

SIXTY DAYS TO FREEDOM

A PERSONAL JOURNAL OF FAITH

GERRIT VERSTRAETE

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*My special thanks to Rev. Graham Powell,
Rev. Bernard Warren, and Dr. Beert Verstraete
for their help and prayer, and to
my wife Alice and our children
for their patience and encouragement.*

*I dedicate this devotional to all my students
who have sought earnestly after the Kingdom of God
and its glorious King, Jesus, and
to those students who have persisted through
good times and bad times to seek that Kingdom first,
only to discover the incredible and life-changing
truth of freedom, and as a result of their persistence,
remain resolved to follow Him and Him alone.*

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Introduction

60 DAYS TO FREEDOM was written as a result of a personal journey that spans many years. On that journey I began to discover the joy of being set free by the truth of God's Word. That discovery is more than just casual or frequent Bible reading. It is a journey of faith to believe the Holy Spirit will open my eyes to know my true identity. That identity is the real person I am in Jesus Christ. Encouraged by many of my students, I began to write down the discoveries I made.

In the early months of 1984, I began to teach "*In Christ you are,*" not as a special series of teachings, but as a constant thread of truth in everything I understand and believe. In 1991, I began to write down these teachings in a special series of daily devotions that focus on the believer's identity in Jesus Christ. That series became the foundation for this *personal journal of faith*.

60 DAYS TO FREEDOM is a personal journal of faith and a record of how God shapes you and me into the image of His Son, Jesus. The secret of my journaling, journaling that frequently led me by the Holy Spirit into great times of joy and liberty, was not only written notes to prepare for teaching and study of God's Word, but more personal writings as well, writings about God's power to change me. These writings became especially personal when I discovered my true identity in Christ. As I wrote about who I was in Christ, I experienced an ever increasing peace and joy.

I want you to experience that same wonderful blessing of the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry through this journal of faith. To use this journal effectively, I encourage you to keep a separate journal of *your own 60 day journey*, or simply make notes in the generous margins on each page. Even though this is not mandatory, writing your thoughts will help you grow in your personal experience of God's love and grace. There are a total of 60 passages that teach who you are "*in Christ.*" When you read the individual Bible passages that accompany these *60 days* of devotion, take some time and write down in *your journal*, *your* thoughts and impressions. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes and understanding to receive the revelation of who *you* are in Christ. Jesus promised that, "*If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:31,32).

Should you plan to do one such devotion and response per day, then **your personal journal of faith** will take you 60 days. However, if you are unable to do one a day, do as many as you can in a week, or even one per week. Should you wish to journal, there is no need to write in complete sentences, paragraphs, and outlines, to imitate the writing of this devotional. Journaling is not essay writing. Simple words, thoughts, and short sentences, are all that is needed. Just write as you feel free to write. James, the half brother of Jesus, and recognized leader of the early Jerusalem church, said: "*But prove yourselves to be **doers** of the Word, and not merely **hearers** who delude themselves*" (James 1:22).

When you spend time reading this devotional, you become a **hearer** of the Word. As the Holy Spirit leads you to write your own personal journal of faith, you become a **doer** of the Word. It is my prayer that you will be profoundly blessed as you discover who you are in Christ Jesus. May the power of His Word change you and set you free from fear, from bondage, from bitterness, and insecurity. May this devotional inspire you to seek the balance of truth found in the Kingdom of God, to protect you from being led astray from every wind of doctrine and popular teaching fads of the modern era.

Enjoy your personal *journey* through these 60 teachings of an eternal truth, namely, who you are in Christ.

And should you decide to journal yourself, enjoy as well your very own personal writings of faith.

"If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Enjoy your freedom.

Gerrit Verstraete, Gabriola Island, 1994

To be in Christ means that all He is you are. All that He has is yours. All that He does you do.

To be in Christ means whatever He feels you feel, whatever He knows you will know. Whatever He does in and through you will deeply affect you.

To be in Christ also means whatever you say and do affects Him, personally. Rebellion and resentment, independence, bitterness, and unforgiveness, grieve the Holy Spirit because such a condition of the heart and mind affects Jesus. Your bondage to sin hurts Jesus. He came to set you free.

Only by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and the love of God poured into your heart can you overcome sin.

Only in His love can you love Jesus enough not to sin.

When Jesus examines you with the Law of the Spirit of Life, He exposes the hindrances to true freedom. By faith in the love of God and the joy of personally knowing Jesus Christ can you overcome those hindrances, as the Holy Spirit enables you to love Jesus with all your heart, mind, and body.

This journal, in which you will discover your faith in God's Word for sixty days, will set you free for eternity, because you are in Christ Jesus.

In Him you will be filled with the knowledge of His will, with the combined effect of all Spiritual wisdom and understanding, and to know the truth of His Kingdom that will set and keep you free.

Eph.4:30, Rom.5:5, 8:2, 7:6, Col.1:9, John 8:32

1. IN CHRIST YOU ARE SAVED

2 Timothy 2:10, *"For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and with it eternal glory."*

When God created you, He had a very special plan and purpose in mind for you. His plan and purpose is *your* participation in the most glorious eternal plan of all. His plan and purpose makes you part of a special family, created in God's image, a holy and blameless family. You were chosen to be a part of a Kingdom of special people together with Jesus Christ, God's own Son, as your King. You were chosen to share in all God's power, in all God's understanding, all His love, all His wealth, all His wisdom and knowledge, and all His creative ability. That is some inheritance

Mankind chose to rebel against God thousands of years ago, and reject His invitation to be a part of the family of God. Man chose to live life on his own terms. Because mankind rejected God, you became heir of another inheritance. You inherited rebellion. Rebellion is an inherited character flaw that prevents you from loving and obeying God, and therefore prevents you from being a part of His family, regardless of how hard you try in your own strength, and how many religious duties you perform. Even though you cannot in your own strength change rebellion into obedience, God did not give up on His plan and purpose for you. His love is too great.

He offered His only Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for your sin of rebellion. His sacrifice became payment for the curse of that inherited rebellion, in order to restore you in relationship to the Father. When Jesus came into the natural world two thousand years ago, He initiated God's intervention in history by proclaiming the Kingdom of God had come. The Kingdom of God had come to introduce the world to a power far greater than the world's and the devil's power, a power that had up until that time prevented people from turning rebellion into obedience, and thus kept them from being a part of God's family. It is the power of God in Christ that turned the tide of misfortune for the human family. When you believe God and believe in Jesus Christ, He comes into your natural world, that is, into your life, in a powerful way. Just as He took upon Himself all the sin of the world, He took upon Himself your rebellion (that is what the word "sin" means - rebellion), and your inability to set yourself free from rebellion's curse. Your rebellion has caused you a lot of problems, including the mistakes you made and pain you caused. He took all the mistakes you made, all the pain you caused, and all the pain you received from broken lives, and took them to the cross. There, upon that cross, the mistakes and the pain were nailed with Him, to set you free. Jesus paid with His own blood the deadly price of sin's rebellion, your rebellion. God accepted Jesus' payment and considered the price Jesus paid, sufficient to redeem you, or "buy you back" for His plan and purpose. Your inheritance of rebellion was changed into an inheritance of redemption, or as it is more commonly understood, an inheritance of salvation. Jesus Himself, bought you back and restored you to the Father, into the eternal blessings of God's glorious plan.

Instead of death and eternal separation from God, you now have salvation in Christ. You have been saved from eternal punishment and separation from God's love, God's plan, God's family, and God's blessings. That gift of salvation in Jesus Christ is forever. As years come and go, the reality of that great salvation truth gets better and better every day. The more that truth grows in your heart and mind, the more you will overflow with peace and joy. It is the *Good*

News to be shared with everyone. It began in you the day you heard the *Good News* and believed you were saved forever *in Christ*.

2. IN CHRIST YOU ARE ETERNAL

1 Peter 5:10, "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

Nothing is easy in life. Nothing is easy in the life of a believer. Your journey of faith is marked by disappointment and encouragement, failure and success. Yet God has called you, despite circumstances, into His eternal glory.

Eternal glory is His eternal presence in your life to keep you from being crushed by discouragement, disappointment, failure, rejection, and the pain of life on this planet earth. Because of God's all consuming grace and mercy, love and compassion, He is compelled to call you into His eternal presence. God the Father extends His eternal blessings to you, regardless of who you are, where you are, and the circumstances you are in.

There is nothing you can do to earn God's favour (called "grace"). There is no way you can sweet talk God into extending His unmerited favour to you.

O Christian, taste His eternal glory now as you rest from fighting for recognition in life. God has already recognized and accepted you by calling you *in Christ*, into eternal fellowship with Him. Now that His grace and eternal fellowship are yours, let His grace flow from you to others. Extend favour to others without conditions that demand others to earn your love towards them. As God accepts you unconditionally, so accept others. Even though life can be painful at times, God does not abandon His eternal plan for you. He will make you perfect in the image of Jesus. He will confirm you daily, to assure you that you are in His will. He will forever strengthen you in your commitment to follow Jesus and seek the Kingdom of God. He will establish you with integrity and character, worthy to be called family of God.

Therefore, be gracious and extend unmerited favour to your wife, your husband, your friends, your children, your boss, and your fellow workers. Give that grace to them unconditionally. Don't give with an intent to exchange your favour for their favour. That is simply giving to get. Do not keep an account of what you have done for others. God gives grace to you without charge. So give to give some more. Give this grace, His unmerited favour, to them without charge. The call is now. The call is eternal. God calls you to spend forever with Him, the Creator of the universe, and with His precious Son, Jesus your Redeemer.

Yes, you can taste and experience His grace and eternal glory now. Find time in your secret place and be alone with God. Stop talking *to* Him. Instead, listen to His still small voice in your heart. You can feel His presence in the room, but most of all, you can know His peace and feel His presence deep in your heart. His presence is not subject to change because you are going through some difficult times. His presence does not come and go because you feel you have nothing to offer in your relationship with Him. His presence is His grace, unmerited, unconditional, and unmistakably yours. His salvation trumpets the call to join Him in eternal glory, which is a call to join Him in a relationship that is as close as a loving father and mother towards their precious children. Whether anyone on earth has ever loved you, that love does not compare with the love of God. He is eternally yours because *in Christ* you are eternally His.

3. IN CHRIST YOU ARE NO LONGER CONDEMNED

Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*"

Every day the devil and his cohorts attempt to manipulate events and circumstances to deceive you. Their efforts are concentrated on a strategy to get you to look at yourself in light of the circumstances of that day. For those who do not believe evil has a name and is personified in a real being, named Satan, events and circumstances are resigned to the realm of chance or fate. Nevertheless, they too will judge themselves in the light of circumstances. Condemnation is the inevitable result for all. You begin to feel accused of being a failure simply because you failed in something. You believe the accusation of guilt and accept your uselessness, because your achievements for the day did not add up to much, when compared to the achievements of others. Satan relentlessly accuses you of being a sinner because you rebelled that day. He accuses you of being unworthy of God's love, unworthy of God's forgiveness, and unworthy of His healing and provision, because you made one mistake too many. Satan works overtime to rob you of the joy of life, to steal your hope, and to destroy your faith, with a daily dose of condemnation of your good intentions. He bombards your thoughts with fear and the threat of God's punishment. The truth, however, is far from guilt and fear. In fact, all of the devil's work is an outright lie. If you listen to those lies, you forget that the devil is *not* your father, nor your judge. He is not the one who leads you. It is Jesus Christ who leads you. It is His authority that judges you. He leads and judges you with love and compassion. He does not condemn you. O yes, Jesus will correct you, discipline you, and even rebuke you, but never with condemnation, never with a fear of some pending doom and punishment.

No longer do you stand before the Father as a condemned man or woman. You need not wait in deep despair and anxiety for the judgement of God to fall upon you. Your hope is not tied up in a possible stay of execution. Yet you fear, one day "He's going to get you."

You are not a sinner in the hands of an angry God. You are saint, a child of God, in the hands of a loving Father God. You never need to worry again that God's wrath and anger will be spent on you because you have sinned.

Nowhere in the eternal records of heaven is there a piece of paper with a charge against you. The record clearly shows you have been washed clean by the blood of Jesus. Instead, the record will indicate what you have done with God's gifts and talents, and the resources He has made available to you. For your efforts to make good use of His gifts, His talents, and abundant resources, He will ask you to give an account, not to condemn you for any failures in your efforts, but to reward you. He does not punish you. The reality of freedom in Christ is absolute; you stand before God, free from guilt and shame. In Christ there is no Death Row. The heart of faith is a belief that *in Christ* you are not only saved from eternal separation from God, you are free from eternal condemnation by God. That freedom does not begin when you get to heaven, or after you have somehow managed to avoid the worst of punishment at His "judgement seat." That freedom is *now* in Christ. He offers a freedom from condemnation that promises the only judgement to be a judgement of the size of your reward.

Each day you can wake up to a new morning and resist all attempts to condemn your character, your life, and the circumstances you find yourself in. Just stand up and say, "I am *in Christ*, and I am no longer condemned. I chose this day to walk in my freedom."

4. IN CHRIST YOU ARE RIGHT AGAIN

1 Corinthians 1:30, "*But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*"

One of the greatest feelings is to know you are right, especially when you are right with God. To be right with God is certainly not an achievement you can boast about as your own doing. On your own, and in your own strength, you are about as wrong or *un-right* as you can be. Why? Because in your own estimation of what is right, and in your own strength do set matters right, you will invariably drift towards selfishness, self-righteousness, and pride. After all, you are right! To be right in the Kingdom of God, however, means to be right with God. To be right with God is the greatest feeling. Needless to say, your own efforts may put you on top. You may be an achiever, a member of the upwardly mobile. You may be the number one sales person of the month, having exceeded your goals. But in the eyes of God, all that success can lead to vanity and turn into nothing but rubbish. It simply will not last. God is not against achievement or against success. God is not against your desire to be right. Yet, how can a selfish, self-righteous, and proud, upwardly mobile person, possibly be right enough to enter into fellowship with the Father? He cannot! The key to understanding fellowship with God is His incredible love.

This key unlocks God's righteousness in you through Jesus.

God's righteousness, not your own rights or your own achievements, is the standard by which He judges you. In Christ you are made right with God; you are made the righteousness of God. You are *not* God, but you are just like Him, as a Father would want His children to be.

