



**Living
The Christian Life**

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Life More Abundantly

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by

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Life More Abundantly

Living the Christian Life?

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. – Jn. 10:10b

It is one thing to have spiritual life, but it is quite another thing to have life “*more abundantly*.” It is one thing to know Christ in a salvation relationship, but quite another thing to know Christ in daily fellowship. The purpose of this little book is to help the reader understand the nature of the abundant life. The abundant life is sometimes referred to as the “victorious life.”

The secret for abundant living is presented in one single text in the book of Ephesians:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: - Col. 2:6

That is the secret! To live the abundant life is to walk (live) just as you received Christ. In the following pages we will try to spell out exactly what that means. In order for you to understand what it means there are some other simple things you must understand. However, we will start with just recalling how it was that you received Christ, as that is precisely how you experience the abundant life.

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How Did You Receive Christ?

Experiencing the abundant life is accomplished just as you received Christ! Do you remember how you received Christ.

You did not receive Christ unconsciously, or while in a comma, or while you were asleep. You received him willingly as a conscious experience. This conscious experience involved the realization that you were a needy sinner, convicted and condemned by sin. Otherwise, you had no need of a Savior. So you received him as a needy person. You heard the promise of the gospel and willingly obeyed the gospel command to repent and to simply receive him by faith, humbly trusting in him to do what you could not do, namely, you could not save yourself from sin, Satan, death and hell. Hence, conscious need and conscious faith is how you received him manifested by conscious obedience.

You didn't attempt to help him save you nor did you enter into a co-partnership with him to obtain your salvation. Instead, you simply believed the good news ("gospel") that Christ already supplied all that was needed to satisfy God's demands for your salvation. You simply rested in God's promise that he already provided all that was necessary and that he was able to perform all that he had promised.

So let us summarize the essential elements of your initial salvation:

1. It was a conscious experience
2. It was a conscious sense of need
3. It was a conscious act of faith in response to His Word
4. It was completely resting in his power to perform what he promised.

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Well, that is precisely how you live the abundant life. It is living in a state of conscious need that is developed more deeply by repeated failures to meet your own needs in your own power. It is a conscious act of faith in response to His Word. That conscious act of faith is resting completely in His power to perform His promise.

He has promised you not merely eternal life, but an abundant life. He has promised you the power to live that abundant life. What you need is the conscious sense of need for what he promised and then faith to completely rest upon His power to perform what He has promised.

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Living in a state of Conscious Dependency

Perhaps you have experienced drug addiction or known someone who has lived that way. A drug addict is one that is very conscious of their drug dependency, so that they live in a daily consciousness of their dependency.

However, drug addiction does not occur overnight. It is a progression that has developed into an addiction.

Once addicted to a drug, a drug addict becomes a desperate person, who becomes willing to do anything to satisfy their cravings for drugs. They will lie, steal, cheat and sometimes even kill to satisfy their need for that drug. They are totally sold out in their commitment.

So likewise, the abundant life does not occur overnight. It is a progression that develops according to your spiritual growth into sin addiction. Your relationship with sin must create within you a need attitude that increasing turns from self to God for deliverance.

The abundant life is living in a conscious state of dependency upon the power of Christ to free you from self, sin and Satan. It requires a desperate attitude that is willing to do whatever God commands. This desperate attitude is characterized in scripture as a “*broken and contrite heart.*” That was your condition when you received Christ. This kind of attitude joined with desperation for deliverance fueled by failure through self-help is the prerequisite for victory over sin. This is the driving force to abandon self-help and cast yourself by faith upon God for deliverance. The more mature a Christian becomes the more constant they abide in that desperate and dependent condition or state of mind.

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For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. – Isa. 57:15

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. – Isa. 66:2

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. – Psa. 51:17

If you want to be filled with the power of God you must first empty yourself of self-help. However, even self-emptying is not something you can do, but only something you come to realize you need, but learn by trial and error that it can only be done through the Spirit of Christ. Your total inability to empty yourself comes by repeatedly experiencing Romans 7:14-25.

The Conflicted Christian – Rom. 7:14-25

14 ¶ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Soon after the euphoria of the salvation experience, the believer learns through the college of hard knocks that he is not yet perfect and without sin. He learns that his entire person has not been born of the Spirit. He learns that sin still has a foothold in his being.

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Romans 7:14-25 is Paul's record of his ongoing learning experience that even as a mature born again person he is habitually dependent upon the power of the Spirit of Christ for deliverance from the power of sin.

