

The
LIFE
Which Is
ABOVE



Rabon Byrd

COVENANT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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This booklet is a transcription from a teaching given in spoken form.

The Presence of The Lord

We sing a song at times entitled “In Your Presence”, and the necessity of our knowing the reality of His Presence has become paramount in my heart. I am not referring to the emotional outbursts or the physical effects the Church has defined as His Presence. I am speaking of the indwelling and abiding Presence of our Lord, our Life, and our Salvation. I have found that when we comprehend Him as present NOW in us, we comprehend that if He is present then all that HE IS AND IS MADE UNTO US is present as well. Please understand that if He who is Life is not known to be present in us, we will define Life based upon a false foundation: US. I will see Life where Life does not exist. I will see Righteousness where Righteousness cannot be. I will see Truth in the Darkness of my own understanding. Therein lies the necessity of He Who is Present in us to be revealed in us by the Father. That He might become the comprehending of our soul. Not that He would help us comprehend Spiritual Things, but that He would be in us the comprehension of all things spiritual.

The Deceived Man

I want to focus on the thought of “**Newness of Life**”. The Lord has been dealing with me about the Sufficiency of The New Life. However, until we define New Life or Newness of Life, we will never see the sufficiency of that Life. We must understand that the New Life is not me getting a better disposition or becoming a good person after being a bad person: but a Life that is NEW in nature, character, and KIND. That is important and we will address that later.

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul is dealing with Christians who are being deceived or bewitched. Now what is the basis of this deception? It is the abandonment of the Grace of God wherein Christ in us is made unto us all things; and therefore determining that Christ within is insufficient, which warrants my additional labor. It is attempting to substitute my religious efforts and works for the indwelling substance and sufficiency of Christ. In the fifth chapter of Galatians, Paul deals with the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-23) Moreover, what he deals with as the works of the flesh is really just man himself trying to attain godliness, trying to attain Christ-likeness: trying to be in himself and by his works and efforts who only Christ is. That is what religion does. That is what the natural mind does every time. Why? Because religion which is the natural mind attempting to comprehend Spiritual reality, has defined Life as something that I can live for God. The religious heart devises exercises to ensure that he will produce acceptable fruit unto God, yet Paul calls the man who involves himself in such vain exercises ‘the deceived man’. Galatians 6:3- *“For if a man think (**has a false opinion**) himself to be something (**based on his own deeds**), when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”*

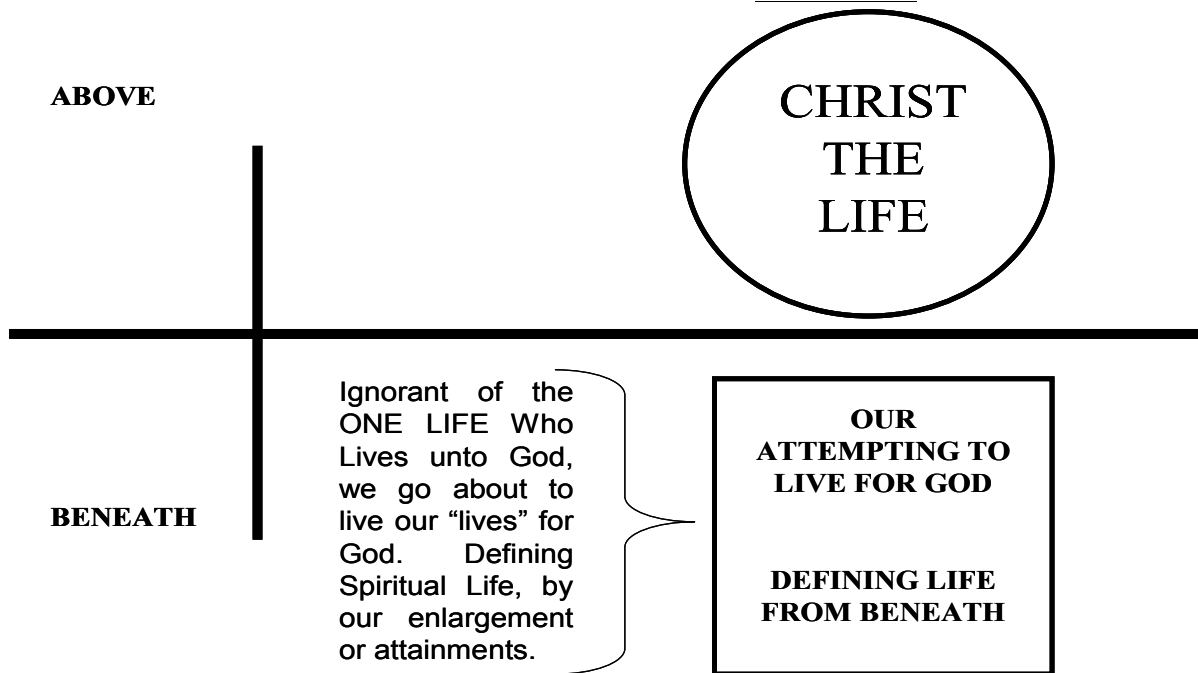
We have, in the Church, degraded fruit down to what WE produce ourselves – what we do, how we do it. However, one translation about the fruit of the Spirit says the fruit that the Presence of Christ in you produces. Although that says it more accurately than most, it still misses a very vital point: for it is not what Christ allows me to produce or what Christ produces, but it is WHO CHRIST IS IN ME. It is NOT us: it is not something that we can even put our hands on. When we attempt to put our hands on it, it is corrupt, and it is perverted; because now we define that within the scope of our own corruption. Indeed, Christ is the Precious Fruit in which the Father is well pleased (John 15:8, Rom. 7:4). It is the Increase of that Fruit (Christ Himself), which we bear in our souls that glorifies the Father. How can we be so self-involved to make that something we do or something we produce? The Father is not interested in our “spiritual enlargement or enhancement”, but in the increase of His Son in us. That is True Spiritual Growth!

