

Fatherly Talks 2

Devotional Series 2.01 to 2.24

By Peter Tan

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PREFACE

These second series of Fatherly Talks seeks to cover areas of practical Christian living like practicing the presence of God, meditation, contemplation, love, patience and simple doctrines of Christianity like discipleship and perfection. Sometimes in these writings I speak as a father to a son or daughter and give practical advice and it may sound more like a letter than a book but that is the manner in which these writings were given. They are a compilation of weekly devotions written through the end of year 2007 and to the end of April 2008.

Some of the topics covered assume that one has read all the Foundational Truth books, Volume 1 to Volume 14, but some repetitions are done in order to familiarize those who are new to fresh understandings of Scriptures from different perspectives. The topics raised sometimes deserve a more thorough study but these talks are designed as devotionals and hopefully would stir the reader towards a more thorough study of the Holy Scriptures.

That the reader might grow more spiritually is the aim of these devotionals.

May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation be your daily portion.

Pastor Peter Tan

Fatherly Talk 2.01

Understanding the flow of God's life

Dearly Beloved

We all know that it is Christ in us who helps us to live our lives (Galatians 2:20) and that it is the energising grace of Christ which enables us to do so (1 Corinthians 15:10). From the perspective of pragmatism and subjectivity, we need to also understand how this flow takes place and the mechanics of this flow in order to flow better with the life of God within us. Jesus spoke of this flow as a well and fountain of living water (John 4:14) and also as rivers of living water (John 7:38) flowing from our hearts.

1. There is the flow of wisdom and understanding (Isaiah 11:2).
This flow affects our mind and thought life in a positive manner. It is a portion of the mind of Christ imparted to us (1 Corinthians 2:12).
 - a. This flow brings revelation and understanding of the Scriptures, the written word of God (Luke 24:49). Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will bring us to remembrance of His words and teach us all things (John 14:26). This is important because no one can understand the Scriptures without the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 2 Peter 2:20-21). The eyes of our understanding need to be opened by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to perceive the things of the written Word of God and all the promises given to us (Ephesians 1:18). It is interesting that Ephesians uses the phrase 'enlightened' (Greek – flooded with light) because the subjective experience is like that of light flowing into a dark area – like something becoming clearer to us where it was muddied and fuddled. Thoughts, principles, doctrines, etc become clear and fit together harmoniously in our understanding of God and His creation. This flow will continue until we all come to the full knowledge of Christ and are taught all things possible of God in this earth (Ephesians 4:13; 1 John 2:27). This flow of thoughts can come at anytime; sometimes while in prayer or worship, and sometimes in a moment of peace and rest or routine activity, or in preaching or the study of the Scriptures. All who operate in the teaching anointing understand this flow of thoughts.

- b. This flow of thoughts helps establish the mind of Christ within us and renews our thought patterns (Romans 12:1-2). It is not through our human effort or mental effort that understanding is produced but rather by the divine revelation of the light of Christ within us that gives clarity of thought (2 Corinthians 4:6; 10:5). The end result of this flow is the harmony of our heart and mind to the heart and mind of God (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16).

- 2. There is the flow of counsel and might (Isaiah 11:2). This flow is an energetic power which results in mighty miracles (Matthew 11:20; Mark 6:2; Luke 10:13; 19:37; 2 Corinthians 12:12). This flow is not like the flow of thoughts to our mind but more like a flow of energy that is felt through the spiritual sense of faith.
 - a. Jesus felt a flow of healing virtue go through Him to someone while He was walking to Jarius' house (Mark 5:30). It is apparent that if Jesus 'knew within himself' (Greek – epignous) that power (Greek – dunamis) had flowed from Him, He would have felt the tangibility of the anointing upon Him before it flowed. Elisha was one of those who also could sense the tangibility of the anointing upon him after the playing of the minstrel (2 Kings 3:15). He did not immediately know it the first time Elijah's anointing came in double portions upon him (2 Kings 2:14). It is also apparent from the many multitudes who were physically touching Jesus at the same time as the woman with the issue of blood, that it was not just the physical touch but the faith behind the physical touch that drew upon the anointing (Mark 5:31).
 - b. This flow is very dependent on both the heart of the yielded vessel and the heart of the recipient (Mark 5:34). It is possible that the lack of success by Gehazi in working a miracle was because of his own lack of yieldedness (2 Kings 4:29-31; 5:20). There were specific instructions – not to talk with anyone along the way – which were part of the release of faith to activate this flow. If Gehazi had even spoken or greeted one person, the flow would have been broken.
 - c. The presence or lack of presence of some people could affect this flow (2 Kings 3:14). Elisha would not have been interested in tapping upon the flow of miracles if not for the presence of King Jehoshaphat. Jesus only permitted three of His disciples to follow Him into Jairus' house and He also

put out all the mocking and scornful people before He brought Jairus' daughter to life (Mark 5:37-42). Peter had to put out all the weeping mourners before he tapped on the flow of miracles and raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:39-42).

- d. The atmosphere of unbelief (negative) or faith (positive) can affect the flow of miracles (Matthew 13:58). Jesus could not operate the full flow of miracles because of the unbelief of the people in His home town (Mark 6:5-6). Sometimes faith is drawn out through a process before there is sufficient flow of power to effect a miracle (Matthew 15:21-28). The authority and anointing given to the disciples to flow in miracles could not be activated because of their own unbelief (Matthew 10:1; 17:20). When people have full faith in Jesus (note: the people recognized Him), even touching His garments (as opposed to the need of laying on of hands in His home town – Mark 6:5) brought powerful miracles (Mark 7:54-56). When people esteem the Lord and His people highly, the quality and quantity of miracles increase (Acts 5:13-16). Paul was sensitive to the atmosphere of faith and the sense of faith to activate the flow of miracles (Acts 14:9). Peter who had probably passed the lame man by the temple's gates countless times, also had to sense the flow of faith in order to release a miracle upon the lame man (Acts 3:4-10, 16). Like Paul, he fixed his eyes on the man and asked the man to look at him to sense faith for the flow of miracles (Acts 3:4-5; 14:9). All those who desire to flow in miracles need to learn to sense this flow of the gift of faith and virtue.
3. There is the flow of knowledge and the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2).
This flow produces a sense of the tangible presence of God upon a place (Acts 5:11).
 - a. This fear of the Lord produces a paralysing effect upon the enemies of God, especially demons and the devil himself (Exodus 23:27; James 2:19; 4:8). It is this presence and fear of the Lord that causes demons to scream out in terror whenever Jesus went to a place (Mark 1:23, 34; 5:7). The miracles of Jesus were many times accompanied by the manifestation of this presence of God (Luke 5:17, 26; 7:16; 8:28, 37). In Ephesians, the presence of the Lord resulted in

mighty miracles and the city was filled with the fear of the Lord (Acts 19:11, 17, 20). The dominion of this flow can rout the work of the demonic forces over a whole community, city or nation.

- b. This flow is also released through prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). When a true word of God is spoken with an authoritative 'Thus says the Lord' and a genuine revelation, the fear of the Lord is usually released upon the hearers – for they have just heard from the mouth of God through a yielded instrument. There is no more room for discussion and contention for the Lord has spoken. For this reason, one should not misuse prophecy to dominate church governmental meetings as it does not give room for genuine Christian counsel, discussion and guidance. Nor should one use prophecy to direct another person's life as it robs the person of the use of his spiritual and soul faculties to discern the Will of God for himself. Because the abundant misuse and abuse of prophecy is so prominent, many people have lost respect for the true Word from the Lord when it actually comes.

It is to our own peril if we become complacent and dulled through the false words and prophecies of sincerely wrong Christians and leaders that we cannot distinguish a genuine prophet when he or she arises amongst us. We need to respect God and His Word so much that we literally tremble at His word (Isaiah 66:2). Many true prophets and men and women of God operate in this flow at different levels when they deliver the Word of the Lord. Rejecting them or the Word they bring is equivalent to rejecting God (Matthew 10:14, 40; 18:5; Mark 9:35-37; Luke 9:48; John 17:18). In these days of much cynicism regarding the church and servants of God, we need to retain a balanced common sense so as not to be deceived by every individual or organization claiming to be the spoken word of God (always check that it is in line with the written bible and common sense conscience) and at the same time still pay a healthy respect to the instruments who bring the genuine Word of God.

4. There is a general flow of the Spirit of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2). This is a general flow of the life and love of God to do His works (Matthew 5:16; John 5:20, 36; 6:28, 29; 9 :3-4; 14:11, 12; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; Ephesians 4:12).

- a. It is important to point out that these works are not prepared by us but were prepared by God (Ephesians 2:10). They are not the result of self effort but rather the result of faith in the power of God.
- b. Our only role is in the substantiating of God's works through the gift of faith (Hebrews 11:1-6). By exercising faith in God we release the creative force of God's works in the spiritual realm to its full completion.
- c. When faith is completed and the works ready for manifestation in the physical realm, we walk in them (Hebrews 12:2; Ephesians 2:10). The process of walking involves taking the steps of faith in obedience to the voice of God and the leading of the Spirit in our individual lives. It is both a rest and yet a flowing of harmonious effort with the energy of God released (Hebrews 4:9-10; Galatians 5:25). As the Jordan parted when the feet of the priests carrying the ark entered the water, so does the manifestation occur at the same moment as the act of faith (Joshua 3:13-15). As the lame man was healed at the same instant that Peter pulled him up, so does the manifestation of faith result (Acts 3:7). The timing is crucial, the fruit cannot be harvested too early before it is ripe, nor can it be done after the optimum time for harvest. Only the leading of the Spirit and the discerning of God's voice in our hearts can give precision in the critical timing of acts of faith. There is always the strengthening of faith that takes place before the actual act of faith releasing the flow of good works (Romans 4:20). There is a season of fruit bearing versus a season of pruning (John 15:1-5; Psalm 1:3 – explained in Fatherly Talk 1.24).

We can truly say that life is a flow. For those who do not find life flowing, perhaps you have wandered outside of the flow and into self-effort. For those within the flow, be sensitive to the ebbs and flows and also to the various types of flow that come from God. By doing so we can truly say that it is no longer us who live but Christ who lives through us.

Fatherly Talk 2.02

Resting and yielding to God's flow of life

Dearly Beloved,

The Bible promises that those who come into Christ enter into His rest (Hebrews 4:1-10). Of all the Ten Commandments, the keeping of commandment number four (the Sabbath day) has been fulfilled in Christ and is no longer a religious nor a legalistic requirement. At most it is purely a health law like some of the other Old Testament religious commandments on clean and unclean animals. We see the understanding of progressive revelation by the early church as they met on the Gentile question (Gentiles coming to accept the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour). They did not impose the Sabbath law nor any Jewish religious dietary or ceremonial laws but only the requirement not to worship idols, not to commit immorality, and not to eat things which died by strangulation or consume its blood (Acts 15:20). The apostle Paul even went as far as to consume food with the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21). As an apostle to the Gentiles, he understood that the dietary laws no longer applied to the Gentiles (1 Timothy 4:1-5). As an indication of what the New Covenant was to be like (freedom from the bondage of the law), our Lord Jesus Himself declared that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; and that He was Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28). He also healed on the Sabbath day to the anger of the religious leaders of His time (Matthew 12:1-14). Some of the religious leaders were even prepared to reject Jesus – that He was not from God - on the basis of Him not keeping the Sabbath (John 9:16). All the above things that have occurred might not seem like much to us from a Gentile perspective but it was an earthquake on the Richter scale of 10 – a powerful revelation revolution – to the Jewish mindset. Surely, it must be an important revelation to reduce the Ten Commandments to nine in the New Covenant under Jesus Christ.

What does it all mean in the fulfilment of the Sabbath in Christ? How does that impact on our daily lives? Apparently, the Lord Himself has now become the Sabbath personified (Hebrews 4:10). There is a position of Rest that Jesus is to bring us into when we are in union with Him. Where it was a chronological time period in the Old Testament, it is now in the person of Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 28:12; Leviticus 25:11; Luke 4:18-20). In the Old Testament, there are different levels and types of Sabbath: the normal weekday Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3), the feast day Sabbaths (Leviticus 23:4-41), the land rest Sabbath which lasts for a year (Leviticus 25:4) and the Jubilee Sabbath (Leviticus 25:10-12). These Sabbaths speak of the ebbs and flows of God's life through us: weekly flows, seasonal flows,

phase flows and dispensational flows respectively. Understanding these flows is to truly understand how to abide in Jesus as a branch to the vine; to allow Jesus to live through us and not to depend on our own strength – to truly enter into a position of rest in Jesus.

1. The flow of life and dependence on Jesus can only be achieved by understanding how to be in Him and allowing Him to be in us.
 - a. These involve learning the principles of allowing the cleansing and rooting of the Word and the love of God within our lives (John 15:3; Hebrews 4:12; Mark 4:14-20; Ephesians 3:16-20). Teachings in these areas are covered by Fatherly Talks 1.23, 1.24 and 2.01.
 - b. Understanding the doctrine of grace and the finished work of Christ places us in the position of walking in the works prepared for us (1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:9, 10; John 19:30; 17:4; Romans 4:4, 16; 5:2, 21; Ephesians 2:8-10).
 - c. Understanding the ebbs and flows of the life and Spirit of God within us helps us to always be dependent on God and not on ourselves (Psalm 1:2, 3; Zechariah 4:6; John 15:1-5).
2. What is born of the Spirit is spirit, what is born of the flesh is flesh (John 3:6).
 - a. The Galatian Christians began in the Spirit but ended up trying to perfect themselves in the flesh (Galatians 3:3). What is birthed by the Spirit through the law of faith can never be perfected by the works of the law (Galatians 3:1-14). It is possible to begin in the Spirit but through self dependence end up in the flesh. Some say that some begin in the flesh but end up in the spirit but this is an impossibility. What actually happened in such cases were people who began in the flesh, realized that the flesh does not work, repented and started again in the Spirit. For what is born of the flesh will always be flesh no matter how good, religious or pseudo-spiritual it might look. The works of the flesh in contrast to the works of the spirit are clearly defined in their inner quality (Galatians 5:19-23).
 - b. Within this principle is the requirement that anything we do must first be brought forth by the Holy Spirit – in its very

desire inception and conception within our desires, our mind, our heart and our spirits. For this to be so, we need to be emptied (cleansed) of all our selves and selfishness and be nothing so that Jesus can be everything within us (John 15:3, 5). We need the Word of God like a sword to pierce and scrutinise us, discerning the very thoughts and intents of our heart (Hebrews 4:12). Only when Jesus is the author of our faith can He be the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). And this gift of faith comes only by hearing the specific spoken (rhema) word of God for our individual lives (Romans 10:17).

- c. Involved in making sure that the origin (genesis) of all the works of our lives be from the Spirit of God is also the requirement to only bring it forth in its fullness or ripeness of time (Psalm 1:2, 3). To everything there is always a time and a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1; John 7:6; Galatians 4:4; Acts 1:7; 3:21). If roots are not formed properly before they shoot, the whole plant will die (Mark 4:17). If the foundation is not properly laid, the whole building is unsound (Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:20).
3. Resting in the Lord involves an inner harmony within us and an external harmony with all things outside – a oneness within ourselves in God and a oneness with the works of God without (Hebrews 4:10; Galatians 2:20; John 15:4; 17:21-24).
 - a. We must always remain in touch with this peace and harmony within ourselves for the maximum flow of God's life through us. It is the supernatural peace that only Christ gives which surpasses natural peace (Romans 5:1, 2; John 14:27). It is a peace that can only come when our own conscience is cleansed by the blood (Hebrews 9:14, 15). It is a peace within our conscience that witnesses that we are walking in accordance to our own specific level of faith and understanding (revelation) and not that of another person (1 Corinthians 8:7-13; Romans 14:2-8, 19, 22-23). It is a peace that has the power to garrison heart and mind with freedom from all anxiety (Philippians 4:6, 7).
 - b. This peace from within has the power to crush and defeat the devil on the outside (Romans 16:20). The law of faith that brought us into the new birth and position in Christ is the same law that will subdue the things visible to the things

invisible (Romans 8:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 11:1, 3; 1 John 5:4-5). The evidence of being in the right optimum flow is life and peace (Romans 8:6).

- c. The tangibility of the peace and harmony from within can affect all external objects and circumstances (Matthew 10:13; Luke 10:5, 6; John 14:27; Romans 16:20; James 3:13-18).

It is vitally important to enter into this Sabbath of rest in Christ everyday and experience it every moment of each day. The Sabbath is no longer just a chronological time period in Christ; it is a dynamic and living place of rest and union with God in Christ to be experienced each waking moment of our lives.

May His Rest be upon each of you and may you find His strength to be your strength,

Fatherly Talk 2.03

Flowing with the fullness of time

Dearly Beloved

In everything from the Lord, there is always a fullness of time for it to take place on the physical plane (that which has been completed in the spiritual plane). The destinies of individuals and nations are planned in the Spiritual World and acted out on the physical plane. It is important for us to flow with the timing and fullness of the energising from the Spiritual World when the time is ripe for its manifestation on the physical plane. When the tree is ripe, the harvest season begins.

1. The suddenness of a full manifestation takes many by surprise but the undercurrent has been flowing and positioning itself for a long time.

The dreams given to Joseph when he was seventeen years old came to pass when he was about thirty-two years old (Genesis 37:2; 41:46; 45:6 – Joseph met his brothers during the first two years of the seven year famine). God used the intervening time to train Joseph in righteousness, patience, faith, compassion and caring for others. He was not perfect but he always had a heart that turned to God both in good times and hard times (Genesis 37:2; 39:9; 41:51-52). David's rise to fame after the slaying of Goliath looks sudden but he had been faithful in taking care of sheep, facing great danger, when no one was looking (1 Samuel 17:37; 18:1-7). The private anointing which he received in his father's house by Samuel, was already working in his personal life before the public event (1 Samuel 16:13).

Daniel's rise to high position and fame in the Babylonian kingdom was preceded by much faithfulness to God in the daily training vigil which every young man went through (Daniel 1:8, 9-18). Many people do not see what is going on within the individual heart and life but God does. It is only when you conquer the private areas of your trials and temptations that you would truly have the ability to handle the public promotions which come from God. Jesus endured temptations privately in the wilderness but came out victorious without the world knowing all the greatness of the tests He endured alone in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-14). Keep faithfully doing what is right in your heart. Never be discouraged even if there seems to be various delays. There is a God watching us (and He is our Father God) and he or she who continually and constantly keeps doing what

is right in the sight of God and in the seeking of God's Will, will have his/her payday someday. God will always reward those who believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him diligently (Hebrews 11:6). When the blessings start flowing, it pours forth in such a manner that eye has not seen nor ear heard of all the wonderful blessings that God has in store for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). Every single thing that you do right now in the privacy of your heart and life, is an important step to the nurturing of the fullness of the flow when it comes forth.

2. Mundane and routine events hide the glorious breakthroughs that are about to spring forth in great destiny changing ways.

This means that we should not take lightly the small little things in life, for behind some of them, especially when the fullness of the time is ripe, is a torrential outpouring that changes destinies and nations in a tidal wave across the world. A simple trip to see how his brothers were faring changed Joseph's life forever (Genesis 37:14). A simple caring gesture to two prisoners changed Joseph's destiny (Genesis 40:6). A simple trip to bring his brothers some lunch changed David's life forever (1 Samuel 17:17-18). A simple offer of a meal sharing delivered the poor widow from the entire famine (1 Kings 17:15, 16). The simple act of caring for a discarded slave was the key to saving David's entire army and their families (1 Samuel 30:11-13). A simple act of reporting by Paul's nephew to the Roman commander saved a great apostle's life (Acts 23:16-22). Histories and nations have risen and fallen dependent on one simple act (or the lack of it). So do not neglect to be faithful to the daily simple things of life for (unknown to you – for sometimes the spiritual ripeness is purposefully hidden from the knowledge of men) when the fullness of time is ripe, the simplest acts can release a destiny changing tsunami.

3. One must be willing to adapt and flow with the changes required to ride the waves flowing in the fullness of time.

When the time for the Gentile church had come, many Christian Jews refused to give up their old habits of culture and orthodoxy; and ended up a hindrance and a stumbling block to the new move of God (Acts 11:2; 15:1, 5; Galatians 1:6, 7; 5:12). Yet, every time they moved beyond the boundaries of their preconceptions, God was blessing (Acts 11:19-21; 13:42-48). Even our Lord Jesus knows how to go where He is welcomed and leave where He was not welcomed (Mark 6:3-6; 3:31-4:1 He based most of His early ministry at Capernaum instead of Nazareth). Even Peter and Barnabas had a hard time adapting to the new revelation (Galatians 2:11-17; 2 Peter

3:15, 16). New understandings, new applications and new methodologies will always be required to tap on the new flow of God's Spirit. The old wineskins can never contain the new wine (Mark 2:22). Go with the flow as long as it is still biblical. It does not matter whether you are used to it or not, nor whether you are culturally and methodically predisposed to it; it only matters that it remains Scriptural. Not being flexible, pliable and yielded to the new fullness of flow can cause us to miss out on it altogether; and even worse, become a stumbling block to others. It was a great paradigm shift to bring people to the understanding that true worship in spirit and truth no longer revolved around a place (temple or mountain) or even around a set time (John 4:21-24). Each major seasonal spiritual move has always required a paradigm shift of vast proportions.

