

Fatherly Talks 1

Devotional Series 1.01 to 1.24

By Peter Tan

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PREFACE

These Fatherly Talk series are a compilation from the weekly talks that first began with some devotional talks that I gave to my own children when they grew up and stayed away from home while studying in University. As more and more Bible students were added to the online list of international students who look up to me for spiritual guidance, I began to include them in these talks. Through time, these devotional talks include those who are partners and friends of the ministry. The blessings of Abraham must be upon me as I have so many spiritual children all over the world. May they be numerous like the stars of the sky and the dust of the ground.

These talks are compiled in sets of 24 and can be used as a topical Bible study daily or weekly. They consist of insights on practical things of Christian life and flow in various directions as the Spirit leads. Sometimes I sound very personal because I speak as a spiritual father to spiritual children in the Lord. The talks don't always go deep into biblical areas as special areas of topical teachings need to be written as a book in its own right on some topics but they serve as daily or weekly inspirational to keep one's spirit nurtured and alive in God's Word and God's Spirit.

At the time of this writing, these talks are continuing and as long as the Lord gives life and grace, I will continue them until my work on earth is finished.

Be strong my children in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Peter Tan

Fatherly Talk 1.01

Growing in Love

Dearly Beloved

I prayed Ephesians 3:14-21 for each of you today. The most important area in ministry and in your personal life is to grow in the love of God. Too many times we concentrate on 'What' we are to do but we do not realise that the 'Why' we do it determines both the success and the eternal impact. It is possible to do ministry without the pure motivation of love for God and for others. Paul points to this in Philippians 1:15-17. Yes, it is even possible to operate the gifts without love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Everything that is not done out of the motivation of love is consumed in the light of eternity (1 Corinthians 3:11-14). None of us wants to waste our time in doing something for years and find out in eternity that all the work is considered nothing because our motivation was for self glory, self maintenance, etc. If you are ever tired of ministry, depressed in ministry, feel frustration or irritation; then something is not right. You have lost your balance. The only way to restore balance back into your life and ministry is to get back into the love of God.

From the time that we were born again, a measure of the love of Christ was poured into our lives (Romans 5:1-5). This love of God within us needs to grow until we know the width, length, depth and height of God's love. It will take all of our earthly life to grow into the fullness of this love. In the ministry, we need to desire that we feel the same intensity of love for the world that the Father has (John 3:16). We need to feel the same intensity of love for people that Jesus felt when He freely gave His life on the cross for each of us (Roman 5:8; 1 John 3:16). This intensity of love needs to grow from day to day; it is not an instant overnight process (thus the reason for Paul's Ephesians chapter 3 prayer). As an allegory, I will use the word 'frequency' to convey the meaning of this growth in love. Imagine that the highest frequency in the Spiritual World is the pure and holy love of God (God is love 1 John 4:8). And from the highest frequency of God's dimension, the frequency is lessened or diminished through the many myriads of spiritual spheres until it reaches the physical realm, which is the lowest frequency. Those of us who are still physically on this earth receive but a minute measure of this frequency of love (which to us is already overflowing). Having been born of the Spirit of God and of love, we now need to grow into this higher frequency. It cannot be done overnight as we need to be daily tuned a little bit more each day - otherwise the sudden increase in frequency is too great for the instrument and may cause the

instrument to be destroyed. Day by day as we are used to the higher frequency, we are tuned further into a still higher frequency.

For this reason, we need to take time each day and pray, worship and meditate to allow this tuning process to take place. Also each day as we find our love exhausted, we need to return to re-fill in the love of God. All healing, all power and all ministry flows from the higher frequency to the lower frequency. When the frequency and vibrations within an individual are in disharmony sickness or other ailments of the soul and body take hold. We need to be honest and admit that we all don't really love people as much as God the Father and Jesus do; we are all getting there but we are not there yet. Also when we stand to minister to people or when we pray for another person, the most important consciousness is to be conscious of the love of God for the people rather than to be conscious of their needs. For what they physically need, or expressed a need, of may be diverse and different - purely symptoms of a greater spiritual need - but what they all really need is the love of God. (All soul and physical ailments are only symptoms of the disharmony of frequencies within a person). Thus when we become channels of the frequency of God's love, we are meeting the true need of people (and not just their symptoms). From the restoration of the frequencies within those ministered to, many miracles and healings and other soul and physical breakthroughs result. (Remember that I am using allegories here to express a spiritual principle and a spiritual phenomena that is taking place in the spiritual realm. It is difficult to express spiritual things using natural illustrations but this is as good as it gets in figurative language. What is expressed is true and real in the Spiritual World).

The day our hearts and lives vibrate with the same height of frequency of God's love, is the day that we will be doing the works and the greater works of Jesus (John 14:12). And if our hearts and lives are not vibrating with a measure of the frequency of God's love in ministry and life, all that is being done would be wasted and of no eternal value. The greatest is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Fatherly Talk 1.02

Listening to your heart

Dearly Beloved

The most important advice that any father should give to their children on this earth is that within each of us, God has placed a guidance system by which we could be led and directed in every aspect of our lives. This guidance system is not so powerful as to overcome and drown our free choice. Thus many people are not aware that there is an internal guidance system within each of us. At the same time it is so gentle and faint that only when we take time to hear it can it be heard. It is like being in a busy mall or street with thousands of voices; and by focusing on the right sound can we zoom in to hear the sounds we want to hear. The secret is to being led by the Spirit which something every child born of the Spirit of God (and whose spirit has cried Abba Father, Romans 8 verse 14 and 15 are connected) has within themselves. Jesus said that He will not leave anyone of us orphans (John 14:16-18).

The following are some guidelines on hearing our heart:

1. There are many 'thoughts,' 'impressions' or 'feelings' within each one of us. The key is to differentiate those from the soul and those from the spirit.
2. Soul consciousness is always involved with things of this life; things about our past or things about our future. It is the natural default of our soul mind. For this reason, Jesus says NOT to worry (Matthew 6:25-34). Many people cannot hear their spirit man speaking through their heart because it is being drowned by the thoughts or concerns of this life. We need to get past the soul to reach the spirit. Paul suggested praying and leaving all our concerns and burdens to the Lord (Philippians 4:6-7). When we reach the stage of passing through our soul and into our spirits, it is like entering into a spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:9, 10) and the separation of the spirit and the soul (Hebrews 4:12). Sometimes it might take some quiet time in prayer, worship, reading of the Word, etc. to get quietness in the soul to listen to the spirit but through constant practice, one can develop spirit consciousness all the time.
3. Spirit consciousness revolves around the NOW, the experience of the PRESENCE of God. The inner mind of the spirit man basks in

the LIFE of God flowing through it. There is always a sense of love, peace, joy when this stage is reached (Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; 1 John 4:7, 8). The most interesting thing is that unless we have completely let go of the concerns of this life (as in point 2) we cannot receive true guidance on the directions of our personal life - it is like a little paradox. He who finds his life (soul) shall lose it, but he who loses his life for Jesus will find it (Matthew 10:39).

Remember not to try to enter into the spirit consciousness just for the sake of trying to hear some guidance as this will work against you and keep pushing you back into the soul realm. JUST ENJOY the presence of God and your UNION with HIM (John 15:1-5). What can be more important than to be WITH JESUS? There is NOTHING in this temporary life that should be more important than your transformation for ETERNAL LIFE (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Each time we enter into Spirit consciousness something transforms within us. From glory to glory He transforms us. Also remember that when the Lord speaks, you DO NOT hear it straightaway in your thoughts. Sometimes you might 'hear' the gentle thoughts floating into your mind, at other times you hear nothing but there is a 'warming of your heart' (Luke 24:32).

Spiritual impartations need NOT always be known or felt by the soul immediately but through time when you encounter the things in life that need wisdom or guidance, you 'immediately' seem to know what to do. This is because you 'have already received' the answer in your spirit but it 'arises' from your spirit as demand is made upon the strength in your day to day life. Thus a life of daily meditation (quietness to listen to your heart and enter the Spirit consciousness) is VERY important. EVERYTHING that you need in this life is always placed into your spirit man by the impartation of God's grace. There is NO temptation, trial, situation, challenge in your daily life that God did not provide for a way through (1 Corinthians 10:13). In every situation, the answer or ability to work through the situation is always provided through an impartation of grace into your spirit man (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Beloved children, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).

Fatherly Talk 1.03

Childlike dependence and prayer

Dearly Beloved

Everyone who believes in God prays and every Christian who has needs prays. Yet, from the Spiritual World point of view, each prayer has different impact and power and some do not even reach beyond the earthly sphere because they are too carnal for the highest spheres of the Spiritual World. It is therefore essential that one is taught the essentials of prayer from the Spiritual World perspective.

1. Prayer involves more than making our needs known to God, for God knows all that we need before we pray (Matthew 6:32). Every prayer, every cry, every desire that constitutes both verbal and silent prayer is heard in the Spiritual World by God and is evaluated based on its eternal value. (How does it affect eternity in regards to all who have prayed and the objects of prayer?). God has assigned angels involved with the task of bringing answers to prayers (Acts 10:4; Luke 1:13). Thus all prayers go through a purification evaluation process, with those purest having the greatest eternal impact (also involving angels of the highest spheres in bringing about the answers). This does not mean that it is the most visibly spiritual people whose prayers have such eternal impact but it also includes prayers of innocent children and pure hearted unknown Christians. Included in this purification process is the motivation for the prayers.

For this reason some prayers seem to take time because the "prayer's" motivation and understanding of the eternal impact of the prayer is impure and through time with the help of God and His angels through Christ, the first answer is the work of God within the one who utters the prayer until the prayer uttered becomes purified. Besides that, some prayers (in line with the eternal plan) have a time schedule of answer and manifestation in its working out on the planet earth. This does not mean that the prayer is answered based on the merit of the person but rather that the person who prays has not appropriated the same purity of Christ into his/her life. In order to appropriate the finished work of Christ as our basis, it has to be Christ praying through us. If Christ indeed is praying through us by His Spirit, how many of our prayers would be the same in terms of its content and motivation? To summarise this point, prayer is answered based on its eternal impact on everyone and everything; and not merely for its temporal effect. This does not mean that God

is not interested in our daily needs or earthly concerns but rather our needs are met as a bonus to the eternal impact answers that we receive (Matthew 6:33; 6:9-13).

2. Faith in God's love (Hebrews 11:6). The theological ground for all prayers is the love of God. Throughout Matthew 6:25-34 (and Luke 11:9-13), the great love of the Father for each of us individually is flowing as a theme. This assurance of the Father's love is the basis for all our ability to have faith in His Word. For this reason before one utters any prayers, one should become conscious of the greatness of God's love for us. It is through this confidence of God's love for us that renders us more than conquerors (Romans 8:31-39). It is also out of this confidence that we in turn are able to love God (and love our neighbour) thus having the ability to pray in such a manner that ALL things work out for good to those who love God (1 John 4:19; Romans 8:28). Consequently, all answered prayers are purely the further expression of God's love for us.

For some people, they want their prayers to be answered before they have confidence in God's love for them - which renders their prayers powerless. We need to FIRST have confidence in God's love BEFORE we pray. How do we have this confidence? By looking at the finished work of Christ. Christ's finished work speaks one word aloud 'GOD LOVES US' (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). For our prayers to be effective, we MUST be FULLY ASSURED of God's love for us through Christ. And being assured of this love, it stirs our love towards God (1 John 4:19). Think of it this way - If God did nothing else for us, but gave His son for us; if He did not answer a single more prayer (which, of course, He won't), if nothing else is brought forth for us - ALL that He did on the cross would have been enough. We should be willing to crawl on our knees across an ocean of broken glass, scale a Mount Everest of thorns, give our lives to be pommel led to death in declaration of our love (in response to His love) - for all that Jesus did for us on the cross.

Paradoxically, it is when we are so FILLED with God's love, and so IMMERSSED in love towards God (and towards our neighbour) that we desire NOTHING else but to LOVE GOD and GIVE our lives for God as a living poetry of love - that our prayers are the MOST powerful. Thus when we are rooted and grounded in love, and comprehend (Greek word - katalambano - receive) with all the saints the width, length, depth and height to know the love of Christ - that we are filled with the fullness of God who is able to do EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY above ALL that we ASK or

THINK, according to the POWER THAT WORKS IN US (Ephesians 3:17-21). In summary, this point means that the love of God through Christ is the source of all true pure prayers and the answers given to ALL prayers are to further establish the love of God for us through Christ - in an ever widening cycle, love keeps being experienced increasingly for all eternity, in this life and in the next.

No matter how old we are in earth years, or how experienced we are in the things of God, we are all little children to our Heavenly Father. Let us in prayer learn the true secrets of childlikeness, of total dependence on the pure love of our Father in Heaven, of pure child-like response to God's love through us for others. We might no longer speak like a child, understand as a child or think like a child but we ought to always TRUST as a child (1 Corinthians 13:11; Matthew 18:4; Luke 18:17). The secret things still belong to those with childlike trust and love towards our Father God (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; 1 Corinthians 2:9). Of all the thoughts we think everyday, of all the consciousness that we need to have everyday, the MOST important consciousness and thought is that God loves us very, very, very (times googolplexes) much. This consciousness was always in Paul's daily life (Galatians 2:20).

Beloved, love God and love one another through the love of God poured forth into your hearts (Romans 5:5)

Fatherly Talk 1.04

Balance in Christian life

Dearly Beloved

True Christianity is all about balance. In the natural world we see how every type of nutritional food has to be taken in balance. All the elements that compose our physical bodies have to be present in balanced amounts; some in microscopic measurements the lack of which causes problems in physical health. Similarly, in ALL Christian doctrines, practices and experiences there has to be balance to retain a healthy spiritual life. The history of Christianity has shown that every move of God, every revelation of God to His church, and every new experience of God's people has produced extremes. The hardest thing is always to see ourselves from an objective point because of the interference from our own doctrinal beliefs, our own inbuilt Christian heritages and our own Christian experiences.

The Word of God is the only key to help us to balance all of these. And in order to avoid twisting the Word of God to our own preset of doctrines, practices and beliefs we need to be willing to accept apparent contradictions of God's Word (which in the light of future history will not be contradictions) to our own belief systems. Church history is filled with the twisting of Scriptural interpretations to suit the people who lived blinded by their own beliefs. During the days of scientific discoveries, the church persecuted anyone who dared to challenge the place of man in God's creation by stating that the earth revolves around the sun. In the days of slavery, churches were filled with preachers who advocated racial segregation and even slavery; some even proving their position from the Bible (twisted Scriptures, of course). In Nazi Germany, the official German churches were approving of Nazism.

If we are indeed the generation to bring about balance in Christianity - to the measure of the fullness of Christ that we should NO LONGER be children carried about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-16) - there must be a certain heart and mind attitude that we should have in approaching the Word of God as we grow in the accuracy of Christian doctrine, practice and experience. Some of these qualities would include the following:

1. Doctrinal and theological humility

Knowledge puffs up but love edifies and if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). True Christianity is not what you know but who you are. All doctrine and theology revolves

around definitions and word semantics that try to accurately describe Truth. We need to humbly realise that no human language can accurately describe truth. And just because someone may disagree with a definition or a word used, it does not mean that that person did not have the same experience or the same belief or practice. You never judge the head, you judge the heart. Never judge what is said, judge the life. One should always judge a tree by the fruit it produces (Matthew 7:17-20). In the end it is not even the knowledge of love, but the presence of the love of God in a person's life made obvious by the intention and works of the person that counts (1 John 3:14; James 1:27). For this reason, although we believe in having as accurate an interpretation of Truth as possible in our minds (for the sake of understanding), we need to have humility to accept anyone who outshines us in the love of God. True doctrine never produces selfishness, it only produces the love of God in a person. From this principle, one can also discern between the false and the true without fully comprehending the intellectual concepts of the argument. If a doctrine produces more selfishness or sinfulness (as opposed to selfless love and holiness) then it must be either wrong or be an extreme off-balanced interpretation of the Scriptures.

2. The 100% principle and the conscience principle

If there is a single verse or several verses in the Bible that prevent the twisting of ninety-nine other Scriptures to fit into a certain theological mold, it would mean that the theological-mold is inaccurate. All truly good interpretations of Truth would have 100% harmony of ALL Scriptures and not just a certain group of Scriptures. There are enough Scriptures in the Bible to argue for slavery (tons of it in the OT and many in the NT plus even the use of Greek words like bond servant, etc) but just a few Scriptures from the NT that show that it is not a perfect setting and the equality of all men was sufficient to overturn thousands of years of culturally accepted slavery. And through all the 1800 years of Christianity when slavery was practised and Scripturally defended by highly intellectual clergy men and powerful people, the simple hearted people knew within their own conscience that it was wrong. To guard against being easily carried away by every wind of doctrine or extremism, we must pay heed to even one tiny Scripture that whispers into our spiritual ears over the thunder of popular doctrine. And also listen to the gentle prompting of our conscience against the tidal wave of accepted popular practice. Remember that we all have to answer to our conscience in the Spiritual World.

3. Intuitive versus intellectual knowledge

The mind always requires intellectual training and the learning of languages in order to express itself in accurate terms. But language itself is subject to subjective interpretation and colourization by cultures and upbringing. How

much can we trust even our inherited human language systems and figures of expressions for clarifying spiritual things beyond our present experiences? Most of the time, although many would not admit it, we are relying on intuitive knowledge rather than intellectual knowledge. Look at Paul the apostle himself. He was a great intellect but was first converted to Christ through a spiritual experience and then became an intellectual expositor of Christ. If the fullest expression of God is love and this love is beyond our comprehension (1 John 4:8; Ephesians 3:19), how much can we rely on the intellectual comprehension of God? Yet it is important to have intellectual understanding for it is God who created our minds for understanding (Luke 24:45). And it is our understanding of Scriptures that prevents us from going into the extremes of experiential Christianity (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). There is the mind of our spirit which is intuitive (Romans 8:6; 1 Corinthians 2:14) and the mind of the soul which is intellectual (Romans 7:23, 25; 1 Peter 1:22). The mind of the soul must always be the servant to the mind of the spirit. Truth is always known intuitively before it is known intellectually. Knowing it intuitively establishes it in our lives, knowing it intellectually establishes it in our understanding. Thus it is always possible for a person to intuitively know a truth and even practice it without intellectually understanding it. However, it is best to both know it intuitively and intellectually for that will completely erase any further presence of fear and doubt about that particular area of Truth in our lives. To walk without fear or doubt, the soul understanding must come in line with the spirit.

We are in the beginning phase of a great new wave of the Spirit. We need to learn from all of church history, take the best and the most accurate and press on into the greater heights of the coming wave of the Spirit. May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation rest upon each of you and may God open the understanding of the Scriptures as He did to the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Ephesians 1:17; Luke 24:45).

Grace, wisdom and peace be upon each of you in the coming week.

Fatherly Talk 1.05

The Unconditional Love of God

Dearly Beloved

As I prayed for each of you last night, the thought came to me as to how much each of you are fully conscious of the love of our Father God for each of you. Although our Heavenly Father may love each of us equally, we are not always equally conscious of His love. Our ability to walk in great faith and great grace depends on the greatness of our confidence in God's love; which results in the greatness of our love for God and others (1 John 4:16,19). Jesus when He was physically manifested on earth had twelve apostles, hundreds of other disciples and thousands of followers. I am sure that He loved all equally, yet only one disciple wrote that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20,24). What right had John to call himself THE disciple whom Jesus loved? Doesn't he know that Jesus loved ALL equally? Of course, Jesus loved ALL the disciples BUT it was ONLY John who TREASURED the fact the Jesus loved him and made it his supreme consciousness. He felt special to be loved by Jesus; he felt unique to be loved by Jesus; he knew that God was love and that Jesus was the personification of this special love that God has for us.

Contrast that with Peter. He was always TRYING to impress Jesus instead of just RESTING in the love of God through Jesus. Even though Andrew had introduced him to Jesus earlier (John 1:40-41), he continually felt unworthy of the love of Jesus. When Jesus used his boat and gave him a miraculous catch of fish, his first words were 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man' (Luke 5:8).

Note: It is NEVER God that shuts us from His love. It is we who through our own fear and doubts shut ourselves from His love.

