

*Nuggets and Gems from the Bible*

MAGNIFYING

CHRIST

BY

LIVING HIM

WITNESS LEE

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# MAGNIFYING CHRIST BY LIVING HIM

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 1:19-21](#)

In this booklet we shall consider the matter of magnifying Christ by living Him ([1:19-21](#)). In [verse 20](#) Paul said, “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.” In Paul’s bodily sufferings, Christ was magnified, that is, shown or declared great (shown to be without limitation), exalted, and extolled. His sufferings afforded him opportunity to express Christ in His unlimited greatness. Only Christ would he have magnified in him, not the law or circumcision. Philippians is concerned with the experience of Christ. To magnify Christ under any circumstances is to experience Him with the topmost enjoyment.

## MAGNIFYING CHRIST

In [verse 20](#) a number of expressions are related to Paul’s statement that Christ would be magnified

in him: “with all boldness,” “as always,” “even now,” “in my body,” “whether through life or through death.” Paul does not simply say “with boldness,” but says “with all boldness.” Then he specifically points out that Christ would be magnified in his body. He said this because his body was in chains. At least during the night, if not all the time, Paul was chained to a guard. Nevertheless, even though his body was in chains, Christ would be magnified in his body. Moreover, Christ would be magnified whether through life or through death. This indicates that no matter what the circumstances were, Paul expected Christ to be magnified in him.

Now we must consider what it means to magnify Christ. The word magnify means to make something large to our sight. Perhaps you are wondering how Christ can be magnified since He is already universally great. According to [Ephesians 3](#), the dimensions of Christ—the breadth, length, height, and depth—are immeasurable. They are the dimensions of the universe. Although Christ is vast, extensive, and immeasurable, in the eyes of the praetorium, the imperial guard of Caesar, Christ was virtually nonexistent. In their eyes, there was not such a person as Jesus Christ. However, Paul magnified Christ; he made



Him great before the eyes of others, especially before the eyes of those who guarded him in prison. As a result, some eventually turned to Christ. Evidence of this is found in [4:22](#), where Paul speaks of the saints of Caesar's household. Through Paul's magnification of Christ, even some in Caesar's household were saved.

At the time of Paul's imprisonment, the Jews were despised by the Romans. The Romans were the conquerors, and the Jews were the conquered ones. Among these conquered ones there was a man named Jesus. Although He is great and most wonderful, in the eyes of the Romans He was nothing. But as Paul was held captive in a Roman prison, he magnified Christ, making Him to appear great in the eyes of his captors.

In our daily living we also should magnify Christ, making Him great in the eyes of others. Where you work or go to school people may look down on Christ. They may ridicule Him and take His name in vain, in violation of the third commandment. Therefore, you need to let others see Christ not in a small way, but in the way of enlargement, of magnification.

We should also magnify Him at home. The parents of some of the young people may not believe in Christ, but rather may despise Him.

Hence, these young people must bear the responsibility to enlarge Christ before their parents. Instead of simply preaching to their parents about Christ, they need to magnify Him. We need not simply the life within, but also the living without. Through the proper living, Christ will appear to be great in the eyes of others. Young people, let your parents see Christ's greatness in you.

We can magnify Christ even in situations where we have little or no liberty to speak about Him. Although teachers may not be able to preach the gospel to their students, they can magnify Christ in the classroom. They can cause Christ to appear great in the eyes of their students. I do not believe that when Paul was in prison, he was free to do much preaching of Christ. On the contrary, he was very limited and under strict control. However, even in such circumstances, Christ was magnified in his body. With all boldness Paul sought to magnify Him always.

Paul says that Christ would be magnified in him whether through life or through death. No matter what faced him—the opportunity to go on living or martyrdom—Paul expected to magnify Christ. In his living Paul magnified Christ. This is to magnify Him through life. As he was expecting to be martyred, he also magnified Him.

This is to magnify Christ through death. Thus, whether through life or death, Christ was magnified in Paul's imprisoned and chained body. This is the genuine experience of Christ.

In [verse 19](#) Paul mentions the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. If we allow the bountiful supply of the Spirit to work in us, our daily living will be changed. We shall be burdened to magnify Christ always and with all boldness. Through our magnifying of Christ, others will see His greatness and His unlimitedness. To magnify Christ in such a way surely is to live Him.

At the time Paul wrote the book of Philip-  
pians, he was an elderly person. No doubt, the guards expected him to be exhausted by his imprisonment. But far from being exhausted, Paul was full of joy and rejoicing in the Lord. I am confident that he was shining forth Christ and expressing Him. Such an expression was a declaration of the unlimited greatness of Christ and a declaration that Christ is inexhaustible.

Our love is eventually exhausted, but Christ as love is inexhaustible. Likewise, our natural patience is limited, but Christ as our patience is without limit. We all have the capacity to be patient, but only to a certain extent. Then we become provoked and angry. For example, a brother

may exercise patience with his wife. Eventually, however, this patience reaches its limit, and he becomes angry with her. Although our natural patience is so limited, Christ as patience is inexhaustible and immeasurable.

Even though Paul must have been mistreated in prison, he could be happy and display to the guards the unlimited greatness of Christ. In particular, Paul displayed Christ's inexhaustible patience. Christ certainly was magnified in Paul's physical body. Day by day, Paul was happy in the Lord. His happiness did not diminish as time went by. In his happiness he could show forth the immeasurable Christ he experienced and enjoyed. By this way Paul expressed, exhibited, exalted, and extolled Christ. I do not believe that Paul was offended by the jailers or that he offended them. Rather, he was a living witness of Christ, testifying of His ability, power, patience, love, and wisdom, all without measure. The guards may have considered Paul to be strange or peculiar, viewing him as possessing something which they did not have. What they sensed in Paul was Christ magnified. While he was in prison, Paul expressed the greatness of Christ in an enlarged way. He magnified Christ with all boldness both through

life and through death. By magnifying Christ in this way, Paul could overcome any situation.

## LIVING CHRIST

In [verse 21](#) Paul goes on to say, “For to me to live is Christ.” The little word “for” at the beginning of this verse is important. It indicates that what is to follow is an explanation of the preceding verse. Christ could be magnified in Paul’s body because Paul lived Christ. In order to magnify Christ, we must live Him. Although the matter of living Christ is of such tremendous importance, not many Christians have paid adequate attention to it. The word “for” in [verse 21](#) helps us to see that Paul could magnify Christ because to him to live was Christ. In Paul’s chained body Christ was exalted, extolled, praised, and appreciated because Paul lived Christ.

If we would live Christ, we must take Him as our person and be one person with Him. He and we must be one in a practical way. In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul declared, “Christ lives in me.” For Paul, this was not a mere doctrine; it was a fact. It should also be real to us that Christ lives in us. It is said that some Christians do not believe that Christ actually lives in them. Neither do they believe that we can abide in Christ and have Him



abide in us. But the Bible tells us definitely that Christ is in us and lives in us. Furthermore, we should abide in Him and allow Him to abide in us.

Paul could say not only that Christ lived in him, but also that to him to live was Christ. On the one hand, Christ lived in Paul; on the other hand, Paul lived Christ. Inwardly Christ was Paul's life, and outwardly Christ was Paul's living. Paul and Christ thus had one life and one living. Christ's life was Paul's life, and Paul's living was Christ's living. The two, Christ and Paul, lived as one. [First Corinthians 6:17](#) refers to such a living. In this verse Paul says that we are one spirit with the Lord. The organic union that has taken place between us and Christ causes us to be so close and intimate with Him that we are even one spirit with Him.

To live Christ is not merely to have a holy life or to live holiness. To live Christ is to live a person. We admit that the expression "live Christ" is new. We use this term deliberately. In the past we have spoken of living out Christ. Although this expression is not incorrect, to add the word "out" may detract from the proper meaning. We should simply live Christ. We should live a life which is Christ Himself.

From my experience I can testify that the most difficult thing in our Christian life is to practice to live Christ. We may be “holy,” “spiritual,” and “victorious” without living Christ. Even though we may be “holy,” “spiritual,” and “victorious,” we are still the ones living our natural life. We are not living Christ.

By nature, I am a quick person. When my sister heard that I had turned to the Lord, she was happy and wanted to help me. In particular, she tried to help me with my natural quickness. She would not rebuke me or correct me. Instead, she would tell me about others who were slow in their speech and behavior. Realizing what she was trying to do, I told the Lord that I regretted my quickness and asked Him to enable me to slow down. But my behavior was like that of a monkey imitating a human being. Although I could deliberately be slow for a few days, eventually I reverted to my natural quickness. Because I had been born a quick person, I just could not make myself slow down. At the time my sister tried to help me, she was teaching me to be slow. But she did not help me to live Christ. Now, more than fifty years later, I can be slow and patient. I can also control my temper. In a sense, I can be holy, spiritual, and victorious. But I have come

to see that it is possible to do all this without living Christ.

In order to live Christ we must take Him as our person and as our life. Although I have made progress in this matter, I admit that still my practice is not very successful. Almost every morning I pray, “Lord, I thank You for another day to practice living You. Lord, in myself, I cannot do this. I ask You to remind me to live You and grant me the grace I need for this.” I have found, however, that soon after praying to the Lord in this way, I may go back to living myself instead of living Christ. Everything about my living may be good, and yet I may not live Christ. I do not yet have the assurance to testify with Paul, “To me to live is Christ.”

In the Christian life it is easy to follow certain practices. For example, we may realize that we are talkative and may adopt the practice of limiting our speech. However, we may succeed in restricting our talkativeness and yet fail to live Christ. It is one thing to follow a certain practice; it is another thing to live Christ. God does not care for how holy, spiritual, or victorious we are in ourselves. Actually, to live in this way by self-effort is to strive to keep the law. What counts in the eyes of God is Christ and the living of

Christ. Concerning the matter of living Christ, the situation of today's Christians is far from God's goal. This is the reason we are fighting and struggling to enter into the genuine living of Christ in a practical way. God wants His people to live Christ. We should not care for holiness, spirituality, or victory as things in themselves, and we should not care for our natural virtues or attributes. Instead, we should focus our whole attention on living Christ and care only to live Christ that He might be magnified in us.

In the book of Philippians Paul encourages us to think the one thing (2:2). This one thing is to live Christ. We should care only to live Christ and magnify Him. Instead of pursuing holiness, spirituality, or victory, we should seek to live Christ and magnify Him always with all boldness, whether through life or through death. God's desire today is that we live Christ.

Do not allow anything to distract you from the direct, personal experience of Christ. Yes, we need to understand the background of Philippians and realize what is the present religious situation. We also need to discern between the different preachings of Christ. But none of this should distract us from Christ Himself. Today we need to focus our attention on the one thing—to live Christ.

## HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LAW AND CIRCUMCISION

Paul's life was to live Christ. To him, to live was Christ, not the law or circumcision. He would not live the law but would live Christ, not be found in the law but be found in Christ (3:9). Christ was not only his life within, but also his living without. He lived Christ because Christ lived in him. He was one with Christ both in life and in living. He and Christ had one life and one living. They lived together as one person. Christ lived within him as his life, and he lived Christ without as His living. The normal experience of Christ is to live Him, and to live Him is to magnify Him always, regardless of the circumstances.

When Paul was in prison, he was living Christ. Therefore, he could be found not in the law, but in Christ. At any time, men, angels, and demons could find him in Christ. We also need to be found by others in Christ, not simply in our good behavior. Young people, your parents should find you in Christ. They should sense that there is something different about you. All of our relatives, friends, and colleagues should find us in Christ.

If we would be found in Christ, we must live Christ. Only when we live Christ shall we be found



in Him by others and by the angels and demons. However, if we are law-keepers, we shall be found in the law instead of in Christ. We are not here to express the law or magnify the law; our goal is to express Christ and magnify Him. We all need to pray, “Lord, have mercy on me and rescue me both from sinful things and from good things, even spiritual things, that replace You in my daily life. Lord, rescue me from everything back to Yourself. Also, I ask You to grant me the grace each day that I may truly live You and be found in You.” I can testify that this kind of prayer is effective. Let us all seek the one thing and pursue the one thing—to live Christ and magnify Him.

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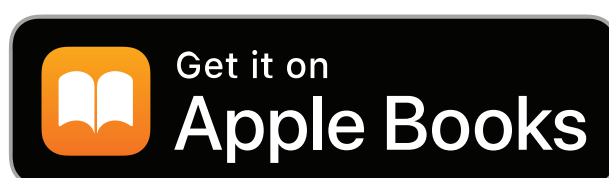
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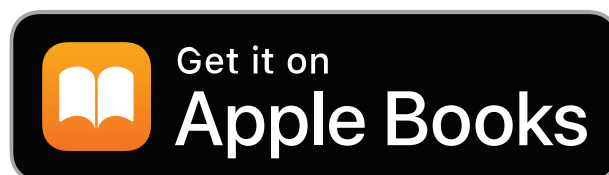
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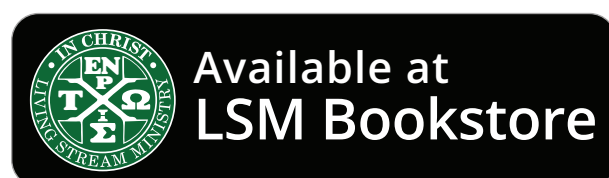


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# THE EXPRESSION OF A LIFE WHICH LIVES CHRIST

Chapter four of [Philippians](#) is a word of conclusion. As Paul was composing this concluding word, he was still motivated by those factors which caused him to write the first three chapters. He was still considering such matters as thinking the same thing by pursuing Christ and rejoicing in the Lord in order to enjoy the riches of Christ. In the first three chapters of [Philippians](#) Paul refers to the inner reality of the experience of Christ. But prior to [chapter four](#), he does not give any illustrations of the outer expression of this reality. If we enjoy Christ and experience Him, we shall have a certain inner reality. Such an inward reality invariably issues in an outward expression. In [Philippians 4:5-9](#) we find a full expression of this inward reality, a full expression of a life that lives Christ.

In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul declares, “To me to live is Christ.” This statement is a testimony of Paul’s inner reality. But what is the real expression of a life that lives Christ? This expression is found in the virtues listed in [Philippians 4:5-9](#).



In the same principle, in [chapter two](#) Paul sets forth Christ as our pattern. Suppose we take the crucified and exalted Christ as our pattern. What will be the expression of a life which lives according to this pattern? The expression is in [Philippians 4:5-9](#). The same is true with respect to Paul's word in [chapter three](#) concerning counting all things loss, even refuse, in order to gain Christ. What kind of expression will there be in a person's life if that one condemns philosophy, rejects culture, and renounces religion, counting them as refuse in order to gain Christ? What kind of life will such a person live, and what will be the practical expression of this life? Once again we would point out that the expression is seen in [Philippians 4:5-9](#).

## FORBEARANCE

The first aspect of the expression of a life that lives Christ is forbearance. [Philippians 4:5](#) says, "Let your forbearance be known to all men." Later we shall see that a second aspect is the absence of anxiety. In a life that lives Christ there will be forbearance, but no anxiety, no worry. Paul considers forbearance and the lack of anxiety as the first two aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ.

A life that lives Christ is calm, tranquil, peaceful, and quiet. Forbearance is the most important element of a tranquil life. Forbearance is reasonableness and consideration in dealing with others. To have forbearance is to deal with others without strictness of legal right. If we would live a calm life, we must have forbearance.

Forbearance includes patience and moderation, but goes beyond them. If you have forbearance, you will not argue with others, fight with them, or debate with them. You may have a great deal to say, but you will have patience and moderation in dealing with others and will not say anything in response to provocation or irritation.

Suppose a group of sisters live together. The most precious sister will be the one who is the most forbearing. When difficulties arise, she will be calm and quiet. Even if others offend her, she will not retaliate. Sisters who lack forbearance, however, may easily react when they are offended. In their living there is no calm, no tranquillity, no moderation. A proper Christian life is a life of calm. To live such a life means that we do not argue with people or fight with them.

Forbearance is versus rivalry and vainglory,

two negative things mentioned by Paul. Forbearance is also opposed to murmurings and reasonings. Some saints are given to the pursuit of rivalry and vainglory, whereas others are given to murmurings and reasonings. Whenever we have rivalry, vainglory, murmurings, and reasonings, there is no calm, no tranquillity, no forbearance.

From my experience I have learned that the first aspect of a life which lives Christ is tranquillity. If we live Christ, we shall not argue with others. We shall know what is the right time to speak even a calm word. Even a calm statement made at the wrong time can contribute to an argument. If you reply as soon as someone offends you, your word will not be one of forbearance. If someone is angry with you, it is best not to say anything. Exercise forbearance and wait for the right time to utter a calm word. It is especially important for married brothers and sisters to practice this. If your husband or wife is argumentative, be careful about the way you speak. It may be wise not even to call on the Lord aloud. Such a calling may stir up trouble. Instead of speaking outwardly, calm yourself, call on the Lord inwardly, and wait until the situation is tranquil before you say anything.

It is easy to teach this, but it is quite difficult to practice it. To live in this way requires grace. When a brother's wife is angry with him, it is very easy for him to be stirred up. He may bristle with anger, and his emotions may boil over. At such a time it is extremely difficult to calm down and be tranquil. For this, we need the Lord's grace. It takes much grace to be forbearing in this kind of situation. But if we exercise to be calm by the Lord's grace, the atmosphere will eventually become tranquil. Then there will come a proper time to speak a calm word.

I have wondered why after covering such profound matters in the first three chapters, Paul says in [Philippians 4:5](#), "Let your forbearance be known to all men." Compared with what Paul has already covered, forbearance seems to be a secondary matter. However, in a very practical way, forbearance is a test of whether or not we live Christ.

In [Philippians 4:5](#) Paul also says, "The Lord is near." Many readers of Philippians take this as a reference to the Lord's coming. I do not say that this does not refer at all to the coming of the Lord; however, I believe that it does not refer mainly to His coming. On the contrary, it refers primarily to the Lord's presence with us. The

Lord is near; He is with us. When we live Him, taking Him as our pattern and counting all things loss in order to gain Him, we sense that He is present with us. He is near both in space and in time. In space, He is close to us, ready to help; in time, He is at hand, coming soon. Since the Lord is near, what need is there for us to be troubled and stirred up?

When we live Christ, knowing that He is near, we should let others know our forbearance, our moderation. Again I say, this is the first aspect of the expression of a life which lives Christ. Be assured that whenever you live Christ, you will show forth such a forbearance, such a moderate and tranquil attitude. But when you are striving in rivalry for vainglory or when you are murmuring or reasoning, you do not have this forbearance. This lack of forbearance proves that you are not living Christ. The first test of our living Christ is whether or not we express forbearance.

Paul had no intention to be like Confucius in teaching us to be patient and to bear difficulties. The factor which motivated him to write these verses was his desire to show the expression of a life that lives Christ. Thus, in [Philippians 4:5-9](#) we see a picture of a life that lives Christ. If we



are living Christ, we should let others know our forbearance. They should see that we are calm, tranquil, and moderate and that nothing can disturb our inward calm. However, when we are not calm, we surely are not in Christ. Then in our experience the Lord is not near. Instead of calm, we may have anxiety, which destroys our tranquillity and causes us to lose the inward peace. Whenever we lose our tranquillity, we are unable to live Christ. It is not possible to fight with others or to argue and at the same time to live Christ. Living Christ requires absolute tranquillity, absolute calm.

## WITHOUT ANXIETY

In [Philippians 4:6](#) Paul goes on to say, “In nothing be anxious.” Often when we hear bad news, we worry and fall into anxiety. Anxiety undermines the living of Christ. Instead of being anxious, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving we should make our requests known to God. Then the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus ([Phil. 4:7](#)). The peace of God saves us from worry and anxiety. Paul’s word here proves that our interpretation of these verses according to our experience is correct. Being free from

anxiety is for the purpose of keeping us calm and tranquil.

In [Philippians 4:6](#) Paul charges us, “In everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” The words “in everything” refer to the many different things which happen to us day by day. Under the Lord’s blessing, many positive things happen, and we hear good news. However, we also experience negative things and hear bad news. Nevertheless, in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God. Prayer is general with the essence of worship and fellowship; petition is special for particular needs. Notice that Paul says “with thanksgiving,” not “and thanksgiving.” This indicates that both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord.