4. Everyone will have their specific part to play in a destiny changing fullness of time move of God.

Whether it be a frontline position or a side position in the move of God, each of us must find our place in this new move (Ephesians 4:16). Every Finney has his Father Nash. Every Paul has his Timothy and Barnabas. Moses had his Aaron and David his mighty men. Not everyone is called to be captain of the entire army; some are captains of ten thousands and others of hundreds and fifties. From eternity's view point, the natural order of this physical world is not important. Many times, the greatest saints do not take destinies on earth involving very public, famous and frontline number one positions. Many of them choose obscure but highly important mundane destinies that play a vital role in the outcome of the spiritual history of the earth. Many times they remain unknown to earthly historians but are famous in the historical archives of the Spiritual World.

This is not to say that there has not been great training provided to saints when they have important roles to play in their leadership roles on earth – they do but in comparison to many other great saints more developed than them, who have not as much need of the experiences of the earth, their glory pales in comparison. The release of a destiny changing wave on earth involves the coordination of millions of spirits whose destinies are tied together in what is to be achieved in a generation. Thus each individual spirit must do God's perfect Will in their lives to be part of the great symphony of life – regarding each musical instrument as highly important even if they are played less often than other instruments. Each member of the body of Christ is important (1 Corinthians 12:18-26). Each must

discover his/her own uniqueness and his/her own contribution to the whole.

This is the decade of the wave of the glory of God. Let it flow within you and through you.

Fatherly Talk 2.04

Union and oneness – the essence of flow

Dearly Beloved

We have been speaking about the energising flow of life over the past weeks and now we will look at the core technical essence of this flow. Essentially, it is union or oneness in three different areas of our lives: union with God, union between our spirits, souls and bodies, and union between us and those around us. The first and foremost union to be experienced is, of course, union with God followed by the union of function between our spirit, soul and body, and then union with others. If the word ‘union’ does not convey this concept well, you may replace it with the word ‘oneness’ to convey the concept of being in unity. There are different varying levels of union achieved in all three areas.

1. The experience of the peace of God in our hearts is the indicator of our oneness with God (Romans 5:1-2). There are varying levels of peace possible (2 Peter 1:2; Philippians 4:7). For those in Christ the peace experienced is the peace of Christ (John 14:27). For those not yet in Christ, their experience of peace is only that of a clear conscience (Romans 2:15). From the position of union with God, we partake of His love, His light and His life. Of these three, those not yet in Christ partake of only the generalised version – the general love and light of the goodness of God to all His creation – but not of His life provided in Christ (John 1:9; 3:16; Matthew 5:45; Ephesians 4:18).
 - a. His love – the impartation of confidence and boldness
Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). And he that fears not will be bold as a lion and confident in all his walk. The security of being loved enables one to turn from being an insecure introvert into a benevolent encourager of others. Boldness and confidence comes from an impartation and filling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:29-31). Faith in a person produces a conviction and assurance (Hebrews 11:1). All faith is energized by the Spirit of love (Galatians 5:6). There is such a thing as an inspirational flow of boldness that enables a person to overcome natural odds and achieve what is impossible to other men like David overcoming Goliath (1 Samuel 17:26-37). It flows from an anointing of the Holy Spirit and a deep love for God.

b. His light – the impartation of knowledge and wisdom

The light of God has always been the key by which humans receive understanding and knowledge. The root of all knowledge (both natural and spiritual) and understanding flows from God. All manner of artisanship has its roots in the inspiration of the Spirit of God (Exodus 28:1-4). Problem solving skills have their roots in the power of wisdom through the Spirit of God (Genesis 41:38-39). Political and economic wisdom comes from the Spirit of wisdom (Proverbs 8:15-21). All manner of sciences, literature skills and astronomy insights flow from the impartation of God's Spirit (Daniel 1:4, 17, 20). All wisdom and knowledge is an outflow from God (Daniel 2:21-22).

Botany, zoology and all the possible variations of human studies originate in God's imparted wisdom (1 Kings 4:30-34). Architectural skills, construction skills, project management skills all proceed from the wisdom of God (1 Kings 7:1-51; 10:3-5). Military genius and sports ability all arise from the enabling of God (2 Samuel 22:29-40). By opening ourselves to the light of God we tap upon His divine wisdom and inspiration which causes us to flow in the achieving of all areas of human profession and work (1 Corinthians 1:27-30; James 1:5). There is such a thing as an inspirational flow of ideas which comes from God; and we need to learn to tap on the Spirit of wisdom to flow in it.

c. His life – the impartation of God Himself

When the life of God comes into us through Christ Jesus, we are lifted beyond even ourselves. It truly is no longer us who live but Christ who lives in us (Galatians 2:20). The world has yet to see what the manifestation of Christ in us can achieve (Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:8-11). In fact the entire natural world groans in earnest expectation of the revelation of the sons of God (Romans 8:18-19). There is such a thing as an inspiration flow of God-ness within us such that at the peak of inspirational flow we function in our thought, speech and acts as the perfect image of God. It would be the living God living through us.

2. The experience of peace, love and joy is an indication of the internal harmony of our spirit, soul and body being in synchrony. It is like the flow of music from our hearts expressing itself through the delightful joys of the soul and vibrating with the harmonious health

of the body (Ephesians 5:18-19). Besides being the overflow the Holy Spirit in our lives, it is also the overflow of the abundance of the Word in our lives (Colossians 3:14-17). Our soul is filled with strength and blessings (Psalm 35:9; 103:1, 2). Joy and thanksgiving flow by the God of peace in the sanctifying of all of our spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:16-23). It results in

- a. rejoicing always
- b. unceasing prayer
- c. the ability to give thanks in everything

This 'bubbliness' is like having a whole symphony orchestra playing powerful music on your inside – a music that vibrates from the very core of your being to its outer fringes. Your heart beats with the heartbeat of God, your mind is flowing with the thoughts from the mind of Christ, your affections are the affections of Jesus and your whole body the temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:21-22). There are varying degrees of this flow from a fountain to rivers of living water. When you are in this flow of oneness of spirit, soul and body it is the most heavenly experience you could have while on earth.

3. There is also the experience of a divine corporate flow that takes place when humans become united together. This is very, very powerful and transforms whole communities, cities and nations. Even from the negative point of view, when evil unites it is destructible in its power as in the building of the Tower of Babel; such that even God has to intervene (Genesis 11:1-9). From the positive side, it is possible to be one heart and one soul with another human being or a group of human beings (Acts 4:32). When it is in the Lord, the most powerful spiritual and natural forces are released:
 - a. Being one accord before Pentecost brought forth an entire new dispensation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 33).
 - b. Being one accord in the church brought forth blessings and growth in the church (Acts 2:42-47; Psalms 133:1-3).
 - c. Being of one heart and one soul eliminated poverty from the midst of the church (Acts 4:32-37).
 - d. Being of one accord, brought forth greater miracles and works that the church has never seen before (Acts 5:12-16).
 - e. Where two or three people can be in oneness, there is a powerful heavenly power that is released that will cause all things agreed upon in the divine will to be established in heaven and on earth (Matthew 18:19-20). Ideally, one should find such power of agreement in one's spouse (Genesis 2:24;

Ephesians 5:28) and thus a godly couple in oneness is a very powerful force for the transformation of cities and nations by releasing heavenly authority on earth. It is also possible to find individuals of like mind and faith, and with the same purity of heart, that can combine together to release this powerful corporate flow of heavenly authority and force.

Jesus is waiting to release His most powerful manifestations of glory on the earth. But this is only possible when those in Him are bonded together in oneness with Him and the Father and with one another (John 17:21-24). The good news is that it is not something which can be done from our own strength or works; it is more the reception of this unifying glory from God that makes us one (John 17:22). This oneness is the very flow of oneness which Jesus had with the Father – a God oneness. Possibly we can only see a small but world shaking, world transforming part of this God-oneness flow on the planet earth and experience the fullness of it in the Spiritual World. But even a small seed of it would be enough to create a new earth and heaven.

May we be one with God and with one another,

Fatherly Talk 2.05

The purpose of eternal life

Dearly Beloved

Why were we created? Why do we exist? At some point before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), God gave a part of Himself (the spark of life) to bring us forth as living beings in all His creation. That started us on the path of discovery and self awareness which will, when completed, bring us back into the fullness of oneness with God. Jesus revealed that the purpose of eternal life is that we might know God our Father, the only true God, and He, Himself, whom the Father has sent to us (John 17:3). Knowing God is thus the most important mission which we have been assigned for the unmeasurable gazillion years in eternities (which, of course, include the extremely brief time of 90 to 120 years on earth). The highest and greatest reason for our existence is that through all our experiences, through all our works, through all our relationships, through all our spiritual growth, we would discover the knowledge and wisdom of God and the revelation of God Himself that would enable us to know Him more and more.

1. God has revealed His being and attributes in all His creation (Romans 1:20).

The whole creation is a Bible of revelation of God waiting to be discovered by those who sincerely seek God. There are many who stop at unravelling the laws of nature but do not go beyond to understand the various aspects of God's attributes which are being revealed through His multiple and varied creations. Like the understanding of the written Bible, the true discovery of God's revelation would also depend on the work of the Holy Spirit; for He alone is the arbitrator of ALL truth (John 16:13). Some of the things we can see of God's revelation in creation are as follows:

- a. God is a merciful Being who loves unconditionally
He sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45). His sun shines freely upon all whether evil or good (Matthew 5:45). Every day when you see the bright shining sun at midday or the beautiful scenery of glorious sunrises and sunsets, remember that His unconditional love and compassion is upon all whether good or bad, whether just or unjust, whether evil or righteous – He loves all abundantly. Every time you see the refreshing rain, remember His mercies and His love that He freely gives to all. How bright

is your unconditional love to all? How unconditional is your help and gifts to others? Is it like our Father God?

- b. The clouds symbolise the glory and the presence of God (Exodus 16:10; 19:9; 40:38). The thunders symbolise His voice and power (Job 26:14; Psalm 81:7; Revelation 6:1). The bright lightning symbolise His face, His awesome presence and His judgments (Job:36:26 - 37:13; Psalm 97:2-6; Daniel 10:6; Revelation 4:5; 11:19)

By His clouds, thunders and lightning we understand that it is HE who made us and not us Him – we are His creation and the concept of God is not just a figment created from our imagination. As His creation we respect and conform to Him, we respect the laws which He has created. If we choose not to conform to His laws, we suffer the consequences. Just as we have to respect the power of electricity and the natural phenomena of lightning, we need to understand and respect that when we do so, we are blessed and doing the opposite will only allow that same power to destroy us. It is up to us whether we see clouds of glory or dark thunderous clouds of judgment. The next time you see the beautiful clouds in the sky, remember they proclaim the glory of the Lord. And the next time you see the clouds of thunder and lightning, remember to give respect to God for who He is.

- 2. Our relationships with all humans on earth (parents, brothers or sisters, children, friends, general relationships, etc.) are an avenue through which we can understand and discover all the attributes of God.
 - a. Our relationships with our earthly parents are enshrined in the Ten Commandments because they are the first relationships we develop on earth (Exodus 20:12). They symbolise the benevolence and the tenderness of love that God wants to give us (Psalm 27:10; 68:5; 89:26; 103:13; Jeremiah 31:9; Malachi 1:6; Luke 11:11-13; Matthew 23:37).
 - b. Our relationship with our spouse speaks of the love relationship of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-30) and of God and Israel (Jeremiah 3:1, 8-12; Ezekiel 16:1-63).
 - c. Our relationships with our brothers, sisters and friends give us an understanding of the close friendship we can have with

God (Proverbs 17:17; Matthew 12:46-50; John 21:15-19; Hebrews 2:17; James 2:23)

3. Our relationship with all animals, plants and things on this earth reveals what is truly in our heart; and if harmonious, reveals the heart of God in us.
 - a. The nature of development of each human person is sometimes compared to that of animals (Genesis 49:9-27; Luke 13:32).
 - b. The righteous heart would respect and treat animals well (Proverbs 12:10).
 - c. A balanced relationship to wealth reveals our spirituality and a greed for the things of this life reveals our carnality (1 Timothy 6:6-10; Matthew 6:19-24; 1 John 2:15-17).

4. Those who align themselves with this eternal plan of God – to know Him – become seekers of God in this life and they receive supernatural help while on earth and in the eternities beyond.
 - a. Those who seek the Lord will find Him, if they seek Him with all their heart (Deuteronomy 4:29).
 - b. David was a man who sought after God, and God sought after him and promoted him (1 Samuel 13:14).
 - c. The onus lies on us to seek Him and to know Him, if we do not do so it is only to our own loss (1 Chronicles 28:9).
 - d. In his early reign, Solomon sought the Lord and offered 1000 burnt offerings (in the Old Testament this was very significant in its largesse) and God appeared to him and offered to give him whatever he asked (although this was not the original motive of Solomon) (2 Chronicles 1:5-12).
 - e. Solomon's son did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord and becoming evil, failed miserably (2 Chronicles 12:14).
 - f. Asa inherited a ruined kingdom but when he made a covenant to seek the Lord, there was peace and prosperity until he stopped seeking the Lord (2 Chronicles 15:12-14, 19).
 - g. Jehoshaphat was an imperfect king (he could not give up his worldly ties and friendship) but the Lord still blessed him as much as He could because he had prepared His heart to seek the Lord (2 Chronicles 17:4-6; 19:3; 22:9).
 - h. As long as Uzziah sought the Lord, the Lord made him to prosper (2 Chronicles 26:5).

- i. Hezekiah prospered in the areas in which he sought the Lord (2 Chronicles 31:20-21).
- j. The eyes of the Lord are studying every single human being on earth, seeking to show Himself strong to those whose hearts are loyal and seek after Him (2 Chronicles 16:9).
- k. Those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness will have an abundance of everything that they need on earth (Matthew 6:33).
- l. God the Father is Himself seeking out those who worship Him (John 4:23-24).

Everyone on this planet earth should be a seeker after God. Sadly this is not so as people are too easily distracted by the temporal things that are around them. For those who choose to devote themselves to a life of knowing God (which, of course, includes learning to love all those around us), God has assigned special blessings, special grace, special angels, special revelations destined to give those who seek Him with all their heart an advantage and a strong helping hand even while on this earth (1 Corinthians 2:9).

If you desire to tap on these special privileges, line yourself up with your eternal destiny – you were created for this – of knowing God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see the mighty hand of God.

Fatherly Talk 2.06

Becoming a friend of God

Dearly Beloved

Abraham was called the friend of God in James 2:23. Although some might think that it is far better to be a child of God in the New Testament than just a mere friend, we need to remember that being a friend is a term of close endearment in the Scriptures. Jesus called His disciples friends as He revealed the secret things of God to them and shared freely of His knowledge (John 15:13-15). It is possible to grow to know God beyond just mere ministerial positions, callings and missions. Even though Moses was a prophet, his relationship with God developed and grew beyond just His calling from God. God Himself said that He spoke with Moses face to face and not merely in mysteries (like to other prophets) (Numbers 12:6-8). It is the desire of God that we come to know Him deeply and form a close relationship with Him – for this is eternal life, that we might know God (John 17:3). There were some things which Abraham did in his life that brought him into friendship with God.

1. God loves those who use all their energy and resources to pursue Him. Abraham was willing to devote all his energy and resources to the pursuit of God. When we leave this physical body, our spirits and souls will be drawn towards the place of our main pursuit in life; our greatest desires, the centre of gravity of all our consciousness. If this desire be God and Jesus, then we will be drawn towards the heavenly spheres; and if this desire be for carnal pleasures or the pursuit of money or worldly things, then we will be drawn into darkness.
 - a. Abraham gave up all his natural security to seek after God (Hebrews 11:8-10). God delights in those who are willing to use every resource in their hands and all the energy of their being in the pursuit of God. After all, this is our eternal destiny – to know God. Each time Abraham gave up natural things for God, God brought him into a new level of revelation. Only after he left the land of Haran did the Lord appear to him (Genesis 12:7).
 - b. When Abraham chose to remain in Canaan rather than live like Lot in the fertile plains with Sodom and Gomorrah, God appeared to him again (Genesis 13:14).

- c. When Abraham refused the reward of the king of Sodom, not even wanting a shoe lace, God again appeared to Abraham (Genesis 14:23; 15:1).
- d. Finally, when God tested Abraham to see if His blessings to him (Isaac was the blessing of God to Abraham), were more important to Abraham or whether Abraham still loved Him for who He is (not just what He has done), Abraham passed the test with flying colours and God pronounced a special blessing on him and his descendants (Genesis 22:1, 15-18). No wonder Abraham was called a friend of God – he always put God first above all else: no matter what the cost or what it involved.

2. God loves those who take initiative to seek Him.

- a. Abraham expressed the lordship of God over his life by building an altar to the Lord as his first act in his journeys (Genesis 12:8; 13:3-4; 22:9). This was his way of expressing that God was number one in his life and that his whole life revolved around the Lord.
- b. Abraham ran towards the Lord whenever he recognised the manifestation of God (Genesis 18:2). He did not care when or how or how much it cost but as soon as he saw the Lord and recognised Him, he wanted to give all his life and all he had in the worship of God.
- c. Phinehas during Moses' time was zealous in removing sin from amongst the people of God and God gave him a special blessing in the covenant of peace (Numbers 11-13). God does watch whether we take special initiative in obeying His commandments.
- d. It was the initiative of Moses to seek to see the face of God, which brought him into a glimpse of the majestic glory of God (Exodus 33:18).
- e. It was the initiative of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus that persuaded Jesus to stay back and He gave them the extra special revelation of who He was (Luke 24:28-31).

3. God is pleased with those who exercise faith in Him (Hebrews 11:6).
 - a. Abraham's faith in God's promises was stretched thin through the many years of believing God for an heir. He was probably around 80 years old when God promised him an heir (Genesis 15:4) but the promise was fulfilled only when he was 100 years old (Genesis 17:1-17). During that time, he had seen his own body become sterile and the deadness of Sarah's womb but yet he held on in faith (Romans 4:18-20). He believed even when there was no natural hope (Romans 4:18).
 - b. Joshua and Caleb were rewarded by God because they were the only two out of twelve spies who still believed in the promised land of God in spite of the presence of giants in the land (Numbers 14:6-9). They held on to their faith in God even when they were in danger of being stoned by the rest of the unbelieving Israelites (Numbers 14:10). The Lord kept them strong during the extra forty years of delay in the conquest of the promised land. Caleb was 85 years old when he conquered the greatest giants of the Anakim with the same youthful strength that he had at the age of 40 (Joshua 14:11-15).
 - c. For the small initiative of faith that Nathanael showed in Jesus' word of knowledge, Nathanael was promised greater revelations of God (John 1:48-51).
4. God delights in those who obey Him in accordance to the level of revelation they had. Sometimes people are waiting to obey God in the exciting and spectacular things but God requires that every one of us be obedient to whatever commands or direction or impressions we have already received. Unless we are willing to obey God in what little revelation we already have, God will not reveal more direction nor give additional commandments until we are fully obedient to what we already know to do in our heart.
 - a. God knew Abraham's heart that he would seek to obey Him in every area, even making sure that his whole household and children follow in his footsteps of obedience (Genesis 18:19).
 - b. Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22, 23). Many people have great intentions to do things for God but many of them live and die without actually doing anything.

The reason being that they are always waiting for a great opportunity to present itself and never obey God in doing what is right – right now in front of their eyes and with those who are already around them. Unless we are faithful right now in the little we have, we cannot expect that God would entrust us with the greater blessings. He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much; and he that is unfaithful in little will be unfaithful in much (Luke 16:10). God is not interested in hearing what you can do for God in the future; God is interested now in what you can do in Him with what you already have.

- c. Unless we are faithful in watching the sheep and protecting them from the lions and the bears, we will not be given opportunity to watch over the people of God and protecting them from the Goliaths (1 Samuel 17:37). How can we have the courage to face Goliath if we have not taken time to develop the courage to face the lions and the bears?
- d. Before he met Jesus, Paul had all his theology and understanding of God twisted by his religious zeal. However, he was definitely a man who took no half measures for whatever he did, he did it with all his heart. God had mercy on him because Paul sincerely was trying to serve God in his own mind and understanding, even though it was dreadfully wrong (1 Timothy 1:13; Acts 22:3). With whatever little twisted revelation of God that he had, in obedience to that revelation, he excelled above all his contemporaries (Galatians 1:14). Thus when Paul found the truth in Christ, he gave Christ his unreserved and total obedience in following Him (2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-28).

It is possible to develop a relationship with God beyond our callings and missions. It is up to us to take the initiative to cultivate a special and close relationship with God. May Christ dwell in our hearts in greater fullness and enable us to be as close to the Father as Christ is with the Father.

May God stir your heart to rise higher into God,

Fatherly Talk 2.07

Preparations for a New Year

- 2008 the year of firstfruits

Dearly Beloved

The Bible is full of descriptions of the Jewish preparations of each season and New Year. In fact, when God brought forth the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, God commanded them to re-organise their calendar and changed their month of Abib into the first month of their New Year (Exodus 12:2 – it would have been about the third-fourth month of their normal year). God also caused them to blow the two silver trumpets at the beginning of each month and each feast; which would mean that there would be the constant sound of memorial especially over the New Year and Passover (Numbers 10:10). The spiritual significance of all these ceremonies would be the importance of remembrance of the Lord and the Lord's atonement in the lives of the Israelites.

