

A wooden cross is centered in the background. Two hands, one from the left and one from the right, are reaching towards the cross. The background is a soft, warm-toned gradient.

God's Purposes for Humanity

Part One

The cross of Christ is the means by which God reaches out to people, in order to fulfill His glorious purposes.

Colin Winters

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Yahweh – our God – is so high and exalted; so majestic and glorious; and He is so worthy of all glory and honour. He is the One who created all things, and who has purposes in everything He does, and everything He allows to happen in the whole universe. His predominant purpose in all creation was to establish His Kingdom which would endure for all eternity – a glorious Kingdom ruled by a God who is loving, compassionate, and gracious– but who is also holy, righteous and just. In addition to the angels who were created to serve and worship Him, God also predetermined to have a people created with a free will, to choose either to submit to His loving and caring Lordship, or to living for their own personal satisfaction, and thereby eventually suffering His righteous judgement.

At the beginning of time when God made all things, He created man in His image and likeness; to have a personal relationship with Him; to live according to His ways; and to be dependent on Him for all things. But something happened that changed things from being as God had made them, to what they are now. People are no longer naturally dependent on God, but rather on their own independent nature– driven by their own selfish desires– ‘it’s all about me’. However, because God is our Maker, life is supposed to be ‘all about Him’ and His Kingdom.

This is what the Bible is all about. God has given us His Word to reveal Himself and His purposes for humanity. If we fail to recognize this – we will be the losers. But God will show us His purposes and how we can be winners, if we will humble ourselves before Him and diligently spend time getting to know God through His Word and Spirit. And as we get to know God more intimately, we will understand more about His purposes for humanity, and how He wants to restore the likeness to Himself that He created us to have, but which was disturbed by the sin of man.

Written by Colin Winters as motivated by God. Apart from Him, I can do nothing! (*John 15:5*)

BUT – ‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’ (*Philippians 4:13*)

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These booklets are all about Yahweh, the One True God, the High and Exalted One, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, the Holy One. Therefore out of reverence for Him, and because of the importance that Yahweh Himself places on His Name, I am obligated to use His personal name '**Yahweh**'.

Exod 3:15 *God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation."*

For a full explanation of the significance of God's personal name Yahweh, and also the reason for the changes in the Scripture quotations as underlined below, please read through **chapter 1 of 'What an Awesome God We Have, Part One'**.

Most Scripture quotations are based on the English Standard Version (ESV), with the only change being the insertion of 'Yahweh' in place of 'LORD' (in capitals).

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are based on the New International Version, again, with the only change being the insertion of 'Yahweh' in place of 'LORD'.

Please note – all emphases in verses by underlining or **highlighting** are my doing.

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Please feel free to make comments or ask questions.

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Introduction

This is the third topic in a series which are focused on what is the most important issue in the Bible – **to know God and His purposes for humanity**. If you haven't read the first booklets in this series, I would strongly recommend that you do, as they are precursors to, and foundations for this booklet.

The primary focus in this whole series is on Yahweh our Maker; and the cover page gives a brief overview of the reason why knowing God and His purposes for humanity are of such great importance. Please re-evaluate the cover page.

Writing these booklets has been rather challenging, as our ability to understand the things of God is extremely limited compared to His infinite wisdom and knowledge. But, because He is our Maker, who longs for us to know Him, He has given us His Word and His Holy Spirit to lead us into the Truth.

The following paragraph is an excerpt taken from the NIV Study Bible's Introduction to the Psalms, citing God's purposes for Israel. I have included it because it gives us a summary of God's purposes for us as His redeemed people.

'As the Great King over all the earth, the Lord has chosen Israel to be His servant people, His "inheritance" among the nations. He has delivered them by mighty acts out of the hands of the world powers, He has given them a land of their own (territory that He took from other nations to be His own "inheritance" in the earth), and He has united them with himself in covenant as the initial embodiment of His redeemed kingdom. Thus both their destiny and His honour came to be bound up with this relationship. To them He also gave his word of revelation, which testified of Him, made specific His promises, and proclaimed His will. By God's covenant, Israel was to live among the nations, loyal only to her heavenly King. She was to trust solely in His protection, hope in His promises, live in accordance with His will, and worship Him exclusively. She was to sing His praises to the whole world – which in a special sense revealed Israel's anticipatory role in the evangelization of the nations.'

These booklets are more of a study or devotional style, rather than just a booklet to read. So don't rush through them like you might with a normal book, but take time to meditate your way through them, submitting yourselves to the Spirit of Truth, whom Yahweh has graciously given to us to lead us into the real Truth of God's Word.

As noted under the contents list we will be using God's name Yahweh; including the use of 'Yahweh' in Scripture quotations. If necessary, please read the full explanation for this in 'What an Awesome God We Have – Part One'.

Why is it so important to know God and His purposes?

For a Christian, the most important thing in our life should be **to know God**; and to know His plans and purposes for us. After all, **God is our Maker and He created us for a purpose. Is that not true?** Well, the Bible makes that very clear.

Psa 100:3 *Know that Yahweh, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Rom 11:36 *"For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."* (Also ***1Cor 8:6***)

The essential message we get from these verses is that **God created all things**; everything was made **through Him** – by His almighty power and wisdom; and all things were made **for Him** –for His glory. We are not a product of evolution – God created us **for Himself** – that we would be participants of His Kingdom, and give all glory and honour to Him.

There are also other scriptures confirming God's definite purposes in creating all things for Himself, and being totally committed to fulfil those purposes.

Isa 46:10-11 *I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.' ¹¹From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.*

Isa 55:10-11 *"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

Also ***Psa 33:11*** & ***Isa 14:24***

Now – as already noted elsewhere in these booklets – think about who gave us the Bible; and what is the main reason for Him giving it to us? I'm sure you realise that it was God who gave us the Bible – that's why it is called 'the Word of God'. And **the reason He has given it to us, is firstly to reveal Himself; and then to make known His purposes for humanity.** So the real issue is **how important is God to us?** Is He important enough for us to make a greater commitment to getting to know Him, and the things that are really important to Him?

If Yahweh is so high and exalted; so majestic and powerful; and the Sovereign Ruler over everything He has made; **shouldn't we show a much greater respect for him by devoting more time to seek Him with all our heart?** Where is our

'fear of the Lord', or our love for Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, if we don't make such a commitment? **It is Yahweh who made us for Himself and has ordained His purposes for us.** This is why it is so important to be diligently seeking to know Him and His purposes for us.

Another important point to make is that the big picture in God's purposes has **eternity in view**. Leonard Ravenhill; a well-known preacher who went to be with the Lord in 1994, made this statement after many years of serving the Lord: **"This Life is a Dressing Room for Eternity - THAT'S ALL IT IS!"**

But if God is so perfect, and knows exactly what He is doing, why did He allow the devil to enter the scene and cause so much trouble and suffering? Why didn't God send him to Hell at the time he rebelled against God? God is going to send to Hell one day anyway; so why didn't He do it way back then

There are answers to these questions, and the purpose of this booklet is to some degree, to attempt to answer them. In the meantime, the main thing to remember is that **our life has been given to us by God as a time of preparation for spending eternity with Him, so let's make the most of it.** That's what this booklet is all about, and there are many verses that confirm it.

***Jer 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you, declares Yahweh, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

***1Pet 1:3-4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...*

Also ***Eph 3:11***

God created us for a purpose, and that purpose has eternity in mind. Our life-time on earth is miniscule compared to eternity. So even if we have to give up things that are attractive to our self-life; or to suffer losses or persecutions; these are nothing compared to the glory we will experience for all eternity if we dedicate our lives to seeking God and His kingdom; to knowing Him; to loving Him; to walking in His ways; and to serving Him with all that we are.

To summarise: **God is the Maker of all things and He has purposes in everything He does, and all He allows to happen. His all-inclusive plan has eternity in view – but what are His purposes for us in our lifetime on earth? That's what we seriously need to consider, and is what we are earnestly seeking to do in these booklets.**

As we have done so far through this series of booklets, so we will continue to include scriptures, or maybe a song, which draw our attention to the wonders of Yahweh and His Son Jesus for the purpose of taking time to give Him the praise and worship which He is so worthy of.

Take time to praise and worship

Psa 97:1-12 *Yahweh reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!*

²*Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.*

³*Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around.*

⁴*His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles.*

⁵*The mountains melt like wax before Yahweh, before the Lord of all the earth.*

⁶*The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.*

⁷*All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods!*

⁸*Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O Yahweh.*

⁹*For you, O Yahweh, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.*

¹⁰*O you who love Yahweh, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked.*

¹¹*Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.*

¹²*Rejoice in Yahweh, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!*

Psa 135:1-7 & 13 *Praise Yahweh! Praise the name of Yahweh, give praise, O servants of Yahweh, ²who stand in the house of Yahweh, in the courts of the house of our God!*

³*Praise Yahweh, for Yahweh is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!*

⁴*For Yahweh has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession.*

⁵*For I know that Yahweh is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*

⁶*Whatever Yahweh pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.*

⁷*He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses....*

¹³*Your name, O Yahweh, endures forever, your renown, O Yahweh, throughout all ages.*

1. To be Devoted, Active Participants in The Kingdom of God

The 'Kingdom of God' is top of the list in 'The Plans and Purposes of God' because it really encompasses all of God's purposes for humanity.

God's Kingdom can be defined as **the whole realm of everything Yahweh has made – whether physical or spiritual – and which is under His government and authority. And in His Kingdom, Yahweh has purposes in everything He does, and all He allows to happen.**

All of Scripture points to Yahweh's sovereign rule over all things, even the evil things He has allowed to happen as part of His eternal kingdom purposes.

1Chron 29:11-13 *Yours, O Yahweh, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Yahweh, and you are exalted as head above all.*

¹²*Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

¹³*And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.*

Psa 97:9 *For you, O Yahweh, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.* (Also **Dan 4:3**)

The Kingdom rule of God is not a forceful/ domineering rule; rather it is the caring and compassionate leadership of the Maker of all things over those who are willing to submit themselves to His Lordship, and to participate with Him in the extension of His Kingdom throughout the world.

In his book '*Beyond Renewal – The Kingdom of God*', Brian Hathaway writes:

"The Kingdom of God is a unifying theme for the whole of Scripture. We can not say it is the main theme. The main theme is the revelation of the character of God Himself. Since the fall, God's intention has been to both demonstrate and extend His rule in human beings. His purpose has been to have a person (or people) who would both model to those around them what it is like to live under His rule and seek to extend that rule into the lives of others."

Accordingly, the Kingdom of God, and His purposes for us ought to be a major focus in our lives. If we truly want to apply the 'first and greatest command – to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength'; then surely we will be more diligent in seeking to know God and His Kingdom purposes for us.

So let's explore what God's Word says to us about the Kingdom of God.

a. The Kingdom of God in the OT

➤ The Kingdom of God is mainly referred to by David and Daniel in the OT, with probably the most comprehensive portrayal being in David's worshipful prayer as he was handing over the kingship of Israel to his son Solomon. See **1Chron 29:11-13** on p.7 above.

As a consequence of David living a life predominantly focused on God, he certainly knew Yahweh in a greater personal degree than all the other kings of Israel. He had seen Yahweh's power working in many circumstances, and generally he acknowledged the greatness; the power; the glory; the victory; and the majesty of Yahweh Almighty.

As a result of David's experiential knowledge of Yahweh, he had a strong faith in God and His Kingdom authority and rule over all that was happening. That's not to say that he didn't have moments of failure – but when he recognized them he repented of them and continued to live by faith in God.

➤ In the Psalms, David praises Yahweh for the glory of His Kingdom.

Psa 145:10-13 *All your works shall give thanks to you, O Yahweh, and all your saints shall bless you!*

¹¹*They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,*

¹²*to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*

¹³*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.*

➤ In the book of Daniel the Kingdom of God is frequently referred to.

Dan 2:44 *And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever...*

The 'kingdom that shall never be destroyed' was a prophetic expression of the eternal kingdom which would be instituted with the coming of the Messiah. It was revealed to Daniel in a vision which he found somewhat disturbing.

Dan 7:13-14 *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an*

everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (Read right through to **v.28**)

- **Isaiah prophesies more specifically about the coming Messiah** on whose shoulder would be the government of the Kingdom which He will establish.