Peter kept swaying in accepting the unmerited favour and love of God for himself. He was the type of person who was bold to risk everything and quick to act (Matthew 14:28). When Jesus blessed him for his willingness to confess Him as Christ the Son of the Living God, instead of resting in His love for him, He started TRYING to control and impress Jesus and received a rebuke (Matthew 16:23). When Jesus, who loved all and knew all things, told Peter that He had prayed for him because he was going to experience a test, Peter was confident in himself and boasted that he was ready to go to prison and to even die for Jesus (Luke 22:33).

Note: God is not interested in what we can prove to Him; rather He is interested in whether our Christian-living-and-ministry confidence comes from the consciousness of His love for us or does it come from our own self-confidence. We always fail when we are confident in our own abilities. We ONLY succeed when that confidence comes from a deep assurance of God's love for us and His ability to enable us to do what He wants us to do. Thus we tap upon His ability in us.

When Peter was tested and he failed miserably in denying the Lord; when the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and His eyes met Peter's eyes. Peter must have been overwhelmed by the fact that in spite of all that he had done, the Lord still loved him and he wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62). It was the Lord's prayer for Peter that sustained him through this experience and not Peter's own ability. The Lord had prayed that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:32). Faith in what? Faith in whom? Faith in the love of Jesus for him which would result in faith for everything else! For faith is energised by love (Galatians 5:6 - the word 'working' is the Greek word 'energise').

After His resurrection, Jesus sought to restore Peter's confidence in His love by asking him three times whether he loved Him. The Greek words showed that Jesus was asking Peter two times whether he had 'agape' love to which Peter only could respond with 'phileo' love. On the third occasion, Jesus came down to Peter's level and asked whether he had 'phileo' love - Peter still struggled with raising his level of love from 'phileo' level to 'agape' level (John 21:15-19). In fact, he seemed concerned when Jesus revealed that he was to die for Him, about whether John was having a different (maybe better in his mind?) treatment (John 21:18-21). Behind it all, his struggle was the struggle as to whether God and Jesus loved him as much as John. Later in the book of Acts, we see Peter working closely with John - he would have definitely realised by then that God loved him as much as John and everybody else (Acts 3:1).

Note: since our ability to love God is directly proportional to God's love for us - 1 John 4:19 - this test of Jesus on Peter is ultimately a test of whether he was confident in God's love for him.

All the devil's works and all the trials, temptations and tribulations serve only ONE purpose - to make us doubt whether God loves us. All our doubts and fears are always centred on ONE thing - whether God loves us enough to take care of us. All our human efforts and fleshly efforts are based on only ONE premise - trying to earn God's love or be good enough to be loved by God.

Let it sink into our consciousness once and for all - God loves us. He loves us as much as He loved Jesus (John 17:23). And He loved us while we were enemies of God (Romans 5:8-11). And Jesus loved us and laid His life down for us that we might KNOW LOVE (1 John 3:16). The secret to your daily victory is your confidence that God loves you. The secret to your success in your ministry and profession is that God loves you. Knowing that God loves you enables you to overcome tribulations, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword (Romans 8:35). It makes you more than a conqueror through HIM WHO LOVED US. (*Note: Confidence in God's love for us - not just our love for Him*). Death or life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come - NOTHING can stop you from becoming more than a conqueror in Christ when you have faith in God's love for you (Romans 8:37-38). The rest of our lives and ministries are purely the discovery of the width, length, depth and height of God's great love for all of us (Ephesians 3:18-21).

God loves you and great blessings be upon each of you, beloved in the Lord!

Fatherly Talk 1.06

Inner knowing of the spirit

Dearly Beloved

Once a centipede was asked how it walked, how it was able to move its leg, which leg did it control to move first, etc. As the centipede pondered that question, its legs got stuck and it was not able to walk. However, when it stopped thinking about walking and just walked, it started walking again. In all spiritual things, it is the inner knowing of the spirit - the instinct of knowing:-

that enables us TO RECEIVE all that God wants us to receive

that enables us TO BE all that God wants us to be

that enables us TO DO all that God wants us to do.

When the untrained soul mind starts doing too much thinking we stop receiving, we stop being and we stop doing - because we are no longer connected to the divine flow of strength and life in Christ.

Consider how

Peter could walk on water until his mind started thinking that what he was doing should not be possible and his eyes saw the waves that were about to drown him (Matthew 14)

Jesus had raised the dead, healed multitudes until He reached His hometown where everybody thought that he was just a carpenter and the miracles stopped there but continued greatly in the next town (Mark 6)

A whole army of professional Israelite soldiers were fully convinced that it was impossible to defeat Goliath until a little boy without any mental blocks showed up, believed, slew and defeated Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

As long as Peter looked to Christ on the water, he walked on water but when his eyes were on the waves, he started sinking until he started calling and looking to Christ again. We need to LOOK to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). We have a BETTER covenant (Hebrews 11:40). Always, every day, every morning, every night TAKE TIME TO LOOK TO CHRIST.

SEE His finished work

SEE His resurrection

SEE His Throne on high

And then SEE Him in you and you in Him.

The ONLY battle everyday is the battle of this physical life with all its required attendance and its distraction to take your eyes away from Jesus. Your victory everyday is to KEEP YOUR EYES on Jesus and keep walking on the water.

This may be a simple point but if you catch this point in your spirit, everyday of your life will be different.

As always His loving eyes are upon each of you

Fatherly Talk 1.07

Success and growth takes time

Dearly Beloved

Of all the principles that go together with faith (which is an important principle in itself for without faith we cannot please God – Hebrews 11:6), the most important is longsuffering (Greek ‘makrothumia’ mistranslated patience in most versions of the Bible). It is faith working together with longsuffering that achieves the miraculous. The proper Greek word for patience is ‘hupomone’ which is an expansion of the word ‘mone’ which means ‘to abide.’ The word ‘makrothumia’ is derived from ‘thuos’ and ‘thumos’ which conveys an essence of rage, passion, heat, desire. When ‘makrothumia’ is used with faith as in Hebrews 6:12, it speaks of the ability to stretch forth (makro – long) one’s passionate desire to achieve that which faith has visualised and received within oneself. It is by faith and makrothumia that one inherits the promises of God (Hebrews 6:12). Perhaps the word ‘longsuffering’ is not the best translation of ‘makrothumia’ as it conveys a passive quality which is not a good picture of ‘thumos.’ Perhaps the two English words ‘persistence’ and ‘gumption’ mixed together conveys a sense of the meaning – a sense of outright boldness of courage mixed with an unrelenting persistence.

It is this sense of outright boldness mixed with an unrelenting persistence that separates the champions of faith from the average Christian. This quality is present in Joshua when he went to battle against the Canaanites and in the woman prevailing against the unjust judge (Joshua 10: Luke 18:1-8). In terms of the overcoming faith, it is not just what we believe but how long we can continue to believe despite all opposing circumstances. And it is not just receiving but rather how long we can continue to hold fast to that which we have received to allow it time to take root in our lives. In the parable of the sower and the seed, all received but the word did not take root and grow in all the different types of ground (Luke 4). Indeed, on the ones sown in stony ground, Jesus said that they hear the word and immediately received it with gladness (Mark 4:16). The key is allowing the word to take root and grow within us. Thus, I leave you with the following principles:

1. Success in Christian life and Christian ministry is a process of growth (Parable of the sower and the seed – Mark 4)
What we are able to do and be comes as a result of growth. When we were babies, we could not do some of the things that we can as adults – not because we did not have the potential nor because it was not our destiny – but because we just have not grown to have the

capacity. Grow into your victory rather than trying to achieve victory. Grow into your ministry rather than trying to perform the ministry. Growing establishes who you are, and then the doing becomes a natural outcome of who you are.

2. All things are possible to those who believe (Mark 9:23). It just takes time.

Time is the key factor in doing the impossible. With time knowledge increases, faith increases, wisdom increases, skill increases, resources increase. If we are surrendered to the fact that ALL success in Christian life and ministry is by the process of growth; then we are led to the second major conclusion that growth takes TIME. Even in the natural world, the dreams that were impossible to one generation become possible with time to the following generations. Jesus declared to the disciples that if they would believe nothing shall be impossible to them (Matthew 17:20). Rest assured that if it is God's Will and your destiny to do what is in your heart, you will be able to accomplish it by allowing God to help you grow day by day into it. If we accept these two major principles, then it will lead to a third major conclusion:

3. Everything is done by incremental steps.

We walk by faith: not run or be hasty (2 Corinthians 5:7). He that believes shall not make haste (Isaiah 28:16). The greatest buildings that men have built in the natural world have been done by small incremental steps of finishing one level before going onto another. Sometimes it is spending time creating machines that later do the work for men. Every journey begins with the first step. Every building begins with the first brick. Every miracle begins with the first prayer. Every sign and wonder begins with the smallest step of faith. Sometimes the incremental steps are so small that they are invisible to the natural eye but when they finally burst through into manifestation, people do not realise the small seemingly insignificant steps that led to the avalanche of faith and God's power and presence. Peter did not suddenly become the man who could command a cripple to walk in Acts 3; he went through many incremental steps of faith within his own soul and life to reach that point. He was not overnight an evangelist who could convert 3000 in one short sermon. Do not despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10). For it is with small things that big things are made up from. All growth is by daily incremental degrees.

Don't be so consumed by the vision of the future that you forget to take the daily incremental steps towards its fulfilment. Whatever your goals,

whatever your dreams, whatever your desires in God; you can only take it one step at a time, one day at a time. Sometimes we have to focus on the forest and not on the trees. At other times we have to focus on planting one tree at a time to create a forest. It takes life skills and wisdom to know how to balance both. Make every day of your life a special day for growing more in Him. And one day, when you look back from eternity, you will suddenly discover what a giant of faith you have become.

Be blessed throughout the week.

Fatherly Talk 1.08

The aim of meditation – seeing Christ

Dearly Beloved

We are all always conscious that this earthly life that we received is a gift of God to us and we all desire to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to the Father. In doing our Father's Will, we would have:

1. Control and responsibility over all our actions in this life (2 Corinthians 5:10-11)
2. Control over everything we say (Matthew 12:36-37)
3. Control over everything we think (Philippians 4:8-9)

Most people accept willingly the accountability for all our actions but the key here is that we must FIRST have control of our thoughts, then we will have control over our WORDS, which will lead to control over our ACTIONS. Thus, the aim should be the changes wrought in our hearts and minds before any changes can be perceived in word and deeds. Moreover, word and deeds automatically follow any changes in heart and mind. And changes in heart and mind constitute true spiritual and soul growth changes. In order to bring about these changes, the following would be the true keys of spiritual growth and changes no matter if we express them through different words or principles:

1. We need to recognise and accept that Christ in us has already wrought the changes within us through His finished work.
This is important as we can only be changed not by changing ourselves but by learning to yield to the changes Christ has wrought in our spirits. There is a world of difference between relying on your own strength to change yourself and relying on the strength of Christ to change you. One is the works of the law and the other is the works of grace. Everyone of us walk different paths and histories but finally always come to the primary conclusion that Christian life and ministry is only possible through Christ within us – and impossible by any other man-made methods including every self effort through myriads of methods, except by Christ's Spirit within us. If in your life you have not come to this conclusion yet, you will in time to come. For some of us it took many years of struggle to come to this conclusion and for others (God bless you) a short time. If you still do not understand what is being said here, God bless you, you will come to the end of self effort one day and finally realise the true key to Christian living and ministry is through Christ within us. Most of us acknowledge this truth mentally but do not understand how to implement it in reality. Most of us, tap into it from time to time –

knowingly and unknowingly - but never consistently live it. There is a permanent rest available to all when we cease from our own works and enter into the works of grace:

- Romans 7:24, 25* *O wretched man that I am who will deliver me from the body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ.*
- Hebrews 4:10* *For he who has entered His rest has himself ceased from his works as God did from His.*
- 1 Corinthians 15:10* *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*
- Galatians 2:20* *I have been crucified with Christ; 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 the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*
- Ephesians 2:8-10* *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*
- Romans 4:4* *Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.*
- Romans 4:16* *Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed ...*
- Romans 5:21* *So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

By default, we will always follow the works of the law in self effort. For this reason it is a daily 'effort' (diligence) to enter into the rest (Hebrews 4:11). But this 'effort' is not so much an action as it is a 'yielding' - a daily 'letting go.' Like the plants and trees daily growing towards the sun, like the branch yielding to the vine, like the wheels of the car yielding to the propulsion of the engine. Unlike trees, plants and inanimate objects we have free-will and therefore we require a daily yielding of our lives to Christ within us. It is almost effortless which is why the works of grace are not DONE as

they are WALKED (Ephesians 2:10). To sum this point up, we need to daily recognise and accept

That it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives within us,

That Christ has created (finished) all the works that we are to do within us and we just WALK in them daily

That He is the Author and Finisher of our faith (works) and not us (Hebrews 12:2)

That everything (strength, energy, grace) for each day's work is provided WITHIN us and we only need to release that portion for each day

That it is a GIFT of His faith and His grace and not our own faith and strength that is required to live day by day

That this faith requires that we see each work that we are to walk in as COMPLETED and not uncompleted or in the process of completion (Mark 11:24).

2. We need to recognise and accept that although everything is completed in Christ, our human finite capacity prevents us from receiving everything in one lump sum. There is a requirement that we daily be enlarged to receive that portion of grace that we need; in the similar manner as plants and trees grow, in the similar manner as our muscles need the accumulation of daily processes of exercise to grow rather than having a lump sum muscle for the rest of our lives suddenly attached to our bodies – if this is done to a baby, the baby would suffocate and die in its own muscles. There are sufficient Scriptures to prove daily growth and reception:

- Mustard seed growth parables (Mark 4:13-20; Matthew 17:20)
- Believers as trees or plants allegory (Psalm 1:2, 3; Matthew 7:15-20; 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19; John 15:1-5)
- Progressive transformation (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

What do we actually do in this daily process? Paul speaks of dying daily and Jesus of taking up the cross daily (1 Corinthians 15:31; Luke 9:23). This is purely what we discussed in the first point – that of daily recognition that it is not us but Christ who lives in us, of choosing Christ in us and not our self as the daily strength. The details of this process involve the reception of grace for our daily lives (Hebrews 4:16). Note the progression of the argument in Hebrews chapter four: from cessation of our own works and labour and entering into the rest of Christ (Heb 4:10) to the requirement for inward transformation in our hearts and minds (Heb 4:12) to the practical reception of grace at the throne of grace for all our daily need and help (Heb 4:16). To understand this process, we need to

know that grace is not just a position of unmerited favour with God (Romans 5:1-2 It is definitely a spiritual position in God but it is more than that in the New Testament: note – we have a better covenant than the Old Testament – Hebrews 11:39-40). In the New Covenant, grace is also a spiritual substance that can be imparted like a spiritual infusion of strength (dunamis) and energy. The following Scriptures show grace as an energy form substance and not just as a position:

- a. It was the grace of God within Paul that helped him do the works (1 Corinthians 15:10)
- b. Paul exhorts Timothy to be strong (Greek word - endunamo – means strengthen from within) in the grace of God (2 Timothy 2:1)
- c. Grace can be increased and grown progressively, which implies a substance rather than a position (2 Peter 1:2)
- d. Paul acknowledges that it was the substance of grace working (Greek word – ergo – means energising) within Paul and Peter that made them to become apostles (Galatians 2:8-9)
- e. Paul became a minister through the effective working (Greek word – energeian tes dunameos – energising of power) according to the gift of grace (Ephesians 3:7).
- f. Being filled with the Word of God will cause us to sing with grace in our hearts (Colossians 3:16); it is from that impartation of grace that whatever we do in word and deed is released (Colossians 3:17)
- g. It is obvious that the reception of grace in time of need and help from the throne of grace is a substance impartation as the position is already established for the reception (Hebrews 4:16)
- h. It took Paul time to discover the reception of grace for one of his prime battles against spiritual opposition in his ministry (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Note the equation of My grace with My strength, showing that both are directly and proportionally related (2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace is a spiritual substance of inner spiritual strength imparted into our spirits.

In summarising this second point, we need to spiritually gain access to the daily spiritual impartation of grace at the throne of grace. Sometimes, we realise that we need this impartation when we find that we are at the end of our strength and energy (as in scaling a mountain or overcoming an obstacle) necessitating a pulling back (or rather pulling within) to find the resources of inner strength and grace. This should be the practice every morning when we wake up and every night before we sleep but some mountains and some

battles require the moment by moment drawing because of the full capacity of our spirits being used each hour rather than each day.

3. What do the above two points involve in our daily lives? The process is what meditation and daily devotional is about. Note how in some of the above verses the finale of the revelation leads to a spiritual-mental process of opening oneself up to God
 - a. The teachings of Romans chapters 3 to 7 leads to the conclusion of being spiritually minded as the key to actualization of the truths (Romans 8:1-6) and the daily presentation of our selves (body and soul) for the progressive renewal of the mind (Romans 12:1-2).
 - b. The rest advocated by Hebrews (Heb 4:10) is brought about through the letting of the Word of God pierce our inner hearts and minds (Heb 4:12) and the importance of seeing – visualization - of Jesus our High Priest of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16). This theme of beholding or ‘seeing Christ’ is continued in Hebrews 12:2 as we look to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith. Apparently there is such a concept as ‘diligently looking’ to Christ less we fall short of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15). Obviously, it implies that when we are stuck in our own strength, it is because we have taken our eyes off Jesus – no longer diligently looking to Him or being spiritually connected to Him. Thus, the art of daily meditation and devotional must include the aspect of the visualization of Jesus. Paul would call this looking with the ‘eyes’ of the understanding (Ephesians 1:17)
 - c. The process of the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds and the final transformation of our thought life involves prayer and meditation (Philippians 4:6-8).
 - d. Humility is an important attribute in the reception of the grace of God (1 Peter 5:5, 6). This again points to the first point of acknowledging our need of God by daily relinquishing our self pride and ability – the taking up of the cross daily.

Using pictorial language, the application of these important keys to the Christian life and ministry is through:

SEEING THE CHRIST ABOVE - Seeing the completed work of Christ, Seeing Christ in ALL His glory – Acknowledging the gift of the Position of grace.

SEEING THE CHRIST WITHIN – Visualise (as the Holy Spirit enables you and gives you the right images) Christ’s life within you.

SEEING THE CHRIST UPON – The New Testament authors used the phrase ‘putting on Christ or the new man’ (Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10).

From our human perspective (there are many other creative ways these three processes can be re-phrased), it would be

SURRENDER AND GIVE UP

YIELD AND RECEIVE

FLOW AND DO

The purpose of your daily devotional and meditation must include the actualization of the above for it to produce the daily spiritual benefit within you. If you fully understand the above truths expressed, you would truly enter into the rest of Christ and walk in the works of grace.

May God richly impart an abundant measure of His grace upon each of your lives this week.

Fatherly Talk 1.09

Fundamentals of faith

Dearly Beloved

Faith is an important subject in the Christian life and much has been taught and spoken about by various teachers. However, one needs to see the whole theological perspective and the concepts of faith in the Word of God as a whole. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6) thus we have to understand the fundamentals of the concept of faith in the New Testament.

1. The first fundamental principle is that the source and nature of faith in the New Covenant is the gift of faith received through Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, we are to live by His faith. It is not only that the just shall live by faith but rather that the just shall live by His faith (Habakkuk 2:4). Paul understood this concept and when he introduced the subject of faith, he was leading to the teaching of the gift of His faith which comes only through the hearing of His word (Romans 1:17; 10:17). The actual Greek here says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the *rhema* of the spoken word of God. There is an emphasis that ONLY through the reception of God's voice (His spoken word) is His faith imparted. Technically, it would mean that without hearing His voice (His spoken word) there can be no (zero) faith.