It may seem easy to understand Paul’s word, “Let your requests be made known to God.” But we should not take this word for granted, assuming that we understand it. I have spent considerable time studying the phrase “to God.” It may also be rendered “before God” or “in the presence of God.” The Greek preposition is *pros*, often translated “with” ([John 1:1](#); [Mark 9:19](#);

2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 16:6; 1 John 1:2). It denotes motion towards, in the sense of a living union and communion, implying fellowship. Hence, the force of “to God” here is in fellowship with God. We should let our requests be made known to God in such a fellowship, in such a union and communion. This requires that we pray to contact God.

In our prayer to God there must be the essence of worship and fellowship, and also petitions for particular needs. Even if we do not have specific needs, we still need a time of prayer day by day to worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him. As we worship the Lord and have fellowship with Him in prayer, we enjoy communion with Him and practice the organic union with Him.

The issue, the result, of practicing the organic union with the Lord is that the peace of God guards our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7). The peace of God is actually God as peace (Phil. 4:9), infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer. This peace is the counterpoise of troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

Bad news or difficult situations may cause us to worry or to be anxious. We find the antidote

to this anxiety when we pray, practice communion with God, and enjoy the organic union. Then spontaneously, even unconsciously, the peace of God is transfused into our inner being. This transfused peace becomes the counterpoise of trouble and becomes the antidote to anxiety. From experience we know that through prayer we receive this antidote to anxiety when the peace of God is infused into us. Having the peace of God as the counterpoise to our troubles does not mean that the troubles will disappear. The troubles remain, but we have a counterpoise. Furthermore, the poison of anxiety is still within us, but we have an antidote—the peace of God transfused into our being through our fellowship with God in prayer. When we enjoy God as our peace, we are made calm within.

In [Philippians 4:7](#) Paul says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. The Greek word rendered “guard” may also be rendered “mount guard over.” The God of peace patrols or stands guard before our hearts and thoughts in Christ. The heart is the source, and the thoughts are the issue. The peace of God guards both our hearts and our thoughts. This means that in Christ Jesus the peace of God patrols as a guard who goes back and forth before

our hearts and our thoughts. The peace of God which patrols within our inner being in such a way keeps us calm and tranquil. Even though we may have many troubles and much anxiety, nothing will disturb us. This is not a mere teaching, but a word which corresponds to our experience. From experience we know that the peace of God infused into us keeps us calm.

Toward man we need the forbearance mentioned in [Philippians 4:5](#), and with God we need the fellowship Paul refers to in [verses 6 and 7](#). As two leading aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ, forbearance and fellowship cause us to remain calm inwardly. In this way we shall become a tranquil people. This does not mean, however, that nothing negative will happen to us. Rather, it means that we need not be disturbed by negative things. Do not complain about your living situation. Live Christ! The first expression of your living Christ will be forbearance.

In [Philippians 4:5-7](#) Paul does not mention a third thing apart from forbearance and not having anxiety. Instead, he simply points out two important aspects of a life that lives Christ—that we have forbearance, but no anxiety. When we are forbearing and free from anxiety, we are kept



tranquil and in a calm atmosphere. Then we can live Christ and have the full enjoyment of Christ.

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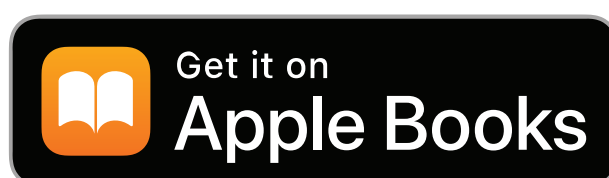


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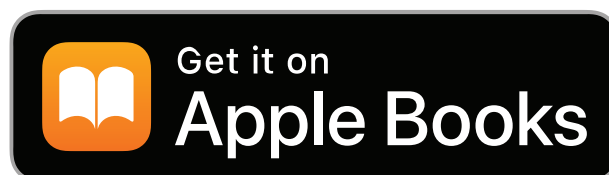
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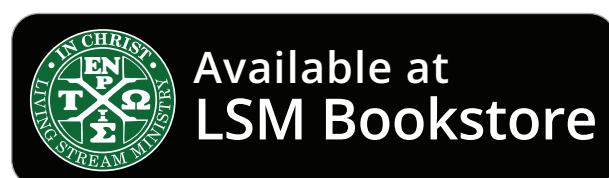


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# A LIFE THAT LIVES CHRIST

In [Philippians 4:5-9](#) we have the expression of a life that lives Christ. In this booklet we shall see six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ.

Paul gives us these governing aspects in [verse 8](#): “For the rest, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is well-spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.”

## WHATEVER IS TRUE

The first governing aspect of a life that lives Christ is “whatever is true.” The word true here means truthful ethically, not merely true in matter of fact. In the expression of a life that lives Christ there can be no falsehood, no lying. Everything we do or say must be truthful. No one who lives Christ should practice falsehood of any kind. A life that is the expression of Christ is a truthful one.

## WHATEVER IS HONORABLE

The second aspect is “whatever is honorable.”

The Greek word rendered honorable means venerable, worthy of reverence, noble, grave ([1 Tim. 3:8, 11](#); [Titus 2:2](#)), implying the idea of dignity, which inspires and invites reverence. A life that lives Christ will be honorable, noble, grave, solid, weighty, and dignified.

We should not think that only older people should be weighty. All the young people, even the teen-agers, should also have dignity. Even a young brother in junior high school should have dignity, for he has God within him. He is a vessel containing God as his worth, weight, and dignity.

To have dignity is not to act important; it is to live God. A jewelry box containing a diamond ring has dignity not because of the box itself, but because of the diamond. It is the diamond in the box which gives dignity to the box. In like manner, we are a vessel containing Christ. If we live Him, we shall have true dignity. When others see us bearing such a dignity, they will have a deep respect for us. The dignity implied in the Greek word for honorable always inspires a profound respect. This dignity is the second governing aspect of the expression of a life that lives Christ.

## WHATEVER IS RIGHTEOUS

In [Philippians 4:8](#) Paul also speaks of “whatever

is righteous.” This refers to what is right (not just) before God and man. Doing what is right is another governing aspect related to the living of Christ.

## **WHATEVER IS PURE**

The word pure in the expression “whatever is pure” means single in intention and action, without any mixture. To be pure in this way is to have no pretense. Purity is also a governing aspect of the life that lives Christ.

## **WHATEVER IS LOVELY**

Yet another governing aspect of such a life is “whatever is lovely.” The word “lovely” means lovable, agreeable, endearing.

## **WHATEVER IS WELL-SPOKEN OF**

Next Paul goes on to mention “whatever is well-spoken of.” This means whatever is of good repute, renowned, attractive, winning, and gracious. The Greek word means sounding well.

In [verse 8](#) Paul does not mention kindness, patience, or holiness. Instead, he mentions six items which are governing aspects of a life that lives Christ. If we live Christ, we shall surely have a life that is an expression of all these aspects. In



our living there will be no falsehood, looseness, or lightness. Instead, our living will be honorable, pure, right, lovely, and well-spoken of. Of the many, many Christian virtues, Paul selected these six as governing aspects.

Here I wish to point out that all human virtues were created by God. According to [Genesis 1:26](#), we were made in God's image. Our human virtues are a vessel made to contain the divine virtues, just as a glove is made in the image of a hand to contain the hand. The Bible reveals that the image of God is Christ ([Col. 1:15](#); [2 Cor. 4:4](#)). Therefore, to say that man was made in the image of God means that he was made according to the form of Christ. Man was created according to Christ so that he could contain Christ and express Him. A glove is designed in the pattern of a hand so that it can contain the hand. Likewise, man was designed by God to bear the pattern of Christ. When Christ comes into a person, that person becomes a vessel containing Christ.

[Romans 9](#) indicates that we are vessels to contain the glory of God. The glory of God denotes the expression of God, and this expression is Christ. Human virtues such as truthfulness, dignity, purity, and loveliness are all aspects of man as a vessel to contain Christ as the reality.

On the basis of Paul's word, "To me to live is Christ" ([Phil. 1:21](#)), we can rightly say that the virtues in [4:8](#) are aspects of the expression of a life that lives Christ. Since Paul himself lived Christ, he certainly would not charge the saints to live something else instead of Christ. Therefore, the virtues he mentions in [4:8](#) must be the expression of the reality lived by Paul and by other saints. This reality is Christ Himself.

Furthermore, in [chapter two](#) we see Christ as the pattern, and in [chapter three](#), the pursuing of Christ with a view to gaining Him. In order to gain Christ, Paul counted all other things as refuse. How then could he exalt human virtues in [chapter four](#)? This is another indication that the virtues in this chapter are not something apart from Christ Himself. Rather, these virtues must be the very expression of the Christ lived by the believers.

If we consider carefully the virtues listed in [4:8](#), we shall have to confess that there is no way for us to live such a life in ourselves. The ethical teachings of Confucius are very high, but they are inferior to Paul's instructions here in *Philippians*. I studied Confucius' writing entitled *The Highest Learning*, but it cannot compare to the virtues mentioned by Paul. In ourselves it surely

is impossible to have such a life with such an expression. Therefore, we must go on to 4:13, where Paul says, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me.” All the virtues in 4:8 are the expression of the very Christ in whom Paul could do everything. Based on the whole context of the book of Philippians, we can say that the six virtues in 4:8 are the expression of the living of Christ. These are not mere human virtues, not even the virtues developed according to the teachings of Confucius. These virtues are the expression of the very Christ whom we live.

### **IF ANY VIRTUE AND ANY PRAISE**

Toward the end of 4:8 Paul changes his expression and says, “If there is any virtue and if any praise.” The Greek word for virtue here means excellence, that is, ethical energy exhibited in vigorous action. Praise refers to things worthy of praise, as the companion of virtue. The first six items are categorized as “whatever is”; the last two are categorized as “if any.” This indicates that the last two are a summing up of the six foregoing items, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise.

Virtue and praise are not two additional aspects, but values of the six aspects already

mentioned. Virtue is a general term rather than a specific aspect. There is virtue in truthfulness, dignity, purity, loveliness, rightness, and being well-spoken of. The principle is the same with praise: there is something worthy of praise in all these six aspects of the Christian life.

How excellent is the expression of the life that lives Christ! The six aspects in [verse 8](#) certainly are excellent characteristics of the Christian life. It is excellent to be truthful, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good report. In each of these excellent aspects there is some virtue and something worthy of praise. We should “take account of these things”; that is, we should think on them, ponder them, consider them.

## **THE THINGS LEARNED, RECEIVED, HEARD, AND SEEN IN THE APOSTLE**

In [verse 9](#) Paul concludes, “The things which you have also learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things.” Not only should the believers think on the things mentioned in [verse 8](#); they should also practice the things which they have learned, received, heard, and seen in the apostle. To be sure, Paul lived in such a way as to express all the aspects listed in [verse 8](#). Hence, the believers had learned of



him, had received from him, had heard of him, and had seen certain things in him. For this reason, Paul charged them to follow him in practicing these things.

[Verse 9](#) closes with the word, “And the God of peace shall be with you.” This is both a blessing and a promise. The God of peace is the source of all the things mentioned in [verses 8 and 9](#). By fellowshiping with Him and having Him with us, all these virtues will issue forth in our life.

In [verse 7](#) Paul speaks of the peace of God, and in [verse 9](#), of the God of peace. First he says that the peace of God will guard our hearts and thoughts, then that the God of peace Himself will be with us. Actually the peace of God and the God of peace are one. When God is with us, peace is with us also. The genuine peace we enjoy is God Himself. The way to enjoy the God of peace is by praying to have fellowship with Him.

If we did not have these verses in [Philippians 4](#) concerning the expression of a life that lives Christ, we would not know what kind of life this is. The pattern of such a life was established by the Lord Jesus during the years He lived on earth. If you read the four Gospels carefully, you will see that the Lord lived a life absolutely outside religion, culture, and philosophy. His life was the

full expression of the divine life. This was the reason He could say, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” ([John 14:9](#)), and, “The words which I speak to you, I do not speak from Myself; but the Father who abides in Me, He does His works” ([John 14:10](#)). In His living on earth, the Lord Jesus lived the Father and expressed Him.

The life of the Lord Jesus has set up a pattern for us. If we live according to this pattern, we shall count as loss, even as refuse, all religious, cultural, and philosophical things. Furthermore, we shall count as loss the things of habit, custom, and tradition so that we may be fully occupied by Christ. Then whatever we live out day by day will be Christ and Christ alone.

Human virtues are a vessel to contain Christ as the divine content. We have such virtues as forbearance, truthfulness, and dignity. But these are shadows, not the reality; they are vessels or containers, not the content. The divine forbearance, truthfulness, and dignity are the reality and substance of human forbearance, truthfulness, and dignity. Our virtues are an empty vessel, an empty glove, until Christ comes into us and occupies every part of our being. But after Christ has occupied us inwardly, filling every part of our inner being, then the “glove” is filled with the



living “hand.” A glove without a hand is empty and lifeless. Not only is there nothing living in the glove; there is not even the appearance of livingness. But when the hand gets into the glove, the glove is still the glove, but now it has something living in it. After the hand enters into the glove, the glove begins to have a living expression. In principle, the same is true of our virtues. Unless our virtues are occupied by Christ and express Him, they are empty and devoid of true life. But when they are occupied by the living Christ, they are filled with reality and become His expression.

It is important for us to see the difference between a living that is according to ethical teachings and a living that is the expression of Christ. Probably the best ethical teachings are those of Confucius, who taught people to cultivate, to develop, their human virtues. But it was not possible for Confucius to add anything to people. All he could do was to teach them to develop the virtues they already possessed.

How different this is from God’s economy! God’s economy is not to develop our virtues, but to add Christ to them. When Christ is added to our virtues, they are no longer empty, but are filled with Christ as their content and reality.

Once again, we wish to emphasize the fact that human virtues are a vessel, a container, to express Christ as the real content.

How wonderful it is to realize that [Philippians 4:5-9](#) shows us the clear expression of a life that lives Christ! In this portrait we see that we need the six governing aspects of a life that lives Christ. It is truly marvelous to see these things! Here in Philippians there is a vast territory for us to explore and inexhaustible riches for us to search out and experience.

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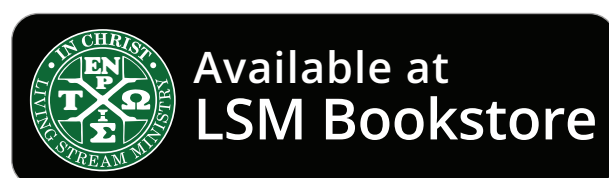


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# PAUL' S SECRET OF SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST

In this booklet we shall consider Paul's secret of sufficiency in Christ. Paul had learned the secret of sufficiency, of satisfaction, of contentment. This secret is actually Christ Himself. In [chapter one of Philippians](#), Christ is the life for us to live; in [chapter two](#), Christ is the pattern for us to follow; and in [chapter three](#), Christ is the goal and the prize for us to pursue. Now in [chapter four](#), Christ is the secret and also the power for us to enjoy.

## LEARNING THE SECRET

We may talk a great deal about the book of Philippians, but not know the secret of experiencing Christ. To change the figure of speech, because we do not have the key, we cannot open the door to the experience of Christ. In [chapter four](#) we have the secret and the power. On the one hand, Paul says, "I have learned the secret" ([Phil. 4:12](#)); on the other hand, he testifies, "I can do all things in Him who empowers me" ([Phil. 4:13](#)).



In [Philippians 4:11](#) Paul says, “Not that I speak according to want, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.” Paul had learned to be content in all circumstances. He could say, “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”

In [verse 12](#) Paul continues, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want.” The words “I have learned the secret” are an interpretation of the Greek word which means “I have been initiated.” The metaphor is that of a person being initiated into a secret society with instruction in its rudimentary principles. Paul had not only learned a secret; he had been initiated and had learned certain basic principles.

The church, the Body of Christ, is not a secret society. But because the church has a mysterious aspect, there is the need of a spiritual initiation in order to learn the principles of the church life.

The basic principles of the church life are altogether different from the basic principles of the world. Thus, when we are saved and come into the church, the Body of Christ, we need to

be initiated by learning certain basic principles. The secret of the Body is to take Christ as our life, to live Christ, to pursue Christ, to gain Christ, to magnify Christ, and to express Christ. These are the basic principles of the church, the Body of Christ. As one who had been initiated into the Body, Paul had learned the secret.

## APPLYING THE SECRET

According to [Philippians 4:10-13](#), Paul applied the secret he had learned to his circumstances in prison. As a prisoner in Rome, he was far away from many of the believers and from many churches which had been raised up through his ministry. No doubt, during his imprisonment, he suffered both psychologically and physically. He was in need of a material supply. It certainly was not easy for him to be in prison under such circumstances.

According to the record in the New Testament, when Paul was journeying in Europe for the ministry, the church in Philippi was unique in taking care of Paul's material needs. In [4:15](#) he says, "And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I went out from Macedonia, not one church shared

with me in the account of giving and receiving but you only.”

Later, when Paul was in prison, he had certain physical needs. Because Paul was still human, he expected the Philippians to continue remembering him. But for a period of time, the Philippians did not do this. This is implied by Paul’s word in [Philippians 4:10](#): “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you caused your thinking for me to blossom anew; wherein you did indeed take thought, but you lacked opportunity.” Notice the words “at length” and “blossom anew.” For some time, the Philippians’ thinking of Paul had been dormant; it might even have withered. Their thinking for him certainly was not blossoming. But when Paul wrote this verse, winter had passed and spring had come. He could now say that their thinking for him had begun to blossom anew.

It was sovereign of the Lord that the material supply from the Philippians had stopped temporarily. This time when there was no supply was a time of testing for Paul, a time for him to be abased. No doubt, when Epaphroditus came with the supply, making a large deposit into the heavenly account, that was the time for Paul to abound. Therefore, in [verse 12](#) he could declare,

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.” He knew both how to be humbled and be in lowly circumstances and also how to live with abundance.

Before Epaphroditus came, Paul was abased. After he came with the supply, Paul was abounding. But he did not know how long this abounding would last. He knew that probably the time would come when once again he would be in want. This was the reason he first said, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound.” But because Epaphroditus had arrived with the supply, Paul then changed the order and said, “I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want.” Knowing that his circumstances could change again very soon, Paul said that he knew not only how to be abased and how to abound, but also how to abound and how to be in want.

## **GOD’S SOVEREIGN ARRANGEMENT OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES**

My reason for dwelling on this matter is to point out that our circumstances are always sovereignly arranged by God. Sometimes His sovereign arrangement puts us in a low situation, and at other times in circumstances that are quite

good. Paul realized that even though the supply had come from the church at Philippi, his circumstances were still in the hand of God. In God's sovereign arrangement, the Philippian church did not send the supply until now. Perhaps they had the heart to send him a gift, but not the opportunity until Epaphroditus could come. When the opportunity was available, the Philippian believers sent a gift to Paul. This supply brought him out of the condition of humiliation, want, and abasement and set him on a peak. But he did not know how long that would last. Nevertheless, he had the assurance that he knew both how to be abased and how to abound, both how to abound and how to be in want. He had learned the secret; he had been initiated into the basic principles of Christ and the church.

In [Philippians 4:13](#) we find a basic principle related to the apostle's secret of sufficiency in Christ: "I can do all things in Him who empowers me." Paul was a person in Christ ([2 Cor. 12:2](#)), and he desired to be found in Christ by others. Now he declared that he could do all things in Him, in the very Christ who empowered him. This is an all-inclusive and concluding word concerning his experience of Christ. It is the converse of the Lord's word concerning



our organic relationship with Him in [John 15:5](#):  
“Apart from Me you can do nothing.”

## DOING ALL THINGS IN HIM WHO EMPOWERS US

In [Philippians 4:13](#) Paul refers to Christ as the One who “empowers me.” To be so empowered is to be made dynamic inwardly. Christ dwells in us ([Col. 1:27](#)). He empowers us, makes us dynamic, from within, not from without. By such inward empowering Paul could do all things in Christ.

In [Philippians 4:13](#) we find the secret to which Paul refers in [4:12](#). Here Paul says that he is in Christ, in the One who empowers him. In [chapter three](#) Paul testified that he pursued Christ in order to gain Him and be found in Him. Now in [4:13](#) Paul says that he is in Him. In Christ as the One who empowers him Paul could do all things.