Newness of Life

I will not go any further on that, because I want to present a view of New Life or Newness of Life that has been on my heart as of late. We all say, ‘Christ is my Life’. However, the thought came to me recently: do we truly understand what we are saying? Do we truly understand Newness of Life? What does ‘newness’ mean? Not only that: what is the reality of it? What is the truth and reality of Newness? We are going to look at what I am seeing as the sphere or realm of Spiritual Fullness we know to be In Christ or Christ Himself. In doing this I want us to take a look at two specific terms: ABOVE and BENEATH.

I AM from Above

To bring those two words into context, we need to turn to John 8:23, “*And he [Jesus] said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*” Jesus is not just speaking about geographic locations here. He is not merely saying, I am from up there and you are from way down here. That is not it. When He says that He is from ABOVE, Jesus is speaking with regard to His Nature and Kind. According to Vincent’s Word Studies, the term “from” means much more than to come out of some place. He says that it means to come bearing its nature. Do you see? ABOVE is not just where He is or where He takes us, but WHO HE IS. In this reality we are seeing the otherness of Christ to man. Now we must agree that if ABOVE denotes the very nature of Christ, then BENEATH speaks of the nature of man. What I want us to see is that ABOVE there is Christ and nothing else; Christ all and in all: but BENEATH it is Man and nothing else. Man has taken the terms, which speak of the realities that are only known and realized in, and as the Person of Christ and has redefined them in accordance with the undercurrent of man’s ultimate ambition: “to be as God!”.



Above and Beneath

Unfortunately, most define everything that is above, and can only be defined ABOVE from BENEATH. They try to find the truth and the reality of everything that is only known ABOVE from BENEATH. In Christ (which is what I mean when I say ABOVE) natural sight and natural reasoning are not sufficient. In this sphere of Spiritual Fullness, the only means of sight and understanding is the Revealing of Christ in our souls. The very fact that we are in Christ, necessitates that He be revealed. However, most have brought their wrongly defined (self-defined) understandings of Salvation and have attempted to apply them ABOVE. So, although they are ABOVE, in Christ, they are functioning out from that BENEATH understanding. Instead of knowing Christ as The Substance of all Spiritual Things, they are attempting to accumulate as many “spiritual things” as possible to attain substance.

Let’s use Righteousness for an example. You see, ABOVE Righteousness is not something, but someone. Righteousness is Christ Himself. Just to clarify, He does not give us the ability to become righteous, but He is made unto us The Righteousness of God. That is why the scripture says, that we have been made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, because IN HIM we live by Him Who is the Righteousness of God. In fact, if we look at that verse closely, I believe it can be better translated, “*that we might[†] be found in Him the Righteousness of God*”. (2 Cor. 5:21) That is the reality from ABOVE, because above Christ is ALL. However, from BENEATH, man is the center, so man redefines

[†] In the King James it is translated “might be made” , but the Greek word ginomai which can be translated “to be found”. To me this better fits with the writer who says, to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness. (Phil. 3:9)

righteousness based upon himself. For those whose comprehension is from BENEATH (or self-centered) righteousness is something we become by efforts and works and then we can be called Righteous Men. Do you see the self-absorbed state of man's religious mind? That sounds so good to the natural mind, but at its roots, it is pure evil. (Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 7:18-21)

Becoming a Christian does not give us the right to access the attributes of Jesus, take them unto ourselves so that we can be "like" Him. However, that is what we are taught. Becoming a Christian gives you the right to Reckon yourself dead with Christ, to count your self loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him so that you might come to the living comprehension that Paul came to, "not I, but Christ liveth in me". Not I, But Christ. Not I, but Christ is my Righteousness; not I but, Christ is my Holiness; not I, but Christ LIVES and is LIFE. This is the right and privilege we have: to know Him as the Ever Abiding Substance of Salvation. That is not only the right, but the necessity if we are to know Salvation to any measure, because He is the Fullness of Salvation.

For most, that which is ABOVE is only valid if it comes into the earth and benefits me! Holiness, for example, is not valid unless we can define it as "us" becoming holy. Glory is not valid until we redefine it as being a place we go or an external manifestation we can observe or experience. Most Christians do not comprehend Salvation from ABOVE, but from BENEATH, which speaks of our self-centered desire to attain or possess something of spiritual significance separate from Christ Himself. It is not our being ABOVE: it is not "Since ye then be risen with Christ..." (Colossians 3:1) That is not the perspective of most. It is not "to be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness", but instead, "that I may be found righteous before Him". We bring it down to our level, and we begin to define it in ourselves. We begin to center it in ourselves.