In Ephesians, Paul speaks of the gift of faith and grace (Ephesians 2:8). In Galatians, he says that the life which he lived, He lived by the faith OF the son of God (Galatians 2:20). In Colossians, he speaks of the faith OF the operation of God (Colossians 2:12 – most translators missed it by translating it as 'in'). Peter, after the healing of the lame man in Acts, says that it was all done in Jesus Name, through faith in His name, faith which comes THROUGH Him (Jesus) that has given the man the perfect soundness of health and healing (Acts 3:16). In the New Testament, the source and nature of our faith is a gift from God imparted into us through the hearing of God's voice (spoken word). It is not our faith but rather His faith (spiritual substance of His energising) in us. The difference in understanding this concept is like the understanding that it is not our ability to love God but we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). It is NOT our faith but the substance gift of His faith in us that

enables us to do the impossible for in the New Testament, Jesus is indeed the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

2. The second fundamental principle is to differentiate between the substance of faith and the mechanics of faith. Many people teach and try to establish the mechanics of faith without ensuring that people first received the substance of the gift of His faith. The mechanics of faith are:
 - a. Faith believes (initialization)
 - b. Faith receives (conception)
 - c. Faith sees (visualization)
 - d. Faith speaks (verbalization)
 - e. Faith acts (action)

Outwardly, human faith and the gift of faith may demonstrate the same mechanics but it is powered by two totally different sources of power: one is derived from self and the other is derived from God's strength and ability.

Until and unless, one gets the first principle correct, there is no point going to the second. Once the first principle is understood that the source and nature of faith is indeed from the impartation (hearing) of God's *rhema* word, then this seed of faith will naturally progress through the mechanics of faith as one meditates on the word received from God like the growing of the seed planted into good ground (Mark 4:20). In the New Testament, you *become* before you *act*. When the source and reception of God's Word is achieved within the spirit man, the recipient literally becomes that part of the Word (the Word becomes you and you become the portion of the Word received). Thus acting on the Word becomes a natural progressive consequence. From the Spiritual World perspective, they do not concern themselves with actions and deeds because ALL actions and deeds are the natural result of WHO a person is; rather they concern themselves with WHO one is. For this reveals the true nature of a person in their actions no matter how they try to hide it outwardly.

3. The word "word" in reference to the Word of God in the New Testament is either from the Greek word '*logos*' or '*rhema*.' The *logos* of God is related to the *rhema* of God. In the second fundamental principle of the mechanics of faith from *a* to *e* above, the *logos* of God's word (includes written word of God) can produce the mechanics of *a*, *b* and *c* through prolonged and constant meditation on the *logos* Word of God. However, when one receives a *rhema* word from God, it is like *a*, *b*, and *c* has taken place

instantly and simultaneously as God's imparted gift and one moves straight into *d* and *e*. By relating the written word (although we realise that the concept of *logos* is greater than just the written word, it is sufficient for this teaching to take the written word aspect of the *logos*) to the spoken word, we realise that both are important to the overall picture of faith and the continual increase of faith in our lives.

The *logos* cleans and clears the ability within us to believe, receive and visualize the Word of God. Jesus told the disciples that His *logos* has made them clean (John 15:3). The *logos* is like a sharp two edged sword that cuts within our heart and spirit man, energising and enabling us to hear the voice of God (Hebrews 4:12). The *rhema* is like a sharp two edged sword of the Spirit that proceeds forth from our spirit man through our spoken word that moves mountains and circumstances (Ephesians 6:17). Notice that although both *logos* and *rhema* are in essence the same energies proceeding from God, their directional work in our lives are different: one works into us and the other works out from our lives. In both instances, the source and nature is still God and not us.

By understanding the above fundamentals of faith, you can discern all teachings on the subject of faith and place where it is emphasizing on in the above overall picture of faith. The hearing of God's voice is pre-eminent in the exercise of faith. The side effects of confidence, boldness and emotional zeal are not by themselves evidences of faith; they are what they are, merely side effects. And the mechanics of faith are not in themselves faith; they are the functioning of the substance of faith. True faith needs to be grounded upon the reception of God's voice (through His written and spoken word) as its source of energy is the gift of God's life within us to do His works. It will take great faith to do God's great works in these last days. And great faith comes from great hearing and reception of God.

May God cause each of you beloved ones to hear the voice of God clearly in your lives. Only do what God speaks individually to you to do; no more and no less. And together as each of us perform the gift of faith that He has imparted differently in our lives, we will do the works of Jesus and the greater works of Jesus – for it would then be Jesus Himself who does it through us; we are His hands and His feet when we have been His ears and eyes.

Fatherly Talk 1.10

Led by the Holy Spirit

Dearly Beloved

It is the desire of every believer to be led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus did say that His sheep will know His voice and they will follow Him (John 10:27). This verse speaks of two stages in being led by Jesus through the Holy Spirit: the sheep must know His voice first before they can follow Him.

1. Recognition of the voice of the Lord

The Lord speaks through the Holy Spirit who has now been sent to be in the place of Jesus (John 14:15-18). A key method of the Holy Spirit is to bring to remembrance the things that Jesus said to His disciples; and in our case, to bring to remembrance the Word of God (John 14:26). This implies that we need to have the Word in us at some point in order for it to be brought to our remembrance which can be broken down into the following sub-points:

- a. We can recognise the voice of the Lord proportionally to the quality and quantity of the Word of God and the love of God in our hearts.

Jesus told His disciples that the Word has made them clean (John 15:3). This implies the cleansing and renewal power of the Word of God. It is only when we are transformed by the renewal of the mind that we can discern the Will of God (Romans 12:2). This link between the renewed mind and the leading of the Holy Spirit is further established in Romans 8:14 which follows the requirement of being spiritually minded (Romans 8:6). The voice of the Lord is not an audible voice heard through sound waves vibrating in our physical ears, although it might sound like it is external and physical. It is always from within our hearts for the Holy Spirit dwells with and in us (John 14:17). Listening to our heart is akin to listening to the Lord who speaks to us through the instrument of our spirit man. Thus if the heart is troubled or sinful or turned against God, one cannot hear nor recognise God's voice. And the condition of the heart will always affect the mind. The key to hearing and recognising the voice of God is to harmonise both heart and mind with the vibration of God's wavelength – God's wavelength being the Word of God and the love of God. It sometimes takes time to hear God not because God is not speaking but rather we are not tuned to the level of

God's spiritual wavelength. And the only tuning instruments we have to enable us to synchronise with the spiritual wavelength of God are the Word of God and the love of God. We have to both abide in His commandments and in His love (John 15:9-11). Peace, love and joy are the pre-requisites and also the after-effect result of God's voice speaking to us. They are the natural result of a spiritual mind (Romans 8:6). The first and foremost condition to being led by the Holy Spirit is that one must be full of the Word and full of the love of God.

- b. Once one is filled with the Word and filled with the experience of God's love, the Holy Spirit has a resource within our hearts, to draw upon the things which God has placed within us (His Word and His love) and bring it into remembrance. The act of bringing it into remembrance is not just bringing a thought into our minds (although it can include that) but it also means bringing a sense of His affection. In the Spirit World, unlike the natural fallen world, thoughts and feelings are never in contradiction nor separate. Every righteous thought has an accompanying righteous feeling and every bad thought has an accompanying bad feeling. Every loving thought has an accompanying loving feeling, etc. In this physical fallen world, people try to separate thoughts and feelings such that a person tries to have pure thoughts without pure feelings – which is an impossibility in the Spirit World. In the physical fallen world, people seem to succeed in separating thoughts and feelings (in deception) only because they have hidden the true feelings within themselves (which in the Spiritual World cannot be hidden).

Thus when the Holy Spirit brings something into remembrance He would bring both the thoughts and the accompanying feelings of the thoughts. It is like an impartation of the mind of Christ and the affections of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 1:8). On the receiving end, our soul sometimes perceives the thoughts but not the feelings or at other times perceives the feelings but not the thoughts. This does not mean that we are led by our intellect or by our own feelings. Rather it means that we are led by the sense of the mind of Christ and the sense of the affection of Christ. One can say that being led by the Holy Spirit is being led by the Word of God and the love of God.

Intellectual people tend to be led more by their understanding thus they have a default mode of being led more by the Word of God. Emotional people tend to be led more by their emotions

and thus have a default mode of being led more by their feelings of love. The problem is that both of these form half a picture each. Thus the mistake of the intellectuals is that they can be led wrongly especially when their intellectual understanding makes them hard of heart. And the mistake of the emotional is that their feelings of love carries them into places which is outside of God's Will (Word). It takes both to make a balanced leading – like having two wings to fly forward as one wing flapping would only result in circular movements. The second most important training in being led by the Holy Spirit is being able to sense the mind and the affections of Jesus. Every leading of the Holy Spirit will always be in harmony with the mind and affections of Jesus. Sometimes it takes hours of prayer and worship to get a sense the mind and affections of Jesus and at other times it is an instantaneous sense.

2. Following the Lord

The Lord does not tell His sheep every detail of the path and the whole length of the path. He only provides a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). If we do not obey the first step, the second step will never be revealed. If we missed the first step, we need to get it right before we can move forward.

- a. The Bible has always used the analogy of walking with faith and not running (2 Corinthians 5:7). This implies a steady pace and a step by step pace. Samuel was not told about the exact son of Jesse who was to be king until he first obeyed and went to the general house of Jesse (1 Samuel 16). The children of Israel were not told where to build the temple until the time to build the temple was near. They were only told about 'the place.' (Deuteronomy 12). It was in the time of David, when God had provided abundance (through David) for the building of the temple, that the place for the temple was revealed. And the revelation took place at a time when everyone from David to his people were in repentance for their mistakes in numbering Israel – least expected time for such a significant revelation of the place (1 Chronicles 21). It was at the place and time when David recognised that it is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of his enemies. It was when David had faith in God's mercy and love (1 Chronicles 21:13). It was a time when he did not deserve mercy for he had made a mistake.

Thus God showed that it was by grace and not by works that He brought forth Israel to their destiny to move into the next phase

of their history with a visible temple. Following the Lord is not just following the Lord outwardly for we are exhorted not to look from the physical fleshly point of view to Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:16). Instead, we trust in the sense of God's love within us that is constraining us forward. This was the inward energy of grace leading that Paul says laboured more abundantly (1 Corinthians 15:10). Paul was constrained by the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). Each step is like going through an open door which the Lord opens. Each step is walking in the works which God has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). Note that the works are prepared before you walk in them. The preparation by God precedes your steps. Take just one step at a time. Your vision may like the eagle see far but your steps must like a blind man (not by sight – 2 Corinthians 5:7) be guided one at a time by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- b. Each step must result in an inward peace and joy. He guides our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:79). You will know that you have taken the wrong step when you lose your peace. When we walk in the grace of our Lord Jesus' finished work, the God of peace crushes Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20). And this victory is possible only because the Lord first fills us with all joy and peace in believing (Romans 15:13). It is the desire of God that our joy may be full (John 16:24). And when He shows us the path of life there is always joy for in the presence of God there is always fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). Do not just trust in your mind and in your understanding but trust in your heart (Proverbs 3:5, 6). Many times our heart which is closer to our spirit man catches the leading of the Holy Spirit first before our mind (which is part of our soul and easily affected by our physical insight). Since the leadings of the Holy Spirit are matters of the heart way beyond our understanding, we need to rely on our heart's sensing of God's love more than our intellect and our own feelings. In learning to be led by the Holy Spirit, we need to learn the secret of knowing the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge and understanding (Ephesians 3:19).

In conclusion, we need to emphasize that being led by the Holy Spirit is not as complicated as we might think it is. It is as simple as learning to walk by the instinct of God's love. It is our lack of understanding or rather our reliance on our understanding too much that makes it difficult. God gave us intellectual powers for a purpose, and that is to study and understand the beauties of God's creation and His laws and harmony and wisdom. He gave us a mind to do that. But He gave us a heart to follow Him. A new heart

born of the Spirit with an implanted instinct to follow after Him in love.
Thus the child-like will excel in being led by the Holy Spirit.

My desire for each of you is that you learn to listen to your heart and walk
step by step in the perfect Will of God being led by the Holy Spirit.

Fatherly Talk 1.11

Walking in God's love

Dearly Beloved

The two greatest attributes to have 24 hours a day in our lives is love for God and love for people. These are expressed by Jesus in the two great commandments (Mark 12:29-31). Yet this love needs to grow in discernment (Philippians 1:9). From the beginning of our walk with God right to its completed path, it is the continual development of our spiritual capacity to be transformed by these two commandments that determines our true closeness with God. The key principles in the understanding and development of the love in these two areas of our lives are:

1. Recognise that this love is not our love but its source is the love of God flowing through the indwelling of Christ.
In Ephesians 3:17, the rooting and grounding of love in our lives is directly related to the indwelling of Christ in our hearts. In Romans 5:1-5, the outpouring of the love of God in our hearts is also related to the reception of Jesus in our hearts through being justified by faith in Christ. The demonstration of God's love for us in Christ's death on the cross becomes the reception of love in our hearts when we accept and receive the finished work of Christ on our behalf (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-11). For we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). In Ephesians 3:19, as a second emphasis on the relationship between the indwelling of Christ and the love of God, the Scripture declares that as we know the love of Christ (which passes knowledge), we are filled with the fullness of God. Unmistakably, there is a direct proportional relationship between the indwelling of Christ in our hearts and the love of God.
2. How can we know something which passes knowledge? Here, it is experiential knowledge rather than intellectual knowledge. Experiential knowledge is gained through experiencing Christ whilst intellectual knowledge is gained through study and mental reflection. The only way to gain experiential knowledge is to allow our spirit within us to experience the indwelling of Christ within our hearts. Note that it is related to the strengthening work of the Holy Spirit in our inner man (Ephesians 3:16). Jesus said that we receive the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive because the world does not see Him nor know Him but we know Him for He dwells with us and

is in us (John 14:17). We need to take time to meditate on the following:

- a. True reality is not the reality of the five senses but the reality of the invisible Spirit world (2 Corinthians 4:18). The things which are seen are temporary but the things which are not seen are the true eternal reality. This world (which seems so real to our five senses) is but a passing shadow, a whiff of vapour that appears for a little while and then passes away (James 4:14). Our faith must rise beyond the visible to comprehend the invisible, understanding that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible but rather are made from the true reality of the power of God's spoken word which is an invisible spiritual energy force (Hebrews 11:3). The secret is to take time each day to shut out the five senses and allow the inner spiritual sense of our spirit man to experience the true reality which is within us; and Christ who lives within us.
- b. Practical application
 - i. Close your eyes and be still on your inside (Later, when you become more spiritually aware, the closing or shutting of eyes becomes immaterial).
Be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10)
He leads us beside the still waters (Psalm 23:2)
Commune with your own heart and be still (Psalm 4:4)
 - ii. Be at rest – avoid the extremes of straining yourself in reaching for something or the opposite in having a blank mind.
He who has entered the rest has ceased from his own works (Hebrews 4:10)
Allow the peace of God to garrison your heart and your mind (Philippians 4:7)
 - iii. Enjoy the sense of being, the sense of self, the sense of God in your inner man – senses beyond the outward five physical senses.
The sense of Christ within you; the sense of God's presence; the sense of oneness with God.
For it is God who commanded light to shine in the darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6)
This is the mystery which was hidden from ages and from generations but now has been revealed to us, His saints, the riches of the glory of this mystery among the

Gentiles: which is Christ in us, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27)

But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17)

And the glory which the Father gave to Jesus, Jesus has given to us, that we might be one just as the Father and Jesus are one: Jesus in us and the Father in Jesus that we might be made perfect in one, that the world may know that the Father has sent Jesus and has loved us as the Father has loved Jesus (John 17:22, 23).

Without any effort, without any strife, day by day as we allow the transforming effect of the indwelling of Christ in our lives, the love of God will grow in our lives and fill us. The side effect of all this is a greater sensitivity to the things of the Holy Spirit and the ease of being led by the Holy Spirit.

3. And then, when it comes to loving people, there will be a natural (rather supernatural) desire to want to help and look after others.
 - a. The real secret to truly loving and helping another person (from the Spiritual World perspective) is to help them help themselves. The key is not just giving them help but rather rendering them assistance in areas which they are trying to work out themselves. Help them from their perspective not from your perspective. True love allows self discovery in a person (allowing room to make mistakes) for when people have room to help themselves, they grow during the process of working it out for themselves. Moreover, when we help others to help themselves (rather than just helping them), we do not rob them of the honour of growing in God; and when they do succeed, it would be their honour to receive their reward from God for it would have been their accomplishments through God (our role being just lending aid or assistance in helping them to do it for themselves).
We must help them the way the Holy Spirit helps us by being our Helper and not by doing it for us (John 14:16).
 - b. Another secret to loving people is to understand that in our knowledge of them, the knowledge of good in their lives must outweigh the knowledge of evil/bad that we see in them. A lingering side effect of the curse of eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Adamic race is the ability to see evil in others more readily than the ability to see the good in them. Thus people constantly react to the bad in others and sow a cycle of hate and strife. It takes good to truly overcome evil and eradicate

evil (Romans 12:21). For when evil overcomes evil, the greater overcoming evil remains. The cycle of hate and evil can never be stopped until somewhere along the years (maybe decades or centuries) of cycles of strife, someone arises and chooses the path of good to overcome evil and the cycle stops. No matter what bad or evil we face while living on this temporal earth, we must choose to respond in thought, word and deed with only love. Our only response to everything, whether good, bad or evil, is the response of love. This was the response of Jesus to all the evil that men and devils did to Him. He kept loving right to His crucifixion (Luke 23:34). This was the response of a true disciple of Jesus (Acts 7:60). We must see others through the eyes of Jesus and be willing to lay down our lives as Jesus laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16). The only cross which every one of us will be given is the chance to lay down our self-centred nature and give of ourselves to the love of God within us in loving and helping others help themselves.

The true secret of the Christian life is the dynamics of allowing Christ to live through us and to love through us. Seek not to be loved but seek to give love for we have already received the outpouring of God's love within our hearts (Romans 5:5). We only need to allow this love in our hearts to take root and be firmly grounded in our lives (Ephesians 3:17). If God is love, then we must become the personification of love to be like Him. We must first find the heart of Jesus within us, before we find the eyes of Jesus to see others the way Jesus sees them. And then we will be empowered as the hands of Jesus to render help in the demonstration of His Spirit of love and power.

God bless each of you with the revelation of His love that is already in your hearts,

Fatherly Talk 1.12

The mirror of the soul and the mirror of the Word

Dearly Beloved

We all use physical mirrors every day to dress, comb and pretty ourselves each day of our lives. Yet the more important clothing is the clothing of our souls and our spirits every day. How do we check the condition of our souls and spirits every day?

1. The mirror of our souls

The first mirror of your soul is actually your feelings and attitudes to others around you. What you like and dislike about others is actually what you like and dislike about yourself. We are usually blind to other things in another person except to those things in them that we are interested in. Our interest in classical music might cause us to admire another person with skills in classical music (that we might love but lack the skills to play or have skills but still admire the skills in others). Even though we might lack the ability to perform as well as them, because of our innate love of similar music, we are drawn to the same likes in others. At the same time, we might not have noticed that the same musicians were bad fathers, immoral or spoilt because we are blind to those things. However, if those qualities are also important to us, then we do notice them.

Thus a morally upright Christian might admire a classical musician for both their skills and moral purity whilst a worldly immoral unbeliever may just admire all skilled classical musicians disregarding their immorality because they can't see fault in their own immorality. This illustration can be taken to other professions like actors and politicians or church and business leaders. The most important thing to note is that our ability or inability to see what is truly in others is directly proportional to our ability or inability to see those qualities in our own lives. Other people around us are only mirrors in which we see the reflection of our own souls. We see (or don't see) in them what we only can see in ourselves. If you are highly critical and a perfectionist to yourself, you will naturally be highly critical and a perfectionist towards others. If you hate yourself, you will hate others. If you are hardworking and dislike laziness, you will like others who are hardworking and dislike laziness. Our ability to see fault in others is because we ourselves have the same hidden fault. For this reason Jesus asks us to remove

the plank from our own eye first before we remove the speck in another's eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

Now expand this principle and imagine Jesus who has no imperfection within Himself but only pure love. What does Jesus see? He sees only potential in everyone and has love and benevolence towards all. Since we are all still in the perfection process towards Christ-likeness, we need to be aware of this principle as it aids us towards realisation of our need to receive grace for transformation. When we realise that our attitudes toward other people around us are but mirrors that reflect our own selves, we need to find that inner hidden place in our hearts and minds which cause us to have a less than loving attitude towards others. Like a mirror, it helps us clean ourselves up by being honest with ourselves and admitting that the inability to be loving towards others is not because of others (since Jesus commands us to love all) but rather something within us that is blocking our ability to love. The first step towards transformation is to be honest with oneself and see that our relationship of love towards others (or the lack of it) is actually caused by something deep within us and not just the condition of others. To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure (Titus 1:15). Practical application: think about those people you find it hard to love; then, ask God to reveal what is really in your own heart and mind that is causing you to find difficulty in loving them.