1. As the Israelites sought God each year during the day of atonement (Yom Kippur) in which the high priest presented the sacrificial lamb's blood in the holy of holies (Leviticus 16), it is important that we also consecrate each entire year to the Lord through the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. We could choose to do this at any time throughout the year but it is easier to demarcate each New Year with our normal year end calendar. For this reason, we have always made a tradition of consecrating the last day of the year (31st December) as a day of fasting and prayer (while the world eats and drinks) during which we thank God for all His mercy and grace for all that He has shown us in the past year and at the same time seek to dedicate the New Year to Him. At the end of the day, we then celebrate with the communion and if it flows over into the New Year, then it would be the first meal of the New Year.
2. The decade of 2006 to 2016 is the decade of the glory of the Lord. As we enter into the third year of the new decade, it will continue to be a period of positioning and entrance into the blessing of the Lord. The first three years of this new decade is like the first three years of a farmer in the land of Canaan. It is the third year of dedication of all the young fruit trees to the Lord and only in its fourth year will the fullness of the harvest be visible and seen by all (Leviticus 19:23-24). Similarly, many of you will find that over these three years (2006 to 2008), that God has been growing you spiritually and preparing you for a great harvest work. This preparation will be

completed in the year 2008 where you will begin to see harvests from new areas which the Lord has placed you in.

Remember that all the harvest for the first three years is dedicated to the Lord. This means that whatever blessings you receive (bearing fruit through new ventures), they are to be used for positioning yourself for the successful implementation of the fruit-bearing work that will come on a yearly basis from the fourth year onwards. In other words, the harvest during the coming year (2008) is like seed money which has to be re-invested into areas which will keep producing fruit for the rest of the decade. This means that many of us will see the beginning of a harvest next year and also have many opportunities and doors opened to us to move into positions of producing more blessings. Use the opportunities carefully and only enter into those which the Lord sanctions. The fourth year (2009) will be the beginning of a constant and regular harvest. So do not spend all your seed-blessings that will come into your life in 2008 but re-invest them.

3. Three years has always been the average time that it would take to train and prepare a person for the ministry of the Lord. The apostle Paul only went to see the other apostles after three years (Galatians 1:18). During the first three years, Paul had to wrestle through all the new revelation and understanding that he was receiving about the Lord Jesus Christ. It took three years to crystallize the revelation and commission that he had received from the Lord Jesus when he first met the Lord on the way to Damascus (Acts 26:12-23). For this reason, I have always seen three years as the ideal period to mentor a person in the ministry (or training a person in any other area of professionalism) although most people are impatient and would rather move out of the trainee position within a year; the first year would be foundational principles, the second would be specialisation in each unique ability or call and the third year would be practical training and mentoring.
4. Thus for most of you, the third year of this decade of 2008, would still find yourselves in the preparation and training area in which the Lord has given you fresh vision in 2006. For myself personally, since the visions of the Spiritual World in 2006, the preparations and training the Lord has put me through would be completed in 2008. Many of you (in all professions) would have found that 2006 was a year of fresh impetus, fresh direction, fresh visions, fresh ideas and that the entire year of 2007 was a huge preparation. Well, this preparation will be completed in 2008 and many of you will see the

beginnings of the harvest in 2008, when you must handle carefully all the firstfruits that will be coming in during 2008. Be faithful to the finalized preparations and training that the Lord is putting each of you through in 2008.

5. In the Bible, firstfruits represent the first harvest which must be dedicated to the Lord (Leviticus 23:9-14). For material things, it means dedicating the gold and silver to the use of the Lord's temple (Joshua 6:19). From the New Testament perspective, it means that you will be using the blessings of the first harvest that will be coming in 2008 to create a system that will enable you to be systematic in the show of your devotion to the Lord; something akin to Abraham building an altar to the Lord (Genesis 12:8). For the first part of his journey and also up to his grandson's time, the altar at Bethel played an important part in Abraham's journeys and life (Genesis 13:2,3; 28:10-22). The other altar which Abraham built in Hebron (Genesis 13:18), became the site of the city which played an important part in David's life during the first seven years of his kingship (1 Chronicles 11:1-3).

These altars of Abraham symbolised dedicated vehicles of blessings which continued to bring blessings to generations after him. Dedicated vehicles of blessings could be in any form in the New Testament: the setting up of a new ministry or church, a new company or business, a new venture, a new spiritual partnership, etc. The most important thing is to dedicate the firstfruits to the Lord and build upon the pattern which the Lord has shown you in your personal life, your family life and your ministry or professional life; similar to how David received the pattern (blueprint) of the temple and Solomon built upon it (1 Chronicles 28:11-19). Make sure that you follow after the blueprint which God has set for your life and ministry. Some of us will be called like David, while others will be called to build upon the plans received by David like Solomon; and others will fulfill their call through David like the mighty men of David (1 Chronicles 11 and 12). Some are called to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers but all would have their ministries in the Lord (Ephesians 4:11-16). Each of us must be part of the New Testament living temple of the Lord (the body of Christ); and like each brick in the temple, we must know who is above us in authority, who is below us and who are beside us. If we are positioned correctly, we will grow into a living habitation of God (Ephesians 2:20-22).

Sometimes people are like loose bricks who have yet to find where to fit in, until and unless they find their place in the kingdom of God, it is very difficult for the blessings of the Lord to come upon them. They may live and die without even entering the first phase of their call and ministry; and in the judgment day, it would be all their responsibility and not the Lord's. This does mean that we have to ensure that we are in the right fellowship, in the right local church, in the right partnership, in the right profession, in the right ministry call, having the right type of friends, etc. Getting it wrong in one of these areas can hinder the full blessings of the Lord from flowing to us. For this reason, some people seem to be doing all the right things with a right heart and yet not getting a breakthrough, the problem being that they are not in the right place.

This does not mean that the place or people they should be with are perfect but rather that they are properly connected as a brick in the wall of God's temple. In this world, although we are told to be perfect like the heavenly father is perfect (Matthew 5:48), the imperfections of others might prevent us from wanting to connect with them as a brick in the wall but we still should obey the Lord because it is the right place to be. We also need to know that sometimes the perfection (yes, not imperfections) of others can cause us irritation because they are simply not like us; just as the eye is not like the ear or the hand like the foot.

We blame the imperfections of others and constantly bicker about it as an excuse to dis-fellowship or disconnect with people but most of the time it is our own judgmental attitude that is at fault – we want everybody to have the same tastes or idiosyncrasies like ourselves or our own families – an unlikely scenario as it would be a dull world if everyone is like us. Judge not lest you be judged (Matthew 7:1-6). I have always found that the most important thing is the heart of a person and the motive of a person; if the heart and motive are right, it is the easiest thing to be in fellowship with a person no matter how different their mannerisms or style may be. If you find that the heart and motive of a person is not right – stay well clear of such people. Do not even seek to join or be in fellowship with such people. Unity in the Lord and with one another must always start with the right heart and in the right spirit.

6. In the first year, God gives the vision; in the second the methodology and in the third the application. If you have been flowing with the Lord's Spirit in any new revelation received in 2006 and 2007, then in 2008 you should be receiving the revelation of the methodology

and the application. It is in these practical aspects that are going to have a cost factor in the material and physical world. By seeking righteousness and the kingdom of God first, the Lord will provide for the methodology and the applications (Matthew 6:33). Sometimes, the desires and visions of a person are in the right areas but the motives of a person are still not pure. In such cases, the Lord puts a person through a refining period until the motivation is corrected and the heart pure. At other times, a person might have the revelation but lacks the skill to implement the methodology; in such cases, the Lord brings the person to connect with those with the right skills and materials.

We must admit that it is rare to find a person who is an architect, an engineer and a contractor at the same time. Most of the time such diverse professions require three different types of persons with varying personalities. Similarly, it would be rare to find one skilled in the ministry world and in the business world at the same time. Most of the time one is skilled only in one area and needs help in the other areas. In these situations, fellowship and linking up with the right people and partners is important to the carrying forth of a vision. In all visions, a group of individuals need to link up properly to bring it to pass. The whole body, joined and knit together by what EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, according to the effective working by which EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:16).

At this time, it would be a good time to say thank you to those of you who have become a part of our lives and fellowship. We know it is the Lord who has brought us together to fulfil something bigger than any one of us individually. In the end, only the fulfilling of the Lord's perfect Will counts; and should the fulfilment of His perfect Will involve the linking together of any of us in various levels of fellowship, His Will be done and not ours. Individually we are all but one small part of the picture which the Lord is creating on the planet earth but together we can change the world for God. Amen.

Fatherly Talk 2.08

The power to change (transform)

Dear Beloved

As we ponder a New Year, we need to take comfort in the fact that God is always in control of all things. Much as many might think that it is human free will that runs wild on this planet or the devil who is behind everything, our Almighty Father God is watching carefully and guiding all things on the earth (while giving room for free will) towards a predestined conclusion. All wisdom and might are His. He changes the times and seasons, He removes kings and raises kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness and light dwells with Him (Daniel 2:20-22).

We need to remember that

1. All things physical have their source change in the spiritual world; and some of those things in the spiritual plane have been brewing for decades while others for years or months (Hebrews 11:3).
 - a. The Spiritual World is a beehive of activities which has its final goal in the changes that will occur on the physical planet earth for the good of humanity. Some of the spiritual activities are in response to the wrongful free-will acts of mankind which needs a response from the Spiritual World (some activities have an automatic response from spiritual laws laid within the fabric of creation) in the activating of angels and ministering spirits to steer things continually towards the predestined Will of God our Creator. In the time of Noah when evil reigned, God responded with the flood (Genesis 6:13).

In the time of the tower of Babel, God responded in the scattering of mankind into different languages and geographical regions (Genesis 11:5-8). When cities become evil, destruction comes upon them (Genesis 18:20-21). There is also a ripeness of time of judgment before God permits it to occur (Genesis 15:16). This law of reaping destruction and death through sin is impartial and even occurs to God's own people when they follow the wrong path (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The mercy of God is also available to all (those within the covenant and those outside the covenant if they

are willing to humble themselves) when any individual or community or country turns to God in repentance (2 Chronicles 7:14; Jonah 3:6-10; Matthew 15:21-28). Even though we might be living in the scientific 21st century and in the dispensation of the gospel of grace, the same laws of God still operate within communities and nations. God is still watching over people and communities and the proud will always be cast down and the humble exalted in the end (1 Peter 5:5, 6).

- b. Much in the same way as we see the accumulation of spiritual forces in the Spiritual realm over countries gather strength and from time to time have a tsunami impact upon the natural realm, within each of us are the accumulation of spiritual forces which through our daily spiritual life, thought life, desires and acts begin to impact upon our conscious life and our natural life – including the flow of circumstances over our life (for good when we yield to the right spiritual flow and for bad when we continuously yield to the wrong forces). These spiritual forces are like rivers and fountains within each of us (John 4:13-14; 7:37-38). Reading the Bible, prayer, worship and all the various wonderful religious acts are only means and methods by which these wonderful rivers within us are activated and directed. In contrast, all the various thought energy, soul energy and acts of sin released within us stir and misdirect the flow of God's original creative energy and turn them into darkness and destructive forces (Romans 7:21-23; 8:6). The same body of sin is the same potential temple of God (Romans 7:24-25; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). In a very true sense, all changes in our soul and physical life have to first be changed in our spiritual life.
- c. The secret of this change (or the better word is 'transformation') is to firstly recognise (know) that we cannot effect this change just from the natural or soul realm. It must always be done from the spiritual realm (for national and community change, changes to the spiritual realm over the respective nation and community; and for personal change and transformation, a change in our spiritual lives). Many people struggle too hard to change their soul life (thoughts, desires, soul weaknesses) and their physical lives (health, prosperity, favourable circumstances, etc.) by just focusing on those soul and natural areas. This is like trying to

remove weeds from the garden without removing the roots of those weeds. It will be a continuously fruitless task as the weeds keep regrowing in their lives and their relief is only temporary. They should have focus on changes in the spiritual climate of their lives.

The second important recognition (knowing) is that the 'energy' for sin or all the wrong things (wrong thoughts, wrong desires, wrong acts, wrong impulses) comes from the same good energy source within them. Just like Satan cannot create but can only pervert the things given by God, all energy has its source and goodness from God but where the energy is 'dark energy' in a person's life, it is because it has been turned or misdirected into a disharmonious function.

The third recognition (knowing) is that whatever we give our focus or concentration on, it will receive maximum energy. Thus when people begin to focus on the wrong things (even in great efforts to get rid of them) it actually has the opposite effect and re-energizes those very wrong things that they are trying to get rid of. We see that happening when a nation becomes obsessed with a particular crime in the media, it generates more copy cat crimes. Or when a business focuses on the failures of its past and spends too much effort to remove them, a depressive atmosphere robs the energy of the company. Similarly, one who focuses on all the darkness in one's life (even in trying to get rid of it) will only perpetuate the same darkness.

To move forward, a nation should focus on its positive ideals and perpetuate them. To prosper, a company needs to focus on its strengths and capabilities and excel in them. To overcome, one must focus on the gifting and strengths which God has given to each one by His grace. The only way to remove wrong thoughts is by replacing them with new good ones; not by trying to go against the wrong thought (which takes a great amount of expended energy) nor by trying to have an empty mind. Note that transformation through the renewal of the mind is done through focusing on the good, acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 4:8) and not on anything negative or wrong. This does not mean that one is blind or ignorant of the faults (without knowledge of wrong or repentance) or wrongs but rather one does not spend time wallowing in the mud of

condemnation and conviction of sin. Focus on God and the devil will be but a sub-atomic bug easily crushed. Focus on the promises of God and the giants in the promised land will be like cockroaches to be trampled upon. Focus on God your shepherd and Goliath will be like a grain of sand underneath your sandal.

2. All things operate by seasons and cycles (Genesis 1:14; Psalm 1:3; Ecclesiastes 3:1).

This means that whenever there is a downturn in the economy, there will be an upturn again. Where there is a good season, one must then prepare for the difficult season. Cycles will always occur in everything – some are long and some are short plus we have cycles within cycles. To those who are wise and access the knowledge both spiritual and natural, you will be able to discern the times. I have personally collected researches by scientists who have measured solar flare activities and cosmic radiation and the next phase of our sun over the next 8 years is mathematically projected to be into its low solar flare stage – this would mean more seasonal rains (the ebbs and flows of various rivers in the world have been graphically tied to the ebbs and flows of cosmic radiation to the planet earth).

There are also easily recognisable economic cycles of booms and recessions which wise business men would profit from if they pay heed to them (besides being aware of laws of wisdom and prosperity in the Bible and also predicted prophetic events). It is not a very difficult thing to be a seer when one combines knowledge of the Word with pure and accurate research data from natural science, and with perception of activities in the Spiritual World – every believer should be able to do it with the Holy Spirit's help especially within their own community or circle of influence (John 16:13) – and especially in your own life. There will always be a season for reaping and another for sowing. To those who do not understand the necessity of a season for the low ebbs when darkness seems to prevail for some time, please read the Spiritual World book (Chapter 2 – light to the planet earth, around pgs 42, 43 of the eBook). Much of the seeming permission of evil reigning temporarily is more like the scampering of cockroaches under a sudden bright light (unfortunately for us some of the lengths of this extra activity and scampering as evil tries to hide in new forms is measured on earth by years and would seem long to us still in the physical realm. Take heart that no evil is permitted forever, all have their Day of Judgment even before the last and final Great White Throne

Judgment. Every low ebb in a cycle is ALWAYS to prepare for the next greater glory.

To each of you beloved students, friends and partners of the ministry, I raise my hand to bless you and may God our Father's face shine upon each of you especially in the New Year and bring forth a greater abundance of grace: firstly in the knowing of God in your lives, then in the blessing of God to you and your loved ones, and then to all those within the sphere of your influence.

May the wonderful multitudes of angels who work through us combine with the work of your angels and bring forth a new revelation of glory in the coming year. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Written with blessings from the heart.

Fatherly Talk 2.09

The two commandments: love God and love your neighbour

Dearly Beloved

By the two basic commandments (love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and love your neighbour as yourself – Luke 12:28-31), all the religious aspirations of mankind could be combined. Removing all the various ceremonial, codes and idolatrous elements of all mankind's belief and religions, the essence of all religions invented by man can be reduced to purely these two commandments. These can all be summed up in one word – true unselfish benevolent love. God is love (1 John 4:16). Although every core Christian knows these two commandments, the outworking of them is demonstrated in one's ability to relate to God and to people. As we begin this new year, let us examine whether we have truly grown in these two areas of our life.

A. Relationship with God

1. How have we grown in our love and appreciation for God?
True appreciation of God should fill us with a sense of wonder and thankfulness each day of our lives as opposed to an unthankful attitude (Romans 1:21). Our thankfulness barometer should be full everyday and our capacity to be thankful should be increasing year to year. This thankfulness also extends to areas beyond our understanding – in everything give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18). There are two roads to take in growing older each year: the road of complaining and depression or the road of thankfulness and cheer.
2. How much more of God have we grown to know?
Eternal life is knowing God (John 17:3). This growth is propelled by a desire to know Him and to seek Him. Unfortunately, in this temporal world it requires a quality decision to seek God which involves an element of diligence (Hebrews 11:6). This is not the outward seeking of good works, but the internal energising of the heart by the Spirit of God. The key here is not just seeing how much more religiosity or works we have increased year by year but rather whether the internal energising that we are experiencing (that drives us each day to know God) is increasing year by year. If we do it right by entering the rest and allowing the working of grace in our lives, we should have more spiritual energy this year than last year. If our inward man is renewed day by day for the whole of last year,

then as we begin this year we should have the increased accumulation of energy from the last year (2 Corinthians 4:16). Eternal life does not begin when we leave this physical body, eternal life begins now while we are still in this limited body by the reception of the transforming life of Christ into our hearts (2 Corinthians 4:6). In a sense, the question to ask is have we received more of God's life within us throughout the last year – for our knowledge of God is directly proportional to the reception of God's life into our hearts.

3. How much more have we allowed God to demonstrate His love through us?

The measure of our love for the invisible God is measured directly by the measure of love that we demonstrate for others (1 John 4:20-21). Have we grown more selfish in the past year or more generous in the past year? Have we cared for the needy, the poor, the destitute, the downtrodden around us? It is important that we do not distance ourselves from the need to directly care for others (besides caring for our loved ones) for in doing so we are doing it as unto the Lord (Matthew 25:31-46).

B. Relationship with people

1. Relationship with our loved ones

Firstly, we need to grow in our thankfulness for our loved ones. Too many people take their loved ones for granted. We should thank God for our parents, brothers, sisters and children each day. The death of love begins with the death of thankfulness. It is not possible to be angry and thankful at the same time. In all families we should maintain the spirit of thankfulness (1 Timothy 2:1). Secondly, we need to grow to understand that part of love is the giving of ourselves to another. In that respect, a measure of sacrifice is involved (or inconvenience). Life is not just about personal satisfaction and gratification but it is about the giving of ourselves in love to those nearest around us (our neighbour – which begins in our own home). Look at the sacrificial love that Ruth had for her mother in law (book of Ruth). She left her homeland, not thinking of herself and devoted her life to taking care of Naomi. In the end God blessed her and she became the great grandmother of King David.

2. Relationship with our friends

Many people do not know how to live a balanced relationship with friends nor how to form the right type of close relationships with friends. They are either too demanding or too distant. Friends know

how to respect each other's boundaries and not to cross moral, social or family lines. If you do not have close friends in your life, you are the problem and not others. Either your standards are so high that only the Lord Jesus qualifies to be your friend or your fear of getting hurt is of such low threshold that you do not allow anybody close to you. If you have not developed more new friendships last year, you have not really grown in this area but remain stagnant. Jesus was able to be a friend to both His disciples and to people of various social strata (Matthew 11:19; John 15:14).

Secondly, the type and quality of friends you make is also a true reflection of who you are (Psalm 1:1); just as the type of books you read is also a true reflection of who you are. Your friends should not just be those whom you need help from but those whose relationship you treasure and desire to grow with in the Lord. Neither should they be friends who are Yes-men who only tell you what you want to hear but tell you what you need to hear - telling you the truth at all times even things which you might disagree with but that you need to hear. In the light of eternity, these are the human spirits embodied in physical bodies who came into this life in the same generation to prod us along the right path. Do not just let the natural course of physical life direct your choice of friendship – business, ministry, church, social, etc. Rather pray diligently and be sensitive to those human spirits who are placed in this life at the same time as you and with whom you actually have a spiritual and eternity connection.

3. Relationship with enemies

It is more important to convert an enemy than to slay an enemy. For this reason, Jesus commands us to love unconditionally even those who oppose us (Matthew 5:44). Part of the growth in this life is to learn to respond correctly to our enemies (Luke 6:22, 23). We should be way past the point of learning to forgive others and it should be an automatic thing for us by now, if we have understood and have absorbed the full impact of the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:12). How can we truly say we are followers of Christ who loved us while we were yet sinners and enemies of God, and not follow His example? (Romans 5:8-10). It is when we have grown into this level of unconditional love that we understand what true spirituality means. We should never render evil for evil but grow to the extent that even in our thoughts, we do not think evil towards anyone or anything (1 Corinthians 13:5).