Isa 9:6-7 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this.*

- **Even though references to the 'Kingdom of God' are somewhat limited in the OT, God's sovereign rule over all things is very obvious from the beginning of Genesis right through to the end of the Prophets.**

However, when we come to the NT, the 'Kingdom of God' becomes the overarching theme, with a particular focus on the means by which God has given us entrance into His Kingdom through our faith in Jesus Christ and the redemption He has provided for sinful humanity.

b. The Kingdom of God proclaimed in the NT

When the Messiah did come, **His forerunner, John the Baptist, began preparing the way for Jesus to come on the scene.** Immediately the focus was on the Kingdom of God – also known as the Kingdom of heaven.

Mat 3:1 *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (NIV ...the kingdom of heaven is near.)*

Then after John was arrested by Herod, Jesus began His ministry; again with the same focus as that of John – '*the Kingdom of God is at hand...*'

Mar 1:14-15 *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* (Also **Matt 4:17**)

Also, very early in His ministry, Jesus again emphasized the priority of the good news of the kingdom – because **this is why He was sent.**

Luke 4:43 *...but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose."*

Shortly after that, Jesus started calling His disciples, and then began His preaching and healing ministry:

Mat 4:23 *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.*

Jesus' ministry, which included teaching, preaching, and healing; grabbed the people's attention. It had a widespread influence throughout the regions, and many were healed and set free from demon possession. The gathering of the crowds of people presented the opportunity for Jesus to communicate what is known as 'The Sermon on the Mount' – primarily to His disciples, but in the hearing of all the people. The first part of the sermon – known as the Beatitudes – included two examples of people who would become participants in the Kingdom of heaven – those who are poor in spirit; and those who are reviled and persecuted on account of their being truly righteous.

Mat 5:3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Mat 5:10 *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

These dispositions of godly people, and their responses to those who have improper or self-centered attitudes, are not the means of becoming members of God's Kingdom, but are clearly some of the conditions by which they are blessed.

Then, further on in Jesus' 'sermon' when He is giving various ethical instructions, He addresses the issue of **people worrying about the things of life** – what we eat or drink or what we wear. He concludes with an appeal for people to seek first the Kingdom of God, with the outcome that their needs will be met.

Mat 6:30-33 *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

This is certainly an encouraging instruction we all need to pay attention to, because we all have the natural tendency to be anxious about the basic needs of

life. **But the priority Jesus gives us here is that we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and then He will provide us with our needs.**

Does this raise the question in your minds – **what does it mean** to 'seek first the Kingdom of God', and **how do we do this?**

Since the Kingdom of God is all about Yahweh's sovereign rulership over everything He has created, essentially, **it's all about Him and the means by which He is working out His purposes.** So to seek God's Kingdom, is to **diligently seek to know God in increasing measure; and to know the purposes which He is working out in all creation.**

Further selections of 'Kingdom' Scriptures in the NT

The phrases '**the Kingdom of God**' and '**the Kingdom of heaven**' appear over 70 times in Jesus teachings. That in itself is a clear sign of the importance of the Kingdom of God, and I would encourage you to meditate your way through the following Scriptures, taking in the significance of the whole 'Kingdom' concept as being of vital importance in our understanding of the purposes of God.

➤ Requirements for entering the Kingdom of God

Not only did Jesus appeal to His hearers in the Sermon on the Mount to seek first the Kingdom of God, but also to seek '**His righteousness**'. Obviously this 'righteousness' was quite different to the righteousness of the Jewish religious leaders who only had a focus on external compliance to the letter of the law, rather than on understanding the true spiritual significance of the law, leading to being changed on the inside.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

We now have a much clearer understanding of true righteousness, which means "the character or quality of being right or just" in the sight of God. This right standing with God is gifted to those who have a genuine faith in Christ and what He did for us on the cross.

We will never enter the Kingdom of God on the grounds of following religious traditions or cultures, or simply attending church on a regular basis without being 'born again'. Just using the name 'Lord' will not get us there either; but only true faith in Jesus followed by living out the will of His Father in heaven. There are many false teachers who use the name 'Lord' – but only for their personal gain, or to elevate themselves to a place of honor.

Mat 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

As Jesus continued His public ministry He began to tell the people many parables; prompting the disciples to ask Him why He spoke this way. Jesus replied:

Mat 13:11-12 *And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

Essentially, the secrets of the Kingdom are only given to true followers of Jesus. In fact, those who have a genuine relationship with Jesus will be given greater revelation about the things of God; whereas those who are only listeners and not true followers will lose even more of what they think they know.

One of Jesus encouraging parables is the one in which He likens the Kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in a field. The man who found it realised its great value, and he gave up all he had to personally gain that treasure – the treasure of the Kingdom of heaven.

Mat 13:44 *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

Oh that we would have a much greater appreciation of the value Kingdom of God, and be willing to sacrifice all that we are, and maybe all that we have!

Rom 12:1 (NIV) *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

➤ Being a participant in the Kingdom of God

Becoming a participant in the Kingdom of God isn't for those who are 'mature' or proud, **but for the simple-hearted; the weak; and the humble.** When Jesus' disciples asked Him *"Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?"*, He took a child among them and responded:

Mat 18:3-4 *..."Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

Then another time when the disciples reacted to people bringing children to Jesus for Him to pray for them, He said:

Mat 19:14 ...*"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."*

Being participants in His Kingdom is also **for those who are willing to abandon all worldly things** – even friends and family if necessary – in order to follow Jesus and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Luke 18:24-30 *Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."*

²⁶*Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"*

²⁷*But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."*

²⁸*And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you."*

²⁹*And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."*

Luke 9:60-62 *And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*

➤ **The growth and ultimate consummation of the Kingdom**

The message of this Kingdom must be **proclaimed to the whole world**.

Mat 24:13-14 *But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (See also **Luke 8:1**)*

The growth of the Kingdom will be greater than what we can expect, or what we may be seeing at this present time. And we need to take encouragement from Jesus' words, that regardless of how small the 'seed' might be, He will cause it to grow much greater than we might expect – provided we also commit ourselves to being living examples and proclaimers of the Kingdom; as Jesus has conveyed in all his other teachings about the Kingdom of God.

Mar 4:30-32 *And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."*

While **the ultimate consummation of the Kingdom** is still in the future, it is nevertheless in the midst of us now. It is not a physically visible Kingdom as were the kingdoms of the nations; but it is spiritual in nature.

Luke 17:20-21 *Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, ²¹nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."*

Matt 12:28 *But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

Mat 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Jesus also asked His disciples to preach about the nearness of the kingdom.

Luke 10:9 *Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*

In one sense the Kingdom was 'near' because the King Himself was there, but not yet in His kingly position. That was to come when He ascended back to His throne in heaven to be seated at the right hand of God.

Mar 16:19 *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.*

In John's visions in the Book of Revelation, he saw Jesus – the 'Lamb' of God – the conqueror; and **the Lord of lords and King of kings**.

Rev 17:14 *...and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."*

In another sense the 'nearness' was pointing to the time of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection; after which those who would believe that He was the Messiah who was crucified for their sins would enter God's Kingdom.

After Jesus' resurrection, before He arose from this earth to be seated with His Father in heaven, His messages to the disciples were summed up under one all-encompassing theme – the Kingdom of God.

Act 1:3 *He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.*

➤ **Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost**, the predominant focus of the apostles' preaching was naturally about Jesus whom the people had crucified according to God's set purpose; who was raised

to life again; and whom: "...God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (**Acts 2:36**)

Then soon after the outpouring of the Spirit, the apostles were preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12 *But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*

Acts 19:8 *And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.*

Acts 28:31 *...proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*

➤ The apostle Paul refers to the Kingdom of God a number of times, generally about **the nature of the Kingdom**, or, about fleshly issues which would exclude people from the Kingdom of God.

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

1Cor 4:20 *For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.*

1Cor 6:9-10 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

1Cor 15:50 *I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

➤ Finally, we need to consider the words of Jesus in the 'Lord's prayer'.

Mat 6:9-10 *Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Our first request to the Father is that **His Kingdom would come**; and that request is expanded by asking that **His will be done on earth as it is in heaven**. We know that His will is already being done in heaven, but on earth it is only evident to a limited degree. However, it is on earth that God wants His Kingdom to be both demonstrated and multiplied; and this will happen wherever His will is being done, and through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. (See **Acts 1:8 & Matt 28:18-20**)

2. To Redeem us Back to Himself

As we continue with God's purposes, we will begin by looking into how we become children of God. This is just the entry point into God's Kingdom – the beginning of a life-time of growing in our relationship with Him; increasing in our understanding of His purposes for us; and living out those purposes for the glory of our Maker and Savior – Yahweh Almighty, and His Son Jesus Christ.

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve 'in His image and likeness'. They were created to be representatives of all humanity, and they were in perfect relationship with their Maker. But there were some unsettling things that happened with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden story.

In the Garden of Eden, God planted the **tree of life**, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**; and He made it very clear that they could eat any fruit in the garden, **except** those from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they ate those fruit they would certainly die – but the choice was theirs.

Then along came a serpent that tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit. As we know, the serpent was Satan disguising himself. In a very subtle way Satan convinced them to eat the forbidden fruit; and when they did, everything changed. They suddenly felt bad – they realised that they were naked and tried to hide from God.

But God knew what had happened, and when He found them, He had to put into effect the penalty of death which He had warned them about – not only physical death when they came to the end of their life, but worse than that – **spiritual death, which was separation from God**. The 'likeness' to God in which they were created was seriously disturbed, and **they now had a sinful nature at the heart of their being**.

Because Adam and Eve were created as representatives of humanity, all people have inherited the same sinful nature which separates them from God. Also at that time, Satan was given a certain level of control over the world, and his evil influence has been clearly seen throughout history all around the world.

But the big question remains – **why did God allow this to happen?** At the core of the answers to this question is the clear message of Scripture – **God is our Maker and He has purposes in everything He does**.

Isa 46:10-11 *I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.'* ¹¹*From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.*

But if a kind and loving God deliberately created the forbidden tree, knowing that Satan was going to tempt Adam and Eve; what did He have in mind? Worse still – why did God even allow the devil to exist after he had rebelled against God when he was one of God’s chief angels?

Even though things went horribly wrong back then, God already had a plan to **redeem people back to himself**, and even to use the devil in the process of redeeming and renewing people.

Yahweh is the God of compassion, love and grace, and will always give us the opportunity to be **restored to the relationship with Himself that He originally created us to have**. This is the **essence of redemption**, and is **the first** of many steps where God is working out His purposes for humanity. His plan of redemption unfolds through the Bible, reaching its climax in the Cross of Christ.

‘**Redemption**’ generally involves paying a price to purchase someone or something; and this is exactly what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross. In fact the price He paid was so huge as He was being punished by His Father for the sins of all humanity. **Jesus – the Son of God – suffered the wrath of God on our behalf**. This was the greatest example of the love of God that we find in the Bible; and I trust you have read about the hugeness of this love of Christ in 'What an Awesome God We Have – Part Three'.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has made the way for us to be redeemed. **But how does it become real for us? What do we have to do to be restored to our relationship with God?**

Firstly, let it be said that there is **nothing we can ‘do’** in the sense of doing good works, or keeping God's law, in order to be made right with God. Rather it is **by the grace of God**; and **by faith in Christ**.

Rom 3:23-24 *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

Eph 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

This ‘**faith**’ first and foremost involves believing in **Jesus Christ – who He is; and all that He achieved for us through His death and resurrection**.

It is because of the **greatness of His love and grace** that God has made a way for us to be ‘**redeemed**’ – to be restored to the relationship with Himself that He created us to have. And it is by **faith in Jesus** and all that He had done for totally undeserving people such as we all are, that our loving God restores us to that personal relationship with Himself.

3. To Know God

To be redeemed to our God and Maker is just the entry point into a relationship with God. From there on God has many purposes for us – all of them being dependent on our growth in that relationship – the personal, intimate relationship which the Scriptures refer to as 'knowing God'.

Even though this was the focus of the first booklet in this series (The Most Important Thing in Life: Knowing God), I feel duty-bound to address it again here because it is such a high priority within God's purposes for us. However, this chapter mostly contains abbreviated replications of the most important aspects of that booklet.

In pages 3 and 4 of this booklet we sought to briefly answer the question: **'Why is it so important to know God and His purposes?'** The primary answer is that God is **our Maker**; He created us **for Himself** (see ***Psalm 100:3*** and ***Rom 11:36*** on p.3) Following on from that, God has made it very clear that He has **purposes** in everything that He does (***Isa 46:10***)

If Yahweh Almighty is the high and exalted One; the creator and supreme ruler of all things in the whole universe; and our Maker – one would think that this would grab anyone's attention; and that all people would long to know more about this awesome God. Surely, we would want to humbly come before Him to seek to know Him and His purposes for us; and to love and worship Him with our whole being.

a. What does it mean to 'know' God?