Long before the earth was ever created and families populated the land, Jesus Christ offered Himself as a ransom for man. He said He would pay with His own life for the sin of man's own self-righteousness and achievements, attempted without God. The family of man was doomed to reap the fruit of his own rebellion, unless he could be freed somehow, from pending judgement. Jesus set you free. Jesus bought back the human race to ensure a right relationship with the Father would be possible again. God's love for you permitted such a tremendous sacrifice, because Jesus was sinless, He never rebelled. The stakes were high. In the balance lay the future of God's entire family. Nevertheless, Jesus volunteered to be the sacrificial lamb for you sin and your rebellion. It was the ultimate price - a sinless man to die for a sinful humanity.

It would cost God His only Son. God gave His Son Jesus as payment for you. God had put a price on you. That price was your life. Jesus paid that price for you. His life became the cost of your *redemption*.

Jesus sacrificed His life and shed His blood for you. His life and blood were equal in value to the cost of making you and all mankind, right with God again. God accepted the price and mankind could once more, just as he was in the beginning, receive the greatest blessing of right standing with the Father. With such a right standing came the promise of eternal life. Not only are you in right standing with God in this present age, you are forever right with God. Your own rights do not matter any more. Now you believe and yield your entire life to Jesus. Only His right life is the motive for your life. Only His thoughts are your thoughts and His ways are your ways. *In Christ* you are right before God. Now you must live to seek after the fruit of your right

standing with God, every day of your life. That fruit is the evidence that you believe you have been made right with God *in Christ*. That fruit is peace, joy, faithfulness, kindness, and love.

5. IN CHRIST YOU ARE REDEEMED

1 Corinthians 1:30, "*For by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*"

I remember the first bicycle I ever bought. Before that special day I had on occasion received old and used bikes. They took me wherever I wanted to go, but fell short of the joy of a shiny new bike. On one special day in 1958, however, that changed. I was thirteen years old. I bought my first brand-new bicycle, a fire-engine red CCM from *Canadian Tire*. What a thrill. What great joy as I rode through all the streets of our small town. The price was thirty dollars, a formidable sum for a young boy in the late fifties. The store had a payment program that allowed me to pay five dollars per month for six months. With my paper route revenue, including tips, I did my best, and managed to save five dollars per month. Six months was a long stretch of time for a young boy. Finally, there came the day, when I rode my bike to the store for one more trip. I placed a pocketful of change on the counter. With great ceremony and a big smile on his face, the owner of the store took the original bill of sale and marked in clear letters: "*paid in full.*"

What a great relief! The pressure was gone. The original thrill of buying a new bike was replaced by an even greater satisfaction. Now the bike was all mine, completely paid for. The store could no longer take it back. As I rode through town, pride of possession was replaced by pride of ownership. I kept the bike spotless, as a token of my gratitude.

The great Gospel message is the price Jesus paid to restore you to fellowship with the Father. Jesus died and shed His blood for you, and with His great sacrificial deed, He bought you back (*redeemed* you, that's what "redemption" means: He bought you back) from the pit of hell. The sin of rebellion of the human race, a rebellion which you inherited, was cursed to resign you to hell, that eternal place of separation from God. When Jesus paid the price for that rebellion, He marked the bill for your damnation: "paid in full."

There is nothing God will do to reverse that incredible act of Jesus' love. There is nothing God will do to take eternal life back, and ask you to work for your own salvation just a few payments longer. The price for all your sin of rebellion and disobedience against God has been paid in full. Regrettably, too many faithful saints still believe that *works* (doing things for God such as church programs, evangelism, witnessing, leading clean lives, tithing, etc.,) are a self-help program to ensure your salvation, and assure you of a place in the Kingdom. Few realize the gift of salvation is not only free, it is forever paid for by Jesus Christ. That is why the amount you owed God for your salvation is "paid *in full.*"

That day in 1958, when I rode my bike through town, I safely kept the receipt marked, "paid in full," in my pocket. It was a day on which I also determined to treasure my bike. I promised myself to look after my bike and keep it looking new as long as possible. After all it was mine. The bike lasted for many years until the day I outgrew it, and needed a larger one.

Jesus redeemed you. That means He *bought* you back into relationship with God. Now you must look after your life and let the Holy Spirit teach you, and show you, how to look after your treasure of life, with God's Word as your standard. It will earn you nothing, except a deep satisfaction and joy, of pleasing God with a well looked-after life. A well looked-after life is a satisfying life, set apart (sanctified) and redeemed (paid in full) in Christ Jesus, your Lord.

In Christ you are redeemed. Every morning when you wake you can thank God for your redemption, without fear He will take it back or demand a works program to pay for it.

6. IN CHRIST YOU ARE SET APART

1 Corinthians 1:30, "*But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.*"

Once you have made Jesus your Lord, He will rule and direct the rest of your life with a process of continual separation called *sanctification*. Sanctification means *separation*, but not the kind of separation that just means being apart. Sanctification or separation is not a passive state of being, but an active life force. Sanctification is a separation from one thing towards another. You are separated from the things of the world to be joined to the things that matter to Jesus, set apart from the kingdom of the world into the Kingdom of God. Jesus will separate you from worldly values and from desires for material possessions. He will even separate you from your first love of family and friends, not to make them less valuable, but to put Him first in everything. Putting Jesus first in everything means judging everything you do by His teachings on the Kingdom of God. He will separate you continually from anything and anyone that hinders your first love of Him. Because you have been redeemed and made right with God, you are set apart, you are *sanctified*.

Sanctification has two sides. You are set apart TOWARDS God and you are set apart FROM the world. The closer you draw to the Father, the farther you draw away from the things and influences of the world. Having been set apart by Him on this course of life, you must live the sanctified life. Why? Why not simply be satisfied with salvation? Because Jesus said you are His witness in this world. Sanctification and its fruit of holiness are your witness in this world. By your sanctified, set apart life, and verbal witness, people will know you are "different," because you are a follower of Jesus. Allow the Holy Spirit to equip and strengthen you in sanctification, and say "no" to the temptations of the world.

Often Christians argue over the sin of an occasional glass of wine, or a cold beer on a hot thirsty day. What does a little worldly pleasure matter anyways? These Christians are looking at sanctification in the wrong light. Sanctification is not legal sanctions against pleasure, recreation, leisure, and good times. Sanctification is freedom from any bondage (slavery to bad habits, and their proven destructive nature) that may result from excessive behaviour. The result is compromise. Compromise is the inability to make valuable decisions in any direction. It is the inability to say yes when harmless and no when harmful.

Compromise is being set apart in both directions at the same time. A little drawing near to God and a little drawing near to the world. Some believe it is the best of both worlds. However, it is not. Only one world can rule over you. Which one will it be, the kingdom of the world, or the Kingdom of God? Your answer is the Kingdom of God. You have been sanctified to enjoy God's righteousness, God's wisdom, and the eternal joys of redemption.

You have been set apart by the Father through Jesus Christ, for the joy and pleasure of His great and eternal plan for you. You have been set apart to God to be His holy and blameless people. Set your sight on Jesus and let Him carry you closer and closer to the glory of the Father. There are four detailed accounts of His life to enrich your journey. They are the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Set your sights on the treasures contained in these Gospels. Separate yourself from just worldly answers. Instead, weigh each answer in light of the answers Jesus offers in the teachings of His Kingdom, the eternal Kingdom of God. In Christ you are separated from unworthiness to worthiness.

7. IN CHRIST YOU HAVE BEEN DELIVERED

Colossians 1:13, *"For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son."*

The day you were born again, an era came to an abrupt end. That era is the span of your life during which you had little control over what influenced you, or who told you what to do. On the day of your rebirth, the rule of the kingdom of darkness ceased to have authority in your life. From that day on, the prince of the power of the air, Satan himself, has no more legal grip on you. From that day on, no demon in hell, or any one or group of people who are influenced by darkness, can legally occupy a place in your life against your own will. The day you were born again is the day you were delivered.

Even when through ignorance of the devil's schemes, you have give permission to demons to haunt and torment you, those demons are still illegal "residents" in your life. They have no right to torment and frighten you. Even when by invitation, through sinful practices and unhealthy soul ties, you allow demons to govern your life, those demons are still in illegal possession of your thoughts and actions. Their diabolic scheme is to occupy the territories of your life, such as family and marital relationships, conduct, attitudes, friends, peers, and community influence. Even though these forces of darkness have no authority over you, because you are a follower of Jesus, they have a great deal of influence nevertheless, because you simply did not know that "in Christ" you have been delivered from that authority of darkness. However, when you do get a revelation of who they are "in Christ," you will be prompted by the Holy Spirit to act swiftly. Through repentance and confession you can quickly deport the demons of darkness back to their kingdom of evil, thus putting a stop to the mental torment and anxious fears that have plagued you for so long. In the name of Jesus and by His blood, the forces of darkness must flee and leave you alone, because you are delivered, and by His life-giving Word you are set free. You are eternally saved and no longer condemned. You are right again with God, bought back (redeemed) into His family, and set apart to be directed in your thoughts and actions, by the truth of the Kingdom of God, rather than the lies of the kingdom of darkness.

The day you were born again and delivered is real and spectacular, yet you may not actually realize the full extent of your deliverance in Christ Jesus. No one may have told you the nature and extent of your deliverance.

The legal government of Satan over you was declared finished by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A grand miracle took place on Calvary and during the three days before Jesus rose from the dead. The former, old you, a legal subject of Satan, is now declared dead and buried, ending his rule in your life, once and for all. When you become a believer and follower of Jesus, He spiritually *buried the old you and raised you from the dead* (that place of being incapable of saying "no" to the authority of darkness). You are now a totally new creation. You are no longer the *old* you, but you are a *new* you. The new, born again *you*, is now the legal subject of Jesus Christ in His Kingdom. Jesus took you from submission in one government to another. He took you from darkness to light. "In Christ" you have been delivered from bondage of evil's stranglehold, to live in freedom and peace. Jesus delivered you from a destiny of eternal hell to a

destiny of eternal glory. Satan no longer has dominion over you. Four words will hold back and destroy any attempt to illegally possess you. Just say, "No, in Jesus' name!"

8. IN CHRIST YOU ARE FAMILY

Romans 8:14,16, *"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."*

Saved from eternal death, translated into eternal life, paid for by the blood of Jesus, you are in Christ Jesus a new member of the most important and highest ranking family - the family of God. For centuries man has set the standards of wealth and power by powerful families. There are royal families, powerful families in business, banking families, giant transnational corporate families, and families created by carefully selected national alliances. Belonging to anyone of these families will bring fame, prestige, wealth, power, and the acclaim of man. However, belonging to the families of man will not bring eternal life. Only the family of God is eternal.

All the families of earth are temporal. They will not last. Even in these last days before the return of Jesus, the smallest and greatest of these families will be shaken and humbled before almighty God. Your identification is not with them. You are a member of the heavenly household of God. You are His peculiar, particular, and special child. Together with the host of saints from Adam to the end of time, you are forever a child of God.

No doubt, this truth is difficult to understand. How do you relate to such eternal truth about the family of God, when all around you the family of man is crumbling? Perhaps you have experienced a crumbling of your own family. If relationships on this planet are tough to deal with, how do you expect an eternal relationship to be any different? The difference, of course, is "in Christ." The family of God is a family of human beings "in Christ," including you. For all eternity, Christ and His ways will take precedence over man's ways. He rules, not you, or anyone else.

The family of God, to which you belong, is a *done deal* as well.

Citizenship, or membership, is not some privilege to be *re*-considered at a future date. This is not some family contract, or contract marriage, that will expire one day. The terms of your membership, your *belonging* to the family of God, are not terms to be *re*-negotiated, determined by how well you behaved as a child of God. Of course that does not mean God is indifferent to your misbehaviour, with no consequences. The wages of sin are still death, but not eternal death. Misbehaviour, rebellion, sin, will still "earn" you a "wage of death," which are the consequences of your actions. Theft still earns a wage of imprisonment, whether you are a child of God or not. Nevertheless, membership in the family of God is non-negotiable. You are either a child of God or you are not. The good news is, you are "in Christ," a child of God because you are a follower of Jesus. The day you said "yes" to Jesus, as Lord and Saviour of your life, is the day God legally adopted you into His family. You are as much a legal child of God as Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father. In the eyes of God, Jesus is now your legal brother as well as your Lord and King.

Whatever the privileges Jesus has as a son of God, those privileges are yours as well.

As God's child you are the legal recipient, the legal heir, of all the Father's love, all His care, all His protection, and all His provision. Most certainly, there will be times when you simply do not understand how it all fits together. There may even be times when you don't even *feel* like a child of God, but the truth remains. You are His child. Forever He is your *Abba* Father, and forever you are His son and His daughter. Belonging is engraved in your heart. You want to belong; you need to belong. It feels good to belong. It feels even better when you belong forever. Forever you are *in Christ* Jesus, His family.

9. IN CHRIST YOU ARE AN HEIR

Romans 8:17, "*And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.*"

How many times have you secretly wished for that letter and phone call to inform you of some late, great-uncle, has just died and left you a fortune? Remember the thoughts of untold wealth, a mansion, and a garage full of exotic cars, maybe even a dream vacation? Perhaps you have already experienced a similar event when you received some inheritance from a family member. You may have received estate jewelry, property, money, or priceless, family heirlooms. My neighbour once inherited a big, old, beat-up car, that had been standing in a garage for nearly twenty years. It had low mileage, an immaculate interior, but it was worthless because the exterior had completely rusted through.

Some people become so greedy and anxious about *not* getting their fair share of an inheritance, or they harbour great fears of losing it all to another relative or sibling, they begin to divide the spoils long before mom and dad have died. There is no need for greed, anxiety, or fear, about your inheritance with God. There is an abundance that is beyond human imagination. Can you imagine your driveway paved in solid gold? No! Then how can you imagine the streets of an entire city paved in solid gold? You cannot! Yet such unimaginable wealth, not to mention undisturbed peace, unconditional love, full realization of all your potential, and unbridled creativity, and the joys of the Kingdom of God. How ready are you to receive God's inheritance?