He That Findeth Me, Findeth Life

Newness of Life (which encompasses every aspect of Salvation) will never be understood, never be known BENEATH. It will never be known in ourselves. It will only be known in His Presence: in the Face of The One Who says, "***I AM The Life.***"

I remember the Lord dealing with me in Proverbs 8. Here we are dealing with WISDOM: and we understand Who Wisdom is. We understand the context of wisdom – it is CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. (1 Corinthians 1:24) That is the Wisdom of God – Christ Himself. Paul even says in 1 Corinthians 1:30 – "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us **WISDOM**, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" HE is our Wisdom. So, in Proverbs 8 we have wisdom speaking, and He speaks out from His Eternal Self. He speaks out from His "aboveness." Proverbs 8:21 – "*That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.*" I will be their riches and their treasures, the substance. "*The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his*

way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” He is speaking of Himself in this context, and then He goes on and says in verse 34, “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at **my** gates, waiting (beholding Him) daily at **my** gates, watching at the posts of **my** doors. For whoso findeth **me** findeth LIFE, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.” He that finds Me finds Life. Note that it does not say, “he that findeth me will be able to live a better life”. He that findeth ME findeth LIFE. The ME and THE LIFE are one and the same. That is why the ME of this verse: Wisdom Himself, Life Himself, must be revealed in us, for then and only then will Life be defined AS Him and not with reference to ourselves.

Most literal translations make a very specific point of putting the definite article “THE” before Life when referring to The Life we have: The Life He is, because it is the ONLY Life. (Matthew 6:25) “Whoso **findeth** me...” That word “findeth” is so tremendous. We think it is just searching, and finally you find it. However, the word “findeth” in this passage means to appear, and to be found present. It is MATSA – Strong’s #4672. Whoever finds ME as present: knows ME in my presence knoweth Life. That is what John says in 1 John 5:12 – “He that **hath** the Son **hath** life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” That is how simple it is: if you have the Son, you have life. If you do not have the Son, you do not have life. That should let us know that the Son Himself is LIFE and therefore Newness of Life is a reality only comprehended in the revealing of this very Son.

Living Life Above

There we can get a sense of Newness of Life! Finding HIM. Knowing Him in His Presence! It is not defined in us: but in and as Him. As I searched the verses that define Eternal Life (which we will cover), I was thrilled and amazed to see that they are NOT concerned with our doing of anything, but with His living in us. Many are taught that Spiritual Life is to be lived out in the earth by doing spiritual things, but it can only be lived ABOVE, because only HE WHO IS ABOVE CAN LIVE THAT LIFE, FOR ONLY HE IS LIFE.

When I read John 8:23 where Jesus said I AM FROM ABOVE, I began to think how we, through our carnal concepts, try to define “I AM” from beneath. However, I AM can only be understood above. “*I am the way, the truth and the life...*” (John 14:6) “*I am the door...*” (John 10:7,10) If you try to bring it BENEATH you have corrupted it in your own mind and perverted it! The door to what? ‘Well, the door out of sin or the door through which we’re going to get to heaven one day!’ That’s from BENEATH! The Life – yes, so I can live a better life and be a better person. The Truth – yes, so I can know a lot of stuff about Jesus. That is defining The I Am BENEATH. However, The I AM is only known ABOVE.

Since Ye Are Risen

The wonderful reality that most Christians do not understand is that we are NOW IN HIM. We are NOT BENEATH trying to get ABOVE. No – since ye are risen... Forget about the “if” that we read in the King James Version of Colossians 3:1. You are risen.

The subject of favor has become very popular these days. We are told that we receive favor with God if we live a life that is acceptable to God. As a result, we go about to live that acceptable life, Yet, we read in Proverbs 8, “*He that findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord*”. The carnal mind immediately asks, ‘What am I supposed to do to obtain the favor of God?’ We are looking for ways to please God. The Lord dealt with me once that the only way to live acceptably unto God is to live by the ONLY LIFE HE ACCEPTS. I was talking to someone who was recently born again, and I was rejoicing with them about that. I was declaring to them that you have come to Newness of Life; you have come into the very Presence of God; Christ Himself dwells in you. The conversation was not two minutes old before the person said, ‘Man, this Christian life sure is a hard life to live!’ Sad to say, that is the engrained thought of Christianity. It is seen to be the obligatory state of every believer: you’ve got to be that way. It is like we hate to get up in the morning, and wish God would just kill me now and take me on to heaven. That is what most people say: it is such a hard life to live. We get up and say, ‘God, please help me not to screw up today!’

Our Ignorance

My answer to that was, it is a “hard life” to live when YOU are the one trying to live it! It broke my heart to hear that. I was not just hearing this person: I saw the Church in that state of ignorance: and it’s not just ignorance, but bondage due to that ignorance. Because when we are told that newness of life is measured by how we live, then we are brought into the bondage of “self-improvement”. However, we will see that Paul admonishes them “SINCE YE ARE RISEN SEEK THAT WHICH IS ABOVE” There – and only there is Newness of Life. We try to see Newness of Life beneath. This person was saying they were going through all this stuff. They became a Christian and all hell broke loose! My car broke down, my dog died, and my spouse wants a divorce! Why doesn’t God come down and help me out! We want Him to get us out of this mess. But there is NO MESS ABOVE! There is no garbage ABOVE! There is no “me” ABOVE. There is only Christ all and in all – that’s why there is no mess: It is just Him.

