

- I THE BEGINNING
- II HE CREATES
- III HE CONVINCES
- IV HE CONVICTS
- V HE CONVERTS
- VI HE CONSECRATES
- VII HE COMFORTS
- VIII HE COMMITS.
- IX THE CHALLENGE

## THE HOLY SPIRIT - CONVINCES

"But when the **Helper** comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, **the Spirit of truth** who proceeds from the Father, **He will testify of Me.**" (John 15:26 NKJ)

Before I accepted Jesus, **the Holy Spirit was seeking to convince** me about Jesus, prayer, the fruits of the Spirit and revealing the folly of the works of the flesh.

When I was twelve years old I borrowed Mama's hammer and the **Spirit taught** me that God hears and answers specific prayers as I shared in my first book. (Page 102)

But, prior to that when I was eight, the **Spirit convinced** me out of a horrendous dust storm that when the Spirit bids us pray, be very sure that is what we do.

It started out a normal sunny Sunday in June in the mid thirties. The cows were milked, breakfast over, chickens prepared for dinner and we ate at high noon which was our custom. It was about 1 O'clock when dark clouds rolled in creating encroaching darkness. Mother said, "There's a storm coming and we need to do some things: First, get the chickens in." This proved to be a herculean task for besides the 200 baby chicks in a pen, we had six or seven hens with broods of baby chicks roaming the yard freely. The hens and chicks usually found their way to the chicken house when darkness came on gradually as the sun set. But, when darkness came on suddenly the hens simply squatted down where they were, called their chicks in under their body and wings and were ready to sleep. Mother said: "We can't leave them here for they will suffocate from the blowing dirt." So, we gathered them up in bushel peach baskets and basket by basket carried hen and chicks to the chicken house. I asked mother, "Aren't we going to church and Sunday School this afternoon?" Mother said: "No. We must weather this storm. The chickens are in, now close the garage door, get in the house quickly, close the doors and windows, and PRAY!"

The raging dust storm struck suddenly in all its fury creating intense darkness. Our time was consumed with praying and hanging wet towels, gunny sacks and blankets over the windows to catch some of the blowing dust. By midnight the storm blew itself out and we milked the cows and ate the latest supper we had ever eaten. Then, after shaking the dust out of our bed sheets and pillows, all was quiet, and we slept in peace.

The Spirit convinced me that when faced with a crisis and I need to pray, be very sure that **I do just that** and nothing else for God is in the eye of every storm and rides on the wings of prayer.

So, the Holy Spirit seeks at an early age to convince us of various eternal truths.

**EXERCISE 15**

Now write some experience from your early life about how the Holy Spirit convinced you about a particular truth.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The Holy Spirit Seeks to Convince Us that:**

- 1. God Loves Us**
- 2. God's Word Is Genuine**
- 3. Jesus Wants To Save Us**
- 4. Unity Is Of The Spirit**

**1. The Holy Spirit seeks to convince us that God Loves Us**

"And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." (Romans 5:5)

Dwight L. Moody said--"First and foremost the Holy Spirit imparts love."

## **NOT SO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT--**

Adam sins----

- \*God rendezvous with Adam asking--*Where have you been? What did you do?*
- \*God tells Adam and Eve--*You must pay.*
- \*God shows Adam (man) the door (the gate to the Garden)
- \*God waves farewell and Adam finds himself on the outside looking in.

## **BUT, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT--**

Man has weathered 4,000 years of sin and its consequence.

