

BELIEVE IN GOD



By,
Charles R. Chesnutt, Sr.

For God so loved the world that He gave
His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes
in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
John 3:16

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The author's wife, Mary Chesnutt aided significantly in writing this work.

Through no merit of his own, the author came to know Jesus Christ in the manner described in this booklet in December of 1973. That experience continues to this day.

Believe in God—But How?

BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,
AND YOU WILL BE SAVED

ACTS 16:31

Let's face it. If God is really there, why can't we see Him? Is there really an invisible God out there who never speaks and never makes Himself known? How can this God, who is said to have created us, not be able to communicate? Why should anyone believe that? And why should anyone believe some ancient Jewish religious writings that talk about Him? Where is this God? If there is such a God, He must be hiding.

Let's see what those ancient Jewish religious writings (the Bible) really do say about God. Then you can form your own opinion.

So, does the Bible say that God is hiding Himself?

Yes, it does.

Does that mean that He makes Himself known to some but not others?

Yes.

Where does the Bible say that?

Let's start from where Jesus says that God hides Himself. Jesus was conversing with a man named Nicodemus about this. This is what Jesus said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again
he cannot see the Kingdom of God.^{1†}

1. John 3:3

Jesus is saying that not everyone can see the Kingdom of God because the Kingdom of God is hidden from everyone who is not born again.

What did Jesus mean by that? Nicodemus asks Him.

“How can a man be born when he is old?”²

Jesus answers:

...Unless one is born of water [his mother’s womb] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.³

At this point, Jesus has referred to seeing the Kingdom of God and entering the Kingdom of God. And He is saying that in order to see and enter the Kingdom of God we must be born again; we must be “born of the spirit.” So there are two births. One is physical and the other is spiritual. So, there is a spiritual reality that we can’t see unless we are born again. But how there be a spiritual reality that is invisible?

Jesus answers:

Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.⁴

2. John 3:4

3. John 3:5. Here, Jesus specifies that one must be born of water because the right to be born again extends only to humans and not any other created being, such as angels.

4. John 3:7,8

Jesus is saying that being born again is like feeling the wind blowing. You know the wind is there because you can feel it, but you can't see it. Jesus is telling us that we can experience the Kingdom of God just as certainly as we can feel the wind. We can see it spiritually but we can't see it physically. It's a spiritual reality that is hidden from everyone who is not born again.

Of course, the next question is "How can we experience it for ourselves?" Jesus anticipates this question and answers it with an analogy:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.⁵

What did Jesus mean by that? The Bible tells us that after the Jews left Egypt, they complained to Moses about taking them out of slavery and bringing them to a wilderness where they could die. Because of this dissatisfaction and mistrust, God sent poisonous snakes into the Jewish camp and many people were bitten and did die.⁶ But the people repented and God sent a cure for everyone who had been bitten. The cure was simple. Moses was to put a statute of a serpent on a pole and raise it high so that everyone in the camp could see it. All they had to do was to look at the serpent in order to be healed.⁷

5. John 3:14-16

6. Numbers 21:5,6

7. Numbers 21:8 "Make a poisonous serpent out of brass and fasten it to a pole. Anyone who has been bitten and who looks at it will live."

Jesus was saying that He is like the serpent in the wilderness. All we have to do is to look to Him and we will be healed.

But healed of what?

Jesus was making an analogy about sin. Anyone who has been bitten by the serpent of sin will die spiritually because the wages of sin is death.⁸ And we have all been bitten.⁹ But the cure is to look to Christ.

Why does looking to Jesus Christ make such a difference? Because sin can be forgiven through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself¹⁰ and died in our place.¹¹ So Jesus paid the death-penalty of our sin and obtained forgiveness for us.¹² This is what salvation is. It is being healed of sin.¹³

8. Sin kills. Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death.” Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth shall die...” Romans 6:21 “What benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.”

9. Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned...”; Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death.”

10. First Peter 2:24 “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

11. Romans 5:8 “...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

12. Ephesians 1:7 “In Whom we have redemption through His blood [His death], the forgiveness of sins...”

13. The original Greek word means saving, delivering, preserving.

And it is free.¹⁴ It has to be free because if we had paid it ourselves, we would be dead because death is the wage of sin.¹⁵ But why did Jesus compare himself to a serpent when the serpent represents sin? Because in order to save us, Jesus became sin for us so that we could be righteous in God's sight.¹⁶

Since the penalty for our sin has been paid, we are no longer spiritually dead and we have spiritual (eternal) life in Christ.¹⁷ † This why Jesus said that experiencing the Kingdom of God is being born again. It is being born to spiritual life. Just like being physically born is to experience physical life, being born again is to experience spiritual life.¹⁸

When we pass from spiritual death to spiritual life,¹⁹ we can feel it and experience it. Eternal life is knowing God *now*, in this life.²⁰ So we are talking about a spiritual reality that we can *experience*. We are talking about knowing God. We are talking about feeling the wind.

14. Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

15. Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death.”

16. Second Corinthians 5:21 “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

17. Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ...” † Although our body will die (Hebrews 9:27) it will later be resurrected (Acts 24:15; Revelation 20:4-6).