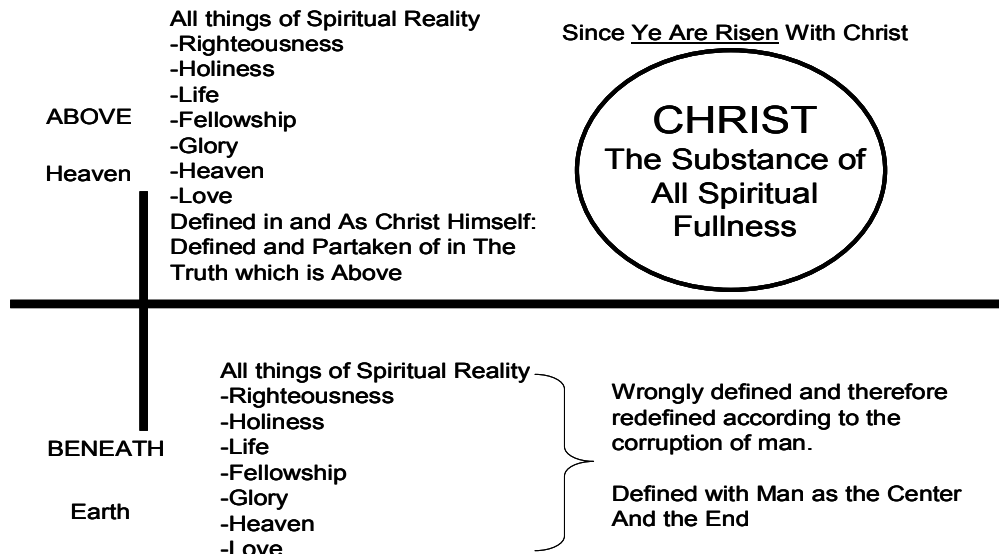
I AM Come

John 10:10 – Jesus said, “*I am come that they might have life...*” That is the essential element to having Life – I AM COME. Not only historically, but NOW – in me, The

coming of Life. That is the essential element; because the word “have” is not like, I ‘have’ this Bible lying on this table. “Have” there means to know the true essence of the matter. It is to know, to acknowledge the true essence of something. Jesus said I am come that they may come to the acknowledgement and partake of the true essence of Life: that they may know The Life I AM. Yet, we try to define Life/Newness of Life BENEATH. He does not come to “fix” our situation. He brings us “up” where there is no situation! He does not come and make us live a righteous life; He comes and brings us face to face with Himself as our Righteous Life. He has brought us into His Divine, Eternal Presence. He has brought us into a relationship that we cannot corrupt because it was eternally established before we even existed! (Ephesians 1:4) That is beautiful! This is the relationship The Son is having with The Father, and the significance of The Son in you crying “*Abba, Father.*” (Galatians 4:6) It is not The Son giving YOU the ability to do it: it is the relationship only He has with His Father, and by grace, we are brought into Him to partake of it. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

Defining

However, that relationship is only realized ABOVE. What a mess we have made by attempting to define this relationship from beneath. We make it a relationship we have and therefore a relationship we must tend to and try not to lose. Righteousness, sanctification, holiness – none of that can be known below. Fellowship is a disaster when defined BENEATH! Righteousness – we know what they’ve come up with for that: defining it BENEATH. Sanctification – we can’t do that and can’t go to this place. Holiness – what we wear or do not wear and other external elements have defined that. These definitions are from BENEATH. Only ABOVE (in Christ) is the true definition realized because the true definition is The I AM. And The I AM is in you. “*...I am in you, and you are in me.*” (John 14:20) And that’s security beyond anything we could ever imagine. You want to talk about Eternal security? There it is, and guess what? It’s not based upon me; it is Eternal in the heavens. (1 Peter 1:4) Salvation – Eternal in the heavens: not BENEATH.



With

Now let's go to Romans 6:4 – “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up...*” Who is raised up here? CHRIST! “*...Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so (in like manner, according to that raising up) we also should walk in newness of life.*” You cannot define Newness of Life beneath. Newness of Life will only be realized in the Glory in and by which the Father raised the Son. This is indeed the same Glory unto which He has brought “many sons”. Verse seven – “*For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.*” Moreover, “shall” is not in a future context. That “shall” is we do, in reality, in truth live with Him. And the word “with” is important. So many think that someday we are going to be WITH Jesus and walk hand in hand down streets of gold or we think I'm going to rule and reign WITH Jesus. It's always “ME” centered. Either I'm going there to walk with Jesus, or He's coming here and we're going to walk down Main Street and rule and reign there. Now the word “with” is Strong's #4800 and it is a compound word made up of #4862 – SUN. It is a primary preposition denoting UNION. It is never separate. With Him... with Christ... we shall live with Him – that's a union. The other word that is in that one word is DYAH - #2198 – to live. It is a life union. It is Life Himself dwelling in me: not just life that I have defined beneath. It is The Eternal Life, The Newness of Life, Christ Living in me as Life Eternal!

Newness of Life Realized

Live with Him! It is not me separate from Jesus. No – a union of Life that cannot be touched from anything that is BENEATH, and definitely cannot be defined by anything there. With Him. Romans 6:9 – “*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*” There is a little glimpse of where Newness of Life is realized. He liveth unto God. Then he goes on: in like manner, according to that, because you are in union with The One, The Life that liveth unto God the Father, now, “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” Our problem is we try to live unto God without the understanding of Newness of Life, or we try to live unto God with a false understanding of Newness of Life. What did Paul say in Galatians 2:19? We quote verse 20 quite often, but verse 19 says, “*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*” The law has done its work, brought me unto Him, and by that I have died. Moreover, I died that I might live unto God. How Paul? Immediately when we read, “I might live unto God” we take that and mean FOR God: we are going to live our life FOR Jesus. So the how question is asked. “How do we live unto God?” No wonder we have so many seminars in the Church world to teach us the how. We have 12 steps, 7 stages, 3 steps to a better you, how to live your best life. Paul had one step and that was “seeing Jesus”; Christ being revealed

in him and the outcome of that “seeing of Christ” was Paul coming to the acknowledgment of Life. He came to the acknowledgment of his Best Life, which is CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.