Just as new born babes do not come into this world fully matured physically or mentally, so likewise, new born children of God do not come into this world spiritually mature. It is a process whereby we advance glory to glory which never is brought to perfection in this life. In every level of growth we counter new and different attacks by sin, Satan and the world. There is no Christian who attains complete victory over sin in this world. So Romans 7:14-25 is a normal part of your life, but so is Romans 8:9-13. Christian growth is determined by which one more characterizes your life. The abundant life is when the Christian is more characterized by Romans 8:9-13 than Romans 7:14-25. However, until you leave this world one way or the other both passages will characterize your daily life to some degree.

It is an ongoing experience in different degrees and in different facets of your life. As you conquer one level of this ongoing battle with sin, you advance to another level of attack where you learn the same lesson again. As you characteristically conquer sin in one facet of your life, you begin all over in another facet of your life.

A true child of God never excuses sin in his/her life. They are never satisfied with past advances and victories. They are always pressing forward and upward striving to be as their "father in heaven is perfect." No other goal is worthy of a child of God, even though sinless perfection will not be obtained by anyone in this life. Nevertheless, the abundant life is the life that is moving forward and upward striving to be more like Christ.

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Understand Who You Are

If you want to experience the abundant life, you must first understand who you are and what aspect of you has been born of the Spirit or saved and what aspect of you has not yet been saved.

Your body has not yet been saved. You are still aging. You are still subject to sickness. You are still subject to temptations that come to you through the avenues of your five bodily senses and desires. Your body is still “sold under sin” and destined for physical death, unless you are alive at the coming of Christ when it is transformed by the removal of the corruptible principle of sin.

You are a three-fold Person of spirit, soul and body and thus made in the triune image of God.

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God **your whole spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 1 Thes. 5:23*

Although some theologians may not be able to distinguish between these three aspects of your human nature or distinguish between your spirit and soul, the Word of God certainly can, and does distinguish between them:

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing **even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit**, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Heb. 4:12*

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It is your “*spirit*” that has been born of the Spirit, not your soul or your body:

What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of Spirit is spirit – Jn. 3:6

You are made to function on three different levels of consciousness.

1. The Body provides this world consciousness through its five senses
2. The soul provides you with inner world of self-consciousness through intellect, affections and will
3. The spirit provides you with other world consciousness (spirit world)

The Spirit of God has cleansed and regenerated your “spirit” as the inner sanctuary where He dwells within you.

The law of sin, or the indwelling sin nature has its seat of operation in and through your body

The battle ground that indwelling sin and the Spirit of God fight for control is the soul or conscious self. Why? The scripture says as a man thinks in his heart so is he. Your attitude and actions are simply the outflow of your thought life. So whatever is in control of your thinking will determine your attitude, words and actions.

In Romans 7:14-25 this battle is spelled out by Paul’s experience as a born again believer who attempts to take on indwelling sin in his own power and the consequences he learns through that experience. He soon learns that his body has not yet been

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redeemed from the power of indwelling sin and is still sold out to sin (Rom. 7:14). He learns this by the attempt of conscious self (“I”) to overpower and conquer indwelling sin. His frustration is spelled out in verses 15-20.

The new birth has changed the soul’s inclination for evil (v. 21) to loving that which is good. But the new birth has not removed the power of evil within his body. Nor has the new birth made his will power able to overcome the power of indwelling sin:

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. – v. 18

He conveys his desire that he is willing to overcome evil, but admits his will does not have the power to do it. The new birth gives you a new desire to please God but it does not make you able, or give you power to overpower indwelling sin.

Paul is not relating a onetime experience. He is relating an experience that he has learned by repeated experiences of self-defeat in various aspects of his life that has brought him to the point of utter frustration so that he cries out:

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? – v. 24

Have you been brought to this kind of experience and to this kind of desperation and frustration yet? Until you have been brought to this kind of reality in the specific area of weakness and defeat, you will need to continue repeating failure after failure in attempting to overcome it in your own strength. The only person who can live the abundant life is the person who has been brought by experience to this same level of frustration and hopelessness in self-

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deliverance from the power of sin. This is process for how the “*contrite and broken spirit*” is attained. There is hope for this person, as greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world or the power of indwelling sin. However, the power is Him in you, and not you.