18. John 3:3 “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

19. John 5:24 “Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

20. John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Eternal life is not simply living forever. It is a spiritual life and entirely different from

So, specifically, how does one become born again? It's simple:

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved”²¹

Believing in Christ does not mean knowing Him. It means to trust in Him. Knowing Him comes later. And knowing Him does not come from us; it comes from Him. Trusting in Christ is the same type of trust that we place in a doctor that we have never met to perform an operation.²²

Trusting in Christ is simple. It may be done through prayer. For instance, one may pray “God, I come to You and I am trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all my sin.” You can pray this prayer even though you are not certain that anything at all will happen. That is what faith is. It is trusting even though you are not certain. Is it really that easy? Yes. He made it easy on purpose. And it free for the asking.²³ That means that it cannot be earned or deserved. And it is not dispensed by a pope or a priest. They have no control over God.

How much real faith does one need? Just enough to trust sincerely in Christ. The invitation is open to all.²⁴

our physical life.

21. Acts 16:31. This passage refers to the “Lord” Jesus Christ because Jesus is God’s son and one with the Father. John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.” The Bible teaches that God is a Trinity. He is one God but three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The family is a mirror of who God is: all equal and all one but with different functions.

22. The original Greek word means to trust. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich (Second Ed. 1958, Univ. Of Chicago Press), s.v. πιστεύω, “believe (in), trust.”

23. Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

24. Revelation 22:17 “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the

Trusting in Christ is a leap of faith, not a leap of certainty. That is, it is not a leap from the point of certainty; it is a leap from the point of trust. Trust is what faith is and it is impossible to please God without it.²⁵

God resolves our doubts about Him when we experience the Kingdom of God. And experiencing the Kingdom of God is the result of faith; not vice versa. Faith is not the result of knowing God; knowing God is the result of faith. Faith is just the first step. After faith comes the knowledge of God—knowing God.

So we are talking concrete reality here. Spiritual reality, to be sure, but reality that we can experience.

Trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin is all that is needed for eternal salvation. But it is not all that is needed in order to experience the presence of God. Indeed, some people who have trusted in Christ experience nothing as a result of it. Some Christians don't feel any different and many just don't believe that anyone really experiences the presence and peace of God. Others simply pretend. Why do some people who have trusted in Him never really know Him?

The answer to yield your will to God. That is the second step.

one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

25. Hebrews 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God...”

Yielding to God

The first step to knowing God is to get forgiven. The second step is to yield to God. This is called righteousness.

Getting forgiven means to trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin. Sin has a consequence and that consequence is spiritual death.¹ Jesus Christ died that death for you² and you may choose to appropriate it at any time you wish.³ It is a free gift.⁴

Yielding means to surrender to God's will. It means to obey Him and that means to turn away from sin and spiritual death. We must turn away from sin because salvation is spiritual life⁵ and sin is spiritual death. They are exact opposites. One cannot engage in spiritual death and experience spiritual life at the same time.

If we trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sin but don't care enough to turn away from committing the very sins that He died to save us from, what then? What is the purpose of being forgiven for sin today if we intend to commit the same sin tomorrow? It makes a mockery of the cross.⁶

1. Romans 6:23 "...the wages of sin is death."

2. First Corinthians 15:3

3. Revelation 22:17 "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely."

4. Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

5. Jude 1:21 "...keep yourselves in the love of God as you await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life." Eternal life is knowing Jesus Christ. John 17:3

6. See Hebrews 6:6, discussed below

But what if we do not intend to commit the same sin tomorrow but falter when tomorrow comes? Or what if we really want to turn from sin but keep failing? Is that making a mockery of the cross? No. Faltering and falling back is what the Christian life is. The Christian life is a progressive spiritual growth that sheds sin as we mature in Christ. Sin is often little more than a substitute for the real thing. Drink is a substitute for equanimity and companionship; mental or physical adultery is a substitute for a righteous marital relationship; theft is a substitute for perseverance and self-respect. Sin drops away in time and it is replaced with its righteous alternative. Some sins fall off early, some late.

Yielding, which is explained in this chapter, is essential because it results in knowing God and knowing God is to experience deep inner peace, which eradicates or decreases the need to sin.

My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.⁷

Knowing God is to experience eternal life now, because eternal life is knowing Jesus Christ:

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.⁸

Therefore, the second step is the step that we can experience. We experience knowing God and a large part of knowing God is to experience His marvelous peace.

7. John 14:27

8. John 17:3

Taking the first step (trusting Christ) without taking the second step (yielding) is like being given a gift certificate for the finest dinner in the finest restaurant in town and leaving after eating the bread and butter. You were there, but you never got what you came for.

So, yes, God does make Himself known but we must yield to Him in order to know Him. God is not silent to those who want to know Him. Over and over again the Bible speaks of knowing God and God revealing Himself to us:

He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.⁹

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”¹⁰

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him...¹¹

9. John 14:21

10. John 14:23

11. Second Peter 1:3

...the one who does evil has not seen [perceived]
God.¹²

O continue Thy loving kindness to those who know
Thee...¹³

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and
knowledge of God!¹⁴

And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then
you will know the Lord.¹⁵

I am the good Shepard; and I know My own, and
My own know Me.¹⁶

And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for
Me with your whole heart.¹⁷

Knowing God is the apex of all human experience. That's
why people spend their lives getting to know Him better and
better. Christians aren't building a stairway to heaven; they are
already there. They have found something that just gets better
and better as time goes on.

