escape? Who was there to help? Where was there an army strong enough to defeat the Pharaoh? Where would they go? How would they get there, after all it's desert everywhere?

Well, God had a vision and God had a man that would receive and embrace that vision! The vision's history now! God did deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt and He did settle them in the land of Promise. It took a bit! First of all He had to wait until there was a generation of people who would simply take Him at His word. The first generation of Exodus Israelites balked in unbelief. They refused to believe the voice of God. Instead they chose to lean on their own human understanding. They reasoned God right out of His own vision. Humanism always accomplishes this. It just has a way of reasoning God right out of the miraculous. Remember seldom are God's visions realized without miracles.

Attitude For Receiving:

The fullness of God's Greatest Vision was kept as a secret in His heart until the fullness of time. The vision starts to unfold with an angelic visitation to a young virgin called Mary. Into her ears comes the audible manifestation of God's redemptive vision. She was to mother the long sought after Messiah. Is it possible to really put ourselves in her shoes? We should try! Can you imagine how this must have sounded! A virgin to conceive! How would this be? Well, the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you! How many times has this happened and when was the last time you ever heard of the Holy Spirit coming upon someone. And then to be told the child would actually be conceived by the Holy Spirit! There's lots of opportunity given to hear the same voice Eve heard, "Did God really say?"

Lk.1:26-38 - In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgins name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God." ³⁸ "I am the Lords servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

How Mary responded is awesome! It's the kind of response that enables God to see His visions fulfilled in and through people. It's the same attitude required in our day. Nothing less will really please the Lord. Mary displays a genuine receivers attitude. Its simple yet so full of trust and faith! . **"May it be to me as you have said."** This is what the Lord waits to hear from us. As you continue through this series you may very well discover something you've never seen before in the same light. It could very well be that promise of God you've wanted for so long! How will you respond?

Before we move on Id like us to look at a portion Scripture that has the potential of revolutionizing our spiritual lives. 2 Corinthians 1:20 **For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.** Let just walk through this slowly and see what can receive from it.

- (1) First of all is this Scripture relevant for us today? Yes it is! Why? Because it's talking to those who are "in Christ".
- (2) Every promise God has made is "Yes" for us in Christ.
- (3) We are to say, "Amen" to the promises of God. (Amen means, "so let it be".)
- (4) Whenever we agree with Gods Word it brings glory to Him.

Are we ready to receive God's voice speaking to us as Mary did?

Knowing the Word of God:

Without faith its impossible to please God. Faith simply believes what God has said. It takes God at His Word and courageously refuses to doubt. Faith sees God not the situation. Why is the Word so vital to us? Faith feeds on the Word! It gets its roots around and refuses to let go. If we don't what God has said regarding any given situation there's no place for faith to take root. Take time in the Word of God. Take time studying the promises of God. Memorize them and then when you need them the Holy Spirit will remind you of them.

How Are We Praying?:

Are we asking for things that God has already declared done? Just listening to your own prayers can be very revealing! Once we know the Word of God and have heard His voice of promise lets not keep on asking! Lets start saying, "**Yes Lord, so let it be just as you have spoken.**"

Note. I want to say something here of importance. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed three times for the same thing. Jesus always prayed in faith! He prayed through! He prayed until He heard an answer. Once the answer came, the pleading was over! So keep asking until you've heard the promise of God but once you've heard, then you start thanking and praising God. To keep on asking after having been told, is not being in agreement with God!

Prayer Suggestion: Father in heaven I come to you in Jesus name. I want you to be glorified and in order for that to happen I need to be in agreement with your vision for my life. Help me to be a receiver of your Word. Help me to put into action what I hear you saying to me. Give me ears to hear and a heart that responds in love and faith. Thank you! In Jesus name Amen.

6) It Can Happen Now

All Things Are Possible

With God all things are possible, not so with people. Fear is a major issue in the human race. The cause of this is the sense of our human limitations. We simply know that we are not able to control every situation. Our humanly resources dictate our limitations.

The first generation of "Exodus Israelites" had an incredible future! God was on their side! He had given them His unfailing Word! What more could they want? They sent in the spies to check things out. On their return it was very evident that Canaan was a fruitful land just as God had told them. At this point Gods people faced a serious challenge! Would they cross over the Jordan and enter a land they had never experienced before! Could they entrust themselves to the "safe keeping" of their God? Every generation of God's people is faces with this familiar challenge. In fact, this same challenge confronts every individual Believer.

Pr. 3:5 says "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding." The natural or Adamic tendency is to trust in our own person, our natural resources, our own understanding of things. In areas that are familiar to us we can have relatively good success by trusting in what we've learned from the past, etc. However when it come to the unfamiliar, to ground never trodden before then this a whole new picture. This is where fear starts to take advantage of our limitations. Fear of the unknown! We've all lived with our share of this in the past.