- \*Now, God meets man singing--*Peace on earth, Good will to you.*
- \*Man sees God in human form--- as a Baby!
- \*God says--*I love you! Come, let us walk together!*
- \*The miracles, parables all say---*Let's talk of a New Day and a New Way!*
- \*At Calvary God says---*I love you! You're forgiven! Welcome Home!*
- \* At the empty tomb, God says---*Come, clasp My hand, and live forever!*

God's love is far greater than human love. I have tried to cause my *love* to prevail on certain occasions. In 1964 when our youngest daughter, Lisa was almost five years old, and had been diagnosed as having various problems --- *childhood schizophrenia, autism, impaired senses*. Everyone else in our family had gone to Dodge City or somewhere. Lisa and I were home alone in the parsonage at Minneola, Kansas. I sought to make a "deal" with God. Lisa was crying. I took her in my arms rocking her in our orange rocking chair seeking to soothe away the source of irritation. I asked God to let me trade places with Lisa as I was already 32 and had lived an eventful life. I was willing to trade health problems and if Lisa's malady could be licked in me--O.K. and if not--O.K. I received no answer, only silence! For this silence of no answer I did not fault God, but since "all things are possible" with Him, I wanted to try because I *love* my daughters, and sons VERY MUCH!

For many years I have reflected on the story of the Father's love in seeking after His prodigal son of Luke 15. The Lord gave me this poem which tells of the seeking Father.

### **The Waiting Father**

Just two days ago I saw a Father waiting on His porch,  
Swinging to and fro in an old porch swing.  
Love was reaching down a path where eyes could not see.

Yesterday, I saw Him standing by the yard gate,  
Looking longingly down an empty road.  
He was hoping--*perhaps today My son will come home.*  
Last evening I saw Him standing at the kitchen door.  
It was supper time, and a welcome home feast was prepared.  
An empty chair was at the table, set for a certain boy.

This morning I saw this Father at the end of the lane.  
He spoke of an expected letter as he nailed a sign on the post:  
*"WELCOME HOME MY SON, COME ON IN!"*

Now, it's high noon, and the waiting Father waits no more.  
He peers through shadows cast by clouds beneath the noonday sun.  
Down the road He runs calling--*"Come home my son! Come on Home!"*

I stand and watch as He crosses the creek,  
And seems to disappear down the old country road.  
That figure in the far west: Is it an animal, a tree, a person?

Now, thunder rolls, it's quite dark for such an early hour.  
The figure is that of a bedraggled boy running towards home.  
Love has won! Father and son hug with hope on a distant hill!

## **EXERCISE 16**

**Now write an experience in your life of the Holy Spirit working through God's love.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2. The Holy Spirit seeks to convince us that God's Word Is Genuine.**

**God has spoken. His Words are inspired.** (II Peter 1:21 ...I Timothy 3:16)

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but **men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**" (II Peter 1:20,21)

Consider this: "Long ago the Old Testament writers realized the human spirit needed hope. So, they decided to write about hope and we have their **thinking in the Bible.**" by Vernon Richerson, elder of Arkansas City, Kansas Bible Christian Church - 11/29/28 as spoken at Mt. Zion Community Church.

Is the thought in the above quote TRUE\_\_\_? or \_\_\_False?

What Mr. Richerson says is exactly what the writings of the Bible is NOT! Men did not write out of their own thinking but "**spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**" (II Peter 1:20,21)

### EXERCISE 17

**Write down other words-phrases used to translate "God breathed" of II Timothy 3:16.**

"All Scripture is given by **inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,..." (II Timothy 3:16 NKJ)

NIV \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Greek-- theopneustos**, "inspired by God" (Theos, "God," pneo, "to breathe"), is used in II Timothy 3:16, of the Scriptures. (Vine's)

In YOUR OWN words write down what inspiration means to you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### AGE and WRITING of the Bible:

- \* 66 books
- \* written over a period of 1600 years,

- \* by 40 different authors who for the most part did not know each other.
  - \* written on three different continents (Asia, Africa, Europe)
- Yet, there is perfect unity from Genesis through Revelation.