C. Areas in which we should be affected in our love

1. Mental and knowledge wise

Part of the growth process is to advance in knowledge and wisdom: knowledge and wisdom in how to treat others, knowledge and wisdom in how to engage people in a proper balanced relationship of give and take, sensitivity to the needs and concerns of others, etc. Wisdom in social skills is an important part of this growth. Like everything else in life, we should not just think that we know all things but rather seek out books written by those with knowledge and wisdom in developing social skills. Whatever our profession or social status, it bears us well to learn to develop social skills. Social skills will not come automatically, we learn or lack learning from the examples of those around us (parents, friends, etc.). 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 is a good place to start in learning social skills.

2. Emotional wisdom

Although we learn that it is important to follow our faith and not our feelings, it does not excuse us from dealing with our inner emotional feelings and bringing them into harmony with love, joy and peace. It is not enough just to know that we should love God and love people but it is also important to feel love towards God and feel love towards people. Look deep within you, how do you really feel about God? And how do you feel towards those around you? Are there any loose unkind or bad feelings still lingering within your subconscious? If there are, it is important to allow the Holy Spirit to bring them to the surface to be dealt with. Every bad feeling or unkind feeling within us has a root cause. Unless and until the root cause is dealt with, those disharmonious feelings will never go away. All our feelings should grow into the fruit of the spirit with time (Galatians 5:22, 23).

When our head and our heart are in harmony, we will not only know that we have love for God and love for people but also be able to feel love towards God and towards all people. In the Spiritual World, there are paths of growth in the knowledge and wisdom areas but there are also paths of growth in the feelings and emotive areas. Those who only seek growth in one path are lopsided and are prevented from further growth by their own lack of balance. Emotional growth (which affects all our ability to relate to others) is a very important path of growth neglected by modern society which places too much importance only in knowledge and skills. Thus you have highly skilled and knowledgeable people with a stunted babyhood

emotional level of maturity with absolutely zero skills in relating to others. On the other hand, those who are mature emotionally with very little knowledge and skill have somehow managed to do reasonably well in life and society.

So dear ones, do not just excel in knowledge and wisdom but also excel in developing your ability to feel and experience compassion and understanding - thus developing your emotional maturity as well.

Fatherly Talk 2.10

The joy-filled Christian

(Practicing the presence of God - part 1)

Dearly Beloved

One of the good classic books in Christianity is “The Christian’s secret of the happy life” by Hannah Withal Smith (originally she wrote it under the anonymous author ‘ The unknown Christian’). Ever since then there has been very few books of that category that teaches a Christian how to be happy. It is evident from the promises of Christ that in spite of the fact that we live in a sin-filled and imperfect world with tribulations, that we should experience His joy (John 15:11; 16:22-24). The apostles Paul and Peter obviously knew the experience of this godly joy (Philippians 4:4; 1 Peter 1:8). This joy was not affected by bodily pain or circumstances for the apostles (Acts 5:41; 16:25). With so many Scriptures in the New Testament regarding joy, one wonders why traditional Christianity has impressed people with its serious, sombre and lack-of-joy countenance as the norm. Indeed if we truly live in the experiential aspects of the kingdom today, we should be experiencing righteousness, peace and joy everyday (Romans 14:17).

1. We need to live above the things of this life (John 15:19; 16:33; 18:36; Colossians 3:2)
 - a. Anxiety and worry is produced by too much attachment to the things of this earthly life (Matthew 6:25-34). We need to release all the physical things in this life and not allow them to be the basis of good emotions that we feel. This does not mean negligence or irresponsibility but rather to understand that good feelings and good emotions have a deeper source than that which arises from ownership or pleasure from physical things. Only a dying to self and a sense of contentment can help us to be free from such emotional attachments (1 Timothy 6:6-10). Remember that all emotional attachments are learned and acquired for we came into this earth with nothing. The amount of anxiety you experience each day is directly proportional to the attachment you have to this physical life. For this reason we are told to reckon ourselves dead in Christ and to take up the cross daily (Romans 6:11-14; 1 Corinthians 15:31; Luke 9:23)

- b. Fear is rooted in anxiety about the future of the physical life, the loss of it or that which is unknown (Hebrews 2:14, 15; Matthew 14:26; Luke 21:26). The reason why fear and love cannot co-exist is because love brings assurance and faith for all circumstances (past, present, future) and rests ultimately in the arms of the object of our love, our Father God (1 John 4:18, 19). Being the apple of God's eyes of love is the antidote to all fear. It is the freedom from all fear and the complete confidence in the love of God for us that makes us overcomers (Romans 8:39).
 - c. The experience of joy is the natural progression from the experience of love and peace (Romans 5:1-5, 11). In His last sermon to the disciples before the cross, Jesus outlined the progression from love (John 13:34-35; 14:21-24; 15:9) to peace (John 14:27) and joy (John 15:11; 16:24, 33). Many people have not experienced joy because they have not tasted and experienced love, while others have experienced partial love but need to experience total ultimate and unconditional love, as the love that only God can give, in order for peace to come. Peace comes when love is full. And joy comes when peace is full.
2. We need to focus on the greatest treasure of this life – the experience of love, peace and joy (Galatians 5:22, 23).
- a. The whole purpose of this physical life – relationships, events and moments – is the ever increasing experience of true love, true peace and true joy. Why do we have desires and ambitions? Because we are seeking that which is fulfilling to us and would bring us love, joy and happiness. Why do we seek out the company of good people and friends? Because it brings us pleasant moments of joy and well-being. Why do people desire things? Because it brings them some sense of temporal pleasure. Think about it. Everything in this life revolves around the pursuit of love, peace, joy and happiness! When this life ends and we have to say goodbye to all the things we have and the people we know here (temporary at least until both are in the Spiritual World), the only reality, treasure and asset we bring into the Spiritual World is our experience of love, peace and joy from this life.

- b. By understanding the above, we should be treasuring the moments of love, peace and joy that we experience each day. Live each day at a time enjoying to the fullest each moment that you experience love, peace and joy. By yielding yourselves to them and purposefully giving time to the experience of these moments, you are building your spirit consciousness of the spiritual realm. Generally, most people only experience these moments 'as-it-happens' accidentally along the path of their busy lives. In the frantic pursuit of happiness, they ignore the happiness that is occurring all along the way. Sufficient for each day is its own challenges; we should thus find fragrances of love, peace and joy that God and His angels arrange for us for each day (Matthew 6:34). Learn to place all your ambitions, desires and goals in the place of rest in God (Hebrews 4:10) and walk not in your own nervous energy but rather just walk in the works that God has already prepared for you (Ephesians 2:10).

- c. Wealth, power and fame have not brought people the happiness they sought. Many instead find more troubles and sorrow (1 Timothy 6:10). When advertisers promote their goods and services, they are not just selling their goods and services per se; rather they are selling the association that those goods or services have to bring wealth, power or recognition. The illusion of happiness is the bait of the devil to tempt people to lose their lives and ultimately lose all possible happiness they can obtain in this life (Luke 4:5-7). True happiness is the ability to enjoy each day filled with its moments of love, peace and joy. A lifetime filled with days of these moments makes a joy-filled life.

Ultimately, all joy arises from a harmony of that which is within us with that which is without (outside). Since there is fullness of joy in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11) it should be obvious that anyone practicing the presence of God should be filled with joy. And since God is love (1 John 4:16), anyone practicing the presence of God should also be filled with love. One cannot experience love, peace and joy by shunning relationships or avoiding interaction with people. Spiritual progress is made not by being a hermit but through forming healthy relationships with all who come into the circle of our lives. Each day is a day which the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it.

Fatherly Talk 2.11

Increasing our perception of God's presence (Practicing the presence of God - part 2)

Dear Beloved,

Everyone knows that we are tripartite beings: spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Most of us understand the place and function of our body, which is like the physical house for our spirit and soul (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Peter 1:13, 14). All the struggles we have in the flesh has to do with the rogue desires and impulses that are found within the body of flesh (Romans 7:18, 24). The aim of spiritual growth is to present our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21). Even our Lord Jesus refers to His own body as a temple (John 2:19-21).

It is the place and function of the soul which puzzles many Christians. Just like the body is the instrument through which the spirit/soul expresses itself physically on earth, the soul is the instrument through which the spirit expresses itself. Thus a fully functional and healthy body would give the spirit/soul the best means of expressing itself physically on earth, a fully functional and healthy soul would allow the best expression of the spirit man within the soul. Misuse of the physical body can damage the physical body; misuse of the soul can damage the soul. The development and training of our soul is thus an important part of spiritual growth (James 1:21; 5:20; 1 Peter 1:9; Hebrews 4:12; 6:19; 10:38-39; 13:17; 1 Corinthians 15:45). While on earth with our limited consciousness, the perception of the spirit man is through the function of our soul and the perception of God is through the function of the spirit man within. This would mean that unless our souls are trained and 'spiritualized' we would find it hard to perceive the presence of God. We can accept the omnipresence of God as a faith fact but to swim and flow in the presence of God requires a perception of the presence of God. It is therefore important to know all the various ways in which our spirit is functioning through our soul.

1. The first and foremost area is the area of the imagination
This is the inner ability to visualize and see images within the mind's eye. In the Old Testament, it is described by the Hebrew word 'yetzer' and in the New Testament it is described by the word 'dianoia.' The final result of what is imagined can be good or bad depending on its harmony with all the laws of God in creation (moral, social, spiritual, etc. as revealed in the Word of God)

(Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Deuteronomy 31:21; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:18; Psalm 103:14; Isaiah 29:16; Habakkuk 2:18; Luke 1:51; Ephesians 1:18). This ability to imagine and visualise can be affected by physical realm images, our inner choice and desires or from the Spirit realm by spirit beings.

By exercising our free will and choosing only those images that are correct and in harmony with the laws embedded in creation, we are able to develop and train our soul to allow it to function as an instrument of the spirit. Only the Word of God can purify our imagination and the intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). The imaginations that are locked in our hearts are the pre-cursor to all our thought patterns and thoughts that we experience in our consciousness. There is (for lack of a better word to describe this process) a 'spiritual substance chemical-energy' release every time we use our imagination. Like every other quality of our soul, it can be subject to our free choice although those who have wrongly embedded imaginations will at first struggle to bring it into subjection to the law of God. Use the positive images from the Bible and from scenic nature to train and exercise your imagination; those images that bring positive feelings within your soul.

2. The second area is the conscience within us.
The sense of right and wrong within our conscience is like an internal gyroscope that tells us our place of harmony in God's laws and creation. The conscience needs to be trained to discern good from evil (Hebrews 5:14). Although there is some basic inbuilt sense of right and wrong on moral areas within our conscience, there are other areas where Christians themselves might sense right and wrong differently, eg. like in the eating of meats or in the Sabbath day (Romans 1:20; 2:14-15; 14:1-23). As we grow in God, much of the religious things we are zealous about could prove wrong in the light of greater understanding while other things that we neglect might prove important in the light of eternity. Most of the time all our religious zeal is much about nothing if we neglect the weightier matters of the law such as loving God and loving neighbour (Colossians 2:16-23; Matthew 22:36-40; 23:23). A good conscience is the only guide to true faith without which only shipwreck will result (1 Timothy 1:19).
3. The third area is logical thought processes
This is the ability within us to think and reason through principles, precepts and laws. It is the ability to see each principle, precept and law in its proper place in harmony with all of God's laws and

creation. Sometimes wrong reasoning can result by not being able to see the larger context and the logic seems right in a smaller context (seeing the leaves but not the forest) which can result in false conclusions – for example thinking that the sun revolves around the earth. Because our logic is finite, we always need the help of the Scriptures and of our conscience to guide us. Wrong reasoning will lead to wrong actions and all such wrong reasoning needs to be pulled down (2 Corinthians 10:5). Many law-breakers reason and justify themselves in their hearts and minds before they break the law. Good reasoning can lead us to see what is consistent with rightness and what is in line with God’s laws and God’s Word (Acts 18:4, 26).

4. The fourth area of development is in the ability to feel – to have compassion, to empathise, to weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice.

The ability to feel the affections of Jesus is an important part of the Christian life and not to be neglected in the pursuit of faith through facts (Philippians 1:8; 2:1). The most powerful healings and miracles have always been preceded by the flow of compassion (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Luke 7:13). The fruit of the spirit might be experiences that result from the Spirit realm but they must resonate within our soul for their impact to be complete in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

5. The fifth area of development is in the intuition.

This is an inner knowing and sense which can be accurate if properly trained and cultivated. The root of this knowing is a perception by the spirit man within us and conveyed in a sense of inner knowing to our souls (Acts 27:10). It usually bypasses the intellect and many times surpasses the understanding (Ephesians 3:19; Philippians 4:7). There is an inbuilt instinct within us that resonates in harmony with the laws of God in creation when we are pondering the correct perception, desire or course of action and potential result.

The above are not the only areas but it gives a sufficient idea as to the capacities of the soul which need training. The Holy Spirit within our spirits enables us to train the soul to stretch in these capacities. As these capacities mature, they become the very same vehicles which God would use in allowing us to sense the flow of His presence and power. Each of us might use different methods or techniques in the training of the soul depending on our inner attributes and inclinations but the principle that our spiritual limitations of expression and reception are directly proportional to the quality development of the soul is a truth we can never avoid. Some of us

may be stronger in one area than another but to be properly developed and balanced we need all areas of the soul to develop proportionally.

May God enlarge your soul capacity through the Spirit within you.

Fatherly Talk 2.12

Twelve senses - practicing the presence of God - part3

Dearly Beloved

In the Spiritual World book, I mentioned about the twelve senses we have in the Spiritual World as follows:

All the senses in the spiritual realm are heightened thousands of times and we can sense things beyond what our normal five senses perceive. The spirit being is more capable to sense all the 12 variations of colours and shapes and sounds in the spiritual world. This is hard to describe but put simply our earthly five senses are only the basics of the twelve spiritual world senses:

1. Within our ears are actually three senses
 - a. the sense of hearing
 - b. the sense of movement or direction
 - c. the sense of balance (the sense of mass or “weight”)
2. Within our sense of touch through our body and nerves are two senses
 - a. the sense of touch which in the spiritual realm becomes more acute to sense electricity-magnetism, ether-astral currents and substances.
 - b. the sense of love (warmth/cold, peace, joy). Our physical bodies produce chemicals (endorphins, etc.) which cause us to physically feel rejection, depression or highs and lows. This is a very, very rough physical type comparison of the more refined sense of love within our spirit and soul that we can sense in the spiritual realm. All emotions finally resolve themselves into one great and final universal force of God’s love.
3. Within our sense of smell are two senses
 - a. the sense of smell
 - b. the sense of life or breath. In the Spirit World, we sense this pulsation of life which comes from God.
4. Within our sense of taste are two senses
 - a. the sense of taste
 - b. the sense of speech. This sense enables us to perceive the sense of what is communicated to us even when we sometimes do not understand the words.
5. Within the sense of sight are the senses of
 - a. the sense of sight
 - b. the sense of thought
 - c. the sense of consciousness (the soul or “I” consciousness)

It is through these twelve senses that we sense the Spiritual World. We do not have the same organs and 'sense organs' that we have in the physical world to exercise our spiritual senses; rather all of our entire beings have the capacity to 'sense' all twelve areas. Having pointed to how they have been 'condensed' into our present five physical senses, I would like to outline them from one to twelve to describe them further.

1. The spiritual sense of hearing in the Spiritual World (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22).

We do 'hear' the Spiritual World all the time but it takes discernment to hear through the static that is present in the lower spiritual realms and also static produced from our own thoughts and desires. For this reason our spiritual hearing is augmented by the Holy Spirit who enables us to hear the spiritual realm. Remember that this hearing is not communicated in any known language of human beings but rather it comes through spiritual means of language and communication. By the time it is conveyed into our acquired earthly language, a large part of it has been lost. It is thus very easy to 'misinterpret' a communication from the spiritual realm which is why we always have to compare and filter all our hearing through the Word of God.

2. The spiritual sense of movement or direction (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1).

Our ability in the physical realm to sense movement and direction is mixed with our other senses (sight, etc.). This spiritual sense is still working when we sense 'spiritual levels.' While direction in this life is based upon the position of physical objects, true direction in the Spiritual World is based on positioning with respect to God. Our inner sense of where we are spiritually at the moment and where others are spiritually is an aspect of this sense. Since travel in the Spiritual World can be achieved faster than the speed of thought, this sense helps us to align our spiritual beings to the respective spiritual level of our destination. A fully developed sense in this area helps a spiritual person 'broadcast' their spiritual form and communicate in the spiritual realm. In order to broadcast or send a message successfully in the natural realm, one must determine 'where' one is and 'where' the object of one's broadcast is; likewise, in the spiritual realm the sense of 'where' people and spiritual planes are enables super-distance communication and manifestation.

3. The spiritual sense of balance (1 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Timothy 6:8).

This is also the sense of unity, oneness and harmony. In the natural realm, the 'hairs' in our inner ear are affected by the gravitational forces and our inner balance and harmony is then affected. The symptoms of disorientation results in motion sickness with vomiting in some people. From the spiritual perspective, this sense of inner harmony with God and inner harmony with His laws (spiritual and natural) is vitally important. By this sense, right and wrong can be discerned even without thought (which is another sense altogether). This spiritual sense can be further developed by being more conscious of the sense of oneness with nature, with God's laws, with other people and with God Himself.

4. The spiritual sense of touch (Mark 5:30).

This is the sense of spiritual power and includes sensitivity to magnetic-electrical forces, ether-astral currents, etc. Some people can sense the change in the electrical atmosphere just before a storm arrives (ions in the atmosphere). Jesus could sense the flow of healing virtue even through the clothes that He wore. In the Spiritual World, this sense is highly important for those who want to flow with God's creative power. It is also this sense that 'senses' the atmosphere of faith before the manifestation of any miracle (Acts 14:9).

5. The spiritual sense of love (Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22, 23).

All the nine fruit of the spirit are different flavours of our sense of love. The extreme negative emotions of hate and rejection show how powerful this sense of love (or lack of love) is. We often describe the lack of love as being 'cold.' In the Spiritual World, this sense of love does indeed produce a sense of warmth or coldness in our spiritual beings. For those who doubt the unconditional love of God, it is due to their own lack of development of this sense of love within themselves. God loves us unconditionally and without favouritism. We are all loved as much as Jesus is loved by the Father (John 17:26). The ability to sense God's love would result in the high development of compassion (Greek word 'splagna' – the affections of Jesus) in our lives (Philippians 1:8; Matthew 15:22).

6. The spiritual sense of smell (2 Corinthians 2:14-16; Ephesians 5:2).
This is a sense of well-being, a sense of spiritual pleasure. Fullness of joy results from this sense. It is the spiritual endorphan and part of what produces the joy unspeakable and full of glory. When we do the right thing in the unselfish giving of ourselves, this spiritual pleasure can be overwhelming as a sweet incense through our lives (Philippians 4:18; 2 Corinthians 9:7).
7. The spiritual sense of life (John 10:10).
Abundant life is our destiny in Christ. This sense of zoe life is a higher law in itself and yielding to this sense brings the fullness of its working even within our physical bodies (Romans 8:2, 10-11). We could all feel our physical heart beat at all times – its increase as we exercise and its decrease as we relax and rest. This sense of pulsation – of its increase and decrease – is important as we flow with our physical body’s optimum performance. Times of relaxation and times of exercise are both important to the continual optimum health of our physical bodies. Similarly, the sense of the rhythms of spiritual life is vitally important to our spiritual health. We should flow rather than walk in our own works and strength. It is this sense that helps us to know when we are walking in the strength of Christ and when we are working in our own steam.
8. The spiritual sense of taste (Psalm 34:8).
Without the taste for food, we would not be enjoying eating. Part of the sense of taste is also the spiritual hunger, desire and thirst for God. Unless and until we hunger for such, we will never be filled (Matthew 5:6-7). Also the joy and taste of certain physical foods cause us to seek them out and make them become our ‘favourite foods.’ It is this differing hunger and thirst in our lives that also make each of us unique and aspire to do different things and develop differently through different professions. Just as there are multiple ways to cook food and multitudes of foods yet to be sampled, there are infinite possibilities in the Spiritual World in all the areas of God’s creation.
9. The spiritual sense of speech (Colossians 4:6).
A word fitly spoken is like pictures of gold in settings of silver (Proverbs 25:11). We all enjoy good poetry because of

the power of the spoken word to express all our thoughts and ideas. Sometimes when people are communicating in a language which we do not understand, we have a sense of what they are saying without understanding the exact words. This is the sense of speech in operation. If a picture paints a thousand words, a word fitly spoken expresses a hundred sentences. Development of this ability also makes it easier to receive communication from the spiritual realm as we in turn have the ability to receive in one pregnant sentence an entire page of revelation.