To appreciate Paul’s word, we need to join the phrase “in Him” in [4:13](#) to the same phrase in [Philippians 3:9](#). In [3:9](#) Paul aspired to be found in Him; in [4:13](#) Paul declared that being in Him he could do all things in the One who empowered him. This is the secret.

Have you seen the secret? Do you have this



secret? Our circumstances may change. In certain circumstances we may abound, and in others we may be abased. But whether we abound or are abased, the enjoyment of the Lord is the same.

## COUNTERACTING ANXIETY

If we have learned the secret, we shall know how to counteract anxiety. If you are in poverty, there is no need for you to be anxious or to worry. The Lord is still at hand, and He will take care of you. By nature, we are given to worry, to anxiety. This is true as much of the rich as it is of the poor. Those who are poor have their particular worries, and those who are rich have theirs. Only those who are truly in Christ in their experience and who are inwardly empowered by Him have no need to worry or to be anxious.

We have pointed out that when the church at Philippi did not have the opportunity to supply Paul, he was in want. He was humiliated and abased. Do you think that during that time of abasement Paul was worrying? We may have the ground to answer this question with both a yes and a no. On the one hand, we can say that Paul was not worried, for he tells us that he had

learned the secret both to be abased and to abound. On the other hand, there is an implication that, in referring to his situation, he must have had some human feeling of worry or anxiety. If Paul did not have any worry, why then did he refer to his situation? When he was in want, he must have had some feeling about it. Otherwise, he would not have told the Philippians that he rejoiced in the Lord greatly that “at length” they had caused their thinking for him to blossom anew. This positive word implies that, prior to receiving the supply through Epaphroditus, Paul was concerned.

If Paul did not have any feelings of worry or anxiety, why would he find it necessary to write such things in his Epistle to the Philippians? As a human being, Paul did undergo suffering with respect to material needs. Paul was not an angel, and he was not like a lifeless statue without feelings. No doubt, he had learned the secret of sufficiency in Christ. When he was in want and was tempted to worry about his situation, he applied this secret. Then, in his experience, this secret eliminated his worry. Therefore, he could have the boldness to testify that he knew both how to be abased and how to abound. The very fact that Paul knew how to be abased indicates that

he experienced feelings of abasement. He knew what it was to have worry and anxiety in times of suffering. But at those times he applied the secret of the indwelling Christ. He applied the very Christ in whom he could be found. This Christ is real, living, near, available, and prevailing. This was the Christ who was Paul's secret.

## DAY AND NIGHT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In the Christian life we experience both night and day. According to [Genesis 1](#), night comes before day. When Paul was abased, he was in the night, and when he was abounding, he was in the day. Just as day follows night, night in turn will follow day. This means that after the night of abasement came the day of abounding. Paul realized, however, that this day would eventually be followed by another night. We cannot change the principle of God's universe. In the universe there is night and day, day and night.

The Christian life does not stay on one level; it has many ups and downs. It is normal to be up and down, down and up. It is not normal to remain on one level and not experience ups or downs. Likewise, it is not normal to experience day and not night.

According to the Lord's sovereign arrangement, we need both the ups and downs in order to experience Christ. I thank the Lord for all the valleys through which He has taken me. But with the valleys, there have also been hills. The Christian life is not one vast plain; it is a land with many hills and valleys. It is by the hills and valleys that we experience Christ.

## IN EVERYTHING AND IN ALL THINGS

In [Philippians 4:12](#) Paul uses the puzzling expression “in everything and in all things.” What is the difference between “everything” and “all things”? We experience one thing at a time. We cannot experience all things at once. Therefore, according to our experience in time, it is everything. But after a long period of experiences has gone by, the everything becomes all things.

The words “all things” refer to a broad range of experiences over a period of time. Paul could say that both on a particular occasion and on all occasions, both at a certain time and throughout the course of his life, he had learned the secret. Paul experienced Christ moment by moment. On the one hand, he experienced Christ in particular things at particular times. On the

other hand, he experienced Christ in all things and at all times. May we all aspire to enjoy Christ to such an extent.

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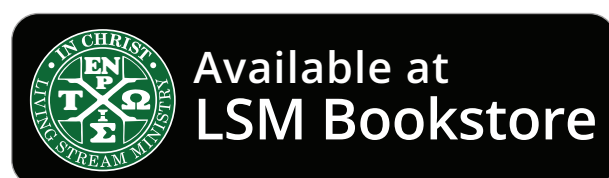


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# TO LIVE CHRIST BY THE SPIRIT

The goal of being a Christian is to live Christ. Furthermore, the destiny God has ordained for us in His economy also is that we might live Christ. Christ is our way, our goal, our destiny, and our destination.

## LIVE CHRIST

We can be helped to know what it means to live Christ by reading the Gospel of John. This Gospel reveals that Christ, the Word, is God (1:1). One day, the Word became flesh (1:14); that is, God was incarnated. Referring to the Word made flesh, John the Baptist declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (1:29). The third chapter of the Gospel of John speaks of regeneration. Here we see that we must be born of God through the Spirit in our spirit.

In John 14 the Lord Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (v. 9). The Lord also went on to say, “I am in the Father and the Father in Me” (v. 11). The Lord Jesus was one

with the Father. To see Him was to see the Father. In this chapter the Lord Jesus also spoke of the Spirit of reality, telling the disciples that the Spirit of reality abode with them and would be in them (v. 17). The Lord Jesus indicated that when the Spirit of reality came, He Himself would come also. [Verse 19](#) says, “Because I live, you shall live also.” [Verse 20](#) continues, “In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” Here we have our living together with Christ. We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. This means that we and He live together. He lives, and we live also. We live in Him, by Him, and with Him, and we even live Him.

In [John 15](#) the Lord gives the very impressive illustration of the vine and the branches. He says, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (v. 5). The branches are the very living of the vine.

## RECEIVING THE HOLY BREATH

After the Lord Jesus entered into resurrection, He came to His disciples. According to [John 20:22](#), “He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.” The Greek word for Spirit, *pneuma*, also means breath. This indicates that the Lord Jesus was telling the disciples to receive the holy breath. The Gospel of John

begins with the Word and goes on to speak of the Lamb and the vine. Finally, in [John 20:22](#) we see that the very One who is the Word, God, the Lamb, and the vine is also the breath for us to receive. On the one hand, He breathed out; on the other hand, the disciples breathed in.

In [20:22](#) the Lord Jesus told the disciples to receive the holy breath, the Holy Spirit. We should not analyze the breath, but receive it by breathing it into us. A. B. Simpson was one who knew the experience of breathing in Christ. The opening lines of one of his hymns read: “O Lord, breathe Thy Spirit on me, Teach me how to breathe Thee in” (*Hymns*, #255).

According to [John 1:1](#) and [14](#), the Word, who was in the beginning with God and who is God, became flesh. In [verse 29](#) we see that this Word become flesh is the Lamb of God. On the one hand, He is the Lamb for accomplishing redemption; on the other hand, He is the tree for imparting life. Therefore, we may speak of Him as the Lamb-tree. According to [John 15](#), the branches of the vine are the living of the vine. Ultimately, the Lamb-tree becomes the holy breath. Hallelujah! In our experience we have Christ as the Word, the Lamb, the tree, and the breath. The Word is for expression, the Lamb is



for redemption, the tree is for the impartation of life, and the breath is for our living.

## A LIFE OF COINHERENCE

The Gospel of John reveals that, as those who believe in Christ, we need to live Christ. [John 6:57](#) says, “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me shall also live because of Me.” Just as the Lord Jesus lived because of the Father, we should live because of Him. As we have pointed out, the Lord Jesus, referring to the day of His resurrection, said, “In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” ([John 14:20](#)). He also said that because He lives, we shall live also ([v. 19](#)). According to [John 14:19 and 20](#), we live in Christ in the way of coinherence. He lives in the Father, we live in Him, and He lives in us. We not only coexist with Christ—we coinhere with Him. This means that He lives in us and we live in Him. How wonderful is this life of coinherence!

We have a life of coinherence with Christ because He is not only the Word, the Lamb, and the tree, but also the breath, the Spirit. If He were only the Word, the Lamb, and the tree, we could not live in Him, and He could not live



in us. Praise Him that today He is not merely the Word, the Lamb, and the tree, but also the pneuma, the breath, the Spirit!

## PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

In [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) Paul charges us to pray without ceasing. What does it mean to pray unceasingly? Although we may eat several meals a day and although we may drink many times during the day, no one can eat and drink without ceasing. But we certainly breathe unceasingly. Paul's command to pray without ceasing implies that unceasing prayer is like breathing. But how can our prayer become our spiritual breathing? How can we turn prayer into breathing? The way to do this is to call on the name of the Lord. We need to call on the Lord Jesus continually. This is the way to breathe, to pray without ceasing. Because we are not accustomed to this, we need to practice calling on the Lord's name all the time. To live is to breathe. Spiritually speaking, to breathe is to call on the Lord's name and to pray. By calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, we breathe the Spirit.

After Paul charges us to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in everything, he tells us not to quench the Spirit ([1 Thes. 5:19](#)). This

indicates that if we do not pray and give thanks, we quench the Spirit. To stop praying is to stop breathing. Thus, to quench the Spirit is to cease from breathing.

In [1 Thessalonians 5:19](#) Paul speaks of the Spirit, not of the Spirit of God nor of the Holy Spirit. According to the New Testament, the Spirit is the Triune God processed to become the life-giving Spirit. If we do not call on the Lord's name, we shall quench the Spirit.

## **BREATHING TO LIVE CHRIST**

Just as we must breathe in order to live physically, we must breathe spiritually in order to live Christ. The way to breathe spiritually is to call on the name of the Lord. From my experience I have learned that the way to live Christ is to call on Him continually. It is not sufficient simply to pray several times during the day, in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. If we pray at these times but do not call on the Lord continually, we shall quench the Spirit. All day long, no matter where we are or what we are doing, we need to call on the Lord. Whatever we are doing, we should call on the Lord Jesus. I can testify that even when I speak for the Lord I call on Him and breathe of Him deep within.

Call on the Lord's name in every situation, even when you are about to lose your temper. By calling on the Lord, you will live Christ. However, if you make up your mind not to lose your temper, you will be defeated. Your temper will be worse. Instead of trying to control your temper, turn to the Lord and call on Him. Say, "Lord Jesus, I love You. Lord, I am going to lose my temper. Be one with me in this." If you do this, you will be saved from your temper, and you will live Christ.

To pray without ceasing by calling on the Lord's name is to live Him. By calling on the Lord, we automatically take Him as our life and spontaneously live Him. If we pray, we shall not do things by ourselves, apart from Christ. Instead, by praying without ceasing, we shall live Christ.

Christ is not only our life, but also our breath. Have you ever realized that Christ is your breath? If you breathe Him all the time, you will live Him. After years of groping, I have discovered that the way to live Christ is to breathe Him, and the way to breathe Him is to call on Him without ceasing.

In [1 Timothy 6:12](#) Paul says, "Lay hold on the eternal life to which you were called." We have been called to eternal life. Now we must

lay hold on this life by calling on the Lord all day long. By calling on Him, we breathe Him.

The Bible reveals that our God today is very wonderful. He created the universe and all things in it according to His plan. One day Christ, who is the very God, was incarnated, born of a virgin. After living on earth for thirty-three and a half years, He was crucified on the cross to redeem us by taking away our sins. On the cross, the Lord Jesus also destroyed His enemy, the Devil. Then He was buried in the tomb and went into Hades. After touring the region of death, He came forth in resurrection. According to [Acts 2:24](#), Hades exercised its power to hold Him, but to no avail. As the very resurrection life, He could not be held by death. When He entered into resurrection, His physical body was transformed into a glorious spiritual body. It is a fact that Christ in resurrection still has a body. Nevertheless, the Bible also reveals that in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit: “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). This Spirit is now our breath.

[Second Corinthians 3:6](#) says, “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” According to Darby’s *New Translation*, [verses 7 through 16](#) are in parentheses. This indicates that Darby regards [verse 17](#)

as the direct continuation of [verse 6](#). [Verse 17](#) declares, “And the Lord is the Spirit.” The Lord is the Spirit who gives life, and this Spirit is our breath.

On the one hand, the Lord is on the throne in heaven. We worship Him, adore Him, and praise Him as our ascended and enthroned Lord. On the other hand, He is with us on earth. Whenever a person believes in Him, He comes into that one and seals him. This seal is actually the Lord Himself. This means that when we call on the Lord and believe in Him, He attaches Himself to us and causes us to be attached to Him. From that time onward, He and we are one. “He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit” ([1 Cor. 6:17](#)).

## **RECEIVING THE SPIRIT BY CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**

To receive the life-giving Spirit, we simply need to exercise our spirit and call on the name of the Lord Jesus. We may also share in this enjoyment by pray-reading the Word. Again I say, no matter what you are doing, call on the name of the Lord Jesus. If you call without ceasing, you will not quench the Spirit.



I can testify from my own experience that if I do not call on the Lord, I cannot live. But if I call on Him, everything is fine. Often when you greet a person and ask him how he is, he will answer, “Oh, I’m fine.” Actually, for the most part, people are not fine. Only those who call on the Lord Jesus without ceasing can truly say that they are fine. Often we are troubled by little things in our daily life. The car may not start, or a shoelace may break. Such things can be aggravating and make us angry. When you are angry over a car that will not start or over a broken shoelace, can you honestly say that you are fine? I repeat, only those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus truly are fine.

There is no need always to call on the Lord purposely or deliberately. We may call on Him subconsciously, unconsciously, and unintentionally. This is true breathing. Breathing is unintentional. Let us practice to build up a habit of calling on the Lord’s name until we call unconsciously and unintentionally.

## **APPLYING THE LORD AND ENJOYING HIM**

We should be those who care for the proper and rich enjoyment of our living Lord. He is God,



the Word, the Lamb, the tree, and the life-giving Spirit as our breath, so present and available. He has redeemed us through His blood, and now, as the Spirit, He dwells in us. We abide in Him, and He abides in us. As branches of the vine, we are one in life with the vine and experience the inward flowing of the life of the vine. How marvelous is the salvation we enjoy today! The very Triune God has passed through a process to become our breath. Now by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, we breathe Him in.

When we receive Him by calling on His name, we apply Him to ourselves. Then we have a deep sense that we are enjoying Him. I cannot deny the fact that whenever I call on the Lord Jesus, I have a sweet sense within. Oh, He waters, refreshes, nourishes, strengthens, and enlightens me! He is so enjoyable that sometimes I am beside myself with joy. The processed God is so great, yet He is so enjoyable and obtainable.

I encourage you to call on the Lord, saying, "Lord Jesus, I love You." As you enjoy the Lord in this way, you may weep out of a sense of His sweetness, loveliness, and preciousness. When we call on Him, He touches us inwardly. This is the true experience of living Christ by breathing

the holy breath. May we all exercise ourselves more and more to receive and enjoy the holy breath.

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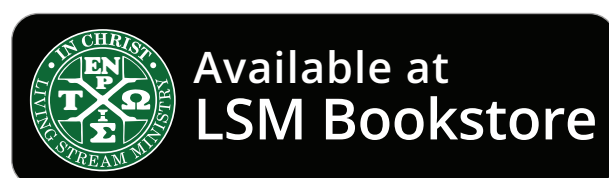


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# **THE RICH WORD FOR LIVING CHRIST**

## **GOD'S ECONOMY VERSUS THE NATURAL CONCEPT**

There is a great difference between God's economy and the natural human concept. Our concept is that after we are saved we should make up our minds to improve our behavior. According to our concept, we need to improve ourselves. Conscious of our weakness, we beg God to help us. However, God does not answer this kind of prayer. The more we pray that He will help us to improve, the less He will do. On the contrary, our behavior may even worsen. The reason for this is that the concept of receiving help from God to improve our behavior is contrary to God's economy. God's economy is to dispense Himself into us and to work Himself into us that we may take Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him. This is not to have an improved human character; it is to live God. According to His economy, God's intention is to impart His element, His substance, and the



ingredients of His nature into our being that we may live Him.

## **NOT OUTWARD CORRECTION BUT INWARD TRANSFUSION**

We may use other terms to describe God's desire to dispense Himself into us. God wants to water us, feed us, refresh us, and nourish us. These terms indicate that God wants to be our life, life supply, food, drink, and air. He is our food to nourish us; our drink to quench our thirst; our air to refresh us; and our life supply to enrich us. As the divine Being, He infuses us with His elements, causing us to be the same as He in life and nature.

In His economy God does not improve us outwardly. Instead, He transmits all that He is into us. The difference between outward correction and inward transfusion can be illustrated by the difference between applying makeup and having a healthy complexion because of eating properly. Man's way is to apply makeup. God's way is to transform us metabolically; it is to nourish, refresh, water, enrich, and strengthen us. This is God's economy. God is rich in His nourishing, watering, feeding, refreshing, and shining. Oh, His shining brings in His riches! The air, water,

and food also supply His riches to us. In the Bible God likens Himself to food, water, air, and sunshine. [Psalm 84:11](#) says that the Lord is our sun. God does not merely teach us; He nourishes us, waters us, and infuses all His riches into our inner being. This is God's way.

## CONSTITUTED OF WHAT WE EAT

God's purpose in transmitting His riches into us is that we may live Him. Dietitians tell us that we are what we eat. If we eat a great deal of a certain kind of food, we shall be constituted of that food. When I was young, I noticed that everyone who lived in the home of my grandparents smelled like fish. My mother explained to me that the people in that area eat fish three times a day. Because they ate so much fish, they became constituted of fish. This illustrates the fact that we are what we eat. If we eat Christ, we shall be constituted of Him.

God's economy is that we eat Christ and become constituted of Him. In [John 6](#) the Lord Jesus says that He is the bread of life, the bread which came down from heaven, and that those who eat Him will live because of Him ([vv. 35, 41, 57](#)). Then in [John 7](#) He sounds the call: "If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink"

(v. 37). This the Lord Jesus said concerning the Spirit. In [Revelation 22:17](#) the call is sounded once again to come and drink. The Lord calls us to drink of the Spirit, of the processed Triune God. Having passed through the steps of a divine process, the Triune God is now a universal, all-inclusive drink, prepared and available.

Every meeting of the church should be a feast. The Lord calls us to partake of Him as our food and drink. Whether or not a particular meeting is of the Lord can be determined by whether or not there is a “dining table” in that meeting. In every meeting there is a dining table set for us, and we have the opportunity to eat and drink of the Triune God.

By now it should be clear that what we need is not outward improvement or correction. Our need is to take in the Triune God by eating and drinking of Him. According to God’s ordination, the way to partake of Him is to eat Him and drink Him.

## **THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELLING IN US RICHLY**

Now we come to the crucial matter of where to find the processed Triune God as the all-inclusive drink. It is true to say that He is in

heaven. It is also true that He is in us. But although the Triune God indwells us as the all-inclusive Spirit, He may not dwell in us richly. In [Colossians 3:16](#) Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” What does it mean to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly? Years ago I thought that this meant that we should memorize Bible verses and be able to recite them. According to my concept at the time, to let the word of Christ dwell in me richly was to memorize more and more verses. However, this is not the meaning of Paul’s word in [Colossians 3:16](#).

For the word of Christ to dwell in us richly means that it inhabits us, indwells us, in a rich way. This can be illustrated by eating. After we eat a meal, the food inhabits us in a rich way. The food contains many rich, nourishing elements. When we take this nourishing food into us and assimilate it, it indwells us richly. In like manner, for the word of Christ to dwell in us richly means that it inhabits us in the way of nourishment and enrichment. This is not a matter of memorizing verses, but a matter of having the Word containing the unsearchable riches of

Christ dwell in us in such a way that it nourishes us and enriches us.