As a child of God and a member of His eternal family, you are, together with Jesus, heirs of all that God has for you. You will inherit everything. That thought alone will stretch and challenge your imagination. After all, how much does God have? He made all of the heavens, all the planets, the entire *cosmos*, including earth. Not only did He make them, He knows *how* He did it, and He will not be selfish and keep those secrets to Himself. Everything God said would be yours, will be yours beginning when you made Jesus Lord in your life, and received Him as your Saviour. But the inheritance is not only *to come*, it has already begun.

The greatest portion of that inheritance is now yours. It is called the Kingdom of God, prepared for you before the earth was ever created. Of that inheritance, the greatest portion is eternal life with Jesus and the Father. Inheritance is not just wealth, belongings, and streets of gold. Those are but icing on a cake so great and delicious, it should make your mouth water. That cake is eternal life of peace, joy, and everlasting love, in a wonderful and caring family.

That portion of the inheritance you are inclined to ask for most frequently, namely wealth, is distributed by the Father according to your faithfulness in handling wealth and your attitude towards abundance. To give is still better to receive. Are you a giver first? In the timespan of "forever" in the Kingdom of God, all will be given to you. But you must be patient. The greatest blessing of God's wealth and abundance in His Kingdom, is the joy and freedom of trusting the Father to use His wealth and power for whatever purposes He considers right in your life.

The Kingdom of God, and everything in it, is yours. But how much can you handle rightly according to God's instructions will determine the extent of your material inheritance now? His intent is not a stockpile of personal wealth and belongings. His intent is justice and equity in His family. Nevertheless, you need not worry. The Father knows, and He will not let you live in lack. The inheritance is all yours *in Christ Jesus*, some of it now, all of it later.

10. IN CHRIST YOU ARE A NEW CREATION

2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away, behold new things have come.*"

For most people funerals are a sombre and sad event. Nobody likes to see loved ones depart from this earthly life, even if they have gone home to be with Jesus.

Yet there is one funeral where you should explode in joy with singing, shouting and dancing making a joyful noise unto the Lord. At this funeral you should leap and cry out in total release of all your emotions.

That funeral is the day you buried your *old man* or *old woman*. That was the day the *old*, former you was laid to rest and a *new* you was born. Into the grave was laid a rebellious, resentful and independent you. Up from the grave rose a new, righteous you, washed clean by the blood of Jesus and adopted into the family of God.

Old things passed away. Your sinful nature, incapable of loving God, passed away. The curse that was over you passed away. The condemnation and guilt that haunted you, passed away. The punishment for your sin passed away. The stranglehold and authority of Satan over you passed away. Buried forever are the remains of who you once were - a person separated from a loving Father. Do not let the devil, himself a zealous grave robber, exhume your old remains and parade them before you in temptation, accusation and condemnation. Remind him of the date on your tombstone. The *old you* has been dead ever since that day. Behold, new things have come.

The rule of Jesus in your life is now the authority over all your activities and behaviour. The Spirit of God now leads you into all truth and guides you along paths of righteousness. Your heavenly Father now gladly gives you all the inheritance of the Kingdom. You are now His precious treasure, forever *reborn* and *recreated* into the image of His precious Son, Jesus. Today is a new day. Put on your new clothes and live in peace and joy of the Lord.

11. IN CHRIST YOU ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

Ephesians 2:10, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

What a joy and comfort to know that long before you ever knew Jesus, God the Father had already planned that you would be a special work of His power and grace. Little did you know the day you were established in God's eyes as a true son and daughter, you would embark on a lifelong journey that would be a masterpiece of God's handiwork. When Michaelangelo began his great sculptures, he selected very special pieces of quarry marble. Even as the marble stood before him on wooden blocks, and before the chisel would touch the stone, he knew that inside that stone was a person waiting to be released. As he began to methodically chip away the many layers of marble, there emerged a handsome sculpture.

After months of hard labour, the statue was released from its stone bondage. To finish the workmanship, he polished the marble and produced a gleaming, brilliant masterpiece that seemed to come to life in the light of day.

The Holy Spirit, daily chips away the temptations of the world around you and the sin that so easily entangles you. Then with the skill and experience of a Master Creator, He polishes you until you stand in the light of His life. You are a holy and precious *sculpture* of honour created to do good works. Carved and polished by the Master Creator you are now a source of delight and admiration as the crown of His creativity. He gives you spiritual gifts to carry out the good works. Supernaturally He equips you to do what is naturally impossible.

To the Father you become a masterpiece of praise and worship. In your own life, these works will produce peace and joy. In the lives of others, these works will produce hope and comfort. In you, God's masterpiece, He will produce an abundant harvest of fruit to be the very reflection of Jesus Himself through you.

12. IN CHRIST YOU ARE TRIUMPHANT

2 Corinthians 2:14, *"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."*

Can you imagine what it is like to come out a winner every time, regardless of the circumstances. Of course in the natural, and with man's own abilities this is impossible. But thanks be to God that nothing is impossible for Him. He can take the worst of situations and turn them around for your good and to His glory. When you submit your entire life in every area to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and your will is reduced to nothing more and nothing less than to do the Father's will, you will experience the freedom and joy of His leadership that always turns trial into triumph.

There is a sweet aroma about such a victory. That aroma is the assurance of the presence of the Lord in every moment of your life. It is a presence that is so real to you and others, it seems as if you can almost smell His fragrance in the air. Like a sunny and crisp autumn day as leaves turn to yellow, gold and scarlet and the harvest is a painting of orange, greens, earthy browns, reds and ochres. Someone is burning leaves somewhere. The smoke gently drifts over the landscape. Trailing wisps bring a pleasant smell. Suddenly you know that "Fall is in the air".

Let the Father lead you by His Holy Spirit through every difficult time, every trying circumstance, every personal struggle, disappointments and mistakes. Trust Him to know what He is doing in your life, and somehow, even when you do not understand, the sweet aroma of His presence becomes a reality. In prayer, in devotion you know that *God is "in the air" right there with you.*

The sweet aroma of His presence will become a triumphant procession of praise, worship and thanksgiving to the Father and to Jesus who really love you deeply. You are triumphant because Jesus triumphed over defeat for you.

13. IN CHRIST YOU ARE SEATED IN HEAVEN

Ephesians 2:6, *"And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."*

You can imagine the tumultuous scene as a glorious processional enters through the gates of heaven. At the head of the parade is none other than the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. Fresh from His awesome victory over sin and death, He stripped Satan of all his power and authority. Now the Son of God makes His triumphant entry into heaven. Following Him is a long train of all the saints kept in Paradise, *the Bosom of Abraham*, until Christ's victory gained them entrance into heaven itself. Imagine Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Elijah, Isaiah and countless thousands of the Redeemed, dancing and shouting and praising as they follow Jesus home.

The procession stops at the throne of God. There amidst tears of joy and satisfaction, the Father and His Son embrace. With trembling hands Jesus takes the stained utensils of the heavenly tabernacle and washes them clean with a bowl of His blood. The work is done. The way to heaven is open. The place explodes in thunderous praise. Jesus steps up to His Father's throne and sits down at His right hand. From this high and lofty vantage point Jesus now sees and rules His subjects in heaven and His church on earth. It is the best and most clear view, completely free from the clutter of fear, confusion, sin and wordliness.

In Him you are now seated in that very same place. In Him you now can have the same clear view of your life and the plan God has for you.

The time has come for you to see and judge your circumstances from His and your heavenly point of view. The time has come for you to see things as Jesus sees them in the light of His truth. Submit to His will, have His mind and you will know the truth for all your life in victorious faith and freedom. You'll see it from the best place of all - your view from heavenly places and from heaven's perspective.

14. IN CHRIST YOU ARE USEFUL AND FRUITFUL

2 Peter 1:8, *"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of your Lord Jesus Christ."*

In Christ you are useful and fruitful. In Christ, God is doing a good and perfect work in you. God is at work in you to make and shape you into vessels of honour fit for good use in His Kingdom. God is shaping you into a person who in the things you say and do will bring glory and honour to Him and exalt the name of Jesus.

Jesus makes you useful and fruitful in everything you do according to the will of the Father. When you submit those areas of your life, especially the seemingly insignificant ones, to the government of Jesus, He will perform a glorious work in and through you. Not only will you feel useful and fruitful, you will experience a treasure of His peace, His joy and His righteousness. You will be a vessel of honour for the Holy Spirit's signs and wonders in your life. However, just as trees begin with a seed, rivers begin with a trickle and adults must first begin as babies, so your usefulness and fruitfulness must have a beginning.

It all begins with God's divine life planted as a seed in your heart the day you are born again. Into the soil of your new birth you now plant diligence. Diligence is your faithfulness to Jesus and His Word by faith. As you begin to grow in submission to the rule of Jesus, a chain of strong links tie His divine life to your usefulness and fruitfulness. Those links form a bond that will keep you strong.

The links are moral excellence, knowledge of God's Word, self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness all wrapped in the presence of God's love to you and through you to others. Jesus calls those links *your* qualities and requires them to increase in your life.

Then you will see His grace multiplied to you as usefulness and fruitfulness in a vessel of honour to the honour and glory of God Himself.

15. IN CHRIST YOU ARE FORGIVEN

Ephesians 1:7, "*In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin*" **Colossians 1:14**, "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His Grace.*"

Perhaps the most crushing weight upon you is the weight of guilt and the shame it produces. You try to forget the crime you have committed. You try to bury the thoughts and memories of those indecent acts, the violence, the corruption, the horror of your deeds. Not to forget those awful thoughts, the anger, the hate and those words of criticism. You know you were wrong and the guilt presses upon you every day. The weight gets heavier as the days grow longer.

Jesus said it was to your advantage that He go away and send you His Holy Spirit. His Holy Spirit is known as *the Spirit of Grace*. The Holy Spirit was sent to bring you a deep and eternal truth. That truth is the forgiveness of your sin, not by your own works but by the Grace of God. God's Grace is His favour extended to you, not because you deserve it, but because of His great love for you. There is no price to pay for the release of your load of guilt. Jesus paid the price on the cross at Calvary. When you received Jesus as Lord and Saviour, *three* of the most liberating things happened. *First*, all the sin of your past was forgiven. God holds no record of it. Because there is no record of your past sin, no charges can be laid. No record, no charges, means no guilt. Regardless of how big your sin, how big your guilt, it is forgiven.

Second, when you sin in the present, the door is always open to forgiveness. In true sorrow for your sin and genuine repentance, the minute you ask Jesus to forgive you, you are forgiven. *Third*, as you are forgiven, so you forgive others who have sinned against you. Don't carry the load of guilt and shame for sin any longer. Pray right now and ask the Father to forgive you. He has and He will, always in Jesus' precious name.

16. IN CHRIST YOU ARE SET FREE

Romans 8:2, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death."*

Down the length of Germany runs a most dangerous highway, the Autobahn. It is a high speed freeway. There is no speed limit on the Autobahn. There is no law in the books of the department of highways to limit the speed of any vehicle on the Autobahn.

One Spring Alice and I drove for a long distance on the Autobahn during our honeymoon trip to Europe. As we drove on that infamous speedway, I looked in my rearview mirror and saw fast approaching headlights. I thought I had plenty of time before they would catch up to us, but I had been warned. So I quickly moved the car to another lane. Within seconds a car roared past at a speed approaching twice the limit I was accustomed to. It was a frightening speed. Later we came upon the ominous flashing lights of an ambulance and police cruiser. Then we saw the reason for the flashing lights. There, to the side of the Autobahn in a wooded area was the car that had passed us. It lay totally demolished in a crumpled heap of twisted metal embedded into the base of a large tree. Ambulance and police stood there helpless. There was nothing they could do.

Jesus set you free from the law of sin and death. Your life is no longer ruled by the desire and pressure to sin, resulting in a slow death of your will, emotions, attitudes and behaviour. Instead you are set free to live a life ruled by the life-giving influence of Jesus. He sets your will free from selfishness, your emotions from self pity, your attitude from bitterness and unforgiveness, your behaviour from deadly habits and dangerous practises. Jesus has put you on another freeway, the Autobahn of Kingdom peace, joy, power and righteousness. Yet you are not at liberty to do all you want. Instead you are at liberty to do all He wants. Through His Spirit of Life there is still the law of obedience. Freedom is your willingness to obey God's Word.

17. IN CHRIST THERE IS NO CHARGE

2 Corinthians 5:19, *"Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."*

It is a terrible thing to realize that you have rejected the God of all creation. You have no right to rebel against God and claim your independence. Evidence of this deeply rooted rebellion is everywhere. Children reject father and mother who gave them birth. Employees reject owners who created their jobs. People reject governments who keep them in peace. Students reject teachers and parishioners reject their pastor who cares for them. Husbands and wives reject each other. And it all began when man said to God, *"I don't need you anymore, except in times of extreme emergency"*. Then when God does not respond, they blame Him for all their problems. The legacy of history and the accumulated deficit of rebellion and the tragedy of man's injustice to man weigh heavily upon the conscience of mankind. History bears its own judgment.

A raped planet, a choking environment, the devastation of the family, the ravages of crime, violence, abuse and the relentless slaughter of millions of unborn babies. All for what? For Mammon, the god of greed, wealth, power and all selfish causes. Condom use is propagated by condom manufacturers. Drinking and driving by brewers and distillers. The evidence is overwhelming. The charge is irrefutable. Guilty as charged. The sentence is eternal death. The planet and the human family are destined to die only to be resurrected into eternal damnation. But wait! Even though man rejected God's love in Jesus as a light of hope at death's door, there is still time to repent and return to God. When Jesus, God's only Son came to earth, He came to pay the price of all mankind's rebellion. The sacrifice of His body and blood was the ransom that bought back the human race from total loss. The agony of the cross, the separation from God, the descent into hell, and the resurrection from the dead, gave the Son of God the divine right to claim all mankind as His own. The price was paid. The righteous anger of God was satisfied. The voluminous charge against man was eliminated. Now you can receive by faith and grace the truth that for all your past and present rebellion there is *"no charge"*. It was paid for in total by Jesus.