As Israelites pondered their next move they chose to listen to human reason. There were giants in the land! There were great walled cities and towering mountains! Everything about it screamed out, "impossible". For then next forty years Israel would live with their mistake. They chose to lean on their own understanding instead of believing the Word of God. God would have to wait for another generation, a generation of believing people, before He would be permitted to manifest His amazing love for His people.

Like the nation of Israel millenniums ago, Gods people today, have been given promises. Yes there's a "Promised Land" for us today! It's definitely not physical (Heb. 13:14) but it is very real. God always has plans for His people. For Israel it was out of Egypt and into Canaan , for us its "out of Adam and into Christ", "out of sin and into holiness".

[Philippians 4:13 - I can do everything through him who gives me strength.](#)

The spiritual potential of "This New Life", like Canaan to Israel, is simply more than humanly comprehensible. When a sinner is truly "Born Again" the very life of Christ enters the human heart. A whole spiritual identity is birthed deep within and with it come the incredible potential of Christ-likeness! Its a challenge to fully embrace Scripture such as 2 Cor. 5:17 - "[What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!](#)"

As a result of the creative act of God in the Believers life is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit through Paul says in Eph. 4:24 [You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in Gods likeness-righteous, holy, and true.](#) "This New Life" birthed in the human heart, by God, has the full potential of the "Jesus Life".

It's not that uncommon to hear Christians excuse their sin with the statement, "Well I'm only human". Not true! Prior to salvation everyone is "only human"! After salvation however, the Believer ceases to be "only human"! If you are a Believer and find

yourself assuming yourself to be "only human" then you do not yet understand what actually took place when you repented of your sins and received Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ has taken up His residence in your heart. He is alive in you!

Christ's life in the Believer is what makes the "New Covenant" a practical reality and not just some ancient irrelevant theology. One might ask, "Is it really true? Can we really experience the "Jesus life" now?" Let's send in the spies and check it out! Where do we send them? Where can we go to find this, "New Covenant" "Promised Land". Who can we trust to bring us an accurate report? The Bible is the only secure source of accurate information regarding spiritual life in Christ.

What does God say about "This New Life"? In Rom. 6:4 we find God saying, "**And JUST AS Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, NOW we also may live new lives**". In that same chapter, verse 11 tells us, **So you should consider yourselves dead to sin and ABLE TO live for the glory of God THROUGH Christ Jesus**. Can it be done? Can God's people go in and take possession of their "Promised Land"? Can we see our spiritual enemies conquered? Can we experience personal victories that bring us closer to Jesus' likeness?

God's Promises Now:

There's no doubt about, God's good and gracious plan, for His people! The question however arises, "Will we choose to believe God and take possession of that for which Christ bled and died to purchase for us, or will we look for excuses?"

Scriptures such as 2 P. 1:3-5 reveal God's good intentions towards His people and clearly expose His heart. **As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life**. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature. So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. A life of moral excellence! WOW! What a potential! What a vision! All the promises of God are yes and Amen. (2 Cor. 1:20) The simple word Amen actually means, "**so be it as it is**". When we say Amen to the promises of God we're coming into agreement with God's Word, with His vision! We're saying, "Yes Lord let it be done to me just as you have said". This glorifies the Lord!

Prayer Suggestion:

Father, thank you for your loving vision for my life. Thank you that I have spiritual destiny that has originated in your heart. Help me to believe that this awesome Christ-likeness is achievable for my personal life. I want to want what you envision for me now. In Jesus name! Amen

7) Christlikeness Today

Today is the Day of Salvation:

It was the late Lenard Ravenhill who said, "**The opportunity of a life time must be ceased during the life time of the opportunity.**" Now is when we are living! Now is when the promises of God must be ceased! Now is our opportunity to enter into our New Covenant Promised Land. **IT'S NOW!**

In 2 Cor. 6:2 it says, "**Today is the day of salvation**". Evangelists often use this truth to emphasize not procrastinating when it comes to making the decision to repent and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Today is not only the day to establish a salvation relationship with Christ it's also the day to experience that salvation effecting every area of our lives.

Our new position "In Christ" determines our destiny. It's great to have this blood bought future! But what about the "Here and Now"! How does our new position effect our every living. The journey of life is important. Some make the mistake of using Jesus as fire escape, thinking that all there is to Christianity is heaven. Well heaven is our future home for sure but until then how we live is vital. It's during this time on earth that we experience our growth into spiritual maturity. It's during the "Here and Now" that Jesus is to Rule and Reign in our lives.

More important than "knowing about God" is having that knowledge applied to our every day living. Having been positioned "In Christ" and having had Jesus positioned "In us" opens to us the pathway to Christ-likeness.

Now is the Time For Christ-likeness:

I've purposely chosen to give a Scripture from three various translations. Each one says the same thing in a little different way. I'm doing this for the purpose of confirmation. Let look at them and see what is being said.