**HOW does the above data effect "inspiration"?**

---

---

---

---

**EXERCISE 18**

**Write down what the following verses assert about the Word of God.**

Proverbs 30:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 30:6 \_\_\_\_\_

I Thessalonians 2:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 6:17 \_\_\_\_\_

**God has spoken! His words are TRUTH.**

"But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will **guide you into all truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." (John 16:13,14)

In the beginning the devil promised the human race (Adam and Eve) "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4,5) This promise that Adam and Eve would possess *truth* was short lived for the only *truth* ("good and evil") man ever realized out of his own mind was that he was naked, (Genesis 3:10-13), and it has been pointed out that for the most part even that has been lost today. Since Eden, man has had to rely totally upon the Word of God and the Spirit of God to know *good from evil*, or reach his own conclusion which most often leaves him looking like a fool.

## EXERCISE #19

**List some moral truth that man has discovered apart from the Holy Spirit in the Bible**

---

---

**List some truths that man's knowing is dependent upon the Holy Spirit in the Bible**

---

---

It is quite fashionable in some quarters to compare the teachings of the Bible with the teachings of Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Epictetus, Socrates, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and a number of other heathen authors. The difference between the teachings of the Bible and those of these men is found in three points—

First, the Bible has in it nothing but truth, while all others have truth mixed with error. It is true that Socrates taught how a philosopher ought to die; he also taught how a woman of the town ought to conduct her business. Jewels there are in the teachings of these men, but (as Joseph Cook once said) they are "jewels picked out of the mud."

Second, the Bible contains all truth. There is not a truth to be found anywhere on moral or spiritual subjects that you cannot find in substance within the covers of that old Book. I have often, when speaking upon this subject, asked anyone to bring me a single truth on moral or spiritual subjects, which, upon reflection, I could not find within the covers of this book, and no one has ever been able to do it. I have taken pains to compare some of the better teachings of infidels with those of the Bible. They indeed have jewels of thought, but they are, whether they know it or not, stolen jewels, and stolen from the very book they ridicule.

The third point of superiority is this; the Bible contains more truth than all other books put together. Put together from all literature of ancient and modern times all the beautiful thoughts you can; put away all the rubbish; put all these truths that you have culled from the literature of all ages into one book, and even then you will not have a book that will take the place of this one book.

My vest pocket New Testament, is a very small book, yet there is more of truth than in all the books that man has produced in all the ages of his history. How will you account for it? There is only one rational way. This is not man's book, but God's book.

## God has spoken. His Words Are Alive!

"For the word of God is living 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." (Hebrews 4:12)

### EXERCISE 20

**List some of the truths you have heard in the past but never put into action:  
BE AWARE of what Jesus and Isaiah said:**

"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.' (Matthew 13:14-15 NKJ)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

The Holy Spirit often convinces us in special ways. Rodger Thompson whose home is Hugoton, Kansas, and now ministers at Wichita shares this meaningful testimony out of his full life.

"The convincing power of the Holy Spirit was first known to me when I was a senior in high school. I had slipped deeper and deeper in sin during my high school years. Because I was a Christian, from a Christian home, and active in church weekly, the Holy Spirit kept me under constant conviction. Those were such years of spiritual struggle that I have very few pleasant memories of high school. Those struggles tended to dominate everything. The battle raged inside of me until I thought I would be pulled apart. As I neared graduation my senior year, I realized that the whole social system I had given myself to was about to come to an end and that of the secular college was even worse. I knew that if I went to a secular college I would not



survive as a Christian. My sister had gone to Manhattan Bible College a couple of years before and I was familiar with that scene. On the other hand I had a couple of football coaches that were encouraging me to go to a Junior college to play football.

As time went by I was under such terrible conviction that I decided to start reading my Bible at bedtime. This was really just an attempt to ease my conscience. One night I was reading in Ecclesiastes and came across 11:9 -- "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee in to judgment."

It was as if God spoke these words in my ears. They struck me with such power that the burden of conviction overcame me. I began to weep almost uncontrollably as the weight of my rebellion settled in on me. I was broken. I can't say everything immediately changed but that was the beginning of change. I truly repented and began to, little by little, yield myself over to God. First I decided to go to Manhattan Bible College because I knew I did not have the spiritual strength to survive anywhere else. One stronghold right after another fell. Some quickly and others are still falling. I quit drinking almost immediately. After about six weeks into Bible college I finally quit smoking. I began to teach a high school Sunday school class in the Christian Church in Westmoreland, Kansas. At second semester I started preaching. I will never forget meeting God in Ecclesiastes 11:9 there in my bedroom that night. I will never be the same." --*Rodger Thompson*--

## EXERCISE 21

According to John 14:21 what causes God to r-e-v-e-a-l Himself to us?