They have discovered the knowledge of God and found
that true Christianity is an experiential spiritual relationship
with Christ. They have discovered for themselves that God is
real, that God's love is real, and that His presence is something

12. Third John 11

13. Psalm 36:10

14. Romans 11:33

15. Hosea 2:20

16. John 10:14

17. Jeremiah 29:13

that they can experience. And they have found that His love is totally accepting and unconditional.¹⁸ It is the love that took Jesus Christ to the cross to provide the basis for the forgiveness of mankind.¹⁹

How to know God is no mystery. Jesus was crystal clear about how we can establish a relationship with Him. The secret is obedience. He tells us when and how:

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.²⁰

Jesus is telling us that if we bother to find out what He is saying (by reading about what He said in the Bible) and then if we obey what we have read, then we have shown ourselves to be someone who loves Him. And when we do this, Jesus says, “I will disclose Myself to him.” This is the reason why obedience is so very important. It results in Jesus Christ making Himself known. This is knowing God and knowing God is everything.²¹

Of course, the converse of this verse is also true. If anyone does not bother to find out what Christ said and makes no effort keep His word, then rest assured, that person will not know God. That is the reason why knowing God comes

18. This love is described in First Corinthians 13.

19. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes [trusts] in Him will have eternal life.”

20. John 14:21

21. Second Peter 1:3 “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him...”

as a surprise to many and creates skeptics in others. Skeptics simply never bother to try. They do not come to Christ and if they do, they do not yield to Him, cannot find Him and then declare (and teach) that there is no God to find. This is ridiculous because they believe that if they can't find God on their own terms, then God does not exist. Is this not the very height of conceit. If God is God, don't they think that God would determine for Himself what is required before He makes Himself known? And it is beyond ridiculous; it is tragic because they are throwing away the gift of eternal life when they could, with little more than an experimental commitment, know God and experience His peace.

So, the very real beauty of knowing God is that you can try it out and see for yourself.

It's Relational

True Christianity is neither ritual nor rules; it is an experiential relationship with Jesus Christ. And to have this relationship is to experience eternal life and experience it *now*, in this life. Eternal life is no pie in the sky; it is *now*.²²

The scriptures that tell of knowing God are not formulas; they are love notes. And just like human love, the thing that makes them what they are is *heart*.

He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me.²³

22. John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This passage and others show that eternal life is not simply living forever. It is an entirely different life altogether.

23. John 14:21

You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.²⁴

He is telling us that obedience is the way that we show our affection for Christ. Righteousness is God's love-language. Keeping His commandments to get God to do something will not get us there. But keeping His commandments in order to know Him will.

It's a *relational* thing, not a *duty* thing. It is a love thing—not a set of rules. It is a love thing because that's what God is: God is love.²⁵ It's all about love and love is expressed in relationships. The love may be the love of friends or the love of family or the love of lovers or simple kindness, but it is always love in one form or another. Knowing God is a relationship and love is all over it. God requires that what we do to relate to Him is done out of a desire to know Him better. In short, He requires exactly the same as what we require of those who are close to us: sincerity. And those who relate for the purpose of advancing an agenda are just as repulsive to God as they are to us.

But don't worry about loving God enough, so quit trying. You take care of the obedience part. When He makes His presence known, you will love Him. You won't be able to stop yourself because He *is* love.

Perfection is not required. God does not require perfection of His children any more than we require perfection of ours. We do not require perfection in order to love, nor does

24. Jeremiah 29:13

25. First John 4:8 "...God is love." God is love, but He is not just love. He is much more. God's love is described in First Corinthians 13.

He.²⁶ What God wants is heart, just like we do;²⁷ sincerity is everything. God does not settle for fake. He may endure fake for a time, just like we do, but ultimately what God requires is a real from-the-heart relationship²⁸ just like we do.

He made us imperfect and He knows it. And He knows that the relinquishment of a particular sin may take years. But He is patient with us and will replace the sin with something far better when we are sincere.

The relationship with Christ and the yielding to His Word occur together. It is much like the relationship between the parent and the child. True obedience of the child must come from the child's desire for a loving parent-child relationship, not from the fear of punishment or desire for reward.

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature...²⁹

26. Romans 5:8 "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

27. John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me"

28. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes (trusts) in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."

29. Second Peter 1:4

Those who have turned to Christ are already righteous in Christ.³⁰ Our Christian life is actually progression toward conforming to the righteousness that has already begun in Christ³¹ and we have all that we need for the journey.³²

It is all based upon knowing Him because through knowing Him we have all things that pertain to life (eternal life) and Godliness.³³ Everything is based upon knowing Him. He *makes* us righteous,³⁴ all we do is cooperate and in doing so partake of His divine nature.