10. The spiritual sense of sight (Ephesians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 4:18).

Seeing the invisible has always been the domain of seers and of those with great faith (Hebrews 11:13). In the realm of the blind, the one-eyed man is the king; in the realm of spirituality and leadership, those who see beyond the physical sight and beyond the limitations of others will rule. In Christ, everyone is given the equal opportunity to develop this ability (1 Corinthians 2:9). We are not limited by the love of God as He loves all equally; rather we are limited by our own response to love God as much as He has loved us (1 John 3:16; 4:19). To respond to God's love requires that we accept His unconditional love and to exercise our free will and love Him unconditionally with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This will open the way for our spiritual eyes to be acclimatised to God's light (which is God's love) and be able to see as far as the light of love enables us to see.

11. The spiritual sense of thought (1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

Our life consists of thoughts and it bodes us well to have our thoughts revolve around Godly and positive areas (Philippians 4:8). To achieve complete control of our thoughts is the greatest conquest of any individual man (2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Romans 8: 6; 12:1-2). A person is only as great as their thought life. We are only limited by our own limitations in thoughts, concepts and ideas. This sense of thought is not just in words and pictures. The spiritual world imparts to us through ideas; we in turn convert these ideas through our words and concepts. For this reason, two people can receive the same spiritual idea and convey it through very different words and vocabularies. If we always remember that thought is just a sense and not a be-all and

end-all in itself, we will remain humble knowing that our 'thought ability' is a created sense given to us by God.

12. The sense of self or consciousness (Galatians 2:20).

Our ability to be self-conscious and self-aware is a created sense given when we were bestowed free will by God. In this physical body our self consciousness is probably only about ten percent, and we should not think that our present consciousness is all there is to it. Think about it, we are not always aware of the beating of our hearts, the flow of blood through our arteries, the function of all our organs and tissues, the flow of saliva through our mouths, etc. Many of these go into the background of our deeper or subconscious level, when we are not thinking about them; and for many of these functions, it is far better that our subconscious (auto-consciousness) takes care of them. Our ability to focus our consciousness on different areas is merely a small percentage of our greater consciousness.

Full consciousness is only possible when we are released from the limitations of this restrictive physical body. Thus our real true consciousness resides in our spirit man, with only a small portion tangible to our soul for the purpose of exercising our limited free will while in this physical body. Part of the training of our consciousness should be God-consciousness as only in His life and light are we able to be fully conscious (John 1:9). Of course, while in this physical life, we should take joy in the consciousness that we derive from our physical bodies as this is the plane of existence that we came into as part of our training for eternity. A continual submission to God and consciousness of God's love is the ideal until the achievement of the awareness (consciousness) of God's presence with us twenty-four hours each day.

When all of our twelve spiritual senses are fully trained and exercised, we have the potential to experience the powers of the age to come (Hebrews 5:14; 6:5). A fuller life (abundant life) also results from the enhancement of all of our senses. The ability to experience anything depends on the acuteness and sensitivity of our senses. By developing all twelve senses, our experience of both spiritual and natural life becomes full – the way God has always intended life to be.

May the abundant life of Christ be upon each of you.

Fatherly Talk 2.13

The simplicity of faith (2 Corinthians 1:12)

Dearly Beloved

Have you noticed that the more we progress in God, the less limitations we place upon God? In the end it is our own set of beliefs, our own set of religiosity, and our own concepts of God that limit us. The more we grow spiritually, the more our false concepts of God are removed; and we can finally see God for who He really is. It is never God who limits us but we who limit God.

Firstly, we need to establish certain concepts of God and understand them perfectly:

1. God is eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27)
This means that concepts of time, beginning and end DOES NOT apply to God. If there was a beginning and an end, it would imply that there was something anterior to God and greater than God controlling the beginning and the end. Our concept of the eternal God must completely include the understanding that all beginnings and all endings were created by Him; that God is the ultimate source of all time, beginnings and endings.
2. God is unchangeable (Hebrews 6:17, 18; James 1:17)
If God is changeable then there will be no stability in the entire universe or His creation and everything would become unstable. It is because ALL of God's creation rests upon Him and His immutability that His creation has laws and stability.
3. God is unique – there is only One God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6)
If there were several Gods, there would be no unity of plan or power in the entire universe. There is only One God and no other beside Him.
4. God is immaterial and beyond all His creation (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 1:20)
If God were any part of His material or created universe He Himself would be subject to them; thus He has to be above and beyond His creation and not part of the material of the created universe. Although His life fills and sustains the entire universe, He Himself is above and beyond His creation.
5. God is absolute love, goodness and mercy (1 John 4:8; Exodus 34:6).
God is complete love, perfection, wisdom, goodness, righteousness and everything that we can conceive of all concepts of love,

goodness and mercy – for these concepts first originate from the attribute of who God is (1 John 4:8-19; Matthew 5:48; Mark 10:18). All measurements of love, perfection, goodness, righteousness and mercy are based on comparisons to God who is the true measure of these attributes.

Secondly, knowing all of the above, think about what we mean when we speak of concepts of eternal life, righteousness, goodness, etc. Think about how understanding the above helps you to truly relate to God as a Person through the person of Christ. We are on a constant path of growth to know God and love God for who He is – this is eternal life (John 17:3). How do we expand our understanding of God and keep ourselves on the path of growth? The following are important philosophical positions that we need to inculcate within us:

1. Although we understand the limitations of physical laws of this material world, our belief and faith must rise above these laws to allow God to work above and beyond our limited physical laws. The law of the Spirit of life is always above the law of this physical world (Romans 8:2). Whenever a miracle occurs in the physical world it is not a haphazard or chaotic occurrence but rather the result of the application of the higher spiritual law superseding the lower natural law. Our bodies may be limited by this physical realm but our minds must ascend to the limitless possibilities of the spiritual realm. All things are possible for those who believe (Mark 9:23). It is possible to taste of the powers of the age to come through our faith (Hebrews 6:5; Matthew 17:20).
2. God's love is completely unconditional (Romans 5:8; John 3:16). Even in the darkness of hell, the love of God is still present (Romans 8:35-39). The love of God is never withdrawn; rather it is the ability to believe in God's love and the ability to feel God's love that has been blocked by the personal choice of those in darkness. The correct stance to always take is to somehow obtain an inner understanding within us (an inner belief within us) that we are greatly loved unconditionally by God. Having this understanding developed and established in us every thought, every breath, every word and every action from us is a response to this wonderful love of God. Every breath, every thought, every word and action from us becomes an act of worship in love towards God. To the pure all things are pure, even in the midst of the greatest darkness and evil, if you look for it, you can still find the love of God shining through – though sometimes perverted into other kinds of limited small acts of kindness, pity or human desire and love (Romans 14:20; Titus 1:15).

What we see is ALWAYS coloured by our belief system and mental concepts, thus we need to saturate ourselves in the love of God so that we can see as God sees (Ephesians 3:14-19). It is only when our heart is full of the love of God that we can understand His Word and His revelations (1 Corinthians 2:9-18).

3. Knowing God is not sufficient, we need to be linked in oneness with God to be effective (John 15:1-5; 17:24). This oneness is in the spirit realm with an overflow to the natural world (1 Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 5:30-32). We can be one mind with the mind of Christ within us (1 Corinthians 2:16). We need to set our affections on things above – to have our emotions deeply rooted and affected only by things above – in order to be positioned to flow in this oneness with the Lord (Colossians 3:1-2). The sense of compassion is an important development in understanding this flow (Matthew 15:32; 20:34; Philippians 1:8; 2:1).

In the end our walk with God is simple, a complete constant direct flow and dependence on Him. In simplicity, through every problem we face in life – moment by moment – we should tap upon His wisdom and simply see as He sees in every situation of this life. And understanding that ALL life is designed as a flow of response to God's love moment by moment; remembering that your mind and belief system must not be limited by this physical world but must expand to the possibilities of the spiritual realm – according to what we believe, it shall be to us.

May the consciousness of His love and our response to His love be every moment of our lives.

Fatherly Talk 2.14

Learning daily dependence on God

Dearly Beloved

The apostle Paul wrote a beautiful passage during one of his most painful moments:

2 Corinthians 12:10 'When I am weak, then I am strong.' As usual, some of our most powerful understanding of knowledge, revelation and wisdom comes from the most painful experiences. Paul speaks from a moment in time when he was still learning the secret of the power of grace in his life. In looking at this passage, we must not swing to the two extremes: one which denies any physical discomfort that Paul was having by merely pointing to the spiritual conflict he was facing and the other extreme by allotting Paul some sort of incurable sickness. Both these extremes are trying to prove its own theological position: the faith theology where the atonement covers all sickness and the other its very opposite.

The truth of the matter is that the use of the word 'infirmity' (*asthenia*) includes physical weaknesses, though it can be but not necessarily caused by diseases but can also refer to physical sicknesses (Matthew 8:17; Luke 5:15; 8:2; 13:11, 12; John 5:5; Romans 6:19; 8:26; Galatians 4:13; 1 Timothy 5:23; Hebrews 4:15; 5:2). It is apparent that Paul does suffer from physical infirmities in the flesh (Galatians 4:13, 14) which resulted from his physical persecutions (Acts 14:19; 16 2 Corinthians 11:23-24) of which he still bore the scars (Galatians 6:17). If anyone of us has been through stoning, beatings and whipping there is no doubt that the infirmities resulting can cause constant pain even after it is healed – even more if there were broken bones not set properly and scarred tissue. For the moment, in our analysis of 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, we will assume that Paul's physical infirmities were caused originally from Satanic opposition and persecution (1 Thessalonians 2:18; 1 Corinthians 15:32). In his physical discomfort and constant pain, Paul cried out to God three times for relief and God said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Understanding this principle, Paul declares "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions," etc. for when he is weak, then is he strong.

1. The grace of God is the impartation of God's strength
Note how the phrase 'My grace' is easily substituted for 'My strength' in 2 Corinthians 12:9. This clearly shows that grace is not just a position in God by Christ's atonement but it is also a powerful spiritual substance of God's ability and strength. In Galatians, Paul

speaks of the impartation of grace as an enabling factor in the apostleship within both Peter and himself (Galatians 2:8-9). Grace is not received as an outward spiritual position alone; it is an inner enabling substance of power given by the Spirit of God. Thus when Paul instructs Timothy to be strong in the grace of God, he uses the word *'endunamo'* (be strong) which literally is a combination of two words – *en* (meaning 'in' or from 'within') plus *dunamis* (Greek word for power). Paul literally was saying 'be strong from within in the grace of God' or 'be empowered from within in the grace of God.' This substance of God's strength and power can be multiplied and increased in our lives through the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:2-4).

We now live in the 'dispensation of grace' (Ephesians 3:2) and the secret is to be strengthened from within in the inner man and allow Jesus to dwell within our lives (Ephesians 3:16-20). Until it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives within us (Galatians 2:20). If we learn this secret, we can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). If we learn the secret of daily dependence on God's strength from within, we will cease from our own works and truly enter into the rest of Christ and walk in His works (Hebrews 4:10-12; Matthew 11:28; Ephesians 2:10). Many are like the Galatians who 'fall from grace' (Galatians 5:4) – they fell back into self-dependence and self-strength; they fell because they were trying to please God in their own strength through the law (works) and they were influenced through wrong teaching – no longer walking by faith energized by love (Galatians 5:4-6).

2. The secret to daily dependence on God's unlimited supply of His strength

Paul learned and mastered this key when he declared that he now 'took pleasure' in all the various circumstances that defeat humans (infirmities or physical weaknesses, reproaches or rejections, needs or financial lack, persecutions or opposition by other humans, distresses or various mental or soul struggles, etc. – 2 Corinthians 12:10). By examining the 'fall from grace' of the Galatians, we note that they were no longer walking in faith and love but in the works of the law (Galatians chapter 5. Therein lies the secret to tapping on the daily unlimited supply of God's strength:

- a. The first and foremost is the motivation of the heart – every word, thought or deed must be done purely out of the motivation of unconditional love (love towards God and love towards others). This is a love born out of the realisation that

we have been abundantly and specially loved by God (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:17-19). When love is the only reason and motivation for doing what we do, there is no end to the supply of God's strength to do anything and bring it to completion for we will be in complete synchrony with God who is love (1 John 4:8). Every time people lose heart or strength for whatever they are doing it is because their personal self-motivation was not met or gratified. Unconditional love and love for its own sake flowing from God never loses heart and never quits or gets discouraged. Love NEVER fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

b. The second is faith born out of the revelation of the Word of God (2 Peter 1:2-4). Faith is energized by love (Galatians 5:6). Love for God will result in love for His Word and vice versa (John 14:21; 15:4-7, 9-14). The Galatians fell from grace because they were deceived by false teaching of the Judaizers and again tried to work to please God through the law (Galatians 2:11-21; 3: 1-25; 4:8-11; 5:1-5). Like Adam and Eve before the fall (Adam and Eve were already created in the image of God and still tried to be like God through their own works – Genesis 1:26; 3:5), they could not accept the fact that God was already pleased with them through Christ but they tried to please God through the law. By 'trying' to please God, they had already subconsciously accepted the fact that God was not pleased with them. The faith required to tap on the daily supply of God's grace and strength is a faith born out of the simple belief in what God's Word says. The Word of God becomes the factual foundation for our universe of belief. Through the Word of God, we need to simply believe that:

- We ARE already UNCONDITIONALLY loved by God. That the very essence of God's nature is love and that there is nothing we can do or say that can affect, change, cancel or nullify the FACT that GOD LOVES US UNCONDITIONALLY (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:8, 19).
- NOTHING can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:31-39).
- We are already ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED to be a beloved of God in Christ according to His good pleasure (Ephesians

1:3-11). Faith does not try to be in a position of God's love, rather faith ACCEPTS the FACT that we are ALREADY in the position of God's love (He loves us as much as He loves Jesus – John 17:23) and we walk from (not for or to) the position of being God's beloved. Every time you find yourself in the position of 'trying to please God' you are falling from the position of grace and dependence on God's love and strength within you.

- c. The third is to allow this love of God to grow fully in you so that what pleases God pleases you. Paul takes 'pleasure' (Greek 'eudokeo' – think well – from 'eudokia' good will, pleasure towards others) in overcoming all circumstances because of his great love towards Christ and towards others (2 Corinthians 2:4; 4:7-18). Every time you come to a place where your love runs out, you need to draw on the supply of the love of Christ within you and constantly grow more and more in His love – until you become the personification of love like God (Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:17-19). Every time you reach your maximum capacity for love and run out, it is always time for the next cycle of growth in greater love until the fullness of God and of love is complete within us. Each time you feel weak, is an occasion to tap on the strength of Christ's love within you. Be not afraid of any circumstances or challenges to love, they are only opportunities to grow in love. Through love we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37).
3. The power of Christ rests upon us when we walk endued from within by Christ's strength (2 Corinthians 12:9). Thus while Paul may tremble with weakness in his outer man, being strengthened with grace from within, Paul can walk in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Note that the signs and wonders are wrought with perseverance (2 Corinthians 12:12). This perseverance is the perseverance of the love of Christ from within (Romans 5:3-5). There are many in the ministry who come to the end of themselves in their love and capacity. And when they finally find the true meaning of and sense the love of God within them motivating them onwards, they find the power of God as the end result. For every minister, until you find the true love of God for your congregation and everyone you minister to, you will never find

the power of God for signs and wonders. Kathryn Khulman used to weep and cry daily for those who were not healed in many, many meetings of various 'so called healing preachers of her time' because she saw that not many of those critically ill received their healing. And God took her on to become a powerful instrument of signs and wonders.

Every day is a fresh new day to depend on God and the supply of His grace and strength. Be filled with the joy and pleasure of love each day.

Written with great joy and love towards each of you.

Fatherly Talk 2.15

Entering into the rest

Dearly Beloved

‘Come unto Me all you who are labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls’ (Matthew 11:28, 29); these are the words of Jesus to His disciples and still true for us today. The rest that Christ promises is not a rest that can be earned, worked for, or acquired. It is a rest which is GIVEN and FOUND. He gave us the key in Matthew 11:29, when He mentioned His yoke. In those days, the ploughing of the field was done by two oxen: an older ox yoked together with the younger ox. The burden was carried by the older and more experienced ox whilst the younger was supposed to take the lead of the older. In this illustration, Jesus is showing Himself as our sacrificial oxen who carried the yoke for us; He has done the work for us and we walk in His works. Indeed, we are to walk in the works which God has already prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). In Hebrews, we are told to labour to enter the rest (Hebrews 4:11). The only labour required is the labour to cease from our works and self effort (Hebrews 4:10). By default, our soul struggles in self effort like a drowning person thrust into water. The only effort that is required is the effort to learn to cease from our soul struggles and trust that we will float in the water and allow the waters of the Spirit to carry us. The only ‘labour’ required is the labour to daily keep pressing the brakes of the soul and allow the Spirit (Christ within us) to live through us; for it is the natural tendency of the soul to want to drive itself. For this reason we need to allow the Word of God to divide soul and spirit so that we can cease in our soul and move in our spirit (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:9).

1. The Sabbath in the Old Testament

The first mention of the Sabbath was in Genesis 2:1-3, where God rested on the seventh day. The ceremonial Sabbath was then given to the Israelites where they were to cease from work and rest on that day (Exodus 31:12-17). Some Israelites still went to seek for food even after the Sabbath command was given (Exodus 16:27-30). When a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath, he was put to death (Numbers 15:32-36). In New Testament application, this was symbolic of spiritual death which comes upon those who break the inward Sabbath of rest; the self effort of the soul for salvation and self dependence brings about spiritual death.

- a. God rested because He had finished His work. We rest because Jesus has finished the work for us (Genesis 2:2-3; John 19:30). Everything is provided for us in Christ and we are to enter into the fruit of His labour and be at rest.
- b. The outward Sabbath of physical rest in the Old Testament is now fulfilled in the inward Sabbath spiritual soul rest in the New Testament (Hebrews 3:18-19; 4:1, 2, 9-11). This soul rest is entered into by faith; we cannot purchase or provide for it, we can only enter into the rest provided for us by Jesus who offered Himself as our resting place. In this 'inward keeping' of the Sabbath we are not to bear the burdens, for the Lord bears the burdens for us (Jeremiah 17:21-22, 27; Psalm 55:22; Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Peter 5:7).
- c. There is a natural fear that nothing will be accomplished or provided for the soul that keeps a constant abiding rest in the Lord but the opposite is true. The Lord provides for the Sabbath. He provided on the sixth day for two days (Exodus 16:22, 29). The Sabbath was a time of abundance of provision (Leviticus 25:1-5, 8, 10-11, 20-22). The Sabbath is not a demand, rather it is a gift. Man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27-28). Man was not made for the creation but the creation was made for man (Genesis 1:26-Genesis 2:3). When we cease from our soul we enter into the abundant life of Jesus (Matthew 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; John 10:10).

2. The Inward Rest of the Soul

The promises of God are the anchor for our souls (Hebrews 6:19). The faith of Christ within us brings the fulfilment of all the promises of God (Hebrews 11:1; 12:1-2). We no longer live by our souls but we live (Christ lives in us) through the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:20).

- a. The spirit saves the soul (1 Corinthians 15:45 – In Adam we are living souls, in Christ we are life-giving spirits). We believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10:39). The Word of God gives life and saves our soul (Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21). The end result of faith is the saving of our souls (1 Peter 1:9). Through the Spirit, the soul is purified (1 Peter 1:22). It is very clear from the Word of God that the soul is to cease (merely be subject to the spirit) and the spirit within is to live, through Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- b. The presence of God (Christ within – the Holy Spirit) within our spirits is the rest that we experience (Exodus 33:14; Galatians 2:20). The soul having ceased, we have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). The secret of Christian living is merely the yielding to the life of Christ within (Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20; 5:24, 25; Ephesians 3:17; Philippians 1:21; Colossians 1:27; 2:20; 3:1-3).
- c. All the work of Christ was to establish us to be temples of the Holy Spirit – a habitation for God (John 14:15-18, 26; Romans 5:11-14; 7:4; 8:11; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The whole redemption plan is that we would now become the body of Christ filled with the fullness of God (Ephesians 1:23). A temple built together as a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). Filled with His love and filled with the fullness of His presence (Ephesians 3:19).
- d. Holiness is the end result of this indwelling, a gift of being in Him and not of works. God has not asked us to ‘try to be holy’ rather He has always asked us ‘to be holy AS He is holy’ (Leviticus 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:15-16). God never said that I will be your God, if you are holy. He said that I am the Lord your God, therefore be holy (Leviticus 19:1, 2; 20:7, 8) Holiness is the result of a relationship with God. God said ‘Be holy because I am the Lord your God.’ If God had made holiness a condition for a relationship with Him, no one would have qualified; instead, God gifted us with a relationship with Him, knowing that the result of the relationship will produce holiness in us. In the New Testament, the work of salvation is the deliverance from sin and not just escape from punishment. It is a salvation to holiness rather than a salvation to heaven. Escape from punishment and reception to heaven is an incidental result to our being partakers of His nature. Through His indwelling in our spirits and lives, we become partakers of His nature. We feel what He feels, we think as He thinks, we love what He loves and we feel the displeasure of what causes Him displeasure. Our oneness with God, by its own strength and virtue of that oneness in itself, produces the transformation of our nature. We only have to allow the thoughts of Christ’s mind and the feelings (*splagna* - compassion) of Christ’s heart to become our very own thoughts and feelings.

This is an important revelation for the Sabbath is completely fulfilled in Christ. Understanding this revelation is the key to possessing all the fullness and abundance which Christ promises.