---

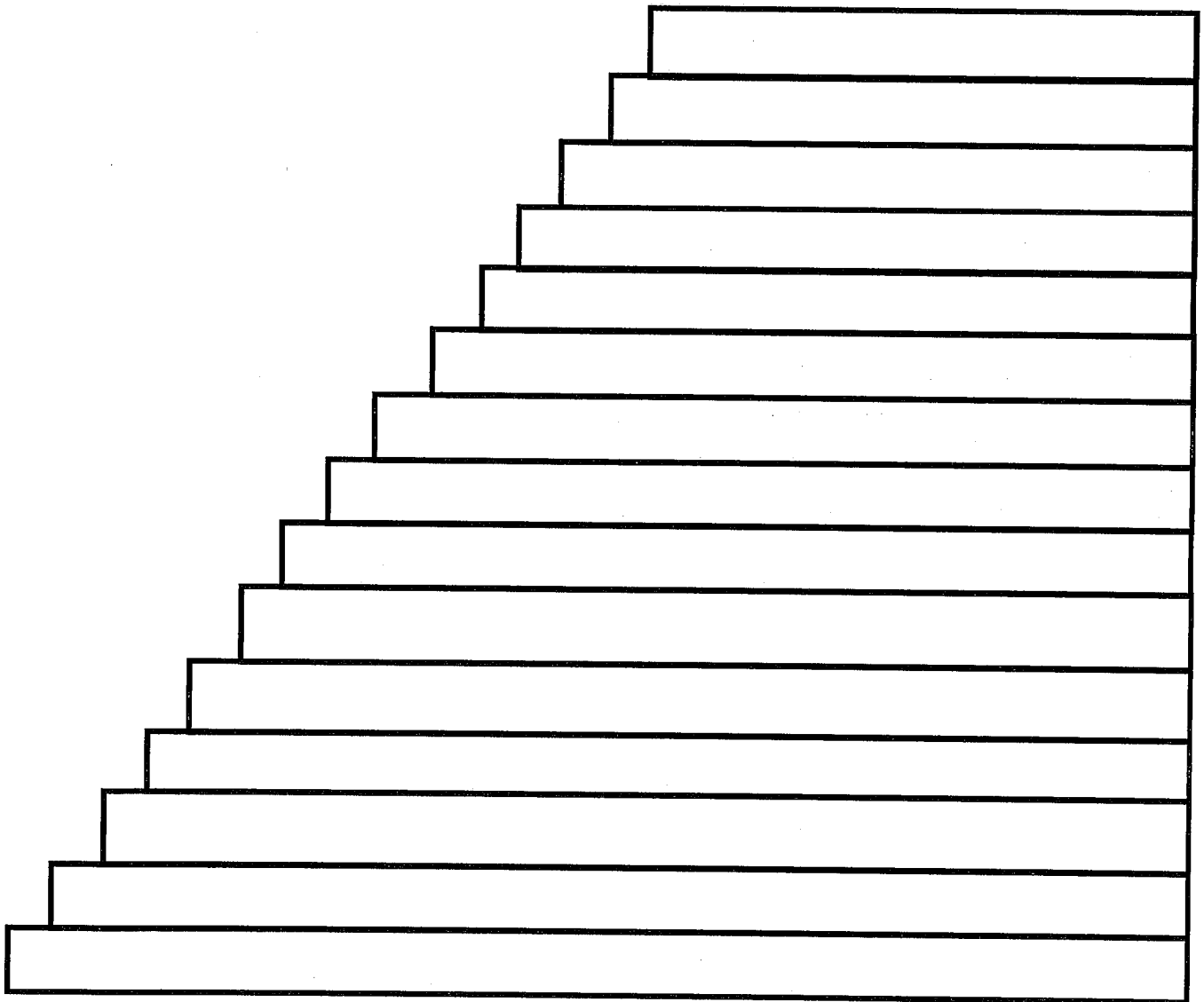
---

The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me, and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father. And I [too] will love him and will **show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him—I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.** (John 14:21 Amplified NT.)