God's purpose for us is life and Godliness. And the core of Godliness is the fruits of the Spirit. Like the vines in a vineyard, He prunes us with adversity so that we yield fruit. Righteous choices made the context of adversity and temptation yield what the Bible calls "fruits of the spirit." The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

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

31. Romans 8:29 "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son..."

32. Second Peter 1:1-10. This entire progression is enabled through the actual knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:2,8).

33. Second Peter 1:3 "...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and Godliness through the true knowledge of Him."

34. Second Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Philippians 3:8,9 "I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith."

faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.³⁵ Fruits of the spirit are important not only because they provide equanimity and peace, but because they define who we are.

Yielding these fruits is immensely important to God and to us because yielding the fruits of the Spirit is one of things that He has created us to do.

I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain..."³⁶

Apart from bearing much fruit, we can do "nothing."

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.³⁷

God did not create man so that he could spin out his life chasing the things of the world like mouse in a golden running wheel. God has a purpose for His creation. His purpose is for us to produce what the Bible calls the fruits of the Spirit. *That is stated reason why we are here.* Certainly God has more than one purpose for His creation, but yielding fruits is His clearly stated purpose, "I chose you...that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain."

These are the Fruits of the Spirit:

35. See Galatians 5:16-25.

36. John 15:16

37. John 15:5

...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.³⁸

What are these fruits? They are virtues; they are righteousness. Our primary *raison d'être* is to yield righteousness.

All of these fruits are relational. They are either keys to excellent relationships (patience, faithfulness) or they are the result of excellent relationships (joy). God has created us to relate to one another because love is expressed in relationships and love is what God is.³⁹ God is expressed in acts of love. Satan is expressed in acts of power.

We yield these fruits by being attached to Christ. Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches. When we are attached to the vine we are relating God⁴⁰ and we yield fruit. We yield fruit because all things pertaining to life and Godliness arise from knowing Him;⁴¹ we yield them because Christ is in us.

Christ is the vine and we are the branches. Vines do not bear the fruit; only branches bear the fruit. We are the fruit bearers. Christ empowers and we yield. We are incapable of

38. Galatians 5:22

39. First John 4:8 "...God is love"

40. John 17:3 "This is eternal life that you might know God;" John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." See also John 14:23.

41. Second Peter 1:3 "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him"

yielding God's fruit without Him, but together we bear fruit. What honor He has bestowed upon us! We are His vineyard created to yield fruits of righteousness.

But there is a problem and the problem is sin. Sin kills. Sin kills righteousness; sin kills spiritual things, sin kills relationships and sin destroys our relationship with Christ and therefore "all things that pertain to life and godliness."⁴²

God does not remain in the presence of repeated sin.⁴³ Sin causes the branch that continues to sin to become separated from the vine. Separated branches will be burned in the fires of this world. They wither and they die spiritually because they cease to draw life from the vine.⁴⁴

There are 50 scriptures from Genesis to Revelation warning us that sin kills. Here are a few:

Genesis 2:17 **1400 BC**

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. 1400 BC

Psalms 33:18,19 **967 BC**

Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death...

42. Second Peter 1:3

43. John 14:21 "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him."

44. See Hebrews 6:6. Any branch is perfectly free to dis-attach from the vine and live for the world, but they are of no eternal value. Dis-attached branches can renew themselves through sincere confession of sin (they should use Psalm 51 to do so) and by relinquishing further sin. See First John 1:9. But it is impossible for anyone else to renew them because they have put Christ to "open shame" by their sin. The sinning Christian is most miserable having rejected Christ and yet not a child of the world. Hebrews 6:6 does not refer to hell or the loss of salvation.

Ezekiel 18:4 **593 BC**

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth shall die...

Ezekiel 33:11 **593 BC**

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?

John 8:51, 52 **30 AD**

Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death. (Jesus Christ)

James 5:20 **45 AD**

Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death...

Romans 6:21 **55 AD**

What benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

2 Peter 3:9 **68 AD**

The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But what is sin? Some people believe that there is no sin. And there are differing opinions as to what sin is. The Bible teaches that if you want to know God, then avoid these things: lying,^{45†} cheating,⁴⁶ stealing,⁴⁷ adultery,^{48†} fornication,

45. † Lying is viewed as a very significant sin. Revelation 21:8 "...all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Those who lie to others will eventually lie to themselves.

46. Mark 10:19 "You must not give false testimony [or cheat anyone]"

47. Mark 10:19 "You shall not steal" Also see Exodus 20:15

48. Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery" † To adulterate means to pollute. Adultery is not limited to the pollution of a family by the introduction of the seed of a stranger. The marital relationship may

tion,⁴⁹ lasciviousness,⁵⁰ † sexual immorality,⁵¹ homosexual acts,⁵² deceit and gossiping, malice, slander, boasting, untrust-

be polluted by inappropriate flirting and one's relationship to God may be polluted by the worship of an idol.

49. Coitus outside of marriage is sin.

50. Galatians 5:19 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness [sensuality]..." (KJV) † Fornication is coitus outside of marriage and it is a sin. Lasciviousness is a sin as well. Lasciviousness is the expression of exaggerated sexual appetite or interest. One should not confuse lasciviousness with sexuality. Sexuality is not a sin. God created man as sexual beings and His creation is always good. Just as most sin is the misuse of what God has given, lasciviousness is the misuse of sexuality. Also see First Corinthians 6:18.