(NIV) 1 John 4:17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, **because in this world we are like him.**

(NLT) 1 John 4:17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because **we are like Christ here in this world.**

(NKJV) 1 John 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; **because as He is, so are we in this world.**

Why doesn't God just task us straight to heaven when we get saved? Because; now is the time, to have Christ-likeness dominate our lives. It's a big mistake to assume that all the changes will take place when we get to heaven. Yes there are some things we'll never experience until the final redemption of our physical bodies at the second coming of Jesus Christ. But until then God is at work in our lives.

Col. 3:5-10 - So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. ⁶ God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. ⁷ You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. ⁸ ¶ But **now is the time** to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

Have you ever asked yourself the question; "What's it all really about". I'm not sure I understand fully what it's all about, but this I do know, God wants to live the "Jesus Life" in me now. He wants the old self gone in me and the new self living in the power of the resurrected Christ in my life NOW! This is not something we should wait for in heaven this something God is doing in the "here and now".

Observe the "Ways of God"

It's interesting to note that when it comes to the old and new self there are Scripture references that give the impression that its all history; "the old has gone and the new has come" and others giving the impression of present personal involvement; you must put off the old self and put on the new self. Is there a contradiction? What are we to believe? Is it a done deal or not? What we observe here is God calling some as done from His perspective yet something yet to be manifest in the practical. Remember how it was for Israel and Canaan Land. God told the it was their land. He saw it as a "done deal" all that was required was for Israel to walk it out in obedience to the Word of God.

[Romans 4:17 ... the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. \(NIV\)](#)

The challenge is to see it and believe the way God does. This is to receive His vision. As we submit to Him, trusting in His ability to bring into being what He has said. While Abraham was 100 years old he had unable to father any children yet he believed God. What transpired is an example of what God will do as we live in agreement with Him.

We will see Christ-likeness in our lives as we choose to listen to God rather than listening to the enemy voices of doubt. Nothing is impossible for God. It's not about our ability to change our selves into the "Jesus Life"! It's all about the "Jesus Life" being released in us by His power! That power resides with Christ who resides in us!

[2 P. 1:2-5 May God bless you with his special favor and wonderful peace as you come to know Jesus, our God and Lord, better and better. 3 As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! 4 And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature. 5 ¶ So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better.](#)

Remember God calls things done that we may not be presently experiencing. Just because its not happening right now does not nullify the truth. God has established the truth! It is forever settled in heaven. Now what needs to happen on our part is for us to start moving into the promises of God. We start doing that by first believing its possible!

Prayer Suggestion:

Father in heaven; thanks for sharing your vision of how you see me. When the enemy speaks his lies of discouragement help me believe you! All things are possible Father, because of who you are and you have the ability and the desire to bring me into Christ-likeness. I want what you want for my life now! In Jesus name, Amen

8) The "Jesus-Life" of Obedience

Jesus Broke the Power of Sin

When Jesus was birthed into this world He was on assignment! He had left His heavenly home with full intentions of disarming Satan and breaking the power of sin! (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8) Throughout Jesus relatively short, time on earth He never lost sight of objective.

God had given His eternal word to the first earthly representatives of the human race! Satan's head would be crushed under the heel of Him who was to be born of a virgin. (Gen. 3:15) At precisely the right time in Gods calendar Jesus was sent from the heart of God to purchase freedom for the human race! (Gal. 4:4,5) This freedom would not come cheap! Jesus would be required to pay the ultimate! He would offer up His life as the supreme sacrifice for sin. This He did when He hung on that torturous Roman cross. Rom. 8:3 says, **God destroyed sins control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.**

The last words of Jesus on the cross, shattered the darkness with the fresh new hope of eternal life. When Jesus said "It is finished" it not only meant He had completed His Heavenly assignment it also meant the end of sin's dominion over humanity! All that Adam had lost through disobedience Jesus had recovered through obedience. The proof of Christ's accomplishments over sin, death and hell is verified by His victorious resurrection!

Sin Has No More Power Over Us:

So where does all this leave you and I in our generation! Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That must mean He doesn't change! What was on His heart as He suffered, bled and died so many years ago has not changed. He died to set us free from the power of sin! If we are not living in this blood bought liberty then we have not yet fully embraced our salvation. Jesus died once to defeat sin! (Rom.6:10)

Rom. 6:6,7 tells us, **"Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of SIN."** This is powerful! Jesus said that when we come into the revelation of truth then we are set free! When we understand that when Christ died our old sin nature died with Him then we will experience a freedom powerful enough to face temptation right in the face and say, "NO, you have no power over me. Jesus broke your power and I now live in His blood bought freedom."

Rom. 6:14 says, sin will not be our master! This truth is really clarified in Ps.124:7 - **We escaped like a bird from the hunters trap. The trap is broken, and we are free!** A few points of interest!