It is possible for the same verse of the Bible to enter into us either in a rich way or in a poor way. At one time you may not be able to digest and assimilate a particular verse. But at another time the Word may be rich in its entering into you and dwell in you richly. We all need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

## SINGING THE WORD

At this point it is important to consider the way to let the word of Christ inhabit us richly. Paul gives us the way in [Colossians 3:16](#), where he says “in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” Here Paul indicates that we should teach and admonish, not in an ordinary way, but in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Psalms are often rather long, spiritual songs tend to be short, and hymns are usually of medium length. As we admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, we should sing with grace in our hearts to God. We need to sing with the exercise of the spirit. The more we sing in this way, the more we shall be inspired and set on fire. By this



kind of singing, we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Suppose in a meeting we sing a hymn composed of [Ephesians 3:16-21](#). If we sing these verses with the exercise of the spirit, this portion of the Word will inhabit us richly, and we shall receive nourishment. This nourishment is supplied first to the spirit, not to the mentality. By singing with our spirit, we have a way to let the word of Christ inhabit us with all its riches to nourish us.

## **DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD**

In [Colossians 3:17](#) Paul goes on to say, “And in everything, whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” What does it mean to do all things in the name of the Lord? To act in a person’s name is to be one with him and even to become him. If I am not one with a particular person, how can I do anything in his name? If we are to do everything in the name of the Lord, we must be one with Him and even become Him. To do this is to live Christ.

The more we take the Word by reading, pray-reading, and especially sing-reading, the more



the riches of the Word will saturate us and make us one with the Lord. Then we shall do things not in our own name, but in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The way to live Christ is to take the Word by exercising our spirit. It is not sufficient merely to use our mind to read the Word. We must also exercise our spirit by praying the Word and singing it. I hope that in the church meetings we shall spend more time singing the Word of God. Let us first read the Word and then pray-read it. Following this, let us sing the Word. Then we shall become thoroughly saturated with the riches of the Word.

Because the Word is the embodiment of the riches of Christ, to be saturated with the Word is to be infused with and permeated by the elements of Christ. This infusion and permeation causes us to become one with Christ and to do everything in His name. In all that we say and do, we shall be one with Him. As we are permeated by the enriching Word, we become one with the Lord Jesus and do everything in His name. This is the way to live Christ.

God's intention is to have a people who are one with Him, not in His Godhead, but in His life and nature. Those who are one with God in the

divine life and nature are able to express Him. What God is seeking today is a group of people who live Christ by taking the rich Word into them.

## **THE WORD BECOMING THE BOUNTIFUL SPIRIT**

Whenever we are saturated with the riches of the Word, the Word within us becomes the bountiful Spirit. This takes place through our unceasing prayer. Perhaps you are wondering what this kind of prayer has to do with singing. Singing is an excellent way to pray. When you sing by exercising your spirit, you pray. Often the best prayer we can offer to God is our singing unto Him. Suppose you sing, “Oh, what a life! Oh, what a peace! The Christ who’s all within me lives.” This is an excellent prayer.

We also pray when we thank God. When we do things in the name of the Lord Jesus, we should also give thanks to God the Father through Him.

By praying, singing, and thanking we are infused with Christ, permeated by Him, and mingled with Him. Many of us can testify that, as we were enjoying a certain portion of the Word, spontaneously a melody welled up from within. Then we began to use this melody to sing the

Word to the Lord. By singing, we were saturated with the Word and nourished by its riches. This caused us to be thankful to God. At that time we were truly one with Christ. Whatever we did in word or work was done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Again I say, this is to live Christ.

We need to see that the Word, the bountiful supply of the Spirit, and unceasing prayer with singing and thanking all go together. By our prayer with singing and giving thanks, the rich Word within us becomes the bountiful Spirit. Then because we are one with the Spirit, with the Word, and with Christ, we live Christ; we are truly one with Him in all we say and do.

Every day we must come to the Word and allow the Word to enter into us in a rich way. For this, we need more than just the reading of the Word. We also need praying, singing, thanking, and praising. When we take the Word into us in this way, the Word becomes the Spirit with the bountiful supply. Then we are saturated with the Lord, mingled with Him, and one with Him in a practical way in life and nature. Gradually, the killing element in the Word will deal with the negative things in us—the flesh, the self, and the natural life. At the same time, the Word will nourish, strengthen, and enrich us, supplying us

with all the elements we need for our spiritual growth. On the one hand, we are saturated with the Word and the Spirit; on the other hand, the negative things are gradually reduced. This will cause us to live Christ and grow in Him.

Once again I would urge you to combine the rich Word, the bountiful Spirit, and unceasing prayer. Take the Word of God not only by reading, but also by pray-reading and sing-reading. Also praise the Lord and give thanks to Him. Combine the rich Word and the bountiful supply of the Spirit with unceasing prayer. Then you will enjoy the Lord, partake of Him, be one with Him, live Him, grow in Him, and magnify Him. This is what God desires today.

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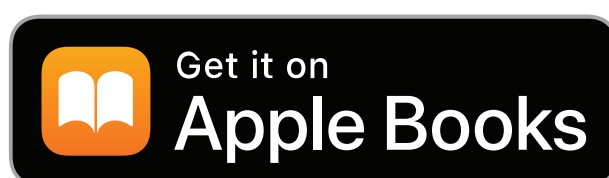
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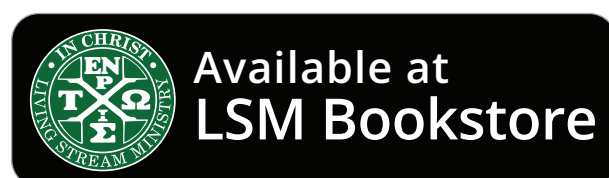


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# THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE— TO LIVE CHRIST

According to God's economy revealed in the New Testament, the goal of the Christian life is to live Christ. When I was young, I was taught that the central thought of the Bible is related to Christ. Now I realize that the central thought of the Bible is not only Christ, but also to live Christ.

## CHRIST ABIDING IN US AND LIVING IN US

Simply to say that Christ is the central thought of the Bible is rather objective. In our experience, Christ should be very subjective to us. For instance, the Lord Jesus says, "Abide in Me and I in you" ([John 15:4](#)). This expression is simple, but the meaning is profound.

In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." To say that Christ lives in us is even stronger than to say that He abides in us. When I visit another locality, I may abide

in a brother's home. However, I cannot say that I live there. I only abide there temporarily with certain limitations. But when I return to my home, I can live there. To live in a certain place is to have full liberty. To say that Christ lives in us means that He has the full liberty to speak, act, and behave. He is able to do in us whatever He desires, for He has redeemed us and made us His dwelling place.

## **CHRIST MAKING HIS HOME IN US AND BEING FORMED IN US**

According to [Ephesians 3](#), Paul prayed that the Father would strengthen us through the Spirit in our inner man that Christ may make His home in our hearts. First Christ abides in us, then He lives in us, and then He settles down in us, making His home in our whole inner being. On the one hand, Christ may live in our spirit. But on the other hand, we may not give Him much room to live in our mind, will, or emotion. From experience we know that sometimes we restrict Christ to our spirit. When He tries to spread from our spirit into our emotion, we may not allow Him to do so. For example, in the morning a brother may pray to the Lord, enjoy Him, and declare, "Hallelujah, the Lord Jesus is living in

my spirit!” But, later that day he is tempted to do a certain thing. Even though the Lord who lives in his spirit does not agree, the brother, living according to his emotion, insists on doing that thing. He reasons with the Lord, trying to persuade Him to stay in his spirit and give him the freedom to live according to his emotion. He even promises that the next day he will give the Lord the freedom to spread into his emotion. But when the next day comes, he does not keep his promise. Thus, the Lord is not given the liberty to settle down in this brother’s emotion.

This is why we need our inner man, our regenerated spirit, to be strengthened. Then Christ will be able to make His home in our hearts. He will not only abide in us and live in us, but spread into every part of our inner being and settle down there.

It is important for us to see that Christ should be subjective to us in our experience. He abides in us, He lives in us, and He desires to make His home, to settle Himself, throughout our inner being.

In [Galatians 4:19](#) Paul says, “My children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you.” For Christ to be formed in us means that

He abides in us, lives in us, settles down in us, and then saturates every part of our being.

## CONSTITUTED OF CHRIST

As Christians, we differ in the measure of Christ we have within us. Some have given more ground to Christ; others have given Him less room to grow in them. No doubt Paul's measure of Christ was full. This means that Christ had been fully formed in him. In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul could even declare, "To me to live is Christ." Christ had been wrought into Paul and had actually become his constituent. Therefore, Paul was a man completely constituted of Christ. This was the reason he could say that to him to live was Christ.

Dietitians often tell us that we are what we eat. The food we eat eventually becomes our constitution. It is wrought into our fibers and even our cells. If a person eats a great deal of a certain food, he will eventually become constituted of that food.

By the time Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he had been a believer in Christ for nearly thirty years. Throughout those years, Christ had been more and more wrought into Paul's inner being. Paul was continually eating

Christ, partaking of Him. Eventually, having been constituted of Christ, he became a Christ-man. As one who was constituted of Christ, he could testify, “To me to live is Christ.”

We today should be the continuation of Paul’s testimony. We are here to live Christ, to have Christ wrought into us until our mind, emotion, and will are constituted of Him.

## A METABOLIC CHANGE

In [Romans 12:2](#) Paul charges us not to be conformed to this age, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. To be conformed to this age is to be fashioned outwardly according to the style of the age, according to the trend of the world. To be transformed is to be inwardly and organically renewed.

The more we are transformed, the more Christ is given room to settle down in us. In fact, the process of transformation is the process of being occupied and possessed by Christ. For our mind to be transformed means that Christ has taken possession of it and saturated it with Himself. Likewise, when our emotion and will are saturated with Christ, He becomes the very constituent of these inward parts. In this way Christ becomes subjective to us.



## THE EXPERIENTIAL CHRIST

According to Christian experience, the Christ who dwells in us is identical to the Spirit who indwells us. The indwelling Spirit is the practical Christ, the subjective and experiential Christ. The Three of the Godhead are one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. When the Spirit reaches us and comes to live in us, all Three of the Godhead come to dwell in us. How wonderful that Christ is in us! Our Christ is subjective and experiential.

If we would live Christ, we must realize that He is subjective as well as objective. As the mighty God, the Lord of all, the One who has ascended to the heavens, and who has been enthroned and crowned with glory, Christ is objective. Of this we should not have any doubt. But Christ is also subjective. He dwells in us, He lives in us, He is seeking to settle Himself in us, and He is also working to saturate our entire being with Himself.

## CHRIST MAGNIFIED

Let us now consider [Philippians 1:19-21](#). In [verse 19](#) Paul says that his circumstances will turn out for his salvation through the petition of

the saints and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to [verse 20](#), we see that the salvation Paul expected to experience was that instead of being put to shame, in everything Christ would be magnified in him with all boldness. Thus, for Paul's environment to turn out to be for his salvation means that it would turn out for the magnification of Christ in him. Hence, salvation here is actually Christ magnified in him. The words, "To me to live is Christ" in [verse 21](#) are an explanation of what it means to magnify Christ. To magnify Christ is to live Him. On the negative side, Paul expected that he would not be put to shame; on the positive side, he expected Christ to be magnified in him.

According to the context of these verses, salvation here is not salvation from hell. Instead, it is salvation from being put to shame. If Paul had been sorrowful and downcast when he was in prison, that would have been a shame. Suppose Timothy came to visit Paul and found him weeping over his difficult situation. What a shame that would have been to Paul! But suppose Paul rejoiced in the Lord and sang praises to Him. Then Christ truly would have been magnified in his body, even though he was a prisoner in Rome. This is the salvation spoken of here.

Paul's earnest expectation was that instead of being put to shame, he would magnify Christ. What a tremendous salvation it is to magnify Christ in all circumstances! The jailers and the guards could see Paul rejoicing in the Lord. In him Christ was magnified. To magnify Christ in such a way is to live Him.

## **SAVED THROUGH THE INDWELLING SPIRIT AND THE OPERATING GOD**

In [Philippians 2:12](#) Paul charges us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In [Philippians 1:19-20](#) Paul speaks of something turning out for salvation, but in [2:12](#) he tells us to work out our salvation. In [verse 13](#) he goes on to explain, "For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." In [chapter one](#) salvation comes by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But here salvation comes from the operating God within us. Now we must see that the operating God is actually the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The One who operates in us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure is the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ with His bountiful supply.

Paul says in [2:14](#), “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” If we murmur or reason, we offend the indwelling and operating God. When we murmur or reason, we may have the sense deep within that we are offending the operating God, grieving the indwelling Spirit. Furthermore, we may have the sense that the indwelling Spirit is telling us not to reason or murmur, but to work out our own salvation. We have received an all-inclusive salvation, which is Christ Himself, but now we must work out this salvation. The very God who is the Spirit with the bountiful supply is operating in us. With fear and trembling, let us respect Him and cooperate with Him to work out our salvation. If we do this, we shall be saved from murmurings and reasonings. This is a practical and instant salvation worked out according to the inward operation of God.

## **SHINING AS LUMINARIES AND HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE**

In [Philippians 2:15-16](#) Paul continues, “That you may become blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom

you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” To shine as luminaries is to magnify Christ. This indicates that the salvation in [chapter two](#) equals the salvation in [chapter one](#). The operating God equals the Spirit with the bountiful supply, and shining as luminaries is equal to magnifying Christ.

According to [verse 16](#), the way we shine as luminaries is to hold forth the word of life. It is rather difficult to understand adequately the meaning of the phrase “holding forth.” It means to present something to people, to offer them something, and even to apply something to them. To hold forth the word of life is to offer such a word to others, to present it to them, and even to apply it to them. This is to minister Christ to others, to offer Christ to them. What do you offer to your family, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, friends, or classmates? What do you present to them? Your answer should be that you offer Christ to them, present Christ to them, and apply Christ to them in their situation. This is to hold forth the word of life. The word of life is actually the living expression of Christ. To shine as luminaries is to magnify Christ, and to hold forth the word of life is to live Christ.



## A DEFINITION OF LIVING CHRIST

Both [Philippians 1:19-21](#) and [2:12-16](#) refer to the same thing. In [chapter one](#) Paul says that his circumstances will turn out to his salvation. Then instead of being put to shame, he will magnify Christ. This is to live Christ. In [chapter two](#) Paul charges us to work out our salvation according to God's operation within us. Then instead of murmuring and reasoning, we shall shine as luminaries, holding forth the word of life. [Philippians 2:12-16](#) is thus a definition of [1:19-21](#). In [1:19](#) we have the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This Spirit is the very God who operates in us. Furthermore, to magnify Christ is to shine as luminaries without murmuring or reasoning, and to live Christ is to hold forth the word of life.

## SATURATED WITH THE WORD OF LIFE

This brings us to a crucial matter: to live Christ we must first receive the word of life and be constituted of it. If we would live Christ, we need to receive the Word into our being and allow it to saturate us. The more we are infused with the Word, the more we shall be transformed. Spontaneously our thought, love, aspiration, and



conversation will become Christ. The word of life infused into us will wash away the elements of culture and become the new constituent in our inner being. Then we shall live Christ.

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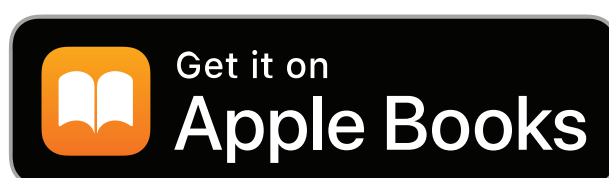
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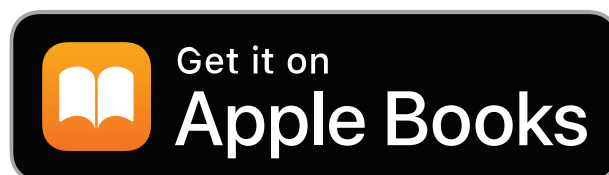
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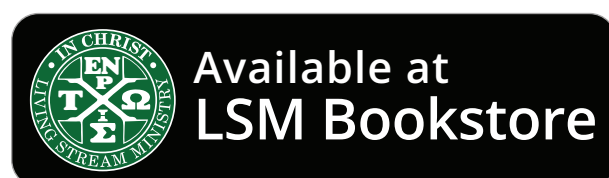


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# **SATURATED WITH THE WORD TO LIVE CHRIST**

**Colossians 3:16** says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.” Here Paul says that the word of Christ should dwell in us, inhabit us. This implies that the word of Christ is living. In order for something to dwell in us, or to inhabit us, it must be living.

## **A LIVING PERSON**

Paul’s expression in this verse indicates that the word of Christ is very much like a living person. Paul almost personifies the word of Christ; he tells us to let this word inhabit us, as if it were a living person. The word of Christ is actually the living Person of Christ. Moreover, according to the New Testament, the living Person of Christ is the Spirit. Jesus is the name of this Person, and the reality of this Person is the Spirit. For this reason, whenever we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, it is the Spirit who comes.

Furthermore, the Word and the Spirit are one. Hence, when the word of Christ dwells in us, the Spirit inhabits us.

## IN ALL WISDOM

In [Colossians 3:16](#) Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly “in all wisdom.” Have you ever considered what it means for the word of Christ to dwell in you in all wisdom? If we would understand the meaning of this expression, we must differentiate between wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is related primarily to the function of the mind, whereas wisdom is related to the function of our spirit. This means that if the word of Christ is to dwell in us in all wisdom, we need to exercise our spirit. If we use our mind to memorize the Word, the Word will then dwell in us in knowledge. Memorizing Bible verses is a function of the mind related to knowledge, not a function of the spirit related to wisdom. For the Word to dwell in us in all wisdom refers to its indwelling every way possible through the exercise of the spirit. Wisdom is deeper, finer, and more profound than knowledge. It comes from the exercise of the spirit.

The difference between knowledge and wisdom can be illustrated in married life. Suppose



a brother's wife is murmuring and even rebukes him. If he fights back by reasoning with her, he will exercise his mind with its knowledge. In this, there is no wisdom. But suppose while his wife is murmuring, he calls on the name of the Lord Jesus and prays. This is wisdom. To reason is related to knowledge, but to pray is related to wisdom. Pray-reading and singing may also be related to wisdom. The brother may also show wisdom by exercising his spirit to share a helpful testimony he heard recently in a church meeting. The point here is that knowledge involves the exercise of the mind, but wisdom involves the exercise of the spirit by such means as praying, pray-reading, singing, and testifying.

When Paul speaks in [Colossians 3:16](#) of letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, he does not mention reading, which is an exercise of the mind. Rather, he mentions wisdom, which implies the exercise of the spirit. What issues from exercise of the spirit is wisdom, but what comes through the exercise of the mind is knowledge.

## TEACHING AND ADMONISHING

In this verse Paul also speaks of “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns,

and spiritual songs, singing with grace” in our hearts to God. Here Paul does not speak of teaching and admonishing in an ordinary way, but of teaching and admonishing in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Furthermore, Paul indicates that it is by singing that we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. We may also teach and admonish by singing.

## **SINGING TO THE LORD**

Nowhere in the New Testament are we told that Christians should gather together and sit quietly, waiting for someone to start the meeting. According to the book of Psalms, when the children of Israel came together for the feasts three times a year, they began their meetings not in the temple, but at the foot of Mount Zion. As they ascended the mountain, they psalmed the songs of ascent ([Psalms 120 through 134](#)). Likewise, the church meetings should begin not in the meeting hall, but either in our homes or on our way to the meeting. The meeting should be an exhibition of our daily life, of the way we live at home, at school, or at work. The meeting should be full of singing and praising because we sing and praise the Lord day by day. I appreciate the chorus of the hymn, “This is my story,

this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.” But where can you find a Christian who praises the Lord all day long? Many Christians who sing this hymn do not praise their Savior in their daily living. But our daily life should be filled with singing to the Lord.

Many of us have read the Bible for years without realizing that we can receive the Word of God by singing. Is it your practice to take a verse of the Bible not only by reading, but also by singing? Christians have been taught to study the Bible and to read it, but not to sing it. We are thankful for the recovery of pray-reading the Word. Now we must go on to sing-read the Word of God. We need to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom by singing. This is not my teaching; it is the charge given by the Apostle Paul in [Colossians 3:16](#).

Even though we have been reading Colossians for years, we have not paid adequate attention to taking the Word by singing. Many Christians claim to be scriptural. But instead of being wholly scriptural, they may be formal and religious. It certainly is scriptural to sing the Word of God.