2. Who we really are

We are the sum total of all our thoughts and feelings and desires. We are the sum total of all that we are, all that we were and all that we shall be. We express who we are in our thoughts, words and actions. When you ask a person who they are, the answer is usually given in their relationship to people or in their professional abilities. Everyone is either a father, mother, brother or sister, son or daughter, husband or wife, etc. – this only answers the question as to who they are to someone else (a relationship) and not the question as to who they really are. Everyone is either a lawyer, doctor, teacher, student, pastor, evangelist, secretary, businessman or businesswoman, etc., etc. on the list of professions in this world – this only answers the question as to what we do and not who we really are. Or we might answer the question of who are by giving our names. Unfortunately, unlike the olden days of naming, our modern names are not necessarily the expression of what we really are – they are means of identification like a social security number or a driver's license.

Relationships can change, professions can change and even names can change. But who are we really??

- a. We are created beings – created to be like God and have the loving character of God

Thus our ability to love God and to love everyone are the most important two commandments. We express who we are in our relationship to our loved ones and in our professional life. No matter what our relationship is to another person or what our profession is, we need to walk in love because our Father Creator is the personification of all that love is (God is love – 1 John 4:8). If we fail to walk in love, we fail in being who we really are despite the relationships or professions we hold. All our human relationships and professions end when this earth life ends but the true character of who we really are continues for eternity. For this reason, those who seem successful in earthly life but fail in love, will in eternity have to re-learn the principles of love until they truly understand who they really are – created beings of a loving God capable of loving others.

- b. We are created beings – created to be like God and have the beautiful holy character of God

God is light and all that are like God must have this same holy light and not walk in sin and darkness (1 John 1:5). The desire to be upright and moral is the true beauty of the Spiritual World. What is beauty? In the natural world, beauty is in the proportional shape of a face or body, in the smoothness and cleanness of the skin and texture, in the harmonious physical relationship of all things in proportion, etc. However, all these physical things age and change with time and pass away. So what is the true eternal beauty? Eternal beauty is in eternal harmonies and mathematical proportions. These laws are expressed in the balance of all things to all other things – every created thing and being having respect for free will and free space to develop without oppression or disharmony from another. These laws are expressed in moral laws as laws and principles of religious life, social life and governmental life, etc. Laws were not made to be oppressive but made so that all things can exist in harmony with one another – like the traffic lights and road laws that exist so that each and every type and make of car can travel freely without destroying or crashing into one another.

True beauty is found in holiness (the beauty of holiness – 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9). The next time you see

immorality, try to open your spiritual eyes and see it as the most vile ugliness no matter what your physical eyes tell you. For one day that physical body will be gone and be replaced with the true ugliness of dark slimy distortions worthy of life in the darkest spheres. The human spirits who are drawn to the dark spheres upon physical death have the ugliest disproportionate forms imaginable – the image of their true selves expressed. Allow the true sense of beauty to develop in your lives – the sense of holiness, the love of moral uprightness, the desire to obey the laws of God. When you appreciate the true sense of beauty, you will become holy in the beauty of holiness. Remember that the real created you on the inside loves and delights in the law of God (Romans 7:22). Allow that joy and delight of the true inner man for holiness to flow through your whole being (soul and body).

- c. We were created to be unique – each of us expressing the different aspects of God’s abilities. This is a process of discovering what we are.

As created beings we cannot be omnipresent, omniscient or omnipotent. As we grow in the Spiritual World, we can have a sense of omnipresence, a sense of omniscience and an aspect of omnipotence in the abilities that God imparts to us uniquely. This implies that our abilities are born and not made. These abilities can increase because as we are faithful in fulfilling what He has sown into our lives, He continually implants more abilities within us from glory to glory and sphere to sphere. We can sharpen our unique skills and abilities but we need to acknowledge that they were qualities that were originally imprinted into us when God first created us. We are His workmanship, created for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Thus “working and doing” is only a process of self discovery of what God really put into us and not so much as to “try and strain” to do. We ARE before we DO. We cannot be what God never made us to be nor can we become what God has not meant for us to become. What we can become outwardly is only the expression of what we have as a seed within us. The seed becomes the unique plant, flower or tree which God has imprinted into our spiritual DNA. It is alright to make genuine mistakes in the process of discovering what God made us to be (which would be what He wants us to do) but be quick about acknowledging areas of limitation to fine tune the discovery of

the specific Will of God for your life. Sometimes it is discovering what you are not before you discover what you are. It is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

3. The mirror of God's word (James 1:21-25)

The greatest mirror by which we can see ourselves (soul and spirit) is the Word of God. The word tells us who we are, what we are, and where we shall be in eternity. It tells us how to get to be what we are and to be who we are. It cleanses us and purifies us (John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26, 27). It is the only instrument capable of removing all the spots, blemishes and wrinkles from our souls and spirits. It is the only instrument of faith by which we can see the Spiritual World clearly (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 10:17). Jesus was the Word made flesh (John 1:14). We need to become the Christ made flesh to others – the living epistles by which others can see God (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3). This is not an instantaneous transformation but a day to day transformation as we yield to the living Christ in our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1-2). Our inner man is being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16). This implies a day by day reception of the grace of God – as we confront each day's challenges and trials and temptations, we draw on the measure of grace to overcome the precise situation (Hebrews 4:15-16).

The greatest discovery in our lives is to discover who we are and what we are. My prayers for you and my role is to point you towards the road to self discovery. Look at the mirror of the soul, look within yourself and look at the mirror of God's Word, for therein is the place of self discovery.

Fatherly Talk 1.13

True Spiritual Growth – Growing in Love

Dearly Beloved

It is the desire of everyone to grow in the Lord through His grace. Yet in the desire is an element of selfishness that seeks one's own spiritual betterment and in its essence is negative and introvert. To avoid this and pursue positive spiritual growth, one must understand what true spiritual growth is. From the Spiritual World perspective, the true measurement of growth is in becoming a greater blessing to those around. At first the sphere of becoming a blessing to others could be small and just one-to-one but as one grows in love and in the Lord, the sphere of being a blessing increases. When one becomes like God, one finally becomes a blessing to all.

1. The greatest among us shall be the servant of all (Mark 10:43-45).
This contrasts with the way the world system is now organised where those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles, lord it over another and the greater one exercises authority over the lower (Mark 10:42). All Christians know within themselves that this is Jesus' instruction to us, His disciples, but many times this service of servanthood is only acknowledged in word but not practice in life. Most church organisations are influenced by the world system and have a hierarchy system. No doubt organizational authority is needed to govern multitudes but the heart, spirit, mind and attitude of those with organizational authority must be that of a servant like Jesus. The test of this true servanthood in the heart and mind is by answering the following questions:
 - a. Are you giving of your time, money or help to another?
Love should not be just in word and tongue but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18). True agape love requires that one give something to those we love. It could be helping another person financially or giving time to encourage another or using one's skill or training to freely help others. It is not possible to love another person without giving something of oneself to another. This is a spiritual law in the Spiritual World. Whether the giving be in spiritual or in material form, to love means to give. God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten son (John 3:16). Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for us (1 John 3:16). A true shepherd who loves the sheep gives his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

b. Who are you looking after? (Who are you taking care of?)

If you are only looking after yourself, then you know where the spiritual blockage in your life is. If your answer is that you are not looking after another person at all but only for yourself, you are a most selfish person and your life is full of darkness. If you are looking after your nearest loved ones, it is a good start and it is always the first place to learn to love and care for another person. If you are looking after people beyond your natural family, you are beginning the journey of moving beyond storge love (family love) and starting on agape love. In the Spiritual World, everyone is assigned to look after another person; and those with greater capacity look after many more people.

The only way one is allowed to progress upwards spiritually through the glorious spheres of God's presence is by looking after another person. If you fail in your task to look after another, you will not be allowed to advance. There is no room for selfishness; not even in spiritual pursuits of self-advancement as such advancement does not exist in the Spiritual World. Only self-advancement with a view to be a greater help and blessing to others is allowed. The greater your desire to give all of yourself to help others, the brighter is the light of the glory of God in your life. In fact your only motive for self-advancement should be to better serve others. The early apostles gave their lives in death that others might live (2 Corinthians 4:11-18) and received the weight of glory in their spiritual lives and for all eternity.

c. Why are you doing what you are doing?

We are trained in the natural world to be self-preservative and self-seeking for our own survival or the survival of our own inner circle. Such attitudes contain darkness. We must learn that unless we lose our own lives, we will not find life (Matthew 10:39). We must be willing to abandon our lives to altruistic love, in order to find true life. The law of the spiritual world is that unless you are giving you cannot receive. If you seek healing, give your life to help or pray for others healing. If you seek wealth, give and use your wealth to help others. If you seek spiritual growth and wisdom, give your time to help another person grow spiritually. We must deal a death blow to the object of our desire by turning it into a desire to help others in the very area in which we desire greatly. The energy of all our desires must be turned towards altruistic agape love; for when this is done, it is finally tuned properly in perfect harmony with God thus releasing the supernatural energy of God through our lives.

There is always a danger of a passionate desire for anything (whether material or spiritual) to become selfish and the answer to the 'why' will determine how in tune we are with God. God is pure altruistic agape love. There is not a single atom of selfishness in Jesus or in God the Father. God is pure benevolence personified. To be like God is to become altruistic in agape love like God without an atom of selfishness in our beings. If you dare to lose your own life in the abandonment of your life towards pure altruistic agape love, you will find that you gain an abundance of everything and experience true abundant life. The context of the abundant life in John 10:10 was in the context of a shepherd willing to lay down his whole life for his sheep (John 10:1, 11). Modern consumerist Christianity has taken this pure altruistic passage and through wrong emphasis produced a breed of self-centred materialistic Christians who care for nothing but themselves. The call of Jesus is to be a true disciple of His and live an altruistic life of agape love towards all.

2. The true light of glory in our lives is the passage of the light of God passing transparently through us to others; and all darkness is but the same light energy turned inwards. Jesus is the true light which gives light to every man who comes into the world (John 1:9).

a. Recognise God as the Source and Creator of all energy (John 1:1-3).

All energies whether they be presently revealed to be darkness or light comes from God who is the source and creator of all life and energy.

It is important to understand that darkness does not have any energy of itself; rather it is the turning of the original supply of God's life and energy inwards thus producing the illusion of darkness. The same white clouds that float through the skies can become dark clouds the moment light is no longer refracted or reflected through it. Thus the best way to overcome evil is with love for the love of God re-channels all the destructive energy into altruistic energy (Romans 12:21). We are to love God with ALL of our hearts and ALL of our souls and ALL of our minds and ALL of our strength (Mark 12:30). Thus if you are struggling with tremendous energy towards sin, or selfishness or worldliness, remember that the origin of that energy was from God and it was placed into your life for a specific purpose (to

fulfil your destiny). The darkness that you feel within is but the energy turned inwards towards self-gratification.

Firstly, do not oppose that energy but recognise that its origin is God. Secondly, recognise the need to turn that energy towards God and altruistic agape love. Thirdly, accept the energy of God (the grace of God) into your life. The law of physics is such that unless a motion is acted upon from an external source it will remain in the path that it was heading. The reception of the grace of God into your life will produce a turning (and a tuning – a shifting of momentum) of your heart, mind, soul and strength outwards towards compassion for others and love towards God. The reception of this grace energy can be a daily process as much as the need is felt (Hebrews 4:16). The reception of God's love within you enables you to love (Romans 5:5). The reception of God's energy grace within you enables you to live (1 Corinthians 15:10).

- b. Link to the flow of God's river of energy (John 4:13, 14; 7:37-39).

The well and the fountain receive their supply of water from underground hidden pools of water. God is equally present everywhere. In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). All things were created through Him and for Him; and He is before all things and in Him all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17). If your spiritual ears and eyes and senses were opened, you would be able to sense the source of all thoughts, the source of all music, the source of all life pulsating from the Almighty God Himself. Like our heartbeat vibrating through our whole bodies from the pulsations of the heart, the whole creation vibrates with the pulsations from the heart of God.

In our 'busyness' we do not hear nor sense the heartbeat of God in the Universe but in the quiet times of repose and meditations, you can feel it vibrating through your innermost being. God is with you and around you all the time (Romans 10:7-8). First, quiet your inner being until you can sense the flow of God's life and creative force through the Universe. Second, recognise that He is both within you and without you; that He is there with you – Yahweh Shamah. He is not far away at some unreachable distance; sense and be one with the Omnipresent God who loves you. Third, yield to the flow of life in Him inwardly as your arteries and veins yield to your heartbeat. Decades ago as a young Christian, I was always puzzled by the fact that many

Christians still are dry and thirsty whilst Jesus said that we will never thirst again. I understand now that it is a simple matter of tapping on to the omnipresence of God in you through Christ Jesus. Like wells and fountains, dirt and debris can block the flow of water. The only requirement is to daily keep the dirt and debris from blocking the flow and the wells will be fresh and the fountains strong. Similarly, the daily process of recognising and accepting His omnipresence is essential if we want to remain in the flow.

3. Every Christian knows that God is Omniscient (All knowing), Omnipotent (All powerful) and Omnipresent (All present). But what every Christian does not realize is that through Jesus we tap on the Omniscience of God through the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), and the Omnipotence of God through the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and the Omnipresence of God through the word of God (Romans 10:6-9). Through the exercise of faith, through the exercise of our new born spirit in the things of God, through the daily practice of Christian living we are releasing the power of God's presence in our lives. The key as always is to accept by faith, acknowledge and then train our senses in the omnipresence of God (Hebrews 11:1-6). Like a new born babe sensing the physical environment, we as new born spirits in the things of the Spirit World are told what is there first by others and then guided to feel, touch, see and hear the new environment. If you believe and stretch your spiritual senses, like Nathaniel, the day will come when you will see and hear more (John 1:50-51). Faith is the first little step that the spiritual toddler takes in exploring the Spiritual World.

I pray the Ephesians prayer for each of you, that God would open the eyes of your understanding and spirit man to experience with your spiritual senses all the wonders and creative energies of the Spiritual World opened to us by Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus
Ps Peter Tan

PS. My apologies for the delay today in this little talk (usually I try to send this talk by Saturday). Although it seems short, it takes at least several hours to write down all the flow of encouraging thoughts that I have towards each of you. Also it takes time to get into the sense and flow of God's love for you, which I always seek to do, before I even begin writing. For each word must be enclosed with the love and presence of God to each of you, dearly beloved ones.

Fatherly Talk 1.14

Grace, thanksgiving and joy

Dearly Beloved

Some of the beauties of the Bible are hidden in the original languages in which it was written. Although knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is not necessary to understanding the Bible, I believe that those languages were especially chosen to bring the revelation of God to man because of their unique characteristics. The Hebrew language has the unique “waw” consecutive which renders a verb as completed/eternal and has pictorial elements – which is useful in its prophetic power of viewing a future event as a completed event in the sight of God (eg. Genesis 17:5). The Greek has its precision in tenses which is useful in understanding the effect of a past event affecting the present and the future. Everything is centred on the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in His redemption of mankind (Hebrews 1:1, 2). To those who read New Testament Greek, there is an expansion of the understanding of the revelation of grace by noting the words from which the root word (chairō) for grace (charis) is derived. The following are all related to grace (Greek words Romanised for the benefit of non-Greek readers):

Chairō – the main root which has a sense of the meaning of joy and well being – to rejoice, to be merry, to be delighted, etc.

Chara – joy, merriment, delight, etc.

Charis – that which delights, grace, favour, etc.

Charizomai – to be delighted, to be favoured, etc.

Charisma – a gift of grace, a gift of favour, etc.

Eucharisteo, eucharistia – to be thankful or grateful, thanksgiving, gratitude

From the relation in the above words through their root (chairō), we can surmise the following:

1. That thanksgiving and gratitude are both the pre-requisites and the after effects of the reception of grace (chairō and eucharistia being related from the same root).

It is clear from the Old Testament that thanksgiving is the first door into the presence of God (Psalm 95:2; 100:4). Even the general goodness of God becomes cut off when men become ungrateful in their hearts towards God (Romans 1:20-21). Being ungrateful attracts a whole multitude of circumstances that leads from bad to worse into one’s life – whether the person is good or bad. All things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28). When one is in love with God (who has created us and given us freedom to

access all of His creation), one naturally would be grateful and filled with gratitude. All nature naturally sings with gratitude to God (Psalm 148) but mankind with free will has the ability to deny God and become ungrateful. The first step towards evil and sin is to lose the ability to be thankful and grateful to people and to God. The path towards life, grace and favour is entered through the gates of thanksgiving and marked by the milestones of grateful praise. For this reason we are exhorted to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Never let any circumstances, no matter how difficult or tough, rob your ability to give thanks to God. All the onslaughts of the enemy were designed with one purpose and one purpose alone, to take away your grateful and thankful heart to God and replace it with a heart of dissatisfaction and complaint. Once the devil succeeds in this, you are on the road of sin and destruction (Romans 1:21-24). Be thankful to God. Be thankful to the people around you. Be thankful in good circumstances. Be thankful in bad circumstances. Be thankful in ALL circumstances. It is not just a little exhortation to keep us happy; it is the KEY which will bring power and grace to ALL your circumstances. It is the ONLY way to enter into the road of grace and favour and it is also the ONLY way to keep yourself (to maintain) on that road without losing the position of grace and favour.

Practical application: If you are having problems coming out of difficult circumstances, this is the first place to check. Until and unless you are able to give thanks while in your present circumstances, your circumstances will never change. You must change your heart attitude first before your circumstances change.

2. That to be filled with joy is to be filled with grace; and to be filled with grace is to be filled with joy (chairō and chara being related from the same root).

When Jesus spoke of the disciples' joy being full, He was speaking of the reception of grace that was to be released upon His finished work (John 15:11; 16:20-24; 17:13). The unspeakable joy that is full of glory, which Peter spoke about in his epistle is the result of the reception of the grace which the prophets had prophesied would come upon the New covenant people (1 Peter 1:8-10). The joy of the Lord was the strength for the Old Testament people (Nehemiah 8:10). The grace (and joy) of the Lord is still our strength (and glory) in the New Testament (1 Pet 1:6, 8; 2 Timothy 2:1). The only way to overcome all manner of temptation and trials is through the joy of

the Lord (James 1:2). James was not just telling us to keep the right heart attitude; he was giving the KEY to come out of the trials and temptation unscathed. Faith is the substance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1). Abundant hope results in abundant faith. The God of Hope fills us with joy/grace causing us to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

If you find it hard sometimes to hold fast in faith, it is because you are holding on by your own strength. When the joy/grace of God is in you, the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to hold fast in faith because He causes the supernatural abounding of hope. The evidence of the grace of God being in your life would be the joy of the Lord. The signs of you beginning to depend on yourself rather than the grace of God within you is the loss of joy in your life. When you are truly abiding in the vine, the joy of the Lord is your strength (John 15:5-11).

Practical application: Watch your joy meter every day. If your joy meter is low, get back into the presence of God where there is fullness of grace and joy (Psalm 16:11; Hebrews 4:16). Jesus conquered the cross through the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). It is the eternal desire of Jesus that His joy be fulfilled in us (John 17:13).

3. That both the pre-requisite for the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the results of the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is joy/grace (charis and charisma/eucharisteo being related to the same root).