51. First Thessalonians 4:3 "...abstain from sexual immorality."

52. Romans 1:18 "...the women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." First Corinthians 6:9 "Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people--none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God."

worthiness, being unloving or unmerciful,⁵³ envy, drunkenness (drugs), carousing,⁵⁴ taking advantage of people,⁵⁵ being critical and being condemnatory.⁵⁶

Eventually we all sin in one way or another.⁵⁷ Indeed, the only difference between us with regard to sin is that we all commit different sins. But we are all guilty of one sin or another and that sin, whatever it happens to be, kills. The only cure is to trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.⁵⁸

Two Kinds of Sin

There are two different kinds of sins. There are overt sins and covert sins. Sins such as theft, murder or adultery are overt sins because they are committed outwardly. Sins such as condemnation and unforgiveness are covert sins because they are committed inwardly. Overt sins by their nature are

53. Romans 1:28 “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worth of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

54. Galatians 5:21

55. First Corinthians 8 “...you yourselves wrong and defraud.”

56. Matthew 7:1 “Judge not for in the way you judge, so shall you be judged.”

57. Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short...”

58. First John 1:9

occurrences that start and then stop. They may be repeated, but each occurrence has a beginning and an end. Covert sins, however, are different. Covert sins are sins of the mind and they may continue for years.

Covert sins have another dangerous characteristic. They are justified (or appear to be so) because they are always caused by someone else. For instance, if we are unforgiving it is because someone has hurt us or hurt a loved one. Someone else causes the pain that we must bear. Someone else is responsible, so why should we forgive? Since covert sins appear to be justified, they often become normalized and simply part of life.

Silent sins are relational sins because they destroy relationships. There are two primary relational sins.

The first relational sin is the sin of judging and condemning others. The Greek word for judge is “krino,” which means to criticize or judge another person. Criticism and judgment can be either spoken or thought. It does not have to be condemnatory or the result of an offense. But it is often occasioned by an offense.

Of course, it is normal to take offense when we are injured. An emotional injury results in emotional hurt and hurt causes resentment. Resentment is composed of criticism and condemnation. If the injury is serious, silent criticism may be carried for years.

But scripture commands us to be free of criticism, condemnation and judgment of others. We are not to judge (criticize) anyone.

Do not judge lest you be judged for the in the way you judge, you will be judged and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.⁵⁹

Notice how obedience to this scripture affects the person who has been injured. If the injured person declines to criticize or condemn as the result of an injury, he or she is refusing to take offense, refusing to blame or criticize. Anger and retribution require blaming and condemnation. Without blame and condemnation, anger rarely exists. Therefore, if we never judge another, we cannot take offense and anger is marginalized.

But just like a physical injury, when we are injured emotionally, we hurt. Sometimes we hurt very bad. But feeling is neither judgment nor condemnation. Condemnation is not hurt; condemnation is the *result* of hurt. And, exactly like a serious physical injury, when we suffer a serious emotional injury, we need to stop, to slow down and heal. Scripture teaches that we heal by declining to take offense, by declining mentally replay the injury. The decision not to take offense to an emotional injury is like a salve⁶⁰ that is placed on a wound caused by a physical injury. Taking of offense and retaining condemnation for an emotional injury is the same as opening the wound and infecting it. It will never heal.

There is tremendous power in not to criticizing or judging another. These scriptures are healing to a dying marriage and resurrection to a dead one. The effect of obeying these scriptures is immense.

59. Matthew 7:1

60. This is where the word "salvation" comes from.

Obedience to these scriptures is not "sweeping things under the rug." Sweeping things under the rug means to take offenses and "stuff them" somewhere inside, to pretend that they are not there. This is unhealthy because it is refusing to deal with a serious problem: resentment. But scripture is not telling us to stuff; scripture (Matthew 7:1) is saying that we are to decline to take offense in the first place, so there is nothing to stuff or sweep under a rug. That is the only way to stay clean. And if there is already dirt under the rug the scriptural way to remove it is not venting. Venting does not remove the dirt; it spreads it. That is the only way to be clean is to forgive. We may not be willing to forgive, but if we are willing to be made willing, God will empower us to do so.⁶¹

Look carefully at the sequence contained in these scriptures. First we obey to the extent that we can. Then He acts. He does what we cannot do. He takes up our slack. He empowers us to forgive and not to criticize.

Make no mistake about it. We are talking miracle here. Not flashy, spectacular, look-at-me type miracles, but quiet, internal miracles, miracles that open the door to knowing God and living eternal life *now*, miracles that enable us not to take offense when offense has been given, personal, silent miracles that empower us to give things that we never even had before, miracles that create oceans of love, love that loves with immense power and loves those whom we do not have the power to love. And what is the practical result of these miracles? An absolutely indescribable sensation of total freedom and peace.