- 1) We have escaped
- 2) The trap (sin) is broken **(This is an important point)** Sin no longer has the power to keep us bound!
- 3) We're as FREE as a bird

The hunter (the devil) is still around! The hunter, still hunts, (1 P. 5:8) yet we are free from fear because we understand the blood of Jesus has broken the trap. We're free to say, "NO" to temptation just as Jesus did.

Rom. 8:3,4 - ...God destroyed sins control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished by us who no longer follow our sinful nature BUT instead follow the Spirit. The significance in this verse is our redemptive ability to CHOOSE to not sin. Prior to salvation we were bound and enslaved by the power of sin. Sin was inherent with our Adamic sin nature. People with Christ sin because they are sinners. We're all born that way! Its called human nature! Sinners simply do what comes natural to them! They sin and are powerless in and by them selves to change that nature. This is where Jesus comes into the picture! He has done for us what we could never do for our selves. He came and with His shed blood He paid for our freedom and broke the power of sin.

As "Born Again Believers" learn that the hunters trap has been broken and that they have been given the power to choose Gods way then there are great shouts of joy and victory. Then we been to realize and experience the full salvation Jesus purchased for us.

True Love Responds In Obedience:

Twice during Jesus' relatively short time on earth, He received audible conformation from the Heavenly Father that He was pleased with His Son! Once in the Jordan River (Lk.3:22), and then again, on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt.17:5)! Jesus lived with a constant and consistent passion for His heavenly Father. This is made very evident through His statement in Jn. 4:34 - **Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work."**

What proof is there that Jesus loved the Father? He was a doer of Gods will. He obeyed the Word! This strict obedience lead Jesus right to the cross. He had purposed to remain, obedient even if it meant dying on a cruel Roman cross. As Ph. 2:8, 9 says, "this obedience resulted in His resurrection"! **"And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminals death on a cross. Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name".**

Manifesting love for God in a way that is meaningful to Him is not sophisticated or complicated. It's very basic! Obedience!

Jn. 14:15 - If you love me, obey my commandments.

Jn. 14:21 - Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.

Jn. 15:10 - When you obey me, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father and remain in his love.

Jn. 15:14 - You are my friends if you obey me.

1Jn. 2:5 - But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him.

Obedience under New Covenant relationship with Christ is not always understood very clearly. It seems that on the one extreme anything goes, it's doesn't really matter how we live its all under the blood and covered by the grace of God. On the other extreme it's nothing more than "Old Covenant" legalism!

Obviously there must be a great difference between old and new covenant otherwise Jesus died for nothing. The "Old Covenant" was good in its divine purpose and function. Two basic things it did! One it gave knowledge and instruction and the ways of God. Secondly it proved to God's people that they needed much more than just being told what to do. It clearly revealed that humanity lacks the power to live pleasing to God. When it comes to living in obedience to the Word of God good intentions are not enough, follow through is required. Like James says in Jms.1:22 We must be doers of the Word and not just hearers. "And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself." Is there any greater deception than self-deception?

Jesus' Resident Power is Always Available:

What hope do we have? What makes us any difference than many well, intentioned, Old Testament believers? Jesus does make the difference! Col. 1:27 makes one of the clearest distinctions between the old and the new covenants. "For this is the secret: Christ lives in you, and this is your assurance that you will share in his glory." Israel did not take possession of Canaan through, their own strength. It was God who did it for them! The same is true for Gods people in New Covenant! We need Jesus' power in us to produce the follow through that results in obedience to Gods Word. The exciting thing is, God wants us to succeed. He's for us and has made provision for us to please Him. Ph. 2:13 says, "For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him."

What an awesome God we serve! He loved us enough to not only provide us with a Savior that would come and die to pay the penalty for our sin but also One who would rise from the dead and come and live within us energizing us with His life so that we could live pleasing to God.

The choice is ours. Prior to salvation we lacked the power of choice. We were completely dominated by sin and under the authority of the powers of darkness. But now we are born of God! We have Jesus alive in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and we can now choose to live for God. The Jesus Life can be lived and expressed through His people. The power to do it is God and that power is in the Believer.

Prayer Suggestion: Father I come to you in the name of Jesus! I want to desire obedience at all cost. Help me to always turn to Jesus for the strength to do your will. Make me courageous in true holy living for your honor in this spiritually dark generation. In Jesus name! Amen

9) The Power of Choice

Prior To Salvation:

We had no choice nor personal input into nor being birthed into this world. Others decided it for us! We had no choice in what nature we'd be born with! All people are born with the sin sick Adamic nature. People sin because it's their nature to do so! It's born right in us at birth. Genuine salvation changes that! We are given the power to choose whom we obey!