18. IN CHRIST YOU RECEIVE THE HIGHEST CALL

Philippians 3:13,14, "*Brothers, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do; forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*"

There is a moment of absolute quiet when the speed skater stands at the start of the race. But inside he measures the race with muscles taut and adrenalin pumping through every fibre of his body. The starting pistol sounds. He catapults from the gate. He rushes to gain speed. Then with body bent low, one arm behind his back, and his other arm in even pumping movements he propels himself in a strong steady rhythm of long legs that push the thin blades back over a smooth and fast ice. Small puffs of crushed ice created by slicing blades belittle the incredible speed at which he moves. His head is forward, his eyes up and steady towards the finish. With sweeping right over left he hurdles around a bend. Suddenly his skates slip from under him. He stumbles and loses his balance as his legs collapse. Precious seconds race by. But his eyes remain fixed on the prize ahead. The possibility of gold quickens his heart and mind.

He regains his posture. Somehow he manages to get up and not lose stride. The rhythm of pumping arms and racing legs is back. How much time was lost? He dismisses the fall from his consciousness and forgets the pain. There is gold waiting for the one who presses on. His form is gracious and smooth. His authority is assured and strong. As the distance closes, his conviction is deep.

There is an *upward call* of God's children who will forget the mistakes of the past and the failures of yesterday. That upward call is the Kingdom of God. No fall, no stumble must keep you from pressing towards the total rule of Jesus in your life. His government must rule your intellect, your will and emotions, your heart and conscience as well as your body. As He rules you, so you live according to the highest call of the Kingdom - obedience to the King.

19. IN CHRIST YOU HAVE WISDOM

2 Timothy 3:15, *"From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

The surgeon has a precision scalpel to make decisive cuts for healing. The journalist has a pointed pen to stir the conscience of man. The painter has sable and bristle brushes to record the saga of man's will and emotions. The lawyer has a library of case studies. The mechanic has a cabinet full of wrenches. The salesman has a case of samples. The housewife has management skills, the policeman a badge, the soldier a rifle and the secretary has shorthand. In each of their given tools lies the wisdom to perform a variety of tasks. Each tool has a wise way of being used.

So you have been given a most powerful tool - the written Word of God. These sacred writings contain the most awesome truth and wisdom to unlock all the secrets of life in the Kingdom of God. These sacred writings contain the record of God's provision for your salvation and all the blessings that accompany such salvation. Knowing you would fail in your own attempts to understand Him, tempted to lean on your own understanding, He provided a wonderful solution.

He gave you His Holy Spirit to teach you all the wisdom recorded in His Word and guide you in applying this wisdom to daily life. As you journey through God's Holy Word, the Holy Spirit will point repeatedly to Jesus as your living example of all the truth contained in that Word.

By faith you believe the Holy Spirit's teaching to be perfect and good for solutions to every problem. By faith you believe that in everything the Holy Spirit teaches, He discloses more of the awesome God you serve, the loving Father He is and the wonders of the counsel and peace found in Jesus Christ. The Bible is the sacred truth of a sacred relationship you have with the Father in Jesus, revealed in eternal words of wisdom - your tools for life.

20. IN CHRIST YOU ARE A SOLVED MYSTERY

Colossians 1:26,27, *"That is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

What child or adult does not like a mystery? Who does not delight in the unraveling of a myriad of mysterious events and clues to reveal the answers? There has been a great mystery hidden for thousands of years that has just recently come to light for many people. What for perhaps as many as six to ten thousand years was a mystery has now been made known. It was a mystery God hid from men until the outpouring of His Holy Spirit shortly after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ some two thousand years ago. As men and women throughout the ages believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit reveals that great mystery to them. The mystery was the plan of God to dwell *in* man, rather than just *with* man.

When you are born again, something so mysterious took place, many devoted and serious believers still don't know how it is possible. How can Jesus Christ live *in* you when He is with the Father in heaven? The mystery was solved when God revealed that the presence of Jesus Christ *in your heart, is the presence of the Spirit of Jesus*, who is the Holy Spirit. In a way that only Almighty God could mastermind, Jesus came to live in your spirit through the miraculous working of His Holy Spirit. What a solved mystery! Now His presence is evident through gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit and the message is one of hope and assurance. He assures you that you belong to His family. He assures you God has a plan for you and that Jesus is coming back soon. Jesus will come back and take His family to the place He has prepared for eternity. What hope, what assurance and what a beautiful Saviour is now *in you*.

21. IN CHRIST YOU ARE FIT TO THE END

Ephesians 1:10, *"With a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth."*

Long before Jesus Christ was born, the great prophet Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born who would be a great Counselor and King. Upon His shoulders would rest the eternal government of the Kingdom of God. That government would increase as the years passed, and its effect on its subjects would be peace, joy, power, quietness, assurance, justice and righteousness. That government is the eternal rule of Jesus Christ in the hearts of His people and over all the earth.

That rule began when Jesus came and begins in you the day you believe and receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. That rule of the Kingdom of God is the eternal spiritual, ethical, moral and behavioral code by which you obediently live. It begins in your heart and when Jesus returns will be established over all the nations. God the Father has a great plan that will be completed in the fulness of time, when the great commission to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom to the ends of earth is finished. On that day, Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom government and rule of heaven over *all* the earth.

God in His grace and mercy has equipped you with every spiritual blessing to take you through the end times. His Holy Spirit teaches and guides you. His Son Jesus Christ gives you abundant life. His Word brings you faith, hope and love. His armour protects you. You are a special part of that great and glorious fulfilment of all things in Christ. Until the end of time, you are fit to stand the trials and temptations of life with the full assurance that you belong to Jesus and He watches over you. Soon He will come back to take you to His home. Until that time you must stay fit in committed discipleship, abiding in His words daily. Only then will you know the truth to set you free.

22. IN CHRIST YOU ARE HEALED

Matthew 8:17, *"In order that was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases'."*

1 Peter 2:24, *"And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by His wounds you were (in Him you are) healed."*

The Kingdom of God is not only a spiritual realm dominated by the Word of God, it is also a physical realm dominated by the people of God. Whatever the Father establishes as His will in heaven, He will demonstrate as His will on earth through His people. The truth of the Kingdom of God, the teachings of Jesus, are spirit and life that will demonstrate their life-giving power in your physical life of mind and body. Wherever Jesus went to proclaim the spiritual life-giving words of the Gospel of the Kingdom, it was followed by the deliverance and healing of demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, sicknesses and diseases. God's life-giving Word brings healing to the broken heart, the wounded soul, and the sick body. God introduced to the Israelites in the desert the special sacrificial system to provide healing and deliverance through the shed blood of animals. His explicit purpose was to point to Jesus Christ and healing in His blood. When Jesus poured His blood out for you on Calvary, He ended the need for continuous blood sacrifices and instead provided forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration and healing for all who would believe. His sacrifice was sufficient for all mankind to be set free from the curse of sin and death. When Jesus sent His Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that Holy Spirit became your absolute guarantee of salvation. Salvation in Him includes your reconciliation to God, your forgiveness of sin, resurrection of your body, your deliverance, healing, safety, security and life everlasting. This is what the true disciple of Jesus believes, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit, that God's will for you in heaven is God's will for you on earth, *your healing*.

Examine yourself to see if no sin hinders His healing. Then by faith rejoice and receive your healing in Jesus Christ, and learn to walk in divine healing every day.

23. IN CHRIST YOU ARE ABUNDANTLY BLESSED

Ephesians 1:3, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."*

The Amplified Bible, (a bible that expands the full meanings of original Hebrew and Greek words) defines the word "blessed" as "happy, enviable, fortunate and spiritually prosperous, that is, possessing the happiness produced by the experience of God's favour and especially conditioned by the revelation of His grace, regardless of outward conditions"

It is difficult for the natural mind to comprehend the Father's heart as a loving and generous heart whose preoccupation is a daily outpouring of His blessings in your spirit, soul and body. Too often the outward conditions of life determine your faith and trust in Jesus. A child who is sick, a husband without work, a wife unable to cope, disappointing friends, broken relationships, the cost of living, crowd your thinking with doubt, discontentment and fear. Where are all the Spiritual blessings with which you have been so abundantly blessed? The Psalmist encourages you to look behind you whenever the road ahead seems impossible. Look back and count your blessings over the past days, weeks and even years. It is amazing how generous the Father has been.

Too often you let the irritating noise of life's many crises drown out the resounding echo of God's promise of the greatest spiritual blessing of them all - eternal life in Jesus Christ. And you can start counting the blessings now.

Count them, such as God's gift of Jesus to you and adoption into His family. Count His gifts of grace and wisdom, the Holy Spirit and His gifts and fruit, His precious Word to teach and discipline you, His gifts of forgiveness, restoration, renewal and right standing with Him. Count His gifts of freedom and life, truth and joy. The abundance of His blessings keep on pouring from His hands. Stop living in the shadows of what is not or could have been. Step into the light of His abundance of spiritual blessings given to you because you are in Christ the heir of all God's blessings.

24. IN CHRIST YOU ARE A CONQUEROR

Romans 8:3, "*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*"

At the United States international airport in Dallas, Texas, stands a statue dedicated to the famous Texas Rangers, the epitome of law and order. The inscription below reads: "*One Riot, One Ranger*". Such was the reputation of the legendary Texas Rangers. One day a riot broke out in a Western frontier town. Seeing the situation rapidly deteriorate, the sheriff wired the district Texas Ranger office for immediate help of a group of Rangers to rescue the town. When matters seemed worst, the Rangers finally arrived. One lone Ranger rode into the riotous town on that dusty, Western day. *One Ranger*. The effect was paralyzing.

The presence of one Texas Ranger brought such a calming influence that the riot stopped and peace was restored. When your life has turned into a riot of fear and doubt, you can overwhelmingly conquer with one calming word - Jesus. When your life has become a riot of adverse circumstances you can overcome with just one authoritative word - Jesus. When your life is a riot of torn feelings, shattered hope, frayed emotions and a confused will, one word will bring you victory - Jesus.

Your faith in His name and your belief that He is there with you will calm the wildest storm, still the raging waters of accusation and restore peace where once was condemnation. Your victory is not won in your own strength. In fact, the weaker you are, the greater the power of God. Nothing in your life can stand against the assurance of the Holy Spirit. His voice may whisper ever so quiet in your heart, but His authority thunders in the name of Jesus to turn sadness into gladness, fear into faith, war into peace, pain into joy and *victim* into *victor*.

In Christ you can do more than just cope with the situation. You can overcome and live in His blessed hope for tomorrow and His blessed joy for today.

25. IN CHRIST YOU ARE DISABLED

2 Corinthians 13:4, *"For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you."*

There is in the English language an expression called a "*paradox*".

A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory, yet may be true in fact.

The Kingdom of God is a paradox. The first are last. The rich are poor. The greatest are the least important. Adults must be like children. The poor are rich. The weak are strong and enabled are disabled. These seem like great contradictions but they are true. The great liberating truth of being in Christ and Christ in you by His Holy Spirit is a secret that escapes many. The secret is simple.

The more of you and the less of God's power. The less of you and the more of God's power. So extreme is this paradox that to gain life you must lose life. To gain the fulness of God's power, God's love and all God's blessings, you must die to any vain attempts to take matters into your own hands by your own power. The apostle Paul was a visible example of such a living paradox. He boasted about his weaknesses. The weaker he was, the more powerful was God's demonstration of heaven's power. Paul considered it a Kingdom privilege to be spent for others as people occupied his precious time. Many beat him and persecuted him. Yet he knew "*losing it all*" would mean great gain for others and himself. He discovered the more *disabled* he was the more *enabled* he was in God's power. In such weakness he was used singlehanded by God to bring the entire Gospel of the King to known civilization in his time.

To be so disabled in the strength of your own opinions, solutions, methods and attitudes to leave you no choice but to be completely dependent on God and His wisdom, His solutions, His methods and His truth, is to be truly blessed. "*Lord disable me to enable me to do your will with peace, joy and contentment*".

26. IN CHRIST YOU ARE BLOOMING

Philippians 1:11, *"Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*

During an international flight we encountered some lengthy turbulence. As the aircraft began to shake and tremble the small seatbelt sign came on just above us. When I looked out the window I could see no evidence of what caused the turbulences. We were high above the clouds under a bright blue sky and beautiful sunshine. Everyone stayed in their seats as the aircraft sped through the shaky sky. Some were terrified but didn't show it. Others were calm and a number slept. Some quickly ordered alcohol. It was the voice of the captain that interrupted the aircraft's engine noise and people's private thoughts. His professional voice assured us that these turbulences were normal and in a few moments we would be through them.

Somehow the tension stopped and people began speaking to each other again. Eventhough the aircraft was still shaking and the seatbelt sign was still on, the assuring voice of the captain brought hope and comfort that soon the flight would be smooth again.

Flying is much like life. At times it is sunny and bright, at times dark and rainy and always there is the possibility of turbulences. That is when the Captain of your life, the Lord Jesus, assures you with His Spirit's still small voice in your heart that everything will be all right. He will again and again assure you of your right standing with God regardless of weather and turbulences. Your fears are calmed as your destiny is secure and you know you will land there safely. Such assurance has a special effect through life's rough weather. Such assurance bears the abundant fruit of His love, causing you to bloom in peace, quietness, confidence and more assurance. The Captain's voice is pure and trustworthy. You are going to make it. You settle back comfortably in your chair. You look out the window and the Sun shines warm on your face. It is good to be alive in the Kingdom of God with Jesus Christ as your Captain.

27. IN CHRIST YOU ARE HOPEFUL

Colossians 1:27, *"to whom (the saints) God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

Perhaps the greatest mystery of life is the fact that Jesus Christ lives inside His followers. In every day life this defies all logic and reason. You know that Jesus is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God, the Father. The mystery is solved when you understand that the indwelling presence of Jesus *is His Spirit*, the Holy Spirit.

This is not some mystical, metaphysical explanation that is restricted to fond memories of Jesus nor the result of a lot of wishful thinking or strange philosophies. Yet you have never seen or met Jesus. But, He is very real to you. Have you ever said, *"Oh, if only Jesus were here right now, He would heal my blind brother"*. But Jesus is there with you. He lives in you by His Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul wrote to his church members a profound explanation of the indwelling Christ. He said that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you. That same Spirit will bring peace, joy and abundant life to your heart, your mind, your emotions, your will and stir even your body with divine health. He is the foundation of all your hope.