The word **'know'** is used in the Bible in a variety of senses. But interestingly, the most intimate use of 'know' is for sexual relationship. The first occurrence of this is with Adam and Eve:

*Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain... **Gen 4:1***

The NIV version translates this sentence in a more contemporary way:

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant...

It is also used of Joseph and Mary to reinforce the fact that Jesus was not conceived by sexual relationship; but by the Holy Spirit.

Mat 1:24-25 *When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

The point in emphasising this use of the word 'know' is to show that **'to know God'** involves much more than knowing **about** God. But **please bear in mind** that the relationship we have **with God** is **not physical** –like that of a husband/wife – **it is a spiritual relationship**. And I believe that God has purposely used the word 'know' in the context of sexual relationship to bring our attention to the fact that **to know God spiritually, involves closeness; familiarity; even a sense of intimacy**. And it is as we develop that intimate relationship with God that we will continually grow in our appreciation of the awesomeness of Yahweh, **and we will get to know His heart; and His purposes for our lives**.

This is the real meaning of 'knowing God' in the biblical sense.

Getting to know God in this way can also be **likened to relationships** we have with friends or family members. The more time we spend with them in different situations – the more intimately we get to know them. We know what pleases them; and what disturbs them; and we get to know their strengths and their weaknesses. We could call it **'acquaintance-knowledge'**.

A personal relationship with God begins when by faith we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins; and was raised from the dead to be seated at the Father's right hand. But believing in Jesus; repenting of our sins; and accepting Him as Lord and Savior; is just the starting point of this relationship. And from there on, God wants us to grow in our **'acquaintance-knowledge'** of Him.

The reason God wants us to have such a close relationship with Him, is that **He loves us and wants us to have the full experience of all that He has to offer us**. This will be experienced only in part during our lifetime on earth, but then fully when we go to be with Him in His heavenly kingdom.

But let me emphasise that this full experience of God's eternal blessings is only for those who have fully committed themselves to know God and live as He wants us to – not as we want.

b. It is the desire of God's heart for His people to truly know Him

In the Old Testament we find that Yahweh had chosen a people for Himself – the nation of Israel to whom He revealed Himself in astonishingly powerful ways; ways that you would think would grab their attention and motivate them to attentively follow His instructions, and to truly worship Him. But sadly, as is the pattern of all humanity, they were too self-focused, and even forgetful of what God had done for them. They wanted to do things their own way, and even

worship the gods of other nations – who weren't even real gods anyway. In spite of all that Yahweh had continued to do for them, the people of Israel failed to recognise the awesome greatness of Yahweh; His power; His majesty; His glory; and His holiness. As time went on God expressed His deep disappointment through His prophets, and eventually had to send them into captivity as He warned them that He would.

***Isa 1:2-3** Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Yahweh has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. ³The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."*

***Jer 4:22** "For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'--in doing evil! But how to do good they know not."*

***Hos 4:1&6** Hear the word of Yahweh, O children of Israel, for Yahweh has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land...⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*

In these prophetic words we see that Yahweh is emphasizing **His desire**; and the **importance**; for people to truly know Him and to live according to His ways.

In the New Testament we also find the same emphasis. One of the most significant verses that shows just how essential it is for us to truly know God's heart is **John 17:3**. It is part of Jesus' prayer with his disciples just before He was arrested and then crucified. Starting at verse 1:

***John 17:1-3** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And **this is eternal life, that they know you** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

Think about the words: '*And this is eternal life, **that they know you...***' In other words, **knowing God is the essence of eternal life**; it is what eternal life is really all about. We need to constantly bear in mind that God is our Maker, and He made us for Himself so that we might live in relationship with Him; a relationship that will endure for all eternity. That's God's purpose; and the desire of His heart for all of humanity.

c. To know Christ was the Apostle Paul's greatest desire

Phil 3:8 (NIV) *'...I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ,*

➤ **It was Paul's earnest prayer for the churches he had established:**

Eph 1:17 (NIV) *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

Col 1:9-10 (NIV) *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. (See also: **Eph 4:13**).*

➤ **In Peter's second letter he highlights the importance of knowing God**

2Pet 1:2-3 & 8 (NIV) *May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence...*

⁸*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Read also **2Peter 3:17-18**

d. So, how do we get to Know God?

There may be some people who are asking – 'How do we get to know God in a 'close personal relationship'? While this question was answered to some degree in the 'Knowing God' booklet, we have added some other notes here.

Firstly – we need to **recognise its importance**, as has been made clear in this chapter, and in the first booklet in the whole series – 'The Most Important Thing in Life: Knowing God'. It's always worth repeating – There is nothing more important in life than to truly know God, and to grow in your personal relationship with Yahweh Almighty and His Son Jesus.

Secondly – by having **the right motivation**, and **developing a personal desire** to know God more intimately.

Thirdly, by **diligently seeking Him**, and asking **the Spirit of Truth** to reveal God to us. Let me emphasise again, that it is by the Word **AND** the Spirit that we

come to know the Truth about God and His ways. It's not simply an intellectual exercise in which we get to know the 'letter of the Word'.

Seeking God with all our heart

As we have seen from some of the Scriptures we have quoted, God is looking for those who will **seek Him with ALL their heart**. In other words, you need to **make a real heartfelt commitment to seek Him so that you will get to know Him in increasing measure. This is Yahweh's clearly expressed desire for us.**

***Psa 14:2** Yahweh looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.*

***Psa 119:1-3** Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of Yahweh! ²Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, ³who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!*

***Prov 8:17** I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.*

***Heb 11:6 (NIV)** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

These Scriptures give us a very clear message from the heart of God that He longs for us to genuinely seek Him with all our heart and all our soul. If this is the desire of Yahweh our Maker; who made us for Himself; why do we tend to give Him so little attention; and so little time seeking to know Him more intimately?

The commitment that we ought to be making to seek Him will require **consistency in the time we spend seeking to know Him**. This is not always easy, because life is busy, and the devil will do all he can to distract us, and lead astray from the things of God. Also, as you begin to seek God it may seem to be boring, or uninteresting; or there may be distractions that take your focus away from seeking God. **But God allows these things to happen to test us – to see if we are going to be faithful in seeking him.**

Please, let me encourage you to make a commitment to be consistently spending time getting to know God and His purposes for you. There is nothing more important in life; and God will provide everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him (**2Pet 1:3**).

Truly knowing God will also motivate us **to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and all our strength**. This is the first and greatest command and is what we are addressing in the next chapter.

4. To Love the Lord our God With our Whole Being

The Pharisees, who were always trying to test Jesus to see if they could find some fault with Him, came to Jesus one day and asked Him which is the greatest commandment in the Law. Jesus immediately responded with this answer:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Mat 22:37-38 (NIV)

Notice the emphasis that Jesus put on this commandment: *‘This is **the first and greatest** Commandment.’* This commandment was first given by God through Moses to His chosen people Israel in Deuteronomy 6:5, and was slightly rephrased a further three times in Deuteronomy; and then again in Joshua. Jesus citation of it is found in the first three gospels.

The point in saying all this is that this commandment of God is obviously of great importance to Him and should therefore be of great importance to us – if in fact we are true Christians!

The commandment to *‘love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’* is something that most Christians are aware of, but to which we don’t seem to have given much attention. Maybe we don’t have a very good understanding of what it really means!

Question: How would you personally explain what the first and greatest commandment means?

a. What does it mean 'to love... '?

There are two main word’s used in the Greek New Testament for ‘love’. One is *‘Phileo’* which more closely means "natural human affection". ***‘Phileo’ is never used in biblical language when referring to man's love for God - but ‘Agape’ is.***

Following are some edited comments taken from Bible Dictionaries on **‘Agape’**: *‘Love can be known only from the actions it inspires. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, (1 John 4:9-10). Christian love has God as its primary focus, and expresses itself first of all in complete obedience to His commandments, (John 14:15; 14:23; 15:10). Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the opposite of love to God.’ ‘Agape love, whether used of God or man includes: a strong desire, and an active and generous interest in the well-being of the person loved.’*

These comments are not suggesting that there are no emotional feelings in our love for God. If we come to appreciate how awesome God is – including His astonishing creative powers; His greatness and superiority; His sovereign Lordship over all things; His knowledge all that's happening in our lives; and most importantly His extravagant love; mercy; and grace for such totally undeserving creatures as we all are – then we should be affected emotionally.

And an even greater reason why we should be emotionally touched is that Jesus, the Son of Almighty God came to earth and made such a huge sacrifice by suffering the cruelty of the Cross and the wrath of God as He was being punished for our sins. If that doesn't grab our attention, then we are missing something.

The main point of the Bible dictionary comments above is that there should be a practical outcome arising from our emotional response to the love of God.

So we can say that **if we are not showing our love to God in heartfelt and practical ways, then we do not love Him as He requires.** And that lack of love on our part only goes to show that we don't really know Him – we don't really appreciate His awesome greatness; love; mercy; and grace as expressed above.

i. 'Loving God' in the Old Testament

In the OT, the call to love God is inseparably linked to keeping His commands. Read the rest of **Deut. 6** following after the command to love God in **v.5**, and also read the previous chapter (**Ch.5**) which includes the Ten Commandments.

A little further on in Deuteronomy, the practical outworking of this love for God is seen in His call to **love Him**; to **walk in all His ways**; and to **serve Him** with their whole being.

Deut 10:12-13 *"And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to keep the commandments and statutes of Yahweh, which I am commanding you today for your good?"*

Deut 11:13 *"And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love Yahweh your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul..."*

The books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are filled with the laws; guidelines; and practical day-to-day ways in which God's people were to apply their love for God.

ii. 'Loving God' in the New Testament

Then, in the NT, Jesus not only re-emphasises God's requirement for his people to love Him with their whole being, but also to work that out in obedience to His commands and His teachings. **If we truly love God we will have a strong desire to walk in His ways and to obey Him.** Jesus made this very clear, as did the apostle John:

John 14:23-24 (NIV) *Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. (Also vs. 15 & 21)*

1John 2:5-6 (NIV) *But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.*

2John v.6 (NIV) *And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*

Based on this very clear teaching by Jesus and John, we need to know Jesus' teachings and God's commands, and willingly commit ourselves to working them out in our lives. **It's all about truly knowing God and His purposes for us; and because of our love for Him, to be living our lives according to His ways.** That's a nice simple way of saying – we need to love Him and obey Him.

But it also has to be noted, as Paul goes to some length to explain, that we can't do this in our own strength, regardless of how committed we might be to obeying God's laws. He clearly illustrates this in ***Romans 7:7-24***; and then gives us the remedy in ***7:25 to 8:4***. The Holy Spirit is the One whom God has sent to dwell within us; to teach us God's ways; and **to enable us to fulfil the righteous requirements of God's laws**. This is an important subject that we will address more fully in Part Two; titled 'To be Led by the Spirit and Not by the Flesh'.

iii. A living sacrifice

If we truly love God with our whole being, then we should be willing to lay down our self-life and follow Jesus. Jesus Himself made this very clear:

Matt 10:38-39 *And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

Luke 9:23-24 *And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny*

himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

John 12:25-26 *Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

The first eight chapters of Romans is Paul's systematic treatment of the Gospel, focusing on the righteousness of God, and how He imputes that to us by His grace, and through our faith in Jesus Christ. Through the important theological themes that he addresses, Paul is highlighting the merciful and gracious things that God has done for us, and which become ours by faith. Then in chapters 9 to 11 he explains Yahweh's righteous rejection of Israel because of their rejection of Him.

At the end of chapter 11, Paul's writes a wonderful doxology which really applies to all that he has written up to that point:

Rom 11:33-36 *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

³⁴*"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"*

³⁵*"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"*

³⁶*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

Following immediately on from that, Paul makes a conclusive challenge. In this case, the 'therefore' would refer to all the merciful things that God has done for us as expounded in Romans up to this point:

Rom 12:1-2 (NIV) *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

In view of all God's mercy, we are presented with the obligation to totally devote ourselves to God – to present our whole being as **a living sacrifice to God. This is how our love for God should look.**

There is so much more to be said about how to work out our love for God; and we will be seeing more of the 'how' as we continue to address the purposes of God for us, and how we can work those out in our lives.

b. Love, Obedience and the Fear of the Lord

Both 'love' and 'obedience' are motivated by a true biblical Fear of the Lord – a subject which we will address more fully in the next chapter.