The kingdom of God is the domain of righteousness, peace and joy (Romans 14:17). When Peter raised the lame man from the ground, we can safely assume that the words of Jesus (that he can ask the Father in Jesus Name that his joy may be full) was on his mind when he said that what he had (grace, joy and life) he gave to the lame man (Acts 3:6). There is no doubt that the tidings of great joy (grace) that was to be upon all people would have included all that Jesus declared would come in the acceptable year of the Lord through the anointing of the Holy Spirit - healing and deliverance (Luke 2:10; 4:18-19). When the seventy returned with joy to report the power of the Lord, it is obvious that the joy they experienced was just the continued result of the power of the Holy Spirit upon them (Luke 10:17). The miracle ministry of Philip resulted in great joy (Acts 8:8). This is no ordinary joy but the aftermath of the abundance (greatness) of grace/joy that God was working on the whole community to whom Philip ministered. Despite opposition, this

supernatural joy/grace continued upon the disciples in Paul's ministry (Acts 13:52; John 16:22).

The only thing that Jesus did in releasing the power for the miracle of the bread in feeding the thousands was in giving thanks (John 6:11). This was particularly noted by John in writing the gospel (John 6:23 – they did eat the bread after that the Lord had given thanks). The supernatural filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives enables us to give thanks for all things (Ephesians 5:18-20). We are told not just to intercede for all men but also to give thanks for all men (1 Timothy 2:1). If we stop in our thankfulness towards the world, we stop the flow of grace from our lives to all the world. We are the custodians of the New Testament flow of grace; we should be as willing as God to bestow unconditional love and grace towards all men. The manifold wisdom of God of this dispensation of grace is to be manifested through the church (Ephesians 3:2, 8-10). The devil will seek to make us ungrateful for our country, our leaders, our fellow countrymen, our world so that our prayers for them become ineffective. We should endeavour through thick and thin to have a grateful thankful heart for everyone around us. For the atmosphere and attitude of thanksgiving is essential for the working of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Practical application: Be thankful for your spouse, your family, your children. Don't let the enemy make you an ungrateful person and hinder your prayers for your own loved ones. The seeds of divorce are found in the attitude of ungratefulness and the lack of thanksgiving. A strong loving marriage is built upon the foundations of thanksgiving and love. Always be thankful for your leaders, your country and your fellow countrymen. For you release the grace of God (and the power of God) upon their lives when you hold them before God in thanksgiving for them and in your prayers.

As his disciples were to the apostle Paul, each of you are my glory and my joy (1 Thessalonians 1:20). To see you have victory in life and closeness with God is my greatest joy and fulfilment.

God's abundant joy and grace be upon each of you.

Fatherly Talk 1.15

The Sanctified Life

Dearly Beloved

The word 'sanctified' (also translated as 'holy') means to be set apart. We are exhorted to be holy as God is holy (Leviticus 19:2). The first impression that all of us have when we read about holiness is that of moral purity. This would be true in the OT but in the NT the standards are much higher and we are to be in the world but not of the world (John 15:19; 17:14-17). In His sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it clear that His standards included more than conformity of actions to the moral code, it included conformity to the purity of heart and mind (Matthew 5:8, 20-48). This does not mean that we can achieve this by our own strength but rather we need to yield ourselves to the transforming grace of God in our character development (1 Corinthians 15:10) and the power of the Holy Spirit working within us (Romans 8:1-5).

This transformation completely changes our heart and our mind through the indwelling of Christ within us (Romans 8:5-11; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:3-18). Although it is Christ within and the grace of God by the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms us based on the finished work of Christ, knowing what the NT standard is helps us to honestly evaluate ourselves as to whether we have sufficiently allowed the transforming grace of God to change us from within. Besides being morally upright, being sanctified in the NT means that our heart's motivation and the method employed in our daily lives must be in line with the law of the love of God; which implies a complete absence of selfishness in all that we are and do.

1. Living a daily sanctified life implies a letting go of a worldly motivation in our daily lives. Our motivation and methods are not like that of the world (Mark 10:42-43; Matthew 6:32; 1 John 4:14-17).
 - a. For the fulltime minister this means that one should not be doing the ministry for the sake of earthly gain (money or recognition). During the apostle Paul's time, there were those who did the ministry work for the sake of selfish gain (Philippians 1:16). In our modern times, there are ministers like those that Paul described whose goal in the ministry is either money or recognition. Some of these will not go where the Spirit leads but would only go where the dollar leads. Others would use every opportunity to promote themselves rather than to promote Christ and others before themselves. All such behaviour is unsanctified and unholy in the sight of God. Although the innocent sheep

would still get ministered to, in spite of all these imperfections; for these ministers they have robbed themselves of eternal rewards by focusing on temporal rewards. In the Spiritual World, when a minister lowers his motivation to that of worldly gain, his entire spiritual vibration and light becomes more coarse and lower in quality. The extreme worldly ones radiate darkness around themselves; this means that their messages and lives while helping some are also causing many to be led into the realms of darkness in the Spiritual World.

What then should be the correct sanctified motivation for the minister? He should fulfil the ministry out of a pure love for God and a pure love for his congregation. He should love as Christ loves, willing to sacrifice for those he loves that they may grow and be nurtured under his care. I do believe in the principles of tithing and giving to ensure that a fulltime minister is properly supported but as far as the minister is concerned, with or without worldly gain or reward, he or she should seek to do his best to express his love for those under his care by giving his ministry free and without charge. This is the highest motivation and causes the spiritual light of the minister to grow bright and powerful in the Spiritual World.

- b. For all Christians this means that whether you work or are in business for yourselves, you DO NOT work NOR do business for the sake of worldly gain (money or recognition). Jesus told us to NOT be like the Gentiles (people of the world) (Mark 10:43; Matthew 6:32). We are told specifically to NOT love the world NOR the things in the world (1 John 2:15). We do not serve mammon but rather serve Christ (Matthew 6:24). Sanctified daily living means that when you go about your professional work life, you do it because you love to do what you are doing; with financial gain being incidental. If you are an architect, you love designing and creating things and work out of a pure love to do so; getting paid at the end of the day is only incidental to you. If you are an engineer, you love doing engineering stuff for the joy of doing those things. If you are a doctor, you love helping others get better with your skills. If you are a clerk or an assistant, you love being an assistant to help others achieve their goals. If you are a business person, you go about doing the business because you see it as a means to help and serve others in that particular area of meeting a need for goods or service; that would be the main eternal reward that you seek – of serving and helping others – with the temporal rewards as incidental. While

outwardly those of the world do the same jobs for the sake of money (they are serving mammon); the sanctified Christian goes about the same jobs for the joy of doing those jobs in themselves; the temporal rewards being incidental. For those who are afraid that they will lose out in the natural because they now focus on the daily eternal rewards, remember Jesus' words that ALL these things shall be added to you because your eyes and motivation are always on the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

What happens when such a drastic motivational change occurs within all Christians? Firstly, they will begin to find the true place of joy and fulfilment that God wants them to be in. In this life, we are supposed to find our natural and spiritual gifting (everyone has both natural and spiritual gifting). It may take time for some of us to discover them and also even after discovering them we might require a period of training in them. Search your heart, those things that God has placed in your heart would be those things that you desire to do; and your training and qualification for them (natural and spiritual) are merely to help you become a function of the natural and spiritual gift within you.

Once you discover your function and gifting, your motivation would then be to daily fulfil it for the joy of seeing your gifting become a blessing and avenue of joy to others. This should be the ONLY reason why we work. We should NEVER, NEVER work just for money (no matter how much you need it). It will sap your energy and joy; and in the end destroy yourself and your home and family. Mammon does not a good master make. Jesus is our only Saviour and Master. And He wants us to work out our daily lives by living for Him; which would be using all the natural talent and spiritual gifting He gave us to be an avenue of love and joy to others. This is what it means to do service as unto the Lord and not unto men (Ephesians 6:7). See yourself as a creative being releasing creatively your gifting on a daily basis. Do not see yourself as a dutiful slave working just for the pay check at the end of the month. The difference between the two is like the difference between light and darkness. One is sanctified, the other is unholy. From the Spiritual World perspective, the difference in the light radiating from a person is great between the sanctified motivation and the unholy motivation (darkness surrounds the unholy motivation). Whatever you do in word or

deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:17).

2. The goal of Holiness and Sanctification is beauty. Thus we have such a concept as the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2; 96:9; 110:3; 1 Chronicles 16:21, 29). When we are sanctified in our heart, mind and body we become beautiful in our spirit, soul and outward life. Moral uprightness without mental and heart purity is not true sanctification. On the other hand, mental and heart sanctification will always produce moral uprightness. All sin begins in our heart and in our mind before it is acted out (Matthew 5:27, 28; James 1:14, 15).

a. We cannot overcome sin from without, we can only overcome it from within.

There is the law of sin in our members (physical bodies) that wars against the law of our mind (Romans 7:23). Yet through all this internal warfare, there is the inward man that delights in the law of God (Romans 7:22). God helps us through the indwelling of Christ who strengthens this inner man (Romans 7:25; Ephesians 3:16-17). There is the impartation of love and grace which transforms our whole motivation and life-force (Romans 5:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 3:17-20). The result is a new energy force of the Holy Spirit spurring us from within into a life free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2, 11). Free choice is still present within us and we need to simply exercise this free choice by choosing to receive the thoughts and the mind of Christ for He is our sanctification (Romans 8:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:12-16). The simple key is to daily present (surrender) our hearts, minds and bodies to God as a living sacrifice and the transformation takes place automatically (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). By daily allowing the grace of God's pure love to energize and motivate us in our day to day affairs, we live a sanctified life that pleases God. Do everything out of the love of God and sin is banished out of your life for perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18. Fear is the only weapon of the devil - Hebrews 2:15).

b. We should always live for eternity, and examine all temporal motivations and goals in the light of eternity.

Our motivations are like anchors. When we anchor our motivations to those of God and eternity we are pulled upwards towards glory and light. When we anchor our motivations to this temporal world or on temporal things we are pulled downwards into realms of darkness. Jesus said that the devil is only mindful

of the things of men and not of God (Matthew 16:23). The temptations of Jesus by the devil are all in the temporal realm: satisfying his physical hunger, pride in showing off, kingdoms and riches of this world (Matthew 4:3-8). Where our treasure is, there will our heart also be and if it is with mammon, then it is full of darkness (Matthew 6:21-24). We are spirit beings destined for eternity and should never lower our motivations to the realm of bread and butter. There should be no fear of the lack of material needs for Jesus promised to take care of us more than the birds of the air (Matthew 6:26-33).

- c. We should regard work as creatively bringing forth the works God has prepared for us to walk in and not merely dutiful drudgery.

As such, we work for the pure joy of bringing forth that which God has worked into us (placed into us) (Ephesians 2:10). We are thankful for the grace of His talents and gifts which He has given to us, and thus in thanksgiving allow these talents and gifts to be expressed through our lives in ways that will bring blessing to others (Ephesians 4:16-17). Everything that we do becomes an expression of His love through us to others – a gift of love and not a work for wage. By this we practice the presence of God and are filled with the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19-20).

It is the high calling of God that we be holy (sanctified) as He is holy. Knowing that we are in the world but not of the world, Jesus prayed that we might be sanctified by the truth of His Word (John 17:17). Jesus sanctified Himself that we might be sanctified by the truth (John 17:19). Jesus had the pure motive of love flowing through Him 24 hours a day when He was on the earth and sought nothing of this temporal world. We are His disciples and He now lives within us. We should allow the same purity of love motivation to direct every detail of our lives.

We are sanctified in Him

Fatherly Talk 1.16

The powerful sense of inner knowing

Dearly Beloved

In the study of the book of Romans, the theological aspects of the great redemption of Christ are clear-cut and its promised results of freedom in Christ powerful. Many Christians can see it in the Word but still struggle to experience its reality in their lives. One of the key words to translating what is objective into what is subjective is the phrase “reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:11).

The word “reckon” comes from the Greek word “logizomai” and is used in the book of Romans nineteen times; the greatest numerical occurrence in the New Testament. The next greatest number of times is in 2 Corinthians (eight times), in 1 Corinthians (three times), in Mark (twice), in Philippians (twice) and once in Luke, Acts, Galatians, 2 Timothy, Hebrews, James and 1 Peter. It stands tall and prominent as an important principle in the book of Romans.

What is the full effect of the meaning of this word “logizomai”? Its first literal usage carries with it the meaning of the word “account” (as in the usage of an accounting term of listing the credits and debits in a ledger). In understanding its inherent meaning, translators have used it to mean reckon (Romans 4:4; 6:11), impute (Romans 4:6, 8, 11, 22, 23), esteem (Romans 14:14), think (Romans 2:3; 1 Corinthians 13:5, 11), regard (Acts 19:27 - counted), reason (Mark 11:31), numbered (Mark 15:28). As you can see from the various translations of this one word, there is a stretch of meaning from that of the mental area (think, reason) to that of an invisible spiritual area beyond feeling (impute), and that of a pure objective occurrence (numbered).

The root of the word “logizomai” is the word “lego” which has various forms as follows:

1. Lego – meaning ‘to lay, to arrange, to speak, to gather, to signify, to declare, to propound, to term, to designate, to call, to explain, to name, etc.’
2. Logos – meaning ‘word, reality, expression, form, thing, saying, etc.’
3. Logikos – meaning ‘pertaining to speech, pertaining to reason, pertaining to mind and soul, rational, spiritual, etc.’

4. Logios – meaning ‘gifted with learning, eloquence, words, knowledge, etc.’
5. Logizomai – meaning ‘to count, to calculate, to enumerate, to regard, to deem, to consider, to reckon, to think, to reason, etc.’
6. Logismos – meaning ‘a computation, act of computing, a thought, cogitation, a conception, device, etc.’
7. Logia – meaning ‘a gathering, a collection, etc.’

From the above analysis of all the derivations of “lego” it is obvious that there is no equivalent single English word that can convey the full depth of its meaning and application. Try to imagine what “Logos” means in John 1:1. It obviously means more than just “Word” as it is translated in the New Testament (though this is the best single word translation). The Greek language conveys the meaning of ‘logos’ with the meaning of ‘true reality, first cause, first thought, first existence, the orderly element, essence of nature, etc.’ And then imagine it as an act that covers the scope of its full conceptual meaning. To narrow it down for our teaching in the word “logizomai”, I would describe its full meaning in the phrase “an inner sense of reckoning or knowing deep within our spirits which is partly conscious to our soul (mind and affection)” or in short “inner knowing” – an inner sense of us, little creations of logos, vibrating in harmony and in sync with the Logos.

Thus in the book of Romans, God gave us an inner knowing of His imputation of righteousness upon us based on Christ’s finished work (Romans 4:1-12). The results of this inner knowing is

- a. Abraham became strengthened in faith (Romans 4:20)
- b. Abraham became fully convinced (Romans 4:21)

And we know the miraculous results of God resurrecting Abraham and Sarah to give them Isaac (Romans 4:17-19). Abraham again used this sense of inner knowing when he presented Isaac to the Lord ‘inner knowing’ that He would be able to raise Him from the dead (Hebrews 11:19). It would seem that this “inner knowing” (logizomai) would be:

1. An inner sense of faith.
Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Obviously, the confidence of this invisible reality of conviction has to be something inward (being invisible to the physical eye). Many people mistake the loud confidence of people to be great faith but true faith is inward by an impartation of the grace of faith. It is not so much us ‘trying something’ but rather us ‘accepting’ the reality of the Logos. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17 – although rhema is used here, we all know that rhema proceeds from Logos and is a part

of Logos applied specifically – like the rays of a sun in relation to the Sun). By accepting the inward revelation of the Word, we spiritually vibrate in harmony with the Logos, and have this sense of inner knowing. I believe it is this inner sense of faith which Peter sensed when he walked by the temple gates one day, a sense that he did not have on any other day before but only on that particular day in Acts 3 which resulted in him pulling the lame man up. It is this inner sense of faith that caused Paul to shout a command for a crippled man to stand up in Acts 14.

2. An inner sense of thought which produces peace.
We are exhorted to “inner know” (logizomai translated as meditate or think) the things which are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, praiseworthy and which flow with the inner sense of peace which passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7, 8). Apparently, this inner sense can be so powerful that it literally guards the heart and mind. The word ‘guard’ here implies a garrison around us like a fortress. Imagine a fortress of inner thought and knowing! This sounds like the secret place of the Most High which David sings about in his psalms (Psalm 91:1, 2). Note that in Psalms 91 there is trouble all around – terror by night, arrow by day, pestilence that walks in darkness, destruction that lays waste at noonday (visible to all), a thousand falling on one side and ten thousand falling on the right side – but it DOES NOT COME NEAR because of this secret place of the Most High – the inward confidence of David in the love of God.
3. An inner sense of trust and surrender activated by an inner free choice.
Apparently, this inner knowing can be within our control. This is implied when Paul instructed us to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God (Romans 6:11). We have the free choice to yield (translated present/surrender in Romans 6:13). There must therefore be an inner mechanism within us, partly involving our mind in accounting and reckoning, and involving our intelligent choice to inwardly trust. David declares that the Lord is his refuge and his stronghold and in Him, he puts his trust (Psalm 91:2). He chooses to SET his love upon Him (Psalm 91:14). David was a man who knew that God was a compassionate and loving God, he could set his love upon God because he had confidence in the compassion and love of God for him even when he makes a mistake (2 Samuel 24:14). And we know that we are able to love God because He first loves us (1 John 4:19). It is not just confidence in our love for God but our confidence in His love for us (Romans 8:37). In the same passage

where God encourages us to love Him so that He can work out all things for good, He includes a passage to let us know that it is through confidence in His love for us (Romans 8:28, 37-39). (*Please re-read Fatherly Talk 1.5*).

We are able to be set free to trust and surrender to Him unconditionally because we fully trust in the completed work of Christ for us – He loves us, He did it for us, He did it to show us how much He loved us, there is nothing more you can do or add to what He has done – ACCEPT HIS LOVE FOR YOU – and trust implicitly that His love for you will be your shield, your fortress, your secret place of the Most High, your all in all. This is what it means to reckon (inner know) yourselves dead to self and alive to God and thereby stand not under the law but under grace (Romans 6:11, 14). All the world and mankind in general sees a God of conditional love with quickness in punishment but through Christ's finished work on the cross we see purely a God of unconditional love. Don't be like the world, be like a true believer in Christ (like the disciple John) who has confidence in God's love for him more than his love for God – thereby calling himself the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 21:20 – *Reminder: re-read Fatherly Talk 1.5 for this teaching*).

In conclusion, this 'inner knowing' sense is above all maintained by an inner sense of love towards Jesus through all circumstances. Just as God's love towards us is unconditional, our love towards God should be stripped of every single condition that we put across our life's path that prevents us from loving God unreservedly. There is like 'an inner secret pact', an 'inner covenant' that you have made between you and God that you (having discovered how much God loves you unconditionally) will always (in season and out of season, through thick and through thin, in ease or in pain) love God unconditionally for the rest of your earthly life and the rest of eternity – never ever doubting that He loves you and never ever withholding your love for Him. As much as God loves us, He cannot make us love Him nor make us love one another. We must choose to love God and choose to love one another. Thus David SET his heart to love God and discovered the secret place of the Most High (Psalm 91:14). Like the three friends of Daniel who declared that God was able to save them but even if He does not, they will still choose God (Daniel 3:17-18). And Job despite his negative worries, his wrong views that it was God who did him evil (it was the devil) and his self-righteousness has one redeeming quality that sustained him throughout his trials – his implicit trust in God – declaring that 'though He slay me, YET will I trust Him (Job 13:15).

Let us offer to God the one thing which He cannot force us to do, the one thing more precious than any earthly gift at His altar (for all created things are His anyway), let us offer Him our implicit and unconditional love and trust. It will be a journey that leads to the very heights of the glories of heaven – the place of perfect oneness with God in Jesus – where we truly understand that God the Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus and is one with Him (John 17:23).

Fatherly Talk 1.17

Christ the way of life

Dearly Beloved

There is a vast difference between knowledge and wisdom. It is possible to have knowledge yet lack wisdom (whether it be concerning things of God or things of this life). Knowledge is a subset of wisdom, to have wisdom is to have the knowledge. The Bible tells us that Christ is our wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30). There is a vast difference between facts and truth. Facts are based on sensory perception but truth is the ultimate basis of all reality. Truth contains facts but sometimes facts do not contain truth. Example, it is a true fact that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west but the truth is that it is the earth that rotates from the west to the east and around the sun.