61. Second Peter 1:3 "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him."

The commandment to avoid criticism and condemnation applies to one's self as much as it applies to others. If we have confessed our sin and asked for forgiveness, our sin is forgiven and we are not to condemn ourselves. God's forgiveness of our sin is just as complete as His forgiveness of the sins of others and if others condemn us, it is their sin, not ours. Christ became sin for us in order to provide the judicial predicate for our forgiveness. He paid dearly for it⁶² and offers it all for free.⁶³ All we have to do is to accept it. Who are we to ignore what He did simply because it is our own self that must be forgiven? Who are we to call the cross ineffective? God is righteous and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and this includes our own.⁶⁴ We are to take Him at His Word. The result is freedom.

But sometimes the injury is severe. Where is Jesus Christ when we are dying from an injury inflicted by another? What is He doing when we are bleeding inside and the world inside us is demanding retribution? Christ says:

Take courage. I have overcome the world.⁶⁵

He does it—not us. Our part is to obey. He empowers us to decline to take offense and empowers us to forgive. But He does so on His schedule, not ours, because He uses endurance

62. Second Corinthians 5:21 "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

63. Revelation 22:17 "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

64. First John 1:9

65. John 16:33

to perfect us.⁶⁶ Ultimately He empowers us with a supernatural release and healing. With Christ we can live in a sea of forgiveness, total freedom,⁶⁷ and a peace that passes human understanding.⁶⁸

The peace of God is not physical. It is not the peace that comes from the vapid satisfaction of retribution. Nor is it the feeling that comes from a good day's work or from a healthy bank account or from an excellent relationship. It is a deep spiritual peace that is deeper than physical or worldly things. It is the peace that the things of the world attempt to give but cannot.

God's peace is not deliverance from the troubles of the world. He has not promised us a bed of roses. Indeed, He promises exactly the opposite.

In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.

Christ is saying that His peace overcomes the troubles of the world. But He is not saying that it removes them. We will have tribulation, that's a given. But God's peace exists in spite of them. God's peace exists where it is not expected to exist

66. James 1:2 "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

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

68. Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

because it is not the peace of the world; it is the peace of God. God's peace (His presence) is the "pearl of great price"⁶⁹ it is worth nothing less than everything.

The companion to the sin of criticism and condemnation is the failure to forgive. Scripture addresses the sin of unforgiveness in Matthew 6:14:

For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.⁷⁰

The result of the sin of unforgiveness feels just as justified as the sin of criticism. When someone does something wrong to us, we feel justified in taking offense and holding resentment. We did not do it; someone else did it to us and justice needs to be done. But forgiveness doesn't have anything to do with justice. Forgiveness is the opposite of justice; forgiveness is the *release* of justification and the relinquishment of judgment. Forgiveness skips the entire who-did-what inquiry and taps directly into the power of God to create a supernatural forgiveness, internal equanimity and peace. Real forgiveness ignores justice and opens the door to love.

69. Matthew 13:46 "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

70. Matthew 6:14. This verse does not address eternal salvation. It addresses the way God relates to us in this life. Jesus is not telling us that we will lose our salvation if we do not forgive because salvation, once given, can never be lost (Romans 8:38).

Justice (pay-back) does not belong to us. It never did. It belongs to God and God alone.

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'vengeance is mine, I will repay' says the Lord.⁷¹

Notice that both the sin of condemnation and the sin of unforgiveness carry an immediate penalty. The penalty is that God relates to us with the same severity or the same leniency with which we relate to others. God will treat us with the same forgiving, accepting spirit that we extend to others. So how close we are to Christ is up to us. If we are severe, so is He. If we are accepting, so is He.

So, God's love and forgiveness in Christ is free, but when it comes to our condemnation and unforgiveness of others it is tit-for-tat. What we give, we get. Why? Because condemnation and unforgiveness are sins directly against love. And at times they are greater than the sin that caused them. Sin kills even when it is initiated by someone else. Sin always kills. God does not reside in the presence of repeated or unrepented sin. He departs, and He takes His presence and His peace with Him.⁷²

The twin sins of criticism and unforgiveness are the edge of the blade that kills the family. How many marriages have withered in the serpentine tangle of wrongs that were never

71. Romans 12:19. † This scripture applies to who we are inside and how we live out who we are. It does not apply to the external criminal justice system of a state. Justice that is encoded into written laws and enforced by righteous judges is not unscriptural.

72. See John 14:21 and 14:23. Obedience is required for the presence of God within us.

forgotten and the silent demands for justice? How many families have been eviscerated with this knife? Look closely. Unforgiveness is not justice; it is spiritual and relational death.⁷³

The point at which forgiveness and the absence of criticism reside inside of us is the point of interface with Jesus Christ. It is where we know God. It is door to the Kingdom of God where faith becomes knowledge and Jesus Christ makes Himself known. Without this interface, one cannot know God. This interface, this relationship is everything.⁷⁴

Reproof

But all criticism can't be bad! Some criticism is necessary and helpful! Indeed, we cannot sit by and watch someone injure themselves—or injure us—without saying something. It can't be wrong to discuss an affront; and indeed, it may well be wrong to say nothing. So, where is the line to be drawn between good criticism and bad criticism?

The answer is quite straightforward. But there is another name for good criticism. That name is reproof and reproof is always good.

So, what is reproof? Reproof is a critical statement about someone that is received as helpful. Criticism becomes reproof when it is well received. So, the difference between the two is not the statement itself, but how the statement is received.