We should sing the Word not only in the meetings, but especially in our daily life. In

particular, we should sing the Word at home. When you are alone in your room or with others at the dining table, sing the Word of God. Singing the Word is an excellent way to exercise the spirit. To pray is to exercise the spirit, but to sing is an especially good way to exercise the spirit.

The longest book of the Bible is the book of Psalms, containing one hundred fifty psalms. This book was composed not merely for reading; it was written for singing, even for psalming. Psalming is more elevated than singing. In [Colossians 3:16](#) Paul mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Spiritual songs are usually short; hymns, of medium length; and psalms are usually longer compositions. We need to sing and psalm the Word of God. Psalming is higher, deeper, and more profound than singing.

## **SATURATED WITH THE WORD**

If we sincerely desire to be saturated with the living Word so that we may live Christ, we need to follow the practice advocated by Paul in [Colossians 3:16](#). This means that we must let the word of Christ inhabit us in a rich way, not by mere knowledge from the mind, but by

every kind of wisdom from our spirit, including singing and psalming. Oh, we need to sing and psalm the Word of God! To sing the Word is better than reading it, and to psalm the Word is even better than singing it. Psalming the Word includes musing upon it and enjoying it. As we psalm the Word, we dwell upon it, muse on it, and enjoy it, thereby giving more opportunity for the Word to saturate us.

If we only read the Word, there is little opportunity for the portion we read to sink into us and saturate our being. But if we sing the Word, and especially if we psalm it, we open our being more fully to the Word and give it the opportunity to sink into us and saturate us. For example, if we sing [Psalm 1](#), we shall enjoy the riches found in this short psalm. Let us sing and psalm the Word of God not only in the meetings. Let us come to the Word daily to sing and psalm it with our whole being. In singing and psalming the Word of God, let us exercise our voice, our mind, our heart, and our spirit.

I hope that from now on in the church meetings more place will be given to spontaneous singing of the Word. Perhaps in a certain meeting we shall sing or psalm the whole book of Ephesians. No doubt, if we spend an entire



meeting to do this, we shall touch the riches in this Epistle.

It is surprising that in [Colossians 3:16](#) Paul does not mention reading. Instead, he emphasizes singing. It is possible to read the Word without exercising our spirit and without contacting God. But by praying, singing, and psalming, we are ushered into the Spirit. The best way to receive the word of life and to be saturated with the element of Christ is to sing the Word.

## FILLED IN SPIRIT

[Ephesians 5:18-19](#) is parallel to [Colossians 3:16](#). In these verses Paul says, “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled in spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord.” Notice that in [Colossians 3:16](#) Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, but in [Ephesians 5:18](#) he tells us to be filled in spirit. When we put these verses together, we see that we should be filled in spirit with the word of Christ. These two portions of the Word have the same goal—that we should have our spirit filled with the Word.



We may compare our spirit to an automobile needing gasoline, and the Word, the Bible, to a gas station. When we sense that we are empty, we should come to the Word to be filled. In the Word we have an inexhaustible supply of spiritual gasoline. The way to pump this “gasoline” into us is by singing and psalming the Word. If we are filled in this way, surely we shall speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We shall also discover that singing and psalming the Word are higher than pray-reading it.

The more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more we shall be delivered from the influence of religion, the influence which causes us to come to the meetings in a formal way. Let us build up the habit of singing the Word day by day. Then our meetings will not be formal. Instead of any kind of performance, the meetings will be filled with an exhibition of our daily life. What we exhibit in the church meetings will be the way we live day by day. In particular, we shall sing in the meetings because we sing the Word daily.

Concerning the singing of the Word of God, my main burden is not that the meetings will be enriched; it is that we shall be saturated with the

living Word. We shall participate in the bountiful supply of the Spirit and enjoy the riches of Christ by receiving the Word of God.

In the past I lost many opportunities to be saturated with the Word because I did not know to sing the Word. I spent a great deal of time reading and studying the Bible, filling several Bibles with notes, but I did not realize I could sing or psalm the Word. It is one thing to read [Ephesians 2](#) and another thing to pray-read it. But once again I wish to emphasize that singing the Word is even better than pray-reading. Many of today's Christians exercise only their mind to read and study the Word. They do not sing the Word at all. I am confident that the more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we shall be washed by and saturated with the element of Christ.

## RECEIVING THE WORD

Concerning those things necessary for life, what is important is not understanding, but receiving. We may not understand very much about the water we drink and especially about the food we eat, but we need to drink and eat nevertheless. By eating and drinking we receive what is necessary to maintain life. In like manner,

we need to receive the Word into us by eating it. Yes, we can eat the Word by reading it in a proper way. Furthermore, from experience we know that we can take the Word as food by pray-reading it. But now we must go on to see that there is no better way to receive the Word into our being than by singing the Word. The more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more it will sink into the depths of our being and saturate us. If we take even a little time to sing the Word, we shall sense that we are inwardly filled and saturated with it. Then spontaneously we shall live Christ.

When the element of Christ has been infused into us by our singing and psalming the Word, we live Christ spontaneously and automatically. Sometimes we may read the Word without having any element of Christ infused into our being. But when we sing and psalm the Word, we are saturated with the divine element contained in the Word and conveyed to us through the Word. The more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we give opportunity to the Word to dwell in us, sink into us, and permeate us with the divine element. Then we shall be constituted of the element of Christ. Automatically we shall become what we eat and

live out what we have absorbed. This is the way to live Christ.

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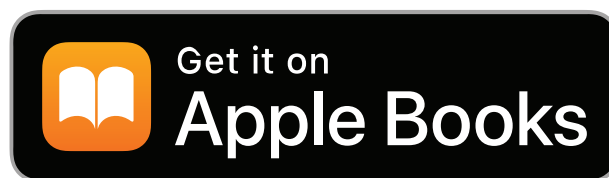
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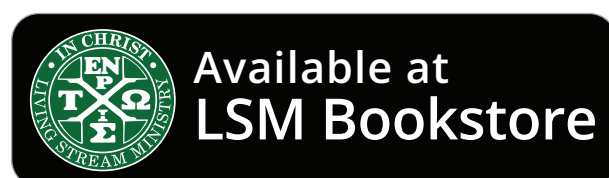


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## A LIFE FULL OF FORBEARANCE

In our reading of the book of Philippians it may seem that Paul's thought in [Philippians 4:1-7](#) is not nearly as high as that expressed in the first three chapters. In [chapter one](#) he speaks of living Christ and magnifying Him; in [chapter two](#), of taking Christ as our pattern, of shining as lights in the world, and of holding forth the word of life; and in [chapter three](#), of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and of pursuing toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Then in [chapter four](#) Paul uses expressions that apparently are quite ordinary: "Rejoice in the Lord"; "Let your forbearance be known to all men"; and "In nothing be anxious." Suppose as you were pursuing toward the goal for the prize someone suddenly encouraged you not to be anxious. Would you not consider this an interruption and say, "I am pursuing Christ. I want to arrive at the goal of the out-resurrection. Why do you talk to me about anxiety?" Many readers of Philippians treasure the first three chapters, but, perhaps unconsciously, they may

consider [chapter four](#) to be on a lower level than [chapters one through three](#).

## STANDING FIRM IN THE LORD

[Philippians 4:1-7](#) is part of Paul's concluding word to [chapters one, two, and three](#). What he says in [4:1-7](#) is based on what he has previously written about living Christ, magnifying Christ, taking Christ as our pattern, knowing the excellency of Christ, pursuing toward the goal, and living in the out-resurrection.

In [4:1](#) he says, "So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, beloved." We know from [chapter three](#) that Paul aspired to be found in Christ. In [4:1](#) he tells us to stand firm in the Lord. Standing firm in the Lord is the key to letting our forbearance be known to all men. If we do not stand firm in the Lord, there is no way to make our forbearance known. In order to do anything we must have a proper standing. This is true of making known our forbearance. For this, we must stand firm in the Lord; that is, we must remain in Him. Hence, Paul's word about standing firm in the Lord is equal to the Lord's word about abiding in Him ([John 15:4](#)).

In [Philippians 4:2](#) Paul goes on to say, "I

beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.” As those who stand firm in the Lord, we should also “think the same thing in the Lord.” Apart from the Lord, we cannot think the same thing. If we would think the same thing in the Lord, we must first stand firm in Him.

**Verse 3** continues, “Yes, I ask you also, genuine yokefellow, assist them, who contended with me in the gospel, with both Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” Here Paul is asking those who were genuine yokefellows to help Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing. Paul seems to be saying, “These two sisters are my co-workers, but at least temporarily they are not in the Lord. I encourage you, genuine yokefellow, to do your best to bring them back to the Lord and help them to think the same thing in the Lord.” These sisters were co-workers who had labored with Paul and contended with him in the gospel and whose names were in the book of life. Nevertheless, for the time being they were not in the Lord.

In **verse 4** Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” When in our experience we are not in the Lord, we do not have

any joy and we cannot rejoice. Formerly Euodias and Syntyche could rejoice, but now, because they are not in the Lord, they cannot rejoice in Him.

There is a practical way by which we can know whether or not we are in the Lord. As long as you are not one with a certain brother or sister in the church, you are not in the Lord. Of course, as far as position is concerned, you are in Christ eternally. Nothing can affect our position in Christ. But practically and experientially we may not remain in Him. The fact that we are not one with a particular saint proves that we are not in the Lord.

It is very serious not to be one with even one brother or sister. Most of the saints have at least one other saint with whom they are not one. For example, suppose some sisters are serving together at a love feast. One sister may not like the way another sister is serving and she may refuse to serve with her. She may even walk away from this sister. By walking away from the sister, she actually walks out of the Lord. Instead of refusing to serve with the sister, she should make her forbearance known in that situation.

It is not easy to serve with the saints in the church. If an employee in a factory does not do

a good job, the boss can fire him. But in the church life no one is hired and no one can be fired. Just as we have been born into a family and cannot be fired from being a member of the family, so we have been born into the church and cannot be fired from being a member of the church. When difficulties arise, we should not walk away from the saints or refuse to serve with them. Instead, we should exercise our forbearance.

## **NO ANXIETY**

If we exercise forbearance, we shall not be anxious. Whenever we make our forbearance known, our anxiety is crossed out. When we exercise forbearance, we can rejoice in the Lord, and when we rejoice in the Lord, our anxiety disappears. Thus, forbearance maintains our rejoicing, and rejoicing drives away our anxiety. But whenever we do not exercise forbearance, we are not able to rejoice. Then the way is open for anxiety to enter in. This is not a mere doctrine; it is a word which touches the actual situation of our Christian life.

## **SATISFIED WITH LESS THAN OUR DUE**

At this point we need to consider in a fuller



way the meaning of forbearance. Forbearance means that we are easily satisfied, even with less than our due. This is the meaning of the Greek word rendered forbearance. To be satisfied with less than our due is in contrast to being just in an exacting way. To forbear is to make no demands on others; it is to be satisfied with whatever another party does to us or for us. Suppose a brother's wife serves him a cold drink when he preferred a hot one, and, very dissatisfied, he rebukes her for what she has done. This is not forbearance; it is being just in a very exacting manner. If the brother had shown forbearance toward his wife, he would have been satisfied with whatever she served him, even if he had not been able to drink it. He would have been satisfied with less than his due.

## **AN ALL-INCLUSIVE VIRTUE**

In his *Word Studies* Wuest points out that the Greek word rendered forbearance not only means satisfied with less than our due, but also means sweet reasonableness. The word includes self-control, patience, moderation, kindness, and gentleness. Furthermore, according to Christian experience, forbearance is all-inclusive,

for it includes all Christian virtues. This means that if we fail to exercise forbearance, we fail to exercise any Christian virtue. If a brother's wife serves him a cold drink contrary to his preference and he complains about it, then at that time he does not exhibit any Christian virtue. But if by the grace of Christ he is satisfied with less than his due and exercises forbearance toward his wife, not criticizing her or condemning her, he will show in his forbearance an all-inclusive Christian virtue. His forbearance will include patience, humility, self-control, looking to the Lord, and even the virtue of admitting that the Lord is sovereign in all things.

The reason we sometimes behave in an unseemly manner is that we lack forbearance. Negative attitudes and unkind words also come from a shortage of forbearance. When we fail to love, it is because we have no forbearance. Likewise, we may be intolerant because we lack forbearance. Even talkativeness may result from having no forbearance. If we do not have forbearance, we shall not have peace. If we do not show forbearance toward the members of our family, there will be no peace in our family life. Peace comes out of forbearance.

## MAGNIFYING CHRIST BY MAKING KNOWN OUR FORBEARANCE

Paul realized that forbearance is an all-inclusive virtue. This is the reason he says, “Let your forbearance be known to all men.” This forbearance is actually Christ Himself. In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul says, “To me to live is Christ.” Since Christ is forbearance, for Paul to live was forbearance. Paul’s earnest expectation was that Christ would be magnified in him, whether through life or through death. For Paul to magnify Christ was for him to make known his forbearance. Thus, for Christ to be magnified in us is equal to making our forbearance known to all men. The reason for this is that forbearance is Christ experienced by us in a practical way. We may speak of living Christ and testify that for us to live is Christ. However, day by day in our life at home what we need is forbearance. If we have forbearance, then in our experience we truly have Christ. If a brother’s wife offends him, what he needs to make known to her is Christ as his forbearance.

It is very difficult to be a good husband or wife. The key to being a good husband or wife

is forbearance. To repeat, forbearance includes much more than gentleness or humility. As an all-inclusive Christian virtue, forbearance is Christ Himself. In both the family life and in the church life, we need to live Christ by living a life of forbearance.

The more we consider the significance of forbearance, the more we can appreciate why Paul spoke of it in [Philippians 4:5](#). Our failures and defeats in the Christian life come because we are short of forbearance. All the saints, young and old alike, have a tendency to neglect forbearance. If we would live Christ, we must be satisfied with less than our due. We should not make exacting demands on others.

The Lord Jesus lived a life of forbearance when He was on earth. In one sense, He was very strict, but in another sense He was very tolerant. For example, although He prayed a great deal, He did not make demands of His disciples concerning prayer or condemn them because they did not pray enough.

## **THE NEARNESS OF THE LORD**

Immediately after speaking about forbearance, Paul goes on to say, “The Lord is near.” I do not oppose the understanding that this refers

to the nearness of the Lord's coming. Nevertheless, according to experience, not according to doctrine, I would say that this word refers to the Lord's presence with us today. It also strengthens Paul's exhortation that we make our forbearance known to all men. Because the Lord is near, we have no excuse for not making known our forbearance. Often we fail to exercise forbearance because we forget that the Lord is near. We do not even remember that He is actually within us. When a brother's wife serves him a cold drink instead of a hot one, will he care for the drink or for the Lord? If he cares about the drink instead of the Lord, then in his experience only the drink will be at hand, for the Lord will be far away. Because we do not realize that the Lord is near, we do not exercise forbearance. Instead, we are strict in dealing with others and make exacting demands of them without considering their situation. The more we realize the nearness of the Lord, the more satisfied we shall be and the more we shall be considerate of others and sweetly reasonable regarding their situation. If we realize that the Lord is near, we shall turn from the old creation to the new creation, to the out-resurrection, which is expressed as forbearance.

## THE EXPRESSION OF THE OUT-RESURRECTION

For Jesus, the Nazarene, to live a life full of forbearance required that He live a life in resurrection. Only a life in the out-resurrection can be a life of forbearance. Forbearance is actually the expression of a living which is in the out-resurrection, in the new creation instead of the old creation. To let our forbearance be known to all men is not simply to be kind or patient. Rather, it is to let others see a proper Christian living. This living is Christ as the out-resurrection expressed through forbearance.

### LIVING IN THE OUT-RESURRECTION

I wish to emphasize the fact that forbearance is not a matter of ethics. Forbearance is Christ. In [chapters one, two, and three of Philippians](#), Paul has much to say concerning Christ. Then in [Philippians 4:5](#) he speaks of forbearance, not of Christ. Actually, when he says, “Let your forbearance be known to all men,” he is saying, “Let Christ be manifested and magnified before all men.” After speaking about living Christ, magnifying Christ, taking Christ as the pattern, and pursuing Christ as the goal, Paul indicates that



we need to live this Christ as our forbearance. We all need the Lord to be our forbearance. To live Him as forbearance is truly to live in the out-resurrection.

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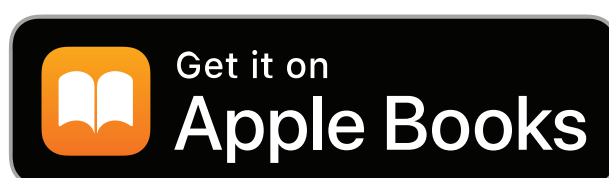
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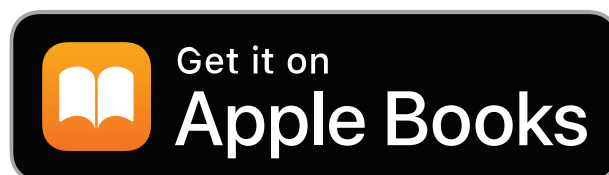
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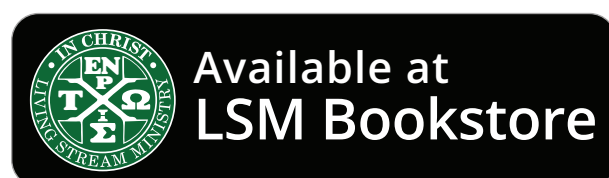


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# CHRIST AS OUR FORBEARANCE

In [Philippians 4:5](#) Paul says, “Let your forbearance be known to all men.” Although we are familiar with the word forbearance, it is not easy for us to define it adequately. Many would say that forbearance is patience. However, this term is used at the end of a book which emphasizes the experience of Christ. Philippians is not primarily concerned with morality, behavior, character, or ethics. The subject of this Epistle is the experience of Christ. All four chapters of this book are related to the experience of Christ.

## MAKING CHRIST KNOWN

As we read the first several verses of [Philippians chapter four](#), we may not have the impression that these verses still have the experience of Christ as their subject. But [verse 13](#) says, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me.” “All things” must include the exercise of forbearance spoken of in [verse 5](#). Paul charged the saints to have forbearance. Certainly he himself lived a life of forbearance. Otherwise, he would have been hypocritical in exhorting others to make their

forbearance known when he himself did not practice forbearance. Paul's word in [4:5](#) must be based on his own living, experience, and practice. Thus, forbearance must be an experience of Christ. Furthermore, the fact that Paul says that he can do all things in Him who empowers him is an indication that forbearance is Christ.

In [Philippians 1:20 and 21](#) Paul speaks of magnifying Christ and of living Him. In [chapter two](#) he presents Christ as our unique pattern and then speaks of holding forth the word of life. Holding forth the word of life is equal to expressing Christ. In [chapter three](#) we see that Christ should be our goal and prize. We need to pursue toward the goal for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ([3:14](#)). Whether we are young or old, we all should pursue Christ. This was Paul's concept when he said in [3:16](#), "Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk." We all should live Christ, magnify Christ, express Christ, and pursue Christ. Then in [chapter four](#) Paul speaks of standing firm in the Lord, rejoicing in Him, and letting our forbearance be known to all men. If we have a proper understanding of the subject of Philippians, realizing that this book is focused on the experience of Christ, we shall see that to make



our forbearance known is actually to make Christ known. I believe that this was Paul's thought.

## AN EXPRESSION OF CHRIST

What word would you use to describe a life that expresses Christ? Would you describe it as loving, submissive, patient, humble, kind? None of these words is adequate. Yes, a life that expresses Christ certainly is loving, submissive, patient, humble, and kind; however, it includes much more than this. It is significant that Paul does not use any of these terms in [Philippians 4:5](#). Instead, he uses the word forbearance. He does not tell us to make our love or patience known, but to make our forbearance known.

In [4:5](#) why does Paul tell us to make our forbearance known to all men? Why does he not speak of some other virtue, such as holiness or righteousness? What word would you have used if you were writing this Epistle? Perhaps some would use faithfulness, obedience, or oneness. But none of these words seems to fit. It does not seem adequate to say, "Let your faithfulness be made known," or, "Let your oneness be made known." Try as we may, we cannot find an adequate replacement for the word forbearance. Even though we cannot fully define forbearance or

explain what it is, we sense as we read this verse that forbearance is the only word which is fitting in this verse.