The powers of darkness control pre-salvation life! The truth is; humanity is so lost in sin and under the spiritual influence of the powers of darkness that, only by God invading the situation with His grace can people even begin to believe the Gospel message. Every salvation is a miracle! Every salvation is the direct result of God pushing back the influence of evil in an individual's life. The following three Scriptures are examples.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - Satan the god of this evil world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so they are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News that is shining upon them. They don't understand the message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

Acts 26:18 - to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among Gods people, who are set apart by faith in me.

Colossians 1:13 - For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.

Adam and Eve were originally without sin. They had no sin nature! They controlled their destiny because they had God given "**free choice**". When, of their own free will, chose to disobey God, they lost their spiritual virginity. They lost their innocence! They lost intimacy of relationship with God. They also lost the power to choice! They had entered Satan's dominion of disobedience and darkness! Without special help from the Lord they and their entire human family where under direct influence of Satan's power and his kingdom.

Think of it! People are born in sin! Born with a sin nature! When they sin they're simply doing what comes natural. People of Adams family can't help themselves. What choice do they have? None! Why? Because when Adam chose to disobey God he also chose to relinquish his God given privilege and power of free will. He surrendered to the devil the incredible blessing of "**power of choice**". I'm purposing to labor this point! Its important to see what Adam lost so that we can appreciate more fully what Jesus has restored.

Salvation Restores the Power of Choice:

At salvation we are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. We are taken out of the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of God. Our citizenship no longer of this world but in heaven!

The truly "Born Again Believer" has been given the privilege to say "no" to the devil, to sin and to this world. We couldn't do that before Jesus entered our lives.

Choice over Satan

Luke 10:19 - I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. (NIV)

James 4:7 - Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (NIV)

Choice over sin:

Romans 6:14 - Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God's grace.

Choice over the World:

1 John 2:15-17 - Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.

1 John 5:4 - **For every child of God defeats this evil world by trusting Christ to give the victory.**

No Longer "Just Human":

"Born Again Believers" can not honestly say, "well after all what can you expect I'm only human". There was a time in all of our lives when this was the case. We were spiritually incapable of pleasing God. To live "This New Life" one must understand and believe that through Christ its possible to live the "God pleasing life" that Jesus lived. [1 John 2:6 - Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.](#) This is good place to have just a bit of a spot check. If you find that you're having a bit of doubt as to this actually being possible for you personally then stop right here and ask the Lord to open your heart to these truths. "This New Life" will not happen in a practical way for you unless you're fully convinced, it's Gods best for you, and that, you can experience this which Christ died and rose again for!

When God re-established the power of choice in our lives He also restored responsibility! I'm not sure, that at present, we've been re-established to the full pre-fall state of Adam and the reason I say this is because Adam didn't have the battle with the old self that Christians do. Nevertheless, it is possible to overcome the temptations of sin and live Holy Spirit filled lives that display Christ-likeness to a lost and dying world. Lets face it, if the world is to see Jesus today it must see Him through us. Jesus deserves an accurate representation! We can be all He envisioned us to be in our generation. Hes alive in us right now, available at all times to release the power of the Holy Spirit to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

The Choice Is Ours:

Romans 6:16 - [Don't you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master? You can choose sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God and receive his approval.](#) Born Again Believers are not puppets on a string as it were! We've being recreated in the image of God with the divine attribute of free will and the power to choose. God is after a people who want Him out of free choice, not out of death threat.

Clearly Jesus has broken the power of Sin Satan and the World. These no longer need to control us. If at present any of these three things are reigning over us that can change right now. In Jesus name we can rise up and say no to evil influences and yes to Jesus Christ. As we do this we are, trusting the power of God to make this a reality. He has promised! We believe! We start to experience more of Jesus in us!

The Power Is Gods:

What hope was there for the nation of Israel possessing the Promised Land? On their own, none! The land was full of walled cities and giants. Unbelief and disobedience stopped the first generation of Exodus Israelites. When there finally was a generation of people that would simply believe God then they entered in and began experiencing one miracle after another. Joshua's closing message to the people of God is so encouraging for us today. **Joshua 23:14 - Soon I will die, going the way of all the earth. Deep in your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has come true. Not a single one has failed!**

In Josh 21:43-45, we're told where the power came to accomplish this incredible feat. **"So the LORD gave to Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they conquered it and settled there. 44 And the LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had solemnly promised their ancestors. None of their enemies could stand against them, for the LORD helped them conquer all their enemies. 45 All of the good promises that the LORD had given Israel came true".**

The Psalmist confirms these truths for us: **Psalms 44:3 -They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strength that gave them victory. It was by your mighty power that they succeeded; it was because you favored them and smiled on them.** It has never been seen in the plan of God that we should come into the New Covenant Promised Land of Christ-likeness through the humanistic efforts of trying harder but rather through trusting Jesus to do for us what we can never do on our own. This New Life is a realistic possibility for all God's people because of who He is not because of us

Prayer Suggestion: Heavenly Father help me to believe that you have restored to me free choice and empowered me through Jesus Christ to be able to make the right choices. Help me not only to see that I have the authority I need to be able to obey you, help me to also use it for your glory. In Jesus name! Amen

10) Renewing of the Mind

The Mind is a "Big Player" in Spiritual Success:

I can still remember the first sermon I heard after my initial salvation experience with the Lord Jesus! The preacher pointed at his temples and said, "The battles of life are fought and won right between your ears". The mind is a major player in living a fruitful and spiritually productive life! Never underestimate the influence of our thinking regarding your spiritual success.