Live Unto God

We take “that he might live unto God” and say he just wanted to live for God. ‘Good old Paul.’ But how does he answer that? How does he say he does that? Here it is – Galatians 2:20 – *“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...”* What are you doing for Jesus? I AM crucified with Christ. He did not define it in himself; he did not define it by just being brought out of something – out of Judaism. He defined it now being One who lives unto God lives in me. That is the Life I live. That’s where Newness of Life is understood. That’s where Newness of Life is realized and found – ABOVE. I began to see that in the New Covenant – in Christ Jesus, the only way you define Life is in the face of The Living One. The Cross does not produce a bunch of good living people. The Cross – no matter how they preach it does not produce a bunch of better living people. Revelation 1:18 – *“ I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.”* This is The One in the midst, The Son of Man, The One in the midst of His people; The One in whom they are all summed up. (Revelation 1:13) He did not say I am and they are too. The original translation of Revelation 1:18 says, “I am the Living One.” The only way to define Life is in the face of The Living One!

Defining Spiritual Life Beneath

Let me take a brief moment to address the way many wrongly define Spiritual Life. The life I can live is not Life at all. Yet many have deceived themselves to think that Spiritual Life is attained by us and lived by us through religious efforts.

We have fabricated means and methods to be Spiritual people. Prayer has become a means, Bible Study has become a means, Giving Money has become a means to being or becoming Spiritual. There is nothing wrong with any of these things, except when they are used by us to reach our own self-centered end, which is us being Spiritual and thus living a Spiritual Life. Let me be frank with you and say that the measure of most who consider themselves Spiritual comes down to this: “I am spiritual or I live a spiritual life because I live “better” than Brother Bob or Sister Sue”. That is basically the measurement of carnal religion, because we compare ourselves – flesh with flesh, Adam with Adam, death with death. Can we not see this? We can plainly see in 1 Corinthians 15, that the First Man Adam is not spiritual, but natural. The Resurrection (which is being addressed in this chapter) is not the resurrection of the First Man; it is not the Spiritualization of that which is natural. The Resurrection is the Second Man, The Lord from Heaven Living as the Life of all who are found in Him. That my friend is Spiritual Life.

If it is not Christ living in us unto the Father, then it is not Life and therefore it is not unto the Father. Spiritual Life is not me living spiritually, but is THE SPIRIT OF LIFE (CHRIST) living and working in me.

We have already said Paul's definition of Living unto God was not him being spiritual, but him being dead and Christ living unto God in him. This is the man that says, "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST". (Phil.1:21) That is Spiritual Life, because it is the Second Man, the Life Giving Spirit not only living in you, but being revealed in you as THE LIFE. Only when THE LORD FROM HEAVEN (ABOVE) is revealed will we stop trying to define Spiritual Life from BENEATH and seek that which is ABOVE. That which is ABOVE is not many different things but is CHRIST HIMSELF as the Substance of All things.

The Glory of God

As soon as I take it out of Him, and out of His face, I have corrupted it! Romans 1:23 talks about those who have taken the glory of God, the glory of the incorruptible God, and made it like unto the image of corruptible man. "*And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*" This is the epitaph of the Church world. What have they done? They have taken the glory of God and perverted it. John 17:5 – "That *I may be clothed with thine own self, Father; glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*" Hebrews 2:9 – "*...bringing many sons unto glory.*" That same glory, that same relationship: here is the glory of God that we have brought down beneath and corrupted it. Regarding "change": you cannot actually change anything of the incorruptible One. The word is actually "exchange"; like I take this pen and exchange it for another. What have we done in the Church world? We have exchanged His incorruption for the corruption of man. We have exchanged the Truth that He is, for the Lie that we are. We have exchanged the Life He is, for the life we have imagined ourselves to have separate from Him. Instead of "*Set your affection above...*" We have set our affection "*on things on the earth...*" And when I say 'earth', I am not talking about this planet. I am talking about the earthbound, fleshly exercises we implement to "get" ABOVE: the things we try to do to receive favor from above. That would be the "bodily exercise" Paul tells Timothy profits nothing. (1Tim. 4:7-8) He is not talking about going to the gym there.

Access Above

The natural mind attempts to build a tower (of works) to get ABOVE. We pave it with deeds and labors trying to live a life God will count worthy of access, but we have access – ABOVE. (Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:19) We have access through The One who said, "*I am the door.*" (John 10:7,10); through The One who says, "*I am the Way.*" (John 14:6)

Now if we think of Him as only being the door “out”, we never comprehend Him as the door “in” – to ABOVE. We never comprehend Him as The Way to the Father; we never comprehend Him as The Life that is ABOVE anything that we have with our natural mind asked, thought, or imagined. (Ephesians 3:20) Life – Newness of Life cannot be defined in what I do: what I try and attempt in my religious efforts. Newness of Life is not about treating people better and acting better, because it is not defined in the earth. It is only known in Him who says, “*I am from above.*” (John 8:23).

Not I

So how do you live unto God Paul? **I live unto God by not living!** I will not live unto God by my own strength. You see, Paul has come out of the efforts and the means, and the principles, and the trying to do. He has come to his end, and he now sees The One who truly lives unto God. Therefore, Paul says I live by HIM. I live not by my own – my own self, my own doings. HE IS MY LIFE! (Philippians 1:21) I have used the term, “the sufficiency of the New Life”, and for much of my Christian Life I was trying to make my life (which I was living for God) sufficient. Yet, I have come to see that the Sufficiency of the New Life is simply that this New Life is not me improved, enlarged, or enhanced, but Christ Himself living in me. That is what makes it sufficient: He lives, not me.