When Paul says that we should make our forbearance known to all men, he indicates the fullness of our forbearance. A forbearance which can be made known to all is not a limited or partial forbearance; it is the fullness of forbearance.

If we would understand the meaning of forbearance, we should not turn to books of philosophy or ethics. Instead, we need to turn to the Bible and seek to learn from the Scriptures the significance of forbearance in [4:5](#). As we have seen, this must be an expression of Christ. First Paul charges us to make our forbearance known to all men. Realizing that we are not able to do this, he goes on to say, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me.” This indicates that forbearance is at least part of the expression of Christ. That forbearance is related to the expression of Christ becomes even more clear when we consider [4:5](#) in the context of the whole book of Philippians. In [1:20 and 21](#) Paul speaks of magnifying Christ and living Him. Certainly, making our forbearance known must involve living Christ and magnifying Him. This means that our forbearance must be the very Christ we live and

magnify. We should not separate [chapter four](#) from the rest of the book.

In [chapter two](#) Paul presents Christ as our unique pattern. Certainly, forbearance must be related to Christ as our pattern. This means that forbearance must involve the experience and the expression of Christ as the pattern revealed in [chapter two](#).

As we have pointed out, in [chapter three](#) we have Christ as our goal. With Paul, we must pursue toward this goal. Christ as the goal toward which we pursue must include forbearance. Since Paul speaks so much of Christ in the first three chapters of the book, what he says in [chapter four](#) must also be related to Christ. Therefore, we believe that the forbearance in [4:5](#) is Christ.

## MAKING OUR FORBEARANCE KNOWN

Forbearance is Christ as our living. The Christ whom we live becomes the forbearance we exercise and make known. If we see this, we shall realize that forbearance is a matter of great significance. It is by no means an isolated virtue in the Christian life. On the contrary, forbearance is actually a synonym for Christ in our Christian living. On the one hand, we may say that our Christian life is Christ. On the other hand, we

may say that the Christian life is a life of forbearance. To make our forbearance known, therefore, means to make our Christ known.

If we do not make known our forbearance, we shall have Christ only in doctrine or terminology, but we shall not have Christ in our experience. Young people, your parents may know that Christ is in you. However, you need to let Christ be made known to your parents by making your forbearance known to them. To all those whom we contact day by day we need to let our Christ be made known. This is to let our forbearance be known to all men.

In every chapter of Philippians Christ is revealed. However, in [chapter four](#) a particular term—*forbearance*—is used to denote Christ in our experience. Do not think that [chapter four of Philippians](#) is on a lower level than [chapters one, two, and three](#). No, in [chapter four](#) we have Christ experienced by us and expressed through us as forbearance. We may say that the central focus of our Christian life is Christ. I certainly agree with such a statement. But from the standpoint of our practical Christian experience, the focus of the Christian life is forbearance. Forbearance is an all-inclusive Christian virtue. It includes love, patience, kindness,

humility, compassion, considerateness, and submissiveness, a willingness to yield. If we have such an all-inclusive virtue, we shall also have righteousness and holiness.

The Christian life is a life full of forbearance but without anxiety. Only when we have forbearance can we have a life without anxiety. If our whole being is filled with forbearance, there will not be any room for anxiety.

## **FITTING AND SUITABLE**

The Greek word for forbearance is rendered different ways by different translations. Some versions translate the Greek word as yieldingness. Other translators point out that the Greek word means reasonable, considerate, suitable, and fitting. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, one whose behavior is always suitable.

Certain saints are good, but they do not fit in. They may move from place to place, but no matter where they may go, they are not happy. The reason these saints do not fit in is that they are not forbearing. A forbearing person is one who always fits in, whose behavior is always suitable, no matter what the circumstances or environment may be.



Forbearance also includes peacefulness, mildness, and gentleness. If you are reasonable, considerate, and able to fit in, you will no doubt be gentle, kind, mild, and peaceful. You will also be meek and moderate, full of compassion for others. The opposite of forbearance is being just in a very exacting way. A person who lacks forbearance will be exacting and demanding of others. But to be forbearing means that we are satisfied with less than our due. Alford says that the Greek word for forbearance means not to be strict with respect to legal rights. For example, a certain thing may be ours, but we do not claim it according to strict, legal right. This is forbearance.

## THE FORBEARANCE OF CHRIST

The life of the Lord Jesus is the best illustration of forbearance. Consider how He spoke to those two disciples on the way to Emmaus. [Luke 24:15](#) says that while these disciples “were talking and discussing, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.” The Lord Jesus said to them, “What are these words which you are exchanging with one another while you are walking?” ([v. 17](#)). With a rebuking tone, one of the disciples answered, “Are you a stranger dwelling alone



in Jerusalem and do not know the things which took place in it in these days?” (v. 18). Appearing not to know anything, the Lord asked, “What things?” (v. 19). Then they proceeded to tell Him about Jesus of Nazareth, One they described as a “Prophet, powerful in work and word before God and all the people.” They went on to say that the chief priests and the rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death and crucified Him. How forbearing the Lord was to listen to the disciples speak things which He knew much better than they did! After walking quite a distance, “they drew near to the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther” (v. 28). However, “they urged Him, saying, Stay with us, because it is toward evening and the day is already nearly over. And He went in to stay with them” (v. 29). The Lord even sat down to dine with them. When He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, “their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him” (v. 31). In all this we see the Lord’s forbearance.

Besides the Lord Jesus, no human being has ever practiced a life of such forbearance. If you study the biographies of famous people, you will see that not one was truly a person of forbearance. However, if you read the four Gospels, you

will see that the human living of the Lord Jesus was full of forbearance. The Lord Jesus exercised forbearance with His disciples. Can you find a case where the Lord Jesus “fired” one of them? The Lord was forbearing even with Judas.

## **CHRIST AS OUR FORBEARANCE**

We need forbearance in the church life, especially in our serving together. Suppose a particular sister is serving in a way that is not adequate. The sister serving with her faces at least four options: walk away, join her in serving in her poor way, correct her, or try to improve her. None of these options involves forbearance. If the one sister exercises forbearance, she certainly will not walk away from the other sister. At least for a while, she will join the sister in her serving. Then she will exercise wisdom to see the sister's situation and to determine whether or not she can speak a word of correction or improvement in love. If the sister is not able to receive such a word, the other one needs to wait before saying anything. Eventually, she may have an opportunity to speak not according to her own intention, but according to the leading of the Spirit. This is to exercise forbearance. If we all exercise forbearance, the church will be built up in a wonderful way.

When Paul exhorts us to let our forbearance be made known to all men, he is saying something of great significance. No human being is able by the natural life to fulfill such a requirement. Confucius may have been very good, but he was still sinful and fallen. Only the Lord Jesus lived a life full of forbearance, and only Christ can be our perfect forbearance today. The best word to sum up the totality of Christ's human virtues is forbearance. To make known our forbearance is to live a life which expresses Christ; it is to express the Christ by whom we live. Such a life is Christ Himself as the totality of all human virtues. This is Christ as our forbearance.

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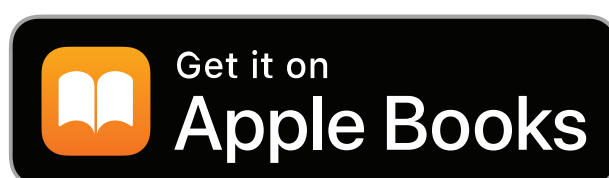
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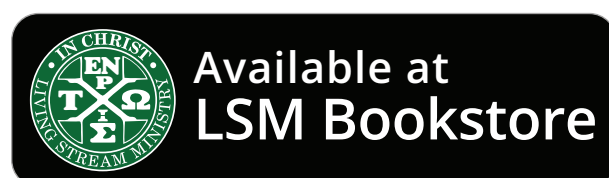


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## THE EXERCISE OF FORBEARANCE

The Greek word for forbearance in [Philip-  
pians 4:5](#) is composed of two words. The first is the preposition *epi* which, when added to another word, can have the meaning of extensive or full. This word is a component of the Greek word for full knowledge used in [2 Timothy 2:25](#). The second Greek word has various meanings: reasonable, considerate, and suitable. Thus, the meaning of the Greek is extensively reasonable or fully reasonable.

### AN ALL-INCLUSIVE VIRTUE

Based on the analysis of the Greek word, our spiritual experience, God's activities in His economy, and the Lord's living on earth, we can realize that to have adequate forbearance requires that we also have many other virtues. Forbearance is an all-inclusive virtue.

### THE NEED OF FORBEARANCE IN OUR FAMILY LIFE

There is a great need of forbearance in our

family life. A good family life is the product of forbearance. If a husband and wife show forbearance toward each other and toward their children, they will have an excellent married life and family life. However, if they do not exercise forbearance, they will seriously damage their life together as a family.

In dealing with their children, parents should be neither too strict nor too tolerant. Both excessive strictness and excessive tolerance are damaging to children. Then what is the right way for parents to care for their children? The right way is the way which is full of forbearance.

Suppose a child does something wrong, and the matter is made known to his father. He should not rebuke his child in a hasty way or spank him in anger. In [Ephesians 6](#) Paul tells us not to provoke our children. Usually parents provoke their children by dealing with them in anger. If you are angry with your child, you first need to ask the Lord to take away your anger. Once your anger has been dealt with by the Lord, you need to exercise your understanding to realize why the child made that particular mistake. No doubt, the child was wrong. Nevertheless, you still must understand his situation. Perhaps he was wrong because you were careless.

If you had not been careless in that particular way, the child would not have made that mistake. Because your carelessness afforded him the opportunity to do something wrong, you should not put the full blame on him. Rather, first you must blame yourself and then discipline the child. All this is included in exercising forbearance toward our children.

Parents need to exercise wisdom in speaking to their children. A child may need correction, but the parents need to sense when is the right time to speak to him. A father should ask himself whether or not he should rebuke his child in front of other children or even in front of the mother. Sometimes it is not wise to discipline a child in the presence of others. How much wisdom we must exercise in caring for our children! If we do not have forbearance, we shall not exercise wisdom. On the other hand, if we do not have adequate wisdom, we shall not be able to exercise forbearance.

If we would show forbearance, we also need patience. Most parents find it difficult to be patient when they are disciplining their children. Suppose a brother is about to rebuke one of his children. It would be much better if he waited a few hours before saying anything. However, it

is extremely difficult to wait even a few minutes, much less a few hours. The natural tendency is to deal with the children in haste. Such impatience is damaging.

Impatience is also damaging in our married life. Suppose a brother feels it is necessary to speak to his wife about a certain matter that is not pleasant. If he is truly forbearing, he will wait for the right time to speak, a time when the conversation will be constructive. In the same principle, a wife needs to be patient with her husband and wait for the proper time to express her feelings about certain matters. However, to be patient and forbearing in such a way is very difficult for us.

As an all-inclusive virtue, forbearance implies not only understanding, wisdom, and patience, but also mercy, kindness, love, and sympathy. The list of virtues is almost endless.

## **GOD'S FORBEARANCE**

The Bible reveals that in His economy God has exercised great forbearance. Immediately after the fall of man, God began to show forbearance in His dealings with man. If you read [Genesis 3](#) from the viewpoint of forbearance, you will see how forbearing God was with fallen man. God

exercised His understanding, fully realizing man's situation and need. He also exercised His wisdom to deal with fallen man.

For the accomplishment of His eternal purpose, for the carrying out of His economy, God has always exercised forbearance. With His forbearance, He has understanding, wisdom, mercy, kindness, love, and grace. Even the rich supply of life is included in God's forbearance. God never commands us to do anything without considering our need and granting us His supply. If a parent charges his children to do a certain task but does not supply them with what they need, that parent is not forbearing. Forbearance always includes the adequate supply to meet the need.

As we read the Bible, we see that God dealt with different people in different ways. For example, He dealt with Adam in one way, with Abel in another way, and with Cain in yet another way. Some students of the Bible say that in the Scriptures there are different dispensations, different ways God deals with man. These dispensations are actually related to forbearance. For God to deal with people in a particular way during a certain age is for Him to show forbearance. Because God is forbearing, He knows how to deal with

everyone. He may come to you in a certain way because He knows that you are a certain kind of person. However, He may approach another person in a very different way.

The Bible reveals that God exercises forbearance in carrying out His economy. If God had dealt with fallen man in the way we deal with others, there would have been no way for Him to fulfill His purpose. But God has made His forbearance known to all men. Thus, God Himself set up an example, a pattern, of forbearance, making known His forbearance to men throughout all generations. God makes known His forbearance by dealing with us in a way that is reasonable, suitable, and considerate. God never disciplines anyone without proper consideration. He often waits a long period of time before chastising someone. God certainly is forbearing and full of understanding, wisdom, patience, consideration, sympathy, mercy, kindness, love, and the supply of life. Consider, for example, how forbearing He was in dealing with Israel. If you read of Israel's journey in the wilderness, you will see that God truly was forbearing toward them. God has also been forbearing with us. He has dealt with us like a wise and loving father, full of forbearance.



## A BOOK OF FORBEARANCE

The entire Bible reveals the divine forbearance. We may even say that the Bible is a book of forbearance and that, as revealed in the Scriptures, God Himself is forbearance. Hence, if you ask me to define forbearance, I would say firstly that forbearance is God.

## CHRIST'S FORBEARANCE

Christ Himself is our forbearance. The four Gospels reveal that the Lord Jesus lived a life of forbearance. He was forbearing with Judas and in His dealings with Peter. When He was twelve years old, He exercised forbearance toward His mother, Mary, and Joseph. In case after case, the Lord displayed understanding, wisdom, patience, mercy, kindness, and love. He was kind toward Judas, and with Peter He was full of grace.

An excellent example of Christ's forbearance toward Peter is found in [Matthew 17:24 and 25](#). Those who received the half-shekel for the poll tax came to Peter and asked, "Does not your teacher pay the half-shekel?" ([v. 24](#)). Immediately Peter answered, "Yes." When he came into the house, the Lord Jesus did not rebuke him. Rather, He spoke to him in a way that was full of forbearance.

In [John 11](#) we see the Lord's forbearance with Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. Instead of acting in haste, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, the Lord deliberately delayed. Through this delay others were exposed. In dealing with this situation the Lord exercised much understanding, wisdom, consideration, mercy, and kindness. Eventually there was a great supply of life manifested in the resurrection of Lazarus.

## PAUL'S FORBEARANCE

Paul's life was also a testimony of forbearance. He wrote the book of Philippians from a prison in Rome. Paul was suffering and, according to [chapter four](#), he was short of supply and in want. Among all the churches, the church in Philippi was the best in caring for Paul's needs. But for some reason, according to the Lord's sovereignty, there was a period of time when the Philippians seemingly forgot Paul and his need. But even though Paul was suffering imprisonment, persecution, attack, negligence, and the lack of supply, he still exercised forbearance and could declare, "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be

filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him who empowers me” (Phil. 4:11-13). Before he charged the saints to let their forbearance be known to all men, he exercised forbearance himself. No doubt, Paul’s forbearance was made known to those around him. He was full of understanding, wisdom, considerateness, sympathy, mercy, and kindness. He was also full of the life supply.

If we read the book of Philippians carefully, we shall see that 3:17-21 is a separate section. This means that, spiritually speaking, Philippians 4:1 is the continuation of 3:16. After exhorting the saints to walk by the same rule, Paul charges them to “stand firm in the Lord” (Phil. 4:1). Then he urges them to rejoice in the Lord (v. 4) and to let their forbearance be known to all men (v. 5). Later in chapter four he testifies that he can do all things in the One who empowers him. Thus, Paul could make his forbearance known to the saints because he was in the One who empowered him. Furthermore, he was content, having learned the secret both how to be abased and how to abound.

## THE NEED OF GROWTH

It is not easy to make our forbearance known

to all men. This requires growth in both our human life and our spiritual life. The more a person grows and matures, the more forbearance he has. Therefore, forbearance requires the growth of life. It demands maturity.

In [Philippians 3:15](#) Paul says. “Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind.” To have this mind is to have the mind to live Christ and pursue Him. However, the very Christ whom we live and pursue should be expressed as forbearance. If we put together these verses from [chapters three and four](#), we see that forbearance requires maturity. Without growth and maturity it will be extremely difficult to make known our forbearance.

## **WALKING BY THE RULE OF FORBEARANCE**

In [Philippians 3:16](#) Paul says, “Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.” It is true that the rule here is the rule of pursuing Christ. But since in our practical daily life Christ is to be expressed as forbearance, we may say that to walk by the same rule is to walk by the rule of forbearance.

## **THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT**

After speaking of forbearance in [Philippians](#)

4:5, Paul says, “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content” (v. 11). Paul had learned the secret of contentment. By this we see that in order to be forbearing, we must be satisfied and content. If we are not content, we shall not be able to forbear.

When a person is happy, he is not easily upset. But if he is unhappy, tired, hungry, and thirsty, he can be upset easily. A satisfied person, on the contrary, is pleasant and happy. When we are full of joy, it is difficult for us to become angry. Those who are parents know that if a child misbehaves when we are satisfied and happy, we shall deal with the child in one way, in a way full of forbearance. But if he behaves in exactly the same way when we are dissatisfied and unhappy, we shall deal with him differently, in a way that is short of forbearance. The difference is that on one occasion we are full of Christ and are happy and satisfied, whereas on the other occasion we are short of Christ and short of satisfaction in Him.

Paul could let his forbearance be known to all the saints because he was content. He did not lack anything, but was fully satisfied. No matter how he was treated by others, no matter whether the saints in Philippi cared for his need or not, Paul was satisfied. His life was full of contentment.



Now we can see that forbearance requires maturity of life and also satisfaction and contentment in Christ. Few of us are fully mature, but we can thank the Lord that we are mature at least to some extent. According to our degree of maturity, we enjoy the contentment of the Lord's life. Knowing contentment and satisfaction, we can then exercise our forbearance.

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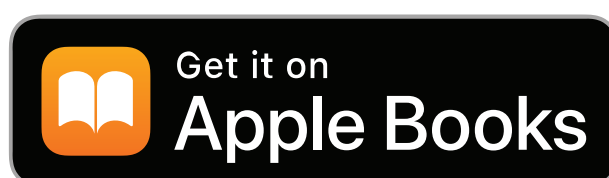


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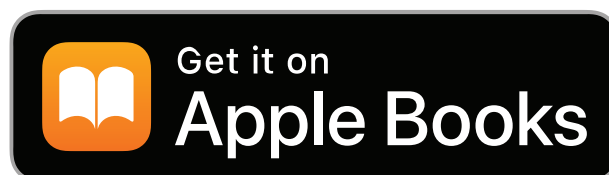
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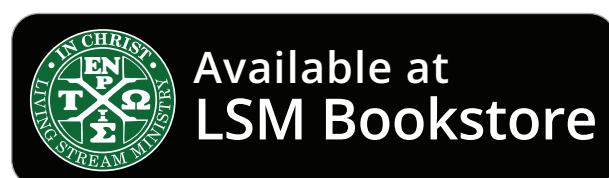


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# THE NEED OF FORBEARANCE IN MARRIED LIFE AND FAMILY LIFE

For a pleasant married life and an excellent family life we need to be forbearing. I hope that all the saints with children will be deeply impressed with the need to exercise forbearance in their daily living at home.

## THE MEANING OF FORBEARANCE

The Greek word rendered forbearance in [Philippians 4:5](#) is composed of two words: *epi*, a preposition which means unto, and *eikos*, which means seemly, fitting, or suitable. When the preposition *epi* is added to other Greek words as a prefix, it often bears the meaning of full or extensive. Consider, for example, the word *epignosis* used in [2 Timothy 2:25](#). In this verse Paul speaks of “the full knowledge of the truth.” Hence, *epi* added to *gnosis* gives a word which means full knowledge. The use of this preposition as a component of the Greek word for forbearance in

[Philippians 4:5](#) indicates that the meaning of this word is to be fully reasonable, or fitting or suitable to the fullest extent. We need to have a full and extensive reasonableness and considerateness. Furthermore, we need to act in a way that is fitting and suitable to the fullest extent. All these meanings are included in the Greek word used by Paul in [Philippians 4:5](#).