We win or lose by how we choose. This statement is quite true! Jesus has gone before us! He's won the victory and He's given us His promises now it's up to us to choose to believe. The first sermon I heard as a Born Again Believer is still as vivid now as it was then! I can still see the preachers fingers pointing at both ears says, "the battles of life are fought and won right between the ears." I thought it strange at the time, but over the years, I've found this to be so true in my own life.

At salvation we're given a brand new spiritual heart with the very life of the risen Christ as its life. However the mind is a different experience. It must go through a renewing process. I'm not sure it's possible to over emphasize the importance of a "Renewed Mind". We need to learn how to think like Christ! This is a very real possibility, however it does require personal involvement and discipline.

Prior To Salvation:

Let's just take a few minutes and look at the spiritual state of the human mind prior to salvation. From the Scriptures listed below we find the human mind is hostile towards God and its pretty much the devils playing field.

Romans 8:7 - **the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to Gods law, nor can it do so.**

Colossians 1:21 - Once you were alienated from God and were **enemies in your minds** because of your evil behavior.

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both **their minds and consciences are corrupted.**

Clearly there needs to be in the area of the mind and what power is going to be permitted to influence how we think and what we think! **Romans 8:6 - If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.**

As seen from the Word of God, the Lord has made provision for us in the area of life that seems very similar to a "mind field". It possible for us to experience a mind controlled by the Holy Spirit. This is the direction were moving in!

Mind Transformation:

The unregenerate mind is the devils playing field and how he loves to play his vicious games there. The good thing is, his days are numbered, if we choose to apply the Word of God. **Romans 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what Gods will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will. (NIV)** The outcome of "mind transformation" is, understanding the good, pleasing and perfect will of God. Well never really fully enjoy, "This New Life", on a consistent basis until we allow our mind to be transformed to think as Jesus does.

The computer age has given us some great visual aid in the basic of the mind. Your computer comes with a pre-programmed hard drive. When we were born in to Adam's fallen human race we came with a pre-programmed brain. In computer language we need overwrite the hard drive with God's Word. In order to think like Jesus Christ we must have the Word of God in our "thinker". We've pretty much grown up in an instant age. TV dinners with the remote, is a good example. There is however no instant Christian maturity. There's no instant renewed mind! The Word! The Word! The Word! Regular daily reading of the Word of God is a must! "This New Life" comes with responsibilities. If we'll read the Word, God will see to it that it is written in our mind. That's His part of the New Covenant. Heb.10:16 "**This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.**" In Hebrews we find where a constant use of the Word enables us to discern between good and evil. That's an ability understand the things that are pleasing to the Lord. **Hebrews 5:14 - But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

We've Been Given The Power to Control Our Thought Life:

The Thinker is no place for laziness that's for sure. The mind is an amazing thing. In virtually split seconds you can leap frog to the nations of the world. You can imagine the unimaginable! If this powerful tool is not brought under the submissive control of the Holy Spirit it become a volatile weapon! The devil will try using it to destroy. I was once wisely told that the devil wasn't trying to harm me he was trying to kill me! Its good to keep this in mind when addressing the seriousness of a renewed mind and disciples necessary to personally experience this.

God has given us His Holy Spirit. Evidently young Timothy needed to be reminded of some of the direct influence the Holy would have on His life. **2 Timothy 1:7 - For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.** The devil loves to bring fear into our lives through the mind. God has given us the power to discipline our thought life. We, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can choose what we will think about. Graciously we've even been given a list of the kind of things we should be thinking about!

Philippians 4:8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

To assume that one night I'll just go to sleep and wake up the next morning fully transformed because during the night I had mind surgery is pleasant thought but unrealistic. This is an area of our spiritual lives that requires vigilance and discipline. It can and will happen as we trust Jesus power to help us.

Strong Holds Coming Down!

There can be certain types of thought patterns that over the years have become strong holds of the enemy. Feels of rejections, loneliness, constant discouragement, depression, suicidal thoughts, etc. These kinds of things often need a very aggressive approach to master. Were in a spiritual battle! If the enemy can rule our thought life then he'll rule our actions as well. This where we apply spiritual warfare principles enters the picture! Take the time to study these verses from 2 Corinthians. The truth here is very important in breaking through areas of thought life that are contrary to the ways of God and have become deeply rooted. Sexual type things are quite common areas that need to be conquered. Depression is another common one! There's lots of different and unique strong holds that can paralyse our spiritual growth.