God’s Sufficiency

Remember what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, “*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*”

Paul asked Him three times to take this away. Did God say, ‘Okay Paul, I’m going to take it away. Tomorrow at three o’clock it’s going to be gone, and you’ll be better.’ No. The reason is that God is not after a better Paul or a Paul without problems. God is after Paul coming to comprehend the sufficiency of another who is within. What did He say? “...*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” (2 Corinthians 12:9) What is grace? The reality that we are accepted ABOVE: we are accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6); we are known IN HIM. That is grace – that He lives. NOT I, BUT CHRIST. “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” And in the original it says, “*My grace is thine own sufficiency.*” It’s not anything that you can do; not anything that you can imagine that you can do; not anything we have imagined that God gives us the ability to do. **I AM... MY GRACE...** The fact that I live – not you, is sufficient. It is in that reality that Paul can glory in his nothingness that he might be clothed or tabernacled upon with Christ Himself. That is sufficient, and until we understand that sufficiency we are going to go about to establish sufficiency of our own. That is where we

come into “works vs. fruit” because in that understanding (trying to define it from beneath) I am always in the conflict Paul talks about in Galatians 5.

Condition Has Been Met

Galatians 5:17 – “*For the **flesh** lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*” What is that? It is trying to do and to be, and to become who only HE Who is Spirit is. (John 3:6) That constant battle of ME trying to be, and ME trying to do; instead of me just knowing HIM – knowing and seeking HIM Who is ABOVE.

Go now to Colossians 3:1 – “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above...*” The United Bible Society Commentary says regarding ‘If ye then be risen with Christ’; “As in chapter 2:20 and on, the affirmation that they have been raised to life with Christ is formulated as a condition, but there is no doubt in Paul’s mind that they have in fact BEEN raised. The form of the conditional clause in the Greek is EI, (which is the word “if”) which implies that the condition has been met and fulfilled. Since... so it should be in REALITY. It is a fact – since ye have been risen with Christ. It is a FULFILLED CONDITION.” I wish every heart would just get a hold of that definition, and understand it as a fulfilled condition.

From Whence We Look

We have so many people saying we are not in Him: we are not there yet. Paul says ‘seek that which is above, set your affection above.’ He has that understanding that it is already a finished reality; a complete reality, a condition that has already been met. He is not waiting on something. So many think he was waiting on an historical event. Some think he is still waiting on something that 2,000 years later is yet to happen. SINCE... the condition is met, friends! He is saying to them it is met: seeing then that you ARE risen with Him, in union with Him, in union with The Life Himself – **SEEK**... It is from that reality you seek. You do not seek from BENEATH. Philippians 3:20 – “*For our conversation is in heaven...*” In heaven, in Christ. (Eph. 2:5-6) “Conversation” there is not us getting together and having a chat. The word “conversation” there is our citizenship. Our citizenship is IN heaven. “...*from whence we look*...”

Citizenship Is Above

We act like we are BENEATH, looking for something above to come down here. No, he says you have been raised with Christ. (Ephesians 2:6) You ARE in heaven; your very citizenship IS above, from whence you look. You do not look from the earth up: you look

IN HIM; you look in His face to know all things. (2 Corinthians 4:6, Hebrews 12:2) From whence we look. Many are looking for the world to blow up one day. Many have imagined what or who we are to look forward to seeing in heaven one day. But what does Paul say we look for as those who are NOW citizens of Heaven as those Who are now in Christ? As he always does, he brings it right into the Person – “... *from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*” You do not look for anything else there, because there is nothing else there to look for, because He says I AM. **I AM FROM ABOVE.** So since ye are risen, seeing that you are risen: it being a fulfilled and met condition – **SEEK.**

SEEK

There is another “seek” in the scriptures. Matthew 6:33 – “*But **SEEK** ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” Notice it is “HIS” righteousness – not yours: HIS. To do the “seeking” that this is talking about, I have to reckon something DEAD. What did he say in Romans 6:11? “*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin...*” Reckon that which is dead to be dead, that you might live unto God by The One that truly does live unto God: that you may know The One who lives unto God, and know Newness of Life IN HIM. (2 Corinthians 5:14) Seek His righteousness; Seek The One Who is our righteousness. The Kingdom of God is ABOVE – that is where you seek: from where you are. Galatians 5:25 – “*If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*” Where you live and where you walk has to finally be the same. Finally, it has to become the same place. We cannot be in Christ and expect to grow up into Him, while walking in the Land of Imagination where we are the center of God’s Eternal thought, because, then we see the necessity of self-enhancement. When we are the reference point by which we measure Salvation, it seems far from Great. In that heart condition, there is no finished and fulfilled condition; there is no joy because there is a continual implementation of self-improvement techniques. Let me assure you from personal knowledge: that is torment!

The Lie

That is torment, because all that I see beneath is vanity and emptiness. Why? Because Adam kept and perpetuated that state. When God said in Genesis 1:26, “*Let us make man in our image after our likeness...*”- that is an empty shell, a vain shell. Man from that time, because he would not lose his own life and partake of the Life of another: Man has tried to fill his soul by the edification of himself. Christ alone is the Substance with which our soul is to be filled. Do you understand what we’ve done? I’ve had to confess in seeing this, that everything that I’ve ever known, everything that I ever thought was holy, everything that I ever thought truly was Salvation was a LIE! It was based upon the lie. It’s a lie because it’s all been based upon me. Great Salvation has been brought in my heart to ME, instead of

remaining ABOVE where it is only realized and defined by HIM. I have not allowed HIM to define it in me. I have gone about to define it in my own self.