**EXERCISE #22**

**Following Jesus Step by Step**

**"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." I Peter 2:21**



Please do not omit this exercise. Your stair steps will be different from mine on the next page. Start at the bottom of the stairs with your acceptance of Jesus and trace your journey by truths learned and obeyed. Remember the old chorus -- "*We are Climbing Jacob's ladder. Every round goes higher, higher; Every round goes higher, higher. Soldier of the Cross.*" Just so, keep in mind that Jesus only reveals Himself to us as we act upon what we study-- "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and (manifest myself, show myself, reveal myself, make Myself real) to Him." Amplified , John 14:21 NKJ

# My Steps of Obedience to the Lord and His Word

He is convincing me that out of many trials comes maturity! James 1:2-4; I

He convinced me that unity is Jesus in people relating to each other! I John 1:7

He convinced me that His church is not a building or a denomination, but "called out people," Matthew 16:18; Luke 17:21 People and Jesus became my focus!

He convinced me God still leads people, Romans 8:14, acts 8:26. I learned to tune in by His Word

He convinced me about spiritual gifts, Romans 12:5-8

He convinced me that His supernatural is present tense, Acts 4:33 Answered prayer (miracles) became a reality!

He convinced me to fast and pray, Matthew 6:16-ff.

He convinced me from His Word how to deal with the devil in every day life from James 4:7

He convinced me to pray about all things, Philippians 4:6 I still do!

He convinced me to walk and live by faith, Romans 1:17,

He convinced me to praise Him in all things, Ephesians 5:20, I Thess. 5:18

He convinced me that God is love and how to communicate His love with others. I John 4:7-11

He convinced me, that having received the Holy Spirit when I came to Jesus (Acts 2:38), to continue being filled with His Holy Spirit according to His Word, Ephesians 5:18; Acts 4:31; Luke 11:9-13. I asked and He answered!

After 25 years He convinced me from Romans 12:1,2 that "worship" is the "presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice to God". And the acts of religion (Greek "worship") are taming the tongue caring for orphans and widows, striving to be "unspotted from the

He convinced me to receive Jesus, and then began a long 25 year dry period in my spiritual life during which I was to busy studying the Bible to obey it's truths. I was forever studying but not coming to a knowledge of the truth. II Timothy 3: 5,7

### EXERCISE 23

List some ways God has revealed Himself to you:

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 3. The Holy Spirit seeks to convince us that Jesus Wants To Save Us.

"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me." (John 15:26)

After listening to many television and radio preachers, I get the idea that Jesus came to judge man; but, it is NOT so. Jesus said that He came NOT to judge the world but save it. (John 12:47) So, a favorite Bible verse of the ages stands forever:

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

### EXERCISE 24

**The Holy Spirit reveals JESUS in every book of the Bible--\***

Beginning with Genesis fill in the missing Bible book name.

- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Seed of the Woman."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Passover Lamb."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "High Priest."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is "The Pillar of Cloud by Day, the Pillar of Fire by Night."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Prophet Like unto Moses."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Captain of Our Salvation."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Judge and Lawgiver."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Kinsman--Redeemer."