The Greek word rendered forbearance in [4:5](#) is not actually a noun; it is an adjective used as a noun with a definite article. This use of an adjective as a noun serves to emphasize the meaning of the word. For example, in [1 Timothy 6:17](#) Paul says, “Charge those who are rich in the present age not to be high-minded.” This is more emphatic than saying, “Charge the rich man not to be high-minded.” In [Philippians 4:5](#) Paul deliberately uses an adjective as a noun in order to place special emphasis on forbearance.

## A RICH SUPPLY

Forbearance requires understanding, wisdom, patience, and many other virtues. If we would be forbearing, we need to be merciful, kind, and compassionate. Furthermore, to forbear definitely requires a certain ability in a number of areas. We need the ability to understand, to be patient,

to help others, and to afford them the necessary supply. In His forbearance toward us, God certainly has given us a rich supply.

God forbears with fallen man for a purpose. His purpose in showing forbearance is to accomplish His economy. If God did not afford man the adequate supply and show forbearance to man, there would be no way for God to fulfill His purpose of accomplishing His economy.

## REJOICING IN THE LORD

Forbearance requires maturity and also satisfaction and contentment. Now we need to see that forbearance is also related to rejoicing in the Lord. In [Philippians 4:4](#) Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Immediately after this he says, “Let your forbearance be known to all men.” If we do not rejoice in the Lord, we shall not be able to forbear. If we would make known our forbearance, we need to be happy and joyful in the Lord. Those who are sad or sorrowful cannot have forbearance. Instead, they find it easy to be upset, to complain, or to lose their temper. Forbearance in [4:5](#) is the issue, the result, of rejoicing in the Lord, mentioned in [verse 4](#). From experience we know that rejoicing and forbearing go together.



## A PATTERN OF FORBEARANCE

In [Philippians 4:11-13](#) we see the relationship between contentment and forbearance. In [verse 11](#) Paul testifies, “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.” In [verse 12](#) he goes on to say, “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want.” Because Paul had learned the secret of contentment, he was able to forbear with all the churches and all the saints. He says, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me” ([v. 13](#)). According to the context, this includes the ability to make His forbearance known to the saints.

Consider Paul’s situation when he wrote the book of Philippians. His circumstances were not at all positive. He was a prisoner in Rome; he was opposed by the religionists; and even the saints, including the Philippians who had been faithful to supply his needs in the past, neglected him for a period of time. In [Philippians 4:10](#) Paul says, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you caused your thinking for me to blossom anew; wherein you did indeed take thought,

but you lacked opportunity.” The words “blossom anew” imply that Paul had passed through a “winter” in his experience, but now it was “spring” with the Philippians’ concern for him blossoming anew. Although Paul alluded to his “winter” experience and the saints’ temporary neglect of him, he exercised great understanding in writing to them. As he was composing this Epistle, he exercised forbearance. Thus, the Apostle Paul, one who was full of understanding concerning the situation and concerning the saints, was an excellent pattern of forbearance.

## **THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM**

Often we are not forbearing because of misunderstanding. In the church life often we may not understand the brothers and sisters. In our family life we may fail to understand our husband or wife. This lack of understanding causes a lack of forbearance. Suppose Paul had misunderstood the Philippians. He certainly would not have written them such a marvelous Epistle. Instead, he might have pointed out that when he most needed their help, it was not forthcoming. Now that they remembered him and sent him a gift, it arrived too late. Paul, however, had a full

understanding of God's economy and His move; he also understood the subtlety of Satan's attack. Moreover, he understood the saints in Philippi and their situation. To him, everything was crystal clear. Thus, on his part there was no misunderstanding. He could exercise much forbearance in writing to the believers in Philippi.

In writing to the Philippians, Paul also exercised wisdom. He knew what to say and how much to say. If we read this Epistle carefully, we shall realize that Paul's wording is very exact. Paul wrote in a way that was neither too lengthy nor too brief. Here we see Paul's wisdom.

Paul needed to exercise wisdom in writing to the Philippians, and there is the need for us also to exercise wisdom in our married life. Husbands need wisdom in speaking with their wives, and wives need wisdom in sharing matters with their husbands. Here I would emphasize the need for the wife to have wisdom toward her husband. Suppose a sister intends to talk about a particular matter with her husband. Before she says anything, she needs to exercise understanding, consideration, and wisdom. If she speaks to him at the wrong time or if she says too much to him concerning the subject at hand, she may cause him to become angry not only with her,

but also with others in the church life, even with the elders. Sometimes a husband becomes upset with the elders simply because his wife gives him information without exercising understanding, consideration, and wisdom. Even in passing on information to her husband, a sister needs a great deal of forbearance. For this, she needs a proper understanding of her husband and of his situation. If she realizes that her husband is a quick person, one who reacts hastily to things and who is easily angered or upset, she needs to consider how to help him to be patient and slow down. In particular, she needs to consider how much she should speak to him. Perhaps at first she should share only part of the information. Before saying more, she should consider the atmosphere and discern whether it is the proper time for her husband to hear more. She may share something at one time, something further at another time, and the remainder at still another time. If the sister is forbearing, exercising understanding, consideration, and wisdom, the result of her speaking with her husband will be very profitable both for their married life and for the church life.

## **PRAYER AND FORBEARANCE**

Just as [Philippians 4:5](#) is the continuation of

Philippians 4:4, so Philippians 4:6 is the continuation of Philippians 4:5. If we see the continuation here, we shall realize that forbearance requires prayer. In verse 6 Paul says, “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” There does not seem to be a relationship between the words, “Let your forbearance be known,” and “Let your requests be made known.” Actually, they are closely related. When we exercise forbearance, we shall realize how much we need to pray. We may be anxious and fearful about many things concerning our family or concerning the church. Furthermore, we may realize that if we talk about our concerns, we may cause problems. What then should we do? After charging us not to be anxious, Paul urges us to pray. If we pray, the Lord will give us the understanding, consideration, and wisdom we need. If a sister prays before sharing a particular matter with her husband, she will know what to say to him and when the proper time to speak would be. Furthermore, if she is faithful to pray, she will also have a rich supply to minister to her husband. Then her forbearance with its rich supply will accomplish God’s purpose in that situation.

If all the saints exercise forbearance in their married life and also in training their children, we shall have the best family life. Then we shall be able to sing about the wonderful, glorious church life. We shall be able to testify not only of a wonderful church life, but also of a wonderful married life.

## **MARRIED LIFE, FAMILY LIFE, AND THE CHURCH LIFE**

First we need to build up the proper married life and family life, and then we shall be able to build up the church life. If a brother does not know how to build up a pleasant married life at home and an excellent family life with his children, it will be very difficult for him to share in building up the church. When he comes together with others for the church service, he may exercise politeness. However, he may not be polite to his wife or children. We may be polite to the brothers and sisters in the church, but be very impolite to our husband or wife or to our children.

Our home life is where we are exposed the most. Do not think that simply because a certain brother is nice, kind, and polite with the saints in the church he is necessarily that way at home.



If you want to know him, you need to see how he lives with his wife and children. Oh, how much we need forbearance in our married life and family life that we may build up the proper church life!

The more we realize the need of forbearance, the more we shall see how difficult it is to be a proper human being. It is not easy to be a wife or husband, a parent, or a member of the church. In our society married life has been severely damaged. Many even live together without being married because they do not want to accept the limitations of marriage. This is to utterly forsake the practice of forbearance.

We need to be fully committed to our married life, family life, and the church life. The ties that bind us together are permanent. In the genuine family life and church life, no one is hired or fired. Can we hire someone to be our child, or can we fire one of our children? Of course we cannot. Neither can members of the church be hired or fired. Likewise, if a servant of the Lord can fire one of his co-workers, then they are not truly working together in the Lord. In the Lord's work there is no such thing as hiring or firing. Therefore, in the family life, in the church life, and in working together for the Lord's interests,

we need forbearance. Forbearance is necessary because we are bound together permanently.

Once again I would remind you that forbearance is an all-inclusive virtue. This virtue includes understanding, wisdom, patience, consideration, and the ability to help and render the adequate supply. If we all exercise forbearance, we shall have a pleasant married life, an excellent family life, and a wonderful church life.

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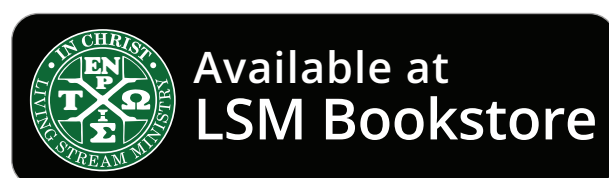


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# LIVING AND MAGNIFYING CHRIST VERSUS ANXIETY

The book of Philippians is a book on the experience of Christ. To experience Christ we need to live Him that we may magnify Him ([Phil. 1:20-21](#)). Then we need to take Him as our pattern ([Phil. 2:5-11](#)) and pursue Him as our goal ([Phil. 3:14](#)). In our Christian life we should have the unique mind—the mind to pursue Christ and gain Him ([Phil. 3:15, 12](#)). After covering these aspects of the experience of Christ, Paul, somewhat to our surprise, speaks in [Philippians 4](#) of forbearance and anxiety. On the positive side, we need forbearance; on the negative side, we should not have any anxiety.

Why at the conclusion of such a profound book on the experience of Christ does Paul mention forbearance and anxiety? Apparently there is no connection between the matters covered in [chapters one, two, and three](#) and Paul's word about forbearance and anxiety. Years ago, I did not consider it worthwhile for Paul to speak of anxiety. According to my concept, he should have continued to speak about higher things,



although I was not clear what these higher things should be.

## THE CIRCUMSTANCES ASSIGNED BY GOD

In [Ephesians 1:3](#) and [2:6](#) Paul talks about the heavenlies. In your experience day by day are you in the heavenlies or in anxiety? More often than not, we are in anxiety, not in the heavenlies. After the fall of man, human life became a composition of anxiety and worry. If you read [Genesis 3](#) carefully, you will see that anxiety comes from the environment assigned to us by God. For example, we have anxiety with respect to our children. From the moment a child is born, his parents worry about him. Those who do not have children may dream of having a child one day. But they do not realize the worry and anxiety associated with giving birth to a child and raising him. Everything that affects the living of our children gives rise to anxiety. Most parents can testify that as far as their children are concerned, their days are filled more with anxiety than with happiness.

[Genesis 3](#) indicates that fallen man is also anxious about making a living. In [Genesis 3:17](#) the Lord said to the man, “Cursed is the ground

for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” In [verse 19](#) the Lord says, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Because man must labor to maintain his existence, he is full of anxiety. Every farmer is anxious about his crops. He worries about the weather and also about damage caused by disease and insects. Actually there is not one kind of work which leaves us free from anxiety. Even those who are successful in their profession are anxious about their work.

There is also a good deal of anxiety related to married life. Young people desire to be married. Married life is good, but it involves more worry and anxiety than happiness. I encourage all the young people to get married at the proper time, but they should not expect a married life free from anxiety.

Human life is full of anxiety. Angels, however, are not subject to anxiety because they do not have any circumstances to worry about. They do not marry, and they do not need to be concerned about earning a living or taking care of a family. It is not even necessary for angels to sleep. Some people make the mistake of trying to live as if they were angels. But God has ordained all the circumstances of human life, even though

these circumstances give rise more to anxiety than to happiness. It seems that sorrow always lasts longer than happiness. There may be a short period of happiness and then a much longer time of sorrow, worry, or anxiety.

What is God's purpose in assigning circumstances to us which cause anxiety? According to [Romans 8](#), in addition to redemption and the indwelling Spirit, we need "all things." [Verse 28](#) says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to the purpose." To be sure, included in "all things" are sufferings, anxieties, and worries. In order for God to perfect us, sufferings are necessary. From our experience we know that virtually every matter included in "all things" involves anxiety.

## **THE TOTALITY OF HUMAN LIFE AND OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

As an elderly person, I have passed through a great many experiences in human life. Under the sovereign hand of the Lord, I have been in a great many different circumstances. I have known poverty, and I have known what it is to have my needs supplied. I can testify that in all the

circumstances of human life anxiety is present. Anxiety is a word that can sum up human life. The totality of human life is anxiety.

Paul speaks of anxiety in [Philippians 4:6](#) because he realizes that it is the totality of man's life. Paul also realized that forbearance is the totality of a proper Christian life. Paul knew that human life is constituted of anxiety and that the Christian life is constituted of forbearance. Thus, to live Christ is to have forbearance without anxiety.

Just as anxiety is the totality of human life, so forbearance is the totality of the Christian life. This is the reason Paul uses the words forbearance and anxiety together in charging the saints. Positively, we should make known our forbearance. All those who come in contact with us should know our forbearance. Negatively, we need to have a life without anxiety.

## LIVING CHRIST

In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." Years ago, I began to read books on this verse. However, I could not understand what it meant for Christ to live in me. The explanation of [Galatians 2:20](#) is found not

in Galatians, but in Philippians. In Philippians Paul says not only that Christ lives in us; he goes on to reveal that to live is Christ. To live Christ surpasses simply having Christ live in us. Living Christ means that we have a life full of forbearance but without anxiety.

Any amount of anxiety decreases the measure of Christ in our experience. Even a little anxiety causes the measure of Christ to diminish. The extent to which Christ is present in our daily life is determined by the amount of forbearance and anxiety. If we have forbearance, we have Christ. But if we have anxiety, we are short of Christ.

## MAGNIFYING CHRIST

[Philippians 4:4](#) says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Paul opens [Philippians 4:10](#) with the words, “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly.” Furthermore, in [Philippians 1:18](#) Paul, speaking of his affliction, says, “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is announced, and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.” Paul’s word about rejoicing is especially significant when we consider his circumstances. He was a prisoner in Rome, and certain of his opposers were doing everything possible to damage his ministry. Nevertheless,



Paul declares, “For I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” ([Phil. 1:19](#)). Salvation here means to magnify Christ by living Him. Thus, Paul says, “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death” ([v. 20](#)). Paul did not expect to be put to shame in anything.

Suppose one of Paul’s co-workers visited him in prison and found him anxious, sorrowful, and full of worry. No doubt the one visiting him would have said, “What a shame to see the very apostle who ministered Christ to us so sorrowful and anxious!” If this had been Paul’s situation, he would have been put to shame. But Paul magnified Christ. No matter how difficult his circumstances were, he did not have any anxiety. Because Paul was not anxious in anything, he was not put to shame in anything. Instead, Christ was magnified in him.

Paul could magnify Christ because he had forbearance. Even during his imprisonment, Paul had a great deal of forbearance. He considered the churches, he had a proper understanding of



the saints, and he had the ability to supply the saints and those around him with love, mercy, kindness, and sympathy. Because he exercised his forbearance in full, there was not a trace of anxiety. Paul could even say that he expected Christ to be magnified in him whether through life or through death. This indicates that Paul was not worried about death.

## **CONTENTMENT AND FORBEARANCE**

We have seen that anxiety is opposed to forbearance. Anxiety is like a worm which devours our ability to forbear. If we have no forbearance, it will be easy for us to be upset or to lose our temper. Anger often comes out of anxiety. If I am worried about my future, my circumstances, or my family, I will not be happy with others. This worry will cause me to be upset with everyone. Only when we are happy and contented do we have forbearance.

Only a happy, satisfied person can forbear. One who is sorrowful and discontented, on the contrary, is easily irritated or offended. Because Paul was full of happiness and contentment, with him there was no anxiety, but an abundance of forbearance.

We know from Paul's word in [Philippians 4:10-12](#) that, at least for a period of time, he was short of supply. But he could testify, "I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content." He could say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want." Because Paul had learned the secret, he could be content and, as a result, have an abundance of forbearance.

Many have pointed out that Philippians is a book of joy. Again and again Paul exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord. Paul's environment would have made it difficult for anyone to be joyful. We do not usually think of a prison as a place for rejoicing. But because Paul had no anxiety, no worry about his circumstances or future, he could rejoice in the Lord and be forbearing.

## **GOD'S ASSIGNMENT**

If we would have a life free of anxiety, we need to realize that all our circumstances, good or bad, have been assigned to us by God. We need to have this realization with a full assurance. Suppose a brother is in business as a merchant. His business may prosper, and he may

earn a good deal of money. Later his business may fail and he may lose much more than he earned. Both earning money and losing it are God's assignment to him. If this brother has the full assurance that his circumstances come from God's assignment, he will be able to worship the Lord for His arrangement. Perhaps losing money will benefit him more than earning money, for through such a loss he may be perfected and built up.

The first prerequisite to having no anxiety is to have the full assurance that all the sufferings we experience are God's assignment. What need is there to worry about things? God has assigned them to us. He knows what we need.

When I was very young, I read a story about a conversation between two sparrows who were talking about the sorrows and the worries common among human beings. One sparrow asked the other why people worry so much. The other sparrow answered, "I don't think they have a Father who cares for them like we do. We don't need to worry about anything because our Father takes care of us." Yes, our Father does care for us. But sometimes He sends us hardships and sufferings to serve in fulfilling our destiny to magnify Christ. We can be freed from worry not

because God has promised us a life without suffering, but because we know that all our circumstances come to us as God's assignment. Paul did not care about life or death. He cared only that Christ would be magnified in him. He realized that every circumstance was for his good. This is the way to have no anxiety.

Why do certain saints worry about losing money? Simply because their desire is to have more money. Why are others anxious about their health? They are anxious because they are afraid to die. If we are ill, we need to declare, "Satan, what can you do to me? I am not worried about death. Death does not make me anxious. Rather, the possibility of dying gives me another opportunity to magnify Christ." Instead of fearing poverty, illness, or death, we should welcome them if God sends them to us. Then we shall have no anxiety, for we shall know that every circumstance is an assignment from our Father. This does not mean, however, that we should seek suffering for its own sake. We should not do things that will cause us to suffer. Those who are in business should seek to make money, and those who are employees should try to get a promotion. But if we lose money or even lose our job, we need not be anxious. Such a loss

comes from God's assignment, and we need not be anxious about it.

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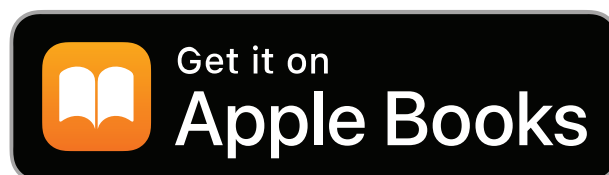
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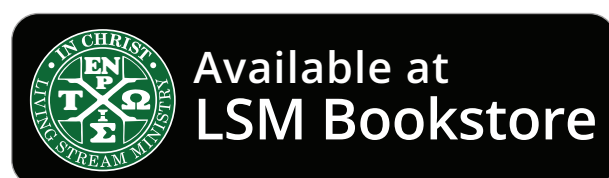


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# A LIFE FULL OF FORBEARANCE BUT WITHOUT ANXIETY

In this booklet we shall consider many of the details and fine points regarding a life full of forbearance but without anxiety. In particular we shall consider the way to fulfill Paul's word in [Philippians 4:6](#), "In nothing be anxious."

The subject of the book of Philippians is the experience of Christ. In the first three chapters of this Epistle, the standard of Paul's writing is very high. However, in [chapter four](#), the concluding portion of this book, Paul seems to descend to a lower level in emphasizing forbearance and anxiety.

More than fifty years ago, I was troubled by [Philippians 4](#). I appreciated Paul's words in the first three chapters. In [chapter one](#) we see that we should magnify Christ by living Him; in [chapter two](#), that we should take Christ as the pattern of the Christian life; and in [chapter three](#), that Christ is far superior to all things of religion and culture and that we must count all things loss in order to pursue Him and gain Him. Then in [chapter four](#) Paul suddenly talks about forbearance

and anxiety. I realized that forbearance was a virtue, but in my opinion Paul's word about forbearance could not compare with what he had written in the three previous chapters. Furthermore, I was troubled by the fact that Paul emphasized anxiety. But in recent years the light on the issue of forbearance versus anxiety has gradually become brighter and brighter. Now I have a deep appreciation for Paul's words, "Let your forbearance be known to all men" ([Phil. 4:5](#)) and, "In nothing be anxious" ([Phil. 4:6](#)).

## TWO LIVES

Anxiety is the totality of the natural human life. Day by day and even hour by hour, the common human life is filled with anxiety. Every normal human being is anxious. The more sober you are in mind, the more anxious you will be. If you are a person who is thoughtful and careful, you will have a great deal of anxiety. Sensitive people are especially bothered by anxiety. Those who are unusually dull or insensitive may not have much anxiety, but those who are sensitive usually have many anxieties.