Seek To Save Your Own Life

In Luke, 17:33 we see another “seek”. “*Whosoever shall **SEEK** to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*” That word “seek” is Strong’s #2212 ZETEO, and it means ‘to seek, to go about, to endeavor, to inquire for, to seek for means; to seek for ways to save his life.’ That is most believers today. Even the things I call “spiritual”; even the things I define as “holy”, and the things I have defined as “righteous” – I finally have to come and understand in my heart it has just been a means for me to save my own life. In John 10:10, Jesus says, “*I am come that you might have life*”. The Jameson, Faussett, and Brown commentary said it this way, “I did not come to preserve a life that you already possess. I have come to bring a life that you have NOT known heretofore.” That is why I AM COME is essential in our hearts. The I AM comes to bring forth a true defining of all things Spiritual, for He is revealed in us as the Substance of All Spiritual Fullness. (Col. 2:2-3).

Set Your Affection Above

“*...seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*” (Colossians 3:1,2) That does not mean that instead of watching television, you had better pray more or do not set your affection on that woman you are dating. See how silly we get? He is saying, do not seek to know, and do not let anyone make you think that you are going to find Life there in the earth, in yourself: that you are going to find that which is ABOVE – BENEATH. Do not seek things on the earth. What things? The things that are ABOVE. Do not try to find them, define them, or produce them in the earth. Seek what is ABOVE – where Christ sitteth: that is speaking of a fulfilled condition. Set your affection there.

We just take Colossians 3, totally out of the letter to the Colossians. We fail to realize he is talking about the same thing he was talking about in chapter 2. Look at Colossians 2:9,10 – “*For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*” Same thing: you are risen: you are complete in Him; all fullness is in Him. We read concerning this same thing in Romans 6. We continue in Colossians 2:12-13, “*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are **risen with him** through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*” And then he goes on: seeing that you have been raised with Him, (verse 16) “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days...*(verse 18)

Let no man beguile you of your reward in voluntary humility and worshipping of angels...” Do not let them bring you down to the earth! Do not let them bring your righteousness down and try to define it in what YOU do: in the feast days you observe, in the things you eat or wear.

Not Down to the Earth Again

Do not let a man bring you into this bondage again. (Galatians 5:1) Therefore, he goes on in Chapter 3: since you have been risen, do not let any man bring you down to the earth again: do not let any man define anything of spiritual substance in the earth. Set your affection ABOVE where He is seated: where He says that I AM THAT I AM; where He said, *“Behold, I make all things new.”* (Revelation 21:5) There is where Newness of Life can only be realized, because if you take it out of Him, it is YOU living, it is therefore NOT New. It is corrupt, it is rotten, and it is evil at its core.

Your Life is Hidden

He goes on in Colossians 3:3 – *“For ye are dead, and **your life is hidden with Christ in God.**”* This is the life we are talking about. Your life is hidden. You have been raised (Ephesians 2:6); but your life is hidden. It is hidden from the natural mind; it is hidden from carnal imaginations: it is hidden from the natural man. (1 Corinthians 2:14) In other words, if we can imagine it, define it, or produce it from the basis of the natural mind it is not LIFE. The fact that THE LIFE is hidden necessitates that the Spirit reveal this Life in us. See, the thing about this Life is that it is so OTHER than we are: it is so foreign to us. Here is a definition of “Newness”. John Lightfoot gives a great definition of “Newness of Life”. He says *“that means in a new state, which is life: in a new state of being which is life. For before they had been dead. To render as the Authorized Version “newness of life” suggests that the old had been in some way life also.”* He is saying that the way it is worded in the King James would have you think that somehow before The Life Himself: before Newness of Life came, there was Life. But no – that is not the case. He didn’t come as The Life to make “my” life better.

Newness

He came as The Life that I might have Life. When He said, *“ I am come that they might have life...”* (John 10:10), He is bringing into the picture something that **NEVER** before existed. Something that never could exist or be known except I AM COME. It is all bound up in HIM. Then Lightfoot goes on and says, *“the idea that is uppermost in this word newness is the word “strangeness”.* That really blessed me! In the Thayer’s dictionary, it says “Newness of Life” is ‘of a new kind, of an altogether new kind: that which is unprecedented, that which is uncommon, that which is unheard of, and that which is

foreign.’ That is NEWNESS of Life because Newness has nothing to do with Rabon Byrd at all. Newness is defined in The One Who says, “I am *THE* life.” (John 11:25; 14:6) We quoted 1 John 5:11 – “*He that hath THE SON hath life...*” In the original literal translation, it says it this way: “He that is HAVING The Son hath THE life.” Not just life: THE Life. He that is having an ongoing fellowship with Who He is – not what He does; the fellowship of Him Who is our Life: hath Life.