73. See the author's *Endless Love*.

74. Second Peter 1:3 “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him...for by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

Some people can receive reproof and some cannot. Indeed, the measure of a person's spiritual strength is the extent to which he can receive reproof without taking offense.⁷⁵ But everyone is different. Some are spiritually weak and some are spiritually strong. Some people can receive reproof about some things but not about others. We must take each person as we find him.

If the person is not strong enough to receive the needed reproof, it should not be offered because it's not reproof. It can't help if it is not received well.

This does not mean, however, that we are to ignore the sins of others or pretend that sin did not occur, especially if we are the victim of it. It means that we are to draw a very clear line between the sin and the person who committed the sin. We are free to demand that the sin cease, but we are not free to condemn the person who commits it. We are to address the act but we are not to criticize the person who committed the act.

Look at the beauty of how these scriptural admonitions fit together when we draw the line at the person himself and address the act alone. When we follow the scriptural command not to condemn the person, we do not place him in a position where he will be forced to defend himself.⁷⁶ We leave Him free to admit that the act was wrong without admitting that he is less than what he perceives himself to be. And once the admission has been made, he is free to confess the sin without risking the resulting condemnation and retribution.

75. Proverbs 9:8 "Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you."

76.

Modern psychology has struck upon this same method with its non threatening approach. The method focuses on the act and not the person. One example is the suggested phrase, "When you did this it made me feel thus and so." In this way, the speaker avoids saying that the person is bad; only the act is bad. The injured party is saying "it (the act)" caused me to feel bad, not "you" caused me to feel bad. He is stating a fact, not making an accusation. This is nothing more than an application of Matthew 7:1.

Scripture forbids the condemnation of the person because acceptance of the person is by far the more important. Acceptance is more important because acceptance is an expression of love and God is love.⁷⁷ Therefore, if God is in us,⁷⁸ each expression of acceptance that we offer is an expression of God. God loved us while we were yet sinners⁷⁹ and He expects the same from us.⁸⁰

On the other hand, each piece of criticism is the opposite of acceptance; each piece of criticism is a piece of rejection. Therefore unless the critical statement will be received as edifying and helpful, it should not be made. Or else, it should be made in a way that is calculated not to be offensive. Rep-

77. First John 4:8

78. John 14:23 "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make our abode with him."

79. Romans 5:8 "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

80. Romans 8:29 "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son..."

etitious "reproof" is always odious and clearly forbidden by scripture because it inevitably becomes critical. Speaking the truth in love repeatedly is not speaking the truth in love.

Human Relationships

The unconditional acceptance required by scripture does not mean that all relationships must be close relationships.

Each of us is free to determine the nature and the extent of any relationship (except for one). A relationship may be the long-term sharing friendship of lifelong companions or it may be a 5 second interchange with a mendicant on a street corner. Either way, each person is free to define the relationship as he wishes. But within the scope of whatever relationship we define, we are to be unconditionally accepting of the person. We can limit the relationship but we cannot limit the acceptance that the relationship must contain.

The only exception to our right to define our relationships is the scriptural marriage. The scriptural marriage relationship cannot be defined by the parties because it is defined by scripture. Scripture defines marriage as "oneness" between a man and a woman.⁸¹ Oneness means total and unconditional acceptance of each other; we are to love our spouse as we love ourself.⁸² Oneness creates comfort and security when each spouse honors it. A wise pastor once put it this way, "Think we, not me."

81. Mark 10:8 "And the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh." Hence, the biblical marriage consists of only two people, one man and one woman.

82. Mark 12:31 "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.' The second [commandment] is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

When marital oneness is honored, there can be no private social relationship between one spouse and someone else. Fidelity is honored when each spouse makes it clear to the third party that the third party is relating to both spouses, not just one. This is what the Bible calls fidelity. Fidelity creates strong bonds and strong bonds create security and comfort. Fidelity is honored when one's relationships with others do not exceed the limitations expected by one's spouse. Fidelity excludes not only physical encounters, but fidelity excludes all inappropriate social relationships. Flirtation is sin because it adulterates the marital relationship on the spiritual and relational level.⁸³ Fidelity excludes any indication of an intention to dishonor a marital vow because a statement of this nature adulterates the marital commitment.

Conclusion

The Bible is not a book about religion. The Bible is a book about spiritual life and spiritual death. It is a book about knowing Jesus Christ⁸⁴ and experiencing the presence of God. It is a book about spiritual freedom and the bondage of sin, internal peace and internal void, wisdom and folly, contentment and futility, eternal life and eternal death.⁸⁵ Your choice.

No other commandment is greater than these." Thus, the two greatest commandments issued by Jesus Christ are to both to love. Love should be preached repeatedly from every Christian pulpit in the world.

83. How does one deal with his own inappropriate affection? With prayer. A suggested prayer is to have God's love for the other person. Love is always good—if it is the right love.