- \* In I and II Samuel Jesus is our "Trusted Prophet."
- \* In Kings and Chronicles Jesus is our "Reigning King."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Faithful Scribe."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Rebuilder of the Broken Walls" of our broken lives.
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Mordecaia."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Ever-living Redeemer."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Lord, Our Shepherd."
- \* In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes Jesus is our "Wisdom,"
- \* In the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Lover and Bridegroom,"
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the Prince of Peace.
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Messenger of Beautiful Feet."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Avenger."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Evangelist pleading for Revival."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is "The Lord Mighty to Save."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Restorer of the Lost Heritage."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Fountain Opened in the House of David for Sin."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness, risen with healing in His Wings.
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Messiah."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Wonder-worker."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Son of Man."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Son of God."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Crucified One."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Justifier."
- \* In I and II Corinthians Jesus is the "Sanctifier."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Redeemer From the Curse of the Law."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "Christ of Unsearchable Riches."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is our "God Who Supplies All Our Needs."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Fullness of the Godhead Bodily."
- \* In I and II Thessalonians Jesus is our "Soon Coming King."
- \* In I and II Timothy Jesus is the "Mediator between God and Man. "
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Faithful Pastor."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Friend of the Oppressed."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Blood of the Everlasting Covenant."
- \* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Lord who Raises the Sick. "

\* In I and 11 Peter Jesus is the "Chief Shepherd Who Will Soon Appear."

\* In I, II, and III John Jesus is "Love."

\* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Lord Coming with Ten Thousand of His Saints."

\* In \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the "Alpha and The Omega - King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

A unknown author penned these words long ago which speak eloquently of Jesus and the effect of His life.

### ONE SOLITARY LIFE

"HERE IS a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, and that was his coat. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth, as has that One Solitary Life."

#### EXERCISE 25

From the Gospels and/or Book of Acts list some examples of people finding Jesus: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 26

Look up the Scripture verse at the end of each sentence and fill in the blank with the appropriate word(s).

### WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR HIS PEOPLE:

He descended (John 6:38) that we might \_\_\_\_\_ (John 14:3)

He became poor (II Corinthians 8:9) that we might become \_\_\_\_\_. (James 2:5)

He was born (John 1:14) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_.(John 3:2)

He became a servant (Philippians 2:7) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_. Galatians 4:6,7)

He had no home (Matthew 8:20) that we might have a \_\_\_\_\_ (John 14:2)

He was hungry (Matthew 4:2) that we might \_\_\_\_\_. (John 6:50)

He was thirsty (John 19:28) that we might drink of the wells of \_\_\_\_\_. (Isaiah 12:3)

He was wearied (John 4:6) that we might \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 11:29)

He was stripped (Matthew 27:28) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_. (II Corinthians 5:4)

He was forsaken (Matthew 27:46) that we might not be \_\_\_\_\_. (Hebrews 13:5)

He was sad (Isaiah 53:3) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_. (Philippians 4:4)

He was bound (Matthew 27:2) that we might \_\_\_\_\_. (John 8:32-36)

He was made sin (II Corinthians 5:21) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Cor. 5:21)

He died (John 19:33) that we might \_\_\_\_\_. (John 5:24,25)

He will come down (I Thessalonians 4:17) that we might be \_\_\_\_\_. (I Thessalonians 4:16,17)

Larry Wright and I penned the following poem which speaks of the Good News of Jesus.

## **GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!**

**What's the news?**

**What's the news?**

**Friend I have good news to tell!  
My Lord has done all things well  
and conquered over death and hell!**

**That's the news?**

**That's the news?**

**So, follow Jesus and do well,  
and conquer over death and hell!  
Then you'll have GOOD NEWS to tell.**

**And you can say**

**"Here's news that rings the bell!**

**Jesus has conquered over death and hell  
and He does all things well!"**

**That's the news?**

**That's the Good News for Today!**

by Larry Wright and Wilbur Johnson - March, 1996

## **4. The Holy Spirit is the Author of Unity**

"Make every effort to **keep the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:3-6)

Perhaps more than any other two blessings, salvation and unity bear the marks of confusion. Man or the evil one in man, has worked overtime to turn simplicity into complexity. The Holy Spirit's definition of "**unity**" is so simple--



"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." (I Corinthians 12:27)

"To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)