By His Spirit you will know in your heart that good things are coming. You know that the Bible is true. You believe in your heart that Jesus is the Son of God and that after He died, God raised Him from the dead to prove to the world that this Jesus is the Saviour of all mankind. You hope for a better tomorrow and now the indwelling Jesus turns that hope into faith. This He does by assuring you His promises are true. Fear turns to victory. Sorrow turns to joy, defeat to great expectations, sickness to divine health, worry to peace of mind and condemnation to affirmation. This is the treasure that God gives freely to all who believe. Jesus Christ, the hope of glory, forever in your heart, soon to be with you Himself in His visible presence.

28. IN CHRIST YOU ARE ONE BODY

Romans 12:5, *"So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."*

Although she lived in a house with her father, mother and brother, she was a lonely girl. As the years passed she grew up and was very beautiful. She searched everywhere for the warmth of true friendship, hoping it would turn into a loving and lasting relationship. Rejected by her family she ended up in the arms of many tempting offers. She became wanted but not needed. The word "no" was seldom used for fear of endangering the tenuous associations, often no more than a night of wishful satisfaction in a strange bed. Jobs were scarce. Funds were almost non-existent. Yet her demand for some hope and a search for meaning kept the fire of nighttime dreams burning. This was life? This is the brass ring? It sure was frightening to learn she was pregnant. Guilt became overwhelming when things didn't work out. She was such a beautiful young woman. What a waste! Surely there must be more? Then one day she met Jesus.

Through the witness and the obviously different lives of some who cared, she came face to face with the unconditional, forgiving love of God. The change was almost too much. Suddenly there was family, a very large family that loved her, took her in and nursed her during the tears and the doubts. Inside her heart, the new birth of a precious girl began to take root. A small blossom appeared on fragile withered branches. Soon the leaves turned tender and soft. Finally she belonged.

Now she has a family that even extends around the globe. The warmth of true friendship glows during the cold and damp days. A loving and lasting relationship was born as she became a family member of the Body of Christ. Not because they were of this or that denomination. Not because of this or that doctrine. She became part of one great group of people, the church of Jesus Christ, the family of God, because one Man chose to love her unconditionally. His name is Jesus Christ. And He appointed His Body, His followers to express that love towards one another as one in Him, through a unity of care for others like her.

29. IN CHRIST YOU ARE OVERWHELMED

1 Timothy 1:14, *"And the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus ."*

There are times in your walk of faith when you are overcome by an irresistible presence of God to render you totally helpless. You seem completely buried, as with a wave or a flood, overwhelmed by the mercy of God.

You used to curse God in the way you lived. You may say, *"But I never said anything bad about Him. I never spoke those awful damning words using His name!"* But you did curse God. You cursed Him with your rebellion and you cursed Him with your foolish ignorance. Many times you heard the Word of God spoken to you. many times He acted on your behalf. Yet, you called Him traditional and out of touch with reality. You called Him a hard taskmaster and thought of Him as a strict legalist. You had at least two or three Bibles in your home, yet you never read once about His deep love for you. A love so great, it cost Him the blood of His only Son.

There were times when you became angry at people, especially those of His followers. You spoke ill of them and in your heart you wished them all some form of physical, emotional or financial death. You acted in total unbelief. But God showed you His mercy and forgave you.

He took you and washed you clean with the life-giving waters of His Word, in which He promised to save you. You look back over the years of unbelief and suddenly you are overwhelmed. His grace, that abundant unlimited favour you did not deserve, overwhelmed you. He took you as you were and you did not have to earn it. His faith, ever increasing inside you to believe and trust Him, overwhelmed you. His unconditional love, which knows no bounds, overwhelmed you. You, the foremost of sinners, Jesus Christ came into the world to save from hell. Suddenly you are overwhelmed again, right now, right where you are, because of God's abundant grace and love for you. Be overwhelmed daily in Him.

30. IN CHRIST YOU ARE FULLY SUPPLIED

Philippians 4:19, "*And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*"

One of the most difficult lessons to learn is the reality that God is your source. It is *my* God who loves you and promised to look after you. It is not the gods of this world who are your source. Your employer, your government, your nation's social programs, your savings or your friends and relatives are not your source for daily provision, daily security and fulfilment. Satisfaction will only be complete when you know *my* God as your source. It is He who leads people across your path to provide for your needs. It is He who speaks to others indirectly or directly by His Spirit to bless you with supplies and provision.

My God's source is the vast, endless supply of His riches. God's riches are not only a great storehouse of heavenly treasure. His riches include all the wealth of this world. He entrusted that wealth to mankind. Mankind grossly violated his stewardship of such wealth. The rich get richer and the poor suffer beyond human comprehension. But God will speak to the hearts of His children and direct them to give to your needs. *My* God will also in these end times reposses the wealth of the wicked and redistribute that wealth amongst His righteous followers to meet all their needs beyond what you can even imagine.

But are these riches not *in glory*, meaning when you get to heaven? No, precious saints. The glory of God is the awesome weight of His presence. That glory has been given to you by Jesus. *My* God will bring His overwhelming weight of influence to bear down on all the world's wealth to provide for His children's needs. The big question is not His riches or His glory. The big question is, *will you remain a faithful steward of His supernatural provision regardless of size or importance, and listen to Him direct you in your investment and spending for His kingdom?* Or will your need become your greed? His wealth is yours in Christ Jesus. Pray for a poverty of your own plans and abilities so that you may have all your needs met in abundance by *my* God and *His* riches in *glory*.

31. IN CHRIST YOU ARE IN LOVE

Galatians 5:6, *"For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love ."*

Jesus set you free so that you would *remain* free from the bondage of your past. You were enslaved to habits, traditions and sinful practises. But now you are free. No person, no demon, no bad habit, no bad attitude can lord it over you anymore because Jesus changed the rules of your life from slavery to freedom. Nevertheless many still cling to traditions and methods that are either a "circumcision" or "uncircumcision". Both represent the traditions man has put upon himself and both rob him of his freedom in Christ. Circumcision or uncircumcision mean nothing to Jesus. Did you get baptised by immersion or by sprinkling? Did you become Christian instantly or gradually? Did you have a major experience or a minor happening? Were you reborn, regenerated or transformed? Jesus set you free from all slavery of tradition, methods and even the language you use to describe your doctrines.

If the teaching of doctrines and your desire to live by those teachings enslave you to a particular method, you are not walking in the freedom Jesus has given you. Slavery will always be an obstacle to your ability to love others as Jesus loves you. For slavery promotes the method rather than the result. Slavery will always hinder the growth of your faith. Are you searching for the answer to why your faith is not working? The answer lies in Jesus Christ and His freedom.

Faith works because of unconditional love. Unconditional love is God's love through you to others free from the "conditions" of tradition and methods, of circumcision and uncircumcision. You love not because they do it your way or attend your church. You love not because they sing the songs you like, raise their hands or even speak in tongues like you do. You love because Jesus set you free. Your faith will grow because Jesus set you free to love others unconditionally as He loves you unconditionally. Faith works because you are in Christ Jesus and He is in you. Faith grows because you let His love in you refresh you and touch others.

32. IN CHRIST YOU ARE CLOSE

Ephesians 2:13, *"But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*

For many people childhood memories bring back the special times when you crawled on your father's lap to enjoy that wonderful feeling of safety and security. Sadly, the devil has spoiled that childhood experience for millions. But thanks to the Holy Spirit, the experience of a child to his father is made real again in your relationship to the heavenly Father. Jesus restored the wonderful experience of being close to the Father to every child of God. You get up in the morning with hope and expectation. Jesus is your Lord and God is your Father. They will never abandon you. Jesus paid the price for your separation from God. He shed His blood and poured it on the cursed ground of Calvary. There His blood cried out to God for grace and mercy. God heard the cry and granted forgiveness and eternal life to the world.

At one time you were hostile to God and lived far from His loving presence. Some rejected the truth in an act of self will. Others were far off because of ignorance. Some still are far off because the worries and cares of the world keep them from knowing God. Other are trapped in the deceitfulness of riches and the lust for material possessions. Still others are far off because traditions of men have blinded their understanding. Angry disobedience to God's truth about marriage, family and children keeps many away from true freedom.

But thanks be to God you are no longer far off. You *were* like that once, but now you have been brought near to God in an intimate and close relationship of Father and son, Father and daughter.

Now Jesus calls you to be close to His teaching and not "far off" in your understanding of His Word. Do not be carried "far off" by strange teachings that do not line up with the "pattern shown to you on the mountain" when Jesus, on the Mount of Beattitudes, gave you the rule of His kingdom. Let the Holy Spirit draw you close to Kingdom truth of righteousness found only in complete submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as taught in His precious teachings. He will bring you close to deep understanding of things past, present and the future. He will bring you not only close, but near to His heart forever.

33. IN CHRIST YOU ARE EXCEEDING ABUNDANCE

Ephesians 3:16-20, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever, Amen".

When the devil plays his favourite game, you begin to lose sight of God's exceeding abundance. The devil's favourite game is to kick you when you are down. The things you hoped and prayed for are not coming to pass. You are at the end of your rope and depression lurks in the shadows ready to seize the opportunity. Relationships are strained and everything goes wrong. Without warning he kicks you. He accuses you. It was your fault, your mistake, your doubt, your unbelief. No wonder you did not get what you thought you needed. You did not pray enough and you could have doubled up on your Bible study. Stop!

Who are you listening to? The devil? What right does he have to tell you anything? Listen instead to the Father in His Word. You have been rooted in God's love. The Holy Spirit who is deep in your heart, does not accuse you. He affirms and strengthens you by showing you the full benefit of your roots. Your roots are in God and through Jesus, your roots are in His kingdom. No poor soil can contaminate those roots for they sprang from an *incorruptible* seed. From these roots, will grow an exceeding abundance of patience, joy, love, self-control, kindness, faith and hope to deal a deathblow to all accusation. Instead there is a fountain of exceeding abundance of God's eternal and unconditional love for you - an exceeding abundance that beats the devil at his own game and causes him to run in fear from the love of God that surrounds you.

34. IN CHRIST YOU ARE MOVERS

Acts 17:28, *"For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, for we also are His offspring."*

Can you remember those days when you sat by the ocean, a lake or at the edge of a large forest? The day is coming to an almost perfect ending. Do you recall the spectacular sunset as reds, yellows, purple and orange bathed the evening sky like some giant Rembrandt canvas?

Believer and unbeliever alike stood and shared in this grand spectacle of creative expression. Even nature itself bowed before the Creator in worship and adoration. Everyone's thoughts, including your own, were on the Divine presence. Some knew Him by name. Some knew Him not, yet felt His presence. There was a day you did not know Him either. Even when you did know Him, He seemed majestic, glorious and spectacular in the closing hours of that sunset day. Nevertheless He was so far away.

If only you could see Him, touch Him and speak to Him face to face. Oh what great and penetrating truth awaits those who press into Him and hunger and thirst beyond the sunset for a deeper walk and greater knowledge of the Lord. *Your moment has arrived.* The Holy Spirit was poured out on you precisely for that reason. He will teach you and show you Jesus through His Word and through His work in the earth. When you know Jesus you will know the Father, the Creator of such heavenly splendor as a colourful sunset. He is the Giver of much peace while you stood and watched the day sink into the horizon. It is the Holy Spirit of Jesus who will give you that deep assurance that Jesus is not only the Lord of heaven and earth, but the residing Prince of Peace in your heart.

Through His Holy Spirit He lives in you and you are in Him. He is the source of all your knowledge, wisdom, peace and joy for daily existence. In Him you live and move. In Him your day is secure beyond the sunset and through the dark hours of the night. Not only is He far away and above all in creation's awesome masterpiece, He is so close, so present, right inside you to lead you, assure you, comfort you and blanket you with His love. There is no life greater than in Him.

35. IN CHRIST YOU ARE ROYALTY

Romans 5:17, *"For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in this life through the One, Jesus Christ."*

No doubt you have known little children who dream of being a prince, a princess, or a king and queen. Perhaps you were one of those children. Such dreams were a time of childlike freedom. The cares and worries of the world were unknown. The deceitfulness of riches had no influence and the lust after another man's wife and possessions did not exist. You look back to those days and call them times of childlike innocence. They were years of a special kind of freedom.

Jesus continues to labour at this very moment in your life to impress you with His desire that you return to this childlike freedom. His Holy Spirit assures you daily with confidence and boldness of your right to stand before the Father, and showers you with the Father's abundant grace. He blesses you with the truth of His unmerited favour towards you as He reminds you that even though you did not and could not earn one bit of that favour yourself by good works and splendid performance, nevertheless you are a chosen race. You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. The freedom of knowing and receiving God's grace and righteousness is beyond your understanding. You have been set free to enjoy such favour again and again as children of His love. There is, however, a very special call of the Lord as you grow in this childlike freedom. That call is to "reign in this life" on behalf of Jesus.

Yes, you can be that prince and princess, the king and queen of your dreams. Only this time your freedom is not spent in the escape of those dreams but in the reality of His rule over your life. Your freedom in Christ enables you to take up royal positions of Godly leadership in marriage, family, business and in government as you demonstrate the Lord's leadership in your life. As you reign with Him, Jesus calls you to proclaim His excellence and the freedom you found on that day He called you as children of darkness into His marvelous light.

36. IN CHRIST YOU ARE WINNERS

1 John 4:4, *"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."*

Turn on any television set and radio, or pick up a magazine or newspaper and you will find everywhere the professional ads that "yes, you can!" For small and large fees the apostles and gurus of success and self-improvement will sell you their merchandise. The commercials show a few who have succeeded, but of the millions who buy into the program, millions never get beyond mediocrity. Even Christians buy into the world's "winner's circle", motivated by lust and greed, devoted to no other god but Mammon.

Amidst this material deception, God nevertheless declares *you* a winner. But in God's eyes you are a special kind of Kingdom winner. Your winning streak in Christ Jesus, is your Holy Spirit-led ability and authority to stop all the world's lies and grand promises from having authority over you. The world's authority is influenced by demon spirits. These spirits are not from God. Instead, these spirits are from hell with a priority of being anti-Christ. They tempt men and women and turn the prophets into false prophets and the teachers into deceivers. Through the most cunning and deceitful of ways they lure Christians into false security, wrong values and a lust for power, position, recognition and wealth. They have permeated the way you think and behave.