2 Cor. 1:3-5 - For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, **they have divine power to demolish strongholds.** 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The Lord has given us spiritual weapons powerful enough to demolish demonic strongholds in our thought life. We can come against every thought that wants to exalt itself above the Word of God and we can bring every thought into line with Christ! If we don't know what the Word of God says the enemy can have a field day in our thoughts. Once we know the Word then we can bring our thinking into agreement with it.

This is an area that has a lot of personal meaning. I know this to work. When I came to Christ I had a lot of mental baggage that needed to be addressed. The truth from these Scriptures is what the Lord has used to tear down paranoid thinking. There is salvation today for our mind; powerful enough change how we think and set us completely free from bondage thinking.

II) The Anointing

Jesus' Anointing:

1Jn. 2:6 Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did.

This can seem like a tall order! Why would God demand this of His people if it were unrealistic or impossible? Jesus lived to please the Father and was successful and He has made it possible for us to do as well. We dare not approach our new life without the same anointing Jesus had.

A good place to start this part of the Series is to answer the question, "When did the Man Christ become God?" He was God at birth!

Jn. 1:1 ¶ In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and **he was God.**

Jn. 1:14 So **the Word became human and lived here on earth** among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of **the only Son of the Father.**

All four of the Gospel accounts confirm that Jesus was not active in any public kind of ministry until after His encounter with the Holy Spirit while in the Jordan River being water baptized. Lets take the time to look at how Luke saw these events.

Lk. 3:21-23 ¶ One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with you." 23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry...

A few things of significance:

- 1) - Jesus was in prayer at the time
- 2) -The Father was pleased with Jesus
- 3) - The Holy Spirit came upon Him
- 4) - Jesus then began His public ministry

I don't profess to understand the need of this experience Jesus had, being that He was fully God at birth. Nevertheless He did receive this special anointing that seems to have initiated His public ministry. What I receive from this is, if the Man Christ needed this experience, how much more do we?

Anointed for Service:

It's not without significance that the first thing Jesus did after receiving, the Anointing of the Holy Spirit, was to confront Satan in the wilderness. The Word clearly tells Jesus was led into this by the, Holy Spirit. (Lk.4:1) While in this wilderness experience Jesus is tempted by the devil for 40 days and nights! The outcome of this is "BIG".

What's noticeable about the temptations Satan uses against Jesus is that they are the ones used on Adam and Eve in Gen. 3. They are the same three avenues through which the devil seeks to, channel sin into our lives today. 1 Jn. 2:15&16 describes them clearly for us.

1 Jn. 2:15,16 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does- comes not from the Father but from the world.

The 3 avenues of sin are:

- 1) Cravings of sinful man (KJV- lust of the flesh)
- 2) Lust of the eyes
- 3) Boasting about self (KJV- pride of life)

Jesus succeeded where Adam and Eve failed. When we begin experiencing "This New Life" we too will succeed where Adam and Eve failed. The Anointing of the Holy Spirit was significant in Jesus' victory over the temptations of worldliness.

This Anointing is Available Today:

Just prior to Jesus ascension to heaven He encouraged His disciples to wait in the city of Jerusalem for the special promise of Gods Holy Spirit. Luke 24:49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." Acts 1:8, says, "But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power". Acts 2 records this now historic event. ¶ On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And **everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit** and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. Jesus had not permitted His disciples to start without this same anointing He had received earlier. How much more us!

Is this Anointing for us today or not? Should we seek the Lord for this promise or not? What does the Word of God say? Acts 2:39 - **This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles - all who have been called by the Lord our God.** The promise is clearly for all who are called of God. Have you been called by God into His eternal family? Are you saved? If so, this promise of Holy Spirit Anointing is for you!

What Should I Do?

Jesus disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray! Out of this, teaching time, came what is known today as, "The Lord's Prayer". This is not all Jesus taught about prayer at this time. From the context of Lk. 4:1-13 we find Jesus also taught about being persistent in prayer. He also taught them to ask for the Holy Spirit!

Lk. 4:9-13 - And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. 10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks. 11 "You fathers-if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? 12 Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 13 If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.**

Jesus teaching here is very significant! He not only teaches us to ask for the Holy Spirit, He also purposes to dispel fear about this experience! Would our Father in heaven give us something harmful? What we should receive from Jesus teaching is the Holy Spirit Anointing is a good gift not to be feared but to be asked for believing its Gods best for us. Jesus received it! On the day of Pentecost another 120 received it. Thousands since then have also received it. Its of God! Its for today! And its for you!