When God's chosen people Israel were about to enter the Promised Land, the Lord gave them many instructions through Moses His servant, and the leader of God's people. The book of Deuteronomy contains all those instructions, including some on which the Lord placed great importance. **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** is a strong directive given by the Lord:

¹²"And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to keep the commandments and statutes of Yahweh, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

Notice that 'to fear Yahweh your God' is the first thing on the list. It is what should stimulate obedience; love; and serving Him with our whole being. And this makes sense – how can you have such a high respect for anyone, and not want to show that respect by obeying, loving, and serving them? And of course – God deserves much higher respect and reverence than any human being.

So we should have a strong desire to love Yahweh our God in real ways, not just in an emotional sense. **'Love can be known only from the actions it inspires.'**

c. The Cross of Christ – The most powerful motivation to love.

A Christian can never spend too much time meditating on the Cross of Christ. Unfortunately, we tend to give too little attention to the love of Christ as displayed in His crucifixion on the Cross. Perhaps it has become all too familiar to us; or perhaps we just take it for granted that Jesus died for us and now we have the gift of eternal life – so why keep thinking about it – or why get morbid over it? We should simply be rejoicing about it all. Yes, indeed we should be rejoicing – but there are deeper significances in the Cross of Christ than what we might have considered.

In Part Three of 'What an Awesome God we Have', from pages 37 to 47, the focus was on the love of Christ; particularly as displayed when Jesus, the Son Of God, suffered the wrath of Yahweh for our sins. The cross of Christ is at the core of God's plan of redemption for mankind; and is the means by which God has shown us the extravagance of His love and grace towards us. So, in order to

spend some time soaking in the significance of the Jesus' crucifixion, please review pages 38 -48 as mentioned above.

The main point we are making in this part of the booklet is that **the Cross of Christ is the most amazing display of the love of Christ for humanity**. And if you come to understand at least something of the wonder of Christ's love, then it should first of all grab our attention, and then it should motivate us to make a commitment to love Him because of what He has done for such undeserving people such as us.

d. How do we determine the measure of our love for God?

Notice that God emphasises loving Him with ALL our heart, ALL our soul, and ALL our mind. That means with **everything that we are – our whole being** – not just a bit here and there. That's an extremely high challenge, and we can't achieve it in a short space of time. In fact it will be a growing thing throughout our whole life. **But it needs to be a high priority for us if we truly want to love God as He deserves, and as He desires.**

It should be obvious that if we give little attention to God, then we don't love Him that much. For you personally – how much time and effort do you put into getting to know God by diligently seeking Him? Do you spend more time being caught up with entertainment or social media, or with your lifestyle, than you do in seeking God through His Word and prayer? How much time do you personally give to glorifying God through praise and worship, or by being a living example of Christ?

These are just a few of the questions that we should be asking of ourselves, and our answers should give us a clear indication of the measure of our love for God. God is so worthy of all glory and honour, and the more we appreciate His awesome greatness, the more keenly we will respond by loving Him in tangible ways.

5. To Glorify Him Who is So Worthy

The opening question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is:

'What is the chief end of man?' with the answer: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'

Following are some very applicable comments by Jerry Bridges in his book 'The Joy of Fearing God'. He writes, **'The person who fears God seeks to live all of life to the glory of God'**. And elsewhere in his book:

*The glory of God is **the sum of all His infinite excellence and praise-worthiness set forth in display**. To glorify God is **first of all** to respond properly to this display by ascribing to Him the honor and adoration due Him because of His excellence. We call this worship.*

The second way we glorify God is by reflecting His glory to those around us in the way we live our daily lives. Jesus said, *"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16, NASB). (End of Jerry Bridges comments)

And as the Apostle Paul aptly states: 'So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do it all for the glory of God.**' (1Cor 10:31)

How very true these statements are – as we will see from the Word of God which abounds with many Scriptures that glorify God, and also many that call for us to glorify Him. To bring glory to God involves firstly a **response to Him**, and secondly, a **reflection of Him to others**.

A brief summary of 'glorify' from Vine's NT Dictionary is: *"To magnify, extol, praise", especially of "glorifying" God, i.e., ascribing honour to Him, acknowledging Him as to His being, attributes and acts, i.e., His glory...*

And from ISBE encyclopaedia: *"Men may glorify God, that is, give to Him the worship and reverence which are His due"*

There is no end to proclaiming this – 'What an Awesome God we have!' Yahweh and His Son Jesus are truly worthy of all glory and honor, beyond what we can appreciate. As we are frequently pointing out – Yahweh our God is so awesome and glorious; so high and exalted; so majestic and holy; with authority and powers that are way beyond our comprehension. He is the sovereign ruler over all creation, working out His universal plans with the intent that one day He will create a new heavens and a new earth, where those who have become part of His family through Jesus His Son will spend an eternity in His glorious presence.

If this is our God – the One who created us **for Himself**; then it begs the question – what is the level of our response? Have we only accepted Jesus as our Saviour, thinking that we are now on our way to heaven; but without really seeking to truly know God and His purposes for us? Or do we really recognise the awesomeness of Yahweh and His Son Jesus; and resolve to grow in our relationship with God, so that our primary aim in life is to glorify Him?

a. Praise His glorious Name

➤ **Scriptures which glorify God.**

Take time to meditate, and give praise and glory to Him who is so worthy.

1Chron 29:11-13 *Yours, O Yahweh, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Yahweh, and you are exalted as head above all.*

¹²*Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

¹³*And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.*

Isa 40:25-28 (NIV) *"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.*

²⁶*Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.*

²⁷*Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from Yahweh; my cause is disregarded by my God"?*

²⁸*Do you not know? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.*

Psa 89:5-8 *Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!*

⁶*For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh? Who among the heavenly beings is like Yahweh,*

⁷*a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?*

⁸*O Yahweh God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O Yahweh, with your faithfulness all around you?*

Psa 95:1-6 *Oh come, let us sing to Yahweh; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!*

²Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Yahweh, our Maker!

Rom 11:33-36 (NIV) Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

³⁵"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"

³⁶For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Please also read: **Exod 15:1-11; 1 Chron 16:23-36; Psa 8:1-9; 19:1-4; Psa 29; Psa 100; Psa 103; Isa 6:1-4; Rev 4:8-11; 5:11-14**

➤ Scriptures exhorting God's people to glorify Him.

Psa 96:1-9 Oh sing to Yahweh a new song; sing to Yahweh, all the earth!

²Sing to Yahweh, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

⁴For great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but Yahweh made the heavens.

⁶Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

⁷Ascribe to Yahweh, O families of the peoples, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength!

⁸Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!

⁹Worship Yahweh in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

Psa 66:1-2 ... Shout for joy to God, all the earth; ² sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!

Psa 105:1-4 Oh give thanks to Yahweh; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!

²Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

³Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek Yahweh rejoice!

⁴Seek Yahweh and his strength; seek his presence continually!

2Thess 1:12 ...so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

➤ **Jesus glorified God, and He too was glorified through His works, and of course through His crucifixion and resurrection**

Jesus spoke many words about glorifying God, as per the following examples; the first two referring to the death of Lazarus.

John 11:4 *But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

John 11:40 *Jesus said to her (Martha), "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"*

Jesus deliberately held back from going to see Lazarus when he was sick because He knew that Lazarus would die, and that his death would give Jesus the opportunity to bring glory to God by raising him from the dead.

There were also other times when the people saw Jesus performing amazing miracles, and as they recognised that only God could do this, they glorified Him.

Mat 15:31 *... so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.*

Jesus had certainly given – and continued to give – glory to God through all that He did as the Son of God. As He was approaching His time of crucifixion, Jesus spoke about being glorified in a way which would have been somewhat obscure to the hearers:

John 12:23 & 28 *And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*

²⁸Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

John 13:31-32 *When he (Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.*

In Jesus' final prayer before He was arrested, He recalls how He had glorified the Father through all that He had accomplished, followed by His request that He be glorified with the glory He had before the world existed.

John 17:1-5 *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having*

accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

b. The ways in which we glorify God

Jesus spoke about Himself being the 'Vine' and we being the 'branches', and that as we bear much fruit, the Father will be glorified.

John 15:8 *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

A vital aspect of being fruit-bearers is **the necessity of abiding in Jesus** – to live our lives in intimacy with Him, and to be totally dependent on Him as the source of all that we need to be fruitful.

John 15:4-5 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

Apart from Jesus we can do nothing of any real significance from a heavenly perspective. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself. Paul taught this same principle when he prayed that the Philippians would be:

... filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:11)

Peter also wrote that we serve by the strength that God supplies, with the result that God would be glorified through Jesus Christ:

1Pet 4:11 *... whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

So, **what is the 'fruit'** that we are to produce, and which will glorify the Father? We can start with **the fruit of the Spirit** – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – but it doesn't stop there. In the context of Jesus exhortation to the disciples (and to us) it also includes **audacious praying with total confidence that God will answer our prayers.** Then it includes **obeying Jesus commands** so that we abide in His love.

John 15:7-14 *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in*

my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Another evidence of fruit-bearing is **the light of Jesus life that shines forth from us**. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His disciples that they were 'the light of the world', and that their 'light' should be shining before others who would see their good works and give glory to the Father.

Mat 5:14-16 *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

As a result of our being united with Christ, and being changed into His likeness as we consistently behold His face, **we will reflect the 'light' of Jesus presence in us**, and we will do good works as we are led by the Spirit. All this will bring glory to God.

The tough side of being fruit-bearers is that we have to **lay down our lives** – we have to die to our self-life. But the joyful side of dying to self is that we will have eternal life. As Jesus said:

John 12:24-25 *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

Then there is the fruit-bearing of multiplying disciples. Jesus final commission to His disciples was to go and make disciples, and that they would be **empowered by the Holy Spirit to be fruitful witnesses**. The book of Acts surely gives evidence of this taking place; and the Father and the Son were certainly glorified.

Mat 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

As the people of God live in true harmony with each other, even after the manner of Jesus Christ, we will together glorify God.

Rom 15:5-6 *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Even in times of suffering, we should always give glory to God. He has allowed these things to happen, and in fact we are thereby participating in the sufferings of Christ.

Rom 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

1Pet 4:12-13 & 16 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

¹⁶*Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.* (Generally understood to mean – in the name of Jesus Christ)

Paul's letter to the Ephesians abounds with expressions of praise, and **encouragements for God's people to bring glory to Him**. All that God has done through His Son Jesus is for the purpose of bringing glory to Him (**1:6**). **Our lives are to be for the praise of His glory (1:12)**. Even the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us as a guarantee of our inheritance, is for the praise of His glory (**1:14**). To God, who can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations (**3:20,21**)

Eph 1:3-14 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a*

plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹*In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²**so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.***

¹³*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

Eph 3:20-21 *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

God's purpose right from the beginning has been that the whole of our lives would be for the praise of His glory.

This is one of the key statements by Paul in this part of his letter (in **v.12**). As a result of us coming to Christ, **our lives will bring glory to God** – we are a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come; we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ; we are filled with the Spirit of God; and we proclaim to the world the Kingdom of God. All this transpires as we grow in our relationship with God; as we commit ourselves to walk in His ways; and as we worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The Ephesians passage above is a wonderful summary of the amazing things that God has done for His chosen ones; and it is **all to the praise of His glory**. It is also a beautiful expression of praise and worship that we should be offering to our gracious heavenly Father '*who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...*' (**v.3**)

God certainly was, and still is of course, glorified in Christ Jesus, and His purpose is that He is also glorified in the Church (**Eph 3:21** above).

c. Worship God in spirit and in truth

This is one of the primary ways in which we glorify God. Jesus made an emphatic statement about true worship to the Samaritan women at the well:

John 4:23-24 *But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Expositor's Bible Commentary gives the following explanation about 'worship in spirit and truth':

The true worshippers shall worship the Father not only "in spirit," but also "in truth." The word "truth" here probably covers two ideas – the ideas of reality and of accuracy... Truth is opposed also to error or misconception about the object of worship. Christ, by His presence, enables men to worship the Father in truth. He gives them the true idea of God. He makes God real, giving an actuality to our thought of God which we could not otherwise arrive at; and He shows us God as He truly is, connected with ourselves by love; holy, merciful, just.

For many years my understanding of true worship has been that it must come from the heart (spirit), and that it must be a genuine reality for the worshipper (in truth). Coupled with the Expositor's explanation, this makes more sense than the idea that 'in truth' refers solely to the truth of God's Word. Of course it must be in line with the truth of God's Word, but in the context in which Jesus spoke those words – 'in spirit and truth' – the explanations given above are certainly more applicable; as are some of the verses in the next page.