But you can overcome them all. Should hell throw all its demonic deception upon you; should the temptations of lotteries, pyramid schemes, and track betting lure you into false security; should the world offer you leadership without servanthood, riches without sacrifice, fame without persecution, and growth without discipline, you can overcome them all. Because the greatest overcomer, Jesus Christ, lives in you by His Holy Spirit. He empowers you to say "No!". He equips you to do the Father's will and not your own. He grows His spiritual fruit in you to stand tall in faith, hope and love. He gives you grace to endure and power to seek after His kingdom and its righteousness. He is the winner in you and you are a winner in Him. Stand up and be counted in God's holy winning circle, today.

37. IN CHRIST YOU CAN DO IT ALL

Philippians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

Are you saying "it is not possible?". You may have a great deal of respect for God's Word and you don't want to blaspheme what God has written. But do you believe you can do *all*? Just yesterday you cried out to Jesus because of the impossibility of the situation. Even the past year has been a roller coaster ride of discouragement and disappointment. Nevertheless, you can do *all things* in Jesus Christ. The power and authority to do everything the Word say to do are in you. His name is Jesus. The strength and endurance to act upon God's Word with discernment and wisdom is in you. His name is the Holy Spirit.

However, this ability in Jesus Christ to do all things, is not a special motivational ability related to earthly accomplishments. The *all things* in Jesus Christ are not merely earthly tasks of labour, management, personal achievement and ambition. The *all things* in Jesus Christ speaks about your ability to walk as a winner through every situation where He leads you.

There are times of wilderness experiences when God's purpose is to show you that He alone is your source. There are times of grief when, even though God did not cause you to grieve, He leads you to the comfort and grace of His Holy Spirit. There are times of wealth and abundance when God shows you His way of peace and love as He asks you to give much to others. People will disappoint you and hurt you. God will never. People will lead you in the wrong direction. Jesus will always lead you to His truth. People will lie and steal and even kill, but Jesus gives abundant life. So how does Jesus enable you to do all these things? Through *contentment*.

By faith you must believe that the Father knows exactly what He is doing. He is never late. He will always provide. When He calls you to do little, be content with little. When He calls you to do much, be content He will provide all you need to do the work. Be content where you are. Enter God's perfect rest of contentment and thanksgiving. Regardless of the task ahead, if He has called you to do it, you can rest assured He will enable you and provide for you. Never say, "God, I would if only I had...." Always say, "I will because I will have all He knows I need to do *all things*".

38. IN CHRIST YOU ARE CLEANSED

Hebrews 10:21-23, *"And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."*

The day you arrive for the first time at your new job is often one of the most stressful of days in your career. New faces, new procedures, new policies and plans add up to many adjustments. Especially when your new job is a management position. Suddenly you are responsible for a whole new team. Everyone is looking at you.

This is a vulnerable time when past memories begin to crowd your thinking. You wonder if they know about the big mistake you made a year ago in another company. You wonder if you sold yourself beyond what you are capable of handling. Will they know what your shortcomings are as well as your management abilities?

So often this is the daily grind of believers. Past experiences and the memory of a multitude of sins begin to crowd your faith. The temptations and failures of yesterday become an anxiety for today.

But today is a new day that the Lord has prepared for you. This is a day in which you step above the turmoil of yesterday's thoughts and give thanks with praise and worship to God Almighty for new life in Jesus.

Jesus is in charge over your life now. He is building you into the image of Himself. He instructs His Holy Spirit to show you liberating truth. Such truth is a river of abundant thirst quenching waters. The truth is that your past record is clean because Jesus offered His blood to pay for the dirt that once was there. You have a clear conscience without any stain of sin and other failures. The blood of Jesus has erased the guilt and shame of your past. You must wash your mind and body daily in the refreshing assurance of God's Word to keep any sin consciousness from crowding your faith. Be assured that Jesus' life-giving truth of His Word is your daily bath of assurance that you are God's clean child.

39. IN CHRIST YOU ARE IMPOSSIBLE

Romans 8:37-39, "*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

Welcome to the unique world of the *impossible*. Even though there is a world which claims the *impossible* is possible through the power of positive thinking, there still remains a world of the *impossible*. Even though the Bible says all things are possible for those who believe, there still remains a world of the *impossible*. God in His infinite wisdom created a special place of the *impossible*. That place of sovereign impossibility is His endless love for you. It is now *impossible* for anyone or anything to separate you from God's love. His love for you is demonstrated in Jesus and that love is so rich, so eternal and plentiful, you cannot escape it or exhaust it. No amount of positive thinking or even the greatest faith can turn the impossibility of His love into a possibility of separation. Let that be your comfort, child of God.

God ordained in His sovereignty to create a world where some things are just plain *impossible*. It is His will to bless you beyond what you can dream or think. It is His will to heal and restore you. It is His will to strengthen and assure you. It is His will to give you His power to live so you will not have to depend on your own abilities. It is His will that every human being have the opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and be saved. It is His will that you live a life of peace, joy, quietness and confidence. It is His will that you must be reconciled in broken relationships, renewed in your mind with heavenly thoughts, and restored in your body to health and full ability. Such is the vast treasure of His *impossible* love. It is *impossible* to be separated from such love, because you are *impossibly* His. Why not enter into His rest of assurance that all His precious love is yours today. His *impossible* love never fails.

40. IN CHRIST YOU ARE HIDDEN

Colossians 3:3, *"For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."*

There is a hiding place in Jesus Christ that very few Christians understand. It is not a place of strange thinking and remote behaviour. Some in the past sought to find that place in monasteries, in caves, on barren hilltops or in the mystical temples of foreign religions. Some have tried to withdraw from the world in communes and camps. Yet all have failed to find that hiding place in Jesus Christ.

But you have such a hiding place. Right where you are now - at the breakfast table, in your car, in the middle of the night or perhaps you are still in bed. Regardless of where you are, you are in that hiding place. That hiding place has two distinct parts. One is the realization that you are dead, the other is the entrance into God's rest.

This death is not a natural death. This is the death of self. Until you realize without Jesus you cannot do anything, you cannot enter His hiding place. There is nothing you have, or that you can do that is of any value in the Kingdom of God if it is rooted in selfishness. Your death is the burial of selfishness, ambition and personal success outside of the government of Jesus in your life.

When you have realized such death, you enter into His hiding place. There you begin a wonderful journey in a state of Divine rest. Your mind starts to become preoccupied with Jesus, His heavenly home, your mansion there, the lawns, forests, lakes and mountains and so many friends. Such thinking is foolishness to the world but that is why it's a hiding place.

Some will say you are so heavenly minded you are no earthly good. That is a lie! Instead you are so heavenly minded you *are* earthly good. For out of that hiding place flow the streams of creativity and productivity only Jesus can give. To be hidden in Him is to be safe and secure in everything you do to His glory.

41. IN CHRIST YOU ARE QUALIFIED

Colossians 1:12, *"Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."*

It is Monday morning and your waiting is just about over. You are tense with hope and expectation, yet doubt still tries to quench the hope. Did you or did you not pass? All the months of learning road rules and mastering the car are finished now. You passed the eye test and scored well on the written exam. Oh, but the actual driving exam itself....

The examiner sure was not the friendliest of people. You know you failed to yield to that one car. But now it is all over. A friendly voice calls your name. You passed!

A few technical procedures later and you have a genuine, plastic-coated driver's license complete with a not-so-complimentary picture of yourself. Suddenly the world seems different now. You scan the parking lot with a sense of accomplishment and pride. You nudge the car into traffic. You may be a diamond-in-the-rough, but nevertheless you are qualified to drive anywhere you wish. You have a license to prove it. You're king of the road. It is all yours now. The beach, a long drive into the sunset, the city, a summer trip north and a winter trip south, they are all yours. *There is a kind of license in heaven too, with your picture on it.*

That license used to have a long written record attached, listing all your sins. An endless list of rebellion, resentment, independence and unforgiveness. However, upon His death and resurrection, Jesus took that written record attached to your license and erased everything. The record is clean not because of what you did, but because He died and paid the price for you. That blank certificate is now your driver's license that *fully qualifies you* to share in everything God has to offer. The cross is behind you. The road to heaven is yours. All of heaven and heaven on earth are yours. You are qualified!

You are qualified because Jesus turned your *disqualification* into qualification. Along with all the saints of yesterday, today and tomorrow, you have an abundant share in God's eternal wealth. Some of that wealth is already yours today, but there is an important task to complete.

Now you must show the world how your qualification has affected every area of your life both on and off the road.

42. IN CHRIST YOU ARE TOGETHER

Galatians 1:22, "...the churches of Judea, which were in Christ."

You may be aware that we live in a large and complicated world. But are you aware that most people also live in a private world? You relate to that private world through time and space. In time that world occupies the hours of your daily life. In space it involves your own image of yourself and those who will influence that image every day. It is like a circle drawn around you within which you determine who is allowed in and who is not allowed into this private world of yours. Insecure people draw that circle far out to keep as many people away at a distance. Secure people make the circle smaller because they are not easily threatened by others. Jesus stands at the doorway at the edge of your circle and knocks. He wants to enter into your private world and govern the affairs of your most intimate space and time.

Many believers leave Jesus at the edge of their circle. Sometimes it seems He gets too close for comfort. He searches deep. But His Lordship is good and perfect. Don't delay in letting Him into your private world. More and more people have grown indifferent to anything that happens outside the circle of their own lives. Famine, disease, war, abuse, terrorism and the destruction of children lie far outside the circle of their private world. Despite massive media exposure you have become dull of hearing. After all, it does not affect you personally. But when you are inconvenienced for one reason or another, the electricity goes off, you are suddenly stuck in a traffic jam, your private world is invaded and tempers flare.

Even though there is a global economy, you still live in a private world. Jesus wants to *invade* you and give you a global outlook. He wants you to know His "global village" which is His church. You are one with millions on all continents who are the church of Jesus Christ. Not only are you *in* Christ, but the whole church is *in* Christ. *Together we are one in Jesus*. May our oneness in Christ and our oneness with the entire church invade your private world.

Their needs are your needs. You must come out of your private world and meet those needs. "How?", you say.

By prayer, not only for your life, but for the entire family of God who *are a part* of your private world. Reach out beyond your own circle to those who are in Christ *together* with you. touch them with kindness, love, encouragement and friendship in need *and* deed.

43. IN CHRIST YOU ARE AT LIBERTY

Galatians 2:4, *"But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage."*

Little do you realize how many people watch you every day. They are not looking at your job performance; they are looking at your Christian lifestyle. Are you really who you say you are and does it show? Yes, the reason they watch you so carefully is their deep inner search for what you proclaim to be true. True love and peace. But you say, Jesus is your truth, love and peace. Everywhere they search for the right answers to peace, joy and a measure of power to make some difference in their lives. So they watch you carefully. After all you *say* you have found the answers.

If Jesus Christ is truly in you and the Holy Spirit is changing you, then the affect of that inner change on the outer, visible you is not an option. It is a must!

They can only *see* the brightness of your peace, righteousness, joy and power if they make a genuine difference in the way you live. If you are mere worldly Christians with good intentions, then their observation of you is in vain. To be Christ-like is to be *like* Christ in the way you speak, behave, carry on at social gatherings, treat your wife and children. It is a visible life of servanthood, not lordship over others. People must see long term, steady commitment, emotional stability and sound judgment. At first they may see a baby Christian, but that baby must grow up. Although you have a tremendous liberty in Christ, it must be true liberty and not a carefully masked legalism.

Your liberty is your freedom to praise God anywhere, anytime. Your liberty is a freedom that can enjoy sweet fellowship with the Father and His family, the church. Your liberty is steady growth in wisdom and knowledge of His Word. Your liberty is to discern the root of problems and the deliverance of solutions. Your liberty is the discipline of faithful prayer, committed church attendance, dedicated intercession and regular devotions and Bible study. They are watching you.

They may call you fanatic, freak, weird, religious and downright crazy. But none of them have the liberty to admit they'll trade their anxiety and fear any day with your love and peace. You are at liberty to do anything the Word of God asks you to do. There is no greater freedom, and thus all you do in the obedience of your liberty by faith truly pleases the Father.

44. IN CHRIST YOU ARE JUSTIFIED

Galatians 2:16, Romans 5:1, *"Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; since by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Nothing you have done or plan to do can make up for your original rebellion against God. No amount of good works, noble deeds, generous giving or exemplary behaviour can justify your need of God's grace and mercy. You may try to make up for your past record even after you are born again. But it is a waste of time. You cannot impress God with your good intentions nor can you persuade Him to bless you because of years of committed service. You can, however, please God. Faith pleases God! Faith in Jesus Christ pleases God.

God declared that the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ was enough to pay for all the debt of mankind incurred because of sin. You no longer need to suffer eternal death and separation from God. God decreed that *justice* was done. When you believe that Jesus paid for your sins, you are *justified*. Your faith in Jesus Christ must be grounded in truth that He, and He alone, has set you free from eternal condemnation, torment and fear. Jesus Christ alone, with His flesh and blood sacrifice, as the innocent Son of God Almighty, wiped out the record of your past rebellion. To be *justified* means that God loves you *just as if* you had never sinned.

You owe nothing to God other than offering yourself a living sacrifice of joyous response to His love in obedience, praise and adoration for such a great gift. If you therefore owe nothing, you have no need to pay for anything. Gone is the need for your hard work to earn salvation. Gone is the need for your endless attempts to prove to God you deserve to be loved by Him. Your life is no longer ruled by what *you* must do to receive from God. Instead your life is ruled by what you do in thanksgiving because He has done it all for you. Such a life brings peace. Because you are justified, you now have peace at last.

45. IN CHRIST YOU ARE CRUCIFIED

Galatians 2:20, *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."*

Just think, Jesus came and delivered Himself to authorities to be crucified *on your behalf*. It was He who would hang on a cross in the agony and display of God's anger *which you deserved*. Yet He did so in His own free choice and in obedience to His Father. But as He was crucified *so you were crucified with Him*. On that day, two thousand years ago, your sinful nature (that inability to do right and natural inclination to rebel against God), was nailed to the cross with Jesus. You were not saved from God's anger and eternal judgment of doom on the day you accepted Jesus into your life. No! *You were saved two thousand years ago*. But is it faith in Jesus Christ that makes your salvation real and opens the door to receive all the blessings of salvation, including eternal life. When Jesus rose from the dead, He cleared the way for you to experience eternal life with Him. His crucifixion was your crucifixion. The day you hear that good news and believe Jesus, that crucifixion *turns into resurrection life*. Suddenly it is no longer the deadness of sin and Satan's dominion that lives in you. Instead, the eternal resurrection life of Jesus lives in you. Through the daily teaching and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, that resurrection life will touch every area of your life. He will renew your mind and break the bondage of every habit and the fear of every circumstance.