When you learn that lesson then you will be able to say with Paul:

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. – v. 25

As the very next chapter will inform you it is through the “*Spirit of Christ*” dwelling within you that can deliver you from the power of sin. When a person comes to that realization, then with regard to themselves, they will realize that “*with the mind, I myself serve the Law of God.*” With your mind, you can serve the Law of God, as you can delight in the Law of God with the mind. I don’t have the will power to overcome sin, but with the mind I can serve, delight and consent to what is good. However, with the flesh, it will continue in bondage to the power of sin until either the day of its death or transformation by rapture or resurrection. That is your condition as a child of God in regard to self without the power of the indwelling Spirit.

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In the Flesh versus In the Spirit

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. – Rom. 8:8-9

Romans 8:1-13 is hard for many to understand. The key to understanding it, and understanding the abundant life is to understand verses 8-9 above and that is simple to understand.

For example, notice the contrast being made between being “*in the flesh*” and “*in the Spirit*.”

Notice that those “*in the flesh cannot please God*” and they are “*none of his*.”

To be “*in the flesh*” is to be in the lost condition without the Spirit of Christ. In contrast to be “*in the Spirit*” is to have the Spirit of Christ indwell in you.

Why does Paul use these particular phrases? Because that is how the natural man comes into this world – he comes “*in the flesh*” born of the flesh. In contrast, that is how the Christian comes into the spiritual kingdom of God, he comes “*in the Spirit*” born of the Spirit.

However, those born of the Spirit or “*in the Spirit*” can live without the power of the Spirit and therefore “*walk*” (live) “*after the flesh*” or they can live by the power of the Spirit and “*walk in the Spirit*.” Paul tells the Galatians:

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If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. – Gal. 5:25

So it is possible for a true child of God to “*live in the Spirit*” or possess eternal life and the indwelling Spirit of God within them and yet not “*walk*” in the Spirit. That is the condition being described by Paul in Romans 7:14-25. In other words, born again people can live (walk) like lost people and do live like lost people whenever they are walking “*after the flesh*” or living in their own strength.

Those who are “*in Christ*” are “*in the Spirit*” and they do not experience condemnation whenever they walk “*after the Spirit*”, but they do experience condemnation whenever they are walking “*after the flesh*” (Rom. 8:1). The lost man cannot live “*in the Spirit*” but a saved man can live in the Spirit but “*walk after the flesh*” because he has both natures.

However, it is not God’s desire for the saved man to “*walk after the flesh*” or live like a lost man. The Spirit of Christ is able to free them from the experiential condemnation and power of sin (Rom. 8:2). He did free us from the demands of the Law and the penalty of sin by the Person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:3). That is our position in Christ by justification. However, just as we received Christ as victory over the penalty of sin, just so the Spirit of Christ can deliver us from the power of indwelling sin so that the righteousness of the Law can be fulfilled in our lives experientially (Rom. 8:4).

The battle ground is over the control of our minds (Rom. 8:5-7) or conscious self (intellect, will and affections). If our mindset is under the control of indwelling sin we will walk “*after the flesh*” and experience condemnation. If our mindset is under the control

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of the Spirit, we will walk “*after the Spirit*” and experience victory.

The mindset under the control of indwelling sin is described in Romans 8:7. This is the continued state of all the lost who are “*in the flesh*” and that is why they cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). However, this is also the same mindset of the saved whenever they are walking “*after the flesh*.”

You experience condemnation whenever you attempt to live for Christ “*after the flesh*” because you always fail.

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Living After the Spirit – Rom. 8:9-13

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

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

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The power for living the Christian life is in “*the Spirit of life*” because only through the Spirit can a righteous life be manifested through you (v. 10b). Your body must be regarded as “*dead*” (v. 10a). When Christ died, we died positionally in him because he died “*for us.*” Therefore, sin can no longer rule over a dead person (see Rom. 7:1-5). However, our body is not literally dead and indwelling sin uses it to war against your soul. Therefore, by faith, we must regard or count the body “*dead*” (even though it is physically alive and the source of sin in us) because sin was vanquished in the death of Christ. In other words, we are to live or act according to our position in Christ rather than according to the reality of our condition. How? By faith we are to face every day living in his strength and power. By faith we rest upon his strength while stepping out in obedience to do His revealed will.

The secret of living the abundant life is found in the Person of the indwelling Spirit of Christ alone. The same Spirit that had power to raise Christ up from the dead (v. 11a) is the same Spirit

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that now dwells in you, and He is greater than he (Satan) that is in the world. Moreover, the Spirit is the only source of power that will also eventually free your “mortal” body from indwelling sin (v. 11b) in the resurrection and which can free you from the power of sin right now.