Every time we hear a sermon or read a good teaching, we immediately receive knowledge and facts but not necessarily wisdom and truth. If the sermon or teaching contains wisdom and truth then by meditating upon what is newly acquired (which always starts as newly acquired knowledge), it would through time become our conviction and lifestyle. Christianity is not about what we know, it is about who we are. Every week, I have sought to write about an aspect of spiritual truth or spiritual life in these devotionals. My main concern is that it not be just read (agreed with, if you are satisfied that it is scripturally sound) and then continue on your way.

Remember a truth is not truly yours until it becomes a part of your life and your conviction (background thinking that affects every area of your life). Just because we know about something does not mean that we truly know it. For this reason, whenever a revelation inspires you (through reading or hearing), it is important to learn to meditate upon it until it becomes a part of your life. If all Christians were to put to practice what they already know in Christ, this world would be a different world. When we all pass on from this world and enter the heavenly realm, it is not about what we know but it is about what we have been, that determines our future eternal role in Christ: to those who overcome various areas, the reward varies (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).

Paul speaks about the crown of righteousness laid up for him and those who loved His appearing and had fought the good fight of faith and run the race like him (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Those who have suffered greatly for Christ are rewarded to a greater measure (1 Peter 4:12-14; Luke 6:23). It is when one has successfully endured that the crown of life is given (James 1:12). At Christ's coming, each will be rewarded according to one's work (1

Corinthians 3:13-15; 4:5). Note: you are not rewarded according to what you know but who you truly are (your lifestyle and work). This does not mean that we go about in our own strength but rather we exercise our free-will to allow the strength (grace) of God to flow through our lives in works and not merely in knowledge.

1. Understanding the gospel of grace from the gospel (law) of works (Romans 3:27-31; 4:4, 14-16; 5:2).
 - a. Although everything has been completed in Christ, those who believe and receive the completed finished work of Christ still have their free-will intact to choose to yield to what proportion of the grace that Christ has imparted to everyone who believes. If free will were removed after acceptance, then Paul would not have to instruct that we do not let sin reign over our lives nor instruct that we present our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12-14). Those who do not acknowledge that free will is still involved end up in the wrong hyper-grace theology that every action or choice that they make from the moment they accepted Christ's finished work does not matter – that their thinking and actions of sin do not matter anymore since Christ has paid the price for past, present and future sins. Paul himself discourages such theology (Romans 6:1). Free choice still matters and as long as there is free choice, there will be differing degrees of free choice being exercised; thus the gospel of grace will have differing transformation effects in proportion to that free choice. The fallacy that the gospel of grace works automatically in our lives without free choice is a gross error and misunderstanding of Scriptures and personal responsibility.
 - b. Secondly, where there are differing degrees of free choice, there will be differing degrees of effort, faith and work. It is a fallacy to think that there is no more free choice effort in the gospel of grace. There is still the free choice to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (Romans 8:1). There is still the free choice to live and think according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (Romans 8:5, 6). There is still the free choice to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1, 2). There is still the free choice to labour more abundantly in grace (1 Corinthians 15:10). There is still the free choice to take time to behold the glory of the Lord and be transformed proportionally (2 Corinthians 3:18). There is still the free choice not to lose heart but to renew our inward man daily (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). There is still the free choice to stay in

grace and not go back into the works of the law (Galatians 5:1-4). There is still the free choice to bow our knees to God and allow the Spirit of God to strengthen our inner man (Ephesians 3:14-21). There is still the free choice to walk in the works which God has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:8-10). There is still the free choice to forget those things which are behind and press on and lay hold of that which Christ has laid hold of us (Philippians 3:12-14).

God may love all of us equally and we all have received the same capacity to love God back for we love Him because He first loved us – and He has shown His love for us in Christ (1 John 4:19). But loving God back (through His love in us) is a FREE CHOICE that God cannot force on us. If there is no free choice then it isn't really love. God loves all of us equally but we all who are in Christ do not love Him equally because we all have a free choice as to how much we choose to love God; as to how much we choose to not love the world but to choose to give all our love to Him and also a free choice in how much we allow the love of Christ to transform us to love one another (1 John 2:15; 4:7-11).

The key to how the gospel of grace works is through faith (Romans 4:16). Since there are differing levels of faith, obviously there will be differing levels of grace demonstrated. Even when we understand that the faith He speaks about is the gift of His faith, resulting in the gift of His grace (Ephesians 2:8; Acts 3:16 – Fatherly Talk 1.9), we all have a free choice as to the level of faith developed while in this life. God still gives fairly and freely to all because everyone of us has an equal opportunity to develop great faith through the Word of God.

- c. Thirdly, having understood that there is still free choice and personal effort (and personal responsibility) in the gospel of grace, we need to understand that the effort exercised is different in quality and quantity from the effort exercised by the law of works.

It is different in quality because the strength for the effort comes not from our selves but from the impartation of grace within us (1 Corinthians 15:10). It is our free choice to choose to yield to this strength within. It is our effort and yet not us – rather Christ in us (Galatians 2:20). Experientially, it feels like an effort effected through union with Christ. There is still consciousness

of effort but the consciousness of effort is more the effort made to be in union with Christ – to abide in Him (John 15:1-5). It is more a yielding and an abiding rather than a doing.

It is a paradox of effort because it is at the same time surrendering as it is making energetic effort in the day to day life. Besides being like the picture of a branch attached and yielded to the vine, it is like being in a river which flows into you and out from you (John 4:14; 7:38). Although there is a conscious free choice involved, there is also a rest associated with it (Hebrews 4:10).

The greatest consciousness though, is the consciousness of Christ – a diligent looking (and consciousness of Christ) who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2, 15). There is awareness that 100% of all the energy and effort that is flowing from within us is of God and not ourselves. It is the energising of God within us (Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 2:12-13). There is also the experience of the love of God that is energising all the faith energy within us (Galatians 5:6).

It is different in quantity because this internal grace energy is not received all in one lump sum but rather it is imparted measure by measure as one through time and yielded effort learns to internalise and work out each measure of grace imparted – grace upon grace (John 1:16). The gifts and works that we bring out in our individual lives will differ according to the measure of grace given (Romans 12:6; Galatians 2:8, 9; Ephesians 4:7, 11).

Potentially, we are only as strong as the measure of grace within us and thus we should pay heed to flow with the grace within us rather than to externally copy or imitate another person (2 Timothy 2:1 be strong – Greek word ‘endunamo’ - strength from within). Remain at rest and never go beyond the measure of grace that God has imparted (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10). Every one of us has equal opportunity to increase and abound in grace (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 4:15, 16) but remember you must grow grace upon grace, measure by measure. Until and unless you have been faithful to the measure you already have, the next measure cannot come for your capacity is not there yet to receive it (To him that is faithful in little more will be given – Luke 16:10; 19:17).

2. The end goal of all knowledge is that it becomes a part of our lives and not just knowledge in our head. The difference between the foolish man and the wise man is not that the foolish man did not know how to build the house, rather the foolish man built the house on the wrong foundation (Matthew 7:24-27).

Firstly, the wise man is a doer and not a mere hearer. It is highly important for each of you, dearly beloved, that you do not think too highly of yourselves, that you already have acquired some level of spirituality just by mere knowing about it. Whenever, you find some knowledge and truth that resonates within your spirit, take time to go over it from time to time until it is absorbed into your system and becomes a part of your heart and life and not just your head.

While I delight in writing fresh truths and manna for your spiritual lives through sermons and through these talks, I need to remind you that reading them once may not be sufficient; those that resonate within your spirits need to be repeatedly read and meditated upon until they become a part of your subconscious, and then a part of your lives. My love and goal for each of you is not merely impartation of truths and knowledge but the very transformation of your lives into the full glory of Christ. Thus from time to time, I need to sound these reminders like a good father should.

Secondly, the wise man built on the right foundation – which is the foundation of Christ. This means that he also depended on the strength of Christ to be a doer and not just his own strength. May the strength of Christ within each of you grow stronger day by day as you commune with Christ. May each of you grow deeper in your union with Christ through the revelation of His abounding love for each of you.

My prayers for you are that Christ would reveal Himself to each of you: within you and through you.

Fatherly Talk 1.18

Christ in us the hope of glory

Dearly Beloved

Different movements and teachings may come and go but the essence of the Christian life is always the same – the miracle of Christ living within us through His Holy Spirit. This is the one distinguishing point between the Old Covenant people and the New Covenant people. The Old had the Spirit upon only, whereas the New have the Spirit upon and within (John 14:16-17). The laws of God are no longer just words on a tablet as an external command but literally written in our hearts and our minds as part of our nature (Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-18). Paul speaks of the mystery which was hidden from ages past, which is finally expressed through Christ in us, the hope of glory. When we finally comprehend how God the Father was in Christ as Christ is now in us, we will do the works that Jesus did and greater works (John 14:11-12).

1. The indwelling of Christ in us is both immediate upon reception of Christ and yet progressive in its fullness.
Paul continues to pray for the indwelling of Christ for the Ephesians even though they have already accepted Christ and are now part of the redeemed church (Ephesians 3:17). The knowledge of His abiding in us is, of course, through the Holy Spirit whom He has given to us (1 John 3:23; John 14:16-17).
 - a. The greatness of His indwelling within us is directly proportional to the strength of our inner man (Ephesians 3:16-17). This inner man is the new creation, our new spirit man, the new heart which came about through the born-again work of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:5; Ezekiel 36:26).
 - b. The strengthening of this inner man is achieved by prayer (Ephesians 3:14-16), by the word (1 Peter 2:2) and by spiritual exercise (Hebrews 5:12-14).
 - c. The results of the fullness of Christ within us are the same as the fullness of the Word within us and the same as the fullness of the Spirit (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18-19).
 - d. The fullness of Christ, the fullness of God and the fullness (full reception and comprehension) of love are the same (Ephesians 3:18-19).
 - e. The fullness of the indwelling is directly proportional to the level of faith (Ephesians 3:17). When Stephen was full of faith, he was also full of the Spirit (Acts 6:5).

2. The mind of Christ and the affections (splagna) of Christ are available to us through His indwelling.
 - a. The mind of Christ within us helps us to discern the things of the Spirit from the things of the natural man (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). This mind of Christ within us is humble yet authoritative which garrisons our own minds and hearts with the peace of God through the indwelling of Christ within us (Philippians 2:5; 4:7).
 - b. The affections of Christ through Paul helped him to love as Christ loved (Philippians 1:8; 2 Corinthians 4:1-18; 5:14; Philippians 2:1-2).

3. The secret of Paul's life was that he achieved all that he did through the indwelling of Christ within him.
 - a. He considered himself dead (crucified) and only Christ living through him (Galatians 2:20). His key revelation was that God revealed His son in him and was working (energising) his apostleship from within him (Galatians 1:16; 2:8).
 - b. He constantly recognises that it was the energising of God within him who helped him achieve everything (Ephesians 3:7, 20; 1 Corinthians 15:10). It was always according to the power that energises IN us (Ephesians 3:20).
 - c. He discovered that his weakness and inability became the opportunity for the ability of God's power to work through him (2 Corinthians 12:10). Indeed, our endurance depends not on our own ability but rather on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).
 - d. Paul encourages us to prove ourselves (of our own inability and weakness), to examine ourselves that indeed it is Christ IN us (who does the work) otherwise we would be disqualified (2 Corinthians 13:4-5).

It is obvious just from a sampling of the above verses how important it is to understand that ALL Christian life and ALL ministry life must flow from Christ within us. How important then must it be for us to strengthen our inner man that Christ might live in fullness through us! We need not wait till we come into a position of self discovery of our own inabilities or the futility of our own self-efforts before discovering that the power of Christ within us can excel in our weaknesses. If we acknowledge and recognise it every day when we wake up, every night before we sleep and sub-consciously 24 hours a day, then we can learn to tap on the continuous flow of Christ's power within us.

In Ephesians 3:14-21, Paul gives us the keys to continuously maintain this working inner relationship with Christ within us:

- Our inner man needs to be strengthened.
- We need to be grounded and rooted in love.
- We need to comprehend (Greek word – *katalambano* which also means ‘to receive accordingly with’ or ‘to lay hold of’ – Philippians 3:12) with all the saints.
- We need to know the love of Christ.

Notice that each leads to the other – the inner strengthening leads to Christ’s indwelling which leads to being rooted and grounded in love, which then leads to reception with all the saints, which in turn leads to knowing the width, length, depth and height of the love of Christ – that we might be filled with the fullness of God.

Being strengthened is a process, rooted and grounded in love is a process and to lay hold of is a process. Many people stop at the first process. Others touch the second process and stop. Paul expresses a desire to complete the entire process in his life and ministry – he wanted to *katalambano* that for which Christ has *katalambano* (Philippians 3:12). *Katalambano* has also been translated as ‘taken’ (Mark 9:18; John 8:3, 4), as ‘perceive’ (Acts 4:13; 10:34), as ‘obtained’ (1 Corinthians 9:24) and as ‘attained’ (Romans 9:30). It is possible that Paul speaks of a transformation or even translation (taken, obtained, attained) into the realms of glory (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:18-21) – complete glorification into absolute Christlikeness (Romans 8:29-30). This perfection of the abiding of God’s love within us will cause us to be like Him in eternity (1 John 3:1-3; 4:16-19).

Everyday allow the inner strength of Christ to flow within you. But don’t stop there, allow that inner strength or river to lead you to a fresh revelation of the love of God, planting another root into the love of God, and then allow it to flow forth from you in comprehension towards the body of Christ and the whole world. Yes, every day is a fresh revelation of God’s love – for God is love.

May each of you grow into the fullness of the love of God.

Fatherly Talk 1.19

Giving place to grace and love

Dearly Beloved

The Old Testament Hebrew word for 'grace' is 'chen' which has the root meaning of 'favour.' The New Testament Greek word for 'grace' is 'charis' which includes the meaning of 'unmerited favour from God' but also means 'an unmerited energy substance from God' – and, of course, in the NT it is based on the finished work of Christ. We need to remember that the grace and favour given in the OT is also given based on the finished work of Christ, except that the OT people looked forward through types and shadows to the finished work of Christ. Because the OT people were not born again nor had the Holy Spirit indwelling in them, they could only receive grace upon (positional grace) and not the substance energy of grace (spirit-energy substance grace). This situation is the same in terms of the coming of the Holy Spirit – He is only upon the OT saints but can be both upon and within the NT saints. Thus we have a better covenant because we have all the benefits of the Old Covenant plus more in the New. In the experiential and subjective operation of grace in both the OT and the NT, the person through which grace is operating would still have to have a sense of the reception of God's love and the outworking of that love.

Even though the operation of grace and favour was limited to positional grace in the OT, it was still a very powerful force that changed people, nations and provided miracles. The story of Joseph in the book of Genesis is a story of the grace of God working. Sold by his brothers into slavery and estranged from his father's love and care, Joseph started at the bottom of the ladder in society and 'worked' his way up. The reason I highlight 'work' is because although Joseph was a very hardworking and diligent man, it was not what he did alone that brought him promotion but rather the grace and favour of God. The most hardworking man without the opportunities or doors that God and His angels open for him would still be nowhere and nothing. I believe in hard work and diligence but it needs to be matched with an even greater surrender and faith in God (Hebrews 11:6). The key to tapping on the grace of God is to at the same time – simultaneously - realise that you are nothing and yet abiding in Him you could be everything (John 15:4-8). It is not a paradox, it is the ONLY way – the key - to realize grace and favour in our lives.

1. Yahweh was WITH Joseph and he was a prosperous man (Genesis 39:2 - LKJV). His prosperity and success came only AFTER the Lord was WITH him. In fact, Potiphar took note of the fact that the

Lord was with him and not just because he was a hardworking man (Genesis 39:3). When Potiphar made Joseph overseer (ruler) over his entire house, the blessing of the Lord was on ALL that he had in the house and in the field (Genesis 39:4-5). When a business, church or country is under a man or woman full of the grace of God, the entire dominion of that same person will be filled with the grace, favour and blessing of God. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true – when a person is under condemnation and curse, everything under the person suffers along: humans, beasts and things.

Which brings the point that if you are not experiencing the grace of God in your life, you need to learn to humble yourself and fellowship or come under the ministerial accountability of one who has the grace of God upon their lives – you will begin to experience the overflow of grace from them. Even bad old Potiphar was humble enough to admit it. (As a side point, it is also important to whom we bring our tithes, offerings and support – if it is a ministry that does not walk in the grace of God, you are also responsible for the condemnation that the particular ministry or church continues to propagate – tithes and offerings are the outward expression of our spiritual partnership; you are a partner to whomever you give and will be called to account in eternity: you can give without love but you cannot love without giving. Giving should never be coerced or compulsory but like in everything else in life – if we are careful in what foods we eat, in what clothing we buy, in the expenditure for education, home, etc, in our family; then we should also be careful to whom we become a spiritual partnership with. This side point is given because of what the angels have been telling me in one of my spiritual encounters – about the importance of whom we partner with through our giving. The angels told me that humans value money and although the love of money is the root of all evil, stewardship of it is one of the tests of our relationship with God – if one is not faithful with money – mammon – one will not be faithful in the things of God – Matthew 6:19-24).

2. And even when Potiphar threw Joseph into the prison, the Lord was WITH Joseph and gave him favour with the chief jailor (Genesis 39:21). No prison or darkest pit can stop the grace of God. Joseph was innocent of his crimes. A lot of people in the world suffer injustices and cry to God. Yet, it is only the grace and favour of God that will redeem and free us as it freed Joseph. We need to understand what was going on within Joseph's heart. With all that he had suffered, he could have developed unforgiveness or anger, etc. Instead he continued steadfast in his faith in God and sought to do

right even when tempted to do wrong. Doing right seemed to put him in an adverse position in the natural but the grace of God is above all. We could say that Joseph loved God enough to want to please Him in his life in everything. This love that he had also overflowed to his care for others. Note his love and concern for the prisoners under his care (Genesis 40:6). I am sure that at the back of Joseph's mind, he would still have the dreams that God gave him (Genesis 37:1-11). It certainly would take the grace of God to establish him to greatness as his situation in prison looked hopeless.

Have you noticed how often God allows His people to come to the end of themselves before He acts? Abraham who was promised a child when Sarah was barren, was still not sterile – as he produced Ishmael with Hagar – when the promise was given (Genesis chapters 15 and 16). He needed one miracle in the opening of Sarah's womb. God waited until he needed two miracles, when Abraham himself was sterile (Romans 4:19) before He announced the giving of the child (Genesis chapter 17). Why did God do this? So that Abraham would understand that it was 100% the grace of God and there was nothing from him (except faith and trust in God) that wrought the double miracles – the paradox of being nothing in ourselves but able to do everything in God. Why did God take His people through the wilderness? It was to humble them and test them (Deuteronomy 8:2). God always wants to bring us to the position of recognising that we are nothing without Him before He can do miracles through His grace in us. Did God choose the Israelites because they were powerful or intelligent or great? No! He chose them because He loved them and frankly told them that they were the least of all the nations (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). He wanted to show them His mercy and grace! (Deuteronomy 7:9).

It was only when Joseph was at the lowest point in his life, knowing that nothing he could ever do would make his dreams come true, that God began to work His grace and favour in Joseph's life and create the set of circumstances for His promotion (Genesis chapters 40 and 41). Yes, indeed! It was not Joseph alone, but the grace of God that established and set him upon the highest authority possible in Egypt. Joseph tapped upon the grace of God through understanding that in all circumstances, God still loved him and he still loved God (and loved others). Grace and love always work together because grace starts with God's love for us. We then respond with love towards Him and towards others. This is what is meant by giving place to love and grace. We must be secure in God's love for us; then we respond by loving Him with all our hearts, minds and souls through

all circumstances – and our neighbours as ourselves. In a sense it is not even our love but God’s love through us. Holding ourselves in this position produces the firepower of the grace of God upon our lives. No circumstances or situations can hold us from being freed into the grace of God as long as we keep responding to God’s love and never ever doubting His love for us (Romans 8:28).