No longer do you believe *you* can make a difference in your life. You were lost in self but now you are found in Him. Now you are in Christ Jesus a child of God, enabled by the Holy Spirit to live by faith in Jesus Christ. You trust Him for direction. You trust Him for provision. You trust Him because just as His crucifixion turned to resurrection, so *your* crucifixion turned to *your* resurrection in a new life of hope, peace and joy. He delivered Himself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God so that you might be a living sacrifice acceptable to God. Only in His death is your resurrection into the fulness of eternal life.

46. IN CHRIST YOU ARE IN HIM

Galatians 2:20, "*Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in Him, the Son of God.*"

Christ *in you* produces the hope you need to be patient and persevere until He returns in glory. Jesus moves in you with His Holy Spirit to equip you, discipline you and teach you how to occupy your time until that glorious day when He returns. Because Jesus is *in you*, your sole preoccupation must be to do what pleases Him, according to His will for the purpose of lifting up and honouring His name. This brings worship and honour to God.

Jesus is the single-minded focus of every day you live. In Him you rejoice. In Him you live and daily love to do His will.

But how can you possibly understand that you are *in Him*? How can you bridge the gap between the seen and unseen to know you are *in Him*, even though Jesus is in heaven? To be *in Him* means you belong *to* Him. You are *in* His family, *in* His Kingdom and *in* subjection to His Lordship. To be *in Him* means everything that really matters to Jesus *is you*. Your well-being, your peace, your joy, your prosperity, your healing and your deliverance are of utmost importance to Jesus. For that reason He prays for you every day before the Father. For that reason He sent His Holy Spirit to assure you that you are not alone, but *in Him*.

To be *in Him*, means a lot to God as well. In Jesus, God is reminded daily of the price He paid for your sin. *In Him* the Father sees you forgiven. *In Him* the Father sees you as eternally His. *In Him* the Father sees your purity and spotlessness. *In Him* the Father sees your freedom.

In Him you can see the Father's love and kindness. *In Him* you know the Father's mercy and patience. *In Him* you have the Father's power and authority. *In Him* you have a quiet and restful assurance that despite opposition and difficult circumstances, everything is going to turn out all right and for *your* good. *In Him* you have hope for tomorrow and strength for today. *In Him* you have everything for life, love and happiness.

47. IN CHRIST YOU ARE BLESSED AGAIN

Galatians 3:14, "*In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*"

Thousands of years ago, God preached a very special message to Abraham. He told Abraham that not only his *natural* offspring would be blessed, but *every nation* that would believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. In fact, those who believed by faith in Jesus Christ would be considered as sons (and daughters) of Abraham. For that reason you are Abraham's family and entitled to the same blessing as Abraham, your *spiritual* father. On day 23 you read from Ephesians 1:3 that *in Christ you are abundantly blessed*. Twenty four days later you are *blessed again* to know that Abraham's blessings are yours because you believe, sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

You believe that what kept you from Abraham's blessings, namely your sin, your rebellion, was forgiven by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Because you believe you have faith. That faith in Jesus Christ, entitles you to be a member of Abraham's family. So what did Abraham receive that is now also yours?

Abraham received the promise of a great nation. That nation is the Kingdom of God. Just as Abraham received the Kingdom of God, so *in Christ* that promise is now yours. Abraham received an abundance of God's material prosperity. Abraham was a wealthy man. That abundance of God's material wealth is yours too. Can God count on you to bless others and by faith exercise responsible stewardship over His abundance?

Abraham received God's protection. In Christ you have been given the Armour of God. Are you wearing it?

Abraham was promised a great reward. You have been promised eternal life and treasures in heaven. God made a covenant with Abraham that would guarantee him a multitude of family. You were given the Holy Spirit as a seal of that promise. Family was everything to Abraham. Family is everything to God. In Christ, you are a part of that family. But what will it cost you? Nothing!

It was all paid for with the blood of Jesus Christ. But is there a price? Yes! It will cost you all your self-will, self-interests, self-promotion, and self-image. But is that too much to pay? No! Your gain is the abundance of Abraham's blessings because you are a child of God, a member of Abraham's family guaranteed by the Spirit of faith.

48. IN CHRIST YOU HAVE THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 3:14, "...so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

What a glorious promise Jesus has given you. Not only did He sacrifice all He had so that you could be restored to eternal life, He gave you a very special promise. That promise is the Holy Spirit. You are in Christ Jesus the heir of that special promise. Because you are in Christ, you have been given the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus knew He would return to the Father. Who would look after you until He came back? The Holy Spirit will look after you.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He poured His Holy Spirit upon all mankind. All you have to do is believe and suddenly, by believing, you receive the full impact of that great outpouring. The Holy Spirit came to you according to the promise and took up residency in your heart. Because you are in Christ, you have Jesus dwelling on the inside through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

How will you know who God really is? The Holy Spirit will open your eyes and show you that Jesus is God. How will you know Jesus and grow in your intimate relationship with Him? The Holy Spirit will teach you the Kingdom ways of Jesus and bring to your remembrance all that Jesus taught about His Kingdom.

How will you understand the truth of your salvation, the glory of your destiny, the marvel and beauty of heaven, and His rich abundance of eternity? The Holy Spirit will disclose to you the height and depth of God's knowledge through His written Word.

How will you be assured you have increasing faith to believe all this and not just a mental understanding? The Holy Spirit will discipline you and test you, by exposing your heart to you, so that you may deal with rebellion, resentment, independence, and unforgiveness. He will increase in you through times of testing to grow into ceaseless praise and never-ending worship.

There is absolutely nothing He will not do for you according to God's Word. He lives in you and makes the reality of your place in Christ a most heart-warming experience. He loves you so much, and does so much for you. That is a promise and a fact.

49. IN CHRIST YOU ARE SPECIAL

Ephesians 2:10, "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*"

You have no doubt at one time or another seen a potter's wheel and a lump of clay on that wheel. The potter takes the lump of shapeless clay and places it in the centre of the wheel. Then as he begins to turn the wheel, he wets his hands and presses them against the clay. Surely and steadily he shapes a beautiful bowl or vase from the shapeless clay. A work of art is born.

You are such a lump of clay in God's hands. It is He who shapes you into a precious vessel, a work of art of *His* choice. You are not a cosmic accident, a freak of nature, a product of evolutionary chance. You are God's workmanship. He fashioned you out of the elements of creation and breathed His life into you to make you a living soul. So unique is God's workmanship that no two vessels are the same, and the gallery of mankind contains a rich variety of vessels in all colours and shapes. But His purposes go deeper than just a beautiful vessel. You were created for more than just looking good. God has a special purpose for you. When you were saved and you began a life of faith in Jesus, a greater purpose unfolded. In Christ you are not only a master craftman's vessel, you are created *to do good works*. These good works are not some list of earthly projects and works programmes. No, God created you to live daily as a living demonstration of His kindness and grace. He wants you to demonstrate *His* love to others through your attitudes, your generosity, your gentleness, your faithfulness and self-control. There is a special *work* in you which God the Father made to glorify Him. There is a special *walk* with you, through which God demonstrates His beautiful inner work in you to others.

Just as the Father shapes you into a precious work of art, so He wills for you to share that treasure with others. Yes, you *do* have much to offer. Not of your own, but of the Father. Yes, you *are* needed in God's Kingdom work. Yes, you *are* a valuable treasure to the Lord. You *are* a good work waiting to be shared with others.

50. IN CHRIST YOU ARE WASHED

Titus 3:5,6, *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."*

When I was a student at the Ontario College of Art, I lived in a small apartment with no laundry facilities. Every Friday evening was set aside for the special treat of eating fish and chips at a local family restaurant to be followed by a walk to the laundromat. Because my studies included much drawing and painting there were plenty of paint stains on my clothes and the grime from chalk, graphite and conte. Despite repeated washings and the best of intentions, the stains remained. No doubt, some stains were part of the artistic image, but too many I did not like. New clothes were a luxury I could not afford, only to wash the clothes, again and again.

You were such a person before you knew Jesus Christ. Again and again you tried to clean up your life, live a better standard, improve your lot, kick some habits, and somehow make ends meet. But no matter how hard you tried, the stains of the world remained. You avoided the truth that you were as much the problem as the world you blamed. Nevertheless, you could not shake the uncertainty and fear of failure and missing out on life's opportunities.

But thanks be to God who saved you through Jesus Christ. Your good works didn't save you, neither did your good intentions. But God in His great mercy took your dirty, world-stained clothes and washed them. But the greatest miracle that took place in that heavenly laundromat was beyond all human understanding.

As God washed you clean, He took your dirty clothes and *gave you new ones*. He wasn't satisfied to simply give you clean, patched-up clothes. You are not a cleaned-up sinner. When you were washed, you came out of the laundry a brand new person with a brand new wardrobe. Your filthy rags became a white robe of righteousness. Let the Holy Spirit renew your thinking every day with the truth of your washed and new you.

51. IN CHRIST YOU PROVE HIM RIGHT

Luke 7:35 (brackets added), "*Yet wisdom (that is Christ Jesus) is vindicated by all her (His) children.*"

Not only are you living proof that Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord, you are in Christ living proof that everything Jesus spoke about and taught is absolutely true. Your witness on this earth, in your community and in your family, is to prove that the Kingdom of God is real. You are proof that eternal life is for all who believe Jesus is alive because God raised Him from the dead.

Through you, God says to the world, "*I told you so...*". People may acknowledge a supreme being, confess a belief in God, and yes, even confess God as God of the Bible. But Jesus is another matter. Jesus is the personification of God and His wisdom. You can interchange the words "wisdom" and "Jesus" to get a real sense of God's work through you. It was God's wisdom that created the earth and heavens. It was God's infinite wisdom that created you. But the Word also declares that the foundations of the world were laid through Jesus. It was Jesus, who alongside the Father, created the world, its trees, mountains, animals and you.

It was Jesus who gave you a new heart and took you from the dominion of darkness into His Kingdom of light. In Him your future is secure as a child of God. In Him your daily task is to be a faithful disciple and prove His existence true. That proof is centred in your willingness to let Jesus rule in every area of your life. From the smallest matter to the largest decision, you must be willing and obedient to let the world see that you live by a higher order. Not a new world order, but a heavenly order. Jesus teaches this new order in His Word and applies it to your life through the Holy Spirit. As His Holy Spirit empowers you with supernatural gifts, you become living proof of His existence. In Christ, *you* are living proof that Jesus is the Son of God. This is not a proof of theory and empty words. This a living proof that Jesus set you free from all bondage. Through *you*, Jesus delivers the proof of healing, hope, and love to others. Through *you*, Jesus delivers peace and kindness. There is no greater proof than *in Christ* you prove Him right.

52. IN CHRIST YOU ARE OCCUPIED

John 14:23, "*Jesus answered and said to him, 'if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and my Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him.'*"

The divine privilege of the indwelling Trinity is the most denied attribute of the Christian faith. No other religion has room for such daring faith to believe any of their gods would dwell in man. But Christianity is not a religion. *Religion* is any form of *bondage both past and present*. Religion is a return to legalism and oppressive rules. Christianity is a relationship. Your Christian life is a living and loving relationship with God Almighty. This relationship was made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The relationship of Jesus to God is *Son to Father*. Your relationship to the Father is one of *Father and adopted child*, King and subject, Teacher and student, Bridegroom and bride, Master and co-labourer. Yours is a relationship of eternal love.

God the Father, Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit have become your true relatives in Christ Jesus. All three now occupy your life. Through a mysterious and divine act of God, the *Trinity* of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit now live in you. The mercy and love of God now live in you waiting to be poured out on others. The peace and joy of Jesus Christ now shines within you, waiting to bring peace and joy to others. The gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit have made your heart their home, waiting to be expressed to others in wisdom and power. As they occupy you, so will you hunger and thirst to be pre-occupied by them every day. The more you believe this loving occupation of your life, the more your life will be occupied by the Father's will. The mystery of God becoming a man in Jesus Christ is compounded by the mystery of the indwelling Trinity. But praise be to the Father for such a mystery. How delighted and blessed you are to be pre-occupied in Christ by such a mysterious God, who in His divine wisdom chose to make that mystery known to you. As He occupies your daily life He will disclose Himself to you to give you the assurance of His abiding presence.

53. IN CHRIST YOU ARE EFFECTIVE

Philemon 6, *"And I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake."*

And I pray that the communication, the fellowship, that is the sharing of your faith with others may become effective and work to have a lasting effect. I pray that this effect will come about when you acknowledge in word and deed every good thing Jesus has done for you and through you to others, especially that awesome relationship of who you are in Christ, that caused you to be gloriously set free.

You may look through the Bible for special formulae that work in areas of prosperity, health and power, but *this is one formula that works*. Share your faith and it will have good and lasting effect. But you must share your faith as the Word of God teaches. Sharing your faith is not preaching, teaching or prophecy. Sharing your faith is not the result of years of study or service as pastor, elder or deacon. Sharing your faith is simple dialogue with people as in everyday common conversation. Sharing your faith is telling people in your own words how peaceful you are and how much joy there is every morning when you wake up, knowing you are in Christ safe and secure.

Sharing your faith is demonstrated in what you say and how you live what you say. His peace is evident in times of stress. His joy is visible in times of grief. Being *in Christ* does not mean you are superhuman. It means you *are* supernatural. The law that governs your life is beyond natural law. It is a supernatural law, fuelled by the grace and mercy of God and His love in Jesus Christ.

As a human being you are vulnerable and you hurt easily. You bleed when you are cut. But the sharing of your faith becomes effective when you deposit in others the seed of His many blessings. Despite the loneliness and rejection of life and regardless of your circumstances, *all the good things in Christ Jesus are yours*. His treasure is far greater than all the good and bad things of the world. His endless love will keep you safe from fear and failure. Go and share His great love with someone else. Share your faith daily.