When The Life Appears

Now let’s go on, “*Set your affection on things above...When he who is our life...*” See, it says the life is hidden. Can that life be lived by me? Can I do that? No, it’s hidden. You cannot do it. Set your affection to know Him and when He who is LIFE... “*When Christ The Life appears, we shall also appear with (in union with) Him in glory.*” When Christ our Life appears. There is the revealing of THE LIFE, which must take place in our hearts, for until that happens you will define life in the earth and try to live a heavenly life beneath, but above there is only One Life. There are not many living good lives, but One Life living in many as the Life of the many. Paul is saying that when Christ THE LIFE appears you will comprehend the Eternal relationship of glory and rest you have truly been brought unto. You will comprehend that this Life (Christ The Life) is the only means of this fellowship, and your heart will only turn to know Him. You will cease attempting to live this life for God, in order to gain access to glory and you will desire only to know Him who is the Life and access unto the Father. This fellowship will not be entered into by my works, my deeds, or any other thing that is beneath. I must come to see The Life that lives unto God, and realize that I live only by HIM. Then my heart will not be after what I can do FOR God: it is living unto God BY The Life that truly lives unto God. (Romans 6:10,11) What a beautiful thing! This is beyond anything that I have ever understood to be Newness of Life because I have only understood Newness of Life from BENEATH, from my own naturally motivated and self-absorbed comprehension of Life as something I live.

Come Unto Me

Matthew 11. This is where Jesus declares that only The Father knows The Son, and only The Son knows The Father, and The Son shall reveal Him to whosoever He will. I never really understood the connection between these two verses. It seemed like He changed gears in the middle of this, but He didn’t. Verse 27 – “*All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*” It’s the same thing as in Colossians 2:9,10. From the reality of that eternal fellowship He now says, “*Come unto ME...*” For a long time I couldn’t see what that had to do with what He just said. However, it is connected. I have relationship with The Father. The Father has relationship

with Me. It is that Eternal, glorious relationship that I can't touch or corrupt. It is that relationship that is ABOVE.

I Will Give You Rest

Then He says in the context of that, therefore, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* Come all ye that labour on the earth; all ye that labour BENEATH; all ye that are trying to define relationship with The Father by your own means and methods. **COME UNTO ME** – I will give you rest! What rest? GLORY! The prophet Isaiah said, *“the Root of Jesse will stand up as an ensign.”* (Isaiah 11:10), and *“His rest shall be glorious”*. The literal translation of that is “HIS rest shall be glory.” It is the same thing. It is the glory into which He has brought us in union with Himself: it is HIS rest, the rest that He has, the rest that He has in His own Father. (Hebrews 4: 10) It is the glorious relationship that I cannot corrupt! *“Take my yoke upon you...”* What yoke? The Life that I Am. The Law at that time was a yoke, (Galatians 5:1), but He says take MY yoke. It is the same Law that Paul says is the Law of the Spirit of Life. (Romans 8:2) That is the Law of the Spirit of Life Himself that has freed me from the Law of sin and death. He has brought me from BENEATH to ABOVE. John 5:24 – *“Ye have passed from death unto life.”* It is the same thing. He says, *“Take MY yoke upon you, and learn of ME.”* The word “of” there means that which proceeds out from.

Learn of Me

Learn of ME. What is the learning that we have of Him? It is that which proceeds out from Him: that which IS Him. *“Learn of me, I AM...”* My God – that is the learning of Him: when The I AM stands up in the soul and declares Himself to be Who He Eternally is, and defines all spiritual reality IN HIMSELF: and not just IN Himself – AS Himself. *“Learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart...”* In other words, I am so other than YOU! That is Newness of Life. The I AM is so far ABOVE and beyond anything you are, or could ever try or hope to be! *“... and ye shall find rest for your souls.”* That soul that has tried so much and worked so hard from beneath, now finds rest. That rest is defined by Paul: NOT I, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME.

Father

Let us turn to John 17:1, *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father...”* This is known as The High Priestly Prayer of Christ. When I saw that word “Father”, The Lord said ‘no other High Priest could say that word. Every other High Priest that went beyond that veil went in fear that he would die, because he was a stranger to that place. But MY High Priest, The One that I ordained and said He was a High Priest

forever (Hebrews 7:21) was no stranger to that place. He was readily accepted and received. No other could say that word – Father.’

“... *Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son...*” Listen to this relationship. And it’s the relationship I’m telling you that is ABOVE. It’s the relationship that we’ve come to. “... *that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*” Here He defines Eternal Life: it is not about me; it is not in the earth; it is not what I do. Here is Eternal Life. This has puzzled me for so long because I had never thought of Eternal Life in its true context. “*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.*” There is the Newness, there is Life Eternal – ONLY there. How is it defined? The Knowing of Him!

Son of God Is Come

Lastly, 1 John 5:11,12 – “*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” Verse 20 – “*And we know that the Son of God **IS COME**...*” Remember, “*I am come that they might have life...*” (John 10:10) He says we know, we have comprehension that The Son has come. HE HAS COME! What did His coming do? What did His coming accomplish? Well, it got me out of the mess. No – “...*and hath given us an understanding (comprehension), that we may know him that is **TRUE**...*” That is true – not defined by the earth, because that which is BENEATH is not true at all. That is a lie, that is fake, that is a shadow, that is an empty show, a vain imagination, an imitation, and a poor one at that. “...*know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and **ETERNAL LIFE.***” There is Eternal Life; there is Newness of Life defined.

My point is that ABOVE we do not find means and methods to live spiritual lives: we find CHRIST as Spiritual Life. We find Christ Who is ALL and He Who is All NOW dwells in ALL who live by Him. For those who will turn from their religious, carnal, and self-centered definitions, concepts and preconceived ideas, He will arise and declare Himself the I AM in your soul and bring us in our hearts from beneath where we are the center and object of God’s thought to the Heavenly View wherein Christ is All and fills up all things. Let us just consider this: from the heavenly view, if Christ is not the substance of it, it does not exist in God’s sight. Therefore, it is imperative that we turn our hearts and seek HIM who is ABOVE.