3. In the New Testament, this grace of God through Christ is so powerful it can even fill the atmosphere and the whole community. When great grace was upon the early church, great power ensued such that even the shadow of Peter brought healing to thousands (Acts 4:33; 5:12-16). The great growth of the church was called the grace of God (Acts 11:19-23). With the grace of God at work, Gentiles begged to hear the gospel and Paul exhorted them to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:42-44). God granted signs and wonders only because He wanted to confirm the word of His grace (Acts 14:3). To his dying breath, Paul was willing to testify to the grace of God in his life (Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:9). It is only the grace of God that can establish us and give us an inheritance among the sanctified (Acts 20:32). Besides being a powerful anointing upon, this grace is working from within us powerfully (2 Timothy 2:1; Galatians 2:8,9; 1 Corinthians 15:10).
4. The secret and key to discovering and releasing the grace of God in our lives is in the paradox of understanding that we are absolutely nothing without Him but we can do everything in Him. Paul discovered the grace of God powerfully in his early life and first missionary journey (if we count his visions in 2 Corinthians 12:1-5 as the same time as when he was stoned to death in Acts 14:19-20). He learned the secret that when he was weak THEN was he strong (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10). He understood that it was the grace of God in him, through him, upon him that would make him successful and strong in every area of his life and ministry. Every minister and every anointed business person needs to discover this truth experientially in their lives. If you haven’t discovered that you are nothing yet, you will never discover the secret of the grace of God. But the day you discover that Christ in you is everything and that there is nothing that you can or will receive based on your own merit – but that it can only be received **BASED ON THE LOVE AND MERCY** of God – then and then only will you be able to say I can do **ALL** things **THROUGH** Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13).

I have tried as much as I can to make this understanding of the grace of God as clear as possible for each of your subjective experiences. Every one of us will have to experience this afresh every day of our lives – otherwise it will not be the grace of God but just ourselves alone which can only lead downhill. The KEY, the SECRET, is to FIRST be fully assured in faith and reception of the greatness of God the Father's love and mercy toward us. Then give place to this love. Allow this love to change and transform you. His love is life and light and strength. As this love transforms you, respond 100% to this love and love God back with all your heart, mind, soul and strength – and overflow in this love to all around you. By this manner and this manner alone, knowing that you are nothing in yourself but everything in God, you will be daily releasing the grace of God upon you and through you.

God's richest love, mercy and grace be upon each of you, dear ones. I love each of you dearly and desire that you would experience this wonderful love of the Father God.

Fatherly Talk 1.20

More than conquerors

Dearly Beloved

Romans chapter 8 is one of the most fascinating passages in Paul's writings, especially being a book with strong theological themes. It was the epistle which Paul wrote to a church that he had not planted, thus his great detailed description of the salvation plan of God for all man. After establishing the fact that ALL things work together for good to those who love God (a powerful promise of God based only on the condition that we love Him; since being called according to His purpose is given when one is already born again), he turns around and speaks about the great love that God has for all of us.

To those who are greatly loved of God:

If God is for us, who can be against us – Romans 8:31

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

Who shall separate us from the love of God? – Romans 8:35

And he concludes with – Yet in ALL these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us – Romans 8:37.

It is a powerful thing to be greatly loved of God.

1. God's love for us is unconditional.

God demonstrated His love for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). Every single human being has experienced doubts of God's love for them due to the consciousness of their own imperfections and failures. We should understand that if this is the basis to receive God's love, no human being will ever qualify for we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). God's love for us is based on WHO HE IS and not WHAT WE ARE (1 John 4:8). The extension of His love to us is a revelation of His righteousness not our own righteousness (Romans 3:21, 22). No matter who we are or who we were, no matter what we have done, no matter what the circumstances, God's love for us never wavers or weakens but continually beats in the heart of God at a steady strong pace.

Indeed Paul says that he is persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 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

(Romans 8:38-39). Are we fully persuaded? Are we fully convicted? Are we fully established and grounded in the eternal immutable unchangeable fact and truth that GOD LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY? As long as there is one iota or one micron of a doubt still in our beings that God does not love us, the enemy will turn it against us and it will hinder us from experiencing all that God wants for us. We should meditate on this truth every day and every hour of our lives until both in our consciousness and in our subconsciousness, we are fully assured that God loves us to the fullest extent. We need to be utterly grounded and rooted in the eternal understanding that God loves us (Ephesians 3:17-19). True spiritual maturity and perfection is when we no longer have any more doubts of God's great love for us.

2. God loves us AS much as He loves Jesus and revealed His love for us through Him.

The revelation that Jesus came to bring us was not just that God shows His love for us through Him but that God loves us as much as He loved Jesus (John 17:23). Think about everything that God has done for Jesus and through Jesus; everything that Jesus has and experienced is now available to us, heirs and joint heirs in Christ (Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7). God who is rich in mercy and BECAUSE OF THE GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6). And the purpose of the revelation of Christ is that now in the New Testament and in the ages to come, He might show to all principalities and powers the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7; 3:9, 10).

The whole story of redemption was not just that we might have our sins forgiven and be made whole again – rather the whole story of redemption was that through Christ Jesus, God would succeed in showing us how much and how greatly He loves us; that He loves us AS much as He loves Jesus. Even in the deepest and darkest hell, the love of God is there (Romans 8:39; Psalm 139:8). Hell is when people refuse to acknowledge the love of God and completely reject His love for them. Hell is when people deny the love of God and are fully convinced that God hates them and wants to punish them. The beginning of hell, even in this earthly life, is when people start doubting the love of God for them.

Some people think that the revelation of God's love would make them too complacent and easy with sin; on the contrary, if anyone

truly has the love of God revealed to them deep in their hearts – if they are truly touched by the love of God – they would instantly and completely forsake all unrighteousness and live the rest of their lives and for all of eternity for God. A poet once said that if truly the redemption story of Jesus for all mankind is true, one would be willing to crawl on their knees to cross an ocean of broken glass to tell the entire world the marvellous story of God’s love for us.

Well, it was this great constraint of God’s love that a blasphemer like Paul became an apostle enduring labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often, five times receiving forty stripes minus one, three times beaten with rods, once being stoned, three times shipwrecked, a night and a day floating in the deep ocean, in journeys often, enduring perils, in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 5:14; 11:23-28). The revelation of God’s love has transformed ordinary men and women making them giants of faith and heroes to mankind throughout all of human history. The Fox’s book of martyrs records the free choice of people who had received God’s love and were willing to endure being thrown into lion’s dens, beheadings, torture, all manner of deaths, etc. No one can truly experience the love of God and remain the same; everyone is transformed by the light of the glory of His love (2 Corinthians 3:17; 4:1-18; 5:12-15).

3. The love God imparts a substance of His being; a part of Himself that He gives to us.

There are four different Greek words for love: *storge* (family love), *eros* (sensual love), *phileo* (brotherly love) and *agape* (God-kind of love). In the story of Peter and Jesus after the resurrection, Jesus was seeking to bring the understanding of Peter to the fact that the love required was not just ordinary ‘*phileo*’ love but that ‘*agape*’ love was required when he asked Peter whether he ‘loved with *agape* love’ (John 21:15-17 – Fatherly Talk 1.5). On the third time that Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him, Jesus used ‘*phileo*’ rather than ‘*agape*’ as in the first two questions because Peter kept saying that he *phileo*-loved Jesus during the first two times – outlined as follows:

“Simon, son of Jonah, Do you *agape*-love me more than these?”

Peter said to Him, “Yes, Lord, You know that I *phileo*-love you.”

He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, Do you *agape*-love me?”

Peter said to Him, “Yes, Lord, You know that I *phileo*-love you.”

He said to him a third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you phileo-love me?”

Peter, grieved that Jesus had asked the third time, said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I phileo-love you.”

There are many teachings that we can derive from the above but when reading in the Greek format, you can see that Peter could not raise himself to love Jesus with agape-love but always responded with phileo-love. There is nothing wrong with phileo-love as it is part of the believer’s concept too (John 5:20; 11:3, 36; 16:27; 1 Corinthians 16:22; Titus 3:15; Revelation 3:19). We are encouraged to love one another and to love God with phileo-love.

The repetition of Jesus admonition to Peter three times could also be linked to Jesus bringing a sense of inner healing to Peter, who had denied Jesus three times – having succeeded in getting Peter to declare and confess his love for Jesus three times. The context of Peter’s denial of Jesus was his over-confidence in his own love for Jesus; of which he boasted that he was ready to go to prison and even face death for Jesus (Luke 22:33). We all know how miserably he failed (Luke 22:54-62). Thus before the same smell of the coal-fire which would have brought the painful remembrance of his triple denial, Jesus ingrained into Peter a new memory of his tripled proclaimed love for Jesus (Luke 22:55-56; John 18:18; 21:9).

In this story is also the teaching that our own love for Jesus is insufficient, we need His love for us and His love in us to enable us (to give us the love-power) to love Him. We can only agape-love Him because He first agape-loved us (1 John 4:19). And we can only agape-love others because He agape-loved us (1 John 4:11). Peter learned this important lesson, when later in his epistle, he speaks about phileo-love growing into agape-love (2 Peter 1:7). The key is that the divine nature is imparted into us (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9). We are not just positionally loved by God but we also have the substance of His love poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5).

This love has all the wonderful qualities of 1 Corinthians 13 and this love energizes the gift of faith within us (Galatians 5:5). This love is the very substance of the life and light of God which gives us eternal life within us even while in our temporal bodies (1 John 3:14-15). When we abide in this love, God abides in us (1 John 4:16). Thus God is not asking us to love Him with our own strength but He is giving us the opportunity to be loved by Him, to receive His love within us and to be enabled by the substance of this love to love Him

and to love others, too. This whole process can only be started by us KNOWING and BELIEVING in the love that God has for us (1 John 4:16).

With all my heart within me, I encouraged you to ALWAYS BE ASSURED and FULLY PERSUADED that God loves you; and to allow this wonderful love of God to transform us such that the power of this love enables us to love God supernaturally and to love one another.

Fatherly Talk 1.21

The Nature of Agape Love

Dearly Beloved

It is an understanding among believers that the love of God in us is not mere emotional love (although feelings can be present from time to time). It is not based in our soul which would mean that it is not limited by our understanding nor is it limited by our ability to feel it. It is based in our spirit man and released by the act of our will in free choice. We choose to love; of course, predicated by us first having received the love of God within us. Although the love of God is beyond our highest comprehension (Ephesians 3:19), we do need to quantify it to a small extent so that we know when our love is not flowing from God's love but is being limited by our own soul love. Paul did try to describe it in 1 Corinthians 13 and we can expand upon his description. Unless we quantify what the love of God is, we might not realize that we have not been living in the love of God at all. We need a measuring yardstick to check on the genuineness of our love – whether it be our own love or the love of God within us.

1. The love of God has already been imparted into our hearts in Christ, thus it is right for God to command us to love.

And it is not given in little drips but rather has been poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5). Also note that the command of Jesus for us to love is based upon the fact that He has loved us – we thus love as we have been loved (John 13:34). We need to have faith that we ARE greatly loved and accepted by God in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:6 – He has made us accepted in the Beloved). This is not just a 'gooey, fuzzy' feeling but it is a child-like perfect trust, belief, faith and confidence in the greatness of the love of our Father; which brings a complete child-like abandon, care-free and absolute surrender to Him. Our heart must be 'fixed' on God (Psalms 57:7; 108:1; 112:7). From the Hebrew word 'kun' (prepared, set up, established), I believe it is like a spiritual bonding of love, where our heart beats in accord with God's heart of love (Ephesians 3:17-18 established in love).

It sometimes gives our souls nice feelings but it is more than a feeling. It is a deep, incomprehensible, surpassing understanding KNOWING OF BEING LOVED AND LOVING. Sometimes deep meditation brings out the spiritual and soul experiences of this love gushing out like a fountain from our hearts but at all times – in season and out of season – it will always be there like an

underground stream below the subconscious. And this love can grow and fill our whole being (Ephesians 3:19).

2. The love of God within us will cause us to NEVER think evil of any human being. This includes even our enemies; because no one is born evil, and God's love sees and understands how each person became evil. This love only looks on in pity, mercy and compassion but never thinking evil (1 Corinthians 13:5 Love thinks no evil). With this love, there is neither possibility of you harbouring evil toward another nor thinking the worst of others. This is even when your love grows in discernment (Philippians 1:9).
3. This love of God within us is unconditional and can NEVER stop loving. Just as nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39), nothing can ever cause your love towards others to cease. No ugliness of spirit, soul or body, no circumstances, no misunderstandings and human imperfections can ever stop you continuing to love another person. All else may fail but love never fails for it has the supernatural capacity to bear all things, believe through all things, have hope in all things and endure all things (1 Corinthians 13:7).
4. This love of God within us is willing to remain unrequited. Yes, even if it is only from you towards others and is never repaid, nor respected. Yes, even if abuse is thrown back in response to your love, you will keep on loving. For this love can suffer long and never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4, 8). This love keeps seeking to give with no end.
5. This love is pure love and does not indulge in evil or sin. It does not rejoice in iniquity but only in truth (1 Corinthians 13:6). It seeks to obey the highest moral law and have the purest thought towards all. It does not find the commandments burdensome but finds the strength and energy to obey and surpass every moral commandment (Romans 13:8-10).
6. This love of God is kind, humble and gentle treating everyone with the utmost graciousness. It is the personification of kindness and gentleness; it does not behave rudely nor is easily provoked (1 Corinthians 13:4-5).
7. This love is the greatest expression of unselfishness and self-sacrifice (1 John 3:16). It does not seek its own self but chooses to lay down itself for others like Jesus did for us (1 Corinthians 13:5; 1

John 3:16; Revelations 12:11). This love expresses itself in acts of love and it is not just a mental-concept, an idea-concept or a feeling-concept of love (1 John 3:18). It is willing to sacrifice all that is in the world, and all that is temporal of this life, to achieve its highest end of giving of itself to another like Jesus did for us (1 John 2:15).

8. The expression of this love is worth zillions of times more than any gifting of the Holy Spirit (whether it be power gifts, revelation gifts or vocal gifts), than any fivefold office gifting (even apostleship, prophetic office, evangelist, pastor or teacher), than anything that fame and fortune can offer (1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 13). It is better to be the greatest loving person than it is to be the greatest apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. Love is the greatest (1 Corinthians 13:13). For everything else will cease and disappear but love never fails for God Himself is the greatest, the highest, the most powerful personification of love (1 Corinthians 13:8; 1 John 4:8; Ephesians 3:18-19).

Now having seen just a brief description of this true agape love – God’s kind of love – can you truly say honestly that you have been walking in God’s love all the time? Or were there times when you were actually walking in your own limited love? We need to understand that this supernatural love of God must affect every motive of our heart, every whisper of our thoughts, every vibe of conscious existence and every spark of life within our lives and beings. Every day as we yield to this love, we will become more and more like God. The true destiny of our calling, to be conformed to the image of His son, is the conformity to personify His love in our beings. Our destiny is to be love-giving creations. We were made to love. It is sin and deception that has robbed us of the destiny to love. Every time we choose to love, we are fulfilling our destiny.

May each of you continue to grow in the fullness of this wonderful love of God.

Fatherly Talk 1.22

God's Love is God's Light

Dearly Beloved

In Romans 5:1-5, the Bible speaks of the outpouring of God's love into our hearts through Christ Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the Bible speaks about the light that now shines in our hearts through Christ Jesus. It was these two passages each singularly pointing out a specific work of God in our hearts that caused me to ponder about the relationship between these two powerful spiritual forces that have been released into us through Christ Jesus. Are they the same spiritual force? Or are they complementary separate spiritual forces? For each has its distinct work in our lives; the former in character development and the latter in understanding the revelation of God. If they are the same spiritual force, then character becomes directly linked with understanding and revelation. This desire to understand the working of spiritual forces also came from some level of spiritual world experiences: I noticed that where the light of God is strongest, love is also strongest. Either love and light are the same spiritual force working out in two ways or they are two forces directly proportional to one another.

In looking through the hundreds of passages on love and light in the Bible, it seems as if in 1 John 9-10 love and light are treated as if they are the same spiritual force; to be in the presence of one is to be in the presence of the other. Also comparisons of 1 John 3:14 to Colossians 1:13 where we are translated from darkness into simultaneous love and light lends support to love and light being the same spiritual force. Our ability to partake of the divine nature of God is also measured in terms of light and love (Colossians 1:12; 2 Peter 1:3-8). This would mean that the declaration of John that God is Light and that God is Love are in essence the same declaration which have two different effects upon us the recipients (1 John 1:5; 4:16). Indeed, from the reading of the epistle of 1 John, it seems as if John the apostle interchanges the expressions light and love as if they are the same spiritual force at work within us. This would also explain the direct relationship between Ephesians chapter 1 and Ephesians chapter 3 where the effect of light in the former and the effect of love in the latter produced the same results – the fullness of God (Ephesians 1:17-23; 3:14-19). The essence of God is pure life and pure love, and this life is the light of all men (John 1:4). What impact would this understanding have on us? Some of it would be as follows:

1. That unless we grow in love, we cannot grow in the understanding and appropriation of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:19-22).
Thus by choosing not to be loving towards God and our neighbours, a person would be choosing to cut themselves off from both the revelation of God to them and the supply of God's blessings to them. This would also mean that the first step anyone should take to change their lives is to receive the love of God and allow this love to transform their lives first before seeing their circumstances transformed. Since love and light are related, a rejection of God's love would automatically be a rejection of God's light. Thus the darkness in one's own life would be the personal responsibility of each individual, as the love of God is unconditionally always there to be accepted. No one can blame another person for the darkness that they have permitted to themselves. This would also mean that no matter how dark a circumstance one faces, the mere recalling and acceptance of God's love would bring a light to even the darkest hell (Romans 8:37-39).
2. That since love and light are one spiritual force, the greatest love would produce the greatest light. And since Satan and all his cohorts fear the light of God, it would mean that all one has to do to drive demons away is to walk in the greatest love. Perfect love would thus cast out both fear and darkness (1 John 4:18). The authority to command demons to flee is thus not based on verbal loudness or mere methodology but rather in the security and sureness of the one exercising the authority on God's love personified through their lives and voice. The submission to God required in causing the devil to flee would thus be a submission of humility to the security of God's love (James 4:7-8). On the other hand, it would also mean that the less one walks in the love of God, the less one's light shines and consequently diminishes one's true spiritual authority in the Spiritual World. The true key to exorcism is an atmosphere of love and understanding and not an atmosphere of screaming, condemnation and confusion. The demoniac was thus responding to the love of God present in Jesus when he knelt down and worshipped Jesus (Mark 5:6).
3. That since the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, the same Word would be the establishment of the love of God in our lives (Psalm 119:105). Jesus revealed that the keeping of His Word would also cause us to abide in His love (John 15:10). His words contain love, life and joy which nourish our spirits (John 6:63; 14:23; 15:11; 1 Peter 2:2). It is obvious that David's love for God

was expressed through his love for the Word (Psalm 119:47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, 165, 167). How we relate to the Word of God is an indication of how we love the Lord (John 14:21-24). By allowing the Word of God into our lives, we are also allowing the love of God into us (John 17:8, 14, 17-23, 26). Consequently, being established in the love of God gives us an ability to know beyond understanding (Ephesians 3:18-19). For eye has not seen nor ear heard, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). This knowledge of God comes to those who are established in the love of God through spiritual discernment and partaking of the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:11-16). The mysteries of God that are seen dimly through the eyes of men can be seen more clearly in the light of the perfect love of God in Christ (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

4. That the true test of spiritual light and brightness both in this life, and in the life to come, is not in mere knowledge, education or position but rather in one's ability and greatness in love. The greatest among us would thus be those who can serve in love (Luke 22:26). This would also mean that the highest positions (the most glorious and brightest light) in the heavens are easily achieved by any person on this earth; for although everyone may have a different ability in skill, talents, mental capacity and spiritual gifting, everyone of us has the equal ability and opportunity to lay down our lives in service to God and others in love (1 John 3:16). Whether one be a young child or a qualified Rabbi, all one has to do is to choose to lay down one's life for another in humility and love to achieve greatness of soul and spirit (Matthew 18:4; 23:11). Paul declares that his willingness to lay down his life in dying for others was working a far greater exceeding weight of glory in the spiritual invisible realm (2 Corinthians 4:11-18; 5:14). All who are in Christ have the equal ability not to live according to themselves but to allow Christ in them to live through them (Galatians 2:20).