May God give each of us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to fully comprehend the significance of this truth.

Fatherly Talk 2.16

Freedom from fear

Dearly Beloved

Fear is a very powerful negative force. The Bible tell us that the devil uses fear to control all men and put them into bondage (Hebrews 2:14, 15). Fear can come through wrong beliefs; it could be superstitious beliefs, wrong cultural beliefs, traditional beliefs, societal beliefs or even beliefs instilled upon people through wrong teaching. Fear can also come because of the unknown. One could ask 'if fear arises out of wrong beliefs' then where does the fear of the unknown come from, since no one has taught anything about the unknown? Fear of the unknown is possible only because of the presence of fear in one self. In an atmosphere of the unknown the worst fears no matter how little, if present in oneself, become reflected back from the mirror of the known. This means that if one does not have the presence of fear within oneself, then there is nothing to reflect back from, and one can look at the unknown without fear. We need to know what fear is in order to understand freedom from fear:

1. Fear is the opposite of faith – a belief in a negative thing and its effect. We need to examine what we believe, if fear is present in any area. (Numbers 14:9)
2. Fear is the absence of love – just as darkness is the absence of light. We were made to be connected in love to God: without this connection, fear rules. (1 John 4:18)
3. Fear is a spiritual force – the devil is a spirit being who uses fear to keep people under bondage. We need to live above the fear of the devil. (Hebrews 2:14, 15)
4. Fear is the natural emotion of the fallen sinful nature to all things unknown or unexplainable whether they be good or bad (Matthew 14:26; Mark 4:41)
5. Fear is a curse of disobedience to the law. (Deuteronomy 28:66, 67)
6. Fear can be present in varying degrees (Acts 5:5, 11; Revelation 11:11).

To achieve great things for the Lord, men and women in biblical times have had to overcome their fear to do mighty exploits. Courage is the resolve needed to face fear and overcome it. The victory always belongs to those who are strong and of good courage (Joshua 1: 9, 6, 18; 1 Chronicles 22:13; Acts 28:15).

We also need to understand that when the Bible uses the phrase ‘the fear of the Lord’ that it does not mean us being frightened of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever – Psalm 19:9

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom – Proverbs 1:7; 9:10

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil – Proverbs 8:13

The fear of the Lord prolongs days – Proverbs 10:27

The fear of the Lord is strong confidence – Proverbs 14:26

The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom – Proverbs 15:33

By the fear of the Lord, one departs from evil – Proverbs 16:6

The fear of the Lord leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction – Proverbs 19:23

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour and life – Proverbs 22:4

Be zealous for the fear of the Lord all day – Proverbs 23:17

The standard teaching to understand this ‘fear (*yirah*) of the Lord’ is that it is a Hebrew word which conveys respect and reverence towards the Lord. This is good but it includes more than these.

We need to first understand that it is ‘the fear of the Lord’ and not ‘the fear for/towards the Lord’ and neither is it ‘the fear of God’ but rather the ‘fear of the Lord.’ Take an example of some of the usages where the word ‘of’ is identified with its ‘belonging or from’ the Lord.

The Word of the Lord (Genesis 15:1)

The Voice of the Lord (Genesis 3:8)

The Face of the Lord (Genesis 4:16)

The Name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26)

The Eyes of the Lord (Genesis 6:8)

The Garden of the Lord (Genesis 13:10)

The Angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:7)

The Way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19)

The Mount of the Lord (Genesis 22:14)

The above are phrases which speak about aspects ‘of the Lord.’ (Hebrew word of belonging). Note that in every instance the first word in the construct (word, voice, etc) belongs to the second word of the construct (Yahweh). The “fear” in the phrase “the fear of the Lord” is not our fear, it is the Lord's fear. Because God cannot “fear” we must look to the Ancient Hebrew concrete meaning of this word to understand it.

The word *yirah* comes from the parent root *yar* which means “to flow” and is related to words meaning river and rain, from their flowing, and to throw in the sense of flowing. From this we can see that when one is afraid the

insides begin to shake, a flowing of the insides. But as the word *yirah* means “to flow” it is not limited to “fear” alone.

In Proverbs 1:7 and 15:33, we see that wisdom comes from this “fear of the Lord.” Compare that with Exodus 31:3 – “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” It is “the Spirit of God (the Lord)” that gives us wisdom in the same way that “the fear of the Lord” does. The Hebrew word for “spirit” is “ruach” literally meaning the “wind,” which is also a flowing. The “fear of the Lord” is His Spirit which flows out of him into us giving us wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Thus in application, the fear of the Lord is the awesomeness of God, an attribute of God which inspires respect for lovers of God and terror to God’s enemies, imputed into our lives. We see how this fear of God upon His apostles inspires fear and respect for the people of God from those outside the church (Acts 5:11-13). We can easily see now why when the fear of the Lord is upon us, we are freed from our own fears and instead, it is the devil who flees from us in terror (James 4:7, 8).

In order to be perfectly free from fear, we need to be completely embraced and immersed in the love of God and in the fear of the Lord (1 John 4:18; Psalm 19:19 – the fear of the Lord is clean and enduring). We need not even be afraid of the devil, and even much less any circumstances or people; instead the devil is afraid of us.

There are seven things which Satan fears

1. Fearlessness - not afraid of death Heb 2:14
2. Love - perfect love casts out fear
3. Holiness - sin has no power
4. Unity - in the body of Christ
5. Holy Spirit
6. Jesus - name of Jesus
7. Presence of God

Know thy God and thou shall never be afraid. Be one with God and the fear of the Lord will be your shield and wall of fire around you.

Fatherly Talk 2.17

The teaching style of Jesus

Dearly Beloved

We consider an interesting topic this week – the teaching style of Jesus. Why teaching style? Well, we have always been analysing His teachings and its content which is no doubt very important but it is rare that one analyses the delivery method or style that Jesus used. Surely, we can learn much truth from that, too, for after all, content, method and style are many times all inter-related. Surely, the best and most perfect teacher in the universe, our Lord Jesus Christ, would have a lot to teach us about His delivery methods and style.

1. Jesus' use of parables

Most of Jesus' teachings were delivered via the use of parables. His disciples asked Him why He used parables and Jesus answered in Matthew 13:10-17 giving His reasons:

- a. He separates His disciples from the crowds by His parables (Matthew 13:11 – to them are given to understand the mysteries). Why the separation? Apparently, spiritual truths cannot be assimilated all at once (at one hearing), it requires enquiry (Ask, seek and knock – Matthew 7:7, 8), it requires a spiritual appetite (Matthew 5:6), it requires humility (Matthew 11:25-27 – babes, childlikeness). He only speaks parables to the crowds (Matthew 13:34), expecting to separate those who would seek Him further from those who would not. Obviously, the expression of 'casting not the pearls to swine' (Matthew 7:6) warns against revealing precious truth to those whose natures are not ready for such truth.
- b. The revelation of truth is progressive and one must be able to hold on to the little before more is given. And if one cannot hold on to the little, it seems obvious that more cannot be given (Matthew 13:12). This speaks of two things: understanding of truth is progressive (a little at a time) and that its' ability to take hold within us is dependent on our heart attitude. We must take heed not just 'what we hear' but 'how we hear.' For it is only when we have a noble and good heart that the word can find root within us (Luke 8:15; Mark

4:16). When it comes to handling truth, it is the heart that matters more than the head.

- c. Some modern scholars teach that parables only teach one main intent principle and should not be interpreted item by item or allegorically. This is wrong because Jesus Himself gave a sample interpretation of one of His famous parables – the parable of the sower and the seed – which gives a representation for every item in the parable: the seed represents the word, the ground represents the four types of hearers, the birds of the air represent Satan taking away the word that is sown (Mark 4:13-20). It took some time for the disciples to understand that the leaven of the Pharisees was not bread that He was talking about (Matthew 16:6-12). Within His parables are hidden nuggets of truth and revelation that we must seek God out to understand them.
2. Jesus' taught with authority and not as the scribes (Matthew 7:28, 29; Mark 1:22)
His authority came direct from the Father and He gave us the words which God gave Him for us (John 5:19-22; 17:8).
 - a. His teaching and words produced real authoritative results with demonstrations of spiritual authority (Mark 1:27; Luke 4:30). All His teachings were not just fanciful human attempts to try to describe spiritual and natural realities; rather they were real and true revelation of realities in both the spiritual and physical realms. The truth always sets us free and releases us to operate the laws of the spiritual and natural realm.
 - b. The words of Jesus were instruments to impart spiritual life (John 6:63). The content of His words were not just sound waves but spirit and the *zoe* life of God. The power behind the words of Jesus was greater than all the natural laws of physics which hold the whole physical universe together (Matthew 24:35).
 - c. When challenged, Jesus responded with authority and spoke in parables and teachings which confounded the chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees (Luke 20). In the end, they acknowledged Him as Teacher and remarked that He had answered well (Luke 20:39-40). This authority and wisdom was present even when Jesus was twelve years

old (Luke 2:46-47). Note that Jesus knew both how to answer as well as how to question. It is obvious that it was the wisdom of God in His life (Luke 2:52).

As we consider the teaching style of Jesus, we also need to understand that Jesus is still teaching each of us through His Holy Spirit of Truth whom He has sent to us (John 14:26; 16:13). He might use human vessels, books, audio-visual materials to bring some areas of revelation to us but we all need to recognise that only Jesus and the Holy Spirit can truly bring the heart revelation of truth to each of us. No one but God through His Spirit can produce the spark of revelation within a human heart. All we can do is to recognise the methods and styles by which Truth and Revelation can come to us. From studying Jesus' teaching style, the following principles would be true:

1. Only the Spirit of Truth can bring and reveal truth to us.
2. Our heart attitude is the key to receiving truth.
3. Truth like a seed growing is revealed a little at a time and this process cannot be hurried.
4. Faithfulness to the little truth that we have acquired is necessary for the next revelation of truth.
5. Truth has real-life authority both in the spiritual and in the natural world.
6. Truth is more powerful than this physical world – for this physical world will pass away but the words of truth remain eternally.
7. The revelation of truth is not dependent on physical age, mental capability, social status or education level but it is dependent on the Spirit of God revealing it in our hearts.
8. An appetite for truth is required to receive truth.
9. The proportional growth (inner root) within us to truth received is the requirement to hold on to the truth revealed.
10. Jesus is the fullness of all grace and all truth.

The whole purpose for our existence is to grow in God which also means to grow in truth and wisdom. This is an important key to every teaching, book or sermon that we will be hearing the rest of our lives. The Lord Jesus continues to speak to us through His Holy Spirit. When we hear and see truths that He reveals like pictures in parables, we should draw nearer and allow Him to explain to us plainly through the Holy Spirit as He always does with His friends and disciples. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). Truth is not just a mental or intellectual concept, it is a transforming life which when received and held on to in our heart, proportionally transforms our inner nature.

May our hearts be always open to the Spirit of Grace and Truth.

Fatherly Talk 2.18

The lost art of meditation and contemplation

Dearly Beloved

Modern Christianity has lost the art of meditation and contemplation. Modern society is in too much of a hurry to get through life and its daily activities. Our minds are many times clogged with thoughts of earthly life and its various needs. We fill our life with much sound and noise and are often afraid of silence. And many Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians know only noisy prayer. They know nothing of the beauty of silent worship before God. The Bible advocates that we meditate on the Word of God day and night thus becoming like a tree planted by the rivers of water (Psalm 1:2,3). Paul teaches us to meditate on the things which are true, noble, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Philippians 4:8).

Although the Hebrew word for meditate (*hagah*) conveys a meaning of muttering to oneself, it also conveys a meaning of ‘to muse or to imagine.’ I call meditation and contemplation a ‘lost art’ because Christianity has allowed the other religions of the world to take this concept away from us to such an extent that when you ask anyone in the street what they think about mediation, they do not think about Christianity but about some other philosophy or occult practice. Even worse, some Christians themselves react to the word ‘meditation’ because they conjure up images of wild-eyed mystics sitting with crossed legs speaking some sort of mantra. True meditation is within the domain of every believer and should be a part of our daily practice of devotion.

A. Spiritual sensations during meditation

1. The sense of union. Meditation – like a tree reaching out to its source (Psalm 1:2, 3).

In this allegory, we are the tree and God is our source. In order to have this sense of union, we need to have stillness within our spirits and souls (Psalm 4:4; 46:10). This is not a mental effort as it is a resting within ourselves. When one is quiet, the only things we hear are our own thoughts and desires within us. And when all our own thoughts and desires are at rest in God, we sense the presence of God within us which produces a sense of union with Him. In the New Testament, God dwells within us (John 14:17). Although we do not depend on our own feelings for faith and assurance that He dwells within us (for we simply believe what the Word says), we do need to

develop a sense of His indwelling within us. We need to understand that the whole basis of the New Testament is that God now can dwell within us (John 14:23). Meditation enhances the sense and consciousness of this indwelling of God's presence within us through His Holy Spirit.

2. The sense of peace. The peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7).
Scripture reveals how powerful this peace is. It garrisons our heart and mind. And the God of peace crushes Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20). It is the powerful peace that can calm a mighty storm of disarrayed thoughts and desires. It is within this inner peace that we can find guidance from God. Like a sheep led to still waters, we receive refreshing and nurture.
3. The sense of love. This love surpasses all understanding (Ephesians 3:19).
God is love and anyone who experiences the Spiritual World senses the love that permeates through everything. This love flows from God with great force, light and energy and is the very sustenance of all of God's creations. One is like a child in God's embracing arms of love in this meditative experience. It is the enjoyment of God's unconditional love for each of us experienced individually (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8).
4. The sense of joy. Joy unspeakable and full of glory (2 Peter 1:8).
This is a sense of bubbly joy which gives a wholesome feeling. This fullness of joy also enables assurance that one is pleasing God (John 16:24). Although it has a pleasing effect on the emotions the source of this joy is in the spirit and the result of pure trust and faith in the Lord.
5. The sense of faith. This is an inner sense of conviction through an impartation of the gift of faith (Hebrews 11:1).
It is not mere human faith but the experience of the gift of the faith of Jesus in us (Acts 3:16). It is this inner conviction that produces outward confidence and boldness to overcome mountains and obstacles of this life.

The above inner spiritual senses are not the only experiences of the state of meditation and contemplation; there are other areas of spiritual experience. Neither are the above senses experienced in steps or progressive order. Depending on the state of our walk with God or our need at the moment of meditation, any one of the above inner sense experiences of God may

eventuate. Once we reach the above state of meditation and contemplation, the next level would be to experience an inner flow in accordance with what God is doing in our lives. Experientially, this inner flow out through us is like a fountain or river (John 4:14; 7:38).

B. Various spiritual flows in the river of God during meditation

1. The flow of thoughts from the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).
This flow of thoughts from the mind of Christ can be in words or in pictures. They are the work of the Holy Spirit teaching and leading us into all truth and showing us things to come (John 16:13). Our intellect and imagination are involved as recipients and filters for this flow. It is not so much us reasoning and analysing as it is God revealing His truths to us progressively a little bit at a time (Ephesians 1:18).
2. The flow of music and worship (Ephesians 5:18, 19).
Within each of us is a central theme of harmonious music and song which changes as we grow and face different challenges in this life. During deep meditation, this river of worship flows through us uniting us with the constant celestial worship that is present in heaven. When it flows from the spirit man to the soul, our soul sometimes hears and interprets it as familiar tunes and songs which we have stored in our memories. The more developed our soul is, the more accurately we hear and transmit this heavenly music and song to the natural realm.
3. The flow of energy and power (Ephesians 3:16).
The power of the Holy Spirit is within us and through allowing a clear channel through our spirits and souls, the power of the Holy Spirit can arise and rest upon us clothing us with His anointing upon (Luke 24:49). It is this power upon that we need to rely on to be effective witnesses for Him (Acts 1:8). Paul's effectiveness as an apostle was not his ability but rather the power of the Holy Spirit through him (1 Corinthians 2:4, 5). It is when the energy and power of the Holy Spirit is flowing through us that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are operational.
4. The flow of love and compassion from the affections of Jesus (Philippians 1:8).
It is this love that Paul felt when he felt constrained to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in places that had never received the good news of Jesus redemption (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is this same flow that intercessors tap on and are enabled to weep and pray for others

(Romans 8:26). It is the heart and compassion of Jesus that we feel when this flow takes place (Hebrews 4:15).

Sometimes different men or women of God tap more into one flow than another. Elijah tapped more into the flow of energy and power whereas Jeremiah the weeping prophet tapped more into the flow of love and compassion. Some churches tap more into the flow of music and worship while others tap more into the mind of Christ and have strong teaching ministry.

It is important to develop all aspects of the rivers of God that are flowing from the Spiritual World to this physical earth. Let it change and transform us individually and corporately.

Be transformed in Christ (Romans 12:1-2),

Fatherly Talk 2.19

The rivers of God

Dearly Beloved

Some time ago, the lady civilian astronaut, Ansari, wrote a diary account of her experiences in the space station, one of which we will use to illustrate a point. In space, microgravity prevails and one relies on push-pull self propulsion to move or float about in the space station. Ansari mentioned how at one time, she was placed right in the centre of a room (by the other astronauts) where she did not have the advantage of momentum or any wall or anything to hold on to – and she could not get out from that position, no matter how hard she tried. In the end it was the small movement of air from the air vents that allow her to slowly move away from the centre of the room until she could touch something by which she could then push or pull herself to move again.

Spiritual life is like operating in a microgravity medium. We need to rely on something else outside ourselves to propel us forward. For this reason, the Bible always talks about the rivers of the Holy Spirit and being led by the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; Romans 8:14). Every Christian knows that it is not by might nor by power but by the Holy Spirit that every work of God should be done – and yet, how many consciously exercise this inner yielding on a daily basis (Zechariah 4:6). We should also consider the other passages after this verse where Zerubbabel faces a mountain (in his effort to build the temple of God) and the prophetic word was that as he started it (by the Spirit), he will finish it with shouts of ‘Grace, grace’ to all as he brings forth the finishing capstone (Zechariah 4:7-10). We all know that there is a release in the New Testament of the position and substance of grace to enable us to do the works of God. Paul declared that it was not him but the grace of God within him which enabled him to be what he is (1 Corinthians 15:10). How then do we yield to the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God within us, and not rely on ourselves or our own strength?

1. There needs to be an inner acknowledgement, an inner consciousness, a daily choice made of laying down ourselves (as a living sacrifice) and our self-efforts before the presence of God (Romans 12:1-2).

The Bible uses many phrases to express this – dying to self, taking up the cross daily, He being the vine and we the branches can do nothing without Him, when we are weak then are we strong, ceasing in our own works and entering the rest, etc. We have spoken of many of these points in our various devotional talks and in our

teaching. The methodology of this happening is through daily meditation and contemplation. A daily acknowledging of being at rest or being in union with Him so that it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives within us (Galatians 2:20). For those of us who are new to this, it might take you some devotional time each morning to enter into this rest (Hebrews 4:10) – remembering that the ‘only effort’ is to cease from works and be at rest in Him. For the flesh and the world will always create its own daily momentum and the only effort required by us to enter into the rest of God is the ‘effort’ of stopping the momentum (like braking a moving car to bring it to rest). Once this inner consciousness is achieved on a daily basis, it becomes easier to enter into the ‘state of rest in God’ each day and as one grows in this ‘consciousness or inner knowing’ it can become the ‘default mode’ of our lives – to be consciously aware 24 hours a day – of being in union with Christ. Like a branch in the vine growing forth from the stem, we grow into a strong and beautiful branch bearing fruit. Like the yielded heart of good soil, we allow the roots of the seed of the word of God to produce tap roots within us and become firmly founded and bear much fruit (Matthew 13:21-23).

2. Secondly, there needs to be an inner awareness of this inner flow of grace, strength and Spirit within us (John 4:14; 7:39). This can be achieved by being conscious of the various sensations of love, peace and joy that we spoke about in last week’s talk. The inner consciousness of these spiritual sensations lead to a sense of the propulsion of the rivers that flow from deep within our spirits (the source of which originates directly from God Himself). Remember, the Spiritual World is like being in microgravity, you cannot move about by your own strength but you rely on the inner propulsion of the Holy Spirit within you to move you where He wants you to be. It is like sailing, your only effort is to ‘catch the wind’ by setting your sails in the right position to bring you to where God wants you to be. Your sails are in your heart - your own inner desires, your inner goals, and your inner thoughts. If these are not right, all the energy which God supplies will be ‘twisted and turned’ into darkness and evil; which is what the devil has done to himself. If your heart is pure and honourable, you will see God (Matthew 5:8). And God will be at work in every aspect of your life – personal, family, work and ministry. For this reason our motivations need to be examined. We must do it always out of a love for God and a love for others.
3. Thirdly, we need to take every little step towards the direction which the inner river within us wants to flow to; do not go ‘against’ the

current flowing from our heart within us but flowing 'along' with the inner river of life. Do not despise the day of small things for it is the small incremental steps that lead to the complete removal of the mountain before you (Zechariah 4:10). Far too many Christians are waiting for the 'big thing' to happen and are not sensitive to being obedient to the small things which are vitally important to the big picture in their lives. Some want gigantic transformations in their character through an infusion of the Spirit without first being obedient to show love and kindness to their family and friends around them. It is the little foxes – the little words or actions – which slowly destroy many good marriages and friendships.