A concise definition of worship, given by Brian Hathaway, is this: '*Worship is a whole of life response to the worthiness of God*'. I think that sums it up beautifully. In fact, could we not also say that **glorifying God is a whole of life response to the worthiness of God**? This would certainly have been conveyed in the Scriptures and comments up to this point, and is essentially confirmed in Paul's appeal to the Romans to offer our whole being as a living sacrifice to God, for this is our true and proper worship.

Rom 12:1 (NIV) *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

Also, we need to be aware that God always knows our heart – nothing is hidden from Him. He alone knows if our worship is in spirit and in truth.

1Sam 16:7 *...For Yahweh sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart."*

Psa 139:1-4 *... O Yahweh, you have searched me and known me! ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Yahweh, you know it altogether.*

God delights in truth, and He delights in a humble spirit.

Psa 51:6 *Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*

Isa 57:15 *For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

We certainly need to consider our current approach to worship – is it just a traditional format; or something we have become so familiar with that our hearts are not really engaged in focusing on God and His awesomeness, and thereby not giving true glory to Him?

If our worship is to be in spirit and in truth, then we need to consistently examine ourselves; submitting our whole being to God; and seeking His face – beholding His glory – on a habitual basis.

Take time to praise and worship – to give glory to Yahweh who is so worthy of all glory and honor

Psa 96:1-13 *Sing to Yahweh a new song; sing to Yahweh, all the earth.*

² *Sing to Yahweh, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.*

³ *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.*

⁴ *For great is Yahweh and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.*

⁵ *For all the gods of the nations are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens.*

⁶ *Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

⁷ *Ascribe to Yahweh, all you families of nations, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.*

⁸ *Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.*

⁹ *Worship Yahweh in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.*

¹⁰ *Say among the nations, " Yahweh reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.*

¹¹ *Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.*

¹² *Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

¹³ *Let all creation rejoice before Yahweh, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

6. To have a True Sense of 'the Fear of the LORD'

"Who is the man who fears Yahweh? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose. His soul shall abide in well-being, and his offspring shall inherit the land. The friendship of Yahweh is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant." **Psalms 25:12-14**

a. The fear of the LORD – its meaning

While the word 'fear' normally means to be scared, or terrified; in the context of 'the fear of the LORD' it means **to have the utmost respect and reverence for Yahweh Almighty; and to stand in awe of Him who is so much more worthy of all glory and honour than we can even imagine.**

This is the main sense in which the phrase - 'the fear of the LORD' is used in the Bible. Yahweh is the Maker of all things, and the most prominent and high-ranking being in the whole universe, and He deserves the greatest measure of respect and reverence. And even though that measure is well beyond what we are able to give, God still calls every one of His people to grow in the 'fear of Yahweh' so that we will come to know how important He is, and how worthy He is of our total respect and reverence; and that also includes our total respect and submission to all the instructions that God has given us in His Word.

The fear of the LORD is one of the characteristics of the Spirit of God that rested on Jesus: *"...the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh"* **Isa 11:2**

We only truly know the fear of the LORD as we give God first place in our lives by seeking Him with all our heart. It is revealed by the Holy Spirit as we read the Bible for the primary purpose of seeking to know Yahweh Almighty; the Holy One; our Maker; and our Father.

An enduring example of the 'fear of the LORD' is seen in the angels who are always in God's presence; who are very familiar with the high and mighty God; and who continuously see His glory and majesty – they are always humbly bowing before Him in worship:

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" **Rev 4:8**

Such is their reverence of Yahweh Almighty; such is their fear of the LORD. **Should we not also stand in awe of him; bow before Him in reverence; and worship Him always with our whole life?**

b. The fear of the LORD – its importance

Even though the 'Fear of the LORD' is a subject of huge importance in the Bible, we seem to avoid thinking about it much. Maybe it's because it sounds somewhat scary! Or maybe we don't really understand what it means; as there seems to be very little teaching about 'the Fear of the LORD' in the churches of our time. Maybe it's because there is a real lack of the true knowledge of God, resulting in little or no fear of the Lord. Most Christians know some things *about* God, but they don't know Him in the sense of *personal intimate knowledge*; which is the true source and motivation of the 'Fear of the LORD.

So often it seems that we prefer to occupy ourselves with our personal interests – we put our own self-life on the front seat, and God on the back seat. But God created us for Himself, and longs for us to know Him and His ways so that we can live as He has chosen – in the fear of the LORD. And when we do, Yahweh will lead us in His ways, and we will experience goodness in our lives.

It is God Himself who has clearly spoken of the importance of 'fearing' Him. Yahweh – the One True God – the self-existing One – the High and Mighty God who inhabits eternity – the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of everything in the universe – the Holy One who is perfect in every part of His being – The God who made all things for Himself and who is worthy of all glory, honour, and praise for all He has done – the One who is so worthy of our total respect and reverence – the One whom we should stand in awe of – **He is the one we should 'fear'.**

As we give time to reading God's Word we should **naturally be encouraged** to stand in awe of Him, and bow before Him in reverence. But we should also recognise in the Scriptures that God **requires** us to 'fear' Him. It's not so much that God has made it a rule for us to follow, and that if we don't, He will beat us with a stick! No! **It is because God wants us to realize how important it is for us to know how worthy He is of our total respect and reverence.** That is why He is strongly encouraging us to live in the 'fear of the LORD' – the fear of Yahweh!

➤ **What God himself says about the importance of the fear of the LORD.**

While there are many Scriptures on this subject, we will look at just a few of them in this section, beginning with the most important aspect of Yahweh's instructions to His people Israel as they were being prepared to enter the Promised Land. In these verses you can see the strong emphasis in Yahweh's decrees to fear; to obey; to love; and to serve Him with all their heart and soul, coupled with the motivation to fear Him based on His awesome greatness, power, and His affection and love for His chosen people.

Deut 4:10 ...Yahweh said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'

Deut 5:29 (NIV) Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

Deut 10:12-21(NIV) And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God ask of you but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul ¹³and to observe Yahweh's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

¹⁴To Yahweh your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ¹⁵Yet Yahweh set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. ¹⁶Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. ¹⁷For Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. ¹⁸He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. ¹⁹And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. ²⁰Fear Yahweh your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. ²¹He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.

Deut 31:12-13 Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear Yahweh your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, ¹³and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear Yahweh your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

Even though God was speaking to Israel at that time, He was speaking about things that are extremely important to Him personally. Thus it is a clear expression of the heart of God; and He does not change. So what He is saying in Deuteronomy is true for all His people, including us. All Scripture is inspired by God, and is given for teaching us about God so that we can know Him and His purposes for humanity. **Therefore, it is still God's strong desire that we fear Him, walk in obedience to Him, love Him, and serve Him with our whole being.**

Even after Israel had entered the Promised Land, Yahweh continued to highlight the importance of fearing Him, speaking through His appointed leaders and prophets. These are just a couple of examples:

Joshua 4:24 (NIV) *"He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of Yahweh is powerful and so that you might always fear Yahweh your God."*

1Sam 12:23-24 (NIV) *As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴But be sure to fear Yahweh and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.*

Sadly, the people of Israel were generally not faithful in fearing and obeying God; they were continually stubborn and rebellious; worshipping foreign gods which Yahweh had forbidden them to do. Even though God was so gracious, and gave them many opportunities to repent and follow His ways, they refused – so in the end God had to punish them by sending them into captivity. At that time He still had a plan for their future which He foretold through the prophets – a plan to restore them to the relationship with Himself which His people had abused. Jeremiah records God's promises of what He would do for His people; including His motivation to fear Him:

Jer 32:37-40 (NIV) *I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. ³⁸They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.*

This 'everlasting covenant' was instigated by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And it was not just for the Jews – it was for all people who by faith accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord. It is because of Jesus crucifixion that we now have a sure foundation of salvation, wisdom and knowledge.

It should also be said that because God is Holy – absolutely perfect, and the Righteous Judge of all people, we should fear – in the sense of being terrified – **if we are on the wrong side with God** – if we haven't repented of our sins and accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord of our lives.

c. Yahweh's encouragements for us to fear Him

➤ In the OT

The Psalms include many encouragements to fear Yahweh; again highlighting its importance. Following are a few of them – but there are still more to come.

Psa 22:23 You who fear Yahweh, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psa 25:12 Who is the man who fears Yahweh? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

Psa 33:8-19 (NIV) Let all the earth fear Yahweh; let all the people of the world revere him. ⁹For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

¹⁰Yahweh foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

¹¹But the plans of Yahweh stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh, the people he chose for his inheritance.

¹³From heaven Yahweh looks down and sees all mankind; ¹⁴from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— ¹⁵he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.

¹⁶No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. ¹⁷A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.

¹⁸But the eyes of Yahweh are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, ¹⁹to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

➤ In the NT

Luke 12:4-5 (NIV) "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. ⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

2Cor 5:11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

Phil 2:12-13 (NIV) Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Rev 14:6-7 Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

I trust that as you have meditated on all these Scriptures which inspire us to fear of the Lord, that it will motivate you to seek the Lord with more consistency and diligence than perhaps you have been doing. Yahweh is truly worthy of much greater reverence than we will ever know while we are in these mortal vessels.

Question: How important is God to you personally, and have you been aware of the significance of the 'fear of the LORD'?

d. How do we develop a true fear of the LORD

The fear of the Lord is not grasped by the mind, but is imprinted in our hearts; and God will reveal it to the hearts of those who earnestly seek Him. In fact, as Proverbs 2:1-5 highlights, there needs to be a growing intensity in our seeking if we are to truly appreciate the fear of Yahweh.

*My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of God. **Prov 2:1-5***

Because of who Yahweh is, and all that He has done out of His great compassion and love for lost humanity, should we not be consistently seeking God through His Word and Spirit, for the purpose of knowing Him more intimately; loving Him with our whole being; and knowing how He wants us to be living for Him?

Not only is this what our High and exalted God **requires of all His people**, but it is what He **fully deserves** because of who He is, and all that He has done for us.

As John Bevere wrote in his book 'The Fear of the Lord': *"Holy fear is the key to God's sure foundation, unlocking the treasures of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. Along with the love of God, it composes the very foundation of life! We will soon learn that **we cannot truly love God until we fear Him; nor can we properly fear Him until we love Him.**"*

e. Yahweh's blessings on those who have a true 'fear of the LORD'

As well as the many verses which show us the importance of the 'fear of the LORD', there are also many which tell us about the results and the blessings of having a true 'fear of the LORD'. But please keep in mind that we don't pursue the 'fear of Yahweh' because we want to be blessed, but rather because Yahweh – our God – is so worthy of our total respect and reverence, and all the glory and

honour that we could ever give to Him. Remember also that God knows our hearts, and He knows if our fear of Him is sincere or not:

*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. **Heb 4:13** (NIV)*

These are the blessings of the Fear of Yahweh:

➤ 'Treasures' will arise from our fear of the LORD

*Yahweh is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with his justice and righteousness. ⁶ He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of Yahweh is the key to this treasure. **Isa 33:5-6** (NIV)*

A 'key' is what unlocks a door that is shutting us out from somewhere. And God is saying through Isaiah that **the 'fear of the LORD' is the key that unlocks the door**, and opens it up to the **treasures of His salvation, wisdom and knowledge**. And let's not overlook the fact that Yahweh will be a **'rich store'** of these wonderful treasures, which are not limited in value, or limited by our intellectual capacities. Yahweh is unlimited in His resources, and **He will impart those treasures to those who 'fear Him'**.

➤ Provides security, and is a fountain of life.

***Prov 14:26-27** (NIV) **Whoever fears Yahweh has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge.** ²⁷*The fear of Yahweh is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.**

***Psa 34:7-11** (NIV) **The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.** ⁸*Taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.* ⁹*Fear Yahweh, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.* ¹⁰*The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek Yahweh lack no good thing.* ¹¹*Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Yahweh.**

➤ Brings pleasure to God

Psa 147:11** (NIV) **Yahweh delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.