Just as anxiety is the totality of common human life, so forbearance is the totality of the proper Christian life. Hence, the words anxiety

and forbearance represent two kinds of lives. Among human beings there are only two kinds of lives: the human life and the Christian life. Human life is a life of anxiety, whereas the Christian life is a life of forbearance. If we see this contrast, we shall realize that it is a matter of great importance for Paul to emphasize forbearance and anxiety in [chapter four of Philippians](#). He emphasizes forbearance and anxiety because they represent two different kinds of lives. Every human being is subject to anxiety. But if we are Christians according to the divine standard, we shall have a life full of forbearance and without anxiety. The first point I would emphasize in this booklet is that forbearance and anxiety represent two kinds of lives.

## **TWO SOURCES**

Second, forbearance comes from God, and anxiety comes from Satan. This means that forbearance and anxiety represent two different sources—God and Satan.

### **GOD, THE SOURCE OF FORBEARANCE**

The source of forbearance is God. God gives us forbearance so that we may accomplish His

purpose. God has a purpose with us individually, with our families, and with us in the church. In order to carry out God's purpose related to us, to our families, and to the church, we need forbearance. If we lack the all-inclusive virtue of forbearance, it will be impossible for us to fulfill God's purpose. This means it will not be possible for us to allow God to fulfill His purpose with us, with our family, and with the church.

God has a threefold purpose with every one of us. He has a purpose for us individually, a purpose for us in relation to our family, and a purpose for us in the church life. It is crucial for us to realize that God has such a threefold purpose concerning us. For the fulfillment of such a divine purpose, we need forbearance. Without forbearance we shall not allow God to fulfill His purpose with us, with our family, or with the church.

Forbearance means to be utterly reasonable, considerate, and understanding in dealing with others. If we are forbearing, we shall have the wisdom and the ability to supply others with what they need. We shall also have the full knowledge of what to say to them and when to say it. For example, a parent who is forbearing will know how and when to speak to his children. If we do



not exercise forbearance in our family life, we shall not be able to build up our family for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Not only is forbearance the totality of the proper Christian life, it is also the means given by God for the fulfillment of His threefold purpose with each of us. How precious that the source of forbearance is God! The forbearance we exercise and make known to others comes from God.

## SATAN, THE SOURCE OF ANXIETY

The source of anxiety is Satan. Anxiety comes from Satan to frustrate the fulfillment of God's purpose. Do not think that God assigns anxiety to us. Anxiety comes from the circumstances assigned by God. To say that anxiety comes from God's assignment is quite different from saying that anxiety is God's assignment. Because of the fall, God has assigned sufferings to us. For example, God has ordained that women experience suffering in childbearing. He also ordained that men cope with thorns and thistles. [Genesis 3:17-19](#) say, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat

bread.” Although God has assigned such sufferings, He has not assigned anxiety. After God made His assignment, Satan came in to cause anxiety through the sufferings assigned by God. Anxiety does not come from God. It comes from God’s adversary, Satan, who uses the sufferings ordained by God to cause anxiety in human life. Therefore, anxiety comes from Satan and represents Satan, whereas forbearance comes from God and represents God.

## HOW GOD USES SATAN

The Bible reveals that God uses Satan. We see this especially in the book of Job. When I first read this book, I was troubled by the fact that Satan had access to God’s presence in the heavens. [Job 1:6](#) says, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.” The next verses record a conversation between God and Satan. I wondered how this conversation could take place. Why would God allow such an evil one to talk with Him? Why did He not destroy Satan, or at least drive him away? God used Satan to deal with Job. Job was righteous and perfect in himself; however, he did not truly know God. Thus, Job needed to be broken,

to be dealt with thoroughly by God. God used Satan to accomplish this work, allowing Satan, within certain prescribed limits, to do certain things to Job.

From [2 Corinthians 12](#) we see that God also permitted a messenger from Satan to afflict Paul. Paul realized that his thorn in the flesh came from Satan. He says, “Wherefore also, that I should not be exceedingly lifted up by the transcendence of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, that I should not be exceedingly lifted up” ([v. 7](#)). The principle is the same both in the case of Paul and of Job. Just as Satan was permitted by God to afflict Paul, he was allowed to afflict Job.

According to the first chapter of the book of Job, soon after Satan received permission to afflict Job, he sent calamities. First, a report came that the Sabeans had stolen the oxen and the asses and slain the servants ([Job 1:14-15](#)). Immediately the report came of another calamity: fire had fallen from heaven and had consumed Job’s sheep and other of his servants ([v. 16](#)). Then the report came about the Chaldeans who stole the camels and slew still other servants ([v. 17](#)). Then the news came of the fourth calamity: a

“great wind from the wilderness” destroyed the house where Job’s sons and daughters were feasting, and they all were killed ([vv. 18-19](#)). Here we see that Satan is able to use people, fire, and wind to bring in great destruction. When I first read [Job 1](#), I did not understand why God allowed Satan to do such things. First Satan sends the calamities. Then he comes to cause anxiety.

God had a purpose in permitting Satan to afflict Job. God’s purpose was to break Job, who was a perfect and self-righteous person. God used Satan to do what no human being was able to do. Since Job’s friends could not deal with him, God used Satan for this task. Often the Devil accomplishes certain difficult assignments for God. Sometimes if God cannot get through by using other people, He will permit Satan to deal with you. Concerning Job, God’s purpose was to break him. Concerning Paul, God’s purpose in allowing Satan to send a messenger to afflict his body was to keep him from being proud because of the visions and revelations he received. No doubt, Satan’s purpose is always to attack God’s people. This purpose is negative. But in permitting a satanic attack to take place, God has another purpose, a very positive one. All the

sufferings we undergo are assigned to us by God for a positive purpose.

Paul speaks of this purpose in [2 Corinthians 4:16](#) and [17](#): “Wherefore we do not lose heart, but if indeed our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory.” Although the afflictions are assigned by God, they do not come from Him directly. Rather, every affliction, disaster, calamity, or catastrophe comes from Satan. But they come with God’s permission and for His purpose to perfect us. This was the reason Paul could declare that the present lightness of affliction works for us an exceeding weight of glory. God has a purpose to fulfill concerning us, and this purpose sometimes requires Satan’s help.

A few months ago I had a problem with my health. I knew this problem was caused by the Devil, Satan. But I also realized that it was permitted by God for a purpose. The Lord wanted to touch something in me, and He used this means to do it.

If we look at the cases of Job and Paul, we shall see that God permits Satan to cause affliction. As soon as the affliction comes, Satan comes



to cause anxiety. The anxiety caused by Satan is for the frustration of God's purpose. To repeat, forbearance comes from God for the fulfillment of His purpose, but anxiety comes from Satan for the frustration of God's purpose. If we see this, we shall realize that it is not an insignificant matter for Paul to speak of forbearance and anxiety together in [Philippians 4:5 and 6](#).

## **NO COEXISTENCE OF FORBEARANCE AND ANXIETY**

If we have forbearance, we shall not have anxiety. But if we have anxiety, we shall not have forbearance. Just as God and Satan cannot stand together, so forbearance and anxiety cannot co-exist. Whenever forbearance comes, anxiety must go. But if anxiety is with us, we shall be utterly lacking in forbearance. No one who exercises forbearance can be anxious. But if you are not a forbearing person, you will be anxious and filled with worry.

From experience, not from doctrine, we have come to understand that when we exercise forbearance in full, all anxiety disappears. If by God's mercy and grace we forbear with everyone, everything, and every matter, we shall not be anxious in anything. By God's mercy and grace



we need to forbear with persons, things, and matters. If we are forbearing in this way, we shall not be subject to anxiety.

## **LIVING CHRIST AS OUR FORBEARANCE**

Forbearance is actually Christ Himself lived out of us. The Christ in [Philippians 1, 2, and 3](#) is the very forbearance Paul speaks of in [4:5](#). Thus, to make our forbearance known is to make our Christ known. Forbearance is actually the magnification of Christ. In [1:20](#) Paul says that Christ will be magnified in him, but in [4:5](#) he tells us to let our forbearance be known. When we put these verses together, we see that to let our Christ be magnified is to let our forbearance be known. Therefore, in our experience forbearance is Christ Himself.

If we live Christ as our forbearance, it will not be possible for us to be anxious. Anxiety is an impossibility for those who have Christ as their forbearance. Do you know why we are anxious and why we worry? We are anxious and worried because we do not live Christ. The words “live Christ” may merely be a doctrinal term, a way of speaking, not our actual living in a practical way. But when we live Christ day by day, anxiety has no ground within us.

I repeat, to forbear is to live Christ. In such a life, a life of forbearing everything by the grace of God, there is no room for anxiety. When we magnify Christ by living Him, anxiety has no way to touch us. Then because we live Christ as our forbearance, we shall be anxious for nothing.

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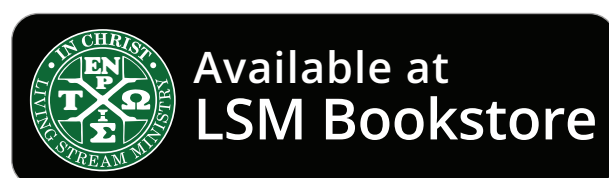


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# THE WAY TO BE FREED FROM ANXIETY

## ONE WITH THE LORD

[Philippians 4:4-7](#) speaks of living a life full of forbearance but without anxiety. To have such a living we need to live Christ ([Phil. 1:21](#)). If we live Christ, we are truly one with the Lord. In [Philippians 4:4](#) Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” To rejoice in the Lord is to be one with Him. When we are one with the Lord, we are not anxious about anything, for we are not only under the Lord’s sovereign hand, but we are in the Lord Himself. If we live this kind of life, how could we be anxious? The more we practice being one with the Lord, the more we shall realize that His destiny is our destiny. If He wants us to stay on earth for a longer period of time, He will keep us alive. But if it is His desire that we go to Him, He will take us to Himself. Since everything depends on His will and since we are one with Him in a practical way, there is no reason for us to be anxious.



When we are separated from the Lord, we are anxious about everything. Everything in human life gives rise to anxiety. But when we are one with the Lord, we are separated from the natural human life and its anxiety. If we would make our forbearance known to all men and not be anxious in anything, we need to practice being one with the Lord. This is the reason Paul charges us to rejoice in the Lord before he exhorts us to make known our forbearance.

We become anxious whenever we are not one with the Lord in a practical way. Doctrinally speaking, we are always one with Him. However, quite often we are not one with Him in practice.

Even though Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he was not anxious about anything, because he was one with the Lord actually, practically, and thoroughly. He could even say that to die was better than to live. Paul was so one with the Lord that he knew that the Lord was his destiny. Not only was Paul's destiny in the hand of the Lord—his destiny was the Lord Himself. Because Paul was one with the Lord, he knew that Satan could not do anything to him, even though he might send a messenger, a thorn in the flesh, to buffet him. Paul was not worried about what Satan might do, for the Lord was his destiny.

## THE SECRET OF SATISFACTION

If we are truly one with the Lord in our experience and something negative happens to us, we need not be anxious or troubled. If we are not one with the Lord in a practical way, virtually every person, every matter, and every thing will bother us. We may be disturbed by our husband or wife or by our children. When we are not one with the Lord, nothing will be satisfactory to us. For example, apart from the Lord, no job is satisfying. The secret of satisfaction is to be one with Christ. When we are one with the Lord, we can be satisfied with our circumstances, and we can be forbearing with everyone, everything, and every matter. Only when we are one with Christ can we be forbearing to the uttermost and be satisfied in all situations.

If we would not have any anxiety, we must recognize that all afflictions, sufferings, calamities, disasters, and catastrophes are assigned by God. We also must be one with the Lord in our experience. Yes, we may realize the necessity of passing through suffering and affliction. But if we would be free from anxiety, we need something more than this realization. We must also be one with the Lord. Otherwise, eventually our

circumstances or the things which happen to us will cause anxiety, and we shall not be satisfied with anything or anyone.

The older a person becomes, the more difficult it is for him to be satisfied. Throughout the years I have observed a good number of elderly persons who did not have Christ. The older they were, the more dissatisfied they became. Some were disgusted with almost everything and everyone. If we do not practice being one with the Lord, our situation will also become worse as we grow older. Out of a feeling of dissatisfaction, we may blame our circumstances or the members of our family. It is easy to satisfy a child or a young person, but difficult to satisfy someone who is older. This fact should motivate us to be one with the Lord in a practical way that we may be free from anxiety and have a life of forbearance.

## **PRAYER AND PETITION WITH THANKSGIVING**

In [Philippians 4:6 and 7](#) Paul says, “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” It is significant

that in 4:6 Paul does not speak of prayer, petition, *and* thanksgiving, but of prayer and petition *with* thanksgiving. Both our prayer and petition should be accompanied by thanksgiving to the Lord.

Suppose a brother prays that the Lord will change his wife. If he prays in this way, the Lord may ask him why he does not offer thanks for his wife. Then the brother should pray, “Lord, I thank You for giving me a good wife.” After offering thanks to the Lord, he then may proceed to ask Him to transform his wife.

Another brother may lose his job and pray to the Lord concerning employment. Instead of saying, “Lord, I have lost my job and I need You to have mercy on me,” he should first thank the Lord. Perhaps he should say, “Lord, I thank You that I did not lose this job before now. Lord, I also thank You for the means I still have to support my family. O Lord, I have many things for which to thank You.” Then along with his thanksgiving, he may ask the Lord to give him another job. But even as he prays concerning a new job, he should still be thankful and say, “Lord, I believe that You will give me a new job. Lord, You know what I need. I even thank You ahead of time for the job You will give me.”

Let us all learn to pray and petition with thanksgiving. If we are thankful to the Lord, this will keep us from anxiety. But if we pray to the Lord out of worry, our anxiety will increase. Praying about our situation may actually cause our anxiety to grow. But if we pray and petition with thanksgiving, our anxiety will be driven away.

## ACCEPTING THE LORD'S WILL

To overcome anxiety we need to pray and have fellowship with the Lord and worship Him. Then with thanksgiving we need to make our petitions known. When we do this, we may think that the Lord will always answer us and give us what we ask. However, sometimes the Lord will say “no.” Consider Paul’s experience of the thorn in the flesh. In [2 Corinthians 12:8](#) he says, “Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” However, the Lord denied Paul’s request, and said to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness” ([v. 9](#)). Therefore, Paul could declare, “Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.” The crucial point here is that Paul accepted the will of God. He realized that God’s will was to leave

the thorn with him so that he could experience His sufficient grace. Because Paul accepted the Lord's will, he did not have any anxiety.

Yes, we need to pray and petition the Lord with thanksgiving. But when the Lord does not grant our petition, our anxiety may increase instead of decrease. At such a time, we realize that the Lord will not change our situation. Instead, He allows the "thorn" to remain. He knows that we need the thorn. He also needs it that He may reveal His sufficient grace and in addition train us to trust in Him. If we do not accept the Lord's will but insist on making petitions according to our own will, we shall not be able to escape anxiety.

Suppose you pray to the Lord when you are suffering from a certain illness. The Lord may answer your prayer and heal you. He does this especially on behalf of those who are rather young in their experience of Him. At a later time, however, you may again become sick and ask the Lord to heal you. Instead of healing you suddenly, He may heal you gradually, or He may not heal you at all. Eventually, it may become clear to you that the Lord intends for the illness to remain. If you accept His will in the matter, you will be at peace. You will not have any anxiety.

When Brother Watchman Nee was a young



man, he suffered from heart disease. Often when he ministered the Word, he was in such pain that he had to lean on a stand for support. Although he contracted this disease before he was thirty years of age, he lived with that illness for nearly forty years. Although he knew that he could die from that disease at any time, he accepted the Lord's will and was not anxious. He realized that his illness was a thorn given him for the fulfillment of God's purpose.

Accepting the Lord's will in particular matters not only enables us to experience His sufficient grace; it also teaches us to have a life of trusting the Lord. If the thorn had been taken away from Paul, Paul probably would not have trusted in the Lord as much as he did with the thorn. Simply because the thorn was allowed to remain, day by day Paul had to live a life of trusting in the Lord.

We all prefer that hardships and sufferings be taken away from us. But sometimes the Lord will say, "No, I cannot answer your request. It is better for this thing to remain so that you may learn to trust Me and not be anxious." If we accept the Lord's will and trust Him, we shall not be anxious. However, if we do not accept His will or if we do not live by trusting in Him, we shall be anxious.

## **A PROPER REALIZATION**

Whether or not we can exercise forbearance in difficult situations depends on the kind of realization and practice we have. If we realize that a particular situation is of the Lord, that it is needed to perfect us, and then thank Him for it, we shall not be anxious or threatened. We shall be able to say, “Lord, I thank You for this. I am not threatened by this thing, because I know that I am one with You and that everything which comes to me is Your assignment. Lord, I also know that You allow this thing to remain that it may help You to fulfill Your purpose and to perfect me.” If we realize that everything is the Lord’s assignment and if we accept His will and thank Him for it, we shall be able to say with Paul, “Wherefore we do not lose heart, but if indeed our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:16-17). Then we shall not have any anxiety.

## **SIX POINTS TO UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE**

If we would be free from anxiety, we need

to understand and practice six points. First, we need to realize that just as anxiety is the totality of the human life, so forbearance is the totality of the Christian life. Second, we need to see that the source of forbearance is God and that the source of anxiety is Satan.

The third matter is to realize that forbearance and anxiety cannot exist together. The reason for this is that forbearance is actually a person, Christ Himself. Only when Christ is lived out of us do we have forbearance. This is indicated by the fact that in [Philippians 1](#), [2](#), and [3](#) Paul speaks of Christ again and again. He emphasizes magnifying Christ, taking Christ as our pattern, and pursuing Christ as our goal. But in [Philippians 4](#) he uses the term forbearance and charges us to make our forbearance known to all men. Actually, this forbearance is the very Christ revealed in the foregoing chapters. Therefore, to let our forbearance be known is to live Christ.

We have seen that God may assign certain sufferings to us. But although the sufferings are God's assignment, they do not come from God, but from Satan. The experiences of both Job and Paul illustrate this. The calamities assigned to us by God actually come to us from Satan. Satan is the messenger who brings these things

to us. God assigned a certain thorn to Paul, and He permitted Satan to bring the thorn to him. Immediately after sending us a certain difficulty or affliction, Satan comes to cause anxiety. This anxiety is not assigned by God and it does not come from Him. On the contrary, it is always caused by Satan to frustrate God's purpose. If we have a full realization of this, we shall see the need for Christ as our forbearance. If we have this forbearance, we shall not have anxiety. But if we have anxiety, we shall not have forbearance.

The fourth matter we need to understand and exercise is that to have a life full of forbearance but without anxiety, we need to be one with the Lord in a practical way. To be one with the Lord experientially is to be in Him.

Fifth, we need to pray. Prayer does not mean merely to ask the Lord for things. Prayer involves conversing with the Lord, communicating with Him in fellowship, and worshipping Him. As we spend time with the Lord in this way, we should make known our petitions with thanksgiving.

Sixth, after praying, having fellowship with the Lord, worshipping Him, and making our petitions known to Him, we shall know what the will of the Lord is. For example, if we are ill, we shall

know whether the Lord intends to heal us or allow the sickness to remain. Once we know God's will, we should accept it, experience His sufficient grace, trust in Him, and thank Him. Then we shall have a life full of forbearance but without anxiety.

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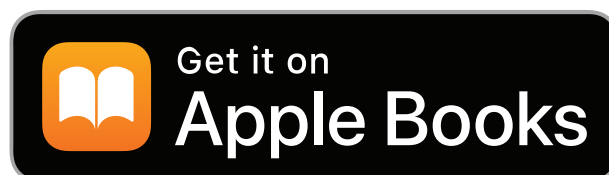
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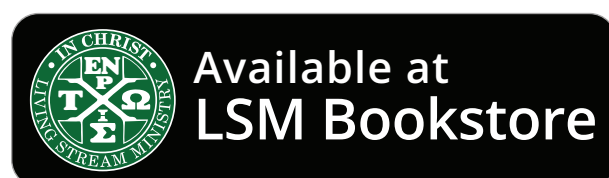


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