And in character building, it is these incremental little changes that build to an avalanche of transformative change. Others are waiting for the big blessing to flow before they begin to do good works and neglect to share the little blessings that God has given; they forget that faithfulness in little things leads to faithfulness in greater things. Joseph's small show of kindness in wanting to cheer up the butler and baker in prison led to the creation (by the butler) of an open door to Pharaoh (Genesis 40:6; 41:9). The two disciples on the way to Emmaus wanted to show hospitality to the 'stranger' who had accompanied them on their journey and ended up with the biggest revelation of their lives (Luke 24:28-29).

Have you missed the biggest blessing of your life because you neglected to show some small kindness? Have you missed the biggest revelation of your life because you neglected to show some simple hospitality? Far too many people are worshipping the god of convenience and will not trouble themselves or inconvenience themselves to show some kindness, some hospitality, some small acts of love. If only they knew that they are missing out on eternity's greatest blessings both in this life and in the life to come. If one were to offer even a small cup of water to a little one, he shall receive a reward (Matthew 10:40-41).

Did you realise that God is already answering your prayers for breakthroughs in powerful mountain moving demonstrations by giving you small opportunities to show forth love and kindness to those around your circle of life? Many people do not fathom how the Spiritual World works and sit around waiting for the earth to shake, the heavens to open, the angels to sing and the winds to blow. They don't realise that it FIRST starts with releasing the little flow of the river of love and kindness in their hearts through tiny little insignificant (in the natural) acts of graciousness, mercy,

forgiveness, kindness and love. God is found not in the earth quakes or the fires or the winds but in the small still voice in your heart (1 Kings 19:11-13). God is already answering your prayers but many people do not see it or hear it because they are looking for the giant outward demonstrations and neglect the little answer flowing in their hearts.

He that is faithful in little shall be given much more. Every man or woman of God – both in the Bible and in church history – achieved what God wanted through being obedient to the little impressions of love and kindness in their hearts. The same is also lost through neglect of the heart. Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable to the Lord (Psalm 19:14). The big answer from the Spiritual World and the angels working powerfully in our lives is release through the small acts that flow from a heart full of love.

May each of you be mighty in the daily little acts of love that flow from your lives,

Fatherly Talk 2.20

Eyes that see, ears that hear

Dearly Beloved

Our Lord Jesus spoke of people having eyes that don't see, ears that don't hear, and hearts that don't receive (Matthew 13:14-15). How can people have eyes and yet not see, ears and yet not hear? Jesus is, of course, talking about spiritual seeing and spiritual hearing but even in the natural, have you noticed that sometimes we cannot see the natural things which are right before our eyes or the sounds that are vibrating around us. How many times have our minds being so occupied that we do not hear the soft sounds of insects or birds that lived in our surroundings? And how many times have we been so busy to get from one place to another that we do not notice the beauty of the sceneries that pass us along the path or road?

Surprise, surprise; even our ability to see and hear in the natural seems to be governed by a DECISION, a CHOICE, to see or hear. It has less to do with how good our eyesight is (which can be healed or corrected) or how good our hearing is. It has to do with an inward decision to set our attention (our mind and heart) to see or hear that which we WANT to see and hear. If we want to see a beautiful insect or bird or animal, you might find one along the path or road you take; if you neither want to be distracted nor want to see such creatures, then you might not see it even if it passes you. Now, if this is occurring in the natural, think about what is happening in the spiritual. How many things have we missed that God was showing us? How many words have we missed that God was speaking to us? It is a FALSE assumption of many that WHAT God shows we will automatically see and WHEN God speaks that we will automatically hear. God could be showing something to you right now and you might not see it. God could be speaking to you right now and you did not hear it. What do the Scriptures say?

1. God is showing and speaking to us ALL the time (John 16:13-14; John 10:27; John 14:26).

Our God and Father is not a 'once a week' father nor a 'once a month father.' He is our Father every day. He brings forth goodness and mercy ALL the days of our lives (Psalm 23:6). The days are fashioned by God for us in His book when as yet they did not exist (Psalm 139:16). Why do we assume that God does not speak or show us things every day? It is a fallen, sin-natured wrong philosophy and principle. Every day should be 'This is the day that the Lord has made' (Psalm 118:34). And the night, too (Psalm 74:16). God might show His plans for us that might be worked out

over weeks or months or years but God definitely speaks and shows Himself to our hearts and spiritual eyes and ears to give us comfort and encouragement every day.

Can you hear His words of love and comfort to you each day? (John 10:27). Can you see the glory He shows to you each day? (2 Corinthians 4:6). Paul declared that God renews the inward man day by day – implies every day (2 Corinthians 4:16). Why then do the majority of Christians neither see nor hear the comfort of God in their hearts? Because they have NOT set their hearts, their minds, their eyes and their ears to see and hear God. This does not mean that it has to be spectacular; it just means that it will be supernaturally given, spiritually given and spiritually received. For this reason, we need to daily SET our hearts and minds to daily see and hear Him, THEN will we discern His daily shower of love and whispers of faith.

2. The condition of our heart determines the condition of our seeing and hearing ability (Matthew 5:8; Matthew 13:15).

A heart filled with love is a heart greatly to be desired. For love is the frequency in which God exists and when the TV and radio antenna of our hearts are set to love, it operates in the same frequency reception (1 John 4:8). Love to our spirits is like food to the natural body. It is the energy source for all things, including faith that moves mountains (Galatians 5:6; Mark 11:25; 1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 8). We need our spiritual breakfast of love, our spiritual lunch of love and our spiritual dinners of love. Indeed, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). And every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God is filled with His Spirit and His life, which is love (John 6:63).

A loving heart produces a loving mind (1 Corinthians 13:5). It is not just unbelievers who should rejoice that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son but every believer should rejoice every day and receive the wonder of His love for us for each day of our life (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). As believers we might have received Jesus once into our heart and life forever but we should every day of our lives (and for the rest of eternity) receive the ever increasing measures of God's love for us (Romans 5:5). Every day as we receive the fresh measure of God's love for us, we become more and more rooted and grounded in His love (Ephesians 3:17). Every day pray a prayer of love reception and thanksgiving and open your hearts to receive the fresh measure of God's love energy for the

day (or hourly or three times a day or seven times a day – Daniel 6:10; Psalm 119:164; 1 Chronicles chapter 25).

3. Expect to see and hear from God and it shall be so (John 14:14, 21, 23).

It is the promise of Jesus that when we love Him and keep His Word that He WILL manifest Himself to us (John 14:21). It is the promise of Jesus that when we love Him and keep His Word that He and the Father WILL come to us and make their home with us (John 14:23). Choose to hear Him and you will. It might neither come spectacularly nor with physical manifestations but it will definitely come into our hearts and spirits. The Pharisees chose not to believe in Jesus so even when they saw, they didn't believe (John 9:39). We the disciples of Jesus are more blessed because when we did not see, we chose to believe (John 20:29). And these signs will follow those who believe – power over demons, power to speak in new tongues, power over serpents and poisons, and power over sicknesses and diseases (Mark 16:15-16). What do we believe? We believe that Jesus is risen from the dead and is alive forever more. We believe in the power of His name, which we now represent. When we believe His goodness and mercy flows every day. When we believe! All things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23). Believe that we have received and we WILL have them (Mark 11:24). The problem is not at God's end – for He is daily showing, speaking, revealing, pouring out His love and power like a mighty river and waterfall. The solution is on our end – are we open to receive His love and power and then release it forth.

Like the little boy who accompanied Elisha, the body of Christ cannot see the innumerable forces of light and love that God has given to us, His beloved church; and we do not understand it when a man of God proclaims that those who are with us are more than they who are against us (2 Kings 6:16). We all need to pray that our spiritual eyes be opened so that we might see what God has already prepared for us (2 Kings 6:17). The Lord has already prepared a table before you in the presence of your enemies (Psalm 23:5). Don't just see your enemies (your mountains or your problems), see the feast table that He has already prepared for you. Don't just see your temptations and your trials, see the way of escape that He has already prepared for you (1 Corinthians 10:13). Don't just see the blurriness of your future and direction, see the good works which God has already prepared for you (Ephesians 2:10). We see not because we have convinced and told ourselves that we cannot see. We hear not because we have convinced and told ourselves that we cannot hear. Believe! Choose to see. Choose to hear.

And as you give thanks and enjoy the love which God has for you and the love which you have for God and for others, you will see and you will hear.

We pray that God would open the eyes of each of your understanding that you may know all the fullness of His resurrection life and power in Christ (Ephesians 1:18-23).

Fatherly Talk 2.21

Two types of patience

Dearly Beloved

The exercise of faith involves patience. The Scriptures tell us that through faith and patience, we will inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12). For the trying of our faith works patience and when patience has its perfect work, we are perfect and complete lacking nothing (James 1:2-4). What many English readers of the Bible do not realize is that there are two types of patience: one is from the Greek word ‘*makrothumia*’ (Hebrews 6:12) and the other is from the Greek word ‘*hupomone*.’ The exercise of both these types of patience is important to the final result of faith. Below is a listing of different Scriptures which expresses each type of patience:

Makrothumia (noun form) and *makrothumeo* (verb form) – usually translated ‘*longsuffering*.’

1 Corinthians 13:4 Charity *suffers long* and is kind
2 Corinthians 6:6 By *longsuffering*, by kindness
Galatians 5:22 is love, joy, peace and *longsuffering*
Ephesians 4:2 with *longsuffering*, forbearing
Colossians 1:11 *longsuffering* with joyfulness
Colossians 3:12 humbleness of mind, meekness, *longsuffering*
Hebrews 6:12 Through faith and *patience* inherit
Hebrews 6:15 After he had *patiently endured*
James 5:7 Be *patient* therefore, ...and has *long patience* for it.

Hupomone (noun form) and *hupomeno* (verb form) – usually translated ‘*patience*.’

Matthew 10:22 He that *endures* to the end
Matthew 24:13 He that shall *endure* to the end
Luke 8:15 and bring forth fruit with *patience*
Romans 2:7 By *patient* continuance in well doing
Romans 5:3 Tribulation works *patience*
Romans 5:4 And *patience*, experience
Romans 8:25 Do we with *patience*, wait for it
Romans 12:12 *Patient* in tribulation
Romans 15:4 Through *patience* and comfort
Romans 15:5 Now the God of *patience* and comfort
1 Corinthians 13:7 hopes all things, *endures* all things
2 Timothy 2:10 if we *suffer*, we shall also reign with Him
Hebrews 10:32 you *endured* a great fight of affliction
Hebrews 10:36 for you have need of *patience*

Hebrews 12:1	Let us run the race with <i>patience</i>
Hebrews 12:2	<i>endured</i> the cross, despising the shame
James 1:3	the trying of your faith works <i>patience</i>
James 1:4	But let <i>patience</i> have its perfect work
James 1:12	Blessed is the man who <i>endures</i> temptation

From the above Scriptures, we can understand the struggle of the translators of the Bible in seeking to convey the essence of the meaning of these two aspects of the quality of patience. We can understand the quality of these two types or aspects of patience by breaking them down into their component words. *Makrothumia* comes from the combination of two words: *makro* which means 'long' and *thumos* which is a word that is normally translated as 'wrath' or 'anger.' Since anger or wrath for humans is an aspect of the flesh (Galatians 5:20), we can classify the essence of the meaning of *makrothumia* patience as the ability to hold back, endure, or not allow the flesh to dominate one's life.

We saw in the teaching on entering the rest, that the only labour required is the labour to 'cease or stop' the daily desires of the flesh (Hebrews 4:10, 11). As the physical body, of which Paul laments that sin still dwells within it (Romans 7:18), is a part of our present earthly existence, there is a constant requirement to 'present our members' as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12, 13) in order for it to function as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). The first aspect of patience is therefore the ability (or patience) not to choose to yield to the flesh even though circumstances and temptations may coax it to respond. It is the ability NOT to walk in the flesh. The ability to say 'No' to the wrong things or things which are out of line from God's Will in our lives; whether they be out of line because the motivation is wrong, the timing is wrong or the methodology is wrong or the whole conception of it is wrong. It is not an easy thing to say 'No.' Thus, the ability to say 'No' is one of great character and brought forth by the virtue of patience. Abraham said 'No' to the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:22-24) and God rewarded him (Genesis 15:1). All those who endure tribulations and say 'No' will be rewarded by God (Hebrews 6:15). Jesus said 'No' to the devil all the time (Luke 2-13).

The other aspect of patience is found in the root form of *hupomone* which is derived from two Greek words: *hupo* which means 'upon' and *meno* which means 'abide.' Jesus said that if we abide in Him and in His words, we shall bear much fruit (John 15:4-16). This would be the aspect of patience that says 'Yes' to the things of God. It would be the constant daily choice of listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and responding and yielding to Him (Romans 8:14). The most interesting thing is that this aspect of *hupomone* patience is related to temptations (as opposed to the

makrothumia patience which is related to outward trials and tribulations). The passages where *hupomone* patience is required in the epistle of James 1:3, 4, 12 all relate to overcoming temptation. One would have expected that James would have used the words that refer to *makrothumia* patience but instead he uses *hupomone* patience to overcome temptations. Why is this so? The key is to understand that James states that all temptations arises from within (James 1:14). This means that the only way to overcome 'inward' temptations within oneself is by *hupomone* patience and not *makrothumia* patience. Since *hupomone* patience is an affirmation of the right qualities and the things of God (saying 'Yes' to them over and over again, thus building 'upon') this would clearly imply that the key to overcome the flesh within us is NOT by merely saying 'No' to its desires but rather by saying 'Yes' to the greater things of the inner spirit within us. By analogy, this is logical for the ONLY way to overcome bad thoughts is not by constantly repeating against them but by merely switching on to the good thoughts. By thinking and affirming good thoughts (Philippians4:8), the bad thoughts automatically are removed.

Many Christians are struggling with the flesh in their lives and the key is not by going against the flesh (which is a part of their body makeup anyway) but by affirming and constantly saying 'Yes' and yielding to the things of the inner spirit within them (which is born again in Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:17). It is the spirit which overcomes the flesh and not one's own mind or mental efforts. Logically, when one yields to the spirit within, the flesh is naturally overcome. Which is why Paul's rhetorical question of 'Who shall deliver me from this body of death?' is answered by I thank God - through Christ Jesus our Lord! (Romans 7:24, 25). He goes on to say that with the mind, he serves the law of God while leaving the flesh to the body of sin (Romans 7:25). How does that accomplish the overcoming of the flesh? The key is that Paul has clarified earlier that he delights in the law of God according to the inner man (Romans 7:22). Therefore by yielding to Christ within the inner man, Christ overcomes the flesh within him. It is the spirit within that overcomes the outward flesh, and not the flesh overcoming the flesh. For every Christian who is struggling now, as long as you haven't located your inner man and Christ within you, you will never overcome the flesh, no matter how hard you try. The secret is to locate the inner man within you, the Spirit within you, and to allow the rivers of living waters, the rivers of the Holy Spirit to flow out from within you – affecting your heart, your mind, your soul and your body.

We conclude by pointing to the two aspects of patience: *makrothumia* patience which is the ability to say 'No' to the outward forces that come against the exercise of faith, and *hupomone* patience which is the inward ability to say 'Yes' to the still small voice of the spirit within. It takes both

these aspects of patience to successfully overcome all circumstances through faith. One aspect speaks to the mountains that stand before one's path, the other releases the inner forces of Christ within. By allegory, to resist with patience, one needs to be able to push against the object of one's resistance while having a firm ground to stand on. The pushing resistance is *makrothumia* patience and the firm ground standing is *hupomone* patience. Both needs to work together for the gift of faith to complete its objective and bring forth the manifestation of God's promises.

May your faith with patience bring about the promises of God in your lives.

Fatherly Talk 2.22

The leading of the Spirit

Dearly Beloved

The Scriptures are explicitly clear as to the leading of the Spirit; that it is a requirement for the Christian life that wants to do God's Will (Romans 8:14; 12:1-2). The Holy Spirit is to be our guide and Teacher on the earth in place of Jesus (John 14:16-18). He remains invisible to the world but His leading is there for all those who are born again (John 14:17; 3:8). There is a portion of the anointing of the Spirit within us that will help us to identify and know His leading and teaching in our individual lives (1 John 2:27). The theological concept of the need for the leading of the Spirit is simple but most Christians do not know what is involved. We need to explore some Bible examples to understand these things.

1. The Holy Spirit may sometimes lead us into a place of testing (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Genesis 22:1; Exodus 16:4; 20:20).

There are many tests for each life at different times sometimes in different areas and especially so when we keep failing the various tests (Numbers 14:22). The purpose of every test is that the Lord may know what is in our hearts – our motivations, our desires, the synchronization between heart, word and actions, etc. (Deuteronomy 8:2, 12). The sum of the tests is revealed in the three temptations of Jesus: the tests of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (Luke 4:1-13; 1 John 2:15, 16). We might not lose our salvation when we fail a test but we lose the spiritual progress that we might have had and also our rewards from God (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; James 1:12).

Every person tends to think more highly of themselves (and within themselves) than who they actually are. In an environment when the disciples of Jesus were arguing about greatness amongst themselves, Peter thought that he was willing to go to prison and even die for the Lord (Luke 22:24-34). Never trust people who do not keep their word. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. Intentions do not put you on the path to heaven, only your actions do. Even demons believe and tremble. But the true believer and true Christian believes and takes action. Our true intentions are always revealed in our actions. Good intentions are simply what they are – just intentions. Although thoughts and words are important, the true test of 'who we are and what we are' is measured by our actions and

deeds and not in words alone (1 John 3:18). In thirty-two years of ministry, I have seen and heard many Christians promise the sky but doing nothing when the opportunity to do something for the kingdom is presented to them.

There will never be a time when everything is one hundred percent the way we want it to be before we have to serve God and do His Will – we have to start serving God and doing His Will with what we have now. Far too many Christians live and die without carrying out what they intended to do. I have seen many of them in the Spiritual World regret their loss of earthly and heavenly rewards because of their lack of taking action – many of them suffer eternal loss for there are special progressions and crowns that can only be won by choosing and acting correctly while in the earthly bodies. There are some rewards and crowns that no heavenly progress can bestow – only a righteous, benevolent and giving life on earth can bring many of those heavenly rewards and glory.

Every one of us is given limited opportunity and specific resources and talent to do God's Will – if we fail to act on them; we are responsible for our own failure for eternity and no one else. Our good desires and intentions came from God – so there is nothing to boast about them. It is our actions that we are capable of which shows forth our true nature on this earth. We were placed on this earth with free choice and free will which no one but our own souls can make the decision to take action. We need to evaluate our own lives – not just what we intend to do but what we have actually done thus far.

What have you actually done so far in the performance of God's Will? Is your life just full of intentions and desires but zero actions? Are you failing the tests that God allows you to be in because you never took the right course of action? Are you in a repetitive cycle (an important clue that you are failing the tests given to you) and never moving forward? Do you want to lose your heavenly reward of glory and crowns by neglecting to take proper actions in your life while on earth? Remember that all lives are linked one to another, and your personal failure to obey the Holy Spirit will make the lives of others more difficult (those who depended on or will benefit from your obedience) and they may fail because of the added difficulty and their own weaknesses.

You may be willing to face the consequences of your own failure; but do you want to be responsible for causing the lives of others to

be more difficult by disobeying God? The difficulties and delays caused to other lives (because of your disobedience) will not be held against those who depended on you but will be held against you in eternity – in terms of heavenly rewards and progress in glory.

2. We need to move in the general direction before the specific direction is given (1 Samuel 16:1-13; Acts 11:25-26; 13:1-3).

Samuel the prophet was told by God that one of the sons of Jesse was to be anointed king. He knew the town and the family to go to but did not specifically know which son of Jesse was to be anointed. In fact, when he saw the first born, he thought within himself that he might have been the one (1 Samuel 16:6). Paul would not have been able to move into his apostleship if he had not followed the direction of Barnabas (and the Holy Spirit) in moving to Antioch and serving in the church there for about a year. We have to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing to be placed in a position of spiritual and earthly progress in God's Will. This applies to being in the right church or fellowship, being with the right people and partners (ministry and business) and personal obedience (shown through actions) in our lives.

Many people cannot and will not receive the specific direction because they are disobedient even to the general direction that God has given them. The wise men who sought for Jesus moved in the general direction of country and city before the Lord gave them specific revelation to the specific child that they were looking for. They saw the star from their own countries far away. They followed the star by leaving their country and entering the country of Judea, naturally enquiring in the capital city of Jerusalem (Matthew 2:2). The fact that they were enquiring showed that they only had general direction but no specific direction. They were willing to take a long precarious journey in a foreign land just to seek out Jesus whose star they had seen. It was the Bible that gave them the next clue to follow – that the King of the Jews would be born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:5). By following the Scriptural clue, they came to Bethlehem and the star appeared again, this time specifically over the child, Jesus (Matthew 2:9).