***Mal 3:16-17** **Then those who feared Yahweh spoke with one another. Yahweh paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared Yahweh and esteemed his name.** ¹⁷*"They shall be mine, says Yahweh of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.**

➤ Results in God's great love and compassion

Psa 103:8-13 (NIV) *Yahweh is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; ¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, **so great is his love for those who fear him;** ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. ¹³As a father has compassion on his children, so **Yahweh has compassion on those who fear him...***

Psa 103:17-18 (NIV) *But from everlasting to everlasting **Yahweh's love is with those who fear him**, and his righteousness with their children's children-- ¹⁸with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*

➤ Brings God's blessings

Psa 112:1-2 (NIV) *Praise Yahweh. Blessed are those who fear Yahweh, who find great delight in his commands. ²Their children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.*

Psa 115:11-13 (NIV) *You who fear him, trust in Yahweh -- he is their help and shield. ¹²Yahweh remembers us and will bless us: He will bless his people Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron, ¹³he will bless those who fear Yahweh -- small and great alike.*

➤ Results in the hatred of evil and will keep us from sinning

Prov 8:13 (NIV) *To fear Yahweh is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.*

Exod 20:20 *Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."*

➤ Comes to those who are persistent in seeking God's Wisdom

Prov 2:1-8 (NIV) *My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, ²turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding-- ³indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the knowledge of God. ⁶For Yahweh gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; ⁷he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, ⁸guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.*

➤ **It is the beginning of wisdom**

Prov 9:10-11 (NIV) *The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. ¹¹For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.*

➤ **It assures us of God's great goodness**

Psa 31:19 (NIV) *How abundant are the good things that you have stored up for those who fear you, that you bestow in the sight of all, on those who take refuge in you.*

Psa 36:7-10 (NIV) *How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.⁸They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. ⁹For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. ¹⁰Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.*

➤ **It results in enjoyment of our work, and full rewarding lives**

Psa 128:1-4 (NIV) *Blessed are all who fear Yahweh, who walk in obedience to him. ²You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. ³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. ⁴Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears Yahweh.*

What a wonderful collection of God inspired Scriptures showing us the blessings that flow out to those who have a genuine fear of the LORD. What an awesome God we have, and what great encouragement He has given to motivate us to be pursuing a genuine 'fear of the LORD'!

Yahweh is truly worthy of all glory and honour – He is worthy of our total reverential respect.

Take Time to Praise and Worship

Psa 100:1-5 *A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!*

²*Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!*

³*Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

⁴*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

⁵*For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

7. To Work Out Your Own Salvation With Fear and Trembling

Phil 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

In chapter 6 we examined the significance of 'The Fear of the LORD'. But it has another vital aspect to which we are devoting this chapter – and that is – **the practical application of the fullness of the salvation that God has provided; and which we determine to do as a result of our utmost respect and reverence for Yahweh Almighty who is graciously at work in our lives for His good pleasure.**

To 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' is a serious sounding instruction, and one that we don't necessarily properly understand. But it is certainly one that we need to absorb the significance of, and apply it to our lives – if we really want to bring pleasure to our Saviour and Redeemer.

Before we delve into the significance of '**fear and trembling**', we will expand on the implications of '**working out your own salvation**'.

a. Salvation in its fullness

➤ **Salvation is a process**

We tend to think of 'salvation' (also known as being 'born again', or being 'saved') as simply the initial act of accepting Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and being saved from our sins, and from the end result of sin which is eternity in Hell. But there is much more to 'salvation' than that. Being 'saved' is just the point of entry into salvation in its fullest sense, and it is **not by works** – it is by the grace of God and our faith in Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We cannot work **for** our salvation, but we have to **work it out; to practice, demonstrate, and exhibit the salvation which as believers we have in Christ.** 'Salvation' in the fuller sense, is **a life-long process**, and will only reach its climax when Christ returns to take us to be with Himself.

1Pet 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable,

*undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (Also **Rev 12:10**)*

What a glorious hope we have – that one day we will receive the inheritance promised to those who have been born again – '*an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you*'; and we will experience the fullness of the salvation that is ours in Christ Jesus, and the final transformation into His likeness. **This is for those who live in the fear of the Lord; and who work out their salvation with fear and trembling.**

One of the most glorious aspects of the '*salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*' is that the Church – the Bride of Christ – will be united in marriage. But note that His Bride has **made herself ready**, and will be clothed with fine linen which is **the righteous deeds of the saints**. Are you ready to be part of the Bride of Christ? – have you clothed yourself with 'righteous deeds'?

Rev 19:7-8 *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

➤ **We are a 'work in progress'**

Until that day when the fullness of salvation is revealed, we are '**a work in progress**', and we have to **continue to work out this 'salvation'** in our lives. In essence this means that **daily we have to be working out in our lives God's purposes for us as believers.**

b. Working out our salvation – our part to play

Right from the beginning God has required His people to play their part in – loving God with our whole being; living by faith in Him and His promises; obedience; true worship; and daily walking in His ways – and it continues to be the same under the New Covenant. And even though God has now graciously given us all things for life and godliness; we have a part to play – we have to 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling'. But also, as we have repeatedly said – we cannot work out the purposes of God in our own natural strength or abilities; but in submission to, and reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

i. We are to consistently apply God's purposes for humanity.

Even though we have listed 'To Work Out Our Salvation' under the umbrella of God's purposes for humanity, essentially we can say – in the broader sense –

that to be working out our salvation, is to be applying God's purposes as explained in these booklets. That's not to say that we have covered every single one of God's purposes, but certainly the most important and obvious ones as found in God's Word.

Having said that, I have listed here some important points which we need to be paying attention to as we work out our salvation. And while some of them have been addressed more extensively elsewhere in these booklets, I have itemized them here, and noted where else they may have been included.

ii. We are to love the Lord our God with our whole being

Please refer to chapter 4 for a fuller explanation, and bear in mind that the real significance of 'agape' love is the practical outworking – *'the active and generous interest in the well-being of the person loved'*

Jesus answered the Pharisee who was trying to test Him by asking Him which was the great commandment in the law, by saying:

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." **Mar 12:30**

Then He immediately followed with:

iii. We are to love our neighbour as ourselves

Mar 12:31 *"The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

We will be enlarging on this in chapter 11; but in the context of 'working out our salvation', there are a number of other verses encouraging believers to increase and abound in their love for one another

Phil 1:9-11 *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

1Thess 3:12-13 *...and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. (Also **1Thess 4:9-10**)*

1Pet 1:22-23 *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...*

Again, let me say – this love is not primarily an emotional love; rather it is 'Agape' love – 'a love that can only be known from the actions it inspires'. It is 'an active and generous interest in the well-being of the person loved.' It is a love that motivates us to serve one another in practical ways; by ministering to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

iv. We are to pursue holiness

The issue of holiness will be more extensively addressed in chapter 10. – 'To be Holy and Blameless'. If you are not sure of the true meaning of 'holiness', please refer to chapter 8 in 'What an Awesome God We Have' Part Two, where the full significance of Yahweh's holiness is addressed.

As a major aspect of working out our salvation, we are encouraged to diligently pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord (**Heb 12:14** below). Yahweh is holy, and His purpose for us is that we too will be holy as He is holy.

1Pet 1:15-16 *...but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

1Thess 4:7 (NIV) *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*

Col 1:21-22 *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him... (Also **Eph 1:4**)*

But bear in mind that there are two aspects of holiness.

a. Positional Holiness (sanctification)

This is the holiness which was imputed to us when we became united with Christ at the point of accepting Christ as Savior and Lord. Because of our union with Christ we are 'set apart' to God.

1Cor 1:30 *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*

1Cor 6:11 *... But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

To be sanctified is to be made holy. Albert Barnes makes a helpful comment on sanctification: '(It) denotes the progressive and advancing process of purifying which succeeds regeneration in the Christian.'

b. Holiness of character – moral perfection

This is the other aspect of holiness which we have to apply in our daily living.

1Pet 1:15-16 *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

Heb 12:14 (NIV) Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

2Cor 7:1 (NIV) *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

These verses are not implying that we can make ourselves holy. True holiness comes only from God – through our union with Christ; by the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us; and as we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the self-life (**Rom 8:4**). But, as with every other aspect of 'salvation' which we have to work out, so it is with holiness. We have to apply everything the Holy Spirit brings to our attention as we walk with Him. This is the sense in which we have to 'make every effort'; to 'purify ourselves'; and 'perfect holiness out of reverence for God.'

Because of the huge importance that God places on our being holy as He is holy, this should be high on our list of things that we want to achieve in our lifetime.

v. We are to be progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ

Because of its significance, this will be more fully addressed in chapter 9.

This is a major aspect of 'working out our salvation' – the restoration of the likeness in which mankind was created, but which was seriously disturbed by the sin of Adam and Eve. But by the amazing grace and mercy of our loving heavenly Father, He has provided the means for that likeness to be restored – a means which is not an easy path, and will continue throughout our lifetime. Our loving God allows all sorts of challenging and testing things to happen in our daily living, but He is at work in all those circumstances for our good; and for the purpose of transforming us into the image of His Son.

Rom 8:28-29 *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

We will be progressively transformed as we commit ourselves to working out our salvation; as we submit ourselves to walking by the Spirit and not the flesh; and as we diligently seek His face – as we behold the glory of the Lord.

2Cor 3:18 *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

vi. We are to run the race with perseverance

For a true Christian, working out our salvation is like running a race, looking to Jesus as our example, and pressing on toward the goal to win the prize. It is a race in which we certainly need to persevere, because as noted many times, life is full of interesting and distracting things. But we need to keep our eyes focused on the goal – the goal of truly knowing God and walking in His ways. Jesus is our example; the pioneer and perfecter of our faith – and He endured the cross; despising its shame.

Heb 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Paul set a wonderful example of what it is like to run the race with great perseverance.

1Cor 9:24-27 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

Phil 3:12-14 *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

vii. We are to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus

One of the challenging things that Jesus taught His disciples was the self-denying, cross carrying aspect of being a true follower of Jesus.

*"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **Mat 16:24-25***

Anyone who claims to be a born-again Christian is also a disciple of Jesus – but have we actually committed ourselves to practically living it out? Those who choose to live as a true disciple of Jesus, must learn to deny themselves, and even take up their cross. Albert Barnes says: *To 'carry the cross' is a figurative expression, denoting that we must endure whatever is burdensome, or is trying, or is considered disgraceful, in following Christ.* Self-pleasing will end in destruction; but self-denial and self-sacrifice is the God given pathway to true life. Let us be more eager to **lose** ourselves than to **find** ourselves. Jesus emphasises the importance of taking up our cross by saying:

“And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” **Mat 10:38**, and:

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” **Luke 14:27**

Self-denial; and even persecution, are things that we can expect as we work out our salvation; but the rewards for laying down our life will be huge:

Mat 5:12 (NIV) *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

viii. We are even to suffer for the sake of Christ

Phil 1:29-30 *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.*

Phil 3:10 *...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...*

1Pet 3:14-17 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

1Pet 4:1-2 *Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (Also **1Pet 4:13-14**)*

1Pet 4:12-19 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" ¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*

The apostles are a compelling example for us to follow in times of persecution.

Act 5:40 *and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*

Leading up to the return of Christ there will be many who will be slain for the sake of Christ.

Rev 6:9 *When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.*

ix. We are to be overcomers

This will be addressed more fully in Part Three of 'God's Purposes for Humanity'. But again – I have included a brief summary of it here because of its significance in 'working out our salvation'.

One of the issues that the Bible focusses on is 'battle' against enemies. In the OT it was physical battles, but in the NT there is a shift to spiritual battles, and the struggles that Christians face in life. Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Ephesians when he explains that our battle is not against flesh and blood (people), but against spiritual forces of wickedness. (**Eph 6:10-18**)

God's call for us to be overcomers is also emphasized in the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. To all of those churches Jesus said: 'To him who overcomes...' followed by the wonderful blessings that would be given to the overcomers. The fact that the call to be 'overcomers' was made to all seven of the churches is a clear sign of its importance for all of God's people.

Then ultimately, following the Day of Judgement when all things are made new, God will pronounce: *"He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."* **Rev 21:7** (NASB)

➤ **Why does God want us to be overcomers?**

The life of a true Christian is not free of challenging situations. But God has purposefully allowed these because **He wants us to learn to be overcomers** – overcomers of **sin** and of **our own self-life** (the flesh); overcomers of all the **spiritual forces of the evil one**; and overcomers **of the world**. But let's be clear about this – **God does not leave us to do this on our own. Apart from Him we can do nothing, and – praise God – He has provided us with everything we need to live a godly life, and to be overcomers.** But we have to be aware, and willing to do our part.

➤ **How can we be overcomers?**

a. By being aware of the necessity of being overcomers

It is vital that we remain consistently aware of the activity of our enemies, and that we consistently apply the God-given means to be overcomers.