84. John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

85. Revelation 21:8 "But the...unbelieving...their part will be in the lake of that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

We live in a world that is filled with people who are empty inside and they know it. However, they do not know that the void they live with is spiritual death so they try to fill it with physical things. But physical things cannot fill it. Many people refuse to admit that there is a spiritual anything. But inside they know different. Nothing will fill the void but spiritual life. And there is only one way to obtain spiritual life and that is through Jesus Christ.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.⁸⁶

Experiencing spiritual life requires two things. The first thing it requires is that we be forgiven for all sin. We obtain forgiveness by trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all sin. It is a free gift.⁸⁷ It has to be a free gift because the wages of sin is eternal death⁸⁸ and if we paid that price we would be eternally dead.

The second thing is obedience to Christ's Word (scripture). Obedience can't be free because if it were free we would never be called upon to make righteous choices. It is righteous choices in the face of adversity and temptation that permit us to bear the fruits of righteousness. Bearing the fruits of righteousness is the primary reason why God has created us.⁸⁹

86. John 14:6

87. Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

88. Romans 6:23 "The wages of sin is death..."

89. John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." See the author's *A Reason for Adversity*.

We come to know God through obedience because when we sincerely yield to God's will He discloses Himself to us⁹⁰ and when He does we know Him. Knowing Him is to experience eternal life *now*⁹¹ because Christ is the life⁹² and it is His life that we experience.

Eternal life is not simply living our life forever. It is not simply an extension of mortal life; it is a different life altogether because it is eternal. To receive eternal life is to receive a life that has always been, a life that not only will never end, but a life that never began. Eternal life is God's life and through Christ we can live it now.

The scriptural analogy is a sheepfold. We are the sheep and the shepherd is Jesus. And Jesus is the door to the sheepfold⁹³ and it is Jesus who gives us spiritual (eternal) life.⁹⁴ Once we have been admitted to the sheepfold we go in and

90. John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him."

91. John 17:3 "And this is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

92. John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth and the life..."

93. John 10:9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved."

94. John 3:14,15 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes [trusts] may in Him have eternal life."

out and find pasture;⁹⁵ we drink the water of spiritual life⁹⁶ and "eat" the bread of life⁹⁷ through scripture (the Word of God⁹⁸).

Jesus Christ is the light of the world⁹⁹ but He cannot be known outside of the sheepfold because knowing Him (experiencing eternal life) is a spiritual experience.¹⁰⁰ So don't expect to find Him or understand anything about Him¹⁰¹ until you walk through the door¹⁰² and experience eternal life for yourself.¹⁰³

Remember that God is love.¹⁰⁴ So God is all about relationships because love is expressed in relationships. And relationships are all about communication and we commu-

95. John 10:9b "... if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

96. John 4:10 "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

97. John 6:50 "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

98. John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

99. John 8:12 "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

100. John 1:9 "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."

101. First Corinthians 1:18 "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

102. John 10:9a "I am the door..." John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

103. John 17:3 "This is eternal life that you might know God..."

104. First John 4:8 "...God is love."

nicate with God by speaking His language. God's language is righteousness.¹⁰⁵ God does not communicate through ritual, unknown languages ("tongues") or sacrifice. His language is what we do, especially as it relates to how we deal with others. He is present with us when we are righteous and good. We live in a moral universe, His universe, and the currency is not money and power but righteousness.

If we express our love to Him through righteousness, He makes Himself known to us¹⁰⁶ and lives in us.¹⁰⁷ It all revolves around love. Expressing love is everything in the Kingdom of God because that is what God is. God is love.¹⁰⁸

Once a person has truly perceived and experienced a full measure of the love of God, he cannot turn away. It is overwhelming, magnificent and irresistible. But it is spiritual,¹⁰⁹ not physical. It is like the wind. One can feel it but not see it.

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.¹¹⁰

105. John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them [righteousness], he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father and I will love disclose Myself to Him." This is what knowing God is: God disclosing Himself to us.

106. John 14:21

107. John 14:23 "If any one loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him."

108. First John 4:8 "God is love"

109. John 18:36 "My kingdom is not of this world."

110. John 3:8

That is why we cannot simply decide to believe in God without coming to Christ. Because the natural man is spiritually dead¹¹¹ and cannot understand the things that are spiritually alive.

The natural man does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.¹¹²

It is for this reason that Jesus taught that one must be born again before he can even perceive the Kingdom of God.¹¹³

Try it yourself. Trust in Christ and yield sincerely to God's will and see what happens.

If you are someone who truly wants to find God but wonders if there is a God to find, let me say that I have been where you are. I was just as doubting as you are or perhaps more so. But I found God exactly as this booklet describes, and then I opened the Bible and read about what happened to me.

I found God by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of all sin and yielding to Him in total surrender even though I had no idea whether He was there or not. I did this because I was searching for something that I could not describe, trying

111. Ephesians 2:1 "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins..."

112. First Corinthians 2:14 (Berean Study Bible). See also the King James translation, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

113. John 3:3 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

to fill an internal void. I came to know Jesus Christ through a silly, fumbling prayer that I prayed one evening long ago—doubting all the time but meaning every word.

I had no idea if anything would happen. But it did. He came to me with His immense peace and love and He is still there. He filled the void of eternal death with eternal life. He made me new. And He will do the same for you if you come to Christ and yield to His will. All it takes is a decision to trust in Jesus Christ. After that, it is all about heart.

My time was in 1973. Your time is now.