### EXERCISE 27

**From each of the following verses write down a descriptive phrase which Jesus said about His Kingdom, the Church.**

John 18:36 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 17:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 14:17 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 17:21 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 4:20 \_\_\_\_\_

I Corinthians 15:50 \_\_\_\_\_

John 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 13:24-30 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Luke 17:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 13:33; Mark 4:26-29 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The New Testament Scriptures address the matter of restoration as the restoring of man to God through the Christ of the Cross. Everything God has ever done for man has been directed toward restoring him to God through salvation and sanctification. Even our Lord said—"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

But, man has contrived all sorts of divisive devices--peculiar teaching, religious forms, rules and works, buildings, relics, names, titles, organizations, etc.

I had been preaching only six years when my conviction about **unity was put to the test**. Bertha Schul came to my study saying, "We have heard you do Bible things here at the Lawrence (Indiana) Christian Church; is that true?"

Just in my sixth year of preaching, coupled with the fact that I had never seen these folks before, I was a little hesitant to give a wide-open answer to such a general question; but, I breathed a prayer and said, "Yes, we try to follow the Bible. How can we help you?" They filled me in on their background. They were Roman Catholics but in studying the Bible had concluded they needed to be baptized by immersion. We opened the Scriptures and reviewed God's plan. They spoke further of their intention to remain in the Catholic Church. In my own heart I had to answer the age old question—Are there Christians in other groups? How broad is God's foundation? What does it mean to be "in Christ"? I told them that I was only a servant of Jesus and that my commission in Matthew 28:19,20 gave no fine line restrictions. I immersed them and they went on their way rejoicing. The next Sunday they were in our morning assembly and came forward at the invitation and transferred their membership. I rejoiced in having passed the latitude test earlier, recognizing God's foundation is as broad as His Word and obedient hearts who seek Him!

In seeking to build God's people, we need to expand our thinking to realize that on this certain foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus as the chief cornerstone, (Ephesians 2:19-22), all Bible believing, Christ honoring people seek to build.

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from which the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint

supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:15,16)

In this living relationship we are addressed as being parts of Christ's Body with the Lord Himself as the Head. So, like the human body in which most of the functions: thinking, growing, loving and living--are hidden and silent, so the **unity** of Christ's Body is silent and hidden.

## **EXERCISE 28**

### **UNITY STATEMENTS - "True" or "False" - Discussion questions**

- \_\_\_ Christian unity is all churches meeting together in one building.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity can be accomplished by the World Council of Churches.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity is everyone believing the same with no deviation.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity can be effected by the National Council of Churches.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity is all church people getting together on Sunday with one super "senior minister"?
- \_\_\_ Christian unity is everyone else correcting their mistakes.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity will be effected by the Restoration Movement of the independent Christian Churches, Churches of Christ or Disciples of Christ.
- \_\_\_ When everyone is perfect we will have Christian unity.
- \_\_\_ There is no place for opinions in Christian unity.
- \_\_\_ Christian unity is CHRIST CENTERED, not church centered.

## **CONCLUSION:**

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (I John 1:7)

Edwin Markham wrote four beautiful lines of poetry that remind us of our opportunity for and the blessing of an enlarged vision upon God's foundation:

"He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But love and I had the wit to win,  
we drew a circle that took him in"

## **EXERCISE #29**

**Draw some circles so as to illustrate the exclusive and inclusive spirit suggested in the above lines of poetry.**

Let us conclude our thinking together with this prayer. (If this is being studied in a group setting, this prayer may be prayed as a UNISON PRAYER.)

**"FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, HELP ME GOD TO KNOW I AM ONE WITH YOU THROUGH JESUS, AS IS EVERY OTHER BIBLE BELIEVING AND CHRIST FOLLOWING PERSON ON THIS PLANET. BLESS ME WITH A WIDER VISION TO CELEBRATE YOUR UNITY IN THE PRESENT TENSE THAT JESUS MAY BE LIFTED UP! In His Name, Amen."**