1Pet 5:8-9 (NIV) *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

b. By standing firm in the faith.

As well as being aware – alert – but we also have to stand firm in the faith (**1Pet 5:9** above). Faith is of such great importance; and there are two particular aspects of faith that we need to mention.

i. 'The faith' is another phrase for the whole body of true Christian belief – founded on the finished work of Christ for salvation, then being filled with the Holy Spirit, living a life of obedience and complete reliance upon God and His promises, and growing in our personal relationship with Jesus and the Father.

ii. Secondly, 'Faith' in God, in the sense of having total confidence in who He is, and all that He says He will do for His people.

Heb 10:35-38 *Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.*

We cannot be overcomers in our own strength, but only through the application of all the provisions that God has made for us, with faith being a crucial aspect.

c. Walking by faith and not by sight

The enemies of our self-life; the forces of evil; and the world, will constantly be drawing our attention to what we see; and our self-life will naturally want to make all of life's decisions – that's what it means to 'walk by sight'. But to be overcomers we need to consistently be **walking by faith**; and that of course includes growing in our faith in God; also '*fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of the faith*'; and setting our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.

2Cor 5:6-7 *So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight.*

Col 3:1-3 *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

d. By being led by the Spirit and not by the flesh

Being led by the Spirit and not by the flesh, goes hand-in-hand with walking by faith and not by sight. If we are to be aware of what our enemies are up to in our lives, we need to totally submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit so that He can alert us to what's going on, and we can make the appropriate response.

Gal 5:16-17 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*

e. By knowing and applying the Word of God in our battles against our enemies

The clearest example of this principle is seen in the way Jesus responded to the devil's temptations with "*It is written...*" (**Matt 4:1-11**)

Praise God that He has given us His Word which is filled with many declarations and promises, so that by faith we can affirm them to our enemies, and also encourage our own hearts with the care and protection that Yahweh offers to all who will trust in Him. Following is an example of Yahweh's power to protect; deliver; and save us from our enemies; and other references as well.

Psa 18:1b-3 ... I love you, O Yahweh, my strength.

²The Yahweh is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³I call upon Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

See also: **Psalm 8:2; 18:30-50; 27:1-6; 44:4-8; 46:1-11; 62:5-8; 71:1-5; 73:25-26; 91:1-6; 144:1-2; Prov 18:10; Isa 12:2; 35:3-4; 40:28-31; 45:24-25; Nah 1:7-8; Matt 16:18-19; Luke 21:12-19; 1Cor 10:12-13; Phil 4:13; Col 1:10**

f. By applying the armor provided by God so that we can overcome the enemy.

In **Ephesians 6:10-18** Paul is emphasising that our main enemy is the devil and his spiritual forces of wickedness; and that our only real source of strength is God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the One who **provides** us with all the armor we need to fight the battle, but we are the ones who have to take up the whole armor. We need to know the various aspects of the armor, and standing firm in our faith, we have to apply them in our daily living.

Summary

Praise God for the provision of His unlimited power to deliver us from the forces of wickedness. But our part to play, as we work out our salvation, is to believe with all our heart that God is by our side; and that He has given us His promising words of protection and deliverance. And just as Jesus did when He was tempted by the devil, we too have to proclaim God's Word in faith, and the devil will have to back off.

So the question is – do you believe to that degree? Do you know God to the level that you have absolute confidence in all that He has said He will do for you? If not, then you need to spend lots of time seeking to know Him more.

Having for the most part addressed the implications of '**working out your own salvation**', we will now attend to the exhortation to work it out with '**fear and trembling**'.

c. Working out --- with fear and trembling

Phil 2:12-13 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Maybe we have become so familiar with these verses that we don't realise the seriousness of the injunction to work out our salvation with '*fear and trembling*'. Perhaps we tend to focus more on the '*working out*' aspect, because it's clear that this is what Christians should be doing.

But if you have recognised the importance of the 'fear of the LORD' as addressed in the previous chapter, and if you have grown in your personal relationship knowledge of Yahweh Almighty and His Son Jesus, then you should also appreciate more of the significance of '*fear and trembling*' in His presence.

➤ Fear and trembling

'Fear', as explained in the previous chapter, means – **'to have the utmost respect and reverence for Yahweh Almighty; and to stand in awe of Him who is so much more worthy of all glory and honour than we can even imagine.'**

'Trembling' can sometimes have a physical side to it, with a sense of quivering, or slight shaking movements. Again this could arise from having a much deeper awareness of the awesomeness greatness, majesty, power, and sovereign Lordship of Yahweh; compared to our insignificance and self-centeredness. This is particularly seen in Psalm 119:120 below.

In the Bible, the terms 'fear' and 'trembling' sometimes appear together; suggesting that one complements the other. Following are a couple of examples:

Psa 2:11-12 *Serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

¹²*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

Psa 119:120 *My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments. (Also Jer 5:22 & Dan 6:26 below)*

These verses certainly indicate a high level of reverential respect for Yahweh, coupled with the awareness that we can so easily come under His judgements if we knowingly or deliberately sin. Rather, we should approach the 'Son' and do homage to Him, lest He be angry. Even as those who have been 'saved' through the blood of Jesus, we continually need to be aware of the natural self-centered and sinful habits that keep cropping up, and determine to live in the fear of the LORD – to consistently work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

There are also a number of Scriptures giving us warnings about falling away from a true living faith in God. Israel was a clear example of being cut off because of unbelief; and God's severity under those circumstances are a warning to all believers to fear lest God cut us off if we fall short of living out the salvation that God has so graciously provided for us.

Rom 11:20-22 ... They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²²Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

1Cor 10:11-12 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹²Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Heb 4:1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

Heb 4:11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

I'm all too aware that losing one's salvation is a debatable issue, but the Scriptures above are addressed to believers. Having grown in my awareness of the awesome greatness of God – in particular, His holiness; His absolute perfection in His whole being – and having recognized His judgements against those who consistently failed to honor Yahweh in the ways He required of His people, it is no surprise that we can still fall away from the glorious salvation that Yahweh Almighty has graciously provided. We must 'stand fast through faith'

Other implications that have been made about 'fear and trembling' are: being mindful of the serious and awesome nature of the work to which the Lord has called us; the humility and respect we should have with the responsibility of being ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ; having a healthy fear of offending God through disobedience; coupled with a strong sense of awe and respect for Yahweh's majesty and holiness.

➤ '**Therefore**'...**work out your salvation.** '**For**' it is God who works in you

In Philippians 2:5-13 there are two primary reasons given as to why we should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling – reasons which appear after the words 'therefore' and 'for'.

Phil 2:12 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*

Phil 2:13 *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Whenever the words 'therefore' and 'for' are used in the Scriptures, they are assigning a reason, explanation, or intensification of what the writer has just been saying. In the first instance above, Paul has just been encouraging the readers to have the same mind of humility and servanthood that Christ Himself had when He left His lofty place in heaven, and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross.

In the second instance, the reason for working out our salvation with fear and trembling is that **Yahweh Almighty is at work in our lives, to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

Does the significance of Yahweh Almighty; and the huge sacrifice that Jesus made for sinful humanity impact you to the place of 'fear and trembling'? Both these reasons are surely powerful enough to motivate us, with fear and trembling, to grow in our personal appreciation of the wonders of our God; to intensify our desire and commitment to walk in His ways – to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Yahweh and Jesus are truly worthy of our utmost respect and reverence.

➤ **Yahweh Almighty is the high and exalted One who inhabits eternity. He is holy; so majestic and perfect in all His judgements – a God greatly to be feared.**

***Psa 89:6-7** For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh? Who among the heavenly beings is like Yahweh, ⁷a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?*

***Jer 5:21-22** "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. ²²Do you not fear me? declares Yahweh. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it.*

***Dan 6:25-26** Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.*

***Heb 12:28-29** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.*

If we are lacking this sense of 'fear and trembling', then it probably indicates our lack of reverence and awe for Yahweh Almighty, which is generally the result of a great shortfall in our true personal knowledge of Yahweh and His Son Jesus. Having personally come to know to some degree, the awesomeness of God, I would encourage you to make 'knowing God' the highest priority in your life. There is nothing more important. This is what God created us for, and He earnestly desires that we seek Him with all our heart; that we worship Him in spirit and truth; and that we work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Although I have addressed a number of important goals we should be aiming at as we work out our own salvation, there are probably more. So I would suggest that you do some thinking about it, and more importantly, ask the Lord to show you the things that He would like you to be focusing on as you grow in your walk with Him.

d. The Lord's provisions to enable us to work out our salvation

By the grace of God, He does not leave us to do this on our own, nor does He expect us to. God is at work in our lives to encourage us, and to provide what we need to enable us to fulfil His good purposes for us. The International Standard Version translates **Phil 2:13** in a more easily understandable way:

'For it is God who is producing in you both the desire and the ability to do what pleases him.'

In other words – God is **inspiring us** to do what pleases Him. And an encouraging aspect of that inspiration is **the provisions** that He has made to enable us to accomplish His purposes:

³¹*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* ³²*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* **Rom 8:31-32**

'He who did not spare his own Son...' He who went to such extreme lengths to make a way for us to be 'saved' and to bring us into a personal relationship with Yahweh Almighty – surely – if He has made such a huge sacrifice for sinful human beings – **surely He will give us everything we need to live the kind of life He has purposed for us!** Such is the amazing love and grace of Yahweh.

i. God has provided us with everything we need for life and godliness

2Pet 1:3 (ISV) *'His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the full knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence.'*

These are amazing verses which we have referred to a number of times. Through His almighty power, God has provided us with everything we need to live a godly life – and that of course includes what we need to be working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Does this happen automatically? No! Notice the process by which God does this: *'...through the full knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence.'* Through **the full knowledge** of God!

This is why we are consistently emphasising the huge importance of truly knowing God. The *'full knowledge of God'* is the personal intimate relationship-knowledge with God which began when we received Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and continues to grow as we diligently seek God with all our heart through His Word, and by submitting ourselves to the leading of the Spirit of Truth.

Yahweh's provisions are for those who walk uprightly; who trust in Yahweh; and who truly seek to know Him

Psa 84:11-12 (NIV) *For Yahweh God is a sun and shield; Yahweh bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.* ¹²*Yahweh Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.*

Psa 34:9-10 *Oh, fear Yahweh, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!* ¹⁰*The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek Yahweh lack no good thing.*

ii. God has provided us with His precious and wonderful promises

God has **provided** us with everything we need for life and godliness, and by His own glory and goodness *'...He has given us his precious and wonderful promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, seeing that you have escaped the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires.'*

(2Pet 1:4 ISV) But as we are emphasising in this section, these wonderful promises don't just automatically make changes in our lives– we have to work them out in our lives – *'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...'* We need to become familiar with the promises of God in increasing measure, and then **apply them in our lives**, as Peter goes on to emphasise:

2Pet 1:5-10 *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*

Again, in verse 8, there is another way of describing the 'working out' – '...if these qualities are yours and are increasing...' And the result of consistently and increasingly applying the qualities of 'salvation' in our lives is that we will be more effective and fruitful in our vital, growing relationship with Jesus – 'the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Praise be to our gracious and loving Heavenly Father, who has not only given us the gift of salvation through His Son Jesus, but who has also provided us with everything we need to be able to work out that salvation. And because of Yahweh's greatness, majesty, and holiness; in contrast to our total unworthiness of His love and grace – we should be compelled to honour Him; to worship Him with our whole being; and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

iii. God has provided us with His Word – the Bible

We wouldn't know anything about God, or His provisions to enable us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, if we didn't have His precious Word. It is only through His Word that we can grow in our true knowledge of God; and that we have access to His precious and wonderful promises.

Oh what a treasure the Word of God is for us. When linked with the Spirit of Truth, it is the means by which Yahweh reveals Himself and His purposes for humanity. God speaks to us through His Word, and He reveals to us the provisions He has made for us to work out our salvation – provided we put in the effort to seek Him with all our heart – and provided we listen to His voice and do not harden our hearts as did the Israelites during their time of testing in the wilderness.

This is a very important issue which the author of 'Hebrews' gives strong attention to in Hebrews chapters 3 & 4. Following his repeated appeal to his readers: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts", he emphasizes the power and the effectiveness of hearing His voice through the living Word of

God. If we will but listen, it will penetrate to the depth of our being; it will judge the thoughts and attitudes of the heart; and lay it all bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Heb 4:12-13 (NIV) *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

So not only is the Word of God the primary means by which God reveals Himself to those who seek Him, but it also the means by which He speaks to us about those issues in our lives which He wants to change in order that we might truly enter into the 'rest' which He has graciously provided for us.