If we live “*after the flesh*” we shall continue in *experiential* death, or the experience separation from the power of God in our lives. The words “*ye shall die*” in Romans 8:13 is not a proper translation of the Greek text, as the Greek verb is not future tense, but present tense. He is saying, if we are living after the flesh, that is, in the strength of our own power, we are experiencing death, meaning we are experiencing separation from God and His power.

If you understand that “*death*” means separation, then you will not stumble over his statement. For example, spiritual death is spiritual separation from God. Your spirit does not cease to exist, but is existing in a separated state from God who is life. For example, physical death is merely separation of the immaterial aspect of human nature from the material aspects. The body returns to dust in the grave and the immaterial parts go back to God to be placed either in heaven or hades. For example, the second death is eternal separation of the lost from God in the place of Gehenna or the lake of fire. Therefore, when a Christian is “walking after the flesh” that Christian is experiencing separation from the power and experiential presence and blessings of God

The Christian who is living “*after the flesh*” is separated from the power of the indwelling Spirit, and thus separated from the temporal blessings of salvation (peace, joy, assurance, rewards, usefulness, etc.). He is dying experientially as described in Romans 7:14-24. He is existing in a state of misery, chastisement and defeat. On the other hand, if he is relying on the power of the

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indwelling Spirit to live the Christian life, then he is experiencing life, and life more abundantly (v. 13)

But how does one live in the Spirit? Paul explains that in the latter part of Romans 8:13 when he says, “*But if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.*”

Remember, at the beginning I told you that you don’t even have the power to “*put to death*” (“*mortify*”) my self-dependency which is the ego or pride of the flesh. You must depend on, trust in the Spirit’s power to “*mortify*” or put to death self-dependency.

But how is that done?

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Mortifying the deeds of the Flesh

Paul describes this act of mortifying the flesh in a number of ways.

1. Putting off the Old Man
2. Crucifying the flesh
3. Mortifying the flesh

The key to living the abundant life is understanding there is no amount of energy in thought or deeds that you can do to live that life. In fact, it is dying to self and all that self can do that is the key to living for Christ. That is how you received Christ and that is how you live the Christian life. Jesus explained it like this:

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. – Lk. 14:27

A “*cross*” is an instrument of death. What it means, is that you must die to self-ability, give up even the thought of depending on anything you can do to save you. You must forsake everything you think you can do to save you:

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. – Lk. 14:33

You were saved “*by grace*” and “*grace*” is what God is able to do without your assistance. You received Christ completely dependent upon what God said Christ did in your behalf what you things you could not do then or now. Christ satisfied all of God’s requirements for you, in your place, without your aide or assistance. Initial salvation is all about what Christ did for you and nothing about what you did or can do for Christ. That is the secret

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of living the abundant life on a daily basis. You must give up completely on attempting live that kind of life in your strength. Jesus said:

*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me. – Lk. 9:23*

The apostle Paul said,

*I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**. – 1 Cor. 15:31*

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

Lets put this in a practical setting. Suppose you have a drinking problem or sex addiction problem or whatever. You realize it is not pleasing to God, and frankly you are quite miserable and want to stop doing those things. No doubt, at times you have felt motivated to stop and probably even made resolutions to stop but have ended experiencing what Paul described in Romans 7:15,18,19

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I....for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. – Rom. 7:15,18,19

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This will be your experience always, whenever you set your mind to overcome your problems by your own energy (mental or physical = works). You must die to live, you must give up to win.

The key to living the abundant life is first learning you cannot do it and forsake any attempt to achieve it in your own strength.

But how does one die to the flesh?

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The Recipe for the Abundant Life

How does one die to self and live in the power of the Spirit? Simply stated it is a process that must be learned. Remember, that the prerequisite for living the abundant life is “*a humble and contrite heart*”, which is attained through repeated trial and error in attempting to conquer sin by self help as described in Romans 7:14-24. So your failures are an important part of winning over sin. One must first learn by experience the futility of self-help and be brought to utter frustration to the point where they have no confidence in their flesh at all to accomplish this. I might add here, that this experience will be repeated in every single area of your life where you attempt to overcome by self-help and so it is an ongoing process as you face every facet of your life and learn the same lesson over again in each area.