All who are in Christ are the light of this world (Matthew 5:14-16). The light that the world sees is the fruit of our life of love in God – the good works that God graced through us (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:8-10). As long as we keep laying down our lives for others, we can walk in the works which God has prepared for us before the foundation of the world in Christ. Every one of us has been given equal capacity to lay down our lives in love, it is a free choice as to whether we want to do so or not. For those who choose to do so, in this life and in the next life, your glory shines bright as the Sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus our Lord (Matthew 13:43; Acts 26:13; Revelation 1:16; 21:23; 22:5).

Fatherly Talk 1.23

Doing the works of Jesus

Dearly Beloved

Our Lord Jesus wants our lives to bear fruit. This is obvious in His statement that every branch in Him that does not bear fruit, He takes away and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes that it may bear more fruit (John 15:2). For the moment, and without going into too much theological debate, let us assume that the fruit Jesus wants is both character change in our lives (Galatians 5:22, 23) and the good influence our lives have on others (both in discipleship of others and in leading others to Him – Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8). Secondly, we will also assume that being ‘taken away’ (Greek – ballo) does not mean the loss of salvation (1 Corinthians 3:15) but rather the disqualification from having eternal reward or being out of the race as in 1 Corinthians 9:27. The Bible says clearly that although all of us have received the equal grace of God, our free choice gives us the opportunity to yield/surrender our lives differently (deny ourselves and live for others – Luke 9:24). Although it is the same God who gives ALL of the increase, each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour (1 Corinthians 3:7, 8). Some apparently might have zero reward and just make it into the pearly gates (1 Corinthians 3:15). It is the free choice of each of us to live a sanctified life and become a vessel of honour (1 Thessalonians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:20-22). On the other hand, those who yield themselves fully to Jesus will bear much fruit and do the works and the greater works of Jesus (John 14:12; 15:5).

1. From the spiritual point of view there are three stages of life: babyhood, adulthood and fatherhood (or motherhood).
 - a. In simple terms, babyhood is when one is fully or partially dependent on another person for one’s day to day life. This is the natural starting point for everyone in their spiritual walk. Sadly, some do not have this guidance in their early spiritual life but are left to themselves after being born again. All that one is required to do is merely keep having spiritual hunger and desires for the things of God and to eagerly partake them (Hebrews 5:13; 1 Peter 2:2). All who are freshly born again know the redemption of Christ and have come to know God as their Father (1 John 2:12, 13). All Christians at this stage in their lives need a spiritual mentor to disciple them, implying the need to remain teachable. No matter how old in natural years a person is (or how experienced in physical life), a person newly born into the Spiritual World is merely

a babe in Christ, a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Although we all need to keep a humble attitude to remain teachable throughout our lives (as God the Father always remains our eternal Father and we His children), on this earth, we do need to grow out of spiritual babyhood. For some, it might take longer while others progress at a faster pace dependent on the type of ground or heart a person has (Mark 4 – parable of the sower and the seed), the quality and quantity of foundational teaching or milk given (Hebrews 5:12-14; 6:1-2; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:2) and upon the personal initiative a person takes to seek after God (Matthew 7:7-8).

- b. Adulthood is when one is able to appropriate natural and spiritual things by themselves. This does not come overnight but, like natural life with its toddler and teenager stages, the spiritual adulthood stage is acquired gradually. One learns to fight one's own battles and temptations with the internal strength and grace provided by God (1 John 2:13-14). For everyone, there will always be some areas (or weaknesses) harder than others to overcome due to genetic, ancestral, societal, cultural and spiritual-environmental predispositions and factors. In most cases, generally most internal and external conflicts of the soul are overcome except for one or two areas that need constant maintenance. This is sometimes permitted by God to keep a person humble and yielded to Him (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Keeping in the right spiritual fellowship where one's weaknesses are supplemented by another's strength or where one's strength is enhanced by the group's common goal and desires helps to create a spiritual barrier of resistance against temptations and failure. There is nothing more fulfilling than to find one's spiritual gifting and ministry with a group of like-minded believers. Just as God is the one who adds to the growth of any church, it is God who leads a person into the right spiritual teams to function with while in this life (Acts 2:47; 11:24-26).
- c. Spiritual fatherhood or motherhood is the last and final phase for everyone in their path of spiritual growth. This implies a period of being responsible for the nurturing of others who are still growing (those still in the babyhood to teenage stage) and the cultivating of fellowships among those who are in the adulthood stage (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; 4:14-17; 1 John 2:13-14). It is expected that at this stage one would have removed

all selfishness from one's life and live entirely for the Lord and others. The potential for growing in God at this stage is much greater than in any other stage. For as the pure agape love envelops all of one's desire and life, one no longer lives for themselves but for the greater good of others (Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 4:11, 12). Daniel in his last phase became a mighty prophet who sought only for the good of his people (Daniel 9). Daniel received his first visions when he was a much older man during the latter part of the Babylonian empire (Daniel 7:1-2).

The apostle Paul's ministry began when he was either in his forties or in his fifties or sixties if we assume that he was a young man of 30 or 40 or 50 in Acts 9 (Membership or appointee of Sanhedrin council was usually from the age of 30 and upwards – Acts 9:1-2, 14 – and Acts 13: 1-5 was approximately ten years after Acts 9). John the apostle received his Patmos vision during his latter years. Abraham was 75 years old when he began his spiritual journey (Genesis 12:4) and Moses was 80 years old when he had the revelation of Yahweh (Acts 7:23, 30). Abraham was 99 years old when God revealed the completion of his faith for an heir (Genesis 17:1). Moses was 120 years old when he completed his spiritual work on earth (Deuteronomy 34:7-12).

It is not the Will of God that everyone be well-known (fame, authority or power is also a privilege bestowed by God that must be used responsibly – it can be taken away as easily as it is given – Daniel 2:21). Nor is it the Will of God for everyone to handle great wealth (1 Corinthians 2:26-28). But it is the Will of God that every one of us grows into spiritual fatherhood or motherhood with people under our spiritual care. As humans born into this physical and limited imperfect body, we all learn to grow to understand the various concepts of love. We learn as babies that we have the potential for sensual and tactile love (eros love). We learn through our teenage and adult life the need and potential for family and friendship love (storge and phileo love) and the need to balance eros love within the confines of a marriage relationship. We finally learn in fatherhood the heights of agape love – the purest form of love that caused God to send His only begotten son and causes us to lay down our lives (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16). It is usually at this stage that God

unfolds the things which He has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

2. It is the desire of our Lord Jesus that we bear much fruit for Him (John 15:5, 8). This is done not through our own strength for in ourselves we can do nothing but through Christ in us (John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:20). We were especially ordained and chosen to bear much quality fruit for God (John 15:16).
 - a. Jesus revealed that the secret to all of His works on earth was through the indwelling of the Father in Him (John 14:10-11). And our ability to do His works and greater works is based on Him going to His Father (John 14:12). The phrase 'going to the Father' is completed in the revelation that when He has gone to the Father, He will send the Holy Spirit who will be with us and in us (John 14:16-18; 16:7). Through the Holy Spirit, we will fully understand the power of the union that we have in Christ – Jesus said that in that day we will know that He is in the Father, and that we are in Him, and that He is in us (John 14:19-20). The secret to the works of Jesus and the greater works of Jesus is in the power of our indwelling in God through Christ and of Christ in us. We should therefore take time everyday to meditate on the indwelling of Christ and God within us and our indwelling in God (John 14:23; 15:5; 17:20-23). This is the same energising within us that Paul speaks about by which God can work mightily above what we think or ask (Ephesians 1:19; 3:17, 20; Galatians 2:8, 20; 1 Corinthians 15:10).
 - b. All the works that God would have us do on earth have already been foreordained and pre-planned by God (Ephesians 1:3-4; 2:10).
 - c. We need to be in union with Christ for these works to flow out through us (John 15:5). It is assumed that in this union we, like a branch in the vine, would receive His life and strength and become His workmanship – He succeeds in forming us after His image in word, thought and deed (all of our character) – we were created for good works (Ephesians 2:20). This implies a spiritual growth from babyhood to fatherhood. At some point, if we keep abiding in Him, this creative process would be completed in us and we can walk in the works that He has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:20). Note the emphasis 'walk' implying that there is not much

effort (although there is 'some' effort in yielding). It would be as simple as a branch on the vine producing fruit through the life received (John 15:5).

- d. Apparently, the very process of producing fruit would also produce some extra expansion which requires a pruning process to produce more fruit (John 15:2). Pruning is always painful as it implies removal of unnecessary growth – a sort of quality control – and a focusing of energy (nutrition) into only the targeted areas of the branch. This implies a cycle of process as each new harvest would require another pruning to produce the next harvest. True growth and fruit-bearing life would then be in cycles of renewal by the Word (John 15:3). This cycle is possibly best expressed by the cycle of waiting, soaring like an eagle, running, walking and then waiting again (Isaiah 40:31).

Even fruitful land was supposed to have a year when it had its rest after every sixth year (Exodus 23:11). This also applied to the fruit tree including the vine (Exodus 23:11). In fact particularly for the fruit tree, during its growing stages it was allowed to remain wild for three years, and in the fourth year its harvest was 100% for the Lord, and then from the fifth year onwards its harvest was for the farmer himself (Leviticus 19:23-25). The farmer would thus enjoy its cultivated harvest for two years, its uncultivated wild rest stage in the seventh sabbatical year and so forth. The growth of a fruit tree in its first four years represents the growth from babyhood to adulthood.

For this reason, one should not panic when a person seems to be self absorbed and self nurturing in their lives. This is part of a growth process of exploration that everyone has to go through in life. It is only natural for babies, teens and young adults to focus their energy on bettering themselves. This also applies to older adults who receive conversion to spirituality late in their physical adulthood – they probably lived selfish lives until they received the revelation of God. Of course, it is always an advantage to receive this conversion and spirituality early in physical life. However, it is very important that before one leaves this physical life for eternity, that one reaches spiritual fatherhood or motherhood. If this stage is not reached, the purpose of this physical life has not truly been fulfilled and one would have come to earth

in vain. Whether one is still growing into fatherhood or has already achieved fatherhood (or motherhood) one needs to continue to be sensitive to the cycles of fruit-bearing and pruning. In this way the graph of one's spiritual walk with God continues on an upward curve and does not remain on a plateau.

My exhortation to each of you this week is to pursue growth with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Set the goal of spiritual fatherhood or spiritual motherhood in your life. Learn the secret of dwelling in God and allowing God to dwell in you through Christ. Do not struggle to do the good works of God but rather let the good works of God flow through you. For it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives through us. Grow into the fullest expression of benevolent agape love.

Fatherly Talk 1.24

The Optimum Flow of Life

Dearly Beloved

We all know that the Bible says that everything that we see is made up of things which are invisible (2 Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 11:3). Based on Romans 1:20, where all creation was made to reflect God's image, many assume that this process of the visible being affected by the invisible is a completed process which ended at creation; this was true before the fall but the image has been corrupted since sin entered the world. In truth, the present physical world is still being changed and affected from the invisible spiritual realm. This process will continue until all rule and all authority comes under God (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Hebrews 2:5-8; Romans 8:18-21).

2 Corinthians 4:18 and Hebrews 11:3 were written to help us understand how we continue to be an instrument to effect this change (of the invisible world upon the visible physical world) towards the perfection of Christ. It was in view of this ability that we have in Christ to effect this physical world that the power of exercising faith comes in (2 Corinthians 4:13-16; Hebrews 11:1, 6). Through all the teachings, we have established that it is not our own faith, effort or energy but the gift of faith, love, grace and God's strength within us that helps us to achieve this dominion (Romans 5:17; 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:13). Once we are firmly established in the understanding that it is not us but Christ in us who enables us to fulfil our destinies in this life, the next logical step would be to understand how to flow with this internal energy source from Christ within us. Some of the keys to understanding this optimum flow of Christ's life from within us is likened to a surfer riding a high energy ocean wave.

1. There are ebbs and heights in the flow of the power of the Holy Spirit through us (Isaiah 40:31).

We need to be sensitive to times and seasons of the Holy Spirit (John 7:6-8; Acts 1:7-8; 3:19, 21). Some of these cycles and seasons are long dispensations while others are short cycles of days or weeks (Ephesians 1:10; 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:1). Like a surfer, we should always swim towards the wave to 'catch and ride the wave.' In between the waves, the surfer exercises more effort to swim but when the waves come, the only effort is to balance and ride out the wave. These spiritual waves are invisible spiritual energy waves that flow from God to our spirits and outwards to the physical world. Some of these waves have been released since the resurrection of

Christ and last for thousands of years but within them are smaller waves that affect individual lives differently through His gifting (Ephesians 3:10; 4:7).

- a. Part of the causes of the ebb and flow are the balance of flows of God's goodness and mercy on a daily basis (Psalm 23:6) interacting with seasons of 'attempted evil days by the enemy' (The word 'attempted' is used to qualify the fact that it need not be a successful attack of the enemy if we are aware of it and successfully put on the armour of God – Ephesians 6:13). We need to know when to have seasons of fasting when the battle heats up and when to rejoice and feast when the Lord gives the victory (Luke 4:1-2, 13; 5:33-35; Romans 12:15).
 - b. Part of the causes of the ebb and flow are our own internal needs to take time to strengthen our inner man versus times of display of outward manifestations of inner strength in fruitfulness (Psalm 1:2-3). Times of pruning versus times of fruitfulness (John 15:2). Times of growing roots versus times of branching out (Mark 4:13-20; Ephesians 3:17-18). We need to know when to soar like an eagle, when to run with the vision, when to walk by faith at a steady pace and when to be still and wait upon God (Isaiah 40:31).
 - c. Part of the ebb and flow is caused by the corporate faith of believers and the community as a whole (Acts 4:32, 33; 5:11-14) – the atmosphere of faith. Jesus was sensitive to the atmosphere of faith as He restricted the disciples who could follow Him to three and removed all the mocking unbelievers out of the house where He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37-41). Paul was conscious of the flow of faith when he commanded the crippled man to walk only after he had preached the word of faith (Acts 14:7-10). Even Jesus could not do mighty works when a whole community was entrenched in unbelief (Mark 6:5-6). The acceptance of the word of God and the positive effect of one or two miracles can grow an atmosphere of faith (Acts 19:10-20).
2. Different principles and methods apply to flowing in the low ebbs as opposed to riding the heights of an energetic wave (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Luke 5:34-35).
There are always times of waiting and tarrying versus times of simply walking in the miracles (Acts 4:24-31; 5:12-16). At all times,

the energising is still from Christ and the Holy Spirit within (John 15:5; 1 Corinthians 15:10). Even Paul acknowledges that the signs and wonders of an apostle are accomplished with perseverance (2 Corinthians 12:12). The spiritual breakthroughs in Ephesus were accomplished only after three years of daily (365 days a year and each session possibly lasting hours) solid and patient ministry in the Word of God and tearful prayers (Acts 19:10; 20:31).

- a. The times of low ebbs are actually as important as they are hidden from public view for they are times of building a solid root foundation. These are times when outwardly you seem to grow smaller through the pruning of the Lord as old branches are removed from your life (John 15:3). Yet they are the most important times as your roots are given sufficient time to grow strong (Psalm 1:2-3). This is an important time of waiting on the Lord when you grow more 'bonded' (Hebrew *qavah*) and in union with the Lord (Isaiah 40:31). Those who try to shorten the optimum time required for this and those who bypass this vital stage completely will be completely destroyed when they try to bear fruit because they have no root in themselves (Mark 4:16-17). Remember that the whole tree depends 100% on its root system. Everything depends on its foundation (Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 3:10-12). If a surfer does not take time to swim towards the waves, there will be no waves to ride. If a sail boat does not put out its sails, no amount of wind is going to be of any benefit. If we are not prepared to grow roots and foundations in our own inner life with the Lord, there will be no opportunities for the Lord do His works through us.
- b. The times of foundational building involve great internal structural changes within us. These involve renewal of the mind, establishment in God's love for us, strengthening of our first love towards God, growing in grace, growing in faith in the Lord, etc. (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 3:17-19; Revelation 2:2-4; 3:15-20; Hebrews 11:6). They involve much time in the study of the Word, in prayer and fasting, in worship, etc. (2 Timothy 2:15, 15-17; Luke 5:35; Acts 6:4; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 11:27; Acts 13:1-3). God continues to expose more and more of our weaknesses that need to be yielded to Him until we are perfectly moulded in His image (2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Hebrews 4:15, 16; Romans 8:23-30). Our thought patterns are changed during this time which will also impact upon our habits and styles as

we behold more of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:14-18). All these will not be done in one cycle but it will be done gradually through many ebbs and flows. For like the Israelites, we are not able to possess all of the promised land at one time but God gives us possession as we grow bit by bit (Deuteronomy 7:22, 23). It will be glory to glory and grace upon grace – one step at a time for each cycle (2 Corinthians 3:18; John 1:16).

3. Learning to ride the heights of each wave is purely an art of letting go and keeping balanced.

One must walk in perfect love and absolute trust in the reality of a personal God if one is to ride on the wave that flows from God (Proverbs 3:5, 6). Note that you would have to trust the Lord to open all the right doors in His time (not in your time); and also to acknowledge that He is in control of every one of your steps even if they meander through a wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2; Mark 1:12) and even in your failures (Psalm 37:23-24; Romans 8:28).

- a. There will always be a risk element in every step of faith and in every act of trust. Peter walked on water at the risk of drowning. Though he stumbled and nearly drowned, he received an experience which no other disciple (left shivering in their fear in the safety of the boat) had ever encountered (Matthew 14:28-32). Young David experienced a real danger of being killed by Goliath when he ventured (against the advice of everyone, including the whole army of Israel) to fight Goliath with a slingshot (1 Samuel 17). He was a person used to overcoming the dangers of lions and bears before that – not because of his self confidence but rather because of his confidence and trust in God (1 Samuel 17:37).

The only difference between you and a person of great faith and accomplishment is the willingness to overcome the fear-factor and take the risk of entrusting your entire life in the hands of God for something that you fully believe in from the depths of your spirit. The world is filled with cowards and only the bold will possess the promised land (Acts 4:29). It is not the stupid, idiotic and foolish gamble with one's life but rather it is the measured and evaluated risk that one is willing to take in an act of faith and trust in God. It is a step taken after the intelligent and carefully thought-out counting of the risk and cost (Luke 14:26-33). Yet it involves the risking and forsaking of everything to take this step (Luke 14:33).

Abraham risked everything when he left the safety of Haran on his venture of faith (Hebrews 11:8, 9). Everyone who is a hero of faith has risked all to take the step of faith required to show their trust in God not merely by words but by action. Trust is an act and not a mere mental concept.

- b. Once the step of faith is taken, the key is to keep one's balance through flowing with the current. For the surfer, his balance is maintained on his surfboard. For the believer, his balance is maintained by the written Word of God by which everything is measured (2 Timothy 3:16) and by your conscience of right and wrong (Hebrews 5:14). Paul lived his entire life being sensitive to his conscience (Acts 23:1; 2 Timothy 1:3). The whole purpose of life in service and obedience to God is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith (2 Timothy 1:5). Those who do not listen to their conscience will experience shipwreck in their faith venture (1 Timothy 1:19).

Never do anything that is not in line with the written Word of God and never ever violate your inner conscience. Don't associate with people who have no conscience; their paths are a roadway to destruction both in this life and in the next. Right and wrong in your life should neither be determined by what other people around you are saying nor by society. It should be determined by the Word of God and the life and blood of Jesus.

Only Jesus and the Word of God can cleanse us from a conscience filled with dead works and an evil conscience (Hebrews 9:12; 10:22). The Word of God and your conscience is your surfboard to ride the energy wave of God. As a surfer shifts his weight (left, right, forward or backward) to flow in harmony with the energy of the wave he is riding, we should balance the external pressures that the act of faith produces by being sensitive to what the Word of God is saying (both *logos* and *rhema*) and what our conscience is saying. The centre of gravity is the love of God that must be kept balanced above the surfboard of faith and conscience.

Some of the most powerful achievements that have had an eternal effect upon this world were done at the peak of the waves. The actions of men and

women of faith riding on the energising of God within have changed history and produced eternal changes upon this world.

May God continue to teach and train each of us to ride the waves of God that are continually being released upon this earth.