Unless and until we are willing to take action and obey the general direction we have received within our own hearts and from the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will not give the more specific directions. Philip the evangelist had to stand by the roadside (having received the general direction from the Holy Spirit to be there) before he received the specific direction as to which person to talk to (Acts

8:26-29). Far too many Christians keep waiting and waiting for the specific directions which they will never receive because they are not moving in the general direction of God's Will that they have already received in their hearts and through the Scriptures. They might live and die without ever fulfilling God's specific will in their lives because they were never obedient to act on the general Will of God. God is watching us all the time, twenty-four hours, to see whether we are moving in the right direction (of course, this movement is measured by our actions and not by our intentions). While waiting on the Lord, every Christian should be actively doing something. There is, of course, the need to spend quality time and quantity time with the Lord but there is always an action (or continual actions) to be taken in the general direction that is open to each of us in fulfilling God's Will. Remember that while you are thinking that you are the one waiting on God, God could be waiting for you to take the right action in the right direction. Don't live and die still waiting. Seek out the right general direction (while waiting for specific directions) and start obeying now.

3. Specific directions involve specific motives, specific methods, specific timing and specific partnerships.

Jesus sent His disciples two by two (Luke 10:1) and Paul worked in teams (Acts 13:1-2; 15:40). Partnerships can also be between ministries and churches (Philippians 4:15). Many people because of pride (or wanting to take glory for their personal achievement) leave out the many partnerships and ministries which they have benefited from in their personal, ministry or church history of their testimonies of how they came to be (or how a church came to be) where they are today but eternity and the Spiritual realm records it differently. No one, no ministry, no business and no church can be where God wants it to be without the right teams and people in place. It is God who brings (from before the foundation of the earth) the right people in place for the works that He has prepared (Ephesians 2:10). Sometimes God may lead you to choose your team but at other times He chooses them for you (Acts 13:1-2; 15:40; 16:3).

This means that for those you choose – it would be people whom your spirit can sync with; but for those whom God chooses – you would have to learn to accept them and work together with them. Iron sharpens iron and sometimes God's choices would not have been your personal choices (you might not like them) but they are good for you (Proverbs 27:17). Paul and Barnabas were opposite types and their personalities clashed before the second missionary journey (Acts 15:39). Paul and Barnabas would have been friends

and partners for nearly 18 years. Although the Bible records only the sharp contention between them, the apocrypha gospel of the Acts of Barnabas records the following tender moments between them when they parted:

“Therefore bending their knees, they prayed to God. And Paul , groaning aloud, wept, and in like manner also Barnabas, saying to one another: It would have been good for us, as at first, so also at last, to work in common among men; but since it has thus seemed good to thee... And falling to his feet, he wept long. And Paul said to him: The Lord stood by me also this night, saying, Do not force Barnabas not to go to Cyprus, for there it has been prepared for him to enlighten many; and do thou also in the grace that has been given to thee, go to Jerusalem...”

Moreover, the source of their contention, Mark, became a blessing to Paul in his latter years (2 Timothy 4:11). Many people forsook Paul in his latter years when he stood on trial before the Roman emperor but Mark was one of those who stood by him with Luke (2 Timothy 4:11-16).

As Paul moved into his apostleship, he was discovering more and more by experience that his gift lay in the ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27; 15:3; 18:6; 21:19; Galatians 2:8). Paul’s discovery (or acceptance) that he was an apostle to the Gentiles was gradual through many years of ministry. The discovery of specific giftings and callings in the fivefold ministry takes time and many years of practical experience. All of us humans, including Paul, have a difficult time breaking the likes and dislikes of our natural culture, environment and tendencies in discovering the specifics of God’s Will. Paul struggled with his Jewish heritage and tendencies and Barnabas with Peter failed miserably (Acts 17:2; Galatians 2:11-20). It is no easy task overcoming years of cultural and racial indoctrination. Paul must have many big internal struggles in the eating of Gentile food and in making Gentile partners of ministry like Peter had (Acts 10:14). Some Jews and Jewish Christians made Paul their enemy because of his association with the Gentiles (Acts 15:1-2; 17:5, 13; 21:27-29; 22:22; Galatians 5:11-12).

There was also a specific time when Paul was to be release from Antioch to begin his missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-2). He had spent time in his home town of Tarsus, some time in Arabia and Damascus and some time teaching in Antioch before his missionary and apostolic calling came (Acts 9:30; 11:25, 26; Galatians 1:17,

18). All things take time because we need to first learn and acquire the character and transformation within us to be ready for the more specific tasks and Will that God has in store for us. God revealed His ultimate plan for Paul to Ananias when Paul was freshly born again (Acts 9:15). It took Paul many years (about thirty years) of waiting silently hidden from the public eye, three missionary journeys and many trials and persecutions before he finally stood before governors and kings to testify of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 23:1, 11; 24:10-22; 25:9, 10; 26:1, 19, 24-29, 32; 28:17, 29-31).

Paul also discovered the methodological benefit of appealing to his Roman citizenship when he was being arrested for the preaching of the gospel during his second missionary journey and began to use this method of appeal more frequently (Acts 16:37-38; 21:39; 22:25-29; 23:27; 25:8-10, 25; 26:32). It was his appeal to his Roman citizenship that brought Paul for a trial before governors and kings. Methods are developed through experiential years of testing out principles and moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They do not come by sitting alone and praying but by the hard work of taking action in fulfilling whatever area of God's Will that we have received. Many times it is in learning where we are not to go or what not to do that we learn where we are to go and what to do (Acts 16:6-9). No pain, no gain. It is better to have tried and learned than to have never tried. Many of the discoveries of specific methodologies that work for each ministry, specific timings to move into various ministries or business areas or specific ministry or business partnerships take place only when one has actually started doing rather than just dreaming.

The measure of who we really are is in what we are actually doing and not in anything else. Be people of words and deeds and not just words and thoughts alone. The only reason why the gospel is not being proclaimed powerfully in every nation is that many Christians know what they are to do but are disobedient in actually doing them. Actions speak louder than words both on this earth and in the Spiritual World. Obedience is better than any future sacrifice or future intended action that one is dreaming about. The only person that can change dreams into reality is the one you see every morning in the mirror. Don't wait until it is easy or convenient to take action – that day will never come. Obey God now in the best way you know how. No matter how small or how little the action is in your own eyes, it will release the beginning of new revelations of the specific leadings of the Holy Spirit.

God expects every one of us to walk and be led by the Spirit now and not tomorrow. Is there something that He has spoken that you are not doing yet? Are you still waiting for the big picture before you obey in the small picture? Do you have to be pushed and compelled by others and by circumstances before you obey? Are you a Saul who does things only when it is convenient to him or when circumstances compel him or are you a David who obeys God even in the smallest thing? The slingshot and the five stones may not look like much but they are enough to bring the beginnings of a national victory in war. The five loaves and the two fish might not look like much but they are the instruments to feed five thousand men and many more women and children. The trusted and well used wooden rod in your hand might not look like much but in the hands of Moses anointed by God, it became the key instrument and method for all of the mighty miracles over the land of Egypt and in the wilderness.

Every child learns to walk by taking the first step. If the child keeps waiting it will never learn to walk. Every leading of the Spirit begins in us trusting in Him by taking the first little step in obeying God through our actions. Those who are led by the Spirit, these *are* the sons of God; those who do not only have the potential to be.

Let us BE the sons of God.

Fatherly Talk 2.23

Ministering from the overflow

Dearly Beloved

Everyone has a ministry in the Lord. The fivefold ministry is supposed to train the church for the work of ministry; where every part does its share (Ephesians 4:12, 16). From the Spiritual World perspective, every one of us would have to be taking care of someone (or more than one person in accordance to our anointing and calling). We in turn will be cared for by others whom God appoints to care for us. Our spiritual growth results from the love and care that we bestowed on others in helping them to grow in God. It is the ONLY way to progress in the Spiritual World (and in reality the only way to progress spiritually in this life). We must be responsible to take care of others and help them grow. Spiritual growth and progress is not merely the egotistical striving for greater spirituality, greater knowledge and wisdom, greater manifestations, etc. All these are the side-effect results.

True knowledge and true wisdom and true spirituality are life – the life of Christ; which is the life of giving of ourselves in love to others. No matter how much Christian knowledge we have, no matter how much prayer we have prayed, no matter how many songs of praise we have sung, in the end the question is what have you done in your life such that another person or persons could say from eternity's point of view that you have shown the love of God through your life to them. Jesus laid down His life for us; for whom have you laid down your life (1 John 3:16)?

Beyond your immediate family and loved ones, are there any others whom God has stirred your heart to take care of and help them to grow spiritually. What is your sphere of love that God has asked you to share forth from your life? Remember, God through Christ loved the whole world and gave Himself for us – God's sphere is the Universe. He does not expect us to be immediately capable of this same quantity of love but He is expecting us to be capable of this same quality of love to one, then to two or three, then to ten or twenty, and then to hundreds and thousands, and perhaps to millions and when you are reaching billions, you have loved the whole world the way God loves the world. Grow your sphere of love. Every one of us has to start with a few for if you do not love thy neighbour, how shall you love the whole world like God does?

Even when Jesus' heart beat of love was for the whole world, practical limitations of being in one physical body limited the practical showing of love to Jesus and His immediate disciples. However, everyone who came to

Jesus to be ministered to could sense and receive His love for them – and there were thousands who kept coming to Him during His earthly ministry. If you have lived and died and have never loved at least one other person unselfishly like Jesus, you deserve hell fire. What kind of Christianity have you learnt that has not produced a drop of unselfish agape love within you? If we say we know Him (Christ) surely we must be like Him? If we say that we love Him, surely we must love like Him? This little conversation in this paragraph is the essence of what John the apostle of love was trying to tell us in his epistle (1 John 2:7-11; 3:14-19, 23; 4:7-21; 5:1-3).

Please, please understand this. There is no way that you will ever grow spiritually, if you have never practically loved another person in real words and deeds with the love of Christ. That is why the commandment of Christ is not to go out and make converts, but rather to go forth and make disciples (Matthew 28:19). True discipleship is the investment of one's life into another. If you die right now and enter the Spiritual World, at whatever level of progress you are, you will have angels and other more experienced spirits in charge over you to help you; but you will also be assigned charges under you (who are usually lesser than you in spiritual growth) to whom you must help and aid. Your spiritual progress upwards (and forward) will be then measured by your success and sincerity in helping others below you. Of course, it is even better when you are actually helping without even any thought of acquiring growth or progress for yourself – where you love for love's sake; you love because you want to love, you love because it is in your nature to love.

Now understand this, why should this method and style of progress be only for the Spiritual World? The good news is that it is not. It never was just for the Spiritual World. It was supposed to be for this present earth, too. That is why Jesus left us His commandment to love one another as He has loved us. That is why He asked us to make disciples, for He understands that it would be the outworking of the inward working of His love in us. Don't worry about others taking care of you at this time (for God would have already done that and if your spiritual level is truly such that few others can help you onwards to grow, God Himself will supernaturally assign angels and higher spirits to help you in your path of growth). Instead, we should all ask ourselves, who God assigned us to take care of and help and disciple? If you ask God, He will show you.

For some of us, it would include the outworking of your ministry, life and call. But at all times, we would find ourselves (even if we have many opportunities to minister to the thousands and the millions at one time) just speaking one to one like Jesus ministering in the still of night to Nicodemus.

For both the ministry to the thousands or millions or one to one – we must always minister from the overflow.

Since we are all but vessels of God, there are three positions in which we can be: we are not yet filled, we are filled or thirdly, we still continue to receive the inflow while we are filled and it overflows through our lives. Imagine a cup, it can be in the process of being filled, it can be completely filled to the brim or (if you keep pouring into the cup) it can be overflowing. A cup can contain some water, or it can be filled with water, or it can be completely immersed in water. It is the third position – to be overflowing or totally immersed in the Spirit of God that we should be in BEFORE we minister. We not only must receive the Spirit within us, we must be clothed (completely covered and immersed) in the Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). When the Spirit fills us until we overflow, we will be speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:18, 19). When the Word fills us and overflows forth from us we will be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our heart to the Lord and whatever we DO in word or deed, we are enabled to do it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:16-17). How easy would it be to minister from the overflow? Extremely easy because there is no effort as it would be all Him (Jesus) flowing forth through our yielded lives.

Now this overflow needs to be maintained daily through spending time with God (meditation, prayer, worship, entering into the rest, union with Him, etc.). Basically, it simply means being connected with God via your spirit man all the time even while you are going about your life's work. Through this spiritual connection and union with God, you know – you can sense – when you are not filled from when you are filled and when you are overflowing with His Spirit and His Word. And every time you sense that you are not filled, you spiritually draw into Him and draw forth until your rivers and fountains are flowing again (John 4:14). Sometimes when you are helping another person (discipling or showing love or counselling or helping to grow, etc.), you might sense that (at some point) you disconnected from the spirit and you know that you are running at the level below being filled, you should limit yourself and get back into the overflowing before you continue. When you do this and ALWAYS minister from the overflow, there will always be a freshness that comes forth through your life and you are never spiritually exhausted.

What happens when a person ministers below the level of being filled? The flesh comes in; sometimes without you even knowing for the flesh is subtle

and can imitate the spiritual to a certain extent. (And the reason why you have so much flesh in the ministry is because you have a whole bunch of people ministering below the level of being filled – without the Spirit to overflow, people make up the difference through the fleshly works).

Ministering from the overflow also protects us from the works of the flesh. The only way to overcome the flesh is by walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Note that this is an overflow position – the Spirit is not just within you, you are immersed in the Spirit and you are walking not with Him in you but you are in Him, you are in the Spirit. The baptism in the Spirit is just what it is – immersion of you in the Spirit. Jesus has commanded us that this is the ONLY way by which can be witnesses (Acts 1:8). In fact He strictly commanded the disciples that they were to tarry in Jerusalem UNTIL they were immersed in the Spirit and with power (Luke 24:49). Being baptised in the Spirit is not just a onetime experience, it is the beginning and an entrance into a new life style of power and grace – the OVERFLOWING LIFE. A life lived 24 hours a day immersed in the Spirit of God. Is it possible? Yes but only if we learn to get back into a position of being immersed in the Spirit every time we sense that we are no longer spiritually in that position.

Be baptised in the Spirit before being a witness. Be immersed in the Spirit. Always minister from the overflow.

Fatherly Talk 2.24

Christian Perfection

Dearly Beloved

The doctrine of Christian perfection was widely taught and discussed in the days before the Pentecostal movement. It even had its own name and was called the holiness movement. Christian perfection and sanctification was a doctrine well taught by John Wesley and many others of his time. It was even believed to be a 'second blessing' after salvation before the Pentecostal movement in 1906. When the Pentecostal movement came to the forefront after the Asuza street revival, the early Pentecostals struggled with how to identify and place the new Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Spirit with speaking in tongues within their theological framework. Some of them like Seymour, the leader of the Asuza street revival, began to teach the Pentecostal experience as a 'third' blessing after the 'second' blessing of sanctification. Others like Durham began to teach that sanctification was completed at conversion (finished work theory) and that the second blessing was the baptism in the Spirit. Thus the early days of the Pentecostal revival were filled with controversy caused by these two main opposing streams of theological understanding about the new movement. Looking back over a hundred years from today, we all know that Durham's theology won out over Seymour's and there is very little teaching within modern Pentecostal churches (or even other churches for that matter) about holiness and Christian perfection.

Today, we still have to be able to answer the questions on Christian perfection having seen the maturing of both movements through church history. Can a Christian be perfect while on earth? Can a Christian be sinless on earth? The answers to these questions are important as they do affect our fundamental belief system in the atonement work of Christ and possibly where we will be in the years to come.

1. Can a Christian be sinless and perfect on earth?

We all know that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and Paul expects that we live a life free from sin (Romans 5:8; 6:1-2). The contrast between 1 John 1:8 and 1 John 3:9 tells us the difference between those who are spiritually children in the Lord (1 John 2:1) and those who have matured to understand the ability that God gives to be free from sin (1 John 2:12-14). The obvious answer to the question raised from the biblical perspective seems to be 'Yes.' It should also be obvious that if Jesus is coming for a church without spot or wrinkle, that the church should be a mature and

perfect church (Ephesians 4:13-16; 5:27). If this is the biblical answer, then the next question raised would be 'how.'

2. How a Christian can be sinless and perfect in God?

It is first important to understand that sin nature (or the tendency or desire to sin) is not eradicated from our physical body. Paul acknowledged that sin dwelt in his flesh (Romans 7:18-25). The solution to this is found in three things that Paul understood to be the work of God that enables us to be sinless and perfect before God (remember we are not just talking about the positional and objective perfection in Christ that every believer has in the atonement but we are talking about the real, experiential and subjective perfection that is available to every believer):

- a. Sin is eradicated from our spirit nature through the born again experience, where we received the life of Christ within our spirits and experienced the new birth (Romans 8:10, 15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- b. Sin is being eradicated from our soul nature through the process of the renewal of the mind (Romans 8:4-9). This is process of metamorphosis and it seems from the epistle of 1 John to be a spiritual growth process (Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 2:12-14). It is more theologically sound to see it as a growth process than as a 'second' or 'third' instantaneous blessing process.
- c. Sin nature in our physical bodies is being 'neutralised' by the zoe life of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11-13; Galatians 5:16, 24-25).

Being tripartite in nature (spirit, soul and body – 1 Thessalonians 5:23), we could say theologically that we have been sanctified (spirit), we are being sanctified (soul) and that we will be sanctified (body). Another way of saying this is to say that we are freed from the penalty of sin (spiritual birth through the atonement of Christ), we can live free from the power of sin (through the renewal of the mind/soul) and one day we will be freed from the presence of sin (new body given in the resurrection). A careful reading through the New Testament Scriptures will attest to this understanding of past, present and future realities.

Understanding the process by which we can be sinless and perfect before God is important for as we recognised, like the apostle Paul did in Romans, that there is still the presence of sin in our physical body, the maintenance of sinlessness and Christian perfection is through the constant abiding in Christ and being filled by the Holy Spirit. The moment we are 'no longer' filled with the Spirit, the work of the Spirit in 'neutralising' the sin nature within our flesh is gone and the 'supposedly' perfect, sinless and sanctified Christian can fall into sin again. Thus the true key and secret of the perfect

Christian life is a continuous dependence on the infilling of the Holy Spirit minute by minute and day by day. This infilling and impartation of Christ in us was expressed in various ways in the New Testament. Paul recognised that it was no longer he who lives but Christ who lives within him (Galatians 2:20). He also recognised that it is not him who labours (lives day to day) but it is the grace of God in him who made him who he was (1 Corinthians 15:10). Jesus said that we are to abide in the vine that we may bear fruit in Him (John 15:5). Paul also expressed that we are to be continuously filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit that we may not fulfil the works of the flesh (Ephesians 5:18-19; Galatians 5:16). The question then becomes not a question of whether we 'can be' sinless and perfect by our own strength but it becomes a question of whether we have learned to 'be filled with the Spirit' or 'to allow the grace imparted in our lives to flow forth' or 'to let the Christ in us to live through us.' If we learn to do this continuously minute by minute and day by day, then of course, we will be experientially sinless and perfect in Christ.

3. The quality of Christian perfection

Many times people see Christian perfection as what we 'don't do'; for example, 'don't sin, don't be worldly, etc.' The truth is that Christian perfection is more about the perfection of God's nature in our spirit, soul and body. It starts with the perfection of our heart. We are exhorted to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). A cross reference to Luke shows forth that Jesus was asking us to be merciful as the Heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). In other words, we need to have a heart of love and compassion as our Heavenly Father has. Since God is love, the perfection that is demanded of us is that we have a perfect heart of love. Thus the essence of Christian perfection is actually the perfection of God's love within us. This is logical for when we truly walk in the love of God, we fulfil all the commandments of God – and walking in the commandments of God fully implies that we are sanctified and sinless. Thus a loving spirit, a loving soul with loving actions shows forth the fullness of Christian perfection.

If a person thinks that the absence of wrong actions alone is Christian perfection, then the quality of their understanding of what Christian perfection entails is shallow. A person can seem to outwardly do not wrong but yet be unloving. People can also seem to outwardly do all the Christian things but their minds and souls are filled with wrong, worldly, sinful and selfish things. This is not true Christian perfection; it is only an outward shell which Paul would have called a whitewashed wall (Acts 23:3).

John the apostle goes as far as to say that if one is not walking in love one is walking in darkness and in death (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14). We must be

completely saturated and filled with the love of God in spirit, soul and body to have the high biblical quality of Christian perfection that is promised to us (1 John 4:18). It is when we are filled with love that we are filled with Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19). Being born again should not be viewed just as being born free from sin, rather it should be viewed as being born into love and being enabled to take the first steps of our life flowing from God's life poured into our hearts (Romans 5:1-5).

The whole of Christian living is then the growing fullness of this river of love until we are matured and grown in the love of God. Indeed, being in kindergarten in the things of God is being immature in love – no matter how clever we think we are or how great an intellectual capacity or how talented we are or how great a philanthropist we are. It all means nothing if we do not have love (1 Corinthians 13:2). Anyone whether they be a person, a Christian or even a Christian clergy or minister and who seems to be immature in the unconditional love of God – in God's sight, they are all just mere babies and immature children in His great kingdom of love no matter how high or great they are in the eyes of men and society (1 Corinthians 13:11 – childish). True Christian maturity and Christian perfection is measured by the depth, height, width and breadth of God's love. The greatest is love.

Let us all truly grow into the true high quality of Christian perfection.