Having said that, then you approach sin addiction with complete lack of confidence in self, but complete confidence in the promise of God by the power of the Spirit of God. Paul explains the process as follows in Romans 6:

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

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First, “*reckon*” yourself according to the position you have “*through Christ*” as previously explained in Paul’s doctrine of justification (Rom. 3:24-5:20) and as visualized in water baptism (Rom. 6:3-5). When Christ died due to sin, you also died in regard to sin. That is your legal position before God. That is also the actual state of your new inward man. The transition between your position and inward condition unto your actual experience and practice is through faith – “*reckon*” or believe it is your right to conquer sin because of what Christ has performed for you. To “*reckon*” is an act of faith that takes God at His word and believes what he has promised or said in spite of what may seem to appear as contrary to your actual condition. I believe that is my position in Christ. I believe that is my condition of the new man within me. I believe it is my right, my privilege to experience it in my life by the power of the indwelling Spirit because God says so. That is what it means to reckon it as such.

Second, determine with your mind to “*let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.*” This is a battle for your mind. Understand and believe your rights in Christ. With that understanding, then determine to resist the power of indwelling sin **by surrendering to the indwelling Spirit** so that you can experience what is rightfully yours. Determined resistance is through surrender not through any action fostered by your will power. Surrender in order to be victorious.

Third, demonstrate your faith by stepping out in obedience to His word with complete confidence in the Spirit’s power to enable you to both to will and to do what pleases God (Philip. 2:13).

A perfect analogy for this is the call by Christ for Peter to come out of the ship and walk on the water to him. Impossible? Yes! However, Peter obeyed the Lord in doing the impossible by simply trusting wholly in him while stepping out on the water. When he

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took his eyes off the Lord, he began to sink. However, remember when he began to sink, the solution was the same, he immediately cried out “*save me*” with no other hope than trusting in Christ for salvation and the Lord saved him. So likewise, reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God, resist temptation by yielding to Christ while obeying His Word.

Therefore, it is not that we simply do nothing, but what we do is conditioned wholly upon faith in His strength to do it. The command was for Peter to walk on water. Impossible in our strength but in God’s strength. Peter did not simply stand still expecting for Christ to make him walk on water. No, he stepped out attempting to walk on water but without any confidence in himself with complete confidence/faith in Christ.

So this is not an excuse of disobedience because you have no ability to obey. This is not an excuse to stand idle waiting for supernatural lighting to strike that makes you do God’s will. This is the recipe for obedience to do His will. You are to “*walk*” but walk “*in the Spirit.*”

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Learning to Lean

...without me ye can do nothing – Jn. 15:5

Living the Christian life is living a life of dependency. You have heard of drug dependency? A drug dependent person is one who cannot survive without drugs. You must develop a mindset that you cannot live the Christian life without dependency upon Christ! You must learn that you can only live the Christian life moment by moment, hour by hour or day by day by complete and utter dependency upon Christ.

The Christian life is living in a relationship with Christ. It means you involve him daily in all that you think, say and do by trusting him to “*work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philip. 2:13). The Christian life is simply Christ taking control of your thoughts, will and actions and manifesting Himself through your daily life. This is what it means to “*pray without ceasing.*” It is the constant conscious state of mind that you are living in His presence. Faith in Christ is simply self-denial with complete dependency upon him for everything. Faithfulness is the consequence of that state of dependency.

Therefore, prayer and God’s word are vital in living the abundant life. There can be no fellowship between two persons without communication. Prayer is how you talk to God. God speaks to you through His word. The abundant life is a life immersed in prayer and meditating on God’s Word.

God uses tribulations, trials, afflictions in your life to promote dependency, prayer and meditation in His Word (Rom. 5:3-5). Trials drive a Christian to God, to prayer, to meditation in God’s Word and therefore, “*count it all joy when you fall into divers*

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temptations” (James 1:2) not because they feel good but because they accomplish God’s purposes for your spiritual growth.

Tribulations are part and parcel in learning to lean, learning a dependent spirit. God is working all things that occur in your life, no matter how distasteful and uncomfortable those things might be, for your ultimate good.

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You Have Foes

Your spiritual enemies are Satan, the World and Self. Satan hates you and would destroy you if he could. However, greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world (1 Jn. 4:2). The world opposes you and tries to tempt you to think, say and do evil. However, Jesus said He has overcome the world and your faith is in Him and faith overcomes the world (1 Jn. 5:4-5).