Heb 4:11 *Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.*

Strive to enter that rest – work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

iv. God has provided us with the gift of the Holy Spirit

I'm sure you will also realise that a major part of God's provision to enable us to work out our salvation is the indwelling Holy Spirit – the Counsellor whom Jesus said the Father would send following His ascension to Heaven – the Spirit who was poured out with great power on the Day of Pentecost, and now indwells all true believers in Jesus Christ. He is the One who strengthens us with power; who is able to do far more than we can imagine; and who will guide us in the ways that God has purposed for us as we submit ourselves to His leading.

Eph 3:16 *...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being...*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us...*

Rom 8:4-6 *... in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

There is so much more to be said about the power of God's Spirit within His people – a topic which will be addressed in Part Two of this series.

Take time to praise and worship

Psa 146:1-10 *Praise Yahweh! Praise Yahweh, O my soul!*

²*I will praise Yahweh as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

³*Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.*

⁴*When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.*

⁵*Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in Yahweh his God,*

⁶*who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;*

⁷*who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. Yahweh sets the prisoners free;*

⁸*Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind. Yahweh lifts up those who are bowed down; Yahweh loves the righteous.*

⁹*Yahweh watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.*

¹⁰*Yahweh will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise Yahweh!*

Psa 149:1-9 *Praise Yahweh! Sing to Yahweh a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!*

²*Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!*

³*Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!*

⁴*For Yahweh takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.*

⁵*Let the godly exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.*

⁶*Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands,*

⁷*to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples,*

⁸*to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron,*

⁹*to execute on them the judgment written! This is honor for all his godly ones.*

Praise Yahweh!

8. To Unite Us With Christ and to Have All His Fullness

The subject of 'Christ in us' was extensively addressed in 'What an Awesome God We Have – Part Three' from pages 47 onwards; and if you haven't absorbed what is written there, I would humbly suggest that you review it again.

Having said that, I have briefly addressed it here again with a short summary of each section; firstly, because it is certainly of huge importance in God's purposes for humanity; and secondly, because there is another very important and thought-provoking aspect of our being united with Christ, and that is – **that we attain to the measure of the fullness of Christ.**

a. Christ in us – the Mystery of God

Col 1:27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

There is a profoundness about this mystery which can only be truly realized from a spiritual perspective. It is full of riches, and is so glorious. **Jesus Christ – the Son of Yahweh Almighty – dwells in us, and we in Him.** If only we would be constantly aware of this marvelous living relationship we have with Jesus.

The union of Christ with His people is an eternal union; a union of grace; revealed through Jesus and the apostles. It is a union that is enjoyed in time; but a union that will only be fully revealed in eternity.

b. Christ in us – its significance

The basic understanding of 'Christ in us' is that we were united with Christ when we accepted Him as Saviour and Lord, and now the Spirit of Christ lives in us. But that union with Him is a two way thing – Christ is '**in us**', and we are '**in Christ**'. '*It is because of him (God) that you are in Christ Jesus...*' (**1Cor 1:30**); and you may be aware of many Scriptures that refer to our being 'in Christ'.

i. 'In Christ' – the positional aspect

One of the important aspects of being 'in Christ', is that a crucial positional change was made when Christ came into our lives. Before we came to Jesus, we were '**in Adam**', but now we are '**in Christ**'.

Adam was God's first created human being; created as the representative of all humanity. From a historic and biblical perspective, all humanity is considered to be 'in Adam'; that's our position by nature. And it is because Adam sinned that

all human beings have inherited his sinful nature; resulting in 'death' – not just physical death, but more significantly, spiritual death – separation from God.

Rom 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*

That's the negative side of the story. But there is a wonderful contrast to this; because when we accepted Jesus as Saviour, He became our new representative. We are no longer in Adam – **we are now in Christ**; justified; made righteous in God's sight; and alive in Christ. That's our new position – all praise and glory be to Him – it is all of His grace; compassion; and love.

Rom 5:19 *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

1Cor 15:21-22 *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

When Jesus was being crucified, not only were our sins placed in Him, but **we** were placed in Christ – we were united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection – all by the grace, mercy, and extravagant love of God. All we have to do is believe in what He has done, and it becomes a living reality for us.

ii. 'In Christ' – the life-giving spiritual aspect

1Cor 15:45 *Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

The 'last Adam' is Jesus Christ who was born of Mary – a descendant of Adam; but also born of the Spirit of God; and therefore without sin. But not only was He called the 'last Adam', He was also called the 'second man'.

1Cor 15:46-48 *But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.*

One of the things these Scriptures show us is the intimate connection that Jesus had with humanity – He was 'the last Adam'; and 'the second man'. At least in part, he was 'the last Adam', because as our 'representative', He died on behalf of all humanity to bring an end to the power of sin for all who believe in Him.

Jesus was also 'the second man'; instituting a new humanity which has a spiritual union with 'the man of heaven'. Hence He is **'the life-giving spirit'**. And it

is because we were united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, that His life is now within all true believers – **Jesus is the giver of true life.**

1John 5:11-12 *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

iii. In Christ we are a new creation

2Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

The old has passed away; we now have a new self; we are a new creation in Christ. And this new creation is not of flesh and blood; it is of the Spirit of God; initiated when Christ was crucified for us.

c. Christ in us – its magnitude and blessings

'Magnitude' speaks of the greatness; the enormity; and the importance of our being united with Christ. The 'blessings' include all of the remarkable and miraculous things that God imparts to us simply because of our union with Christ.

i. Partaking of the life of Jesus

There is a very interesting and stimulating book written by Frederick Huegel who had been a missionary in Mexico somewhere around the early 1900's. It's titled 'Bone of His Bone'; and subtitled 'Studies on the Indwelling Christ'. The focus of his writing is on the Christian life being a participation of Christ; not an imitation of Him. Two of the key verses which he quotes early on in the book are:

Heb 3:14 (NASB) *For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end...*

2Pet 1:4 *...he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature...*

Huegel writes – 'What is impossible to me as an imitator of Christ becomes perfectly natural as a participant of Christ. It is only when Christ nullifies the force of my inherent self-life, and communicates to me a divine life, that Christian living in its true sense is at all possible for me. I must be born again. *"The flesh profits nothing"* (John 6:63, NKJV). Without Jesus I can do nothing. I must live in Him, and renouncing my own life, find in Him a "new life". (End of quote from Huegel)

Much of what Huegel says in his book is expressed in a variety of ways in this booklet; so let's continue with the summary of our being united with Christ.

In one of Jesus' discourses with the large crowd which He had fed with five loaves of bread and two small fish the day before, he addresses the issue of Him being the 'Bread of Life'. It was somewhat bewildering and confrontational.

John 6:53-56 *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.*

Nobody understood what Jesus meant; and when His disciples questioned Him, Jesus told them that the 'flesh' itself is not the issue; it is a spiritual matter.

John 6:63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

From this we have come to understand that eating Jesus flesh and drinking His blood speaks of '**partaking**' of His life. '*Unless you eat ... and drink ... you have no life in you.*'(v.53) But '*...whoever feeds ... and drinks ... has eternal life...*'; and he '*...abides in me, and I in him...*'(vv.54,56).

This is the very life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming to dwell in mere mortals. Jesus gave up His 'life' as His body hung on the cross; He poured out His life as His blood flowed forth. '*The life...is in the blood*' (**Lev 17:11** etc.) What a sacrifice He made for totally undeserving sinners; and what an awesome privilege we now have of 'partaking' of His very life! '*...God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ...*'

Christ is our true 'life'

John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."*

1Cor 15:45 *Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

ii. Abiding in Christ

Missionary Frederick Huegel writes: 'Jesus tells us that we must abide in Him as a branch in the Vine. He places the supreme emphasis upon this mystical union, this spiritual oneness with Himself of all believers - this **sublime fact of Participation**. "*Abide in Me and I in you.*"'

Our union with Christ is a two way relationship – we abide in Christ as a branch in the vine, and He abides in us. And the outcome is that we will 'bear fruit' and the Father will be glorified. Genuine abiding in Christ must be

productive. His life is not passive, it is active, and Jesus encouragement is that we 'abide in Him' – we are living out our life in Him, and He is living out His life in us.

John 15:4-9 *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*

As the 'true vine' Jesus is the source of true life – spiritual life – for all who abide in Him. We, as true believers, are grafted into the vine, which is Jesus Himself. We are bound together in a dynamic; purposeful bond with Jesus. 'The branches in the vine' is a clearly understandable symbol of what it is like to be united with Christ; and as we truly abide in Him, we will bear fruit.

God's purpose for us is that we 'bear fruit'. But we cannot bear true fruit – that which is pleasing to God, and which brings glory to Him – if we try to do it in our own strength. '*...apart from Me you can do nothing...*' (v.5) But if we abide in Him for the purpose of bearing fruit, then in that context we can ask whatever we wish and it will be done for us. This is the means by which Yahweh is glorified, and by which we prove to be His disciples.

iii. Living at home with Jesus and the Father

Jesus introduced the disciples to the coming of the Holy Spirit by saying: "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John 14:20) Then in v.23 He adds: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

As with many other things that Jesus was telling the disciples, this would have been most puzzling – that the Father and Jesus would come and make their home with them! But before too long – on the Day of Pentecost – the disciples would understand what Jesus meant as they experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into their lives. The very presence of the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of the Father and the Son – were powerfully experienced and exhibited in their lives. But we need to note that our experience of this co-dwelling is conditional upon us truly loving Jesus and keeping His word

iv Oneness with the Father; the Son; and all believers

Adding to the depth of partaking of the life of Jesus; and living at home with the Father and the Son; is the glory of the 'oneness' within the Godhead, and with all other believers who are also united with them.

1Cor 6:17 *But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.*

John 17:21-23 *...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*

This is a subject of real importance, and will be addressed in Part Three.

d. Christ in us – attaining to the measure of His fullness

Eph 4:11-15 *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...*

This is certainly a challenging and inspirational concept – '*...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...*' (NIV translation) The ultimate goal of the Church in its spiritual maturity is to achieve unity of the faith; unity of the knowledge of the Son of God; mature manhood; and at the top of the ladder – '*...the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*'.

I'm sure that most of us would have to agree – when we see how often our own self-life is at the forefront – that we fall well short of displaying the fullness of Christ. The irony is that at the point of committing our lives to Christ, we actually received a fullness – or completeness – **in Christ**. But the question is – are we working it out in our lives? Following are a few more verses which point to the fullness we have in Christ

John 1:16 *And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

Col 2:9-10 *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

Eph 1:22-23 *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

Eph 3:17-19 *...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

These Scriptures certainly make it clear that true Christians have a 'fullness' of Christ in our lives. But there appears to be a paradox in that there is often a limited evidence of that fullness. If our lives were truly '*filled with all the fullness of God*' then we would be quite different people – we would look like Jesus.

But as we have noted elsewhere – while it is true that God '*...has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...*' (**2Pet 1:3**), it's also true that we have a part to play. We have to '*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*' (**Phil 2:12**); we have to '*Strive for ... the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*' (**Heb 12:14**)

God created us with a **free will**, and we have to make our own commitment to apply those God-granted provisions to our lives. Not that we can do it in our own strength or natural abilities (as often pointed out), but only as we submit ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We can only fulfill God's righteous requirements as we walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh (**Rom 8:4**)

Don't take your 'salvation' for granted, but learn what God's Word teaches us about '*working out...*'; '*striving for...*'; '*disciplining ourselves...*'; '*running with perseverance...*'; '*pressing on...*'; '*making every effort...*'; and being '*holy in all our conduct.*' These are aspects of the Christian life that we have to apply if we are to attain '*...to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...*'

Be encouraged in your life with Christ as you read these scriptures.

Heb 12:1-3 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

1Cor 9:24-27 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.²⁵Every athlete exercises self-*

control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air.²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Phil 3:12-15 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

2Pet 1:5-11 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Phil 3:7-9 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith...

Praise God that He has given us the power of His Holy Spirit to strengthen us so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; and that we may have the power to grasp the hugeness of the love of Christ – even though it surpasses knowledge – so that we will attain to the measure of the fullness of Christ.

And as we will see in the next chapter, the result of attaining to that fullness is that we will be progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Let's conclude this booklet with a wonderful song by Keith & Kristyn Getty:

In Christ Alone – Keith & Kristyn Getty

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For every sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.

No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand. (Repeat)