54. IN CHRIST YOU EXIST FOR HIM

1 Corinthians 8:6, "*Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.*"

Oh the joy of knowing the divine Father-heart of God. Oh the assurance of knowing the family of God. There are many "gods", the vain imaginations of man, the futility of human intellect and the masquerade of hell's demonic host. All are impostors. But you are set free from their authority over you because Jesus changed the legal order of your life. Jesus changed the order of your slavery to sin to His order of freedom and forgiveness. Only He could do that. He is the Son of the one and living God, your heavenly Father. All else is vanity. And there are many "lesser gods" from whom you have been set free as well. Their parade of influence is endless. Their names are houses, automobiles, jewelry, boats, cruises, position and fame. But you have been set free from their dominion yet their enjoyment is still yours.

Your paycheque no longer rules your life. Your job no longer determines your future. There remains but one clear path ahead - to only live *for Him*. For the path of God's Father-heart is only to live *for you*. God created everything for your blessing and enjoyment and for His glory and honour. Now that you are *in Christ*, your life is consumed by living for Him. Everything you say and do must be a tribute to His endless love, His majesty and honour, and a daily lifting up of the name of Jesus. For this you live.

Make your earthly journey a daily quest to experience the full height and breadth of your eternal freedom. Jesus set you free from all oppression, tension and anxiety. By His indwelling Holy Spirit, He will give you the answers to your questions. He will give you wisdom and knowledge. He will give you strength and endurance, patience and hope. He will enable you to face the day with courage and boldness. He will give you the reasons to trust the Father. He will give you the motive and resources to cast all your cares on Him and go on with one single-minded determination - *for Him*.

55. IN CHRIST YOU ARE RESURRECTED

1 Corinthians 15:20-22, "*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.*"

It is the one puzzle man simply cannot solve. What really happens when you die? Even if the testimony of some who claim to have died and experienced a form of heavenly visitation, can be believed, the tangible evidence is scant. All you have is the promise of the Word of God that there is life after death.

Your freedom on earth does not depend on material possessions fame or power. Your freedom in Christ is linked together with your service to Christ. As a liberated believer, no longer entangled in sin, you are free to serve Him with your God-given talents and gifts. Your freedom in Christ makes you a *bond-slave* to Christ. That is freedom. Such freedom permits you to become heavenly minded. To be heavenly minded is to live without fear about life after death. The promise of Jesus is clear and simple. Just as through Adam's sin you inherited spiritual death, so you inherit spiritual life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But you are more than just a "free spirit". Just as Adam died physically, so you must die physically. Here the world stops. False religions deceive you through teachings on reincarnation, states of enlightened consciousness, altered states of being, yet all are illusions and contrary to the Word of God. Just as Adam died physically, so Jesus died physically. But praise God forevermore! The Father spoke the Word of life to Jesus in the grave and raised Him *physically* from the dead.

The power of death, its fear and mystery was broken. **Jesus is alive.** After a short time, this living, physical Jesus ascended to heaven to be with the Father. There He is preparing for His return. Because you are *in Him*, you too will physically rise again and ascend to be with Him. That's more than a promise. That is the truth.

You have been set free into *resurrection life*.

56. IN CHRIST YOU ARE MARRIED

Romans 7:4, *"Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God."*

The bond of marriage is the most sacred bond on earth. The bond of marriage is not just a custom or cultural requirement. It is not just a legal agreement or special transaction. The bond of marriage is not for money or power. Marriage is the *spiritual union* between a man and a woman that results in a *mental, emotional* and *physical* union. In marriage, two become one. The world teaches another marriage that is far removed from God's intent and will. Marriage is the visible earthly model of what takes place in your union with Christ. Just as your wife is *in you* and you *in her* and the two have become one, so you are in Christ one with Jesus. Your marriage to Him is the celebration of a very special union. Earthly, God-ordained marriage gives you a glimpse of your heavenly marriage. Your marriage to Christ is sealed by the Holy Spirit and verified in God's Word. Christ is now your head. And as the true "head of the family" He is now your provider, your healer, your deliverer, your love, your hope, your dreams and your eternal companion.

What a day it will be when you will celebrate this marriage with all the saints in that great celebration and wedding feast before the throne of God. Just as a heaven-blessed and God-ordained marriage will produce the glorious fruit of precious children, so your heavenly marriage will produce the abundant fruit of disciples for the Kingdom of God. What freedom to know Jesus is the head of your household, your family. What freedom to know He will never leave you, forsake you, abuse you or divorce you.

The fruit you bear as disciples of Him, you do not bear in quantity but in quality. This quality is the direct result of the love and trust you have in your union with Jesus. Marriage to Jesus is forever complete with a glorious family of the best of relationships ever. It is all yours to enjoy in forever freedom.

57. IN CHRIST YOU ARE CHOSEN

Ephesians 1:4-6, "...just as He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise and the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

What, when, where, how and how much? These are the proverbial questions every customer asks and every manufacturer or retailer must answer. They are simple questions that require direct answers. So your special position in Christ is a simple position and can be answered by a direct response to what, when, where, how and how much.

What is the plan or reason behind your faith in Him? What was God's purpose for creating you, this world you live in and all of the heavens? In Jesus, God chose to prepare for Himself a family, holy and blameless for all eternity. *When* did He plan this? Not in Genesis 1:1, nor in 3000 BC, nor in AD 33 or even in 1995. This family and your place in it was His plan before the earth was ever created. All the details of that plan were already worked out by God long before the foundation of the world. *Where* would this family plan take place? Before Him! You are heaven bound to stand before God, spotless and blameless as His precious family.

How did God accomplish this plan? Through the sacrificial death of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection from the dead, the process of legal adoption into God's family was made possible. Ever since man's original rebellion against God you were excluded from God's family. But Jesus paid the price of your rebellion. Now you are free. You have been adopted as legal children into God's family and are legal heirs to all the treasures of His Kingdom. That leaves one question - *How much?*

God said that because of Jesus' obedience, God's family plan and your participation in that plan as adopted children, has been given to you as *a free gift*. You cannot earn it, buy it, or trade for it. It is a free gift from your heavenly Father. Freely He gave and now freely you give of your time, your energy and resources with no pressure to pay for your heavenly gift. It's already yours. In Jesus Christ, God chose you, adopted you and made you His very own.

58. IN CHRIST YOU HAVE HIS YES AND AMEN.

2 Corinthians 1:20, "*For as many may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.*"

Yes and Amen! *Yes* means yes. *Amen* means, "So let it be". The assurance of God's promises ring loud and clear. God has made a special covenant with Jesus for your sake. Through Jesus God has extended His power to you, His blessings, His wisdom and knowledge and His love. The Holy Spirit is there to make it real to your understanding and experience. The divine work of your sanctification has begun. Sanctification is only possible when you are free. To be drawn closer and closer to God can only happen when there is nothing behind you to pull you in the other direction. Bad attitudes, unrighteous behaviour and unforgiveness pull you away from God. That is not sanctification. It is slavery all over again - slavery to sin.

But you have been set free from your slavery to sin. God paid the price for your sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, so that you might be set free from slavery to sin. There is no way out of slavery other than being bought by someone who will set you free. Jesus bought you out of slavery and set you free. In Him all the resulting blessings that accompany your freedom, your salvation, are yours. To that great promise the Holy Spirit adds an assuring, *yes!*

In Jesus you have the freedom to enjoy all God's blessings and to be assured the answer to the question "are they really yours?" is a profound *yes!* But how can you possibly receive all His blessings? You know they are yours in Christ, but how do you begin to see them happen in your life? By saying *Amen* to the blessings.

This is not some benediction or official closing of a prayer. The *Amen* that is "to the glory of God" is a faith confession whose roots are in absolute trust in Jesus to grant you His blessings. *Yes, Amen Lord, so let it be!*

You confess with your mouth the belief that is in your heart. With peace and joy you proclaim "*Yes, I am free in Jesus Christ to receive His blessings of provision, safety and esteem. Yes it is mine! Amen, Lord. I believe your blessings are for me. May my faith to trust You completely bring glory to Your name. Thank you, Jesus, for the yes and amen of your precious promises.*"

59. IN CHRIST YOU ARE GIVEN ALL

Romans 8:32, "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*"

God was not obliged to pay for your sin other than by His compelling love for you and by His deep commitment to His family plan for a holy and blameless people. But God in His grace and mercy looked at the greater picture. He saw you in heaven with Him long before you were born. He saw you in worship, praise and adoration as you gave Him honour and worth. He saw you extend His love towards others. He saw your heart for the sick and crippled, the rich and poor. He wept and said, "It is worth the price!". So in His greatest sacrifice of love for all eternity, He gave you the holiest part of Himself. He gave it up forever. He gave you Jesus, His only Son. Jesus would never be the same again. Once supreme with the Father as Creator of the universe, master of everything, Jesus would be made lower than the angels. Jesus would become a common man. Jesus emptied Himself of all heavenly privileges to become like you. As the Son of God, He became the Son of Man and gave His life for your eternal freedom. After His death and resurrection He would never be the same again. He is still the Son of God, but now He is also the glorified Son of Man never to return to the way things were before the Creator became the creature. Once spotless, now forever with scars. Yet His love compelled Him to offer Himself in your place and set you free. Free for eternity.

You are free to be glorified with Him. There is no anxiety about tomorrow when you are free in Him. If indeed God so freely gave His own Son for you, would He not give you freely all His Kingdom blessings as well? *Yes* and *amen* He does. Your freedom is freedom from anxiety and fear about tomorrow and the things you need to live. Provision, shelter, health, and the common necessities of life are freely yours. In Christ there is no need to ever worry again about such matters. Freedom is not a number of times you just *feel free*. Freedom is not doing as you please, but as He pleases.

Freedom is liberation from all your cares of the world, including your miserable past. Freedom is your place of rest in the assurance that all things are now freely yours, given to you by the Father. God counted Jesus worth the price to love you and bless you. To God be all the glory!

60. IN CHRIST YOU ARE FREE AT LAST

John 8:32,36, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."*

Yes, you are free at last. The reason for your freedom is not just a man-made program of free thinking and free benefits. Nothing in the world is free. But your ticket to freedom is the knowledge of truth. This truth is both the knowledge of God's Word and knowing Jesus who is *the* truth, the way and the life. You have been given the Holy Spirit to show you the deeper truth about God's Kingdom and to give you a deeper understanding of your place *in Christ*. You have come full circle.

You began a sixty day search in the truth of God's Word so that you would grow in understanding and conviction of your special place *in Christ*. Suddenly you realize that *in Christ* is the place where His truth reigns not as intellectual truth of man, or religious truth of tradition. His truth reigns by revelation. The Holy Spirit showed His truth to you. He showed you Jesus. The Holy Spirit assures you that your place *in Christ* was made possible only by Jesus. The truth has dawned on your heart. *In Christ* is your authoritative position of privilege as a child of God. *In Him* you are now subject to His rule, His methods, His leadership and His Lordship over your life. Now you see there is nothing more to do than to let Him exercise that Lordship in every area of your life. Now you must continue in your search for the depth of God's Word and simply obey as you apply what you discover to be truth for your life.

It is the place of total freedom. No more anxiety about tomorrow. No more worry about today. Just a complete trust in His ability to take you through the day, beyond tomorrow and into an eternity of peace, joy, quietness, confidence and assurance. This freedom is the inheritance of the saints who are the followers of Jesus. This freedom is yours. There is no more past to accuse you anymore.

There is no present to abuse you and no tomorrow to accuse you. Ever so gently, yet persistently, this freedom you have *in Jesus Christ*, penetrates your thinking, your actions and your plans. When Jesus sets you free, it is not some *introductory taste* of freedom. No! His freedom goes all the way. Every facet of your daily walk with Him, from morning, noon to night, on the job and in marriage, in school and at home, in finances and in health, *He will set you free*. Every facet of His diamond of truth becomes the cutting edge of His life in you to trim away the baggage of the past and the disappointments of today. *In Him* you are the heir of salvation and all the blessings that accompany salvation. **In Him you are free.**

"And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh and stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, the treasure which has been entrusted to you".

2 Timothy 1:6,13,14

Set free at last!

Nevertheless, freedom must be guarded for it is a divine treasure God has placed in your heart. There will be many attempts to undermine, even destroy that freedom you have. When you encounter religious dogma, the traditions of man, rules and regulations, methodical faith that

reduces God's word to formulae, hucksters, false prophets, and complex theology, you will be challenged to examine your faith in light of what you believe, in light of what others may say, and in comparison to God's Word. But the freedom that Jesus gives has stood the test of time. For over two thousand years the truth of Jesus' words has given His followers a peace and joy that simply cannot be understood in mere human terms. This freedom is from above. Freedom that Jesus gives brings a wonderful assurance, *always*, that you belong to Him and not to some denomination or sect or some special brand of Christianity. Only in His freedom can you truly begin to trust God. Trusting God, which is the essence of faith, is the highest calling of life. The degree to which you believe who you are in Christ, is the degree to which you will trust God.

Being set free in Christ opens the doors to profound Spiritual understanding with profound natural wisdom to live accordingly.

Set free at last!

Gerrit V.L.Verstraete is the founder of the Christian Communications Centre. He is a graduate and associate (AOCA) of the Ontario College of Art & Design, and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree as well. After a successful career in communications and advertising accompanied by a continual pursuit of fine arts, he experienced a dramatic rebirth according to John 3:3-7 and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 1:5.

He first received a clear vision for ministry in 1979. The Christian Communications Centre was founded as a teaching ministry in 1981.

Called into the ministry in 1982, he began his studies with two Bible colleges and soon found himself preaching and teaching the uncompromising Word of God. He has given special focus to teaching believers their identity in Jesus Christ and the liberating truth of the Kingdom of God. In 1991, according to the commission of Jesus in Ephesians 4:11,12, he was ordained and authorized into the calling of ministry through examination and approval by the elders of the church, the laying on of hands, and the prophetic word.

Since 1982, he has been privileged to teach in person and by correspondence throughout Canada, with special teaching missions to Africa, the Arctic, Mexico, and the USA. Part of the ministry's vision is a rebirth of the visual arts where creative expression is combined with discipleship training to effectively share one's faith in word and deed with all peoples.

Gerrit Verstraete and his wife Alice and their children live on Gabriola Island, in British Columbia, Canada, where they pastor the island's *Church On The Rock*, a charismatic fellowship they began in 1993. Both Gerrit and his wife Alice are ordained ministers.