Your biggest enemy is YOURSELF! You are like a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. You have two different natures existing within you (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16). You have a regenerated nature that “*delights in the law of God*” (Rom. 7:22) but you also have a “*law*” of sin or a depraved sin loving nature.” This is your condition until you either go to heaven or are glorified like Christ in the resurrection.

In order for you to live by faith you must understand some vital promises.

1. Greater is He that is in you than the law of indwelling sin.

Yes, you have a sin problem and it is due to the indwelling law of sin. But you also have a secret weapon indwelling you as well – The Holy Spirit. God has given you the Holy Spirit to overcome the law of indwelling Sin. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God as His weapon to defeat the law of indwelling sin. He empowers the Word through your will and actions. The more exposure to God’s Word the more ammunition the Holy Spirit has to empower your thoughts, will and actions.

2. Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world

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Yes, you have a great enemy in this world. Satan uses the world to entice, trip and confuse you. Satan is a master of deception and he uses the things of the world to trip you up. The “*world*” is often used to describe a system of thought, ideas, and practices that are in opposition to God’s revealed will in Scriptures. It is the “world” in this sense we are commanded not to “love the world” as that is to love the very things that are in opposition to the will of God.

Furthermore, in order to live by faith you must obey Biblical principles that are designed for you to overcome your foes and help you in your daily struggle against sin:

1. Avoid all appearances of evil.

Abstain from all appearance of evil.- 1 Thes. 5:22

If you play with fire you get burned. Avoid the fires or suffer the consequences. This means you should not intentionally place yourself in harms way. If your problem is with alcohol, then if you can find another route to work other than driving by bars do it.

2. Come out from among them and be not partakers of their evil deeds and Evil communications corrupt good manners.

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.- 1 Cor. 15:33

Alcoholics cannot hang out with alcoholics and win the battle with alcohol. God has provided you with a support group called the “congregation of Christ” where you will get a steady diet of good spiritual food and companions to help you in your struggles.

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Salvation of Your Daily Life = redeeming the time

*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil.* –

Eph.5:15-16

Paul is not talking about redeeming your *person*, but redeeming your *time*. Your “*time*” is your expressed life in time and space that other people hear and see – your works. You have twenty-four hours every day, for every day, in every week, in every month of every year.

So we are no longer talking about the component parts of your Person (spirit, soul and body) or obtaining entrance into heaven. We are talking about the daily product of your soul which is the manifest life on exhibit for the world to see in the form of expressed attitudes, words and actions that dominate your time spent. This is your *experiential* daily life. This is the life that can be redeemed or it can be lost on a daily basis depending on whether or not it is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual maturity is determined by how committed and consistent (faithfulness) your daily life is brought under the control of the Spirit of God. Faithfulness is the combination of commitment to what is right plus consistency to that commitment.

Your *experiential* or expressed external life is one of consequences – “*whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*” What is reaped are present temporal, as well as, eternal blessings or consequences. If the life is being lived out for the glory of God you reap presently the experiential blessings of salvation (peace, joy, assurance, fellowship, growth, promises, etc.) and eternal consequences “*laying up rewards in heaven.*” If

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the life is being lived in rebellion to the revealed will of God, then you reap temporal consequences (loss of joy, assurance, peace, fellowship; discipline) and loss of eternal rewards (1 Cor. 3:14-15).

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Tools for Power and Freedom

A new born infant is very limited in what it can do and say. As the infant receives nutrition and exercise it expands its limits and is gradually liberated from previous limitations. Increased strength brings increased liberty. Likewise, the same is true with new born children of God or immature children of God. They need increased strength in order to experience increased liberties and freedom from limitations.

There are three essentials that you must know and understand if you want to experience more liberty and less limitations in your Christian life:

...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: - Eph. 6:17

First, The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. In fact, it is “truth” that is the central piece of your Christian amour which holds all other pieces together. Hence, maturity in the knowledge and understanding of God’s Word is an essential part of being able to resist your spiritual enemies and increases your growth in Christ dependent living.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. – Jn. 6:32

Second, knowledge and understanding in God’s Word is what the Spirit uses to liberate you from your bondages. You must know what God replaces your addictions with. That is found in God’s Word. The truth liberates you.

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Third, your spiritual growth is increased by a proper Biblical support group.

*And let us consider **one another** to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* – Heb. 10:24-25

Just as drug addicts and alcoholics need a support group to strength their resolves and provide examples, so the Christian needs to be part of a New Testament congregation where the Word of God is faithfully preached, taught and practiced.