Prayer Suggestion: Heavenly Father thank you that you are the "all knowing" God. You what Jesus needed to be victorious over the world and you know what I need. Help me to be open to your truth. help me not to fear this gift you have promised. Please prepare my heart for all you want to do in and through me. Thank you Father. In Jesus name! Amen

12) Suffering For Christ

Identifying with Jesus:

In completion of this Series I want us to look at a little understood principle regarding living as Jesus did. The word "suffering" seems to have such a negative concept that when mentioned ears seem to close tightly. It sounds all too painful and could even be of the devil! We desperately need to understand this concept in our generation! It's part of our calling!

The servant is not greater than the master! What Jesus experienced with regards to overcoming sin, while here on earth, as a human, so we will also experience. Was there a battle? Yes! Was there victory? Yes there was! Jesus was able to say, I have overcome the world. (Jn16:33) What He was referring to is described in 1 Jn. 2:15-17, **Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.** Jesus major victory over the world came during His exposure to Satan's temptation while in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Jesus had received a special anointing of the Holy Spirit while in the Jordan River when being water baptized. (Lk.3:22). At this point we need to be reminded that Jesus came to break the power of Satan and sin. (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8)

Having received the special anointing of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is then directed by the Spirit into the wilderness to confront the powers of darkness. Jesus wins the victory over the temptations and its written of Him in Heb 4:15, **"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin."** Jesus has as it were, hands on experience when it comes to temptation. He's personally been through it, so we have a God who understands exactly what it takes to say no to sin and yes to obedience.

Jesus' Suffering:

Suffering is often relegated to physical pain! It's very true that there can be great suffering through pain but that is not the only kind of suffering spoken of in Scripture. Resisting the temptation to sin is also an area where great suffering occurs. **Hebrews 2:18 - Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.** The severity of Jesus' "temptation suffers suffering" can be clearly seen in the garden of Gethsemane. **Luke 22:44 - He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.** This was not an easy time for Jesus. Overcoming the temptation to sin is never an easy time for any of Gods people. It can be fierce spiritual warfare!

The Cost of Obedience:

Jesus paid the ultimate price to remain obedient to the Father! It cost Him his physical life. The results brought His resurrection and salvation for all who would believe. Through the suffering He endured while being tempted Jesus learned what it takes for a human being to overcome temptation. Jesus knows what it takes! **Hebrews 5:8 - So even though Jesus was Gods Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.** Suffering didn't teach Jesus how to obey it taught him what it takes to obey. This is important for Him to know and understand if He's to be an effective High Priest. Heb.2:18 - **Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted.** Jesus knows exactly how we are feeling when being tempted. He knows exactly how much grace we need to overcome. Because He's been there he can be compassionate and gracious to help us in our time of need.

Limited Temptation:

When talking about obedience in the Kingdom of God you're talking about the nuts and bolts of New Covenant Christianity and when you talk about Jesus your talking about the wrench that keeps the nuts and bolts tight. Jesus so understands, from first hand experience, what it takes to overcome sin that He has so arranged things that His people are never allowed, by Satan to tempted beyond their God given ability to overcome. 1Cor. 10:13 **But remember that the temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it.** When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it. I don't know about you but I'm personally very impressed with Gods commitment to His people! He is so much for us that He has the devil on a leash and will only allow him to go so far. God is faithfully committed to our well-being and He has promised that with every temptation He provides away through it and will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.

We Have The Divine Calling:

Most of us graciously accept that we've been called of God to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to continue that believing for our everyday living. What is not so glamorous is the calling to suffer as Jesus did in resisting the temptation to sin. It is however a major part of our life in Christ. Ph. 1:29 says, **For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but ALSO the privilege of suffering for him.** Its very interesting to read what the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write in 1 P. 4:1,2. **For if you are willing to suffer for Christ, you have decided to stop sinning. And you won't spend the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.** This New Life is the same kind of life Jesus has. It wouldn't be wrong to call it the "Jesus Life"! That's exactly what it is! This being the case, we should be prepared to experience Gods power enabling to overcome the temptations to sin as Jesus did! **Jesus is with us at all times and as we call out to Him in our time of need He will help us.** We're told in Heb. 4:16 - **Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

God's vision for His people is nothing less than total victory through the power of the resurrected Christ. Jesus is the forerunner and now we follow in His footsteps and share in His victory. **We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside Gods throne in heaven. Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.** (Heb 12:2-4)
Let's be encouraged to live "This New Life" by the power of the indwelling Jesus and the anointing of the Holy Spirit!

Prayer Suggestion: Heavenly Father I thank you for Jesus who has been here before me. Thank you that He learned what it took as a human be remain obedient to the Word and will of God. Thank you that in my trial and temptations I can count on your faithfulness and I know that I will receive from you the grace I need to be an overcomer as Jesus is. Encourage me to always want to be an overcomer for Jesus sake. In Jesus name! Amen