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Warning!

Living the abundant life will not decrease your trials and tribulations in life but rather increase them. Look at the life of Christ! No one lived under the control of the Spirit of God than He, but he is characterized as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The greater your life pleases God the greater it displeases the world and Satan.

Also, God does not promise He will deliver you “out” of all your troubles, but He will deliver you “through” them. *“**Though I walk THROUGH the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**”*

Moreover, you will lose many battles with the flesh but even that will work ultimately for your good. When Christ died for your sins, your sins were all still future from the cross. This means these sins actually occur in your life or otherwise Christ would not have had to die for them. The difference between a lost person and a saved person is not sin. The difference is how they respond to sin. God uses your sins to expose areas in your life that need spiritual growth. God uses your sins to humble your pride and to demonstrate you are not perfect.

God uses your sins to reveal your inability to overcome them by your own strength. He uses them to build up resistance and obtain a measure of victory over them through His power. He uses them to demonstrate His love through chastening (Heb. 12:5-10). He uses them to draw you to prayer and experience cleansing. He uses them in many other ways, all of which will ultimately glorify Himself and work for your good (Psa. 76:10). So don't let depression be your response to your sins! Learn to deal with sin by confession and recommitment to dependency upon His Spirit to

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renew your battle with sin. This is a life long battle with ups and downs. You will lose many battles but you have already won the war. This is part of your EXPERIENCE and necessary for spiritual growth. The primary lesson is that you cannot defeat this indwelling sin nature except by dying to self and depending upon the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

“New Every Morning”

Yes, it is true that you will experience failure every day to be sinless – you will always come short of the glory of God. Yes, it is true that you will experience willful sin every day as it is willful sin not to obey the Great Commandment to love the Lord thy God with “all” your heart, strength, and soul every day.

However, it is also true that when Christ died for you, He knew in advance all your sins and paid them fully in advance. In regard to your LEGAL POSITION before God they are paid in full and the eternal penalty has been paid in full. They are cast into the deepest sea and are separated from you as far as the East is from the West.

Why then are we commanded to repent and confess our sins on a daily basis? Daily confession has to do with EXPERIENCING the benefits of our salvation. Through repentance and confession of sins we EXPERIENCE the “peace OF God” (peace WITH God has been obtained judicially). We EXPERIENCE the blessings of our salvation (joy, peace, assurance, etc.). We avoid depression and misery due to our sins.

God’s mercy “*endures for every*” (Psa. 108) and his mercies are “*new every morning.*” When we genuinely repent of our sins, our conscious is purged from the guilt of sin and we start out fresh and clean each time. Hence, no need to continue under the FEELING

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of guilt for our sins. No need to enter into the depth of DEPRESSION because of your sins. Confess them with the intent to forsake them. Seek the Word of God and the Spirit of God for the power and plan to implement in overcoming future lapses into the very same sins. Be patient with yourself, as this is a process of growth and there will not pass a day in your life that you do not sin. However, a true child of God always SINS MORE THAN THEY WANT TO. It is that attitude toward sin that distinguishes between a true and false believer. Seek the Lord early and often. Confess your sins as soon as you are confronted and/or convicted and seek the Lord's Spirit and Word to forsake them.

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The A, B, C's for Experiencing the Abundant Daily Life

A. Live in a state of prayer

1. Confess your sins daily –1 Jn. 1:8-10
2. Confess your inability to live for Christ –Rom. 7:18
3. Claim by faith the promises provided by Christ to live the Christian life
 - a. His indwelling presence – Heb. 13:2
 - b. His power – Philip. 4:13

B. Learn His Revealed Will

1. The New Testament Church is where you are taught the truth –1 Tim. 3:15
2. Find a New Testament Church and join it– Mt. 28:20
 - a. Be faithful to all of its services – Heb. 10:25
 - b. Be a useful member by doing what you can – 1 Pet. 4:10
3. Study your Bible and desire to understand His word –1 Pet. 2:5

C. Live in the revealed Will of God

1. Recognize the Bible as final authority – Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:15-16
2. Be Faithful to His Word – 1 Cor. 15:58 (Faithful means – be committed to it and be consistent in that commitment)
3. Recognize tribulations are the by-product of faithfulness in this world – 2 Tim. 3:12

D. The key to Christian living – “*As ye received the Lord Jesus Christ so walk ye in him*” – Col. 2:6